

**John M. Bailey, Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 4/10/1964**  
Administrative Information

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**Biographical Note**

Bailey, 1960 presidential campaign worker and Chairman of the Democratic National Committee from 1961 to 1975, discusses the 1956 and 1960 Democratic National Conventions, the 1960 presidential campaign, and anecdotes about life on the campaign trail, among other issues.

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Oral History Interview

Of

John M. Bailey

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John M. Bailey – JFK#1

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First of Two Oral History Interviews

With

John M. Bailey

April 10, 1964  
Washington, DC

By Charles T. Morrissey

For the John F. Kennedy Library

BAILEY: Well, all right, where do you want to start and what do you want to do?

MORRISSEY: Well, the usual question, do you recall your first meeting with John Kennedy [John F. Kennedy]?

BAILEY: My first meeting with Kennedy was, I think, in 1952--at the border of the state of Massachusetts and the state of Connecticut. That year Adlai Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson] was the Democratic nominee for President. He had been in Hartford and we had a motorcade up to the Massachusetts line. He was then to transfer from our cars into the Massachusetts cars. John F. Kennedy was then running for Senator in Massachusetts. Abe Ribicoff [Abraham Alexander Ribicoff] was running for Senator in Connecticut. We had a little problem over the transfer and that was the first time that I met John F. Kennedy. He was a Congressman at that time and aspiring to beat Henry Cabot Lodge for the Senate seat in Massachusetts.

MORRISSEY: Do you have any specific recollections of that meeting?

BAILEY: Well, all I remember, which was very interesting, was that apparently the Massachusetts delegation had a little bit of trouble deciding exactly

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who was going to ride in the car with the then candidate for president. Paul Dever [Paul A. Dever] was running for reelection as Governor of Massachusetts; there was the Mayor of Springfield; there was a candidate for the United States Senate; there was a candidate for the Congress from that District, and they had a slight problem as to exactly who was to ride with Adlai Stevenson. I might say that having got my delegation up to the line I couldn't care less [chuckle] who rode in the car up to Springfield and on through Massachusetts.

MORRISSEY: Well, how did this relationship with John Kennedy develop? Do you recall your next meeting with him?

BAILEY: My real relationship with Jack Kennedy really began in late 1955 and early 1956. In 1956, as you know, we had a contest for nomination of the President of the United States. We in Connecticut had been for Adlai Stevenson in 1952. We decided *early* we'd be for him again in 1956. We had a dinner early in 1956 in Hartford in which Adlai Stevenson was to come. It was sort of a New England dinner in which the party's stalwarts, the candidates, and the incumbents were to come. We had this dinner and Adlai Stevenson came to be the main speaker. I remember the then Senator Kennedy was there, Governor Ribicoff, of course, was there, Denny Roberts [Dennis J. Roberts] was there, Muskie [Edmund S. Muskie] came

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down from Maine and he was there. And at that dinner, the Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner, which was in January, I was toastmaster. I remember that evening, that in my enthusiasm, might I say, I said, "We have at this banquet table tonight, not only the candidate for president but also the candidate for vice president," and I said, "Our ticket is going to be Stevenson for President and Kennedy for Vice President!" And from then on we were both engaged--Kennedy was for Stevenson and we got to know each other pretty well during the spring and early summer of 1956.

Then we went to the convention in 1956 and there was a group of us who were interested in his nomination. May I impose at this time that Governor Ribicoff, at a press conference held in Atlantic City, at the Governors Conference, in June, announced at that time that he was for Jack Kennedy for Vice President. Of course being at the Governors' Conference was quite a springboard and this got a lot of publicity and we were off and running.

I was friendly--well, not friendly, but I was working with Ted Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen] who was the administrative assistant to Senator Kennedy. I always had the feeling, and a lot of the other people did, that a Catholic on the ticket would be helpful and Ted Sorensen worked out a very elaborate

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study of the voting pattern of many of key states. And this was Sorenson's work, all the bull work and the hard work of this was done by Sorensen. When it was finished, it was decided that, being State Chairman in Connecticut and having been engaged in national politics for many years, that I would be a good person to release this statement, which I did and it was known as the Bailey Report. It got a lot of publicity and also was a matter of a great deal of debate. Some people didn't agree with it; other people *did* agree with it.

I might say that in 1960 this report was proved to be true because it was the states that we said Jack Kennedy would have helped the ticket in 1956. And I think this is the truth and I think that if Kennedy had been the candidate for the vice presidency in 1956 that Stevenson would have run better in a good many states; but I also do think that, as the results proved, that while he might have run better, he would have been beaten by Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] in that year to such an extent that Kennedy might well have been blamed for the beating. Take, for example, in my own state of Connecticut: Stevenson got beat by three hundred seven thousand. I think Jack Kennedy would have helped, maybe, one hundred thousand votes in this state, but we'd have lost the state by two hundred seven thousand which is more than we'd ever lost it

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before and everybody would have said Stevenson was a great candidate but he couldn't carry Kennedy on his back. So that report was published in *U.S. News and World Report*, and got a great deal of publicity and, as I say, it was quite a controversial bit of political literature.

MORRISSEY: Do, you recall Kennedy ever commenting about this Bailey Report?

BAILEY: Well, it wasn't necessary to comment about it. I mean I think that he knew, and I think he realized that Ted Sorensen was working on it. In 1956, you must remember that nobody really thought that Jack Kennedy was going to be nominated for Vice President. He was the Junior Senator from Massachusetts and had only been in the Senate four years at this time and it was quite something to think a Catholic *even aspiring* to run for Vice President. But I would say that this report caused many people to think, and I think that it was very well done, and I think that the voting pattern as proved out later, demonstrated that this had a great deal of sense and that Sorensen did a tremendous job on that. I get the credit, but Sorensen did the work.

MORRISSEY: Tell me about the efforts at the 1956 convention to get the vice presidential nomination for John Kennedy.

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BAILEY: Well, if you'll recall, in 1956 the question of the Vice Presidency was, as most conventions have conceded, that the candidate for President would nominate the Vice President; and our job, early, and prior to the convention, was to try to convince Adlai Stevenson, who was going to be nominated. I think that after he carried the California primary, there was no question that he was going to be

nominated, and what we were trying to do was convince him that that person who would be most helpful to him running on the ticket was Jack Kennedy. Adlai Stevenson was nominated and there was a conference held over in the hall next to the convention hall, at which time it was decided by Adlai Stevenson that something unusual was going to take place. That was that he was going to appear before the convention and announce that, as far as he was concerned, he was going to leave it to the convention and whoever the convention nominated for Vice President would be acceptable to him, and that he had no suggestion to offer to the convention.

Well, that was about eleven o'clock at night and then the fun started. We gathered up at Conrad Hilton Hotel in the Kennedy suite and all Kennedy's friends; I remember Paul Dever, Denny Roberts--Paul Dever was Governor of Massachusetts and Denny Roberts was Governor of Rhode

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Island--and myself, Bobby Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy], other people of the Kennedy organization which was not then as large as it was later, and I think his sisters and brothers-in-law. We all gathered there. Might I say, it was sort of helter-skelter because nobody had expected this was really what was going to happen. We were in the position of trying to set up some kind of an organization of knowing full well that at noon on the next morning the convention gavel was going to hit, and they were going to call the roll. It was at that time it was decided that Abe Ribicoff, who was Governor of Connecticut, one of Jack's early supporters, was to offer Kennedy's name in nomination. Of course there was the question of who was going to second it and all the rest.

Then the question was to get delegates. So we sat down and sort of a plan was worked out. All over the convention people were sent for to try to put this thing together in the short period of time. I might say that the next day's results proved that we were very successful, and *almost* successful. But there were many very interesting things that happened that night. There was no question about it. It was something very unusual: the presidential candidate saying that he had no choice. And so we went into the next day.

