

**Don L. Bradley, Oral History Interview – 6/9/1966**  
Administrative Information

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**Biographical Note**

Bradley was a Democratic Party organizer and an organizer for the Kennedy for President campaign in Northern California in 1960. In this interview, Bradley discusses the 1960 Democratic National Convention, John F. Kennedy's 1960 campaign visits to California, and contacts that Bradley had with Kennedy during the presidency, among other issues.

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Oral History Interview

with

Don L. Bradley

June 9, 1966  
Los Angeles, California

By Ronald J. Grele

For the John F. Kennedy Library

GRELE: Mr. Bradley, do you recall when you first met President Kennedy [John F. Kennedy]?

BRADLEY: Actually, I first met President Kennedy at the Democratic National Convention in 1956 in Chicago.

GRELE: Were you a delegate to that Convention?

BRADLEY: No, I was the executive secretary of the delegation. I served in a professional capacity in putting together the arrangements. At that time Senator Kennedy was running for the nomination for the vice presidency. He made quite an impression on some of our delegates when he came to our hotel, the Morrison Hotel, in Chicago one evening and sat around with some of the leaders of the delegation.

GRELE: Do you recall who in particular was impressed with him?

BRADLEY: Yes, very well. Mrs. Edward Heller [Elinor Rass Heller] in San Francisco, Tom Lynch [Thomas C. Lynch], who is now attorney general of the state,

was then district attorney of San Francisco, Jack Shelley [John F. Shelley], Congressman at that time and

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now Mayor of San Francisco, Joe Houghteling [Joseph C. Houghteling], a newspaper publisher in Northern California. Primarily, the people involved were the Northern contingent of the delegation. When we cast our vote, much to the surprise of the delegation as a whole, the contingent of Northern Californians did vote for him. I think, with one exception, Tom Rees [Thomas M. Rees], who is now a Congressman, who was then in the state legislature, was, I believe, the only Southerner—Southern Californian—who voted for him; and they cast seventeen votes, as I recall, for Kennedy. The rest of the delegation had been for Kefauver [Estes Kefauver].

GRELE: Were most of these people Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson] people?

BRADLEY: Yes, they were. They were all Stevenson people. Our delegation was committed to Stevenson.

GRELE: What was your impression of John Kennedy at that time?

BRADLEY: Well, I was fascinated with him. I was in the suite when he talked with these people. He had come over quite late at night, I believe at the invitation of Mrs. Heller. I know the meeting was in her suite. And he chatted for a while. The people present, who were the people who voted for him, were very intrigued. He was a very vital young man, and I think they all were rather excited with the prospect of getting a new face in the vice presidential spot. It was a very exciting Convention, and we thought—I guess the totals were wrong on the totalers there—that Kennedy had gotten the nomination. Then there were switches, and it settled down to where he was very close, but not over the top, and it eventually went to Kefauver.

Following that, these same people invited Senator Kennedy to San Francisco to keynote a speech which was right after the nomination in the '56 campaign, early in the campaign. And we had assembled a large crowd at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco at, I presume, a hundred dollar a plate dinner. The Senator came. We had shortened the program so that it wouldn't be boring, and there wouldn't be many speakers. And he rewarded

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us with about an eight minute speech which left everybody dissatisfied. It was a very short talk.

GRELE: I understand at one time when he came into California around that period of time, he made a very unimpressive appearance.

BRADLEY: Yes, I think there were a couple of occasions that the Senator breezed into

town and would see his friends and didn't make any particular effort to contact the Democratic hierarchy and made a kind of breezy appearance at a couple of things. The result wasn't very favorable. But following the defeat of Stevenson, he came back in California on a couple of occasions that I recall, once in the South and once in the North. This time he came as a very, very serious prospective candidate and spent a little more time and did a much better job. Then he started to pick up the really strong disciples that were for his nomination in 1960 in the early stages.

GRELE: When did you become aware that he was seriously looking for support from Californians for the '60 Convention?

BRADLEY: Well, I don't recall the exact time. Pierre Salinger [Pierre E.G. Salinger], who had been quite active in the party in Northern California, having served as a volunteer press officer for the Democratic Committee, and had worked on several campaigns while he was on leave from the *Chronicle* [*San Francisco Chronicle*], went to work for Bobby Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy] on the Senate Rackets Committee. And he kept in very good touch with us here and returned often. His family were still here. I think he felt that this was the case probably in '58 or late '57. I'm trying to tie it down. Of course, he was strongly in favor of it. He started to talk to me about where the Senator could look for support. As I recall, it was he who called and asked if we would arrange to have him meet people in the state to move him around a little bit. I arranged one trip, I believe it would have been in early 1959, through Northern California.

