

**Philip J. Ryan Oral History Interview – RFK#1, 12/13/1973**  
Administrative Information

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**Biographical Note**

Philip J. Ryan was Assistant United States Attorney under Robert F. Kennedy and executive assistant to Robert F. Kennedy. This interview focuses on Ryan's first associations with Robert F. Kennedy [RFK], involvement in RFK's 1964 Senate campaign, and contact with RFK after the 1964 campaign, among other issues.

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Oral History Interview

Of

Philip J. Ryan

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Philip J. Ryan – RFK #1

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Oral History Interview

with

PHILIP RYAN

Dec. 13, 1973  
New York, N.Y.

by Roberta Greene

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

GREENE: Some of this, if it comes out in a format that is usable maybe we will transcribe it and not have to go back over it. Why don't you tell me a bit about how you first became associated with Robert (F.) Kennedy and where you went from there?

Ryan: I graduated law school in 1960. My first job following that as a lawyer was as a law clerk to the former chief judge, John W. Clancy, in the U.S. district court in the <sup>southern</sup> ~~seventh~~ district of New York. While I was working for Judge Clancy and he was trying cases, a number of the cases were presented, either from the plaintiff or the defendant's standpoint, by assistant United States attorneys who were operating out of an office in the same building. I became quite interested in the U.S.

Attorney's Office and applied for it, and that was right after  
 President ~~(John F.)~~ <sup>[John F. Kennedy]</sup> Kennedy had appointed Bob ~~(Robert M.)~~  
 Morgenthau <sup>[Robert M. Morgenthau]</sup> as a U.S. attorney. I was one of Bob Morgenthau's  
 first appointments after he assumed the post of U.S. attorney.  
 sort of

GREENE: And that association just started informally?

RYAN: The next thing that really happened that got me involved  
 in politics, which I had not been involved in until that  
 point, was in 1962. Bob Morgenthau resigned and I resigned  
 the same day to work with him in his quest <sup>to be the</sup> for the governor  
 of the state of New York. One of the major events during  
 his campaign was a visit to Buffalo at which time the  
 President came into Buffalo and they were both on the  
 same platform, and it was the first time I had actually  
 met President John ~~(F.)~~ Kennedy. Shortly after that campaign  
 Bob was reappointed U.S. Attorney and I was reappointed  
 an assistant under him. Normally you stay about three years,  
 or possibly four years, in the U.S. Attorney's office, and when  
 my three years were up I had accepted a job with a law firm  
 downtown called Carter, Ledyard, and Milburn,  
 and I went into Bob Morgenthau's office one day to tell  
 him that I was going to submit my resignation, and this  
 was probably in May of 1964, and we sat and talked for  
 about an hour, and the result of that talk was that he  
 believed that Senator Robert ~~(F.)~~ Kennedy, or then

Attorney General Kennedy, was going to run for the <sup>[United States]</sup> Senate in New York. He thought that it would be in my best interest to put off going to Carter's Ledyard for six months until after November of that year. And I had a number of cases pending so I had plenty to do if I stayed in the U.S. Attorney's office, and if he did come, Bob thought I could have some fun working with the Attorney General in his campaign for the nomination for the Senate and election, hopefully. Well, I stayed and probably about a month later I met with Steve ~~(Stephen H.)~~ <sup>[Stephen E. Smith]</sup> Smith, for the first time and undertook a trip around the state of New York to determine whether or not it was wise for the Attorney General to seek the nomination.

GREENE: Now what was the date of that, did you say?

RYAN: That was probably in June of 1964. I went around as an assistant to the Democratic State Chairman Mr. <sup>[William H. McKeon]</sup> McKeon at the time. The trip took a couple of weeks and I met with most of the county chairmen and came back and dictated, which is probably in the files someplace, a ~~seventy-eight~~ <sup>78-</sup> page report, <sup>x</sup> The conclusion of which was that if he ran for the Senate in the state of New York he would lose by <sup>six hundred fifty thousand</sup> ~~650,000~~ votes. So that was my first formal introduction to what was going to turn out to be the campaign staff for the Senator. After that. . . .

GREENE: When would you say that report was completed?

RYAN: <sup>About</sup> ~~At~~ the end of June, I believe. Possibly over into July but I'm not sure. It was about a two-week trip I believe.

GREENE: But he had that in hand long before. . . . <sup>he</sup>

RYAN: I don't know if it ever got to him. It was turned into Steve and it was not the conclusion that anybody wanted to see at the time. They wanted the opposite conclusion that if he did come in he would win by a certain amount. However at that time the carpetbagger issue was a critical one.

[Interruption] And on top of that Senator ~~(Kenneth B.)~~ Keating. <sup>[Kenneth B. Keating]</sup> was just a kind, old gentleman who had performed adequately in the Senate and, certainly upstate, which is where I spent most of the time, was well accepted by the people upstate. So that And it is genuine Republican territory to begin with. If there was any chance for the Senator it would have to be in the city and the surrounding suburban areas, and I didn't spend an awful lot of time in those areas but tried to take that into consideration.

GREENE: Were you. . . you also mentioned speaking to the party leaders. Were you also doing any polling or informal polling? . . .

RYAN: <sup>yes</sup> Yea, the best I could, <sup>ie</sup> Bobby. In any county where I knew any of the legislators or the may <sup>or</sup> any public officials or any businessmen, ~~which I had,~~ a number of whom I had met as a result

of the 1962 campaign and kept up to date with, I would meet with them also to try to get their feel. So it was a fairly composite report of county chairmen, party leaders, local legislators, local officeholders and local businessmen. However it placed fairly heavy emphasis on outside of New York City and the surrounding suburban areas. I guess by the time I got back, ~~the~~ what was going to turn into a campaign staff had developed substantially because right now, or at that time, out of Steve Smith's office I guess there were half a dozen faces I had never seen before who had come up from Washington. I don't remember the exact date of the Democratic <sup>[Democratic National Convention]</sup> Convention, that year but it was in Atlantic City, And I think in September sometime ~~was~~ during

GREENE: Right ~~is~~

RYAN: ... <sup>so</sup> ~~sp~~ during the latter half of the month of July and the month of August things developed substantially, and it looked as if there was little question but he was going to come in and at least seek the nomination.

~~I do . . . .~~

GREENE: By the way, what kind of a reaction did you get in terms of whether or not he could get the nomination? Was it assumed that if he wanted it it was available?

RYAN: Well, in New York, historically, whoever the party heavyweights want they usually get. So that my reaction was really one of a level below the party heavyweights. That would be the Dan <sup>3</sup> ~~(Daniel P.)~~ O'Connell's <sup>at that time,</sup> and the <sup>[Daniel P. O'Connell]</sup> Stanley Steinguts or whoever it was for the most part make the decision, and I was well aware of that as a result of 1962 when very few members of the party wanted Bob Morg<sup>e</sup>an<sup>e</sup>thau, and yet Bob ~~(Robert F.)~~ <sup>[Robert F. Wagner]</sup> Wagner, who was then mayor of the city, wanted Bob Morg<sup>e</sup>an<sup>e</sup>thau and consequently he got the nomination. And we can leave aside whether that was in the best interests of the state or not, or the party, but it appeared that those who had weight to swing in New York were favorably inclined to his nomination. And although I wasn't in on those meetings between Steve and those party leaders, or the Attorney General and those party leaders, I assume that their reactions indicated that those meetings were favorable.

GREENE: Well, <sup>of</sup> these people that you were speaking to, would you say that their prediction as to how he would do was also a reflection of how little they probably wanted him? or would they have rather seen someone else either because they didn't think he would win or because they just didn't want him?

RYAN: Well, I don't think they were very persuaded by the fact, <sup>that</sup> under the ~~constitution~~ a person can come from another state, open up a campaign headquarters and end up representing that state as one of the two United States senators. I think that they felt that, in the inter<sup>e</sup>sts of the party, someone who had performed well within the state should have been given that opportunity to represent the state. <sup>And</sup> ~~and~~ I think that they felt that what he was doing was shopping for a forum at the expense of New York and using that as a springboard to further<sup>e</sup> aspirations, and they felt they were being used, Number one, <sup>and</sup> number two, that those deserving members of the Democratic Party were being just passed over and pushed aside because of this election to come to the state of New York. I don't think that they were particularly against Robert Kennedy -- I think that most of them would have loved it if he had picked South Dakota <sup>and</sup> gained a seat in the Senate through South Dakota -- they just didn't want it to happen in New York.

GREENE: Did you see your role, <sup>at all</sup> as a persuader or were you strictly a factfinder? Did you make any effort to convert them?

RYAN: Well, I had a problem. I was told to go around/ . .

GREENE: You were still ~~employed?~~

RYAN: ~~No,~~ No, I had resigned as an assistant U.S. Attorney, but they all knew, number one, that I had been very close, ~~to,~~ and still was very close, to Bob Morg<sup>e</sup>nthau. They knew that my resignation from the U.S. Attorney's office, ~~was~~ the ink wasn't yet dry. They knew that although I was coming up under the banner of an assistant to the state chairman that most likely, because of Bob Morg<sup>e</sup>nthau's feeling towards the Attorney General, that I had the same and I was really there as a stalking-horse for his nomination, and not, as I said I was, just doing a survey for the state committee. So I don't think I fooled very many, but in trying to maintain that position as a member of the State Committee I had to try to remain. . . . So that not only did I ask about the prospects of a senator ~~of~~ <sup>a</sup> Robert Kennedy coming to New York and running for the Senate, I also had to ask about the Sam [Samuel S.] Stratton<sup>s</sup>, [Samuel S. Stratton] and the Howard [Howard J. Samuels] Samuels, and the others who were potential candidates at the time. So I tried to maintain some independence but I don't think I was terribly successful.

GREENE: Where-- who do you think they would have liked to have seen nominated, <sup>I suppose</sup> those up-staters <sup>mostly?</sup> Stratton? Samuels?

RYAN: I don't really know. Stratton, I think, always preferred to be governor, but secondarily wanted to be something other than a congressman. So I really don't remember who the forerunners were at that time. I know that there were two or three others interested in the post. I think Stratton was one. I think <sup>that</sup> there was a chance at that time that Bob Wagner himself <sup>... GREENE: I was just going to say,</sup> wanted that nomination, and <sup>gaining that</sup> a key to Robert Kennedy's <sup>getting the nomination</sup> was persuading Bob Wagner that he should step aside, which I take it was successfully done. Now I don't remember who the other candidates were. I think probably the most prominent candidate was Bob Wagner. I don't remember any others. I know that after we returned from Atlantic City there was a state convention held in an armory on 34th Street and Park Avenue that lasted two or three days and the result of that was that Senator Kennedy got the nomination.

