

K. Dun Gifford Oral History Interview – RFK#1, 11/22/1971
Administrative Information

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Biographical Note

Gifford, (1938 - 2010), legislative assistant to Senator Edward M. Kennedy, 1967-1970; national Presidential campaign assistant to Robert F. Kennedy, 1968; staff member, Secretary's office, Department of Housing and Urban Development, discusses RFK in Hyannis and comparing him to EMK, working with RFK and EMK on the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, and the 1968 presidential campaign, among other issues.

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First Oral History Interview

with

K. Dun Gifford

November 22, 1971
Boston, Massachusetts

By Larry Hackman

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

HACKMAN: You said over the phone that you had flown on the Caroline and that you really knew him before you went to work in '67. So maybe the best place would be to just start at the beginning.

GIFFORD: I think that probably would make sense. The first other than casual acquaintance of knowledge of Robert [Robert F. Kennedy] came in 1966 when I went to work in Washington for the Department of Housing and Urban Development. During that summer my family, my wife and children, were on Nantucket and I flew up nearly every weekend it seems to me, leaving on Friday afternoon and returning on Monday morning on the Caroline. Most of those times Robert was on the Caroline, not all of them, along with a lot of other people - Ted [Edward M. Kennedy], other senators, people going up to Hyannisport for the weekend, etc. During those trips Bob was clearly the senior officer present on the plane and he sat in President Kennedy's [John F. Kennedy] chair and Ted sat across from him. It was clear that there was a ranking even though I'm sure that it was unofficial.

Most of the trips were very lighthearted and jocular. I don't remember any working trip. There were many jokes, for example, about the votes in the Senate on that given

day or anything like that. I remember one particular incident when Bob and Ted played a trick on Senator Claiborne Pell who was on the plane, who was flying to Hyannis, then to fly from there to Newport where his summer house was. The votes in the Senate that day were about the High-Speed Ground Transportation Act amendments, Claiborne Pell being the principal sponsor of the one to get high-speed trains in the northeast corridor. I don't recall if it was by prearrangement or not, but Bob, Ted and Claiborne were all talking and Ted and Bob were talking about the closeness of the vote on the amendment to take all the money out for the highspeed trains. They were talking more or less seriously, and Claiborne was very, very concerned and had a look of severe consternation on his face. He finally interrupted them and said, "What do you mean, there was a vote on that today?" And they said, "Where were you Claiborne? We thought you were right there." They carried this on and on while Claiborne was getting more and more non-plussed by the whole thing until finally the two of them just broke up in convulsions of laughter and Claiborne realized he'd been put on and he joined it sort of in a self-conscious and embarrassed fashion.

This was very typical of the type of joking that went on at almost anybody's expense - their own or anybody who happened to be along. I think that was the year of the New York state constitutional convention.

HACKMAN: Right, right.

GIFFORD: Bill vanden Heuvel [William J. vanden Heuvel] was on the plane a couple of times. He was, I think, chairman of the constitutional convention or something and was clearly Bob's agent on it. There were a lot of jokes about how some of the things that Bob wanted Bill couldn't get through. Bob would stand up there and make speeches as if he were Bill at the convention and Teddy would play the role of the people booing and giving him Bronx cheers. That was at Bill's expense. That was very much the flavor of the flight. It always was a lot of fun and refreshments were around.

HACKMAN: Those bouts with vanden Heuvel, or at vanden Heuvel's expense, do you think that was really trying to get a point across to vanden Heuvel or in any way indicate to other people that vanden Heuvel was not doing a good job on that?

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GIFFORD: Oh, I think it was a combination of all of those things. I know that there were some very severe disappointments that the convention did not adopt some of the Kennedy positions. I think that there was very definitely in those cases a sharp needle out to be put under Bill's skin saying, Can't quite handle it, huh? You know, if only I were there Bill we could have done it. On the other hand, it was as many times having a good time as much as anything else, taking the roles of the various political figures in the state, for example.

HACKMAN: Do you remember his comments at that time on any of the political figures in New York because this is the time when they were trying to decide who was going to run for governor against Rockefeller [Nelson A. Rockefeller] in '66. He's also involved in the Silverman [Samuel J. Silverman] thing in '66.

GIFFORD: Silverman was very much a part of the discussions in a very self-deprecating manner. I recall a couple of distinct times when Bob was saying, "Well, Bill," you know, "if you can't quite handle it, we can always get Judge Silverman up there." That was the context of it. "Maybe Judge Silverman would like to run for governor. Should I ask him?"

