

William Barry, Oral History Interview – RFK#2, 3/20/1969
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Biographical Note

Barry (1927-2018), Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, security expert, and personal bodyguard to Robert F. Kennedy [RFK] in the 1968 Presidential campaign. In this interview Barry discusses the 1968 Presidential campaign in terms of security, campaign stops, and the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. among other issues.

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Oral History Interview

Of

William Barry

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William Barry – RFK #2

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Second Oral History Interview

with

WILLIAM BARRY

March 20, 1969
New York, New York

By Roberta W. Greene

For the Robert F. Kennedy Oral History Project
of the John F. Kennedy Library

GREENE: Let's begin today by discussing President Johnson's [Lyndon B. Johnson] withdrawal. What do you remember about the reaction to that in the Kennedy camp?

BARRY: Well, I remember that the announcement of the withdrawal came at the end of a highly successful trip through the West which ended in Phoenix, Arizona. The Senator made a rather far-reaching speech on Vietnam which I thought was mildly received by the Arizonian Democrats at a rather important dinner that they had. Senator Kennedy threw a press party for the staff and the press at a local country club that had a pool, kind of a reception thing, because the party was ostensibly breaking up at that point, with the staff going East and a lot of the press was from the West. We had a rather nice time swimming and had lunch, and then we got our plane back to New York. And the plane back had Senator Kennedy, Mrs. Kennedy [Ethel Skakel Kennedy]. I was on board as well as a *Times* [*New York Times*] reporter Homer Bigart and Dick Dougherty from the *Los Angeles Times*. It was a very small party.

As we landed, we had no inkling, of course, what had transpired that day. Dall Forsythe rushed on the plane, followed closely by Chairman John Burns of the New York State Democratic Committee. They were shouting that the President had withdrawn. Of course, the press was assembled and wanted Senator Kennedy to immediately make a

statement, but he just sat down on a seat and considered the matter and stayed there for at least five or ten minutes considering what had happened and talking it over with John Burns. I forget who was with them at that point. I think there was another individual there who counseled “no statement at all,” and the Senator agreed, and that was the position he took.

We left the plane and got through the terminal, through a crowd of people who had come out to meet the Senator. And that night the Senator and his staff worked all night on a position to take in the press conference the

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following day at 11 o'clock. He had the press conference and released the wire that he had sent to the President. But I remember Jimmy Breslin told me, “It’s a lock now,” that there was no way that Senator Kennedy could lose the Democratic nomination. And we felt that way too. I felt that way, I should say; I mean when I say “we,” I think the staff felt that way.

GREENE: Would you say that this feeling lasted very long? Was this the feeling for quite some time after the announcement, or did he slowly come to realize what the possible consequences were?

BARRY: I think it lasted until the Indiana returns, and they were closer than had been anticipated. By that time, contacts had been made, throughout the country as far as the professional Democrats went, and they weren't flocking to RFK's standard as I had expected. Again I say “I” because I wasn't part of the inside political discussions at any time, and frankly I could not be part of them. I think Indiana indicated that it was going to be tougher, and then caucuses around the country indicated that they were waiting to see what Hubert Humphrey was going to do, and what the President was going to do. And actually, I would imagine they were waiting to see what the best deal would be, in many cases.

GREENE: Do you remember anything at all, any discussion about the meeting that took place that night? I believe it was at the Kennedy's apartment.

BARRY: No. I know that there were quite a few people there at the apartment, and many phone calls were made throughout the country. I was very tired and left to go home and go to sleep.

GREENE: But you felt kind of buoyed?

BARRY: Oh, yeah, very excited and exhilarated and elated.

GREENE: Was this possibility ever considered? Was there any knowledge among the Kennedy people of the reexamination going on at the White House?

BARRY: Not to my knowledge.

GREENE: You never heard any talk about it?

BARRY: No. I think the Senator was genuinely shocked and surprised.

GREENE: Did you get the impression that Hubert Humphrey became an immediate factor, that they just assumed he would run?

BARRY: Yes. Definitely.

GREENE: Was anything ever said about how the Senator felt towards Humphrey?

BARRY: Yes. It certainly was. He had a genuine affection for Hubert Humphrey

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and many private occasions and a few statements he made publicly indicated that he felt Hubert Humphrey was a fine and decent man and would make a fine President.

GREENE: Was this a problem as far as running against him at all, do you think?

BARRY: I don't think so. He just appreciated Hubert's qualities, but he felt that he could deal with the problems the country faced in a better fashion.

GREENE: Would you agree with those who say that immediately after Johnson's withdrawal was about the most difficult time for the Kennedy campaign?

BARRY: In what way?

GREENE: Well, there's been some discussion that he was particularly vulnerable at that time because his whole issue of the war had kind of been pulled out from underneath him?

BARRY: Yeah. I really don't have any opinion on that. I don't think the issue was pulled out from under him. I think the war issue was still there; however, I think the target wasn't there. If you remember, he had been criticized for being demagogic and attacking LBJ by implication so he had dropped that whole line. I don't really agree with that. I think he still had the war issue. It was very much a topic of conversation around the country all the time. We're still in it.

GREENE: What were the changes in strategy at the point and in the issues which evolved?

BARRY: Gee, I didn't notice any change, in the speech matter certainly.

GREENE: All right then, only four days after the President's withdrawal, Martin Luther King was shot in Memphis. What do you remember about how the news was relayed and what the reactions were?

BARRY: Well, again, an advance man rushed on board and gave us that news. We didn't know anything about it when we landed in Indianapolis. I guess it was rainy evening, and it was 6 or 7 o'clock at night. A rally had been scheduled in the ghetto. The black chief of police met us at the airport and strongly advised me not to take the Senator into the ghetto, that there were disturbances, and that he wouldn't be responsible for anything that happened if we continued to the ghetto. I relayed this to the Senator. And Mrs. Kennedy, who was with us at the time, was asked to go on to the hotel, and the Senator would just go on to the ghetto and make his speech. He arrived -- there was quite a sizeable crowd -- and made this fantastic speech which he had jotted on the back of a couple pieces of paper, jotted an outline and gave it extemporaneously. I think it was his finest

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speech of the campaign.

GREENE: What do you remember about the crowd reaction to it?

BARRY: Very quiet. It was a very quiet crowd, and I think he gave them the news. I don't think they knew, really, what had happened. At least the majority of them didn't know. It was a very quiet crowd and a very quiet reception, and, I thought, a very thoughtful crowd. And they left quietly when we left. There wasn't any of the usual campaign exuberance.

GREENE: Was there any discussion that you remember about how to deal with this situation, with the whole response to the assassination; what they could do in reaction to it?

BARRY: By "they" do you mean the staff and the Senator?

GREENE: And the Senator.

BARRY: No. I wasn't in on any discussions.

GREENE: Did the Senator say immediately that he wanted to go into this ghetto as planned?

BARRY: Yes. There was no question that he was going. There weren't even two

sentences exchanged. I relayed the chief of police's request that he not do it, he relayed his answer that he was going to do it.

GREENE: What about Mrs. Kennedy? Was she agreeable?

BARRY: No. She wanted to go. But the Senator asked her to go on. She was very, very tired. And it had been a long day, and it was a nasty night. I think all of those things.... I think if she had realized why we were asking her to go, she would have insisted that she go with Senator Kennedy.

GREENE: But she didn't in any way try to discourage him from going?

BARRY: No. Not at all. She wouldn't. I'm sure if she knew, she would have gone with him.

GREENE: Are you aware of anything about requests from Negro and other civic leaders throughout the country for Senator Kennedy to make appearances to try to calm the unrest in the ghettos?

BARRY: No.

GREENE: Yesterday you talked about the Cleveland City Club speech but mainly in terms of the threat that was received at that time.

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What was the reaction to that speech from the crowd? It was a pretty strong one and to a somewhat conservative audience.