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GRELE: When did you first make your commitment to John F. Kennedy? .

BRADLEY: Sometime later. There was a great holdover of sentiment for Stevenson in this state, much more than in the rest of the country—something that was very hard for the rest of the country to understand inasmuch as the Convention site was in Los Angeles in 1960. Stevenson had run for president twice and had been involved in a really tough primary campaign in 1956 and had campaigned California much as if he had been running for sheriff. He had been in most everybody's front room and knew the organizational Democrats personally. He had improved in California between 1952 and 1956, one of the two states where his vote margin improved. He was a popular favorite here.

So along with Roger Kent, who was our Democratic State Chairman, and Elizabeth Smith, now Gatov [Elizabeth R. Gatov], who was our National Committeewoman, we were hopeful that Stevenson would make a bid. But as time passed, and he seemed not inclined to do the things necessary to get the nomination—plus some contact with some of the Eastern politicians who felt that Stevenson would not only lose but would cost them statehouses and legislative representatives—we began to look more favorably on Kennedy's chances. Then Hy Raskin [Hyman B. Raskin] from Chicago came out here. He had been stationed here during the '56 Stevenson campaign; he was one of the original Stevenson backers; he was co-national campaign manager for Stevenson in 1956. He came out to San Francisco and spent

some time with us. It was then that we decided that we were for Kennedy, and would work to that end, although we refrained at the time from making any public announcement.

GRELE: Do you recall who any of the Eastern politicians you mentioned were?

BRADLEY: One that I recall, the New York State Chairman, whose name I don't remember now...

GRELE: Prendergast [Michael H. Prendergast]?

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BRADLEY: Yes, Prendergast. Bob Burkhardt [Robert J. Burkhardt] from New Jersey, who is something in the same position as I am with the party here and is a personal friend of mine, was also convinced of this and was quite convincing in it. Another occasion John Bailey [John Moran Bailey], the current national chairman, came out and talked to us about supporting Kennedy, but he was a little rough in his approach and it didn't go over very well—although he impressed me because I knew him as a man who knew his business. The Senator—now Senator, then Governor—from Connecticut, Ribicoff [Abraham Alexander Ribicoff], came out, and also rather angered everybody. But, nonetheless, the logic and consistency of their arguments, I think, started it.

GRELE: Why did Governor Ribicoff anger them?

BRADLEY: Well, as I recall, he threatened people a little bit. He indicated that if we wanted to get into the swim, we should get in with Kennedy. I think that there's a great misunderstanding of California politics by Eastern politicians in that we have no patronage organization. We don't control people that way. They must be convinced. This led to a good deal of misunderstanding with the Kennedys themselves about the inability of the Governor [Edmund G. Brown] to control his own delegation. They thought that as long as the Governor was for Kennedy, which he was, he should be able to control the delegation completely.

GRELE: When Pierre Salinger asked for contacts in California, who did you suggest?

BRADLEY: Well, I didn't really suggest. I set up a trip for the Senator, and as I recall, we had an affair in San Francisco, one in Alameda, moved through the Central Valley into Southern California, and in conjunction with Joe Cerrell [Joseph Cerrell] who was working in Southern California for the State Committee, we set up a pretty complete statewide tour and invited most of the Democratic officeholders to meet the Senator.

I recall a very humorous incident on that trip. We went to Oakland, in Alameda County, for a luncheon, and we were very short of staff so I turned the arrangements over to Martin Huff [Martin Huff, Jr.],

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who was, I believe, the county chairman. We had a great luncheon set up at Jack London's over in Oakland, only there were no people there. There were maybe thirty people, and it was set for probably three hundred. It was Friday; they served ham. It was one of those wonderful affairs. The President never let me forget that. Whenever I was around him and when he had tremendous crowds, he would turn and say, "Well, it's better than Oakland, isn't it?"

GRELE: How did he do in trying to impress people in California at that time?

BRADLEY: Quite well. This was a very different, dedicated young man who knew what he was about. He took the time to win people and was quite successful in it. And I think that was the transition stage where at first they were hostile to him, and then, while there was still Stevenson support, they liked him. So it was easier to begin to put together support for the Senator. He made very little attempt at that time to actually sign anyone up, although he did see a lot of people individually in hotel rooms and at the same time made speeches for Democratic organizations. As I recall, there were a couple of minor fund raisings where he helped to raise money for the county committees. In general that was a very successful trip for him.

