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Fike, Executive director, Symington for President campaign (1960); administrative assistant to Senator Stuart Symington of Missouri (1952-1976), discusses Stuart Symington's campaign for the presidential nomination in 1960 and support for Symington throughout the country, among other issues.

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By Stanley Fike

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Stanley Fike

Stanley Fike

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Stanley Fike – JFK #2

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Second Oral History Interview

with

STANLEY FIKE

September 13, 1967
Washington, D.C.

By Larry J. Hackman

For the John F. Kennedy Library

HACKMAN: I think last time we were talking about how the plans were shaping up for ’60, and about Clark Clifford’s [Clark M. Clifford] view, and the view of a number of other people, that all of the other candidates had disadvantages which should eliminate them and leave Senator Symington [Stuart Symington, II] as the nominee. I wonder if you could talk a little more about that, particularly in terms of whether there were any disagreements at that point within the group around Senator Symington and advising Senator Symington as to whether this was the strategy to follow.

FIKE: Well, early in the first planning, I would say in ’59, as this was discussed within the family, the planning family, there was no disagreement at that time. It seemed so logical, as Stewart Alsop had stated in his *Saturday Evening Post* article I think he probably summed it up as well as anybody did publicly. Or as I mentioned last time, Clark Clifford talked about it frequently and stated it the best, within the family, or anyone that the thing to do was not make anybody made and that Stuart Symington was the logical and best candidate and, therefore, this is what would work out, they were sure. And I think most of us felt this was right.

HACKMAN: At that point, was the approach to be to concentrate on the main party leaders around the country or was there any mention of getting out and building up some grass roots support.

FIKE: Well, the Senator, we felt, had some grass roots support to begin with, as we mentioned also last time, among country chairmen, among former delegates to the Convention, and among his acquaintances all over the country—political leaders, and Democratic workers, speeches he'd made over the country. In 1959 he went into a total of thirty-two states that year at the invitation of senators, governors, party leaders within the state, over the country. I remember from the time that Congress adjourned in '59, I believe it was on September 20th, until Thanksgiving Day, in that period along he was in twenty states, maybe twenty-one. I remember I was in twenty states with him, and I also recall that I didn't sleep in the same bed more than two nights in a row during that period. We were on the go and traveling commercial airline and entered a private plane whenever this was necessary. Friends or local leaders, business people, often would pick the Senator up and take him wherever it was to speak.

This was part of the strategy, to get around, talk, make friends further, and broaden his acquaintanceship within the Party, emphasizing that what he was interested in was building the Democratic Party. We emphasized that a Democratic victory in 1960 was most important, that there were many qualified candidates around over the country, that the Democratic Party didn't lack for good men. Many of the states in which we visited had favorite sons or probably favorite sons. When Senator Symington got questions about his possible candidacy and candidates within that state or other candidates, why, he'd always say, "Why should I pick out one man and make one friend a better friend and lose eight or nine other friends?" He just said at the time that he was just there to do what he could to help the Democratic Party.

HACKMAN: I know at one point a number of other people got involved in making contacts around the country particularly some of the people from Missouri. Could you talk about how that was organized and what your role was in this?

FIKE: Well, this developed starting in '59. We were beginning to put together an organization, with at least one, in some cases more than one, Symington leader in each state, persons who had volunteered usually, or that we knew and that we'd had contact with.

HACKMAN: You mean people within the states who were already within the state?

FIKE: That's in the states where we'd visited, and the states where we hadn't visited people who had written in and said, "I'm for Symington." Cal Rampton [Calvin L. Rampton] that I mentioned last time was one example in the state of Utah. Cal also made some contacts in the Mountain States for us and reported back what he heard. This was true in a number of places. The present Congressman from Maine, Bill Hathaway [William Dodd Hathaway], we met him when we were in Maine in June of 1959. The Senator spoke there in Rockland [Rockland, Maine], and Bill volunteered that he thought Symington was the best man and he wanted to help him any way he could. He was a good friend of Senator Muskie [Edmund S. Muskie] of Maine. Muskie and Muskie's staff people recommended Bill highly, so that in future correspondence with people in Maine we'd keep, I would, primarily, keep Bill advised of what we heard, volunteers who wanted to help Symington. We just started building up a nucleus of an organization. But in all instances, we pointed out, we did not plan to go into any primary.

HACKMAN: What about the people from Missouri who went out and worked in other states?

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FIKE: People from Missouri, there were some of these at that time, later on in the spring of '60 when a number of them went on in to many different states. Veryl Riddle, for example, from down in Malden, Missouri, who'd been an early Symington supporter back in '52, worked in Alabama, made two or three trips in there. Abby Story [Albert L. Story], of Charleston, Missouri, made some trips into, not only into Southern states—he's from the boot heel also of Missouri; he didn't have so many friends down South as Veryl Riddle did—but he also went into some of the Western states, in other states and did quite a bit of work. And then Charles Curry, presently presiding judge in Kansas City who'd been chairman of the Symington for Senator Committee in Jackson County in 1958. Charlie devoted a great deal of time to traveling over the country at his own expense and enlisting support for Symington. He believed in Symington, worked on it, spent a lot of time on it, made a lot of trips all over the country. Later on he organized a Midwestern Symington for President headquarters in Kansas City. And was organizing, helping direct people into the various states, working with our campaign manager, Charlie Brown [Charles H. Brown], Congressman Charles H. Brown from the seventh district in Missouri. This was steadily developing to the point when the Convention rolled around, we had a complete organization, at least on paper—the Missourian who was supposed to be the contact man for every state and somebody in that state who was friendly to Symington, supporting Symington. In the favorite son states, usually they were not openly active but were building support for the second and third ballot.

HACKMAN: Who were they primarily making contacts with in these states, what type of instructions were they given when they went out?

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FIKE: Well, the objective, of course, was to get delegate votes, so they were to make contacts with the state leaders, let them know that they were in the state, always, that our interest was in building a stronger Democratic Party. We thought everybody could unite on Symington. Our slogan developed during that time, in ’59 and in ’60 both, was “Win with Symington.” This is what we used in the Convention in Los Angeles. We thought that Symington had strength in many different areas and that he was the best man to unify the Democratic Party in 1960, to heal some of the splits that had existed, were always present or possible, and, therefore, it was our endeavor at all times to work with local people, leaders in the states, state Democratic organization but also with the opinion leaders in the state and with the potential delegates.

Many of the states, we had people make it a point to go to everybody who was going to be a probable delegate. We did this in West Virginia although we knew West Virginia was a primary state. It was not a hard and fast primary state, I mean it was not a binding instruction, certainly not after the first ballot, and, therefore, we went in to see the delegates or had our people go see the candidates for delegates, and then those who were elected, to keep the lines of communication open.

HACKMAN: Would these people then report back to you on what….

FIKE: Well, yes. They would send information into our headquarters here in Washington that we’d established.

HACKMAN: How successful did you feel at the time, this effort was, this organization?