BARRY: Gee, I was so busy I didn't watch the crowd reaction to that speech.

GREENE: Were you present in Atlanta when that meeting took place with the Negro leaders?

BARRY: No. I stayed in New City.

GREENE: And did you go to the funeral with the Senator Kennedy?

BARRY: No. That was one of the few times when I wasn't with him, for that span of time.

GREENE: Do you remember anything else about the Martin Luther King assassination that would be important?

BARRY: Well, just that the Senator walked through the Washington ghetto. Nobody knew about that; it was strictly spontaneous. He wanted to do it, and he did it. I wasn't with him. I had gone back to New York. And he went in there -- what do they say? -- to cool it. And he did. But he went really to see what was going on too.

GREENE: Then on April 10th, after the funeral, the campaign went back to Indiana. Were you with him at this point?

BARRY: Yes.

GREENE: Right after the funeral?

BARRY: You know, one thing that I remember about was that Senator Kenedy called Mrs. King [Coretta Scott King] immediately that evening and offered his sympathy, and also arranged for her to get a plane from where she was to Memphis and took over and helped her quite a bit.

GREENE: There was some press criticism of that afterwards. Was there any discussion, to your knowledge, about it?

BARRY: Discussion of the press criticism?

GREENE: Any discussion of the criticism of this.

BARRY: No. I think it was a spontaneous gesture and really sympathetic.

GREENE: Do you remember any incidents of this type of petty criticism and how the Senator responded to it?

BARRY: With the press?

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GREENE: Well, not necessarily, the general criticism of that type of thing -- of his offering the plane and also he took off his jacket in the march to the church at the Martin Luther King funeral; he was criticized for that. What was his reaction to petty backbiting of that sort?

BARRY: I think it depended who was writing it, who was criticizing. If it was a friend, I think he was upset. But if it was just someone who would criticize him anyway.... And that's pretty much the way I think the press fell, fell into two categories. A friend could be objective, but the enemies were never objective, it seemed like. Now, as far as his reactions to it, I think he had arrived at that state in a politician's life where

he knew he'd be criticized no matter what he did. So he had to learn to live with it, and he did.

GREENE: What example of the type of criticism come to mind, the things you're talking about where a friend would be involved?

BARRY: Well, I must say that we moved so fast during that campaign that I rarely saw a newspaper. I rarely read what these people were writing. And I think it was a rather good rule I had because I had a good relationship with the press as far as cooperation with me. For instance, the television cameras had to get right on the candidate. Well, they'd cluster in front of the candidate, and if they'd cluster that means they impede progress through the crowd. And if they zoom in, it means they spoil our momentum, or in many ways they can make it awfully difficult. They all cooperated with me. In fact, there was a press story in Oregon on that. Senator McCarthy [Eugene J. McCarthy] complained that the television people were sabotaging him when he went through crowds, especially the CBS [Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc.] cameramen. Whereas Senator Kennedy on the other hand, had many problems because of this situation. I didn't really read the articles, and I didn't see any of the television shows. I was too busy. So I really couldn't comment. I know that there were a few articles that were written that were upsetting in that private trusts were felt to be compromised.

GREENE: Any examples?

BARRY: Well, there's one minor example in that we were flying through Arizona in a very small plane. Mrs. Kennedy didn't like to fly in planes. And this plane was going over mountains and high plateaus, and it was rather a beautiful trip, but it was a small plane. The way I understand this particular incident is that the press people invited were invited as a non attribution basis. It was one time that the candidate could relax. This was quite a problem because the press is with you constantly; When does the candidate relax? Well, this was one of those which the press was off limits. I mean nothing could be reported. And one of the reporters, Joe Mohbat, wrote an article for AP [Associated Press] that included a section that Mrs. Kennedy was upset about the plane.

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And there was some reference that the Senator was holding a glass of bourbon. He was giving a little color to the thing. The article was in poor taste from the Kennedy's standpoint, and they were upset about that article. It was pointed out to Joe that he had betrayed that particular trust, and Joe realized that he had been wrong.

GREENE: Who pointed it out?

BARRY: I'd say two people did, Fred Dutton [Frederick G. Dutton] and Dick Tuck [Richard G. Tuck].

GREENE: Were they generally in charge of this type of problem with the press?

BARRY: I think, by nature, they liked to be in charge of it. I don't think they were designated. As you can see, it wasn't anything that was delegated. It was just something that they wanted to do.

GREENE: Did Tuck's role with the press change at all when Mankiewicz [Frank Mankiewicz] went to work in California?

BARRY: Yes, it expanded, I think. Although Dick Drayne [Richard C. Drayne] took Mankiewicz's place. But, of course, Mankiewicz is such a strong individual he controlled everything with the press.

GREENE: Were there any changes in plans at that point after Martin Luther King's assassination and your return to Indiana? Were there any changes in the strategy or the organization that you remember?

BARRY: No. Because of the assassination?

GREENE: Yes. And the change in issues.

BARRY: No.

GREENE: Okay. At this point also, O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien] and Goodwin [Richard N. Goodwin] arrive on the scene. What do you remember about that?

BARRY: Well, not too much. I saw them a few times. Goodwin traveled with us one day. I talked to Larry in a couple of hotel room things, but I don't remember much about it.

GREENE: Was there any dissension among the staff that had been there all along about these two outsiders?

BARRY: Not to my knowledge. There could have been. I don't know.

GREENE: There were a number of personal friends that worked in one way or

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another for the Senator. How was their role defined, and how did they get involved in the first place?

BARRY: Well, you see, I was on the traveling staff, and there weren't any personal

friends on the traveling staff that I know of.

GREENE: Someone like John Glenn or Jim Whittaker [James W. Whittaker]?

BARRY: Oh, well, they really weren't working. I think they volunteered to appear with the Senator where it would do him some good. For instance, Whittaker would appear with him in Washington. He appeared somewhat in Oregon because he is a well-known figure in the Northwest. John Glenn, of course, has appeal wherever you go. I think John Glenn had a heavier role in the campaign than Jim Whittaker did. John Glenn would introduce the Senator and he'd say, in a very American, apple pie, Boy Scout way why he believed that this fellow was the man that should be President. And he said it in a way that ran with tremendous sincerity because he is a sincere man, and he believed in what he was saying. And I think it was great for Senator Kennedy to have a man like John Glenn and a friend like John Glenn. It was obvious he was a friend. So he would more or less break the ice with many crowds in particularly Midwest America. John Glenn is a great figure out there.

GREENE: What about George Stevens? Was he along at all?

BARRY: I remember George Stevens a couple of occasions, as far as television spots in Indiana, possibly in Oregon, but I don't remember him too much.

GREENE: How did these social friends -- how were they regarded by the professional staff?

BARRY: I don't know. I liked them. I don't know what the rest of the staff.... I was not actually part of his staff in a way that they would confide in me. I was kind of a hybrid, a friend of the Senator, but also a very definite professional with a job to do that had nothing to do with their jobs. So I wouldn't know, really, what they were thinking or saying.

GREENE: What was your own feeling about the law and order issue?

BARRY: That's quite a question. Do you mean the Senator's...

GREENE: The way the campaign.... After the assassination and the reduction of the Vietnam question, there seemed to be a trend towards making law and order the issue, the need for calm in the cities. How did you personally feel about this?

BARRY: Well, I agree with it, I agree with law and order. Of course, with my background, policeman and FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation]

agent and security. I think the country needed that, and I think he was making some telling points, and I thought he had the expertise to say it. He was a good spokesman for that. He would have done a good job on it.

GREENE: What discussions did you ever have with him, off the record, about this? Any at all?

BARRY: Nothing really significant.

GREENE: Yesterday you mentioned that in Lansing, Michigan there was a rooftop rifleman reported. What ever happened to him? Do you know?