GREENE: And really his only opposition was Stratton at that point?

That's always a question, Right. RYAN: ...

RYAN: Well, I think that that month and a half that preceeded the convention was successful and the others who might otherwise have been candidates, because I am certain that they would not have left the field open to just Stratton, had it not been for the Senator. They thought that it was probably in everybody's better interests to step aside and not have it a contested nomination.

GREENE: Let me go back a second to the beginning to when you were talking about the '62 campaign. You mentioned that the President came to Buffalo, did you see Robert Kennedy at all in that campaign?

RYAN: No.

GREENE: No?

RYAN: No, that was for the Pulaski Day parade in Buffalo which, because of the fact that there <sup>are four hundred thousand</sup> ~~is 400,000~~ people of Polish origin in Buffalo, is usually one of the biggest and best events in upstate New York. That particular year it was going to be greater than ever because of the appearance of the President. And part of our problem upstate with Bob Morgenthau was that nobody knew really who he was, and if we could put him on a stand, standing next to President John Kennedy, that was certainly in his best interest. That particular campaign stop was not without many

problems. Getting certain congressmen up in that area who were of Polish origin, away from the side of the president, and some man named Bob Morg<sup>e</sup>nthau, that none of them accepted, along side of him. But I did not meet Robert Kennedy at that time.

GREENE: What do you know about the role that the Kennedys played . . . [Interruption] in getting Morg<sup>e</sup>nthau into the picture to begin with, because it seems, up until a certain point at least, and I am going right now strictly on memory because I just haven't had a chance to really refresh on it. I might be off.

But it is my understanding that [Frank D.] O'Connor [Frank D. O'Connor] was really the forerunner as far as the party leaders were concerned.

RYAN: Well, I don't think there was any question about that, Bobb<sup>e</sup>. His campaign manager at the time was Jack [John F.] English, [John F. English], and Jack, not only then but still is, accepted as a very competent state person on the state level involved in politics, and Jack was very persuasive in pushing Frank O'Connor's campaign. I think that probably Frank O'Connor would have beaten [Nelson A.] Rockefeller in 1962 and I think, that, using hindsight, <sup>that</sup> he probably would have been the best choice. However, at that time there was only person that we were fighting for and

we didn't really step back and take an objective look at it. I was working on the assumption that Bob Morg<sup>e</sup>nthau was the choice of the President and the Attorney General.

GREENE: But you don't know where that, you know, what went on to bring it to that point?

RYAN: Well, I know that there were conversations between the two preceding his resignation and following his resignation.

GREENE: Did they ever actually ask him to get in so that there would be an alternative to O'Connor, or was Morg<sup>e</sup>nthau interested and went to them and sought their support? Do you know?

RYAN: I don't really know what the answer to that was. I know that Bob Morg<sup>e</sup>nthau was very interested in becoming governor of the state and probably still is. I don't know who initiated the conversation. It might very well have been that Bob Morg<sup>e</sup>nthau sought their assistance or their endorsement, because at the convention that year in Syracuse, I remember two of us were checking out certain rooms in the convention hall and we came upon one, <sup>that</sup> and the door was open <sup>to, and we went inside</sup> and it was filled with Frank [S.] Hogan [Frank S. Hogan] posters, and at that time there was a gentleman that

and I was subsequently introduced to, named Paul Corbin who was in town, had arranged for the posters, <sup>who</sup> had arranged for that room and told me at a later date that the real choice of the President was Frank Hogan; And that he was there to engineer it and create a stalemate between O'Connor and Morganthau. Which almost was accomplished, and I believe it took three or four ballots. And while that stalemate was in progress, to come forward with a Frank Hogan who was the true choice of the President and the Attorney General. I don't know whether that is true or not. I do know.

GREENE: That is very interesting. I've never heard that before but that is an interesting piece <sup>in</sup> to the puzzle.

RYAN: I do know that the room was filled with Frank Hogan posters. I do know that Frank Hogan was in town and I do know that shortly after Bob Morganthau received the nomination, one of the first persons that we tried to contact was Frank Hogan, and he left on a very late plane that night without saying goodbye to anybody.

GREENE: Unceremoniously.

RYAN: That's right. So I suspect that there might be some truth to ~~it~~ and Paul Corbin was in town, and Paul Corbin

was not an admirer of Bob Morgan<sup>e</sup>thau. So whether he was doing it on his own or not, I don't really know, but he did say <sup>that</sup> he was doing it because Frank Hogan was the choice of the President and the Attorney General.

GREENE: Did you ever talk to Morgan<sup>e</sup>thau about this? Did you ever tell him?

RYAN: No.

GREENE: Never did?

RYAN: No.

GREENE: It would be interesting to know what his reaction would be.

RYAN: I don't know whether he knows it or <sup>he</sup> doesn't know it. At the time certainly <sup>we</sup> wouldn't mention it to him because he felt, or at least was telling us, <sup>that</sup> he was the choice. There was no value during the campaign, certainly, of advising him that maybe he wasn't. After he had gotten it, it didn't seem to make any difference, and everybody in the state assumed ~~that~~ he was the choice because he had been appointed U.S. Attorney by the President and the Attorney General and ~~he~~ ~~was the logical assumption~~—it was a logical assumption to reach that he was the choice. And we just let it go and I ~~we~~ certainly never mentioned it since. I don't know what his reaction would be. Probably that it was all nonsense.

GREENE: That's very interesting.

RYAN: I guess you know Paul Corbin as well as I do.

GREENE: Oh, <sup>so</sup> yeah. <sup>You know,</sup> It doesn't surprise me, and of course, it really is an interesting question, whether or not he did it on his own and attributed it to them or. . . .

RYAN: He maintained throughout that whole period contact with some fairly prominent people, business men and legislators and county chairmen throughout the state. And continued those contacts up through 1964 because when I went around the state I got some names from Paul to meet with and they were in fairly frequent touch with Paul. So I know that Paul kept his tentacles out in New York State, and I don't know whether he was doing a side maneuver or it was <sup>really</sup> a frontal attack with authority.

GREENE: Could you get much of a feel for how people felt towards Corbin and towards the idea that in many cases this was their middleman with the Attorney General and. . .

RYAN: Well, their attitude towards Paul Corbin was one of intense hatred.

GREENE: Right.

RYAN: Now Paul had a <sup>concept</sup>, or at least I believe he had a <sup>concept</sup>, concept, and his concept was, you either show intense loyalty towards whomever he was involved with, which was just

the Kennedys, or he would do his best to see that you were humiliated. He had the power, on occasions, to do just that. <sup>A You</sup> He could take something as simple as the appearance of a member of the Kennedy administration at a fund~~er~~aising dinner or the appointment of a local person as a postmaster. Now they don't seem terribly important, but they can be on a local level. In a county, <sup>and</sup> in particular, <sup>a county</sup> in upstate New York, the party should have one head and that is the person <sup>who</sup> ~~that~~ is the county chairman. No one within the party structure in that county should have any authority except that which goes through and comes back through the county chairman. <sup>Now</sup> you can't run much of a local organization ~~if you don't~~ have a structure similar to that. If Paul took a disliking to a particular county chairman, what Paul would do is to select someone else in that county, and then, when the fund~~er~~aising dinner came up, get the county chairman to write for a particular speaker, Intercept that communication <sup>3</sup> make certain that that speaker, that <sup>invitation</sup> ~~invitation~~, was declined by that speaker, humiliating the county chairman; <sup>then</sup> and encourage his contact in the county to say, "Well, if you can't do it, Mr. County Chairman, I certainly can." And then have his contact invite that particular speaker in for the dinner and have the

speaker, in fact, show up, ~~completely~~ destroying the county chairman in the eyes of his party. And the same thing with <sup>a</sup>the local postmaster.

GREENE: Can you be specific as far as where you know <sup>that</sup> this happened, or <sup>was</sup> ~~is~~ it so frequent in <sup>occurrence</sup> ~~occurrence~~ that it's ~~was~~ . . .

RYAN: I don't know if Paul was able to do that on many occasions. I know that, in fact, he did do it. There was one particular county chairman <sup>that</sup> he did it to that I recall <sup>a man a man</sup> ~~by the name of~~ Lowell Fitzsimmons. <sup>[J. Lowell Fitzsimmons]</sup>

GREENE: Where was he?

RYAN: He <sup>was</sup> in the county <sup>that</sup>, in which, Plattsburg. . . I am sorry, not Plattsburg, <sup>it is over</sup> ~~it is over~~ on the lake. <sup>[Jefferson County]</sup> Gosh, I don't remember, <sup>it has been ten years</sup> ~~it has been ten years~~, <sup>since</sup> ~~since~~ I thought of, <sup>nine years</sup> ~~nine years~~, since I thought of Lowell Fitzsimmons. But Lowell was one who alerted me to this practice of Paul Corbin's before Paul, in fact, admitted that he was doing it.

GREENE: He did admit it, though, <sup>he didn't</sup> ~~he didn't~~ . . .

RYAN: Paul? <sup>Paul</sup> Paul was rather proud of it. He thought it was a very skillful way to cut the legs off of a county chairman who did not have the same attitude towards the Kennedys that Paul Corbin had. And, it in fact, was effective. I don't know how skillful it was, but

*it was*

^ certainly effective.

GREENE: Did he, when he was, as I imagine he must have been when he was attacked on this kind of thing. . . .

[Interruption] . . . when he was accused of this sort of thing, and I assume it happened to some extent. . . .

of the people. . . . [Interruption]. Anyway, I was going to ask you if people who were being undercut by Paul Corbin, if they or their friends, went after Corbin, <sup>on it,</sup> would he, throw, you know, say he was just acting on the President's and the Attorney General's behalf? Did he. . . .

RYAN: Oh, he always cloaked himself with complete and total authority from the Attorney General, at the time. And not only did he not try to disguise what he, in fact, was doing upstate, but he even bragged about what he was doing. We had problems in Utica, in Syracuse, in Lowell Fitzsimmons's county, whichever that was, I forget. All of which were sparked, by, and full credit taken for, by Paul Corbin. However, you would go into Albany county where there was Dan O'Connell, or go up into Erie county where you had a Peter [J.] Crotty, and Paul Corbin never dared. . . . That's right, although Paul had a contact in Albany county that he used on a very regular occasion, A fellow named

[Peter J. Crotty]

GREENE: [Inaudible] RYAN:

[Daniel V. McNamee]  
 Dan McNamee, who was the President, or Chairman of the Board, of The First Albany Corporation, which was a successful securities operation in the Albany area. So that Paul was getting his "intelligence" from the Albany area, however it was simply for background purposes because there was nothing that Paul could do in <sup>an</sup> Albany county or in <sup>an</sup> Erie county or anyplace else where there was a strong leader. But he attacked the weak and attacked them successfully.