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But one of the interesting things--we were sitting in the room and somebody came to me and said, "There's a couple of men outside who want to see you." I said, "Well, what did you do with them?" He said, "Well, we put 'em in the bedroom," and this fellow who came to me said, "Well, I don't know who they are." And I said, "Well, who are they?" "Well," he said, "one says his name is DeSapio [Carmin G. DeSapio] and the other is Charley Buckley [Charles A. Buckley] of the Bronx." I said, "Look, they got more delegates than all the rest in the room together!" So I went in and talked to them. Then Jack, the Senator, and myself went across the street to the Blackstone where we met with Mayor Wagner [Robert Ferdinand Wagner, Jr.] who was also interested in running for the vice presidency and whose name was going to be presented the next morning and we worked out a sort of arrangement as to whoever got the most delegates in the first go-around, the other would be willing to give in and let him carry the ball. Obviously both being Easterners, both being Catholics, and with



all the other candidates--I mean, if my memory serves me right, I think at that time that Lyndon Johnson [Lyndon Baines Johnson] was a candidate for vice president; Hubert Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey] was a candidate; I think Stu Symington's [(William) Stuart Symington] name was thrown in; Jack Kennedy's name was in there; Kefauver [Estes Kefauver] was the favorite with support; and Wagner's name was in. And so we knew that *two* Easterners wouldn't have a chance.

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That was a very interesting night. I never did go to bed. And I might say that the next morning some of us really needed a shave more than anything else, which we tried to get so we'd look presentable, and put a clean suit on to go to the convention. I remember riding with Denny Roberts and Paul Dever out to the convention hall. That was a really exciting day. The Connecticut delegation was down in front. And I feel to this day that John F. Kennedy would have been nominated for Vice President if there had been a tote board. Apparently--I've checked on this--there was a tote board on the Stevenson nomination for President. By a tote board I mean a board which was up in front of the convention hall which kept track as each state voted, how the vote was recorded, and how many votes each state had. Well, apparently for some reason or another, the board was taken down after the Presidential nomination and there was no record other than what you kept on the back of an envelope or on a piece of paper.

They called the roll, as you know, the first time and then the second time, and there was a great deal of confusion--certain states changing and other states changing to this one and the other. And nobody really knew. I think that one time--I wouldn't say that Jack

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was over the top, but I think he was so close that if anybody knew it--but this was one of the great breaks of history and that he wasn't nominated was one of the great breaks that a man gets in politics. He received all the publicity. He got himself known as an outstanding young man, and a good candidate, and I think this was the most important thing of his whole political career; that he came almost to the brink, and then turned out to be such a good sport about the situation. The day before the convention he made a speech; but more than that, he threw himself into the 1956 campaign and toured this country from one end to the other for the Democratic ticket. Robert Kennedy traveled with Stevenson and John Kennedy showed that he was a real Democrat and, having lost the battle of Chicago and the vice presidential nomination, that he was willing to do all he could to elect the Democratic ticket.

MORRISSEY: Do you think that John Kennedy ever had any doubts about the wisdom of seeking the vice presidential nomination?

BAILEY: Well, I don't think so. I think that if he hadn't sought the vice presidential nomination, I don't think he could have been nominated in 1960.

I think, and this is my opinion based on the fact that I've been in politics a long time, that John Kennedy

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was a Senator from Massachusetts, but he didn't have an important part in leadership in the Democratic Senate. This was the springboard which projected him and made him one of the most desirable speakers of the next two or three years. He was in demand at Jefferson-Jackson Day dinners. People wanted to see this young man whom they had seen on television. They were curious. Stevenson had been beaten; Kefauver had been beaten; and this was the fresh, young Democrat who people wanted to see. They'd read about him. Listening to the vice presidential ballot at Chicago, people have told me, was like listening to a football game. There was a great deal of enthusiasm. There was a contest. I think that this was most vitally important to his whole career; the fact that he had the courage to seek the nomination for Vice President in 1956. Without it he couldn't have gone on because it was one of the miracles of politics that he was nominated in 1960 and all these things had to break just right. It seemed that the hand of destiny was on him. Everything just went along. At Los Angeles in 1960 we nominated him and in November they elected him.

MORRISSEY:            Could you comment on the assertion made by a lot of people that the Kennedy support was really anti-Kefauver in sentiment?

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BAILEY:                Well, of course, it was a very interesting convention. If you look at that roll call. Of course, Kefauver had been a candidate for president. He had run in the primaries across the country against Stevenson and he had beaten Stevenson in some states. Some people say it was Florida and California that were the margin when Stevenson won the nomination. Apparently there were many people who didn't like Kefauver. This is true. Kefauver was a real liberal. He came from Tennessee. For some reason, some of the Southern states were not happy with Kefauver for his liberal record and what he stood for and how he campaigned.

So in that convention, Senator Kennedy got some Southern support. He was supported by Georgia; he was supported, in fact, by Texas. Texas supported him. I remember, Kentucky supported him eventually. (I might say I forgot to mention that Albert Gore was a candidate for vice president in that convention.) Kennedy had a great deal of Southern support in that convention. He had such more Southern support for the nomination for vice president than he had Southern support for the nomination for the presidency four years later. I think there was an anti-Kefauver sentiment among some of the Southern states in that convention of which Kennedy was the recipient. He got those votes.

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New Hampshire, of course, was for Kefauver. He'd been up there in the primary and the delegates felt that they owed him some support. Ohio, where Kefauver had been, was for

Kefauver. In fact Mike DiSalle [Michael V. DiSalle] was a great Kefauver man. He turned out to be the first Democratic governor west of the Hudson River who came out in '60 for Kennedy but in 1956 he was for Kefauver. California was for Kefauver in that convention. It was really quite mixed-up situation. I'm sure if you took the 1956 roll call for Vice President and looked at it, it would seem quite interesting today.

MORRISSEY: What was John McCormack's [John William McCormack] roll during that night?

BAILEY: Well, it wasn't night time. It was in the afternoon. I think John McCormack was unjustly accused of being biased. I think that was quite a situation of who was going to be called while everybody was waving for attention. I think that anybody who says that John reached for this fellow, or that fellow, because he thought he was *not* going to be for Kennedy is completely mistaken. It was a maelstrom, and I think very definitely McCormack was for Kennedy. I think that this talk that because he had been an old-time Congressman, Majority Leader, and the rest that he was jealous of Jack Kennedy, I don't think has really any basis in fact.

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It just happened that the real change was when Albert Gore switched the Tennessee votes.

A lot of them didn't switch but apparently, they tell me, that some newspaper editor down there said that he wouldn't support Gore in the future if he was against a Tennessean. And Gore was up on his chair. It was Gore and Tom Hennings [Thomas Carey Hennings, Jr.] of Missouri, it is my recollection. Tom Hennings threw the Missouri votes and Gore threw the Tennessee votes which broke the dam and started the rush of votes to Kefauver which gave him the nomination. But I think that McCormack was presiding at that time and it was really a rough situation.

MORRISSEY: Many people have commented that John Kennedy changed between 1956 and '60--become more liberal, became more mature. What's your viewpoint on this?

BAILEY: Well, I think that when you say John Kennedy changed, he grew older. John Kennedy covered a lot of territory between '56 and '60. I would say this--and it was something that stood John Kennedy in great stead in the 1960 convention--that he was willing from 1956 through 1959 (prior to the time he announced his candidacy for the Presidency) to go around the county. I met him one night coming up from North Carolina and I got on the plane here in Washington one night when he and Ted Sorensen were on

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the plane. It was an Eastern Airliner. I remember it very well. It was in November. I'd been down to Pinehurst. I got on the plane, and he had a cold. I said, "Where are you going, Jack?" He said "Ted and I are going up to New York and we're then taking off for Alaska. I agreed I would make a speech out there in Alaska." (He had a cold; he was sniffing.) He said, "But, anyhow, I can say this: when I get back to Alaska again and ask them to do something, they can at least say I was there for them once."

This is awfully true. Jack Kennedy was the first man ever running for the Presidency of the United States who had really toured this country.