FIKE: Based on our policy, we thought we were moving ahead well in this field, in this type of operation. I first began to become concerned that maybe our strategy was wrong in the late fall of ’59. Mike DiSalle [Michael V. DiSalle], Governor of Ohio, who we had thought was friendly to Symington—and I think he

wanted to be, still do feel that he wanted to be friendly to Symington and support Symington, but he did not want a primary fight in his own state. I think what happened is that Senator Kennedy [John F. Kennedy] and his brother, Bobby [Robert F. Kennedy], their people, had gone in and talked to Mike and just laid it right on the line with him and said, “Now look, either you’re going to be with us on the first ballot or else we’re going to come into Ohio and make a primary campaign here.” Mike DiSalle didn’t want this because the strength of the Democratic Party in Ohio is very tenuous to begin with, and he felt that this would damage the party, create a lot of friction within the state of Ohio, and greatly lessen his chances of reelection and, therefore, I think that he told the Kennedy people that “I will run as a favorite son with the understanding that Ohio will go to Kennedy.” And this, of course, was what was done; he made the announcement, as I recall, along in late December. We began to have rumors of this possibility earlier. I visited Ohio at Thanksgiving time in ’59, and I saw the handwriting on the wall very clearly at that time. Before then we’d been working primarily with the Governor and his office, but as I continued those contacts, I could see that the

situation was not good and came back and so reported to others of our board of strategy. But at that time, it was a case of either changing our complete strategy or going ahead, and it was decided to go ahead with the strategy that we'd been following.

HACKMAN: When you say board of strategy, what, who are you particularly talking about?

FIKE: Well, I'm referring to Charlie Brown, to Clark Clifford, others who visited with us from time to time and worked with us on this. People from Missouri: Jim Blair [James T. Blair, Jr.], Jack Dwyer [John J. Dwyer], Richard Nacy [Richard R. Nacy], who had had considerable experience in national campaigns; Sid Salomon [Sidney Salomon] very much was a part of the group, he'd been formerly executive assistant to the Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, former treasurer of the National Committee. Dick Nacy had been executive assistant to the chairman of the National Committee at one time. Jack Dwyer, of course, was chairman

of the St. Louis Democratic Committee and was well known throughout the country among the chairmen in the big cities, so that they were not neophytes in this field by any means. At least we didn't' feel that they were.

HACKMAN: What type of reports were you getting back from these people who were working around the country, particularly as far as Kennedy strength went? Did this increase your doubts about the strategy along in this period?

FIKE: Well, we began to have doubts, of course, along at this time. Kennedy people were making claims, some of the claims we knew were overstated, based on our information, which we checked out and thought was factual. But they kept driving, kept working, they made their claims come true later on. I think when they first made their claims in many instances these were not true. But what they were doing was building a bandwagon, by his activity, their activity, and work all around the country.

I would say that finances didn't appear to be any problem with them at all. One of the great things that Kennedy had and I would advise any candidate to have in a similar situation was the *Caroline*. We had problems with travel, real problems, as we were making arrangements, both in '59 and later on in '60, when the Senator was trying to do his job as Senator and also get around over the country. Airline schedules, particularly in some of the Western states, were really a problem, trying to go commercial. And also it's much harder on the candidate. To have a plane where you can go back and relax and have a bed made up any time you want to or you can relax between jumps, and you can set the schedule any way you want to, weather permitting, of course, take along your press entourage—this was a tremendous asset for Kennedy. He used it wisely and well.

HACKMAN: I was going to ask you, in general, about funds. How much of a problem did this present at that time?

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FIKE: Well, we were doing a low key campaign. We didn't expect to raise an awful lot of money, didn't start out to raise an awful lot of money. Harold Stuart of Tulsa, Oklahoma, was chairman of our finance committee, and he got around over the country quite a bit of raising funds.

HACKMAN: In what period was this particularly? When did this start?

FIKE: This was starting in late '59 and on up through the convention time. He did an excellent job on it. When we ended up, we were able to pay all our bills and didn't have to go out and raise money afterward. We operated very carefully. Sidney Salomon was very helpful during this period; he had a lot of contacts over the country, was as devoted to the Senator as Harold Stuart was. They worked closely together, Sid and Harold. Harold had been Assistant Secretary to the Air Force under Symington. Eugene Zuckert who later was Secretary of the Air Force also had been with Symington. He was in the campaign staff. He did some traveling over the country both on fund raising and on contacts with different people, friends he had in the Democratic Party. Harold did the same thing. They were known Democrats. Sid Salomon did.

HACKMAN: I had heard, at one point, that some people—and I think the names I heard were Jim Meredith [James H. Meredith] and Sid Salomon and Dwyer—had felt I think that maybe the push should have begun earlier. Was this ever apparent to you or is this something that somebody said in retrospect?

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FIKE: Well, there was discussion along the way as to when Symington should announce, and there was very general agreement on the matter of not going into the primaries. I think the date that was decided on was a compromise. Of course, some thought he should have announced much earlier, some thought he should have spoken out more than he did saying he was a candidate, others thought he shouldn't go as early as he did. As to just who made these recommendations, I don't recall. There was never any question about him being a candidate, I would say, from early '59 on. Although he never stated publicly in advance that he was a candidate, I don't think there was any question in the minds of newspaper people or any political observers but that he would not only be available, but that he'd be a working candidate. It was basically a matter of strategy and timing.

HACKMAN: You had talked about not entering the primaries primarily because of the basic strategy you were going to follow. Was there ever any possibility that you would enter certain primaries? For instance, Indiana and Nebraska are the two that come to my mind because I know the Kennedys were probably very worried about Senator Symington entering these two.

FIKE: Well, the only—in retrospect, of course, you know, some of the Symington people say, "Well, we wished he'd gone into West Virginia. He had great strength in West Virginia," which he did. He still does have a lot of support in West Virginia. But the one primary that we really seriously considered was Indiana, and the value of this was that the filing date was the latest in Indiana. It was a state comparable in many ways to Missouri. Issues in Indiana are much the same as the issues in Missouri, issues all around the country, for that matter, and we thought Symington would have run as well there as any place else in the country. To go into very many primaries would have been extremely costly, plus the fact that it would have meant that you just have to leave the Senate, couldn't do your job here at all, and particularly if you didn't have the money to have the plane

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shuttling you back and forth wherever you wanted to go. But we did very seriously consider going into Indiana and, in retrospect, of course, this was our one great chance. When the vote came in on Indiana, of course, why, Kennedy got about 70 per cent of the vote. His opposition, why, they were a couple of nuts, pardon the expression. One of them campaigned in an Uncle Sam suit, Lars Daly [Lawrence Joseph Sarsfield Daly], I believe it was. I've forgotten who the other one was, but nobody considered them seriously at all. If there had been a serious candidate in the primary against Kennedy, it might have been different, and Symington had a lot of strength there. But when we discussed it and talked about it, this was after Kennedy won in Wisconsin, and we were beginning to hear that Kennedy might win in West Virginia, and the Indiana primary, as I recall, was June the fourteenth, either the same day as West Virginia or a week later, I've forgotten which. But the filing date was much later than West Virginia or Nebraska, and it was a typical state. We did give it some very serious study. We checked with Frank McKinney [Frank E. McKinney], of Indianapolis, a former Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, who advised that Kennedy h6d been in Indiana a great many times, had spoken it several mayoralty campaigns in the state and had considerable strength in the state. Frank thought that we could win. But, he said, "It's going to take probably four or five hundred thousand dollars to put on a campaign here, and I just don't think it's necessary. (This was Frank's analysis.) We'll have the votes on the second ballot. Kennedy will come in; there'll be no real opposition to him; he'll have the votes on the first ballot. But they'll swing to Symington on either the second or the third ballot. Therefore, I don t think it's necessary for you to come in." Because of the funds and because of the pressure of time, we stayed out of Indiana. As it later turned out, that was our last real chance.