BARRY: As we arrived at the airport, the chief inspector in charge of the detail came to me and said that it had been ascertained that this individual had been identified, and he was an office worker for the state. He had planned a hunting weekend and so had brought his rifle to work with him and intended to leave immediately after work for his hunting expedition. And it was totally an innocent mistake.

GREENE: Also, in Salt Lake City there was apparently a bomb threat. What happened with regard to this?

BARRY: This might have set the tone for the security for the rest of the campaign. The first threat we had was in Monterey. This was the second day of the campaign. It was, I thought, a rather serious threat. They identified the man and subsequently charged him with an extortion plot. I don't know what happened to him officially, but he was identified and kept under surveillance while the Senator was in Monterey. I believe later he was arrested and charged with extortion. The second incident was in Salt Lake City somewhere around 5:00. He had a speech to make that night. As we left the hotel, we pulled away from the curb, a police car pulled up to the car that I was sitting in, which was one in advance of the Senator, and told us all to pull over, that weren't going to go anywhere. He stopped the motorcade, and I asked him why. And he said that there had been a bomb threat, and we weren't going to be allowed to proceed. I told the Senator that, and he said, "We're going to proceed. Tell him to get out of the way." And we proceeded, and we were met by a cordon of police blocking the street to the theater. And they wouldn't let the motorcade go any further, and the Senator got out and walked through the streets, arriving in the lobby of the hotel to be stopped by the chief of police, who asked for the security man and talked to me about it. I, of course, had advised the Senator to wait until they had time to search for the bomb or ascertain whether the complaint was a legitimate one or not. His opinion was that as long as there were people in that auditorium that came to see him, he wanted to be with them, that if there was a threat to them, it was because he had indicated he'd be at this place at a certain time, and he did not intend to back out of it because he was afraid and he was going on. The chief of police stopped me and, of course, the Senator was

behind me, and he indicated that the Salt Lake City officials would not allow us to enter this thing. And if we did so, it would be on our

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own authority and that the city officials could not be blamed for what happened. So I said, "Well, we're going in." And Senator Kennedy stopped me and said, "Bill, what is he saying?" And I told him about the statement of the chief of police saying that if we went ahead it would be on our own volitions and it would be our responsibility. The Senator pointed out to the chief of police immediately that there were people in there, and it wasn't his responsibility that they were in there. He pointed out to me that if I had accepted that, it would have put the blame for any problems that happened on the Senator. So the chief of police said, "Well, I'll let you go on in, but you have to let me make an announcement." So the Senator said, "All right, but it's still your responsibility, and it's still your authority; whether I'm here or not, it's still your problem." So the Senator marched in and took his place on the platform. The chief of police stepped front and center and told the assembled audience that, "Ladies and gentlemen, there is no need to panic, but there has been received a report that there is a bomb somewhere in the auditorium." No, I couldn't believe my ears when he made this statement. I felt that there would be a wholesale rush and stampede for the doors. And not one person got up. Nobody left. The chief of police then said, "Well, it's your responsibility if you stay," and left the stage. The Senator started to speak and made some reference to it in a rather funny manner and went on with his speech, and nobody left. It was a great speech. That was the Salt Lake City incident. But the point was, I think it illustrates, again with the incident of the Lansing Police Department and the Cleveland Police Department and wherever we got a threat, we just forged right ahead. So that was the Salt Lake City incident!

GREENE: Before we go on to something else, are there any others that you think would be worth hearing? Any other such incidents?

BARRY: I think I mentioned yesterday the sniper in Gary, Indiana on the overpass. I think there are so many of them. These were the highlights. We also had many letters from various areas. Before we went in the area, I'd screen the letters and see whether there was anybody that I had to worry about.

GREENE: How could you tell which you should worry about and which were just...

BARRY: Well, I'd worry about all of them. What I meant was anyone in that area. There might not have been a letter from that geographical area. But if there were really some bad ones, I'd want to know about it. For instance, people who had repeated threats would be of more interest than a rambling anonymous letter which was obviously a deranged person.

GREENE: What did you do with those that you considered immediately serious?

BARRY: Well, I'd be more alert. There's not much you can do unless there's a description attached to the letter, or some way the person has been arrested so that there's a photograph. And if there was anything

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like that, well, we'd make it available to the police escort, hopefully in advance of this. And if the information came to us in advance, the advance man would tell the local police. Or they would tell him if they got the information. There was another threat in Evansville, Indiana that was made. That was a serious one, but you know, by that time it was just something that we lived with. It wasn't anything special; you just tried to be more alert and closer to the Senator.

GREENE: Some people have said that there was a lot of consciousness on the part particularly of the people who had worked in the '60 campaign, when they were in the streets, of looking around and of fear of somebody, especially at a window or on a rooftop. Were you aware of this?

BARRY: Well, I think a lot of people -- any American that was an adult in 1963 was obviously aware of danger from rooftops or high buildings. And I think that people were naturally looking up at windows. I don't know what good it would do if you looked up and saw something. The only thing you could do was, you know, take care of the Senator. We looked up one time and saw a rifle, and it was a policeman. You know, how do you know whether he's a policeman or not; he wasn't in his uniform. But that's not answering the question. The question was, "Did I know a lot of people were looking up?" I guess some of them were. I think some of the press corps were very alert to this.

GREENE: What would you do on an occasion like the one you mentioned, where you actually saw a rifleman and he wasn't in uniform?

BARRY: Well, luckily the chief of police was standing right there. I pointed him out; he said, "That's one of ours."

GREENE: Were there any differences in security arrangements in the ghettos?

BARRY: Yes. The Senator dismissed all the police in the ghettos. In Watts for instance, our first trip, again, it was decided that the Senator would go into Watts alone without any police escort. I don't know whether they're properly called the government of Watts -- but the Sons of Watts, which were a group of people that were attempting to establish their own law and order in Watts -- met us at the edge of the district and escorted the car through screaming, dense crowds of black people. And they were rather good about it. And the Senator indicated that I should stay in the background, but they

weren't getting anywhere so that I forged up and helped them move him through the crowd. They were really great. They were terrific fellows. They ringed the platform and helped us get to the car, really nice fellows. But in any ghetto he would just not go in with police, or would rather not.

GREENE: What comes to mind about his relationship with the black people?

BARRY: Well, I think he had great patience and tolerance for them. I

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think he was very sensitive to their problems. Many times he'd indicate to me that I shouldn't be so rough on them through a crowd, for instance, because they had problems and they were very sensitive to being pushed or in any way.... I remember in the Detroit ghetto it was really a terribly hot day, and it was a brutally long motorcade through that district. He had made a noonday speech in Kennedy Square. It was fantastic, about thirty thousand people or fifty thousand. There just seemed to be people all over, and now we're in a motorcade that took about five hours. Just two things on the motorcade: he mentioned that the faces in the Detroit ghetto were much more sullen than the faces in other ghettos, that the faces in Detroit didn't seem to have any hope, that they just seemed to be beaten down and that there was a different feeling in the Detroit ghetto than there was in Watts which was a festive occasion. But in Detroit it was entirely different. They weren't excited about him. They were just looking at him, to measure him. He left the car and went into a storefront operation that had to do with getting jobs. And I helped him through the crowd, and he said to me, "Wait outside. These people probably don't want you." So that I had to wait outside while he went into this tremendously crowded store. But they always took care of him so that I learned not to worry so much. Shortly after this storefront thing, he went into a church in which the assembled Negroes and, I think it was "We Shall Overcome." I thought it was really quite a beautiful thing. But he mentioned to me that these were the people who were criticized by the ghetto residents as being "Uncle Toms," that they weren't really the people that had the basic problems that he was interested in. He was really sensitive to the shadings and the problems that they had.

GREENE: What about the universities, his reception in the different parts of the country at the universities?