GREENE: Do you know of any instances where somebody would take this information and go back to the Attorney General-- and ~~or~~, I assume they wouldn't go to the President, but to the Attorney General, and <sup>say</sup> get this guy out of here. ~~is he~~ <sup>is he</sup> indeed, acting on your authority? That kind of thing.

Or ask, "is he indeed, acting on your authority?"

RYAN: Well, ~~nobody~~, no county leader from upstate New York would have that kind of access to the Attorney General, to my knowledge. What were his avenues of recourse? The first thing <sup>that</sup> he could do was to complain to the state chairman. The state chairman could, in turn, complain to the national chairman. At that time, Paul Corbin, <sup>was</sup> I believe, <sup>was</sup> operating out of the national chairman's office, so that it would go back into Paul's office and that would be the end of the fight. So I think Paul had it set up very well .

GREENE: Do you think this is one of the reasons you found lukewarm sentiment, at best, when you went around the state?

RYAN: I think it certainly contributed. In fact,....

GREENE: → Did people <sup>cite</sup> ~~sight~~ that?

RYAN: Some, <sup>yeah</sup> those that didn't <sup>ac</sup> accept my cover and believed that I really was coming around to try <sup>to</sup> and drum up some <sup>e</sup> support for the attorney general, <sup>e</sup> Certainly, at least those that were honest, and those that would come forward, and I hate to keep using the <sup>e</sup> example of Lowell Fitzsimmons, but it's just that that sticks out in my mind → we're sitting in rocking chairs on his <sup>+</sup> front porch and the only thing that was in my mind at the time was <sup>o</sup> to get out of there. He was a huge man who drove a bulldozer for a local construction company, and he was getting so excited that I wasn't too sure that I was safe, <sup>red</sup> When you <sup>+</sup> think of a Paul Corbin, but that example sticks out in my mind, but I know that there were others as I went around the state. I just can't remember them specifically.

greene; Is there anything else <sup>o</sup> about that campaign that seems important in relation to Robert Kennedy or the President? *I guess once the announcement...*

RYAN: Do you mean pre-campaign or during the campaign?

GREENE: In the Morg<sup>e</sup>nthau campaign, <sup>yea</sup> yeah. Well, pre or during.

RYAN: Oh, I see. When you say campaign, you're referring to the Morg<sup>e</sup>nthau campaign?

GREENE: Now, in '62, Right.

RYAN: Well, what we've just been discussing <sup>was</sup> ~~is~~ the pre-campaign, '64. That wasn't specifically right <sup>related to</sup> at the '62.

GREENE: Right, right, but a lot of it went back to the earlier years while he was attorney general, didn't it? <sup>Paul Corbin stuff?</sup>

RYAN: Certainly those actions that we just described of Paul's took place sometime between '60 and '64, probably more particularly in '62 and '63. I don't know <sup>f</sup> of any other factor, <sup>out of</sup> set of facts, that I'm aware of <sup>at</sup> that period that had any bearing on '64, with specific reference to the state or the Democratic party within the state or any individuals who were in the state. No, I don't know <sup>of any others</sup> them.

GREENE: What about Morgenthau's personal feelings about the Kennedys <sup>and</sup> their role in this whole thing? Did he feel he had their full support, <sup>there were</sup> and no complaints about.//.

RYAN: I don't really know what he felt <sup>about</sup> Bobby <sup>ie</sup>, but I do know that he mentioned on numerous occasions that he was their hand-picked <sup>candidate</sup> Kennedy at the time when.//.//. <sup>EX</sup> <sup>16</sup> <sup>16</sup> accepted that with that minor reservation that I had in the back of my mind about that room that I found in the War Memorial auditorium in Syracuse. So that he was

announcing to anybody where it was important that he was the candidate of the Kennedy's, and used that to whatever advantage he could get from it during the '62 campaign.

GREENE: Well, I guess just to further confuse to whoever who is eventually using this, <sup>if we do</sup> to transcribe it, and I think there's every reason we should. Going back now to '64, between the time <sup>that</sup> you came back from your trip and the actual opening of the campaign after the convention, <sup>s</sup> what were you doing that's of interest, <sup>?</sup> who you were working with and what was going on, <sup>?</sup> I guess.

RYAN: Well, at one point two or three of us from the US, <sup>(United States)</sup> attorney's office prepared a legal memorandum on the right of an individual who was not domiciled with <sup>in</sup> a particular state, to move into that state and run for the United States Senate from that state. There was certainly a lot of question in the minds of the public as to whether or not that could be done. <sup>the</sup> position that we took at the time was that it could <sup>be</sup> under the constitution. What we wanted to back up that position were facts from the past where it had, in fact, been done, and we found, in the Congressional record, and other documents of a historical nature, certain instances where it had been done. We obtained all the information that we could and put it in the form of a brief to support the fact that it was certainly <sup>s</sup> constitutionally acceptable and there was some

historical precedent for ~~ti.~~ ~~Nowm,~~ that took up a portion of the time. There were preparations being made during that period for our trip to the convention in Atlantic city. I don't remember them as being extensive but certainly there ~~were~~ was some time devoted to that.

GREENE: In terms of <sup>o</sup>logistics and scheduling, that kind of thing, or more political?

RYAN: Well, at that time it was confused, and we didn't <sup>really</sup> know that he was going to run at that time, whether or not; we felt certain that he was. Atlantic city was <sup>an</sup> exposure to a lot of politicians and certainly some advantage wanted to be taken <sup>of</sup> ~~to~~ that exposure. The Kennedy Library, which was touring at ~~that~~ the time was moved into Atlantic city and set up as an exhibit. Certain preparations were made that if the ~~Attorney~~ General did come to Atlantic city, who should he meet with, where is that particular person going to be staying, who's going to ~~make~~ <sup>make</sup> up the New York delegation? <sup>so</sup> that while he has a perfectly legitimate reason for being in Atlantic City, how can he convert that into an opportunity to meet the delegates from New York? <sup>so</sup> that if he was going to rely on them <sup>at</sup> sometime in the <sup>u</sup> future, he ~~had~~ at least have a personal opportunity to meet with them. So, <sup>w</sup> he had to develop <sup>and</sup> who they were, where they were going to stay, where the New York delegation was going to stay, some background information on those people, so that when he met with them he'd have a feel

that  
for the person he was talking to.

GREENE: You keep saying "we". Who else would be working on this with you?

RYAN: I was hoping you wouldn't ask that. I don't remember.  
Raymond R.?  
? (Richard) Dick Corbett was involved from Steve Smith's

staff. There was an assistant state chairman, or an  
assistant to the state chairman, at the time and for some  
reason, I believe it was Herb <sup>Brickman</sup> (Herbert) L. <sup>Brickman</sup> <sup>King</sup> but I'm not sure it was Herb, at the time.

GREENE: But none of the people who later became major figures?

RYAN: No. Those that developed into the group that ran the  
campaign were not around. There ~~was~~ <sup>were</sup> a couple of them  
around. His administrative assistant, John //.

GREENE: Who <sup>is</sup> administrative assistant?

RYAN: The attorney general's administrative assistant at the  
time.

GREENE: You don't mean <sup>Joe Dolan</sup> John ? <sup>Joe Dolan</sup> [Joseph F. Dolan]?

RYAN: No, his administrative assistant at the time in 1964  
was <sup>a</sup> the fellow named John, <sup>S</sup> short, stocky. He eventually  
did come to New York and eventually did play a major  
role in the campaign. I can't remember what his last name  
was.

GREENE: It wasn't Nolan? <sup>[John E. Nolan]?</sup>

RYAN: Nolan? Sure. John Nolan was involved, certainly, and came  
up from Washington and was in <sup>n</sup> Atlantic city, and did handle  
or play a role in what went on in Atlantic city.

GREENE: He worked on scheduling later on with Justin Feldman?

RYAN: → Later on, right. But his position prior to that had been as administrative assistant to the attorney general in Washington.

GREENE: Let me ask you something else. You say that Morgenthau first indicated to you as early as sometime in May that Kennedy was likely to come into the state.

RYAN: I think even before that, I think it was around April.

GREENE: Really? It's my understanding that there was a period after that where he completely lost interest in the whole thing, related, at least <sup>+</sup> in part to Ted Kennedy's <sup>[Edward M. Kennedy]</sup> accident, which, if I had my dates with me, I <sup>would</sup> know was sometime in July. Do you remember that period? Do you remember sort of a halt to the thing?

RYAN: I certainly remember Senator <sup>r</sup> Ted <sup>n</sup> Kennedy's accident, but I don't place it historically as happening just before that, so I obviously don't remember that as being an interruption.

GREENE: No, it was right after that. It was like a week after the accident, it seems to me he made a public statement that he definitely wouldn't <sup>not</sup> run in New York.

RYAN: I don't remember <sup>it,</sup> Bobby <sup>ie,</sup> but I'm sure that if I had <sup>as</sup> read it at the time I would have considered it, some kind of ~~(Interrupted)~~ a trial balloon.

GREENE: The important thing is you don't remember people saying, "Forget it. He's just not going to do it."

RYAN:

Well, I think right up until ~~September~~ there was a question in everybody's mind as to whether or not he would. There was a question in my mind as to whether or not he should. I genuinely felt after that trip that if he did, he would not be elected.

And I think that if the election had been held on Labor Day <sup>in</sup> 1964 that he would, in fact, not have

been elected. I think <sup>that</sup> it was the subsequent events

~~that~~ which changed that loss of <sup>six hundred fifty thousand</sup> 650,000 into a win <sup>of eight hundred thousand</sup> of 800,000 or whatever it turned out to be, princi-

pally <sup>being</sup> the runaway of Lyndon Johnson <sup>[Lyndon B. Johnson]</sup> which had to

spill over, and the fact that Kenneth Keating could

probably not have done another thing wrong during

the course of that campaign to help the Senator's

chances anymore than what he did. He made every

classical mistake in the book. So not only did I

think <sup>that</sup> there <sup>e</sup> was some question as to whether he would

do it or not, I thought there was some serious ques-

tion as to whether he should.