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HACKMAN: Speaking of second ballot strength, is this something that these people who were working around the country and you, from the contact you had from here, were talking about to people around the country that you were

in contact with, "Well, if Kennedy has the first ballot strength, stay with us on second ballot," or how did that work?

FIKE: Well, it was Kennedy and favorite sons. We thought that there would be a lot of favorite sons, and the votes would stay with the favorite sons on the first ballot. There were quite a few men who were nominated, but many of them released their delegates even before the first ballot or released them as the voting went on, as it turned out. We never thought there'd be a deadlock in terms of the 1912 Democratic Convention or the 1924 Democratic Convention, in those days there was a two-thirds rule. But we did think it would go to three, four, five ballots with as many candidates as there were, as many candidates of substance, people who'd been around and done a lot of talking. Governor Williams [G. Mennen Williams] of Michigan, for example. We thought that Michigan would stay with him at least through one ballot or two, and we knew we had some strength in Michigan, and we thought we'd pick it up. It would be broken up, divided and that all the followers of all the other candidates could unite on Symington where they might not be able to unite on any other candidate. This was the philosophy, the thinking.

HACKMAN: Do you remember other states who you thought you had a firm commitment from the favorite son to the effect that he would not change on the first ballot?

FIKE: Well, we knew we had strength in a lot of states, felt we had strength in a lot of states, and I think we did at that time. But as the Kennedy bandwagon gained momentum, after West Virginia particularly, then some of the strength we thought we had, based on commitments, began to slide away. When the Alaskan delegates were first named, for example, based on the best count we could make, our friends in Alaska told us this as well as outsiders who thought they knew the situation, we thought we had more votes than Kennedy had in Alaska. This was true in another state, for example, in Idaho, just to pick out a couple, we felt the same way out there. Kennedy claimed that he had more votes than we did or he claimed that he had most of the delegates. We felt that this was not true, based on reports from our people in those states who were members of the delegation. Some of them stayed with Symington to the final end, cast their votes for him.

HACKMAN: Speaking of West Virginia, since you decided not to go into the West Virginia primary, was there anything, any action that you took in connection with this primary since at this point it appeared to be more or less of a stop-Kennedy…

FIKE: No, no, no. We had our people in there and working with the potential delegates and, after they were elected, with the delegates to keep, as I say, lines of communication in the hopes that they would come to Symington on the second ballot.

HACKMAN: There was no working with Humphrey's [Hubert H. Humphrey] people at the time of the primary in West Virginia?

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FIKE: Well, all of the workers for all of the candidates were exchanging information that they thought would be helpful to them to let the other candidates' people have. It's like a couple of lawyers taking opposing sides before they go into the trial; there's a lot of psychology on it. And again, a part of our strategy, keeping our lines open with all of them, even including the Kennedy people. We were not criticizing any other candidates, never did, I mean this. At least this was our policy at the national level and I think pretty much followed by our workers all over the country. We wanted it clearly understood we were not against anybody; we were for Stuart Symington because we thought he's the man who could best unite the Party.

HACKMAN: As you look forward through this period, and assuming that Senator Symington would get the nomination, had you thought about the Vice President, who your choice would be as the Vice President if you won?

FIKE: Not really, no. It came up once or twice, and we recognized the fact that Jack Kennedy was coming up steadily. We didn't know whether he'd even accept the vice presidential nomination at that time, although we felt that he would and that this would be a worthwhile consideration. But we made no commitments on it, and as far as I know anyway, no study of it. After the West Virginia primary, we had much stronger doubts about the whole picture than we had had before.

HACKMAN: Could you tell me how Charles Brown was selected as Senator Symington's campaign manager, and exactly what his role was in relation to this whole effort?

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FIKE: Well, he was a very intelligent, able young man, excellent speaker, highly regarded in the House of Representatives. He and the Senator were very good friends. He had an ability to meet and talk with people, and he was an excellent representative, good judgment, saw things pretty much as Symington did, was devoted to Symington, and volunteered to help any way he could. This was early in '59. He came from a heavily Republican district, and he was a political miracle when he was elected in '56 and reelected in '58. I'm sure he felt that there was no long time future in being Congressman from the seventh district because it was about a 60 to 65 per cent Republican district in normal times. The fact that he was elected was just a tribute to his ability plus the fact of dissatisfaction with the Republican Party at the local level in '56 and '58, dissatisfaction in a large measure in the rural areas with the Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson, and other things. This was a big part of it in that area, in rural counties there.

Charlie had some background in radio, television, public relations, advertising and so forth. In the House, he was a relative freshman bit he knew a great many members of the House, he had the ability to get around and make friends, and he rated verb highly with Mr. Rayburn [Sam Rayburn] and was liked by all the members of the Missouri delegation. So this was the….

HACKMAN: There was never really anyone else considered for that post?

FIKE: Not really, no, not really. In retrospect we would have done well, in addition to Charlie, to have had two or three full-time experienced men, younger men like Charlie who could have been spending their full time over the country and close to the Senator. After we opened our campaign headquarters, early 1960, I spent practically my full time at the headquarters, divided my time between there and the Senate office—still continued as administrative assistant, supervising the general operations of the office to some extent, but probably many more

hours at the headquarters. But I did very little traveling with the Senator after that time. Before then, I traveled everyplace with him, and, therefore, I had a lot of contacts over the country with people that I'd known and met and could call and talk to.

HACKMAN: In terms of the more important leaders of the Democratic Party around the country, I wonder if you could comment on some of these other people, particularly in the large important states, as far as who you felt, in that early period, were strong Symington supporters. Last time you mentioned Bill Lawrence of Pennsylvania and the fact that you…

FIKE: David Lawrence [David Leo Lawrence], Governor Lawrence, of Pennsylvania.

HACKMAN: I mean David Lawrence. The fact that you, it the early period….

FIKE: Bill Green [William J. Green, Jr.], who was the City Chair in Philadelphia—he'd been a long time friend of Senator Symington's, he was a Truman [Harry S. Truman] man, and this, in part, was the reason he was for Symington. But also I think that he respected Symington's success in business and the way he'd operated various agencies in the government that he'd headed, and his record as a Senator was a strong record that was respected both by Bill Green and Dave Lawrence. There'd never been any formal commitment, but I talked to Bill from time to time. Charlie Brown talked to him frequently and to Dave Lawrence. I never talked to Dave that I remember, but Charlie did from time to time, and certainly the way was open there. And we had developed, at that time—DeSapio, Carmine DeSapio [Carmine G. DeSapio], was a leader in New York, and Mike Prendergast [Michael H. Prendergast], state chairman. They both were very sympathetic to Symington. Symington went up and made a number of

speeches for them in key counties where they needed speakers, and he was highly regarded in New York, we thought. We felt pretty optimistic about getting a goodly number of delegates out of New York