BARRY: Well, I think the universities were a major segment of the campaign. I think that he really turned them on. The first trip through, we went to the University of Nebraska, the University of Albuquerque, a couple of universities in California, two universities in Portland, Oregon, the Mormon university in Provo. One incident in Albuquerque was rather funny. It was very hot and sunny and beautiful in Albuquerque, and the students were arranged tier by tier in their football stadium. The lectern was put rather near the stands, and the students filled in the area on the football field. And he was looking up and he was asking for questions. One student raised his hand, and he said,

“That girl up there in the blue sweater.” And everybody laughed. And he said, “Oh, no, don’t tell me. Are you a boy?” And the boy yelled out, “Yes. I’m a boy.” So the Senator said, “Well, you’re proving to me that I’d better get a haircut.” [Laughter] I think that the easy rapport he established with students was fantastic. He answered questions, and he didn’t duck anything. The questions were interesting. The students wanted to know the answers, and the give-and-take in those student sessions were probably the finest hours of the campaign. At least in my opinion, I enjoyed those the best.

GREENE: Did he enjoy them particularly?

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BARRY: He really did. The universities that stand out in my mind were the University of Pennsylvania -- they were very, very McCarthy, and so was the University of Washington. But specifically, in the University of Pennsylvania when he started to speak, he was being heckled by the McCarthy students. So he threw away his speech and started to talk extemporaneously about the problems and answered all of their questions. And as he left he got a standing ovation. Just that really electric quality he had when he went away from a prepared speech was fantastic. And he got better and better as he went along. And the greatest, I think, speech of all to students was made at Purdue. Purdue, again, is a conservative area, and I’m sure voted for Nixon. But the student body came to see and not to be swayed and they, at the end, gave him a standing ovation. I think it was generally accepted that the Purdue speech was his best.

In Notre Dame, he was really exuberantly received, and there was one question that stood out. It was a tall Negro boy in the front row, and he stood up and he asked the question about the draft. And his question was that he didn’t think it was fair that anybody 6’10”, as he was, should be drafted. And he wanted to know what the Senator’s opinion was on the draft height requirements. So the Senator said, “It reminds me of a story my brother Jack told. When he was a lieutenant in the Navy, he was given an assignment to talk about disasters, and he talked about fires. And he said there was one type of fire you could put out with the extinguisher, but the second type of fire of gasoline, you would have to use the other type of extinguisher. And the question was asked, ‘Which type do you use on which type of fire?’” Senator Kennedy said his brother said, “Well, there’ll be a speaker next week to explain that.” [Laughter] And so he said, “Next week there’ll be someone through that’ll explain why a 6’10” fellow has to go into the army.” And the students really liked that. He had a lot of rapport. He never evaded a question.

Usually one of the big things with student audience was, “What do you think about the draft?” And the Senator would always come up with this kind of a.... He’d ask for a show of hands: who favored the draft and who didn’t. It was always overwhelmingly everybody wanted to get rid of the draft. Then he said.... Oh, I’m sorry, not the draft, the student deferments. They all wanted student deferments. Then he pointed out was it fair that a black man who owned a gasoline station and had a son who was working in a gasoline station should have his son drafted, where a wealthy man such as Senator Kennedy could always get his sons into college, and keep them there until the war was over? Did they think

it was fair that the Negro youth had to go, and Senator Kennedy's son would not have to go? And 20 percent of the casualties were being suffered by Negroes, and that was disproportionate with their representation in the population. And then there were a few other things. But when he got through with this line of questioning, he again asked for a show of hands, and he swung them all over to the fact that they didn't believe student deferments were fair. So that was really interesting. At first I thought he was really out of his mind asking the question, but he knew what he wanted, and he said it, and he convinced them.

GREENE: Were there any places that were especially difficult at the universities?

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BARRY: Difficult in what way?

GREENE: Well, as far as harassment goes.

BARRY: There were two, both of them in California. One was in -- I'm not sure whether it was San Francisco University or San Francisco State....

GREENE: State, I think it was; at least that's the one I'm aware of.

BARRY: San Francisco State, yes. That was really a rough night. We walked into many, many "boos." As we approached the stage, this fellow started to spit at us and called the Senator a fascist pig and was screaming. I backed into him, and the Senator got through. And as the Senator started to speak, this fellow started to climb up on the stage, screaming all the time "fascist pig." So I ushered him out of the area and threw him out of the auditorium with some campus police. The Senator started to make his prepared speech, and he was just booed and heckled so that he threw away the speech, and he asked for questions. And he started to answer questions. He did a masterful job with them, really fantastic. But there was a determined group of "hippie" types that the campus police told me were from the nearby Haight-Ashbury district. And they just were there to heckle and they weren't there to listen. It was just a wild evening. As we left the auditorium, we were really mobbed getting out of there. That was really a wild night.

Another wild night was, I believe, in Valley State in the San Fernando Valley. I'm not really sure of that. But it was outside Los Angeles, and it was another hostile student group that were just critical of everything the Senator said and booed and just refused to listen.

GREENE: What portion of the audience would you say these groups were?

BARRY: What portion? In San Francisco State about 10 percent; in the other one maybe about 15 percent.

GREENE: Was he able to win over the crowd in either of these places?

BARRY: The crowd, the majority of the crowd, yes, due to his patience with these people. But there was no chance, I don't think, of changing their minds because they weren't listening to him, the small group.

GREENE: What did he say about the more extreme students? Do you remember anything?

BARRY: Well, I complimented him on the San Francisco State thing. I said, "You handled this beautifully." He said, "Well, I hated to get away from my prepared speech, but there was no chance to give it. The only way to handle a crowd like this," he said, "was to ask for their questions." But, you see, then some supporters of Senator Kennedy would

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try to shout down the unmannerly ones and try to support him. And he said the thing to do is to calm his supporters down and deal with the questions as they came, rather than get into a shouting contest either way. So that was his opinion on how to handle a hostile audience like that.

GREENE: Was he sympathetic at all with these kids? Did he think that they were just responding to the problems?

BARRY: Well, he was sympathetic to genuine kids that had genuine questions. But these people were determined to -- they were there to harass, not to have a dialogue. They weren't there at all... And I'm sure he wasn't sympathetic to them.

GREENE: What about the meeting with Indiana medical students? Were you present at that?

BARRY: That was a great day. He spoke to these kids. The phrase current in the country that summer was, "Tell it like it is." And whenever he got a chance in situations like this, he never evaded it; he told it like it is. The question and answer period again produced some question, and it was the draft deferment thing. He asked for the show of hands, and he gave his reasons why he felt that student draft deferments weren't fair. And one of the boys in the audience spoke back that he felt that (draft deferments for) doctors were fair, and it wasn't true that Negroes were being unfairly sent to Vietnam. Senator Kennedy said, "Well, I look out at this audience, and I don't see many blackfaces." A black boy in the back said, "Well, I'm here." And Senator Kennedy said, "Well, you stick out." There were a lot of these real head-to-head discussions with these students on various issues such as student deferments and the Vietnam war. And he really slugged it out with them. That was one of his finest hours. And after he finished, the majority

of students stood in line to shake his hand. And there was really a rather warm feeling in the room after he finished speaking.

GREENE: Is there anything else on the universities that you'd like to tell?

BARRY: I think he enjoyed going to the universities. He got a tremendous charge out of the kids and their answers and their interest in what was going on. He felt that the students were generally better informed and more interested in what was going on in the country. I enjoyed the universities too.

GREENE: Now to return again to Indiana, to try to finish up there. Was anything said, to your knowledge, about Branigin [Roger D. Branigin] and his remaining in the race after Johnson withdrew?

BARRY: Not that I can recall that's significant. Just the fact that he was probably.... No. I really can't think of anything specific.

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GREENE: Where did the idea for the Wabash Cannonball originate?