HACKMAN: A great candidate, yeah.

GIFFORD: And on and on. And, "Bill, why don't you run?" That always non-plussed Bill because he very much wanted to, but he clearly was not in any position to do it.

HACKMAN: Anything on a substantive side on those trips at all that you can recall?

GIFFORD: The only two general situations when it got substantive were when one of the journalists - obviously Rowlie Evans [Roland Evans, Jr.] was along; there were a whole lot of journalists who came along. And very often they'd try and pin Bob or Teddy down on something. So it did get a little bit serious at times. And others were when, I think, Stewart Udall [Stewart L. Udall] came up once and they were really landing heavy on him about making the Gay Head Cliffs on Martha's Vineyard a national preserve of some kind. Oh, I think

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McNamara [Robert S. McNamara] was along a couple of times and it was, What the hell's going on anyway?, and that stuff. But generally speaking the mood was of relief at getting away from the heat of Washington, the work of the Senate, up to the Cape, seeing the kids, sailing.

HACKMAN: Did you see anything of Robert Kennedy then during those weekends ever at Hyannis?

GIFFORD: Yup, I did. I either sometimes sailed into Hyannis or they sailed over and I sailed back from Nantucket. And there were a couple of.... I don't recall exactly how we ended up there. We ended up there in Jackie's [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy] birthday party, or something, because her birthday is the same day as my wife's, July 28th. Bob and Ethel [Ethel Skakel Kennedy] had one of their usual extravaganzas with Maxwell Taylor [Maxwell D. Taylor] and Schlesinger [Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.], the whole gang up there on the lawn.

It was always fascinating for me to see Bob in those social situations even in his own house because his.... I was fascinated by the difference between he and Ted, for example. Ted always gregarious and always with a group and laughing and joking, and Bob nearly always engaged in a very personal discussion with somebody, it could be the gardener or it could be Max Taylor or Jackie or just about damn near anyone at all. I always had the instinct that he used these occasions to find out what other people were thinking about or just to see what they thought about what he was thinking about. I never thought it was curious, it always fascinated me to watch him move around. He talked to an awful lot of people in those things, but it was always one-on-one.

HACKMAN: You never felt it was because he was ill at ease if there would have been eight or ten people involved in a conversation at once?

GIFFORD: Thinking back on it, when you put the question that way, I think it might have been his sort of either reticence or shyness. Ill at ease isn't the right word. I just think that he was very different from Teddy, which was the natural comparison, the two of them.

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HACKMAN: Let me just skip back a little further and ask you how you came to be flying on the Caroline at this point, what was your earlier association with Edward Kennedy, just to fill in some detail.

GIFFORD: It was because I knew Ted and was a friend of his out of Harvard, out of sailing, out of mutual friends, the whole gamut. And it was Ted who most of the time arranged for me to fly. Although a couple times when Ted was out west campaigning or something for some candidates, I worked with Bob on it.

HACKMAN: Anything else on '66 then at all before you go to work for Edward Kennedy?

GIFFORD: Yeah, the other principal incident had to do with what had been called the cities hearings or Ribicoff [Abraham A. Ribicoff] hearings...

HACKMAN: Right, urban affairs.

GIFFORD: ... in the Urban Affairs Subcommittee of the Government Reorganization Committee of which Ribicoff was Chairman and Bob the principal member. Working at HUD and in the secretary's office one of my jobs that summer - and I recall it was in the summer and in the fall I think, I'm not precise on the dates - I went to all of those hearings and in a funny way operated as the eyes and ears of HUD, reporting back to HUD every afternoon or evening about what was said and what was really going on as opposed to what was said, and working with the members of

the press at the press tables trying to soften the impact of what Kennedy and Ribicoff were doing so effectively. So, in point of fact, I was working at cross purposes with Bob at that point. And I got to be close friends then with Adam Walinsky and with Peter Edelman [Peter B. Edelman] and spent a lot of time in with Peter and Adam trying to argue with them that the administration was really doing more than Bob was saying it was and that he and Ribicoff were unfairly characterizing some of the administration's efforts in the cities area, because that was my job to do that.