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California, we felt all along, to begin with anyway, that Pat Brown [Edmund G. Brown] was interested either in the presidency as a favorite son if it could happen that way or in the vice presidential, keeping that avenue open; and anyway he wanted to control the delegation. Later on, it developed that what they did in California was to pick out the delegates and divide them up among the leading candidates. We maintained the lines of communication out there all along with Brown and with his office, and we had some strength in areas there that were interested in defense, stronger defense nationally. Symington had appeal there. Jimmy Allen, James Allen, who'd worked for Symington in RFC [Reconstruction Finance Corporation], was our key man in California working on it. And we had a number of other people out there who worked with Jimmy in setting up a California Volunteers for Symington—opened an office there. Some people did some traveling over the state. True Davis [William True Davis], who's now Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, went out to California, made some tours out there. Leonard Shane, who had an advertising agency of his own in California, had come in and volunteered to support Symington. He previously worked for Kefauver [Estes Kefauver] in '52 and '56, very knowledgeable on organization, Convention organization. He'd been floor manager for Kefauver, at least set up the organization for him and outlined it, and helped us outline ours and was very able in this field. I think we had as good an organization set up on the floor as anybody else but by the time we got there it was pretty much cut and dried. We, of course, had a youth organization with chapters all over the country, headed up by Jerry Litton [Jerry Lon Litton] of Missouri, Chillicothe, Missouri, a student at the University of Missouri, and this was the headquarters of it. We had probably seventy-five or a hundred volunteers at the University of Missouri, many of whom spent hours a week on it. Jerry spent practically full time on the campaign and did a lot of traveling into various parts of the country, working in the mock conventions at the various universities just to get Symington's name better known, and we did make an impact. We had good organization there, I think, youth organization, to whip up the enthusiasm among the young people. They worked

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out at the Convention—did an excellent job in our headquarters room, the Galleria at the Biltmore Hotel.

HACKMAN: You mean some of these young people?

FIKE: Yeah, they met the dignitaries as they came in with Symington signs, put on a demonstration when Symington arrived, all that sort of stuff. It was very effective as far as making a good show. It's part of the trappings of a

Convention, but necessary to show the people that you're serious about it. But, in and of itself, it just is a standoff if the other leading candidates, in my opinion, have the same thing. You don't really switch any votes, you just keep your own people convinced that you're serious about it.

HACKMAN: Speaking in terms of some of these more important people around the country, looking back at this thing, did you feel that if you had made more an effort to get definite commitments—was this at all possible at the time?

FIKE: Well, going back and looking at our strategy in retrospect, sure, obviously our strategy wasn't right because we didn't win. So that we might have been able to win, I think, personally, that we could have won, if we had gone all out—as a pitch player would say, shot the moon to begin with.

HACKMAN: You're saying now, for instance, entering the primaries and beginning before you did?

FIKE: Well, if we had started right out asking for firm commitments to begin with. And then, I think if we'd have entered the Indiana primary, this could have made the difference, if the results had been as I thought then and still think they would have been. I think we would have won it if Symington had put on the kind of a campaign in Indiana that he did in Missouri in 1952. I think his presence would have appealed to the people of Indiana, and I think that he could have done in on his own on a positive basis, telling them what he was interested in, discussing the issues, all the issues. I think that he would have won the primary in Indiana, shaking hands, meeting the people, up and down the streets same as he did back in Missouri running a statewide campaign. It would have had to be done in about four weeks time, but I think we could have done it. I think we had the nucleus of the support in Indiana.

HACKMAN: One of the things that you mentioned last time was that Senator Symington had quite a bit of support from former Kefauver supporters. Why was this so and who were some of these people? Where were they?

FIKE: Well, Leonard Shane, I mentioned just a minute ago, Gael Sullivan, who'd been Kefauver's campaign manager, as I remember, in 1952, his son worked with us, Gael, Jr. There were a number of others who had worked with Kefauver. Part of it, I suppose, was because they felt this drive by Kennedy in 1956 against Kefauver, although Kefauver had won. And then I think that some of them were from the Midwest and, therefore, felt a relationship with Symington more than with a New Englander like Senator Kennedy. I think that he didn't have the aura of a rich man's son that Senator Kennedy had that probably some of the Kefauver supporters liked—this might have been it. I think Kefauver and Symington were never close, probably not as close as Kennedy and Symington in the Senate, but I think Kefauver himself probably was for Symington

although he had his own campaign that year in Tennessee and didn't take any part at all in the presidential race.

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HACKMAN: What about the South, how much strength did you think you had and what particularly were Senator Symington's problems there?

FIKE: Well, we felt it was second or third ballot strength. He had the respect, I think, of the Southern senators and most of the Southern governors. But we recognized the fact that Symington, with his record on civil rights, which dated away back, not a recent record—he recognized and moved Negroes ahead when he was running Emerson Electric Manufacturing Co. He had Negro friends back when he was working at Rochester in New York, back in the 20's. His mother had been an active worker for civil rights in Baltimore when he was growing up there. When he was head of the Air Force, he integrated the Air Force; it was the first branch of the service that was integrated. This record was known to people within the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People]—his voting record, he voted against jury trial in that historic vote. On civil rights, his record was one hundred per cent. Paul Douglas [Paul H. Douglas] said, "His record is as good as mine on civil rights," you know, which couldn't be more so.

Because of this record, we recognized that the Southerners who liked Symington personally could not go for him to begin with, but we felt that on the second or third ballot they would come to Symington, and we had as good a chance of getting them as any liberal candidate. We figured that the South probably would go to Lyndon Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson] to begin with, but we didn't think that Johnson could put enough strength together to win it. We felt about that the same as we felt about Kennedy. So that again this was a case of getting Symington votes on the second or third ballot after voting for the favorite sons down there.

HACKMAN: What about civil rights leaders, were you people making contact with the leaders of the various civil rights organizations at that point around the country?

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FIKE: Yes, yes, we were working with civil rights leaders and with Negroes. We had a number of them in our organization, working with us, helping us. George Weaver [George L-P. Weaver], who was the delegate from Washington, now Assistant Secretary of Labor for International Affairs, worked with Senator Symington first at the Air Force, in integrating the Air Force, in an advisory capacity; later he worked or Symington again at the NSRB [National Security Resources Board] and at the RFC, both places; and he had great respect for Symington, and Symington did for him. George, at that time, was Assistant to the president of the Electrical Workers, James Carey [James Barron Carey], who had been a Symington man for a long time and organized a

Symington plant at Rochester and Buffalo originally—Buffalo, I believe it was. George was his assistant. George spent a lot of time as a volunteer working for Symington in the campaign. He was one of the early members of the board of strategy that we had, particularly on civil rights issues with respect to the areas where this was of prime importance. He worked around the country, helped us also in labor groups. George was very active. Symington had an excellent labor record. George Harrison [George MacGregor Harrison] and the railroad labor brotherhoods and Jim Carey were two of the labor leaders who disagreed with the union leaders' agreements not to announce for anybody and came out for Symington. Al Hayes [Albert J. Hayes] of the Machinists' union never did come out for Symington, but he and Symington had worked together back in the days of NSRB and were good friends. He had strength among the machinists at the local level in many places.

[BEGIN SIDE II, TAPE II]

HACKMAN: You mentioned last time about your impression that after his victory in the West Virginia primary, Kennedy appeared to take on new seriousness or was more impressive….