BARRY: Gee, I don't know, but it was a good idea. It might have been with the Senator. I think the Senator was pressing for different campaign approaches, rather than the everyday going to street corner rallies and speeches at night. I think he wanted different approaches to the day of campaigning, and that was one of them. I probably think he pressed for that and someone -- I don't know who came up with the Wabash Cannonball. I think a woman took credit for it, a local politician was the one who said she thought of it. I don't know. It could have been. I don't really know.

GREENE: Was there any discussion, any disagreement among the staff, as to whether it was a good idea or not?

BARRY: I don't know.

GREENE: What are some of the more memorable occurrences on the Wabash Cannonball?

BARRY: Well, I think the band singing the "Wabash Cannonball," two guitars and, I think, a banjo. I just enjoyed that. And then, of course, the press wrote a song called the "Ruthless Cannonball" that was great. And the Senator really enjoyed that.

GREENE: Were you aware that it was being written?

BARRY: Yes.

GREENE: How did this affect your job? Did it make it a great deal easier than the motorcades?

BARRY: Well, as I explained yesterday, it was easier between stations, but at the station it was rather hectic. I felt a responsibility for those children who were rushing after the train. I guess basically it was an easier day than the motorcade. The motorcades were absolutely the toughest.

GREENE: Was it much easier on the staff and the Senator himself?

BARRY: Yea, I think the Senator enjoyed those whistle-stop tours. And it certainly was easier on the staff. He gave the same talk each whistle-stop.

GREENE: One more question about that famous motorcade through the Northeast of Indiana. What was the crowd makeup? Was it largely black or largely white? Was it mixed?

BARRY: Well, it was such a long motorcade. Oh gosh, it seems to me it was five hours long. And normally it should have taken an hour

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to drive the route. So that indicates that it was densely packed, and it was. But the size of the route was such that we went through different ethnic neighborhoods, all kinds of people. Whatever the mix was in Gary and Hammond and Whiting, we saw them all. They waited; they waited three hours. By the end of the motorcade people had been standing and waiting for three hours to see the Senator. And I remember the mayor of Hammond was there. Most of the motorcade was in Hammond, and we felt that when we got over the Hammond boundary, we'd be almost at the end. So we'd keep asking the mayor of Hammond -- Mrs. Kennedy and myself and the Senator -- we'd say, "Mayor, when will we be out of Hammond?" And he answered for two hours, "Just two more blocks, just two more blocks." So after it Mrs. Kennedy asked me, oh I guess about a week later, she said, "What was the toughest part of the Indiana campaign?" And I said, "Well, the toughest part, Mrs. Kennedy, was Hammond, Hammond, Hammond, Hammond, Hammond." Because we never got out of Hammond, it seemed. We were in Hammond forever. But the people were there. And the Senator had a feeling that if people were there to see him, he had an obligation to see them and not just a "quicky." He wasn't going to speed through any area. He went slowly. We were expected back for a staff workers and, I guess, volunteer worker party in Indianapolis that night, so we should have canceled the motorcade, but he wouldn't hear of it.

So he never did make that party in Indianapolis. He continued this motorcade because he felt he had an obligation to those people.

GREENE: What was the outlook that evening as far as the possible results the next day?

BARRY: I think he was very satisfied that he was going to win.

GREENE: And when the results came in, was he satisfied?

BARRY: Well, he was satisfied and gratified that he'd won, but I think he expected a larger margin.

GREENE: What were the areas which surprised him as far as the way they went?

BARRY: Oh, gosh, I don't know.

GREENE: Was there anything discussed, that you were aware of, as far as what McCarthy's position was at this point and how he might be dealt with?

BARRY: I don't remember any details about that.

GREENE: Anything else before we leave Indiana?

BARRY: Just the general observation that during the first tour through Indiana the people were very unreceptive, especially in Evansville, but that the last week of the campaign the people in Indiana really were excited about the Senator and very much for him. It just changed completely

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and so it indicated to me that anybody that had a chance to see him and listen to him would probably support him.

GREENE: Would you personally say that had the campaign been a couple weeks longer he might have done even better?

BARRY: Yes. I think so.

GREENE: Do you know who was doing most of the groundwork in Nebraska? Who was in charge of the organization there?

BARRY: Jim Green [James F. Green] was, I think, the leading figure in the Kennedy for President in Nebraska, and he was a fine man. He subsequently died. After the funeral, he had a heart attack and died.

GREENE: Excuse me, after what funeral?

BARRY: After, I'm sorry, Senator Kennedy's funeral. He returned to Nebraska and died. He came East for the funeral and then died shortly thereafter. It was so much stress on him. He really loved the Senator, and worked very hard for him.

GREENE: I didn't know that. What about Philip Sorensen? What was his role?

BARRY: Well, he was very active too. He traveled with us quite a bit. Jim Green was more or less based in Omaha, Nebraska and handled most of the action around there. Phil, for instance, he was on the whistle-stop through Nebraska. I think he had many contacts throughout the state and was very good and very active.

GREENE: Was the Senator generally satisfied with the organization in Nebraska?

BARRY: Yes. I'm sure he was.

GREENE: How about the May 10th motorcade through the southeastern Nebraska towns?

BARRY: Yeah. That was a great day in bright sunshine, good receptive crowds and interesting cities. The motorcade was much like many other motorcades. In Nebraska, the crowds were not as difficult. They were very reserved. You could jump off a car, and people would just make a path for you. People would wave rather than try to shake hands and try to pull him off the car. He'd just wave to them and they'd be very happy with that. They didn't seem to want the aggressive body contact that other crowds wanted.

GREENE: Was this motorcade very different from the one in Hammond, Hammond, Hammond?

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BARRY: Well, for that reason. The crowds weren't as excited. It was a daytime motorcade. I think the motorcades that were really difficult and dangerous were the ones when it was dark. The people became frightened, and when they became frightened, they pushed each other and kind of a crowd stampede developed. And, of course, in the dark people couldn't see the Senator, so the press photographers shined a light on him -- which I thought as a security problem, was very acute. He's standing up on top of a convertible with a spotlight on him, and that wasn't so good. So the nighttime motorcades were, I thought, really a nightmare for me.

GREENE: That night there was a Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner in Omaha. Were you present at that?

BARRY: Yes.

GREENE: What are your recollections?

BARRY: Well, the Senator spoke first before Hubert Humphrey spoke, and I think left before Hubert Humphrey spoke. And he just wasn't "on" that night. He was off. I think it's much like performing -- you either have it or you don't. And that night, I guess, he just was flat. He just wasn't his best. He was received cordially but not overwhelmingly, politely, I guess. That's about all I remember.

GREENE: Was there any explanation for why he was "off"? Did it have anything to do with the type of audience he was addressing?

BARRY: No. I don't think so. It could have been that the audience wasn't as receptive; that could be. Sometimes that affects a speaker, but I think he was just tired. I think the campaign was catching up to him.

GREENE: Somewhere in the midst of this Nebraska campaign, you went to South Dakota. I think it was around Mother's Day. What do you remember about that trip?

BARRY: We went to South Dakota, as I remember, and stopped in Hubert Humphrey's hometown. I think that's Huron. The speaker's stand was on a street corner, and it became known that the Humphrey drugstore was catty-corner across the street. And the Senator went in to see Mrs. Humphrey [Harriet Humphrey] and bought a box of candy from her and wished her a happy Mother's Day and stated that he wished he could see his mother. And she said something equally nice. She was a very gracious woman. She was really excited about the visit, I think.

GREENE: Were you aware of any added emphasis on Hubert Humphrey after this point, especially after that Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner? Did he become more involved in the Senator's speeches? Did he become more of a target than he had been before?

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BARRY: Well, I imagine he did. I just don't have any knowledge of it, no accurate recollection.

GREENE: In a place called Wahoo, in Nebraska, Robert Kennedy apparently made a reference to President Kennedy for the first time in many, many weeks. Was

there any discussion, to your knowledge, about why the references to President Kennedy were cut out?