One of the problems of being National Chairman with him was that he knew everybody himself. There was never anybody that you had to tell him about. He knew all these big politicians from one end of this country to the other. He'd been with them over a period of three years, he knew them by their first names and they knew him. This was awfully important. He was willing to go to a state and make a Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner in the years when we were out, when they needed a drawing card to make their dinners a success. And then when he came back looking for delegates, he wasn't coming hat in hand. He'd been there before. He'd been helpful to them. While it's

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true Jim Farley [James A. Farley] and Roosevelt [Franklin Delano Roosevelt] in '32; Roosevelt never toured the country, Farley went around the country. President Kennedy, as Senator Kennedy, had crossed this country and criss-crossed it over a period of three years prior to '60. He had made Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner speeches from Maine to California, and all across the country. He wasn't somebody that people didn't know, *and* was somebody who they felt they could support.

MORRISSEY:           How about this point that Kennedy became more liberal between 1956 and 1960?

BAILEY:               Well, I don't think the fact is that Kennedy became more liberal. I think that Kennedy always had a good liberal voting record. There were some things that he didn't vote for that people might argue about, but he wasn't under the spotlight that he was under when he became a presidential candidate? And his record was examined. Coming from Massachusetts, being a Democrat, and the Democratic party of Massachusetts is like the Democratic party of Connecticut, that party stands for certain things, it is a liberal party, and for the most part, more than a majority of the party. A Democratic Senator from a New England state *has* to be a liberal. There are certain people who say that unless you are way over to the left you are not really a liberal. I think I'm a liberal; I've always thought I was a liberal. That is one of the problems of the

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Democratic party, you know. We are the only national party. We've got an awful lot of people under the umbrella. There are some people who are Democrats because of birth, there are others because they believe in certain things and issues, and all the rest. I know, this is

true in my own state of Connecticut, I know it is true in Massachusetts, or any other state. Someone can look over their shoulder and say, "How can that fellow call himself a Democrat?" We have some who are Democrats even within cities who can't understand how the others call himself a Democrat. We don't have to go from the North to the South, we can go from one end of the town to the other, to feel where there is a difference of opinion.

But this is why we are the Democratic Party and why we're going to win, and why we have won; because we are the only broad-base party. I often say facetiously, you know, that you can always tell the difference between the Democrats and the Republicans. At a Democratic National Convention you've got the people from Michigan--you've got the auto workers from Michigan--you've got the people from all over the country. You have Connecticut, you have California, you've got a real cross section. At a Republican Convention, they all look alike. I think that is true.

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After I started traveling with Senator Kennedy in about '59--I was with him on most of his early trips, when he really started seriously on this question--I remember that Ohio was one of the states that we devoted a lot of time and attention to. We felt that if we could get the Ohio organization--we had Ray Miller [M. Raymond Miller] in Cayuga County strong for Kennedy--but we felt if we could get Mike DiSalle to be for Kennedy that this would be a help because it would stop the talk that he was only a sectional candidate from New England. I remember I went out in June, 1959. Steve Smith [Stephen E. Smith] called me up and said, "The Senator would like to know if you would go out to see Mike DiSalle. You've known Mike DiSalle for a long time, would you go out with him?" I said, "Yes, I'd like to." So we flew down to Washington. The reason I remember it is the first Johansson-Patterson fight was scheduled but called off on account of rain and I couldn't stay over to see the fight because I had this date to go out to Columbus.

We went out to Columbus. We flew commercial. He and I went out and we were met and went to the Governor's mansion. He had assembled a lot of leaders of Ohio there and we were going to have a buffet dinner. Jack and I went upstairs to wash. By the way, we had one room with twin beds; we hadn't gotten quite important enough yet.

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We were upstairs and Mike couldn't contain himself so he came up and knocked on the door and came in, and we started talking, Senator Kennedy and myself and Mike DiSalle, about the possibilities of Ohio, and especially Mike, supporting Jack Kennedy. We were there about fifteen to twenty-five minutes when all of a sudden a knock on the door and Mrs. DiSalle [Myrtle DiSalle] said, "Look, Mike, if you don't come down the spaghetti's going to go cold." And he had a very enjoyable evening.

The next day we went down and Senator Kennedy had a press conference in which he handled himself extremely well. It was after that that Mike DiSalle told me, "Look, I'm going to be for this fellow. I don't know when, but I'm going to be for him and that's between you and I."

There are many interesting stories on that Ohio situation. We really worked on that one. That wasn't the first time. We went out later, after we got the *Caroline*. We flew out there. We went out there and it was getting along in December, to just go along with this Ohio situation. The Senator, and Robert Kennedy who was his political advisor, were all getting a little anxious: while it was true that Mike was saying, "I'm going to be with you," nevertheless he was being hesitant about when he was going to publicly announce the fact that he was going to be with us. So we

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thought we ought to have another meeting with him. The question was that if we went into Ohio, this would then be a matter of great publicity. We didn't want that, so we set up a date -- he was speaking in Steubenville, Ohio and we set up a date, that we'd meet him in Pittsburgh, at the air field and we'd then have a conference.

Steve Smith was to set up the arrangements. At the Pittsburgh airport there is a motel and a hotel. I was just talking to Kenny O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell] about it the other day and we were comparing notes about that situation. It was one of the funniest things. So we got out there, and Pierre Salinger [Pierre E. G. Salinger], Kenny, and I were with the Senator, and we get out of the *Caroline* and we got a truck to take us over. We thought the arrangement was that the reservation was in the name of Mr. Smith over at the motel so we climb in the truck and drive over to the motel and piled in there. We were an hour late, by the way. There's a manager or clerk sitting behind the desk, checking somebody out. We were a little anxious to get settled.

"Have you got a reservation for Mr. Smith?" someone of us asked. The guy paid no attention. Finally, I edged up and said (sharply): "Have you got a Smith?" He said, "No, I haven't. You better try over at the hotel. This is the motel."

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So then we climb in and the Senator gets in the truck first. It was one of those that the only way you can ever get in the back is by moving the front seat forward and there was a curtain halfway up in the tailboard and it was a sight to see Salinger, myself and Kenny try to climb over that tailboard to get in the truck. Jack was sitting in the front seat.

We finally got over to the hotel and we found out that yes, there was a reservation for Smith and we went upstairs. There was nobody there. So we went downstairs, and we wondered whether they were in the dining room. But apparently what happened (it would have made a great movie) was that as we went down, they went back up again. And they were there and we were looking all around. Then we went up and they came down looking for us. And finally, after about three-quarters of an hour, with running madly about the hotel trying to be as inconspicuous as we could possibly be. Finally, we got together and Senator Kennedy and Mike DiSalle and Maurice Connell [Maurice J. Connell] and Miss Cunningham sat down in the room together. At this time it was agreed that (this was in December sometime) Governor DiSalle would announce for Kennedy early in January. He did, as you recall, just before Kennedy announced for the Wisconsin primary. This was quite important. That was quite an evening there, going up and down in that elevator.

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We had another interesting experience in Pittsburgh prior to this time. We went out to Pittsburgh and the Senator was speaking to the Allegheny County Bar Association. Somebody wrote a speech for him dealing with the regulatory agencies. Well, there was Dave Powers [David F. Powers] , Pierre, Kenny, and myself. There was a mob. There was a mob. Jack was quite an attraction. And we got him down.

There must have been twenty-three or twenty-four hundred people there in the hotel. The Golden Triangle, new hotel, we finally got out candidate in and on the platform and there wasn't enough room for us so we decided we'd go upstairs and have a nice calm dinner. So we did. We went upstairs, and sat around, ordered some good steaks, and really relaxed thinking the speaking program would take some time. When we finished, we went downstairs and, just when we got downstairs, the dinner broke. The first person we bumped into was our candidate, our "white hope," and he looked at us and said, "You weren't even in there!" And we said, "You through already?" And he said, "Yes. The least you could do – *one* of you could listen to me!"