FIKE: We began to be worried at the time of the Wisconsin primary. We had thought Kennedy probably wouldn't win there and that Humphrey was a natural to win in Wisconsin. When Humphrey didn't win in Wisconsin, why, then we became very much concerned. I remember that night of the primary, our oldest daughter, Meg, was Missouri Cherry Blossom Princess, and that was one of the few nights I wasn't working at campaign headquarters. I went down the night that she was presented at the ball. I was sitting right in front of Senator Gale McGee [Gale William McGee] of Wyoming. As the first returns came in, over the radio I was carrying, Senator McGee heard the returns. Humphrey was leading, well in the lead, in the first returns of the Wisconsin primary. McGee leaned over and he said, "Stanley, it looks as though we're really in this campaign, in this race." About an hour later, as the returns started to reverse, then the feeling was different, very different. We regrouped and restudied our situation but decided again not to go into any primaries, keeping it open until the deadline on the Indiana primary, our last chance.

HACKMAN: Was the outcome of the West Virginia primary a surprise to the Symington people?

FIKE: Well, we'd been hearing, based on polls, based on our people who'd been down there, that Kennedy was gaining strength in West Virginia. And we felt that one problem that Humphrey had—why Humphrey hadn't been able to win in either Wisconsin or West Virginia—was that nobody, at most, very few people, considered him as a serious candidate at that time. Not that Humphrey wasn't working his heart out to win. He was. But for some reason or other, people generally, political leaders and others, just did not think the Democratic Convention would nominate

Humphrey for President, even if he won two or three primaries. Of course, that he been the feeling about Kennedy earlier. Kennedy changed this by his tremendous publicity build-up and by winning the primaries, whereas Humphrey was never able to win any primaries. In part, we thought re reason he couldn't, I don't know, somebody said he didn't smell like a President. I don't know what they meant by that, but he just didn't have the spark, just didn't

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impress people as the man who might be President. Maybe he talked too much, I don't know. Maybe he was too liberal for the people to accept or gave the appearance of being too liberal. He certainly had that reputation.

HACKMAN: Did Kennedy's victory in West Virginia change Senator Symington's support around the country appreciably? Could you tell this at the time that some people who you thought were with you immediately switched?

FIKE: Yes, some, we could see the cooling off. People who'd been for us began to report in that they were having trouble with the delegations in their state. Very many people. We particularly found this in Catholic centers where there was a heavy Catholic population. Kennedy had gone into a Protestant state, which West Virginia certainly was, I guess the most Protestant of any state, and when he had won there and showed that he could win a primary in a heavily Protestant state, I think this gave renewed strength to many of the big cities where the Catholic vote was very heavy. Word came in from Pennsylvania, for example, that some of the political leaders there, who themselves were Catholics or had strong Catholic constituencies said, "We just don't think Jack Kennedy can win this fall, but we can't live with our people if we don't support him at the Convention." As a result, strong blocs we thought would be for Symington, just on the basis that they thought he would be the strongest candidate, plus the fact that they liked him personally—he was a man of strength which they thought they needed, man of experience, proven ability—they just began to leave. I can understand their switch to Kennedy. He demonstrated that he could appeal to people in these primaries, convinced them that he could, and they had no choice but to go for him.

HACKMAN: Was this people like Bill Green, for instance?

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FIKE: Bill Green, Dave Lawrence, this type of people, yes. Another was a congressman from Pennsylvania, himself a Catholic, from an upstate Pennsylvania district, same situation with Charlie Brown exactly. They both knew that if Jack Kennedy was nominated, they'd be defeated in their districts, and Charlie was defeated. He ran 42,000 votes head of Jack Kennedy in the fall of 1960, but he lost his district by 19,000 votes. He got as many votes as he had in '58, but so many people came out and voted against Jack Kennedy, and enough of those also voted the straight Republican ticket, that Charlie didn't make it. This was true in another instance.

George McGovern [George S. McGovern] of South Dakota: He was in Congress; but was running for Senator against Karl Mundt [Karl E. Mundt]; and he felt up until the time that Kennedy was the nominee that he had an excellent chance. Kennedy was the nominee, McGovern lost. I'm sure that President Kennedy recognized this fact, he appointed George as head of Food For Peace.

HACKMAN: I can think of other people, Herschel Loveless [Herschel Cellel Loveless], Governor of Iowa.

FIKE: Jim Quigley [James M. Quigley] was the man in Pennsylvania that I was talking about. Quigley was for Symington, he liked him, and they talked the same language, defense and other things that they were interested in. And Quigley's a Catholic. He was not against Kennedy because Kennedy was a Catholic, he just thought Symington was a better candidate, but also he was being a political realist about it. Charlie Brown was the same way. Herschel Loveless in Iowa, but I think that the Kennedy people played it very wisely, maybe smart would be a better word, in Iowa, in Kansas, Nebraska, places where there were Democratic governors in normally Republican states, and they talked to these various governors about the possibility of vice presidency, Cabinet posts, etc., etc., etc., which we never did, I don't know, character, or not wanting to make promises, it's against the federal law. I'm sure the Kennedy people didn't violate any federal laws, I don't

mean that, but you can give an impression that there's a possibility there without making any firm commitments. We never did at all, we never even talked on this basis. If we had held out, told them that the door would always be open a little more than we did, I don't know that that would have made any difference, but I'm darn sure that the Kennedy people did it. There's no question in my mind about it. And then, of course, many of these people were defeated in the election in '60, particularly in the Midwest, and many of them did end up with jobs of some description, appointments in the Kennedy Administration, which they probably would have done anyway.

HACKMAN: Did you people make any use of your own polls or did you have any people taking polls for you in this period? I know that Kennedy did and quite a few others did.

FIKE: We did not have any polls made ourselves.

HACKMAN: Did you feel that this hurt you a great deal, that you would have known a lot more by doing this?

FIKE: No, not really, not really. We could tell by the polls that Kennedy was catching on in the public eye, and I think this, basically, was where his strength came from, or his participation in the primaries. This was not the

main event, but at least he was in the preliminary fights, whereas Symington, in effect, was just on the sidelines shadow boxing and hoping to get into the final bout. Kennedy was in there making news by being in the primaries, and the publicity all just snowballing. He'd started it much before this. Of course, in 1956, the fight for the vice presidency was a tremendous boost for him with the Democratic people just as we discussed last time—the interest in Missouri of getting Kennedy out to speak was a part of it, the interest in getting him to Rockhurst, where he got an honorary Doctorate of Laws in Kansas City. Senator Symington invited him for Rockhurst College, but the reason they were interested in him was because he was a rising young star in the Democratic Party on the national scene.

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Same thing down at the Jackson Day dinner in Springfield, Missouri, the following year after '56.

HACKMAN: Moving on to something else, I thought we might discuss the role that President Truman played in that period. To what extent was getting an endorsement from him a problem, or was that so, because I've heard, well, there had been speculation as to why he didn't Senator Symington at the time of the state convention, I believe, and I wondered what the story was here? Do you recall that? He did endorse the Senator later.