GRELE: Did he at any time seek your advice as to how he would approach the situation in California?

BRADLEY: Yes, he did. He was one of the easiest people to "brief" that I ever saw. He had a very retentive memory. You could, without props or cards or anything of the kind, tell him who you were going to have come in to see him and who they were, and what their importance was. He retained that very well, and I, stranding there, would see him apply it very well. If the person was of some importance, he would ask other questions about their profession, about their family, and other things and retain little bits of that to weave into a conversation which I'm sure was impressive and pleasing to the people he was talking to.

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GRELE: Do you recall your advice to him as to how best to approach the situation?

BRADLEY: Only that I did explain to him that ours was a rather dedicated volunteer political organization. I think he began to see a little bit of the differences between this and the states he was used to, and seemed to understand it a lot better.

GRELE: Did the other members of the Kennedy organization understand this?

BRADLEY: Not all of them, no. Hy Raskin, who had joined the Kennedy entourage,

really, of course, did understand the state quite well. He had been here. As I recall, Bobby did not understand it too well and was always impatient with it. Teddy [Edward Moore Kennedy], who came out to take charge of the Western states for the campaign, also didn't have any real "feel" for it, although he did quite well. He made a great public impression out here. He finally decided, I think, that the organization of California was way beyond his comprehension, and made some appearances here, but concentrated more on the other states in the Western section.

GRELE: There has been a great deal of dispute as to exactly how much pressure was applied to Governor Brown to control the delegation or to control its makeup, and then release it. Do you recall any of the specifics of those events?

BRADLEY: Very well. The Governor had made a commitment to Senator Kennedy's father, Joe Kennedy [Joseph P. Kennedy], sometime in the late summer of 1959, I believe. He was quite intrigued with the Senator and had been for a long while. Although he had had contacts with the Senator that I wasn't aware of, he had met him on several occasions. But traditionally California had put together a delegation to represent all of the various factors in the party—the central committee, the clubs, the volunteer organizations, many of the incumbents—and it had never been done on the basis of extracting pledges; it had simply been put together. Then they met

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and decided which way to go. We'd had a pattern for many years of having delegations badly split over their choices. But it was the traditional way to do it, and the Governor did proceed in the traditional way. This met with the vigorous disapproval of the Kennedy forces who felt that the Governor should choose people favorable to Kennedy on that basis.

GRELE: Do you recall who vigorously dissented?

BRADLEY: Larry O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien] and Kenny O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell] didn't think very highly of this, and Jesse Unruh [Jesse M. Unruh], who was at that time working for them had started early as a professional to help with the Convention and with lining up California support, also disapproved. We had an executive committee which met and chose delegates. As I recall—this happened in Monterey—Larry O'Brien was in a hotel down there, would confer with Jess on occasion trying to find out what the potential makeup of the delegation was. I think there was a grave disapproval of choosing that delegation. From their standpoint, they were right because it was a very hard delegation to control, although eventually Kennedy did get a majority of it, a bare majority.

GRELE: At that time was there any discussion of the vice presidential chances of Governor Brown?

BRADLEY: Yes, there was. But I don't think it was too serious. The delegation was pledged to his vice presidential aspirations, but I don't think even the Governor was very serious about it. He might have been at that time. But the idea that two Catholics couldn't be on the same ticket and, therefore, we shouldn't have Kennedy in order to enhance Pat's chances for the vice presidency, never really caught on. It wasn't really a factor.

GRELE: Did the conflict over the makeup of the delegation have anything to do with the ouster of Mr. Ziffren [Paul Ziffren] as National Committeeman?

BRADLEY: No. Well, yes, it might have in that they were able to oust him. I think Mr. Ziffren had fallen into

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disfavor with the party following the victories of '58. While he had been a very effective spokesman as an "out" party official, he was unwilling to stop his public pronouncements, and once we were an incumbent party, this was resented bitterly by the Governor and the congressmen. He was a strong member of the National Committee's Policy Committee which is an "out" committee. And the National Committee had sort of set the tone and the issues for the Democratic Party, an effort that was made by the National Committee to pull all the policy away from Congress. And Paul had become one of the nationwide spokesmen for this group, a liberal group. He continued, and he vigorously fought Senator Johnson [Lyndon Baines Johnson] in his efforts to set Democratic policy. The controversy found its way into the delegation through the congressmen and other people, and they were determined to change leadership, which they did.