We found out that what was "bugging" him was the fact that the first person that came up to him after the dinner was over said to him, "Senator, I never heard you make such a bad speech in your life!" [Laughter] I'm sure that he wasn't happy,

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and so between the rest of us we decided what we should always do: not only should one of us be there but we should always make sure that somebody was sent up to tell him that it was a great speech. But, it was a speech dealing with regulatory agencies and I'm sure that he didn't know much about the regulatory agencies and couldn't care less about them at that stage. Whoever wrote the speech didn't get the feeling of that audience. It was a great speech to write in Washington but in Pittsburgh they wanted to hear him talk about politics and other things. I always felt that, of the twenty three hundred lawyers there, not ten of them ever had a case with regulatory agencies. I had many interesting times with the Senator in that year that I traveled with him.

I remember one time we were out in North Dakota, it was cold, and I was struggling with briefcases and suitcases. He turned to me and said, "You know, you've been in this political business a long time," he said, "but you haven't progressed very far; you are still carrying the bags for the candidate." I said, "Yes, but when I used to carry bags of the candidate who was running for alderman, that was one thing. Now I'm carrying the bags for a man who's running for President."

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MORRISSEY:           Going back a bit, what was the original reason that caused you and Jack Kennedy to travel together after the 1956 campaign?

BAILEY:               Well, we didn't start traveling together until early in 1959. The

situation in 1959 was that Jack Kennedy was a candidate for the presidency, undeclared at the time, but obviously a candidate. I had been active in the Young Democrats. I had been national Treasurer of the Young Democrats from 1937 to 1941. I became State Chairman in 1946. I've been to all the conventions from 1932 on. I had a large acquaintance among the "so-called" politicians in 1932, 1936, 1940, 1944, 1952, 1956. At that time in 1959, I was the only person who held a political position. When I say position, I mean a party position, and who was recognized around the country as having been a successful politician, inasmuch as we elected Bowles [Chester B. Bowles] in 1948, Ribicoff in 1954 and we had that big victory in Connecticut in 1958 when we swept the state. I was at least recognized as somebody who had been in politics, and was in politics, and I knew the politicians. There is no question about it, those are the people who are really important in a convention. Other than those people in Massachusetts, I was the only person who had come out openly. Governor Ribicoff had but, obviously, he was Governor and had to 'mind the

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store.' He felt, with me along, it proved that there was at least one politician who was for him.

MORRISSEY: Could you comment on the relationship between John Kennedy and Ted Sorensen?

BAILEY: Well, I think that the relationship was a great relationship. I think that Sorensen felt that, in Kennedy, he'd found a man to whom he could devote his energy, and he's a very able man as time has proven. He was very devoted to Kennedy. In fact, one day Sorensen said to me, "I remember when there was no one but myself and two girls in the Kennedy organization for President." And Ted *was* devoted; he was willing to work twenty hours a day for Jack Kennedy. He saw in Kennedy a man who could go far and could do something for the country and the world. He was willing to give his all and Ted was a very able man, an able man with words. He and Jack worked very well together and proved that two men can work together, work many, many years, work very closely. The Senator, President had a great deal of confidence in him. They could transmit. You know Kennedy could give the idea, and Sorensen would put the words down, and Jack would go over them and do them, and this was a great combination. There was a very close relationship in that line.

As far as I knew, Kenny O'Donnell was very close in

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a different respect that Sorensen was close. Dave Powers was very close in a different respect than Sorensen. All these men filled a certain niche in Jack Kennedy's existence.

MORRISSEY: Could you elaborate on this? About how O'Donnell and Powers were close in different respects?



BAILEY: Dave is a very happy-go-lucky Irishman from Boston who started campaigning for Jack Kennedy in 1946 when he first ran for Congress. Dave enjoyed it very much; telling the story when this young fellow came up to his third floor flat in Charlestown and said he was running for Congress. I guess that, at that time, there were a lot of candidates for Congress in that district. He became attracted to him and he brought him around to the various places and the various meetings, sold the boys on the corner that this was the coming young man. I assume that you will talk to Powers. He could tell more stories about the early days than anybody else. Jack enjoyed him very much. He spent an awful lot of time with Jack. When Jack was sick he was with him, and all the rest. Jack had a great feeling for athletics, for baseball. Dave could give the batting average of every player, and Dave could tell Jack how much he won by in 1952, in 1958, and exactly how many hundred thousand down to the digit, how many he'd won; and what Ted Williams [Thodore S. Williams] batted in 1949; and

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he was with him all the time. On trips he was the last man that saw him at night.

Now Kenny was entirely different than Dave. Kenny was a Harvard football captain, and worked with Bobby on the McCarthy Committee [Joseph R. McCarthy] and the McClellan Committee [John L. McClellan]. Kenny is very able. He's not loquacious like Powers in, but he had complete charge of the President's schedule, appointments and everything else. The President had great confidence in him, in his judgment. Kennedy has excellent judgment, I found that out, excellent judgment. And on political matters, he had a great respect for Kenny's judgment.

He knew, and this was true of all the Kennedy close intimates, that their only interest was what was good for him. They weren't trying to do anything for themselves. This was so vitally important. He had great confidence in them. Other than his brother Robert, I think that he had more confidence in Kenny on political matters than anybody else.

MORRISSEY: You mentioned Kennedy's health a moment ago, and Robert Kennedy, in the introduction to the memorial edition of *Profiles in Courage* comments that very rarely was John Kennedy not feeling physical pain. Do you have any...

BAILEY: Well, I couldn't pass an expert judgment on that. I know that he had the back trouble. I know that he wore a

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brace, not a real brace, a cloth brace. Also we all know that he hurt his back digging the tree. But he never complained. You'd never know it from anything he ever said that he had this trouble with his back, except that occasionally it caused him maybe to grab a chair or something else, but you never knew it.

I can't agree with these stories because nobody could have done the things he did during the campaign, in and out of those automobiles, up on the platforms, and around the plants, and all the rest without being in pretty good shape. He was in great physical shape.

MORRISSEY: Were you involved, in any way, in the book written by James MacGregor Burns about Kennedy?

BAILEY: No, I wasn't.

MORRISSEY: How about the book Teddy White [Theodore H. White] did on the 1960 campaign?

BAILEY: Well, I was mentioned quite often in Teddy White's book. Teddy White devoted a great deal of time and energy writing that book. He spent a great deal of time with the Kennedy operation.

I remember one night in January, at a social meeting, Teddy White came in later...

MORRISSEY: This is January, 195--?

BAILEY: 1960. At which time there was a great deal of talk about Kennedy couldn't make it and I don't think Teddy White thought he could make it in January.

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We were in the apartment in New York with some other people and as the night grew late I told Teddy that I was sure that Kennedy would have most of the New York delegation. At the time, he didn't believe it. But I knew what was going on and he didn't. I said that we'd come into New York and that by the time New York City would be with us.

But Teddy traveled. I was with him in Wisconsin. He was up in the room when the Wisconsin results were coming in (that was in April of 1960). During the convention he had a room right outside of where Bobby was operating and where the headquarters was and he devoted a lot of time. He would interview us all. I remember sitting beside the pool in the Ambassador Hotel in California with him and going over the situation. He was along all the time. He once said, "Well, I'm gambling a lot of my time, energy, and *money*. If this fellow doesn't win, I'm going to have wasted a year and a half."

I was in this thing all of the way. Teddy writes the story about the meeting we had in October of '59, up in Hyannisport, on a cold, blustering day. I remember they picked me up at Butler airport at LaGuardia. The crowd had come from Washington and we went up there and spent the day. As Teddy described it pretty well in his book,

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the Senator stood up there and lectured us for an hour, and we all divided up the country in which everybody got a job to do. And I must say that everybody did their job. I remember

Governor Roberts was there, myself, and the rest as listed in Teddy White's book, and the Ambassador [Joseph P. Kennedy] was there for awhile, and all the rest of the boys who put this show on the road.

MORRISSEY: Do you agree that's where the show really....