One day I remember being particularly upset at the

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personal characterization of Weaver [Robert C. Weaver] and Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson] by both Ribicoff and Kennedy. I went back to the New Senate Office Building to Bob's office with Peter and Adam, very agitated and really giving them as hard a time as I could, and sitting in the office and having a heated argument at one point, I think, with Peter - I don't remember if it was Peter, I don't know. One of them said, "Why don't we go in and talk to Bob - or the senator I mean - if you feel that way about it." I was at that point non-plussed by the thought of that because I hadn't... I wanted to have clearance from the White House and they were very sensitive about Kennedy at that point. There was no opportunity to call down and ask if I should do it. But I just decided I'll do it anyway.

So I went into his office and sat down with him with Peter and Adam there. He sat in the chair behind his desk and I sat in the chair beside his desk and they sat at the little chairs around the round glass coffee table in Bob's office. He said, "I understand that you work downtown and that you're upset. What really is the substance of your complaint?" and so on. So I went through it all, made my case. He listened carefully, I might say, and didn't interrupt. And then he said, in his very quiet way, "When was the last time you were in a ghetto for any length of time?" Of course, I hadn't been. He said, "Well, I have been. I've been in Bedford-Stuyvesant, I've been in northeast Washington, I've been in Hough in Cleveland." And he said, "I'll tell you what. Why don't you make it a little project of your own to spend some time, however you can or care to, or if you want me to put you in touch, or Adam and Peter can put you in touch, with anybody in any of those areas we will do it, and why don't you come back and talk to me in two weeks."

So I did do that. I did, I went into northeast Washington, both just roving around and also talking to some people, not through Adam and Peter. I didn't want to get into it that way. I got into it through other contacts. Then in New York and Baltimore, I drove up to Baltimore one day, one hot summer day. I came back and I really was changed by just the simple fact of being in the streets and rapping with some of the people on the streets. And I read a couple of books, and I knew the fellow who had written a book called Tally's Corner.

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HACKMAN: Right.

GIFFORD: Elliot Liebow. I talked with him one evening in Washington during this time and read the book. Then I went back and told Bob that he was right. I still did my job for HUD, but with considerably less enthusiasm than previously.

HACKMAN: Did you ever see him do that same kind of thing with someone else? Because it sounds like the kind of thing he would do, just come back at someone like that and say, "You don't know what you're talking about because you haven't done this."

GIFFORD: That was what he was saying to me but it was most gently, not nasty, not uppity, not superior. He made me feel that he cared very much what I was saying and that I say it after seeing what he had seen. So I did it with enthusiasm and he didn't put me down. I didn't see him do that kind of thing with anybody else because I really think that's a personal thing with him, that technique. I had had the credibility of coming in and having spent time with Peter and Adam, I wasn't just in off the streets, and plus working downtown, and he knew that.

HACKMAN: What kind of feeling did you get around HUD from Weaver and from maybe other people, assistant secretary level, about their previous relationship with Robert Kennedy and his Senate office on HUD matters '64, '65, '66? Had there been a lot of problems that you recall on projects or other kinds of criticism?

GIFFORD: Not really problems as such. It was interesting that the under secretary, Bob Wood [Robert C. Wood], and my own direct boss, who was Charles Haar [Charles M. Haar], a professor at the Harvard Law School, both worked in various capacities for John Kennedy and were very close to the Kennedys as a family and admired them. Weaver never would give anybody a straight answer, I never knew where the hell he was on all this. See HUD was formed in '66.

HACKMAN: That's right.

GIFFORD: ...January of '66. So HUD was not really

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HUD before than. It was separate fiefdoms all around the place. You know, it was a lot easier for a senator then to pick off the guys who ran those bureaus and get the projects. Not until HUD became a Cabinet department and as things start funneling through the White House as the last checkoff did it start to get crunchy. So the issue really was, in 1966 and that summer, that HUD was under enormous pressure from the White House to make Johnson look good about the cities and make Ribicoff and Kennedy look bad. That's the game. And HUD spent enormous energies and time and monies to do just that.

HACKMAN: Did you ever have any personal contact with, well I guess, Johnson, but also with any of the White House staff people on this to get....

GIFFORD: Califano, Joe Califano [Joseph A. Califano, Jr.] was the principal individual involved at that point. We had a couple of meetings in the White House. Sometimes he would call for somebody in HUD who wasn't there and I'd pick it up, get the call. There was a note of urgency in his voice and I understood very clearly what was going on at that point.