GREENE:

Beyond submitting your report, did you have any

discussions along these lines with anybody? <sup>Smith or any-</sup>  
<sup>body like that?</sup>

RYAN:

I don't believe that I met the Attorney General

face to face until he, in fact, came in to New York

and attended the convention in early September. I

don't remember any great series of meetings with

that  
 Steve. I think, there were certain things to be  
 done and we just went about doing them which were  
 preparatory. To go back to ~~the~~<sup>a</sup> question that you  
 asked before, I do remember now in part what we did.  
 We assembled information, which ~~later~~<sup>a</sup> became rather  
 important, about the state. On the assumption that  
 he was going to run and on the assumption that we  
 weren't wasting our time, we assembled every piece  
 of information that we felt that we could, and that  
 was in that period after the trip around the state  
 and prior to the convention in Atlantic City.

GREENE: In terms of a ~~factor~~<sup>a</sup> briefing book, is that the kind  
 of ~~a~~ thing you mean?

RYAN: Yeah, it was even far more extensive. We started with  
 maps of the state and of the counties. We divided them  
 into areas. We proposed a structure of campaign co-  
 ordin<sup>the</sup>ators for ~~a~~ particular areas. We then assembled  
 briefing books for whoever were going to be the cam-  
 paign coordinators covering whatever background infor-  
 mation we could from an historical standpoint: the  
 voting records in the past of both parties and how  
 they fared; the current political structure, what-  
 ever information, ~~we~~<sup>that</sup> we could gain on those who were in  
 power, their attitudes toward<sup>e</sup> ~~the~~<sup>e</sup> Kennedys, if known.

GREENE: Now, what were your sources for this kind of thing?  
 Were you doing polling or.../

RYAN:

Part of it was just from fact books and part of it was <sup>or</sup> from contacts within those areas, people <sup>that</sup> we felt that we could trust by calling them and asking that kind of information. And a good deal of our time was spent amassing background information so that when a coordinator was selected, which <sup>we felt</sup> would be at the beginning of the campaign, he could take this information and <sup>go up and</sup> set up some kind of a headquarters within that geographical area that was assigned to him, and after he studied that information he'd have a fairly good feel for the area that he was going to be charged <sup>with</sup> ~~for the~~ responsibility of. So, a lot of time was spent doing that, that was a massive <sup>one</sup>.

GREENE:

And <sup>were</sup> these, would you say, the same people that you worked on Atlantic City with?

RYAN:

No, here we had the full help of the Democratic State Committee. (William) <sup>Keon</sup> Billy McCune was in constant touch with Steve Smith and an ardent supporter of the Attorney General for the Senate. However, he was restricted in that he couldn't show that favoritism, but he did turn over his staff and his records and his files, so that myself and I <sup>d</sup> don't know who else worked with his staff to assemble that information preparatory to a campaign. So, we got a great deal of help from the state committee. I don't remember <sup>on that aside from</sup> who else worked with me ~~beside~~ the state

committee staff.

GRUENE:

Okay, then, shall we go to Atlantic City or the state convention? <sup>or</sup> what do you see as the next important point?

RYAN:

The next logical step was Atlantic City. I certainly remember expending some effort in getting whatever attendance we could at the presentation put on by the Kennedy library. I remember a lot of times being devoted to seeing that whenever the Attorney General appeared somewhere, there was, in fact, a crowd to show support which, by the way, wasn't very difficult to do. I think that a lot of time was spent in making arrangements for where he should have been or it was <sup>most</sup> advisable to be, who he should have met with, and that, for the most part, was done, I believe, by John Nolan. And I'm not sure whether John Douglass was there or not, he might have been. And I'm almost positive that Angie [Angela M. Novella] was there, and they pretty much handled who went in and out of his suite and who he met with. Certainly suggestions were made as to who he should meet with, but who he in fact did meet <sup>with</sup> at the time I don't really know. And I think he did make an effort to meet those <sup>r</sup> from the state of New York that would be important to him later on in the campaign. But I don't <sup>m</sup> remember playing any important role in what

went on in Atlantic City. It was my first convention and I was more taken in by what was going on around me than I was with anything specifically <sup>for him</sup>.

GREENE:

And what about the state convention which, as I remember, was two or three days later, <sup>I was</sup> one right after the other.

RYAN:

The national, I believe, was in the end of August and the state convention was sometime like the third or fourth of September, so there wasn't a great period between them. My recollection is that by the time the state convention took place, even though it was only a week, a fairly large <sup>o</sup> group were now involved, a good portion of whom, or maybe even most of whom, I didn't even know who they were. They had come up from Washington. My only <sup>f</sup> gear at the time was, what you're doing is exactly what everybody in the state feels you're doing, and that is not only are you coming in from outside the state but you're bringing ~~in~~ a whole structure in with you from outside the state. And what, in fact, are you going to leave of the party, whatever it was at the time, after you're finished? And, I guess what was far more important, was to have around him people he could trust to do a good job <sup>b</sup> than it was to try to develop some trust in some <sup>a</sup> local people to perform the same function for him.

GREENE: Did you also get the impression as time went on that the Kennedys, this was part of their modus operandi, that they brought in outsiders to do the job that needed to be done without being concerned about what would happen after the election?

RYAN: I don't know that I got the impression, as your question implied<sup>s</sup>. I was convinced at that point that that's just exactly what they did, and if they used anybody from the state it would just be for window dressing<sup>^</sup> you know, "we do have some people from the state and here they are, A, B, and C<sup>^</sup>"-- But that the campaign would in fact be run by this group that he brought up from Washington. So I not only had the impression<sup>3</sup> I was convinced of that.

GREENE: Did it continue to disturb you?

RYAN: Well, I think that as it developed... . [Interruption]  
Well, I was told that historically the Kennedy machine

always had a very active election day activity with certain things that they felt had to be carried on. In looking at the scope of the election day activities, we really didn't have sufficient people that we felt we could rely on to run that in New York City and around the state. And it was for the most part a good format to assure that the maximum number of people who were favorable, <sup>to you.</sup> would in fact come out and vote, and that you reduced <sup>to</sup> to a minimum the number of things, <sup>that</sup> your opponent could do to interfere <sup>with</sup> with that vote. <sup>So</sup> So that at that point Senator Ted Kennedy became involved and offered the assistance of some of his trusted and competent friends from Massachusetts. And one day a truck-load arrived--<sup>or</sup> they came in some fashion--state senators, state assemblymen, workers, all with Massachusetts accents. We didn't know whether to hide them in the headquarters, send them off to a hotel, or back to Massachusetts, or in fact use them. And of course they were competent, they were well aware of the way in which the Kennedys

had in the past run election day activities,  
and they were a substantial help. However. . . .

GREENE: How soon before the election, by the way, did these  
people arrive?

RYAN: Two weeks or more.

GREENE: So they were out in the hinterlands?

RYAN: Oh, yes, there was no way to control them, that's  
right. And of course <sup>at</sup> ~~they had~~ a campaign headquarters,  
Anytime anybody from upstate is in New York City,  
which happens frequently, they'll drop into the  
headquarters. And here we had all of these  
Massachusetts accents around the headquarters just  
supporting their fears that this was an out-of-<sub>x</sub>  
state operation.

GREENE: Did you get a lot of feedback on it, complaints?

RYAN: Well, at the time it seemed like an awful lot.  
It seems <sup>ed</sup> as if it was a major problem. It probably  
didn't turn out to be <sup>w</sup> one, but it seemed major at  
the time.

GREENE: Were the complaints largely from the leadership  
and the workers, or was it from the public? In

other words was it those who resented the interloper or the public?

RYAN:

It was from the group of people that we had to work with, for the most part, which were party officials. And they were the ones that felt jeopardized by the outsiders being in <sup>the</sup> state. They were the ones that felt that they should have been in those positions for whatever spoils they felt grew out of a successful campaign, ~~And~~ that they were being denied that by all of these outsiders.

But I think that it sounds as if I'm probably blowing it out of proportion. I did think that it wasn't very advisable at the time. I did think that it was a serious detriment at the time. I suppose in hindsight it wasn't terribly important. They were competent and we did rely on them and we did get a lot of work out of them. So I'm sure that that latter aspect more than offset the former.

GREENE:

The other thing that we missed was the Feldman-<sub>X</sub> Nolan relationship and whether or not that was a typical arrangement. And I thought you had a

very interesting perspective on how you thought it operated.

RYAN: Well, I never thought for a moment that Justin had much persuasion with the attorney general at the time. I felt that Justin was an answer to the problem that we just adjust ourselves to, and that is that most of the people outside of the campaign headquarters felt that the campaign was being run by outsiders. And Justin, having performed the same duties in 1962, which was fresh in everybody's mind, having been appointed to that same position in '64, certainly helped to a great degree. However, I think it was probably window dressing and, maybe even more importantly, Justin was the one that was used to turn events down rather than to encourage events that we wanted to attend. So I think that Justin, to a great degree, was used that the true relationship was one between John Nolan and the attorney general, and that it was the recommendations made by John Nolan that probably controlled. ~~And~~

GREENE: And you also, on a sort of similar note, discussed the Hackett [David L. Hackett]-Gerry Cummins [Gerald Cummins] arrangement?

RYAN: Well, I think that they were similar and created for similar reasons. Dave Hackett was to supervise the area coordinators, who for the most part were out-of-staters, so that a Hackett-area coordinator conversation wouldn't affect anybody because nobody who was outside of the campaign itself would even be aware of it. But when Dave had to get in touch with or get information from somebody who was part of a local organization, Dave would not make that call, But I would make it for him, so in that respect I was Dave's voice to the parties that were necessary for us to work with but who were outside of the campaign staff.

GREENE: What was your actual title or formal function?

Was it Dave's administrative assistant?

RYAN: Well, they changed, I think, from the beginning of

the campaign to the end, Bobbi. It started out as advance man. The first trip that the attorney general made was, I believe, starting in Binghamton, across to Jamestown, up through Dunkirk into Buffalo, and then back via car to Rochester, Syracuse, and then back to New York. That trip had to be advanced, and I did the advance work for that. So I started out as an advance man, and then as that staff grew, with some New Yorkers--with the Tim Hannans and the Peter Smiths and the Jim Tolans and the rest of them, They then moved into that area, and I went on to work principally with Dave Hackett.