BAILEY: No, I don't agree that's where the show started. The show started long before that. The preliminary work had all been done. You couldn't have started then. I remember that prior to that time President Kennedy and I had been up in Rochester, New York. We went up there and he was speaking to a city election that was being held for the election of councilmen up in Rochester. Bill Posner [William N. Posner] had it.

And at that time we had a meeting with Peter Crotty [Peter J. Crotty] and the other chairman from northern New York state. It was earlier in October that we were up there. From there we went to the World Series out in Chicago, and Jack went with Mayor Daley [Richard J. Daley] to the World Series, and we'd done a lot of work before that time. A lot of the preliminary work had been done and it was then when it was mapped out what people were to do, and the rest. I would say it was the

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start of the intensified part. The spring training was over and now we were on the regular schedule. I would say that's when it really started.

MORRISSEY: Could you tell me how you got support from New York delegates for Kennedy?

BAILEY: Well, there was a feeling amongst people in upstate New York – I mean, Peter Crotty felt that Jack Kennedy could make it. He thought he was entitled to his chance at it. As far as the rest of the candidates were concerned, who was he going to be for? Was he going to be for Symington of the Midwest? Was he going to be Johnson from Texas? Stevenson who had tried it twice and who he'd got beaten with? He came down the list and it was natural for a fellow like Peter Crotty, who was leader of Erie County [Buffalo] with a great many Catholic constituents and the rest. He knew, which is always true, that with Kennedy running at the head of the ticket it was going to be easier to carry his county officers. This is what people forget, you know. Local political leaders are awfully interested in electing members of the House of Representatives of the state, state senators, sheriffs and other officers. And we'd been through it, like I'd been through it in Connecticut. We got beaten. We were for Stevenson, but we got beaten by three hundred and

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seven thousand out of a million votes. We lost everything. We wound up with only five members of the Senate and thirty members of the House. We knew that with Kennedy for President we'd do awfully well in the state. And I think this was true with many leaders.

MORRISSEY: And yet there were some Catholics like Lawrence [David Leo Lawrence] in Pennsylvania and like "Pat" Brown [Edmund G. Brown] in California who were a little slow to get on the Kennedy bandwagon.

BAILEY: Well, Lawrence as Governor had two more years to serve. Lawrence told me that what he was worrying about was that Kennedy might *hurt* him; that as a result of being a Catholic he might lose his legislature. At that time he had control of the Senate, and wanted to do it. The funny thing about it is that, as it turned out, he continued to control the Senate. He did lose eight Senators that he had, but he won ten he didn't have. As he said to me afterwards, when I was kidding him because he'd been giving me this line about why he wasn't on the bandwagon early, "Well," he said, "I was right. I did lose them. But I didn't figure that we'd win the others." And this was what happened.

Dave Lawrence was at the Convention. And it was very important, I think, that was the most important caucus that was held in California, was the Pennsylvania caucus on Monday. I went there with Kennedy that day. He and I

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drove out together. That was the morning that Kennedy spoke, and I think it was McCarthy [Eugene J. McCarthy] who spoke for Stevenson, the other people spoke, and then they had the caucus. Pennsylvania went on record for Kennedy – and that was it.

I had a very interesting experience along the line with Lawrence. I was given the job by Robert Kennedy of going out to the airport to meet visiting leaders. As I said, I knew them, I went out to meet Governor Lawrence who was coming in. He was with Matt McCloskey [Matthew H. McCloskey]. You remember that Dave Lawrence had been very important and very strong in the Stevenson campaigns on both 1952 and 1956. In fact, when he went for Stevenson in 1952, he really got Stevenson to run for the nomination. I went out there to meet him and there were a lot of Stevenson people. There were a thousand people lined up out there with banners and they were going to have Lawrence. So then we had an argument in the airport about how many people could go out to meet him. I was by myself with one other. So I agreed I'd go out, and I said to the Stevenson people I'd be bighearted, you can have these. So went out and Dave said, "Hello, John, how are you?" And Matt said, "Hello, John, how are you?" And I said, "Give you a ride?" "No," he said, "we got a car. Why don't you ride with us?" So I rode in the middle, down through [chuckles] these thousand loyal

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Stevenson fans waving the banners and cheering for Governor Lawrence and I'm sitting in the middle of the car!

And that developed into another very interesting thing that happened at the Convention. Of course, we're jumping around.

MORRISSEY: Go ahead.

BAILEY: Dave said to me, "I went to see the Senator and how should we arrange it?" I said, "Well, I'll go down and talk to him and see how we can work it out." He said, "I don't think we should have a big fanfare, but I do want to talk to him." I said, "I know he wants to talk to you."

At this basic period, which was Saturday, Lawrence was being sought by everybody. He was Governor of Pennsylvania, leader of Pennsylvania, and he had the delegation of Pennsylvania, not in control, but I would say that he had a great deal of influence in swaying the Pennsylvania delegation. As you know, Pennsylvania is the last of the patronage states. There are still about sixty thousand jobs that go with the Governor's office, so Dave did have a little bit of influence. So I said, "Well, we'll see."

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Well, we talked about whether we'd go to another hotel. We were downstairs from the Kennedy headquarters which was on the eighth floor of the Biltmore Hotel. We finally worked out an idea which worked. It really worked so well that we were a little bit embarrassed for a moment.

Jack came out. George Meany (head of the AFL-CIO) was calling on him and had taken a room there and all the cameras were outside and fifty reporters were outside; and there was a stairway going from the eighth to the ninth floor right there and Jack came out. He said to me, "John, your room's on the next floor upstairs, isn't it?" I said, "Yes, why don't you and I come up?"

Of course this was no news I'd been traveling with him. The reporters knew that. He and I walked upstairs and nobody even bothered to follow us! He walked down the corridor and we saw Lawrence. And then, afterward they made a statement that Jack did call on him and pay his respects. But that was a very important meeting that day, because I'm sure that things were worked out to the satisfaction of everybody.

MORRISSEY: Did you have any trouble with Stevenson or Symington sentiment in northern New England?

BAILEY: I would say there was a little bit of Symington support in some of the northern New England states, which was

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early. I think there was a question, you might well think, of senatorial friendships and other things involved.

I remember in November – I keep going into anecdotes – we had a date to go up to Maine. Kennedy was making a speech in Maine and he suggested that Abe Ribicoff and I go

along with him. And Abe and I flew up to Boston. It was a rainy day. Kennedy came up from Hyannisport and he had a cold and a fever. Had to get a doctor to give him some stuff for his throat. We went up there. He made a good speech in Augusta and after that we went over and had a meeting at the governor's residence. At that time, Clauson [Clinton A. Clauson] was Governor and we had a gathering with a group up there. I think Denny Roberts was there; I know that Ed Muskie was there; Frank Coffin [Frank M. Coffin] was there; I was there; Abe Ribicoff was there; and Fayette [Frederick J. Fayette], state chairman of Vermont at the time was there. We had quite a meeting at which we were thrashing this thing out. I think it broke up about two or two-thirty or so in the morning. It was raining, as only it can rain in New England in November. So we went out to the airport and got on the plane and flew back to Hyannisport.

I don't know whether you know the then Governor Ribicoff, the Senator, who was a meticulous dresser. When we got off that plane at the Hyannis Airport, the rain

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was not coming down, the rain was going sideways. Abe got off that plane first, got down and stepped into a puddle of water over the top of his shoes, his beautiful grey fedora blew off into another puddle! He turned to me and said: "What am I doing here?" I said: "Well, you wanted to be on the campaign trail!" [Chuckles]

We then went. Jack got behind the wheel of the car and drove us over to his father's home. We got over there about three o'clock and it was locked! And we were standing outside, and he went through the cellar window! He climbed down from the cellar window and came up the cellar stairs and opened up the place. We all found beds in the house. I'll never forget that trip.