BARRY: No, I don't know. I think, if I'm not mistaken, Wahoo is the location of John F. Kennedy College, which would have been the reason for the reference. Also I think the college was being threatened with a lack of finances, and there was some indication that it would be closed. So the president of the college made reference to that. And I think it would be quite natural that he would mention something about President Kennedy.

GREENE: What do you remember about primary night in Nebraska? What was the reaction?

BARRY: Well, that was a happy primary night. I think it was great. Of course the visits to the campaign workers headquarters were always rough. That was a particularly rough one. It was a small area and many people were pressed in. And they were happy and a lot of young people. We got through the crowd. He made a nice speech to them and then came back and faced the television cameras. It was a good night.

GREENE: What do you mean when you say "rough?"

BARRY: Rough, in the sense -- in the reference that I use it, is in a security nature in that the Senator was constantly moving from television interview to television interview and then leaving the hotel to go to the campaign workers. And it was a long night. Then the next morning, we were waiting for the motorcade to form; the Senator and I walked around the block, discussing what had happened. He was very happy and very relaxed and felt that Nebraska had been very good to him, and that he was reluctant to leave it. He liked the state, and he liked the people there. We were on our way West after that.

GREENE: Did he say anything about his prospects for Oregon?

BARRY: No. I think he was still looking backward to his victory, and it was a good one.

[BEGIN SIDE II, TAPE I]

GREENE: During the break you mentioned that there were a couple anecdotes you'd forgotten in the Nebraska region. Why don't you go over those?

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BARRY: Well, one concerned Norfolk, Nebraska. It's a very small town in Nebraska, and we would go to the largest cattle auction in the United States. We arrived

and the cattle auction turned out to be a horse auction. They were auctioning off cow ponies. It was in a semicircle amphitheater, and the seats were very steep. They weren't seats really, they were benches in rows, in a semicircle, in a very steep climb up to the top. This whole amphitheater was filled with cowboys and ranchers and their wives, in very colorful cowboy hats and dresses and weather-beaten faces, and the auctioneer had a long whip. The press piled in.... The stables were behind the amphitheater. The rink where these horses were to be shown was again a semicircle; probably the entire semicircle, on the diameter, would be about fifteen to twenty feet, which didn't give much room for a horse. And then the press lined the bottom of the audience area, standing in the rink. The first cowboy came charging out with that horse and at top speed headed for the press, and they scattered. And he pulled him up short and then backed him up and did these various cowboy cutting tricks with the cow pony. And the Senator and I were on the auction platform, which was the only other thing in the show rink. And I looked sharply, but I couldn't see anybody make a bid, but those horses were sold. We watched about eight horses being auctioned off. It was just a great American scene. These kind of things rejuvenated you when you saw this was still going on. The horses were great and the press really got a kick out of that.

And then the other anecdote concerned an advance man; I mentioned him yesterday. We called him the "eternal pessimist." It was Bill Foley. And it was the Omaha end of the Nebraska whistle-stop. The train pulled into the station, and the Senator was changing to his formal clothes for this rather formal speech he was making in the Omaha auditorium. And the advance man rushed on the train and grabbed me and said, "You've got to stall the Senator." I said, "Why?" "Well," he said, "there's nobody in the auditorium. There's absolutely nobody there." He said, "If he ever walks into that auditorium and sees only a couple hundred people, he'll kill me." Now Foley was dressed in a -- it hadn't rained in the whole campaign, and he had a raincoat on and an umbrella. He had a belt and suspenders. He was a perfect pessimist. I said, "Now, are you sure?" He said, "Yes, I'm sure." I said, "Well, I wouldn't tell Senator Kennedy he had to sit on this train for anyone, and I don't advise you to. I think you ought to just take your chances and hope that somebody gets into that auditorium before we get there. What we'll do is drive slowly." And he insisted, "No, I have to tell the Senator," and he rushed past us and went in and told the Senator. And the Senator was furious. He said, "How could this happen? You've been working on this for days." And he said, "We're not going to wait," and we charged ahead. We walked into the auditorium, and it was completely filled with six thousand people. And, of course, Foley was the butt of every joke from then on in the campaign about the half-filled auditoriums. He learned a lesson then, not to anticipate trouble.

GREENE: Before the break we were talking about those side trips to Ohio, Detroit, and Iowa, and I think you were mentioning an incident that occurred.

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BARRY: Well, he had great crowds in the Iowa towns. I think there were three that we visited, Davenport and Ames and I forget the other one, but they were good

crowds. Governor Hughes [Harold Hughes] met him, which heartened us because we needed his support. It just was a generally successful day in Iowa.

GREENE: Anything about Ohio and Detroit?

BARRY: No. Just that Columbus was -- again we traveled through the ghetto. We were three hours late getting to the hotel to talk to the delegates. Kenny O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell] was a little upset at this delay, but there wasn't a thing we could do about it. The ghetto just turned out en masse to greet the Senator. It was a wild scene. And actually, we never would have made it except for a vigilante ad hoc committee of strong young black men who said, "We're going to help you get out of this." And they formed a chain along either side of the car and kept the crowds back on the sidewalk as we went along. However, it didn't deter the crowd from running alongside of the convertible, so when we arrived at downtown Columbus, we had five thousand back people from the ghetto running along, shouting and singing "We Shall Overcome." And the Senator said, "Bill, look at this policeman. Watch him when he turns around. He's directing traffic and he doesn't see us coming." And this white policeman held up his hand to stop the traffic and then turned and saw what was coming, and it was just an amazed expression on his face. He couldn't believe it. And the crowd was so exuberant, when we hit the hotel that the delegates were meeting in it became rather dangerous. Our vigilantes had to keep the crowd back away from the late glass windows. And we asked our vigilantes to come in and have a drink and something to eat with us, and they did. Actually they stayed and stayed and stayed, and finally I had to leave them and go to bed. The Senator went on to meet with the Ohio delegates and came away from that rather pleased and knew he had to do some more work there. But he was gratified with the trip. He thought it was worthwhile.

GREENE: We talked quite a bit on the other tape about Oregon, but there are a couple other questions. Was Senator Morse [Wayne Morse] with you at all?

BARRY: No. Not that I remember.

GREENE: Was there any special effort made in the last six days of Oregon to put things together?

BARRY: Oh, I'm sure there was. I wasn't aware of it though.

GREENE: Didn't seem to be running harder than ever?

BARRY: Well, the Senator was running harder. Yeah. I think the problem they had there -- at least this is the problem Herb Schmertz told me -- was that it was a problem getting events to attend. The other locations seemed to lend themselves to.... Well, we did do a

whistle-stop tour of Oregon, down to Salem. They had trouble scheduling things in Oregon. The one thing that I remember was that the Senator appeared at a high school convention, a mock convention, on the order of a Democratic Convention. Each group of students had various states. It was rather a well done thing for a high school. He was asked to address the convention, and he did, and he was chagrined to find out he lost the primary election at that high school by a certain number of percentages to an opponent that didn't even appear at the high school. That wasn't too happy a choice by the scheduling people to go to that high school.

GREENE: Anything additional to what you've said already on the mildness of the crowds in Oregon? Was it a very obvious contrast?

BARRY: Yes. It really was. Mild and non-receptive, I think, was probably more accurate. One crowd. I think it was a noontime crowd in Eugene, he spoke to without any applause or any response of any kind, and when he finished, they just walked away. So that was the type of reaction you remembered in Oregon.

GREENE: How did this kind of thing affect him?

BARRY: Well, he was surprised by it and tried to figure out why, why this would occur.

GREENE: Do you remember anything at all about the wiretapping charges that appeared around May 25th?

BARRY: Yes, I did. I remember the wiretapping charges. And I think his response was correct -- that he was responding to a request by the FBI. I don't think there was anything really significant. Are you speaking about the wiretapping of Martin Luther King? I don't think he had anything to do with that, and I think that was his position.