FIKE: He did endorse the Senator later on, and I think he always felt that he wanted to pick the time when he thought it would be most effective. All around the country, as we got around, there was no question in anybody's mind really but what President Truman was for Stuart Symington for President. He let his friends know it; people within the Party knew it. He was from Missouri, Symington was from Missouri. I don't think a public announcement by him at any earlier date would have made any real difference. It certainly didn't help us when he decided at the last minute not to come to the Convention. This, in fact, probably hurt us, but I doubt that it cost us more than two or three votes because by that time there weren't any more votes than that, you know, that were not committed in their own minds, ready to go, unless something really unusual happened. Actually, from the time of the West Virginia primary victory, we felt Kennedy had it unless he made a terrible mistake.

HACKMAN: On the first ballot?

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FIKE: Well, we were hoping not to let it—if we could keep it open….Our only chance was to keep it open past the first ballot into the second or third ballot, and this was really our fight for survival as a candidate. Plus the fact that the Senator felt that he had a commitment to the people who supported him and contributed to his campaign up to that time—these many Missourians, as well as friends all over the country who had worked for him—and he did not feel that he could drop out. If

something happened and Kennedy did take himself out of the race one way or another, then Symington felt that he had to be in there. And this was what our board of strategy felt, and I think this was right, but it was a tough three months there.

HACKMAN: Were any of the people around him urging him to withdraw in that period?

FIKE: No one ever urged him to withdraw, we just recognized what the problem was: that Kennedy had followed on strategy, Symington had followed another. Kennedy made his work; therefore, Symington's couldn't work unless the Kennedy strategy failed. This was a matter of policy shaping events.

HACKMAN: What about a relationship with the other possible candidates at that time, particularly Senator Johnson and Adlai Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson]? Where there any…

FIKE: Well, of course, at the staff level we recognized that we were all in the same boat at that time. It wasn't any formal "Stop Kennedy" movement. We did exchange information with the Stevenson people, with the Johnson people, with the Humphrey people. At this time, of course, Humphrey had withdrawn formally as a candidate, some of his people came over to us, there's a number of instances. But these primarily were not delegates, these were the people who had been working for Humphrey, and we didn't pick up any significant delegate strength when Humphrey dropped out. In most cases, a candidate can't deliver the delegates. People who, you know, volunteers and full-time workers for him, wanted to come over and help.

HACKMAN: When you say you exchanged information, can you be, can you explain that a little bit further, what kinds of things?

FIKE: Well, as to our information about what the strength was in the various states and who was for who and our information pretty much checked out.

HACKMAN: Were people on Senator Johnson's camp urging Senator Symington to withdraw or was there much talk of this at this time?

FIKE: No, no, and certainly we weren't urging anybody else to withdraw. In fact, at this time, the only possibility for anybody except Kennedy was for all the candidates to stay in, including the favorite sons, and that you'd have a standoff to a second or third ballot. I'm sure the Johnson strategy was like ours, that, first of all, Kennedy'd have a run and originally we didn't think he'd get 50 per cent plus one of the delegates. Six years ago I could have told you exactly how many that was and so forth, but it's been too long since I've thought about it.

But then we thought Senator Johnson would be the second strongest candidate going in, based on a bloc of the South that he would have. We thought then, as Kennedy started

going down, the Kennedy votes would come to us rather than to Johnson, very strong feeling between the two. And then if Johnson couldn't make it, why, the Johnson votes would come to Symington. In the meantime, we'd pick up some of the favorite son states; we'd pick up some of the primary states that were committed only on the first ballot. As, for example, Indiana, where the delegates themselves, many of them, we felt were Symington people, but committed to vote for Kennedy on the first ballot.

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HACKMAN: You talked earlier to some extent about the organization at the Convention. Could you go into more detail about how you set this up?

FIKE: Well, as I say, we had quite an organization, we felt, at the Convention. Here's some of our papers from the Convention, our working papers, our campaign organization. The Senator himself, at the Convention—I went back to traveling with him at the Convention, and I still carried the title of executive director of the campaign. Charlie Brown, of course, was the campaign manager, and was out on his own and making contacts himself. Then in the traveling party with the Senator, as I mentioned, either I, probably Steve Leo, who had come in to help out on the press work here in the Senator's office while I was gone, Clayton Fritchey also had worked on press would be traveling with the Senator as he went around to visit the various delegates. And we had what we called policy advisors who would be in touch with our headquarters staff there. Clark Clifford was the chairman of that. Jimmy Allen, that I mentioned on the California aspect of the Convention; labor, George Weaver was in that; Charlie Brown had his own setup coordinated with all of this. Of course this was the overall picture of it. Harold Stuart, finance chairman, was working with Charlie at that time, and Charlie Curry of Kansas City was working with Charlie Brown. And then we had what we called the special operation which was Sidney Salomon to contact the key people. In that group, we had the Governor of Missouri, Jim Blair; Bill Boyle [William M. Boyle, Jr.], former chairman of the National Committee from Missouri; Charlie Brannan [Charles F. Brannan], former Secretary of Agriculture from Colorado who was a Symington supporter; Jim Carey, as I mentioned; Congressman Charlie Diggs [Charles C. Diggs, Jr.] from Michigan, Negro Congressman, a Symington delegate was one of the seconders of his nomination; Jiggs Donahue [F. Joseph Donohue] of Washington, who was a former member of the Board of Commissioners here in the District of Columbia, long active in the Democratic Party, one of the national campaign managers of Estes Kefauver in '56 and '52; Fowler Hamilton of

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Missouri and New York, later Administrator under Kennedy of the AID [Agency for International Development] program; you remember, John Hendren [John H. Hendren] of Missouri, who was past chairman of the Missouri State Democratic Committee; Scott Lucas [Scott Wike Lucas] of Illinois, who was a strong Symington man, formerly majority leader of the Senate, former United States Senator from Illinois; Frank McKinney of Indiana; Jim Meredith was our campaign manager in '52 and '58 in Missouri, active in years past in the

Democratic National Committee; Congressman Pilcher [John L. Pilcher] from down in Georgia who was a strong Symington man; Congressman John Slack [John M. Slack, Jr.] from West Virginia, who was a delegate from West Virginia, was a Symington man; Abby Story of Mississippi [County, Missouri], as I mentioned. These were people who would be available, on special assignments to make special contacts and speak for the Senator and the organization, men of stature, substance, in working with these various groups. Pat Jennings [William Pat Jennings], congressman from Virginia, was in this group; George Kasem [George A. Kasem] of California, Congressmen, was in the group. The Senator's two sons, Stuart Symington, Jr. [Stuart Symington, III], and Jim Symington [James W. Symington], and many others. Charlie Brown, as the Convention itself opened, to be on the floor in charge of the floor arrangements with Leonard Shane, whom I mentioned earlier, and in actually carrying out the mechanical operation of it with the key people that we had in each delegation and the Missourians and others who were assigned to work with those delegations on the floor. We had a press gallery, our press room set up working with Steve Leo and Clayton Fritchey, who were working right with the Senator. In that group we had Don Harris, who was a Los Angeles man, knew the Los Angeles press and how to get things done there; he was an assistant to Leonard Shane. Leo Farrell of Missouri and Kansas originally, a newspaperman here who worked at our headquarters, and Fred McGhee who had been active in TV and radio on NBC [National Broadcasting Company] up in New York. He was from Springfield, Missouri, originally and had been an assistant to Charlie Brown and during the campaign period worked with me over at headquarters. We had a good group of people of California people in charge of demonstrations: Claude Young of Santa Ana who was in charge of that working with Jerry Litton of –

Missouri, chairman of Youth for Symington. Gene Zuckert at this point, as we got into the operations, he was in charge of the communications control, as we called it. In other words he was to assemble the information, the feedback from our various people contacting the state delegations, feed in the information, build it up, and work at being in touch all the time with Charlie Brown and work closely together to develop, when the time came, the bandwagon for the Symington effort and so forth. Leonard Shane worked with Gene Zuckert, except when he was on the Convention floor. We also had other people from Missouri and throughout the country. We had about a ten page organization setup including where all of our people were. We had a directory of all the delegates, everybody who was there and where they were assigned, what their hotel room numbers were and their telephone numbers were, delegates and all the rest, and who in our delegation or who in our campaign organization knew these delegates and could talk to them. I mentioned earlier this is where it really went to work, was supposed to go to work anyway—contact with the Missouri people or Symington people per se who were supposed to work with friends in these delegations. Only trouble is we never really got into operation with this because when the first ballot was started, Kennedy had it won before we got through the first ballot.