HACKMAN: But no personal comments on Robert Kennedy from Califano?

GIFFORD: Never personal, never personal. It was just that "The president says...." No, they were very.... You know, the people at HUD understood what they had to do, and they did it pretty damn well and pretty damn effectively for them.

HACKMAN: Nothing else on '66 that you recall then on that?

GIFFORD: No, not directly. Off and on during the fall I saw Adam and Peter and commented on stuff. Bobby was then talking all about tax incentives to get the business into the ghetto. So Johnson's answer to it was the Urban Development Bank, so-called Urbank or something. And in HUD, we were working on a crash basis to develop this and get all the people lined up for it as Johnson's answer to it. Oh, I do remember a couple incidents of administration officials coming in very hard against tax incentives, against Kennedy's plan, which was always a great

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disappointment to Bob. I remember one time discussing it, just walking down the hall with Adam and Peter and Bobby, about why the hell didn't they understand downtown and admit that this was the way to do it and why the hell did cheap politics get in the way and just his frustration, great rage and frustration about it.

Then, of course, I think it was around Christmas time of that year, maybe a little earlier, somehow somebody in the Times [New York Times], Bob Semple [Robert B. Semple] got a hold of the HUD plan - it was in the Times - and that was anathema and that killed it inside the administration. So that the only thing that was left was Kennedy's tax incentive plan. But the administration had already been on record against it. It was the irony of that situation where the country is then left with nothing. Again I remember that being part of Bob's frustration - you know, that the personalities involved had hurt the people in the country.

HACKMAN: I seem to remember that at one point Califano came up to talk to Robert Kennedy about the tax incentive idea, Robert Kennedy making the point that the administration wasn't interested in it. Do you know anything about what took place between those two?

GIFFORD: Just by hearsay, and it's not accurate to try and repeat that. I did know about the meeting. I knew about it ahead of time. We prepared some stuff for Califano over at HUD about it. But by that time I was really – this sounds almost like the Vietnam discussion – disillusioned by what was going on in the administration in the cities, simply because I saw enough of it to understand that the cities didn't matter, it was the politics that did. That's not to say that I thought the Kennedy bill or Kennedy approach or answer was the right way. I just knew that the administration's wasn't the right way.

HACKMAN: How did you happen to go to work for Senator Edward Kennedy?

GIFFORD: Let me say one other thing. There was one factor in there that I knew that Bobby didn't know even I don't think. The way the budget process works, as you know, is that in the early fall you start doing your Bureau of Budget reviews. And I knew

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at that point that the war was costing a lot more than anybody in Washington was saying, simply because I saw what they were doing to our budget and through friends I knew where the hell it was going. I started to get disillusioned about that too. Your question was when did I go to work for Teddy?

HACKMAN: Now let me just skip back to one thing. During the summer when you were at Hyannis, you talked about him talking with Taylor and McNamara. Do you just remember anything about his manner with them and any comments at all or any questions that he had at that point?

GIFFORD: No, his manner was no different than it was at all other times. When he was talking seriously to people, which was very intently, you knew that it mattered to him to talk in that way to that person at that time. It wasn't something he was just doing because it was a party. That was one of the things that made him different from an awful lot of other people in those situations. Everything stopped except that discussion and that point in time. He always, though, had time for any of the children who came up to him, either by patting them on the head, picking them up, kissing them, joking with them, whatever it was. But that really was the only interference that he brooked when he was in those conversations. With his intensity, you know, when it got going, he was not to be diverted. But that was all. I don't remember even hearing, at that point, I do later on, some discussions between him and Taylor or him and McNamara or him and somebody else. But that was later on in time, not that summer.

But now I went to work....I spent a lot of time talking with Adam and Peter about going to work for the Bedford-Stuyvesant Corporation as being a director of it, the downtown or white corporation as opposed to the uptown or black corporation. And I really wasn't interested. I knew that I didn't know enough to do it. I was fascinated by it. And I would have loved to have done it, but I didn't really want to move to New York and I knew that I wasn't.... I was just fresh out of law school, in fact I didn't have the background to do it. So I didn't do it, but I talked to Bob about it and Adam and Peter and a lot of other people.