9) In a typical statewide campaign, the campaign is going to be won or lost in New York City. So that we changed our focus at about two or two-and-a-half weeks before the end of the campaign, or before election day, from New York City and upstate to just New York City. I guess for that last twenty days I had nothing to do with upstate or the area coordinators, but concentrated specifically on New York City where we felt that

it would be of most value to us.

GREENE: As I remembremember that I once added er, I once added up the

see seems to me the campaign was almost equally  
divided in terms of days between upstate, <sup>and</sup> New  
York, but . . .

RYAN: You mean, between the time that . . .

GREENE: The total time, right

RYAN: . . . the attorney general spent upstate and spent  
in New York?

GREENE: Right.

RYAN: Well, that was a rule of thumb that we were trying  
to use, but I don't think that you'd find,  
except for one final swing upstate, that he  
spent very much time up there in the last two  
weeks of the campaign.

GREENE: No. I was going to say, most of it would have  
been in New York

RYAN: Yup.

GREENE: Do you agree that that first trip was really a  
serious problem for him? Was that a scheduling

blunder? Was it just that they hadn't yet gotten the feel for the kind of crowds you were going to get? Because as I remember, when he came back he was totally exhausted and demanded that they not do that again.

RYAN: Well . . .

GREENE: . . . kind of <sup>incensed</sup> intense . . .

RYAN: the concept was to get him around the state in a flurry, to use every minute of his time from the time he got up in the morning until the time he went to bed at night, and to create as much in the way of crowds as we could, to get as much local coverage as we could, because if you analyze that trip and the cities that we hit on that trip, you'd see that every major television station in the state of New York covered <sup>it</sup>, every major radio station covered <sup>it</sup>, and every major newspaper covered <sup>it</sup>. So that from an exposure standpoint it was an excellent idea.

As to what we could anticipate in the way of crowds, nobody knew because we had never done

it with him before, but we had an idea that wasn't going to be a major problem. In some of the areas the crowds were less than anticipated, but I think that when you pick up that tour in Buffalo, for example--I'll never forget that trip from the Buffalo airport into downtown Buffalo. I don't know why hundreds of people weren't killed by jumping in front of the car, jumping in front of motorcycles operated by the Buffalo police.

An interesting side story was that we asked the Buffalo police to provide twenty motorcycles in order to get the cavalcade into downtown Buffalo. We weren't getting very much cooperation from the Buffalo police. They sent out two. I think he was an hour and a half or two hours late in arriving in Buffalo, and the crowd started to build. We picked <sup>our</sup> a route from the airport into downtown that would avoid the highways and go through the heart of

the poorer section of the city. By the time he arrived and the crowds were building and the police were getting reports back, they sent out an additional ten motorcycles; and before we started into downtown we had every motorcycle that the Buffalo police department could get to start. And in the course of that trip which took an hour and a half or so, I think that half a dozen of the motorcycles burned their engines out in <sup>the</sup> slow speeds and the constant racing of the engines in an effort to get through the crowds. It was a frightening experience. Women darting out between these powerful motorcycles whose engines were roaring, just to get to touch the car, to get to touch him, or to get close to him. I mean, it was frightening, and we were walking alongside the car, a number of us, just terrified that people were going to get killed, run over under the cars, under the motorcycles. I've never seen a crowd like that--and a more receptive crowd.

And then the trip from Buffalo to Rochester was done by automobile. It's not very far, I don't think it's more than sixty or seventy miles, so we decided to drive it rather than fly it. And what we were doing was, for the first time, coming into Ken Keating's home town. There was a great deal of concern as to whether or not we could turn out crowds. And as I remember that trip, the entire roadway--because we didn't again take the highway, but took small roads leading through small towns--almost every house was represented by a group of people standing on their front lawns waving. In the hearts of the small towns that we went through people had lined the sidewalks. So I think from that standpoint it was terribly successful. The reception in Rochester was excellent--that is, in relation to what we anticipated. I think from that standpoint it was successful. From the standpoint of wearing him out, it was also successful. He couldn't

talk by the time he finished that trip. He was totally exhausted.

GREENE: Do you remember him being annoyed or . . .

RYAN: No.

GREENE: . . . upset?

RYAN: No. No.

GREENE: Well, it wouldn't really have been at you, anyway, because it was the schedulers that <sup>he</sup> ~~had~~ <sup>apparently</sup> ~~would~~ really lit into.

RYAN: I don't recall that, ~~anyway~~, <sup>or</sup> I don't recall hearing of it.

GREENE: Did you learn anything of significance from that trip that helped you on the succeeding trips, ~~or . . .~~?

RYAN: Well, I think I changed my estimate of how much he'd lose by and revised it downward from six hundred and fifty <sup>[thousand]</sup> to a break-even point. I never thought that we'd get that kind of a reception in Rochester. And I took that as a change, at least in my thinking, that Ken Keating was maybe not quite as popular as I

thought or, probably more importantly, that Robert Kennedy was more popular and better accepted than I had expected.

GREENE: That's why I tried, when we were first talking about that, to find out whether you actually had any kind of polling done at the time that you--not only you, but anybody--had polls done-- at the time that you were making that trip, or whether these people that you were talking to were really reflecting their own opinions rather than the electorate's, because . . .

RYAN: As to polls, I know that polls were conducted. the state committee had a poll that had been conducted either at its own expense or at someone else's expense pitting Robert Kennedy against Ken Keating.

GREENE: Right.

RYAN: I know of the existence of that poll. I don't know what the result of it was.

GREENE: Well, my understanding is that the polls up to the time that he announced showed him

consistently winning. After he announced, he dropped down almost to a break-even point. Like in the second week in October, which it seems to me, was the low point in the campaign, he fell below, but not significantly, although, of course, it was alarming. And then after that when they went on the offensive more, then he could start on the incline. That's why it surprised me, the degree to which <sup>you</sup> he thought he could lose, because he didn't seem to . . . .

RYAN:

Well, historically, I'm sure that you're right, <sup>and</sup> in your review of the polls, I'm sure it's <sup>is</sup> accurate. I wasn't privy to those polls at the time. I didn't know what they concluded. The decision to come into New York certainly makes a lot more sense if he had in his possession polls that indicated that he was a winner. The only thing that I know was what I concluded personally after a tour of the

state, and I was convinced at that time, with Ken Keating at the level that he was at and the attitude towards the attorney general, that he would lose by 650,000 votes, and I was convinced of that, and was not even aware of the fact that the polls said that he was a winner. But I could see--well, at least I felt that I could see from that point when I did make that estimate through the end a pattern completely different from that which you just announced, which were the polls that were being conducted. I think <sup>at</sup> that the time I took the poll and made the estimate was the low point. I think that we started to go up and up, and we were down slightly but certainly higher than originally at the time that he was nominated. I think that there were some events that took place in the beginning of the campaign that didn't help any, but I thought that probably six weeks from the end we were at a break-even point. And then I think that

when Ken Keating didn't show up for that debate which was--I don't know--three or four weeks before the end, that that was. . . . No, it was closer to the end.

GREENE: No, it was much closer to the end. I forget the date, but it was very close to the end.

RYAN: I mean at that point, I mean it was just clear that Robert Kennedy had the.....

GREENE: ~~be~~ Because the actual debate, which was only a few days later, took place only--oh, I wish I had the chronology with me, but it was only two or three days before the election.

RYAN: Oh, uh . . .

GREENE: More, was it?

RYAN: I would think it was more than that, but . . .

GREENE: I would have to check it, but it was very close, the time, <sup>when</sup> they finally did get face-to-face on the Barry Gray show.

RYAN: My recollection was that there was a greater time lag between the vacant-chair debate and

the election day. But I know that prior to the empty-chair debate, I felt that he was going to be the next senator, so I was fairly well convinced at that time that he was a winner. I know that I was absolutely convinced after that evening that he was, and never really understood Ken Keating's behavior, but felt that certainly he handed over the election on that evening. So my personal reaction, or the recollection of my reaction at the time, was different from the results of the polls.

GREENE: Okay. Now, am I correct in thinking that you made these ~~trips~~-trip or trips~~5~~ around the state with Tom Johnston [Thomas M. C. Johnston] ?  
visiting the various coordinators and. . . .

RYAN: One of the elements that not only appeared in the Democratic National Committee's campaign handbook, but also had played an important role in prior Kennedy campaigns was marshalling the groups that were more inclined to be

favorable to him or them, and seeing to it  
that certain machinery was set up to get  
them registered, and then subsequently to get  
them to vote. The purpose of that trip was  
to conduct the registration drive . . .

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END OF TAPE I

[Start of reel 3]

RYAN: . . . was to conduct a registration drive in the principal cities across the state. Initially, I was to leave with a fellow named Herb Brickman, [Herbert L. Brickman], and Herb for some reason which escapes me now dropped out. And then there were two others suggested to go with me on that trip, and for some reason they couldn't go. And then finally, we had received a telegram from a fellow named Tom Johnston, and--that's how desperate we were at the time--we called him and asked him if he could have his bags packed within an hour and take a trip around the state, and he said, "Certainly." And Tom and I met and jumped into a car and took the trip. And Tom and I stopped at six or eight or ten cities making the swing north and then along the southern tier up to Buffalo, Niagara, then back across the northern tier and down through the Hudson Valley back into the city. I think it probably was a five or six-day trip, but the principal reason for the trip was--or the justification for the trip--was to assemble in each

of those areas the people who could be instrumental in a registration drive, and to see that that drive was set up and that a person was given the responsibility for it, and then a communication system between us and them to see that they were doing something in that regard.

GREENE: Now, were you selecting your people, I assume, with the help of the local coordinator and the Kennedy coordinator?

RYAN: Well, the Kennedy coordinators, I don't believe at that point, were as active as they were later on. For example, I never met Dick Wade [Richard C. Wade]. I spoke to him on the phone, but I never met him. We never touched the Dick Corbett area because it just wasn't worthwhile to conduct any kind of a registration drive in that northern area. I think in the Albany area where McKeon was coordinator, for the most part we left it up to the local organization. That was not one that was easily tampered with by outsiders. Where our

concern was was in the Binghamtons, the Buffalos,  
the Rochesters, and the Syracuses. And there  
what we tried to do was to work through the local  
county chairmen<sup>a</sup>, because in each of those areas  
we had a county chairman who was favorably dis-  
posed towards the Kennedy candidacy. And we  
tried to assemble someone whose name they gave  
to us as a good candidate to conduct the registra-  
tion drive plus the local COPE [Committee on  
Political Education, American Federation of  
Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations]  
representative who could help us with the unions  
and provide funds-- funds, of course, were  
necessary for an effective registration drive--  
and local parties who had been involved in registra-  
tion drives in the past and who were recommended  
to us as interested parties who we could rely on.  
9) But the real point of the <sup>trip</sup> drive was an attempt  
to get a registration effort going around the state;  
collaterally, we also talked to as many people as

we could to see what was going on in those communities, saw what campaign headquarters had been opened at the time, tried to find locations to open up our own, and did far more than just to spur a registration drive, but that was the reason for the trip.