I think that was a good meeting too. I think a lot of what you are talking about was ironed out that windy, rainy, November evening up at Augusta. And Clauson, God rest his soul, died shortly thereafter as you remember. He was quite a fellow.

MORRISSEY: You mention Dennis Roberts quite frequently. Could you tell me about the role he played in this pre-convention period?

BAILEY: Denny was active in 1960 when he was Governor of Rhode Island, and you remember he had the problem of – a recount and the rest. Denny was very active in '56. He was active

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in 1960. I think he had some things to do that Kennedy gave him to do which he did. He was very devoted to Jack Kennedy and added his bit to the rest of us. But, after all, he had been Governor of the state for many years, and Rhode Island was for us, and he was the leader of the Rhode Island organization in 1958, and 1959. He got beat later but at that time, I mean in the earlier stages, he was vitally important. And I'm sure that if he had desired some appointment from the President after he was elected – but Denny, I think, got fed up with it, and decided he'd go back to the practice of law.

MORRISSEY: What role did the Ambassador play during this period in the search for delegates?

BAILEY: Well, I think – I knew the Ambassador well – I think the Ambassador had some old friends who he'd known years in the Democratic Party, I would say, fellows like Charlie Buckley who was older than the rest of us, and Dan O'Connell [Daniel P. O'Connell] in Albany. Of the people who he knew on a personal basis, he was very helpful with them, convincing them that they should support his son. But he kept out of it for the most part, I would say. Whatever he did was on a personal relationship basis with men he had known over the Roosevelt years and the Truman [Harry S. Truman] years.

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MORRISSEY: Did you ever have any doubts that Kennedy would not get the nomination?

BAILEY: No. I always felt that he could make it. I remember that I went with him (we had a dinner in Boston) up into New Hampshire to start the campaign, his primary campaign, in January 1960. I was with him, and others, and afterwards we were at the Carpenter Hotel and we were meeting down there. And, I got into, not an argument, but a discussion with some of the newsmen who always are great political pundits, with all the answers, on every subject. We got into a discussion with Pat Morin [Relman G. Morin], who was an ace reporter of the AP, was one of their senior men. We got talking and I said to him, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll make you a bet. Jack Kennedy not only will be nominated, but he'll be nominated on the first ballot!" He said, "You're crazy." "Well, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll bet you a hundred dollars even." And I still have his check. He forwarded me his check and I still have it; I never cashed it.

But I felt, and I always felt, that Jack *had* to be nominated on the first ballot, before the first ballot was closed. And this proved true. He won it. I think that Kennedy had seven hurdles he had

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to take. He had to take each one of those primaries, and he make them all. I wonder what would have happened if he missed on any of them. Nobody will ever know because he did make them. There were an awful lot of people who were hard convincing that (a) he should be the candidate, and (b) could be elected, *if* the candidate. And when he won the Wisconsin primary and then went down to West Virginia and won that one; and went on through the rest of them; including Oregon, California, Nebraska, and Indiana, this was it. He had the momentum and the rest of the candidates were waiting for him to fall down and he never fell. And it was over, really over, by the time we got to California.

MORRISSEY: Let me pick up one point. Do you think that if the ballot at the

Convention had gone beyond one vote that the tide would have turned against Kennedy?

BAILEY: Where?

MORRISSEY: At Los Angeles?

BAILEY: Well, who knows? The answer is that he did it on the first ballot. There were a lot of people, you know, who would say – certain people in Ohio and other people – people we had won in primary contests – that if he didn't make it on the first ballot they would have left him. I always felt that he would do it on the first. Of course

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you could find nobody now who was a delegate to that '60 convention who will admit he would have changed. So I think it's....

MORRISSEY: It's a hypothetical question.

BAILEY: Of the highest degree. [Laughter] We had some votes we hadn't used up until the time we went over the top. We know where there were some more votes. In New Jersey there were votes which we knew we could have, who really wanted to vote for us on the first ballot but Meyner [Robert B. Meyner] wanted his name to go on and he was Governor of the state. We knew that at the end of the roll call that those New Jersey votes – John Kenny [John V. Kenny], Denny Carey [Dennis F. Carey], Bob Burkhardt [Robert James Burkhardt], Warren Lord, and the rest of these fellows – would have changed the votes and voted for Kennedy.

MORRISSEY: Was there any hesitation on the Senator's part about entering the primaries in either Wisconsin or West Virginia?

BAILEY: No, I think the Senator felt that this was the only way that he could get the nomination. I mean through the primaries – it's a long hard road, you know. A long hard road. I was in Wisconsin. I drove over the roads of West Virginia, and let me say that some person once said that if they could flatten West Virginia out it would be bigger than Texas! [Laughter]

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MORRISSEY: You know that from experience?

BAILEY: Well, I remember one night I was driving over this road – when I was back home in those days as state chairman and a practicing lawyer, if I



had to go any place at night, I usually had somebody drive me. So one night in West Virginia I was driving over these hairpin turns and I stopped the car and said to myself, "What am I doin' here?"

But it was a great experience. I wouldn't give it up for anything. West Virginia was vitally interesting and it proved something. It proved good organization. It proved there were a lot of fine politicians all over this country.

MORRISSEY: A lot of people were apprehensive before the West Virginia primary, and to a lesser degree before the Wisconsin primary about whether or not the Senator's Catholicism would lose him more votes than it would gain him.

BAILEY: Well, I think he made a remarkable campaign in West Virginia. I think some of those television speeches where he repeated the oath and said, "This is the oath I will take..." I think this had a great effect. I'm sure it did. I was there when he made those speeches and he repeated them. It proved that people are decent and they were willing to give the man the benefit of the doubt.

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It was proven beyond question that what he said was true. He was a great President.

MORRISSEY: Some people have said his voting record on agricultural issues was a hindrance in the farm states.

BAILEY: I don't know whether it was his voting on agricultural subjects or not. After all, he came from an eastern state. But yesterday it was the eastern state votes that put the farm bill through Congress. It is awfully hard to say just what is due to what.

There's no question that he wasn't strong in the Midwest for many reasons. It could well be the fact that his Catholicism hurt him more in that area than any place else. Don't forget that in Missouri (Governor) John Dalton [John M. Dalton] won the state by three hundred thousand votes and we carried it for Kennedy by only eight to nine thousand votes. And this was true in many other states. Kerner [Otto Kerner, Jr.] was elected Governor of Illinois by five hundred thousand, and we carried it by eight thousand eight hundred votes. One vote per precinct would have changed it.

You know, in politics you can always think back but you can't *turn* back. You mentioned New Jersey. I think the President had many friends in New Jersey, and, as I say, Meyner who had aspirations for some place on that ticket kept New Jersey from being for Kennedy earlier than

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it was. I'm sure they would have wanted to be for him before then.

MORRISSEY: How much reliance did Kennedy put on the findings of public opinion polls?

BAILEY: President Kennedy was very interested in polling and thought this was a very important segment of the whole political operation. He believed in all that. And I think that the reliance he put on it was that this was an intelligent approach to finding out what people were thinking. Obviously he couldn't interview that many people himself. I don't think that this was guiding, but it was important. He believed in polls. He had plenty of polls. Lou Harris [Louis Harris] made his reputation by the fact that Kennedy was using him in West Virginia and other polls, but it wasn't the only thing. He was guided by his own intuition and by what other people told him. Polls were just another part of the whole political operation.

There are many interesting stories I could tell. We traveled, Dave Powers and I, and the rest, but it is very difficult to recall them all. We enjoyed traveling on that *Caroline*. I remember the time when he got that bad throat and I used to sit beside him. He'd write notes because he couldn't talk to us. He couldn't talk because

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he had to make a speech. I used to sit beside him a lot of times because he knew that as long as I sat beside him I wouldn't bother talking to him and the point is that these other people were always wanting to talk. So he used to motion to me and I'd come up and sit and he'd read and do his work and I'd sit there and read one of those "great books" that I always read. As I say, we had many interesting experiences.

MORRISSEY: Do you have any other specific recollections of anything that happened in the West Virginia primary?