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Then in December, two of Ted's assistants left; they'd had longstanding plans to leave - Alan Novak [Alan R. Novak], the legislative assistant, and Bill Evans [William J. Evans], an administrative assistant. And then suddenly and without warning, Joe McIntyre [Joseph W. McIntyre], who was another administrative assistant, died of a heart attack. So, in the space of about two weeks, Teddy lost three of his top five staff people. Dave Burke [David W. Burke], then legislative assistant, called me and asked me if I'd have lunch with him. So I did. I just thought it was something about some substantive issue, I didn't have any idea. And he said would I ever consider working for Ted. And I said, Well, you know, I hadn't thought about it, and could I think about it. He said - this was on a Thursday - "Could you come and talk to the senator about it on Saturday?" So I did, and I said, "Yeah, I will," and that was that. That was in December, mid-December, and I started work January 4, 1967.

HACKMAN: Why don't you just describe the extent of your assignment for Edward Kennedy and how that gets you into Robert Kennedy, on the committee I guess, but on anything else other than the committee too.

GIFFORD: Dave Burke, who had been legislative assistant, became administrative assistant. The other legislative assistant, Alan Novak, resigned, so that left two places open. I filled one of them, Jim Flug [James F. Flug] filled another one.

I'd worked on the Hill before. In the summer of '65, I worked for Claiborne Pell. Plus I'd lobbied there, I had spent a lot of time up there. So I knew my way around pretty well. Jim had never worked up there and he didn't really know the drill. So in the unspoken way of those things, I took responsibility, basically, until Jim learned the ropes, for the Senate floor. Ted then had two principal committees, one (Senate Committee on the) Judiciary and one (Senate Committee on) Labor and Public Welfare. I took Labor and Public Welfare. Bob was on that committee.

After I talked to Ted some on Saturday about it, I talked to him again during that interval and other people about the way the office would operate. Soon after I went to work for Ted, I suppose a couple of days after, Teddy took me over to talk to Bob and said "I know you talked to him in the past about a lot of different things, but I want you to talk to him about how we can work together. The three of us will talk about how we're going to work in the

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labor committee and just, you know, some general background about the Kennedys." It was fascinating to discuss this. You know, it was sort of becoming a member, it was like an initiation. The relationship changed, and we all understood that it was going to change, which was fine.

"Do you know anything about our political rules?" says Bobby with a great smirk, smile. I knew that something was coming, I didn't know what the hell was up. I said, "Well, no, I don't really," and blah, blah, blah. He said, "Well, we got a lot of rules, little aphorisms we picked up here and there and learned by trial and error." And he said, "You know, let me try one on you. One of them is, 'don't get mad, get even.'" He said, "What do you think of that?" I said it sounded like him, and he laughed. Then another one was "forgive but never forget" and they told that in the context of Joe Tydings [Joseph D. Tydings] and the Morrissey [Francis X. Morrissey] vote, which was Bobby getting at Teddy. You know, Teddy was uncomfortable because he didn't like Bobby telling that in front of me. It was a very funny time.

I was very nervous about it because I'd known them socially, and I'd known them substantively, but not politically. I had understood from my talks to Ted that I wasn't going to mess around with politics. But Bobby said, "You know, you really have to do both. You can't get away from that. So just understand and accept it and try and figure out the way we are." And it was very amicable and funny. Then I walked back over to the office with Ted.

But from then on my principal contacts with Bobby were either on the Senate floor or in the committee, in the labor committee, all through '67 and obviously, up until the campaign, I guess. I did see him at Hickory Hill a number of times. Pebble [Pebble Gifford], my wife, and I were from time to time out there for dinner, which was always a little bit difficult because we had known them before socially and knew all their friends and they knew us, but I was working for Teddy. It was sort of difficult, but we did anyway. And I did see Bobby out at Hickory Hill, in his house, swimming and all the rest of it, playing tennis and football.

But in the context of the committee, there are so many different frameworks all of which are hierarchies of relationships which determine how people act in those situations. There's always the Republicans against the Democrats. There's

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the liberals against the conservatives, which crosses the lines. There's the two Kennedy brothers trying to make, everyone assumed, political hay against those who were for Johnson. All of these things were going back and forth all the time. There was the, I suppose, the inevitable rivalry or friction between Ted and Bob.