GREENE: It was kind of an excuse, wasn't it?

RYAN: Yup--well, no, no. Because that sort of demeans the registration drive. The registration drive was important. Nobody ever believed it was going to turn the campaign around, but that it was important. So that that was an important aspect of the trip, but there were other things that we did on it.

GREENE: Do you remember other areas where you became of aware of problems and what you did about it, how it was resolved, <sup>and</sup> if it was resolved?

RYAN: From the very first time we put our foot put of the campaign headquarters--you know, campaigns are notoriously loaded with problems--I don't remember any major problem at the time or any brilliant

solution to the problem. I just . . .

GREENE: Did you have any . . .

RYAN: . . . know that we went from problem to problem.

GREENE: Did you have any authority to knock heads if you thought it was necessary, or simply report the problem and let somebody with a little more clout do that?

RYAN: I don't think that we ever questioned our authority, to be perfectly frank, <sup>Bobbie@</sup> ~~about it.~~ I'm sure that we exceeded it on numerous occasions and did whatever we thought we could get away with that was in the best interests of the campaign. I can't ever recall thinking that I didn't have the authority to do what I wanted<sup>n</sup> to do, so I'm sure <sup>that</sup> I just went ahead and did it without thinking about <sup>what</sup> the reaction back in New York City would be.

GREENE: Okay. After this trip, is it at that point . . . I'm sort of losing track of the dates. <sup>A</sup> ~~Approximately~~ when do you think this took place, <sup>?</sup> and . . .

RYAN: Well, I know that Tom was around for a good portion of the campaign, so from that fact alone it must have been fairly early in the campaign. I think that the first thing that I can recall after the state convention was the trip, and that was in a matter of days following the convention, and we probably worked on that for a week. I think that this followed shortly after that trip, so it might have been ten or twelve days after the convention, but I don't remember specifically. And it lasted probably five, so . . .

GREENE: What was your impression of the area coordinators that you did get to see and talk to? What was your impression of how well they were working out, where the weak links were and where you could sort of assume that it was being taken care of?

RYAN: Well . . .

GREENE: And you can say subsequent to that, too, of course.

RYAN: Starting with those that I can remember, was McCune [ ], and I believe his first name was Tom working in the Albany area. I think

that Tom never turned out to be terribly effective, not particularly because he didn't have the ability or the interest but because he was working in an area that was pretty well controlled by strong local politicians, and it was probably in our best interest to work with them rather than to fight them. So he was never terribly effective.

Poor Dick Corbett up in the north country had a huge geographical area to cover, and I don't think anybody would be very effective in that country. Most of those people had made up their mind very early in the game, <sup>and</sup> I don't think there was much persuasion.

GREENE: Were these geographical divisions fairly traditional for a New York campaign or were they established by the Kennedy organization?

RYAN: Well, the only campaign I know of other than that, prior to that, was the Morgenthau campaign, <sup>and</sup> we didn't have area coordinators as such who, in fact, were outliving in those geographical

districts and responsible for them. But we also had a campaign staff about one-tenth the size of the Kennedy campaign. So I don't know whether it was because we didn't have the staff to do it or whether it was just not traditional. I assume that it wasn't traditional. I think it was brought into the state by the Kennedys in '64.

But going on, the next one that I can remember was Walter Sheridan [Walter J. Sheridan]. And I think Walter caused probably ten times the amount of trouble than the amount of good he did. What I can remember coming out of Utica was going into Utica once or twice during Walter's reign and remember spending my entire time trying to soothe local politicians and patch up some of the problems that they had had with Walter Sheridan.

GREENE: What kind of problems were these?

RYAN: Well, to get back to what we said very early in this interview, was that Walter, I think, was briefed fairly extensively by a Paul Corbin, and I read Walter's tactics in that Utica area as

Corbin-type tactics. That is, cut the legs out from underneath anybody else that you don't think is loyal to Kennedy, losing sight of whether or not they might have been effective in getting Kennedy votes, because that's the only reason why he was there, not to set up his own machinery to, at some point in the future, run for mayor which I always thought he had in mind-- that he was laying a foundation for his own political future in that area as a politician-- which was one of the faults that I found.

GREENE: Was that generally conceded, do you think?

RYAN: I don't know that anybody else had that opinion. It was my own personal opinion. And secondly, I thought that Walter had spent too much time in the organized crime section of the Department of Justice and felt that most of the people that he met up there were notorious criminals that he had to investigate at some subsequent time. So I think that between his attitude towards the criminals in the Utica area and the laying of a

foundation for some political office that he might run for, I think that Walter caused a lot more trouble than he helped us. I think that Dick Wade was very bright and was alert to a lot that was going on within his territory, but had so many other outside responsibilities that . . .

GREENE: You mean apart from the campaign?

RYAN: Yeah, he spent little time on the campaign, but tried to find us people who would be effective and my recollection is that he introduced us to a Carl Angeloff in Rochester who was very effective, and we subsequently put a fellow named Harry Hammer into Syracuse who, I think, did an adequate job. So that area was covered, although not specifically by the area coordinator but by two people working well, if not under him, at least alongside of him. I don't remember who the area coordinator for Erie County was-- that is, Erie and the neighboring counties, but

usually you could rely on a Joe Crangle [Joseph F. Crangle] who was then assistant to Peter Crotty to do a good job for you.

GREENE: Would you normally work with Crotty rather than Crangle--I mean with Crangle rather than Crotty?

RYAN: I'd work with Crotty any time Crotty would work with me <sup>you know,</sup> and . . .

GREENE: It was easier to get to Crangle?

RYAN: That's right. So that although I might have chosen to work with Peter Crotty, I think that a good portion of our work was done with Joe Crangle.

GREENE: Were you and Tom acting kind of as equals in this thing or were you very definitely the senior person and he was the upstart, so to speak?

RYAN: I don't know. I suppose to truthfully answer that, I certainly thought that I was the senior person. Tom had never been involved in a campaign, had never been in that section of the state. When we first started out the trip, he was a campaign worker for about an hour. So I don't think I ever really thought of it until you

asked the question, but I suppose to honestly answer the question, if anybody had asked me at the time, I would have been able to answer.

GREENE: But it wasn't really a major . . .

RYAN: We had no conflict . . .

GREENE: . . . factor? yes.

RYAN: . . . in that we were both trying to do the same thing and there never came a point during that trip where somebody had to override the other, so the problem never came up.

GREENE: In the course of this trip would you report daily or every couple of days to Dave Hackett? Was that your channel?

RYAN: Dave was the channel. However, I don't recall reporting on a regular basis during the <sup>at</sup> trip, although we might very well have. I think we were just charged with a responsibility and told to go out and do it, and went out and did what we thought was right and came back and probably

rendered a report on our return. But I don't remember reporting during the course of the trip.

GREENE: Do you remember the results of the report? If anything came out of it?

RYAN: Oh, I think it was probably to the effect that we were successful in setting up a registration drive across the state. But in fact we had met, I think, with for the most part the right people, and had started something which developed into a registration drive. They are never really terribly effective, but I think it probably did have some effect in the eventual outcome of the election. I just don't know how important it was.

GREENE: But what about problems that you saw, such as the Sheridan situation and anything else that might have come up? Did you . . . Was there any sense in reporting that when Sheridan was so close to Robert Kennedy?

RYAN: Oh, I think that that problem was discussed, and I think that the once or twice that I was in Utica

following that was because of the problem. So I think he was aware. I don't think that it would have ever entered my mind to ask for an interview with the attorney general to tell him to specifically remove Walter Sheridan. . . .

GREENE: No, right, I meant with Hackett.

RYAN: . . . because I knew that would be totally ineffective.

GREENE: Yes.

RYAN: But I think that my relationship with Dave at the time was one where I'd probably tell Dave just exactly what I thought. The result of it was that Walter stayed until the end, so you can see how important my recommendation was. But I think that I probably did bring that to their attention, and I think that the <sup>at</sup> trip or two that I spent up there was to try to see whether it was as serious as I thought it was, and I don't remember backing down from my position.

GREENE: Okay, then. What happened <sup>s</sup> after that, between

that, let's say, and the time in the last few weeks when you concentrated on the city?

RYAN: I remember a room on the fourth floor of 9 East 42nd Street which was one of the campaign headquarters used where the front office on that floor was Dave's, and then there were a group of girls and then mine, and another group of girls and then John Douglas's [John W. Douglas]. Dave and I worked during that period towards coordinating what these area representatives were doing. It was difficult to track them down. They were pretty active and it was difficult to get them to submit the kind of detailed reports that we wanted. As a matter of fact, our requests were probably unreasonable, but I think that we spent a good portion of our time during that period trying to gather whatever intelligence we could from those area coordinators and others that we knew of in the area that we knew that we could call upon and trust to find out just how the campaign was

going. <sup>9</sup> I think that there was a lot of information that they wanted that we assembled and sent out to them. There was a lot of information that we felt they should be able to gather locally and send in to us, and I think that that found its way into reports, but I don't remember writing any, and I don't remember submitting them. But I'm sure that reports grew out of that period that went to someone. <sup>9</sup> The back half of the fourth floor was the John Douglas effort to coordinate campaign materials. But we had a secretary that was assigned to each area coordinator, who worked with Dave and myself, <sup>9</sup> and between Dave, myself, I think later on Tom Johnston, plus the six or seven girls that were working with us, had the responsibility at that time to find out what was going on outside of New York City, Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester County which would bring us up to the last, well, two, two and a half weeks of the campaign when we removed our emphasis from that

area of the state, <sup>we</sup> just felt that we had done what we could and the machinery that had been set up was as effective as it was ever going to be, and that concentration now was really required in New York City.

GREENE: Okay, and what did that involve? from your standpoint?

RYAN: Totally forgetting upstate, and then a complete shift of emphasis to principally New York City.