BAILEY: Well, I can remember one time when Franklin Roosevelt, Jr. [Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr.], was campaigning and he had to go back. I was substituting for him and I said, "If you'll fly me up to Clarksburg, I'll make the speech." We flew up with a little two engine plane. What I remember is that coming into Elkins, West Virginia, we come in over the graveyard coming down into the airport.

Talking about flying, the first time we were in Ohio on that first trip, and Congressman Wayne Hays [Wayne L. Hays] was piloting us around and we were going to go from Columbus down to Bellaire. He said he had a plane and he would fly us down. He had a pilot. So he did.

We went out to the Ohio State Airport and got into this plane which was a one-engine job with four seats.

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Hays and the pilot sat in the front seats, and Kennedy and I sat in the back. This was the first time I had ever flown one of these real little ones. The door didn't look to me as secure as a door in an automobile. They just slammed it.

Flying, Hays said, "You know I think you ought to see my summer place on the lake." So we took off from the way we were going and went over to see. We swooped down over a cottage that I'm sure the Senator had no more interest in than I did.

Bob McDonough [Robert P. McDonough] who was running the West Virginia show had arranged to have a lot of people – don't forget this was June of '59 – up at Wheeling. We were supposed to land at Wheeling which was right across a river from Bellaire and the Senator said to Wayne Hays, "Are we going to land at Wheeling?"

He said, "Oh no. I left my car over at another airport and we're going to land over there."

So we get over to this other airport and he's talking to the pilot and says, "Do you come in from the east or the west?" I said, "Well, why don't you talk to the tower?" Well, he says, "There's no tower!"

We came in in a kind of a crosswind, and I said to Jack, "You know *I* wouldn't even get the headlines if we crash – *you* would." [Chuckles] But we finally landed

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on the field and we then had to go. We had four hundred people over at Wheeling waiting for us but Wayne Hays had parked his car at another airport so that's where we landed!

MORRISSEY: How important was Eleanor Roosevelt's [Eleanor R. Roosevelt] support for Adlai Stevenson in the pre-convention period?

BAILEY: Well, Eleanor Roosevelt was a great lady and she was supporting Stevenson. The problem was that she didn't have any delegates. As you know, she was in the Stevenson operation in New York. We had, what was it, one hundred and ten out of one hundred and fourteen, or something like that. She and Lehman [Herbert Henry Lehman], both, were supporting Stevenson but the delegates weren't, and this was true in the great demonstration that they were put on at the convention – they had the demonstrators but no delegates were marching in the procession. She gave a great psychological lift, I would say, but the delegates were for Kennedy by that time, or they were committed. It is very unusual for delegates to be changed by any demonstration.

MORRISSEY: Right.

BAILEY: Or by somebody else.

MORRISSEY: Along the same line, how important was Harry Truman's announcement that he wouldn't attend the 1960 convention?

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BAILEY: President Truman is now a very good friend of mine and I'm a great admirer of his. But I remember I was for Stevenson in '56 when Harry held a press conference and came out for Harriman [William Averell Harriman], which didn't affect the delegates very much. And in 1960 I think that there was a great many delegates who were very unhappy that President Truman didn't see fit to come to the convention but I don't think that the fact that he failed to come to the convention influenced the delegates who had come to vote either for Kennedy, or for Johnson, or for Symington, or Stevenson. These people had their minds made up at the time.

MORRISSEY: I understand that you went to the Truman Library after the convention to see Mr. Truman?

BAILEY: We went out to Missouri and Senator Kennedy called out there. I would say that there was no more hospitable host who enjoyed showing Senator Kennedy all around his library. Let me say he campaigned for him.

One thing about Harry Truman is he's a Democrat from the top of his hat to the tip of his toes and there has been nobody, since I've been Chairman of the National Committee, who has been so helpful, who has made speeches wherever we've asked him to, and who believes in the Democratic Party. He likes to say, "All the things the

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Democratic Party did for me, and whatever I can do for them, I can never repay." So Harry Truman is a great American. Some people disagree with him but, nevertheless, he is. One thing about Harry, there is never any question about where he stood.

MORRISSEY: Let's talk about the 1960 convention. How were the Kennedy forces organized in Los Angeles?

BAILEY: They Kennedy forces were really well organized in Los Angeles. Each state had a contact man, There was this Kennedy secretary, or whatever you want to call him, who had the responsibility for each state. We met every day and we worked out a system of communication, telephone system we had set up.

One of the big problems at any convention is the question of communications which I think was developed by Kennedy forces better than it was any other time. In hotels if you can't get in elevators, you can't greet people, you can't find people. This was one of the things that a great deal of time and effort was put into because it was so vital. Things could happen. You'd be looking for somebody and you can't find him. All of us who were working in the operation had to check in to a central, telling where we were going, so that if anybody wanted me, they could call the central number and a girl there knew where I had gone to and where I would be, and where everybody else would be. We had the floor telephones set up connecting into

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that place out there so that Bobby [Kennedy] was in contact with each of the delegations and with somebody in the delegation who was favorable to the Kennedy operation. And we were able, when “fire broke out” to get over to stop it. I remember in North Dakota somebody was changing. Some of those states were close, you know.

It was a well conceived operation. I would say that for the first time in my memory you had an operation that was much better than Stevenson had in 1952 or 1956. It was a real professional job. I have the greatest admiration for it.

I had a small part in it. Abe Ribicoff was floor leader and he and I were very close. We worked closely together. It was – it was a good job! It wasn’t something that was put together. Bob Troutman [Robert B. Troutman] went out a month beforehand and got the thing all set up. If you’re going to be in there, after all the time and energy we had spent, it was no time to lose it because you couldn’t find somebody at one moment or another.

MORRISSEY:           What’s interesting to me about this is that the job was done *professionally*, and yet the people doing it were termed at the time as a bunch of political amateurs.

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BAILEY:               They weren’t all amateurs. When you talk about amateurs, there is no question that they were young. But many of these young men had been active in the presidential campaign in ’52 and in ’58 in the Senatorial level, and there were also a lot of older men who were interested in the Kennedy operation. Dick Daley was a tower of strength sitting at the head of that Illinois delegation. And Billy Green [William Joseph Green, Jr.], God rest his soul, in Philadelphia with the Philadelphia delegation. And the New York group was strong and you didn’t have to worry when they said you’ve got this many delegates, we’ve got that many delegates. You go across the country. There was a great many. But the young men, under the leadership of the President’s brother, did a remarkable job. No question about it! They were devoted. They had no other interest. They worked this thing out, and had the desire, but the President was the great leader of them all. He was great on detail himself.

He was always thinking. I remember we were campaigning across the country. We were out in Omaha in September; Scoop Jackson [Henry M. Jackson] who was Chairman of the National Committee, myself, Symington who was on the Armed Forces Committee, I think Magnuson [Warren G. Magnuson], some others went out. The President was making an inspection tour.

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We went to church the next morning. There’s an old custom in the Catholic Church that you are entitled to three wishes so I said to the candidate for President, “Jack, you know

you are entitled to three wishes.” He said, “Yes, I’ll take California, Texas and New York!” He was always thinking.

MORRISSEY: Can you tell me why Lyndon Johnson was chosen as the vice presidential nominee in the 1960 convention?

BAILEY: Well, I think that Jack Kennedy, after he was nominated, felt that Lyndon Johnson was the candidate who could help him the most. I also know, from the fact that I was in on it, that great many of the so-called leaders around the country, had told Senator Kennedy, prior to his nomination, that, they thought when he was nominated, that Lyndon would be the strongest candidate. I sat with a group for days, starting on Monday, of the leaders who were very responsible for the nomination of Senator Kennedy, such men as Mayor Daley, Dave Lawrence, Bill Green of Philadelphia, General Wilentz of New Jersey, Jack Kenny of New Jersey, Carmine DeSapio, Prendergast, Mayor Wagner, Jim Clark of Philadelphia. All believed the old political proverb that if you have two candidates and one wins, you take the second man and run him with him. And they felt that, of all the potential vice-

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presidential candidates, Lyndon Johnson would be the most helpful to Jack Kennedy running for the presidency.