HACKMAN: Well, were your efforts in these contacts primarily geared to the second ballot, the major efforts?

FIKE: We wanted to hold all the strength we could on the first ballot for Symington; we wanted to make a respectable showing; and we also then were hoping that the other candidates would also have enough strength so that Kennedy would not have it on the first ballot.

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HACKMAN: In planning how to set this convention organization up, was there anything you patterned this after, was this developed…

FIKE: Well, it was taking ideas from other past Conventions and developing it, and we had some people who'd been very active in the Stevenson organization in '52 and '56. Leonard Shane had done this kind of work with Kefauver in both '52 and '56 and was recognized as an able man in this organization field. He was my number one assistant in setting this up, Charlie Brown's number one assistant, Leonard was, in patterning it, and we developed quite an organization chart and a line of authority and so forth. A convention moves awfully fast when you get there, and you've got to be ready to move. We had security people; we had some people on leave of absence from the Los Angeles police department who knew their way around out there. Carroll Weathers, who was on the police force in Los Angeles, had been detailed to us for this purpose, and Leonard had arranged this. Carroll, actually, most of the time drove the Senator's car, and we really moved from one spot to another, as the Senator visited many of the delegations to make his presentation and his plea at that time for votes, "If you can't be for me on the first ballot, why, remember me on the second. I'm convinced that I can beat Richard Nixon [Richard M. Nixon] this fall, and that's what we want to do as Democrats. I think I've got the know-how to be President."

HACKMAN: People have always talked a lot about how efficient the Kennedy organization was at the Convention. Could you compare yours to what you thought theirs was, as far as just the organizational setup; it was no problem then to you? You didn't think this was a…

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FIKE: No, they were effective and—it's hard to say that any organization is really efficient in the mass bedlam that you have in a Convention. They were effective because they'd been effective at the grass roots starting there and getting people committed as delegates. Senator Kennedy himself, starting in 1957, based on the information I've had since then—didn't know it at that time, certainly didn't know it in '57—as far back as '57, he started talking to people and saying, "I want you to be for me in 1960." This was followed up by Bobby and the other workers with continual contacts all over, all along. You asked me last time as to whether we had any evidence of this going on in Missouri, this kind of operation. Since then, we've heard of people who said that they were for Kennedy before the Convention, and I'm sure there were a few of these. And

undoubtedly some of the Symington people in Missouri probably went out of their way to let Kennedy know that if Symington couldn't make it, they'd be for Kennedy. We had the same thing happening from the Kennedy delegation, so this, you know, I don't consider this was disloyal to Symington, but Kennedy was able to build up this bandwagon strategy with his publicity and with his victories in the primaries.

HACKMAN: At the Convention itself, what, if you can recall, were the key things that happened in terms of support you thought you had either for Symington or that would at least hold on the first ballot which, in effect, did go for Kennedy, particularly California and some of the favorite son delegations.

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FIKE: I think the key things, I think we pretty well knew what we were going to have on the first ballot. You know, there'd be one or two votes that'd vary in a number of delegations, that would disappear. I've even forgotten, now, I'd have to look back and see how many we finally ended up with, but we thought we'd go in with about 125 on the first ballot, the way it ended up. Earlier we'd been hoping to have around 250, this was before the primaries, before we had this string of victories in the primaries. And also before he, you know, showed his organization strength at the grass roots in these other states, plus the tremendous publicity build-up that he got and the strength that he gained through the top rating in the polls, consistently, based on the publicity and his attractiveness, and his increasing, to me anyway, increasing show of dedication to the job that we talked about last time.

But at the Convention, I suppose maybe we actually ended up twenty to twenty-five votes below what we thought we had. Johnson was considerably below what we thought he would have going in. Kennedy had strength in what we thought would be Johnson's strongholds. The Humphrey support had pretty well evaporated by this time. It went to Kennedy primarily, what we thought Humphrey would have. We had hoped to get more of it; we had some second ballot strength there, and some people who had wanted to be for Symington, but they felt they couldn't be for the reason I discussed earlier, Pennsylvania, New York, Illinois, elsewhere.

HACKMAN: Do you remember, specifically, the efforts you made at that time with regard to Kansas and Iowa, these favorite son people?

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FIKE: Well, our chairman in Kansas was Paul Aylward [Paul L. Aylward], former Commander of the American Legion there, lawyer in Kansas. He was all the way for Symington and stayed with him all the way, and he was able to keep the Kansas delegation tied up so that the Kansas vote was not cast until after Kennedy had it won. I don't think Governor Docking [George Docking] ever forgave him for this. I think Governor Docking felt maybe that if he'd been able to deliver the Kansas vote that he might have been treated better in appointment in the Kennedy Administration. I'm not

at all sure that that's true, but I do remember that day, the day of the first ballot, that Bobby Kennedy came to the Kansas delegation at the same time Senator Symington was there making his visit. While the Senator was talking to most of the delegates, Bobby was arguing with Paul Aylward, telling him, "Give us your votes on the first ballot, give them to Kennedy; we're not against Symington, we'll be for Symington on the second ballot or the third ballot." I walked up while he was talking to him, and I laughed at him because, I said, "Of course, Paul." And Paul said, "Did you just hear this?" I said, "Yes, and I don't blame Bob for asking you on that basis, but we can't agree, to that at all. We've got to keep our votes on the first ballot." And Paul did keep them on the first ballot. We had a fair majority in Kansas, in spite of the Governor's efforts to go the other way. But thin the Governor was defeated for reelection that fall, Docking just couldn't win in Kansas with Kennedy at the top of the ticket. Kennedy lost and all the Democrats lost Kansas heavily as they did in Iowa, Nebraska, and many other farm states. The big surprise was that Morrison [Frank B. Morrison] of Nebraska won in spite of that. Morrison had not been a Kennedy man. It was a surprise when he won the primary. It was at the time of that Jackson Day Dinner up in Omaha on May the eighth, seventh, whatever it was either the seventh or eighth, May the 14th was the West Virginia primary. At that time Frank Morrison was very much an outside favorite, I mean he was not a favorite at all.

HACKMAN: Bob Conrad [Robert B. Conrad], was it?

FIKE: Bob Conrad was expected to win.

HACKMAN: You remember anything specific about California at the Convention, California delegation?