<sup>I think</sup>  
At one point we attempted to divide New York City and to appoint county coordinators in New York City. In that regard we tried to pay some attention to the different factions of the party, that is, the reform element, the regular element, and whatever else made up the party at that time, by selecting people that we thought would relate to the particular factions in those counties and then trying to work through them in coordinating that final effort. I remember, for instance, we had in Manhattan County phoning Mike Cohen, Myron Cohen, and Mike was out of the reform element on

the West Side, and Mike stayed with just those groups and rather than myself, for instance, talking to one of the reform leaders I grabbed Mike and I'd get Mike to do it. And I think that that was probably the proper way to do it. Any time I went around to any one of those clubs/they would make up a reform club in Manhattan--I wouldn't go unless I had Mike with me. And to them we held Mike out as the coordinator, which made sense then and I think still does. So that we found a whole series of people that we used in New York City, and--I guess I don't like the use of that word "used"--that we worked with in New York City who could relate to the particular faction that we wanted to deal with at the time.

9) And the last couple of weeks was really spent with them, with not very much emphasis placed on any field work. Most of it was done out of the headquarters. So I think that the bulk of the last twenty days was spent probably with these various groups, <sup>at</sup> endless meetings, and on the telephone

most of the day trying to do those last-ditch items which we felt would have made a difference on election day.

GREENE: ~~Where would the area. . . .~~ I know the problem areas that have been written about most often are the Jewish people and the reform elements, which were very often one and the same, and there was some talk of a problem with the Italian electorate, <sup>and</sup> how you remember that breaking down and how did you work on trying to get a more favorable response?

RYAN: As you ask the question, each of those things, you know, bring back certain memories. I think I'd probably have to think more about that to give you any kind of a meaningful answer. We had an Italian problem, not because of their feeling about the attorney general when he was attorney general, and his attitude towards organized crime and the formation of families in particular within the city of New York. It was certainly a problem.

I'm sure at the time we thought it was a very major problem. We did meet with Italian leaders. One of the executives from the longshoremen's union in Brooklyn, Tony--I can't remember his last name--worked with us, announced that he was for Robert Kennedy, <sup>and</sup> I think that probably helped. So we were trying to get endorsements from prominent Italians, and that was a major effort. I don't think that I had anything to do with that. We had another man whose name escapes me for the moment who had on prior occasions coordinated on behalf of <sup>candidates</sup> Kennedy the Jewish community, who worked with us. His name will come to me shortly. And I think that he knew what the problem was, and he had handled it in the past fairly successfully, <sup>and</sup> I think he just went about his business.

Those weren't really the problems that we had anything to do with. We, rather than getting involved in ethnic problems, were much more involved in what you might call political problems, and that is to get the maximum effort that we

could out of whatever amounted to a democratic organization within the city of New York which was terribly fragmented, splintered, and not very effective.

GREENE: I would not like to take a chance again . . .

[End of tape]<sup>2</sup>

*Begin tapes*

GREENE: . . . what you were saying about the end of the campaign in New York. Did you go into Nassau [Nassau County] at all, or did you leave that kind of to Jack English and his people?

RYAN: I think that, not only, in fact, did we leave it to Jack English, I think that that was a positive decision that we made to leave it to Jack English. Jack had an executive assistant at the time who has since been county chairman--and I can't remember his name. Do you know who that is that is now county chairman? I don't . . .

GREENE: You know, I've just lost Nassau--that's where

my family is, and I used to follow it very closely, but I've just lost touch with it. I really don't know. I know they've got Caso [Ralph G. Caso] now, but, of course he's a Republican, but . . .

RYAN: Yes, but he's a supervisor.

GREENE: Oh, what am I saying, of course, right, he's an executive. No, I just don't know.

RYAN: Well, whoever has been . . .

GREENE: *Who succeeded?*  
He was English, is that what you mean?

RYAN: . . . Was his executive assistant . . .

GREENE: Right.

RYAN: . . . And was a very competent man and that we had made a policy decision that we would rely on because of Jack English, and, in fact, turned out to be a reliable type. And consequently, we didn't spend much time in Nassau. We felt that that was certainly under control. Suffolk, [Suffolk County], I don't recall anything specific that we did in Suffolk County. We sent a coordinator out to Suffolk County, and I can't

remember who it was. It seems to me it might have been Chris McGrath. What we were doing at that point was pulling back the people we had used for advance work upstate and redeploying them to areas that we needed help in for that final drive. <sup>No,</sup> On reflection, Chris was the coordinator for Nassau. It might have been Jim Tolan. It was one of the advance men who was used as a . . .

GREENE: I don't think it was Tolan, because I've been to the interviewed him. Maybe it was one of the others.

RYAN: One of them was assigned the responsibility for Nassau and one, Suffolk. I know Chris was one of them. I don't recall who the other one was. But that was an area where you couldn't be terribly effective in a two-week period, in Suffolk County, but it was just a blank that had to be filled, and someone filled it, and someone spent some time out there and did something

leading up to the election. Westchester County, there was a young fellow who came up from Washington, whose name completely escapes me. He was a twenty-three or twenty-four-year-old kid who came up from Washington who had been involved somehow on the Washington scale who left his job and came in to help us, and he was assigned to Bill Luddy [William F. Luddy] as the Westchester coordinator. I can't remember his name. I can see him, but I can't remember his name. So that's how we handled Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester. And then the remaining five counties which make up New York City were handled on a much more skillful basis in that the county was analyzed, the different fragments of the party were analyzed, and then a very specific coordinator was appointed to help us with that specific fragment of the party, as described before with Mike Cohen [Myron Cohen] in the Reform groups here in

Manhattan. The concept was to find somebody who was accepted by the reform group, to get across, from our standpoint, what it was, but what we expected from them, and then to have him get out and work in the field, and then to accomplish that for that last two- or three-week period.

GREENE: Who do you remember besides Cohen? How many did you have in Manhattan, if he was the reform guy? How many others would you have had?

RYAN: Well, I think that the county leader at the time was Frank Rossetti [Frank G. Rossetti], and Frank Rossetti has headquarters over here on 5th Avenue and 44th or 45th Street, and he assigned someone as our coordinator with the regulars with the concurrence of a number of the leaders in the reform element. Referring now specifically to Manhattan, Mike Cohen was selected, and Mike was effective. We had another fellow, I think, named Fred Kaufman who helped us to some degree with the reform element.

We had someone on our staff to work specifically with Puerto Ricans, and we had someone to work specifically with the blacks. And I don't remember who those two people were, but they were chosen from <sup>an</sup> ~~the~~ ethnic standpoint as opposed to a political standpoint. So we probably had, oh, as many as six people that we relied on in New York County and had others in the other four counties that. . . . Certainly the Bronx was considered important and Queens and Brooklyn. You know, we didn't pay an awful lot of attention to Staten Island.

However, we did ~~do~~ <sup>an</sup> have a board meeting. . .

GREENE: How much in the Bronx, for instance, did you rely on Buckley [Charles A. Buckley], or how much outside of Buckley would he allow you to do? Was he very possessive?

RYAN: Well, we relied not at all on Buckley but on the fellow who is now county chairman who was then his executive assistant, Pat Cunningham [Patrick J. Cunningham]; and we got considerable

help from Pat but in just one area of the party from the Bronx, namely, the organization. We had <sup>a fellow named</sup> ~~to find~~ Mort Todel [Mortimer Todel] who was out of the U. S. attorney's office, and Vic Temkin [Victor Temkin] who was out of the U. S. attorney's office, help us in the Bronx that last couple of weeks. We had a headquarters at, ~~the~~ I think it's the Concourse Plaza Hotel, where they worked out of, and Vic and Mort Todel coordinated not only the closing days of the campaign but the election day activity from the Concourse Plaza, so that we relied on Pat for whatever we could get from Pat Cunningham and the regular organization, and had our citizens group working out of the Concourse Plaza to work with the elements that we knew that Pat wouldn't work with and do whatever they could to get out the maximum number of votes on . . . election day.

GREENE: And that worked out fairly well?

RYAN: Fairly well. Oh, I suppose, having gone through that once and seeing where we were effective and where we weren't effective, if you ever had to go through that again you'd be far more effective than we were. But I think it worked pretty well. Some of the problems on election day are in areas where your opponents know that you are going to be far more successful than they. You try not to have the election books arrive on time, so that the people after they get tired of standing in a line for a while will leave and not vote. You see to it, or do the best you can to see to it, that you either break down an election machine or if you aren't quite that criminal you see to it that when one is broken down, that it's not repaired very quickly. So that that was a major concern of ours, that in sections like Bedford-Stuyvesant and the South Bronx and Harlem, that when a machine broke down that we

had a flatbed truck in the area with replacement machines all coordinated with radiotelephones so that we could get equipment in there quickly, installed quickly, so that we didn't lose the voters that were standing in those lines where we thought we were going to get eight or nine votes out of every ten. Whereas in Staten Island, we didn't really care; we weren't really concerned about having replacement machines in Staten Island.

GREENE: Did you have a comparable setup in Brooklyn and Queens?

RYAN: Oh, yeah.

GREENE: Similar, with the regular party organization and citizens group?

RYAN: <sup>Yes</sup> Yuh, in each of the counties we had. . . .

<sub>6 1</sub>  
In some of the counties the citizens groups were more active than others because the county chairman didn't try to snuff out their existence as they did in other counties, but

there was a citizens organization partly on the justification, if my memory is correct, that the regular organization were truly pushing the Johnson-Humphrey [Lyndon B. Johnson-Hubert H. Humphrey] side of the ticket. Some would include Johnson-Humphrey-Kennedy. There were a lot of signs around the city just "Johnson-Humphrey" because of the problems of which I'm sure that you're fully aware at the time.

GREENE: Right.

RYAN: And our response to that was that we weren't getting the exposure to which we were deserved, and consequently had to do everything in our power to get that exposure and justified citizens groups in these counties. So we did have a citizens group in each of the counties, not only in New York City and the surrounding area, but statewide--but certainly in the city.

GREENE: Would you find that the friendlier the regular organization leaders were, the more cooperative

they were or the less resentful they were of the citizens group, or that it didn't necessarily work that way?

RYAN: If they were favorably inclined towards Senator Kennedy and you had a discussion with them about a citizens group, they took one of two postures: either, number one, it wasn't necessary. If you felt that it really wasn't necessary, but still wanted it, you'd ask him to suggest a coordinator. So, in effect, it was not really terribly different from the local party. <sup>The</sup> Those counties that fell under that category were relatively few. If he wasn't inclined, you didn't care; you went in and opened it up anyway.

GREENE: <sup>You</sup> Needed it more, much more, I would assume.