When Ted would get into an issue, Bob being the senior would almost instinctively just pick it up. And we for Ted, and Ted himself, would always be a little bit hurt by it. Ted was into some very good pieces of legislation, particularly about health care for the poor. Bob was always on the employment business. It was a nice working relationship, because I knew Peter and Adam, both of whom were involved in labor committee work, Bob knew me, so we really worked as a team. For example, we would pick up their amendments if Bob wasn't there for some reason, they would pick up ours if Ted wasn't there, or something like

that. Whenever they were there together on just every occasion they needled each other, privately and sometimes out loud with the other senators. There was great note passing back and forth, because even in the executive sessions there is a certain formality. It's not too formal, and everybody would be shocked at the informality, but still the relationships are formal between those senators. The two brothers always had an enormously good time together. [Interruption] It was almost as if the two of them together there had - even though there were other people around, everybody was looking at them, and people buzzing in their ears to do this and that - a really private world between the two of them in those situations. Only they understood the allusions, only they understood the references to jokes in passing. It sounds silly to say it, but they really did seem to draw something from each other on those occasions. Ted usually being better prepared, quite frankly, for whatever he was trying to put forward in the committee and being more naturally gregarious. And Bob being probably - how can I say this to make it sound accurate - because of his time as attorney general, better able to pick up the government parlance, the language of statutes, much more quickly. But his reticence and shyness holding him back.

Plus there was always Javits [Jacob K. Javits]. The thing between Bobby and Javits was a tough one for both of them. Any time Bobby said anything about New York, Javits always had

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to chime in, and he always name-dropped. One of the running jokes was: Bobby would get onto something about the need for jobs or veterans, or any kind of thing in the Economic Opportunity Act, the poverty program, talking about his experience in New York and Javits would always interrupt him and say, "Well, yeah, I was out there last week and I was talking to so and so, the director of this program..." Teddy would often whisper, "Jesus, Bobby, if only you knew as many people as Javits did in New York maybe you could get something done." The joking went on and on. It was a delight to be around the two of them when they were that way.

HACKMAN: How do you account for the difference on preparation? Just temperment or staff differences or both?

GIFFORD: I think it's just the working habits of the individuals. I think that Ted had a reputation for being a senator's senator, which was another one of the jokes between them. Bobby would always say, "If only I was a member of the club, Teddy, the way you are, they'd take my amendments." But, in a funny way, Ted just plain did his homework better than Bobby did. Bobby, I think because of his life at Hickory Hill with all the children, because of the demands on his time either be it Jackie or the other members of the family or anything to do with John Kennedy's memorials, there was always interviews with the press, there was just more drain on his time than there was on Ted's.

Plus Ted, every single morning, he got up at 6:30 and he read the newspapers and he read everything in his briefcase. And if there was a matter of substance, an amendment that he was going to try and put through the labor committee, he'd drag us out there for breakfast

with him. We'd just fill him full of it. He'd ask us questions, and we'd play the cross-examination game. So when he did come... This is not all the times certainly, but most of the time, Teddy didn't want to go in there unless he damn well knew what he was talking about. Bobby, I think, just trusted much more that he could ad lib it, that he knew about it and that he could speak to the need for it and that the technical people would take care of the language. And he often did that. He just said, "Look, I've been to Bed-Stuy, I was there yesterday and these people don't have jobs. The underemployment rate is 23 percent in the major slums of the country and we just have to do something. This amendment's going to do it. And somebody would say, "How?" And he'd say, "Well, it's going to do it. Don't worry about it, it'll do it."

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HACKMAN: Can you think of differences just in the way the staffs operated, either the way the staff was organized, Edward Kennedy's versus Robert Kennedy's, or any other kinds of differences? The way they operated with people around town or other senators?

GIFFORD: Yeah, we always downplayed everything. We were much more private people, as Teddy was more private at that point. There were a lot of articles about Bob around that time, '67, about his staff, the whole thing. They were getting to be famous in their own right, the staff people. And they sort of liked that, and they reveled in it. Adam, I'm sure you've talked to or know of well, he is an outgoing, brash, gregarious, outspoken individual. Peter, when you're talking with him, is very passionately committed to the things he is involved with, and outspokenly so.

I think one of the things I've thought describing this is that Teddy, and therefore us, were more interested in getting the stuff on the books, whether anybody knew about it or not; and Bob as interested in making a case publicly for it as in getting it. Now, that may be unfair. And I know that Peter and Adam would not accept that. But the way it happened, for everything they put on the books we put five - things no one has ever yet heard of, but which are quietly accomplishing things. Other senators knew that. People who followed it closely, knew it. And that's one of the reasons why Teddy had this reputation for being a member of the club and doing his work: because he would take his amendments around to people. We clearly were in the back of the bus and that was the constraint that we just plain operated under.