I think and it’s proven true, that Jack must have agreed with him because he was the one who personally offered Lyndon the vice presidency and, much to the surprise of some people, but not me, Lyndon accepted. Because in my years of experience, I have found this is true at the national level: nobody is ever a candidate for the vice presidency as long as the presidency is open, but there is nobody who will not accept the vice presidency once the presidency is closed. I think this was true in 1960. It has been true in many other years. Don’t forget that the talk about Lyndon Johnson was Majority Leader of the Senate and took the vice presidential nomination. In 1948 Barkley [Alben W. Barkley] was Majority Leader of the United States Senate and he gladly accepted the vice presidential nomination under Harry Truman. While people were wondering about the ’60 election I would say we had more hopes of success in 1960 when Johnson took the nomination than we did in 1948 with Barkley.

And, of course, what some people forget and which I think Johnson realized, was that Johnson was Majority Leader with a Republican President. The leader of the Democratic party was in a different position if Kennedy was elected and he remained as Majority Leader.

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He would no longer have been the spokesman for Democratic policy, the great spokesman. He would have been in the position of having a Democratic President in the White House who would be setting the policy. He would have to be working with him. This I’m sure that Johnson realized and felt that, if Kennedy was elected and he was the candidate for Vice

President, he would be the Vice President and wouldn't be in the position of Majority Leader.

Just like being National Chairman. There is a great difference between being National Chairman of the party in power and the party out of power. Paul Butler [Paul M. Butler] was Chairman of the Democratic Party and its Advisory Committee and he, also, was the voice talking policy for the Democratic Party. Now I, as chairman, set no policy. The policy is set at the White House. The National Committee's job is to carry out the policy, once having been set by the titular national head of the party.

That is the reason why, when I became Chairman, I felt there was no longer a need for an advisory committee. We didn't need an advisory committee to advise the President. You might need an advisory committee to advise the Chairman, but I'm sure you didn't need an advisory committee to advise the President what policy he should make.

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MORRISSEY: Was there much opposition to the suggestion that the Advisory Committee be disbanded?

BAILEY: Yes, there was some objection. Some of the people felt that we should still continue with it, but when you look at the advisory committee of those years in which Paul Butler was Chairman, a great many of them became important members of President Kennedy's administration. Adlai Stevenson was on the Advisory Committee. W. Averell Harriman was on the Advisory Committee. Tom Finletter [Thomas K. Finletter] was on the Advisory Committee. And go down the list, and this becomes a list of people who were enlisted by President Kennedy to be a part of his Administration. So obviously I don't know who you'd have put on an advisory committee when Kennedy was President of the United States. In fact there was no necessity for it whatsoever and I think it was one of my most brilliant thoughts to do away with it! [Slight chuckle]

MORRISSEY: What was your function during the campaign?

BAILEY: Well, during the campaign, I had two hats I was wearing. I was also still chairman of Connecticut and had the responsibility of running the state of Connecticut for Kennedy, but my chief function was traveling with the President and I was his liaison, as I had been for a long time, between him and the Democratic leadership around

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the country. I traveled with him and at every step I was the one who talked to the national committeeman and the state chairman and the rest. This was my job.

There is a very interesting story if you'd like one more story.

MORRISSEY: I'd love to hear it.

BAILEY: On election day, Abe Ribicoff and I were sitting in the headquarters in Hartford. I was busy. I had a private telephone on my desk and we were trying to do some things, figure out how much we were going to win by and the rest. The telephone rang. I impatiently picked it up and said, "Hello?" A voice said, "Hello, John." And I said, "Who is this?" He said, "This is Jack." "Jack who?" Then he said, "It's the candidate; who do you think it is?" It was Kennedy calling me in Hyannisport to ask how things looked in Connecticut! I told him we were going to carry the state by ninety thousand. Fortunately, some of the voting machines had broken down in the afternoon, and having the results, as Abe and I had some very capable slide rule men, who figured out the percentage from what was shown as a result of the machine breaking down, we figured we were going to carry the state by ninety thousand. But we didn't. We carried it by ninety three thousand. But I thought it was very strange

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when that voice come and said, "This is Jack." That day my mind wasn't on him. It was on Jack somebody who was running the second or third ward someplace in the city!

Kennedy was a great candidate for us in Connecticut. We had a great victory.

Abe Ribicoff was a great Kennedy supporter. Abe, himself, is a great man, and I think he was very important to Kennedy. As I say, before Mike DiSalle, Abe was the only governor in the United States who came out and said that he was going to support Jack Kennedy. Of course this was important, especially after the '58 election when Ribicoff won such an overwhelming victory. They asked him, of course, after he won again, "Who are you for?" And he said, "I'm still for Kennedy."

MORRISSEY: Was that election night a long night for you since the results ultimately were rather close?

BAILEY: We sat before the television sets. First of all, we thought we were winning easily and then, all of a sudden they began to slide and then they began to slide back, and I might say it was a l-o-n-g night. It was a close one. It was a squeaker.

But this election of President Kennedy was won by organization. I believe that when you win by one vote per precinct, like in the state of Illinois, it means that

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the organization did a lot of work. In Missouri the same thing is true. I believe that an organization wins the close elections. An organization can't stop a landslide but when it's within one vote a precinct, it's the group that goes out and doesn't quit until the last whistle is blown and goes and brings Mr. and Mrs. Jones down at the last moment and makes sure they cast their votes.

MORRISSEY: I've heard that the successful organization in 1960 was superimposed



on the regular Democratic Party organization in different states.

BAILEY: I think that what I found out as National Chairman is this: in some states there isn't an organization and it was necessary to go in and create one. I don't believe that any organization was superimposed in Illinois. I don't think that one was superimposed in Missouri. I think that the Citizens for Kennedy and Johnson were helpful because there are many people who don't like to work through an organization. They feel that they are outside the organization and will gladly work as independents. That's why you had the Volunteers for Stevenson and the Citizens for Eisenhower. But in the key states, in New Jersey I'm sure, there was no organization interposed. In upstate New York, it might well be. In Massachusetts and in Connecticut, I know we had no problem such as this. In

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Michigan, I'm sure Governor Williams' [G. Mennen Williams] organization there was sufficient unto itself. In states where there is no real organization sometimes, the Senator has a personal organization. If he isn't running, it isn't too active. Then you have to go in and superimpose another organization on top of it.

MORRISSEY: One of the most lyrical parts of Teddy White's book is about President Kennedy's visit to Connecticut late in the campaign.

BAILEY: Well, that was, I would say, the most dramatic moment of the whole campaign. We were in New York. He spoke in New York. We then took off, flew to Bridgeport, got off at Bridgeport. It was twelve o'clock midnight. We started up through the Nagatuck Valley. We finally arrived at Waterbury sometime in the neighborhood of about a quarter of three. And he got into the old Elton Hotel and got up onto the balcony and there were thirty thousand people who had waited up all night! It was really dramatic, with the lights of the cigarettes, the matches, and the thirty thousand people standing on that green in front of the Elton Hotel. We went back to Waterbury in '62 and he recalled that night and that visit to Waterbury in '62. He said to the citizens of Waterbury, "One thing I will promise you, I will be back, at three o'clock in the

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morning, in 1964!" and that is one of the saddest thoughts, that he won't be there.

I don't know anybody who will ever be able to draw thirty thousand people at three o'clock. It was cold, and windy, and they'd stayed there for hours waiting to see him. It was one of the most thrilling and dramatic sights of that whole campaign. Maybe it's because I'm from Connecticut, but, nevertheless, it was. There were thirty thousand. That is no exaggeration. The streets were crowded. The people were all there. All they waited for was to see their hero.

MORRISSEY: We're running out of tape, Mr. Bailey. I think we should stop here.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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