GREENE: Was this anything you had ever discussed with him previously, wiretapping in general?

BARRY: No, I never did.

GREENE: Even while you were at the FBI?

BARRY: No. If we had discussed it, I, of course, would have been in favor of wiretapping. And I'm sure he would opt for controls on it. And I think any wiretapping that was done, I am sure was done without his knowledge. Wiretapping of Martin Luther King, I'm sure, was done without his knowledge.

GREENE: Is this just your own feeling?

BARRY: Yes, yes, oh sure. It's just my own feeling.

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GREENE: What was the mood the night of the Oregon primary and the next morning?

BARRY: Well, I think it was apprehensive before the election, and then I think it was rather grim after it. I thought he was very manly about it. As I remember it, we came from Los Angeles and arrived in Oregon and it looked rather bad then, and he didn't make any excuses. He accepted the defeat, and he didn't yell at anyone or blame anyone for it. I think it was one of his finest hours.

GREENE: Would you agree with those who said that he actually seemed relieved?

BARRY: No, I don't think he was relieved to lose.

GREENE: But you did say yesterday that he was somewhat less vulnerable.

BARRY: Well, it was my opinion that his public image made him more vulnerable; not that he was less vulnerable. People, instead of seeing an all-conquering -- I don't think anybody likes a constant winner. I think there's something in the American people that kind of likes people that are vulnerable, that can lose, that are human. My own opinion was that that loss made him a lot more human in the public eye than he had been before. And the reaction in Los Angeles, "We'll Make It Up to You, Bobby" type thing, indicates that was correct.

GREENE: Anything additional on that first day or two in Los Angeles after the Oregon loss?

BARRY: No.

GREENE: Were you conscious of any of the discussion that was going on about where to direct the campaign as far as which groups to go after?

BARRY: I think it was more a location. It seemed to me that they were deciding whether to concentrate in Southern California or to spend x number of hours in San Francisco and in Northern California. The predominance of the votes were actually in the southern part of the state. That would be the only thing that I was aware of. I think that they had decided to phase away from the college audience type thing. The radical students were making it unpalatable to the press, that the reports were exaggerated; that these students and the benefits gotten out of the appearances to the college audience were being outweighed by these radical attacks. And the image of Senator Kennedy always with students had to be changed. That was definitely a trend. I think the Senator felt -- I

should say, the Senator said that he felt the country wanted to get back to some kind of a normalcy, that the crowd scenes that we had in the beginning of the campaign -- the shouting, screaming, people pulling at him, tearing his hair and getting his cuff links -- the image of an exciting candidate, he felt this was unsettling. The people in America really wanted a calm approach, somebody

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that had answers and was not going to stir up things but rather bring people together. And he felt these college audience type reports were more or less pointing him out as a candidate that was not a reasoned, mature candidate but an exciting candidate. And he felt the American people wanted to have a change from this excitement.

GREENE: What was done to make these changes?

BARRY: Well, one of the things was not to schedule him into colleges. But, of course, that was rather late now. That was a week or two away from the California election, at most.

GREENE: Was there anything else on California? Were the crowds universally terrific in California, or were they concentrated in the big cities?

BARRY: I think we were met at airports with a mix of anti-Kennedy people and Kennedy. The crowds were uniformly good wherever we went. He spoke at a Jewish synagogue, after a long motorcade through a Mexican district in which he lost his shoe. He borrowed Dutton's shoes and spoke in Dutton's shoes and did a great job. But he was received very lukewarmly by this Jewish crowd. After the speech, it was reported to us that a photographer, a really nice fellow from Oregon, had a four hundred dollar camera stolen. In fact, I'm sorry, it wasn't reported to us after it. He was on the candidate's car taking some close television pictures of this crowd scene, and I was on the verge of being pulled off. He put his camera down to help me and hold onto my belt, and in the press of the crowd somebody stole his camera. So we searched through the crowd, I did, immediately. There was a large Mexican youth in the crowd, and I grabbed him and said, "Did you see anything?" "No, I didn't." So I said, "I'm with the Senator and he's very upset about this. It's your people that stole this camera, so would you try to find out who took it and get it back to us at the Ambassador Hotel." After the speech, we went back to the Ambassador Hotel, and this Mexican youth was there with his mother and father. He had found who stole the camera and returned it to the cameraman. Actually returned it to the Senator and I, and we got it back to the cameraman. It was quite a thing. So we took him in and treated he and his mother and father to dinner and talked to them for a while. The Senator came in and shook their hands and thanked them. So they were very excited. I thought that was quite something. He didn't want the Mexican community to get a black eye in the Senator's opinion. He felt the Mexican community had a stake in Senator Kennedy, and he didn't want the Senator to be upset or disappointed in the Mexicans. He told the Senator that.

GREENE: When you say the crowds were often mixed, were they people who were not for the Senator? Were they McCarthy people or just generally not Kennedy people?

BARRY: Generally not Kennedy people. There were quite a few McCarthy students around. There was one anecdote, getting back to Indiana, that reminds me of the McCarthy students. The Senator finished

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his election night functions in the hotel. We were staying in a motel out near the airport, and he mentioned to me that he was hungry. Jimmy Breslin, the columnist, and I -- and I think there was another man -- and the Senator rode out to the motel. The only place to eat was a cafeteria in the terminal. As he and I walked through the airport, two students were waiting for their plane tickets. And he stopped and shook hands with them, and he asked which side they were on. They said McCarthy, and they were very glum kids. So he invited them in to eat because their plane wasn't for another hour or so. He took them in, and they sat down opposite the Senator. And the Senator proceeded to discuss issues and Senator McCarthy, and why they were for him, and why they couldn't find it in their heart to support Senator Kennedy, and why didn't they like him. And they leveled with him, and there was this frank discussion back and forth. And it lasted for about two hours. Finally, he invited them back to the motel to meet Mrs. Kennedy. Now it was about 1:30 or a quarter of two. I signaled to the kids to say no, and they did, thankfully. And he was disappointed in that, but I felt that he had extended himself so much, and he was so tired and he needed his rest. As we walked back to the motel, he and I alone, we walked from the airplane terminal to the motel. He pointed out to me that these were the kind of kids that he wanted to support him. They were bright, they were intelligent, they knew what they wanted, and they could speak articulately about it. And he felt that it was a very important part of his campaign not to exacerbate the feelings between -- to differentiate between Senator McCarthy and his supporters. He felt that if he won, he would want these kinds of kids dedicated to him --- that he felt they were important, and that he wanted them to support him, and he would never do anything to alienate them from him.

GREENE: What was their major objection to him?

BARRY: Well, they felt that he was ruthless, and that he hadn't entered New Hampshire. I think that was the big thing -- that he had been approached by Senator McCarthy, and that he said no he would not campaign in New Hampshire and that, matter of fact, after that he had made a statement that he would support the President, and that it was only after McCarthy demonstrated.... He opportunistically got into the race. And he pointed out that -- well, it went on, but that was their major objection.

GREENE: Was he able to make any headway with them?

BARRY: I think they came away liking him as a man and a person. I don't know how they would not like him as a person. They promised to think about it. I think the girl was definitely swung, but the boy was holding back. I wouldn't be surprised if, when they got home, that they changed. But they didn't on the spot, which amazed me. He turned all his persuasive powers on them, and they didn't change.

GREENE: Did he explain in any detail the reasoning for his reluctance to go in?

BARRY: Yes. He did, he really did. He went on and on but it didn't sway

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them. Jimmy Breslin wrote an article, a very good one, on this airport meeting with the two McCarthy students, a very good article on that.

GREENE: Were you present at the black caucus on May 30th, the meeting with the Oakland black caucus? What are your memories of that?