HACKMAN: Then much of the difference isn't for instance the difference between press secretaries, between Mankiewicz [Frank F. Mankiewicz] and between Drayne [Richard C. Drayne]?

GIFFORD: Yes, it is, clearly. Mankiewicz was older, knew more people, brighter, more aggressive, more self-confident than Dick. Dick, you know - I mean one of the differences is that Dick would go to dinner with the Boston Globe people and Mankiewicz would go to dinner with the New York Times people, and that's a substantive difference. It's not unkind or unfair, because those were the rules they

operated under. Now, of course, Dick is doing the whole ball. But there is a difference between the positions that Teddy and Bobby took with relationship to

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each other, the press secretaries, the staff. We all knew it, and we operated within the framework and under those constraints.

HACKMAN: Skipping back to that first conversation about political rules of the Kennedys, what do you remember about Robert Kennedy's comments on the Morrissey thing and Tydings? Can you draw that out a little bit more? We've talked to Tydings and we've talked to a couple of other people who were around at that time so I... [Interruption]

GIFFORD: The context of it was in forgiving but not forgetting, that was the moral of that story. Joe Tydings was obviously forgiven for what he did because you had to work with him, he was another United States senator, but not to forget what he had done in the given situation. It was much lighter than that, the discussion, because Bobby was giving it to Teddy for all it was worth. Teddy was uncomfortable, I think, about some of it, but not really upset. It was history. It may be a little bit out of school to talk about personal comments, what they might have said about Tydings or anything like that. They understood clearly what he did and understood why he did it and what his motives were. Their own reactions to that were very clear, because loyalty is a cardinal axiom of the way they did business. And he was not loyal, and he made political capital at their expense. And they did not like that. It was very plain to me what the moral was. I think Joe understood it then and understands it now. I don't know what he said in his interview. I'm sure he felt that strongly thereafter.

HACKMAN: Okay, looking ahead now we've got Labor Committee stuff to talk about. You might just want to list, if you can recall, three or four major things that I should go into in some detail and question you about it. As I said, I haven't looked at Peter's papers and I haven't talked with him about what was going on in '67 yet. What sticks out?

GIFFORD: I think maybe the best way to do it, Larry, is we'll just put that off until after you talk to Peter and then give me a call when you have. I will, before you came, go back through my own files for that period, my own memos and stuff.

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HACKMAN: Okay, now the other thing then is the '68 campaign. Maybe you can just spell out, briefly, your role, where you were physically, how much traveling you did, and what a few of the things were you got involved in in any detail.

GIFFORD: Okay, I'll do it very quickly. The morning he announced, I was in the caucus room. Right after that we went back to Ted's office, Bobby, Teddy, Steve [Stephen E. Smith], the whole gang was there - maybe twenty of us, I don't know how many, probably the number will grow to a hundred by the time you finish interviewing. The tasks were set out right then. It was clearly understood that we were starting from zero. I was given the job of finishing a headquarters, finding an office space in Washington, to be ready to go on Monday morning, phones, desks, the whole thing. Actually, they wanted it Sunday morning. This was Saturday about 1:00 in the afternoon. So I said I'd do what I could.

So I found a space and it was ready to go about Tuesday, I think. But it was just clearly too small. So I then found another one down on 2000 L Street which served us amply throughout the campaign, shortlived as it was, and would have worked for the whole thing, it was that big and there was that much room for expansion; it was good. And it was clear that I was going to be detached from the day-to-day duties as Ted's legislative assistant. So Jim and another fellow, Jim Guest [James A. Guest], took on what I was doing then. And I was just plain detached.

So I had the continuing responsibility for the office throughout the campaign, even though I got some office-manager types to come in and really do the guts of it. I then went to work with Dave Hackett [David L. Hackett] in the boiler room - that was full-time. He wasn't full-time. He came in at lunch time and after work because he had a full-time job. And that's what I did, was the boiler room and the political intelligence. I did that through the campaign. I also acted as a sort of loose liaison between the O'Briens [Lawrence F. O'Brien], Sorensens [Theodore C. Sorensen], Smiths, Duttons [Frederick G. Dutton] because I really was the only figure in that office with any regularity. So, when they were trying to find people to get something done or have something happen, I often played that role, and I did that throughout the campaign.