RYAN: Yeah, well, I mean, you weren't really concerned whether he was resentful or not. You just went in and did it anyway. And those that were really middle-of-the-roaders, you needed it. You usually worked with them, because they didn't try to keep

you out of the county, and it worked out that on one of many arguments that we used at the time to support that, they'd accept it, and we opened up a headquarters.

GREENE: Well, what else is there that you can think of about the campaign?

RYAN: Well, there isn't really. . . . There was a very extensive election day coordination that took place out of 9 East 42nd Street that I think was novel in some respects and effective in most. It was novel in that we were always aware of the problems before as to machine breakdowns and disorders and the failure of the election books to arrive, but we never really knew how to handle it. In '64, Marcy O'Rourke [Maurice J. O'Rourke], who was one of the election commissioners, was a very ardent Kennedy follower, and he was terribly helpful. On top of that, we set up an operation in police headquarters downtown,

and, if my recollection was correct, Vince Broderick [Vincent L. Broderick] was the police commissioner at the time who was a sincere Kennedy supporter.

So between the election commissioner and the police commissioner who were responsible for the voting machine distribution and the maintenance it was pretty easy to set up an activity. And my recollection was that Helen Keyes and Tommy Corcoran [Thomas Corcoran] went down to police headquarters where a unit was set up to receive complaints of the failure of machines, a radio-telephone unit was set up to coordinate with the trucks, and a decision could be made on the spot as to whether that was the area for <sup>a</sup> quick repair or for <sup>a</sup> delayed repair. And that was, I believe, an effective election day activity.

We had problems. For instance, we'd received calls at 9 East 42nd Street that the books arrived--I remember one instance in Bedford-<sub>x</sub> Stuyvesant--and they were locked and they

couldn't locate the keys. I guess the statute of limitations has run now, so I <sup>can</sup> think probably I'll say it--we sent somebody out from 9 East 42nd Street in a cab who, in fact, went out and broke the books open, which was strictly against the law, but a couple of thousand people voted because that was done.

GREENE: And you assume that the keys were deliberately misplaced?

RYAN: Well, that was certainly what we assumed at the time, and because of that didn't really care how we got those books open, but in fact got them open by breaking them open and allowing the two thousand or so people in that election district to vote. So that there were activities like that that were coordinated out of 42nd Street, among others, <sup>and</sup> those are ones that I clearly remember because we weren't really certain at the time what we were doing.

GREENE: What the consequences would be, either.

RYAN: That's right. We knew that it made sense from the election standpoint. We weren't too sure that we were strictly within keeping . . .

GREENE: Who would take responsibility for a decision like that--or was just a kind of joint. . . .

RYAN: Well, that one instance that we just mentioned I guess it was I that sent a fellow out to break open the books. If we had been caught at it, I don't know who we would have said did it.

GREENE: Said we're the

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RYAN: Now that we haven't been caught, I guess it was I that did that. I don't remember anything else terribly illegal that we did. In fact, I didn't even consider that illegal at the time, but I'm sure it was.

GREENE: Maybe there would have been a greater illegality if those people had been deprived of their voting.

*90*

RYAN: Well, I guess that's the way I looked at it at the time. They had a right to vote and we were

going to see to it that they did. Of course,  
I was mindful of the fact that most of those  
Well,  
votes were ours. /I might even have done it  
anyway.

GREENE: Well, is there anything else? I mean, were you  
involved at all in the preparation for the  
great empty-chair debate? Were you in the  
room?

RYAN: No.

GREENE: You're not familiar with any of the . . .

RYAN: No. I only know that there was a bar on  
Vanderbilt Avenue at the time that debate was  
to take place, and Helen Keyes and Dave Hackett  
and myself--because we didn't have a television  
set at <sup>9</sup>East 42nd Street--went around and watched  
that at that local bar and that was my only  
involvement. I remember how happy we were <sup>5 of</sup> at  
the outcome at the time. But aside from that,  
just watching <sup>it</sup> on television with those two others,  
I don't remember anything about it other than

being terribly pleased.

GREENE: We haven't really talked at all about your own contacts with Robert Kennedy during this whole time. Were there very many and of any significance that you can remember?

RYAN: No. His appearances 9 East 42nd Street were relatively few. Oh, once every week or ten days or so he'd pass through and shake everybody's hands so that everybody knew that he really was around, but aside from that he very rarely appeared at that headquarters. He for the most part worked out of the Carlyle [Carlyle Hotel], I believe, and there were very few reasons why I'd ever have to go up to the Carlyle. So that if I didn't see him when we were out on the road someplace going to an event together, I guess my contact with him was minimal.

GREENE: Well, I don't want to take any more of your time today except to ask you--you were <sup>at</sup> one of his the staff, You were actually the head of the

RYAN: GREENE:

New York office for a year. Right? That's correct? Now how much contact did you have with him beyond that? Was there any after you left the office in subsequent campaigns or . . .

RYAN: Yes, uh . . .

GREENE: . . . projects and things?

RYAN: Well, of course we used to--and still am-- active in that skating party that is held each year <sup>at</sup> in Rockefeller Center, so we saw him each year when we were making preparations for that and, in fact, at that. When he was wrestling with the decision in '68 as to whether to run for the presidency or not, I and, I think, two others spent a week or so in a law library doing an analysis of the primary laws in each of the states . . .

GREENE: Oh, I didn't realize you had been involved in that.

RYAN: . . . that we were interested in. I think that

the person who was involved in that was Barrett Prettyman [E. Barrett Prettyman, Jr.]. And Barrett asked that somebody in New York prepare or do some work on that. Usually in a Kennedy operation there's somebody in New York and somebody in Washington and somebody in Massachusetts. I don't know who else was doing it, but a fellow named--I got a fellow named Tom Bear [ ~~Robert Bear~~ ] and a fellow named Bob Maguire [ ] to help me with it, and the three of us spent a considerable amount of time in the Bar Association library doing an analysis of the primary laws in the various states.

I was expecting my first child in May, and, well, partly because of that I didn't really have an awful lot to do beyond that. I was asked if I'd become the coordinator for South Dakota, which sounded terribly unattractive at the time, not only to me but much more so

to Jane [Jane Ryan] and declined because of that, but made arrangements that after our first child was born that she would go down to Ft. Lauderdale with her mother and spend as much time as was necessary down there so that I could do what I wanted to do. And I was supposed to pick them up in California and it never became necessary.

GREENE: You were supposed to pick them up?

RYAN: That is, the campaign group in California, and become directly involved . . .

GREENE: And <sup>to</sup> ~~you were coming~~ <sup>to</sup> New York, you mean, or in the course of the California campaign?

RYAN: No, my recollection is that that was June 6 or 7 or something like that. Our child was born on May 20. Jane came home from the hospital about May 25 and was going to stay in New York for two weeks and then go down to Florida. And it was just about the time that she was making arrangements to go down to Florida that that California occurrence took place, and I never did turn up

for him. But I agreed that I would as soon as I got Jane placed down in Florida with her mother.

United States Senate  
GREENE: In the course of his tenure in the Senate were there any political things that you got involved in in connection either with him or with other candidates that would. . . . It sounds, from what you've said, that you've been active in the Democratic politics since then.

RYAN: Yuh, I became assistant counsel to the speaker of the assembly for two sessions, Tony Travia [Anthony J. Travia], and as such there were bills that were being proposed and being debated in Albany that the senator became interested in, one, namely, Medicaid. He wanted to see that bill not only passed but in a certain form. My recollection is that I was working then with two people, one on his staff and one who was an advisor: Peter Edelman [Peter B. Edelman] from the staff and a Dr. McCarthy [Eugene G. McCarthy], I believe . . .

GREENE: Right. ~~I think the name was Eugene McCarthy,~~

RYAN: . . . from Columbia. <sup>[Columbia University]</sup>

GREENE: I think the name was Eugene McCarthy, wasn't it?

RYAN: I think so, yeah. And what I was trying to do was to coordinate with them what I felt the status of the bill was in Albany. I worked on the drafting of the bill with a fellow named Margolis <sup>[Edwin Margolis]</sup>, and when it appeared ~~that~~ we weren't going to get in the final draft of the bill the provisions that they were interested in, Peter and Gene McCarthy came up to Albany. And I don't know how much time we spent, but a couple of weeks anyway working with Margolis on the drafting of the bill, and I think were instrumental in the final version of the bill as it came out at the time. That bill has been watered down considerably since and some of the provisions, as a matter of fact, that we worked on that were terribly important at the

time turned out to be ill-conceived. But I think, to go back to your question, Did I have anything to do with them? and the answer was yes, not extensively but as an assistant to the speaker of the assembly, was called on on a number of occasions--how many I don't remember--with regard to certain bills that were going through the state assembly. I don't remember having anything to do from a political standpoint; that is, involvement with the party on the senator's behalf following that, just more from the legislative standpoint.

GREENE: Did you go directly from his office to the . . .  
No, because you said you went into private practice. I was going to say, to <sup>being</sup> Travia's deputy?  
*At what point did you*  
[telephone ringing on tape] . . .

RYAN: Well, I was in private practice at the time, but being assistant counsel to the speaker . . .

GREENE: It was just a part . . .

RYAN: Yes. I'd go up Monday morning and come back

Wednesday afternoon and did that consistent with practicing law at the time. Just would arrange the schedule so that I had the time free.

GREENE: So would you have remained in that post most of the time, outside <sup>of</sup> the year you spent in his office, until the assassination?

RYAN: Well, the legislative session in New York begins in January and runs through ~~well~~, theoretically April, but frequently runs into June so that I left <sup>his</sup> ~~the~~ staff in January of '66 and then from that point through the '66 session I was in Albany. And then from January to May or June of '67 I was in Albany. And then the following year I didn't go back to Albany, but that was . . .

GREENE: <sup>the</sup> Campaign.

RYAN: That's right.

GREENE: So then you really would be in pretty full touch with the situation, from the assembly point of view, the entire time he was in the Senate?

Would you say that's true?

RYAN: Well, I was the only former staff member or person <sup>that</sup> who worked with them that was on the staff in Albany. I don't know that I was the only one that they resorted to for any liaison with the Senate. I think <sup>that</sup> the senator would pick up the phone and call Tony directly on anything that he felt was really important. If a staff member wanted some information out of the Senate, they'd be more inclined to call me, whereas if the senator wanted something specifically he could have called Tony Travia or Stanley Steingut or any one of the members of the assembly to get his point across.

GREENE: Okay. I think that's good. I think now I have a much clearer impression of what you did after that, and we can pick it up there next time.

RYAN: Okay.

[END OF TAPE]  
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