BARRY: Yes. We went alone; we were not escorted by the police, nor were the police advised that we were in the area. I, personally, was insulted by some black militants. They called me "white fuzz" and all of that so that I stayed quite in the background. The Senator went to Oakland with Rafer Johnson, and they sat on the stage, and they answered these questions that the black community had. Some of them were rather nasty questions about the Senator; I forget specifics on it, but it wasn't a happy meeting. One man who was rather mean about the whole thing said some things about the Senator that weren't very nice, and Rafer Johnson stood up on the platform and said, "You people make me sick to my stomach. The man came here, and you can't even be polite. He's my friend, and I can't stand to hear this business." And this black militant stood up and told Rafer Johnson, "You've got some nerve to be sick to your stomach. You're not living where we are, and you're not dressed the way we are. You're traveling with your friend, and you come in here and tell us, 'You have no right.'" So the thing got rather off the tracks, and the Senator told Rafer that he shouldn't have done that -- later he told him that -- and then immediately, he apologized. The Senator apologized to this man and said that they weren't here to argue, that he wanted to hear their positions on things. I think, in sum, it was probably a plus meeting. It wasn't the greatest meeting of joy and happiness, but I think it was good for both sides to be exposed to each other.

GREENE: Who else was there, besides you and Rafer?

BARRY: Gee, I think an advance man was. I believe it was Jim Tolan; I'm not quite sure on that though.

GREENE: Was John Glenn present?

BARRY: No, not to my knowledge. He might have been.

GREENE: Were you at the earlier sessions of this kind in Omaha and Indianapolis?

BARRY: Yes.

GREENE: Were they any different?

BARRY: Well, I think the Indianapolis one was a closed-door meeting. Is that the one you mean?

GREENE: Yes.

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BARRY: Where a group of black militants asked to see the Senator, and he saw them. There were about eight of them, and Walter Sheridan was at that meeting, and I was and Senator Kennedy....

GREENE: You mean Edward Kennedy?

BARRY: No, Senator Robert Kennedy was talking to this group in a hotel room in Indianapolis, and also Gerry Doherty [Gerard F. Doherty] -- I think that's his name, from Senator Ted Kennedy's staff -- and the rest of the people were all blacks. They were asked to discuss their problems with the Senator and be perfectly frank, and they were. They had a lot of problems, and they were perfectly frank. And I remember this was another rather hectic day, and he was sitting in his shirt sleeves smoking a cigar in an easy chair. And they were both standing and sitting around the room.

One thing stands out. One of the rather colorful and I would think the leader, one of the leaders of this group, said to him, "Well, we've had a lot of white man's promises, and we've talked to a lot of white politicians. You come in here and you need us. Now you need us to get votes, and you're in trouble because Governor Branigin is popular; everybody's against you basically, this is a tough state for you. The only people that you can count on are the blacks. But now you're making promises, and then we'll never see you again. So why should we listened to you anymore than we listen to everybody else that screwed us in the past?"

That was a pretty good question, I thought, and I looked at the Senator and wondered how he was going to handle this one. And he rolled that cigar around, and he had a twinkle in his blue eyes. And he looked at that fellow, and he said, "You don't know that I'm not going to screw you. For all you know, I can forget about you as soon as you leave this room. For all you know, I am just approaching you to get your help. However, I don't know where else you're going to go. You can't go to Branigan, he's not helping you. There's nobody else to go to. And I think you've got to look back on my record and the record of my family. And

you've got to decide whether I'm the kind of fellow that's going to lie to you, and if you decide I am, then don't support me."

They said, "Okay, we like you, and we like your family, but that doesn't mean that you're going to remember us. Indiana's a small thing. And when you get to Washington, you're going to forget about us black men in Indiana because we're not going to get you elected to presidency. Right now you need us for this little thing." So the Senator turned to Gerry Doherty and said, "Gerry, I want you to talk to these people and get to know them, and whatever happens, you've got to be available to these people and listen to their problems." So they accepted that, and that was the end of their black caucus.

GREENE: This was said out loud for the audience to hear?

BARRY: Well, it wasn't an audience now; it was a small room.

GREENE: Well, the group, excuse me.

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BARRY: Yes it was.

GREENE: His remarks to Doherty were open.

BARRY: Oh, yes. He introduced them to Doherty.

GREENE: Was this type of meeting publicly announced in any way?

BARRY: No, not at all. Neither one was.

GREENE: Did it have any specific goals, or was it just his way of...

BARRY: I just think it was to listen to their problems and also to expose them to him and get a kind of a mutual benefit out of it.

GREENE: Was there anything in particular about the one in Omaha that should be told?

BARRY: No. I don't really remember much about the one in Omaha. I might not even have been present. It's not clear in my mind.

GREENE: What about the advertising war in California with McCarthy? Do you remember that?

BARRY: No.

GREENE: With his, I guess somewhat vitriolic ads that he was running at that time. Was

there any conversation about it that you recall?

BARRY: No.

GREENE: What was the feeling at the windup of the California campaign?

BARRY: The feeling? I think it was very bullish. I think everyone thought that he was going to win in California and win big.

GREENE: Would you agree with those who said that his taste for the whole thing was somewhat reduced, that he really was not that enthusiastic at the end; he was kind of worn out?

BARRY: I think he was tired; there's no question about it, but I don't think his taste for the campaign or for the issues or for the ultimate goal was in any way abated. I think he was very much encouraged by what he saw in California and in South Dakota.

GREENE: Is there anything in the public record, just to conclude, that you would like to see amended or corrected? Anything about the Senator that you feel has been particularly unfair or inaccurate?

BARRY: Well, of course there's a book by Lasky [Victor Lasky] that I don't

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think deserves mention. I'm having trouble thinking of a public record that's unfavorable to the Senator. Do you have any specific thing in mind?

GREENE: No. I thought maybe you did. I meant things about his overall image which you feel are inaccurate or unfair?

BARRY: Oh, I don't know that his overall image today is what it was before he embarked on that campaign. I think people felt then he was being opportunistic, and that he was taking a calculated risk for the various reasons -- that he was for shellfish reasons running for the presidency. I think that after people were exposed to Senator Kennedy, they came away knowing that he was self-effacing; he had a good humor; he had a great grasp of the issues. I think that he was the man that promised the most hope of bridging the chasm between the two races and in some way blunting the appeal of the black militants to the Negro youths. And I think he was successful in handling the extremists in both camps. I felt that his promise was that he could reconcile the two races. and that he also offered alternatives in Vietnam. And I felt that his acceptance as a world figure would have helped the country, as far as dealing with the foreign policy problems. But the internal problems, I think, he would have been sensational on. I think both races trusted

him instinctively, upon being exposed to him. And this was a very, very small beginning in that exposure process that we made. The national campaign would have carried that process still further. And I felt that Senator Kennedy grew from the day I met him in 1960 all the way, and he never stopped growing. And the pressure of that campaign just made him a larger man than ever. So I felt that the promise that he held out was what we were cheated out of. I think also his ability to attract the top people in the United States to his side, to enlist them in kind of crusade type thing -- they believed in him, and they believed that he was sincere -- he could attract the finest people in the United States to the government and fill these top.... And that's no small feat. I cite as an example his ability to get the top men in the country into the Justice Department, people like Katzenbach [Nicholas deB. Katzenbach], and Burke Marshall, and Ramsey Clark and Byron White. All of these people came because they believed in Bob Kennedy, and they believed in what he wanted to do. You can't just stop with those names; a lot of people made sacrifices for Bob Kennedy because they believed in him, and I think that's what the country missed out on. So that's Bob Kennedy. Now, what his image is today, I just think that since his death that people have accepted more or less that image. I think they were worried they didn't know him. I know a lot of people have talked to me about him and said that they didn't know him until they lost him. I think that's the feeling around the country. I don't think they remember that image that was unflattering to him. I think they wished that they had been -- a lot of people wish that they had supported him when they needed him. I think a lot of people around are a little ashamed of their attitude toward him. They didn't understand him.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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