FIKE: Well, they were pretty much split up, and we had some very strong support in California. Some people in the California delegation were very strong for Symington. Jimmy Allen was one of the delegates who'd done a lot of work for Symington. We had a number of other delegates there who were Symington people and stayed all the way and, of course, some bitterness developed over the way some of the votes went. But nothing much beyond that. I mean if I could go back and refresh my memory, Larry, and give you names of some particular significance at this time. For instance, people who were unhappy with Pat Brown at that time for various reasons, they later got back together.

HACKMAN: We were talking a bit before about President Truman and his decision not to come. Did you ever find out or hear later as to why he made that decision, what his reasons really were?

FIKE: I've seen him and talked to him a number of times since then, Larry, but I've never really pushed the matter at all. I think really that the President felt or had been convinced that by staying away and issuing the statement

that he did at the time, he would be more helpful to Senator Symington than by coming. We didn't feel that way about it. I talked to him just the day before he made this announcement, and at that time he said he was coming and he gave me the time that he was coming. We were sorry he didn't come, but I did not feel

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at that time that his coming would have been decisive. Some of our people felt it would, but I think that the commitments were too far along then. Harry Truman had been out of office as President for eight years. He was greatly honored in many states as we got around, as the Senator traveled in '59 and '60. Many people came up and said how highly they thought of Harry Truman, glad to see Stuart Symington from Harry Truman's state, and so forth. And when they knew that I was from Independence, why, this was always something to talk about and it was pleasant and it certainly didn't do us any harm. I'm sure it did us some good. In the final analysis, I didn't think it got us very many delegate votes. I think that, this was about, actually, as far as the Truman influence could have helped us. We did consult with Truman over the period of time, as we consulted with a lot of other people. Truman felt that we were following the right pattern. He was opposed to the primaries, based on his own experience in '48. Of course, in '48, he went into it as the President, into the Convention, and, therefore, had a tremendous control.

HACKMAN: I was just thinking that you were talking in terms of Truman being out of touch, or having been President a number of years before. I was thinking of some of the other people, like Bill Boyle and McKinney. Did you feel later that some of these people had been out of touch too long, that you were relying on maybe for advice, or was that a factor at all?

FIKE: Yes. However, our campaign was pitched primarily to the people who were going to be the delegates, the county chairmen, the state officials, the state Democratic leaders. Kennedy went to the people and built the support up from the people at the grass roots, and of course history has proven which course was right. They recognized early that the only way they could do it was to go to the grass roots and pick up this support, and this they did. It would be impossible—I think Estes Kefauver tried to do it in '56 and '52, the

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same type of an operation. I think that Kennedy had a much better television personality probably than Kefauver did, and then I think he had a great deal more mobility. He had a much bigger organization; he had more support in many areas then Kefauver did; and television was much more important in 1960 than it was in '52. And he had this build-up over a period of months. I think probably Kennedy was more attractive to the newer Democratic workers than Kefauver had been. I think this is why it worked for Kennedy and hadn't worked for Kefauver. Kefauver, of course, wert in with the very bitter opposition of the

political leaders. The only opposition that the political leaders had to Kennedy, I think, was what they thought was realism. They just didn't think he could win because of his youth and his religion and I think that applied to, primarily, the Catholics themselves in the leadership of the Democratic Party. They were sensitive to it. Kennedy didn't think it had to be so, and he proved it didn't, and he deserves a great deal of credit for it.

On Friday, the day after the nomination for President and Vice President had been completed, Senator Johnson called and asked Symington to introduce him at the notification ceremonies at the open air stadium where he and Senator Kennedy were to be notified and respond formally. Senator Symington said he'd call Johnson back and let him know. As I remember, I came in to see him about 3 in the afternoon. I think Jim Meredith was with me, Sid Salomon, also, as I recall, but I'm not sure. Anyway he talked about the fact he and Johnson had been friends for at least fourteen years, at one time, had been very close friends. We said, "Well, do you think he's qualified to be Vice President? Do you think he'd be a good Vice President?" Symington said, "Yes." He called Senator Johnson back and told him that he would, Carroll Weathers, whom I mentioned earlier, of the police department and I went out and picked up later on and took him over to the stadium, just the three of us. Carroll was driving, the Senator and I were sitting in the back seat, and he said, "I don't know what I'm going to say when I get up there." And, of course, it was a pretty low point for him, and for us, for me, and Carroll felt the same way. He was an enthusiastic

Symington supporter. We were all pretty low, but Symington did get up and make the introduction of Senator Johnson as the vice presidential nominee. But before he introduced Johnson, however, he spoke about Senator Kennedy, extemporaneously but from the heart, words he later used in tribute to President Kennedy after his death—he said, "I've watched the American people, slowly at first and then with ever increasing crescendo, take to their minds and hearts the leading Democrat, the leading American of thi3 day, John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts. People ask, how did he do it? Well, I will tell you how. He did it because he had just a little more courage, just a little more stamina, just a little more wisdom and just a little more character than any of the rest of us."

I would agree as far as the campaign was concerned. I wouldn't agree about "the little more character," I'm not degrading Kennedy's character, but nobody could have had more character in this campaign than Stuart Symington did. And certainly Kennedy had the courage and the stamina and the wisdom in the way he planned his campaign, and he had some wonderful help, Bobby and a lot of others. But I'd say, number one, the credit goes to Jack Kennedy for the kind of a campaign and the success of the campaign. He did a tremendous job, we all respected him for it. When I say "we all," I mean the inner circle of the Symington camp. There was a lot of disappointment about the fact that we didn't win because we believed in Stuart Symington, but we couldn't—I couldn't, anyway—take any credit away from Jack Kennedy. He went out and did it the hard way. He had a lot of things working for him but he used every one of his assets to the fullest extent.

HACKMAN: Speaking of the vice presidency, what types of contacts were made with

the Kennedy people toward you people on the possibility of Senator Symington as Vice President?

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FIKE: Well, this contact, I frankly was not in on that. We were not interested in the vice presidency, I don't think Stuart Symington was interested in the vice presidency. If Jack Kennedy had asked him to be the vice presidential candidate, I'm sure that Senator Symington would have said yes, as much—well, for two reasons, I think. Number one, he had developed a great respect for Jack Kennedy and the way he ran his campaign; he liked him personally before; and he developed this additional respect for the way in which he ran his campaign, planned it, worked it. Number two, I think he felt that this would have been at least a recognition of the hard work that a lot of Symington supporters over the country had done, and I think for that reason he would have taken it, and I'm sure that—except for that latter reason, and the disappointment because a lot of Symington supporters really didn't get anything for their efforts, didn't get their man at least in first or second place—except for that, I think that both the Senator and Mrs. Symington [Evelyn Wadsworth Symington] were very glad that he wasn't the vice presidential nominee.

HACKMAN: We're just about running out of tape right now.

FIKE: That ought to just about cover it anyway, Larry.

HACKMAN: All I had was a little bit on the campaign in Missouri, now if you are out of time, of course, that's fine.

FIKE: Well, whatever you say, we've got lots else to do this afternoon. Be glad to take another crack at it if you want.

HACKMAN: I would say I've got a half an hour.

FIKE: I'd rather take another crack at it, Larry. We've had, you know, an hour and forty-five minutes here.

HACKMAN: Yes, I've probably taken up too much of your time.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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Name List