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I traveled to Indiana and spent a day. I flew with Bobby. It was the first time we put a "delegate book" together - what the states were, who the principal operatives were in these states, who the political figures were, what we thought our chances would be in that state delegation at the Convention. Once we got that first book together, I had to go over it with Bobby, state-by-state. We had to put into it his own knowledge of people, what he'd said to people on the phone and all of that. So I spent most of one day literally flying from place to place or driving around in a car going through the book, page by page, trying to get him to focus on it instead of talking about the war or the crowds. And then back to Washington. Then I flew out, spent a couple of days in Salt Lake City where we had a western states roundup, giving everybody tasks. Then back to Washington, out again to....I went to San Francisco and Los Angeles on that swing, too. I forgot that.

HACKMAN: That first swing?

GIFFORD: Second swing. First one was to Indiana, then out to Salt Lake and California, and then back to Washington. Then the day, I guess it was Monday before the Tuesday primary, we were to have a great where-do-we-go-from-here. So the day after the California primary I went out with Hackett. We had cardboard boxes full of black books and memos on who was going to do what. We had it all set up, Hackett and I and Steve. No, Hackett and I had it all programmed. Primary day itself we spent with Steve going over that program. And then Tuesday, late afternoon, I wrote it all up into memos for everybody and put them in the mailboxes. There was enormous internal jealousies about who was going to go to New York and who was going to be dropped. And even who was going to be in what meetings during the day Wednesday. Oh, it was an awful mess. But it was all set up. Steve had made the decisions, he knew Bobby would not argue with him because he talked to Bobby about it. So it was all done. That Tuesday afternoon there were memos in everybody's mailboxes or under their doors saying be at certain places at a certain time on the following day. And it was just going to be laid out, it wasn't going to be open for discussion.

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HACKMAN: Do you know where that is now, because we have all the black books out at the Library with a lot of your stuff in there from the campaign, but I haven't seen those memos, I don't think I've seen a copy of them.

GIFFORD: I may have some, Larry. One of the things that I did was not put those memos in that fund of general information you have, because there was no need to get that out. I mean, there were going to be a lot of people who were going to be very put off by some of the things that had been decided.

HACKMAN: Maybe we can just sit down at some point, if you can dig it up, and we can just go through....

GIFFORD: Yeah, if I can find it. If I can't find them, I'll tell you as nearly as I can remember. I mean, I think it ought to be in there anyway. Now, I don't mind, you know it's about...it'll take a while anyway.

HACKMAN: Okay...

GIFFORD: And then that night, I was just messing around up in the suite with everyone else and Bobby wanted to call people. I think that's in, I don't remember if that's in Jean's [Jean Stein] book or not. Oh, it's in one of the books. So then that whole thing that I went through - I was right behind him when he was shot and I went to the hospital and then went on the plane and helped at the funeral.

HACKMAN: When did you do to Indiana? When's the swing that you went to Indiana? Can you remember...

GIFFORD: Well, I can get that because I went to the derby.

HACKMAN: ...how far before the primary?

GIFFORD: I remember the day's schedule. We started out in the south, went up north at late, late night, we went to Gary, Hammond and ended up in the Chicago area, whatever the date I don't remember. We could figure it out because I went to the Kentucky Derby on Saturday.

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HACKMAN: Okay, that's the Saturday probably before the Tuesday primary.

GIFFORD: I think it might have been a week previous, but I'm not sure, maybe it was the Saturday before.

HACKMAN: What about the swing to Salt Lake City, any idea what that is?

GIFFORD: Yeah, I'm sure the dates are in my files. But there was the one when Teddy came to Salt Lake and we had it all...

HACKMAN: Okay, I can find out. Anything else other than going through some of the stuff on the campaign or the labor legislation, the labor committee work, that you can think of what we should talk about?

GIFFORD: I don't know how much you're interested in sort of personal recollections of just vignettes, which is really what they are.

HACKMAN: But that's something I can't prepare for, you've sort of got...

GIFFORD: No, I've just got to write it down and try and work up my memory on it. Some of them I think did along the thing that was in Pat's [Patricia Kennedy Lawford] book. I really wrote to myself in the summer of '68 whole sheets and sheets of yellow paper which I have around here somewhere on which I just tried to put down all of those vignettes which are really unrelated to anything and they wouldn't come up. I'll dig that out, I don't know where it is but I'll find it.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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