GRELE: At one time there was a debate over the tickets to the galleries for the Convention. Did Mr. Ziffren, was he responsible for the Stevenson supporters in the galleries?

BRADLEY: I don't know. I've heard the controversy over that. Paul was pledged to Kennedy; he was a Kennedy delegate, cast all his votes for Kennedy. But there always been the allegation that he provided tickets for those people to get into the gallery. However, I watched that operation myself for some time, and I don't think many of those people had tickets. They had found a way to get in with the tickets and move the tickets back out to bring other people in, much in the manner that kids get into movie theaters at times. They were doing that very effectively. They had also bribed a couple of guards. A young man that I know, Murray Brasky, was involved in the operation, and he told me that on two of the doors to the gallery, the guards had agreed to let people in that they wanted to let in, so they stacked them that way. I don't think there were a great number of tickets. I think possibly Paul, having been friendly with these people, being very friendly with them, did allow them to get some tickets. But I don't think he realized—this is my personal opinion—I don't think he realized the enormity of the plot that was afoot to take over the galleries, which they did very successfully.

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GRELE: Who was responsible for this plot?

BRADLEY: It was a group of Stevenson supporters who had gotten together. None of them were delegates; none of them really influenced delegates. They had not been Stevenson supporters the previous campaign. It was part of what they now call the New Left movement. It became a very popular thing, lots of students. They met with ad hoc committees and plotted these things.

The fellow I just mentioned, Murray Brasky, he's a young lawyer here in Los Angeles, and he was my one contact with this. As I say, these were not people whom I was familiar with. I had run the Stevenson campaigns in '52 and '56, and I had never seen any of them before. Although they did have a couple of movie stars that had been for Stevenson, it was a new group.

GRELE: Did you ever have any discussions with Governor Stevenson over whether or not he would indeed enter the race?

BRADLEY: Yes, we had several. Roger Kent, who was very friendly with him, had been encouraging him and had gone back to see him at Libertyville. He had been out here in San Francisco on his way around the world, and we talked with him then. And Roger and Libby [Elizabeth R. Gatov] called one night to Stevenson and talked to him and offered my service as a professional to start to put together an operation for him to become an active candidate, which he refused. He was bitterly opposed to a Johnson candidacy and was afraid of it, but he wouldn't himself make any move to get it. Of course, he later came to the Convention willing to accept the nomination, but the time had passed. It had run out. It was gone.

GRELE: Were you at that conference of Stevenson supporters where he announced that he would take the nomination if offered?

BRADLEY: I was not, but I talked to him. By that time we were all committed to Kennedy. I did talk to him several times, and he called me to ask whether I advised him to come to the California delegation and speak or

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not. I finally advised him not to. I went over and had a meeting with he and Bill Blair [William McCormick Blair, Jr.], and we decided that it was not a good for him to come here, and he did not. He had not appeared before delegations seeking support, and this would have been, of course, the first place he went. It was also the delegation that probably showed greatest support for him in the country. He did not have his own [Illinois] delegation. It just was an impossible thing for him to start. He started from nothing.

He did come on the floor—a move which I had discussed with them, too—and received, of course, a great ovation from the audience and very little from the delegates. The audience had infiltrated the floor, however, and were wandering around. I recall very vividly his coming by the corner of our delegation, and he shouted something at me. He was in great pain. The crowd had boosted him onto their shoulders. He had a bursitis in his right arm. He was being lifted by a couple of guards and was in pain, and I rushed in to try to get them away from him so they could get him up to the speaker's rostrum without any further harm to him.

GRELE: Did any member of the Kennedy organization at the Convention call on you to assess the California situation for them?

BRADLEY: Oh yes, many times.

GRELE: How did you assess it?

BRADLEY: Well, I think we had a pretty accurate vote count. They were, of course, after us to exert more pressure on these people, and we had been trying, I was actively involved in trying to get people to switch over.

GRELE: What were some of the arguments you were using?

BRADLEY: The elect ability argument, primarily—that these were Stevenson people, and that his time had passed. The same sort of things I'm telling you now, that it was obvious that Stevenson shouldn't start to try to get the nomination, were good arguments with any practical politicians—that he couldn't win. But they were hard because the

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sentiment was there for him, and they didn't really believe that it was any different in the other delegations than it was in ours. So I tried to keep track of the national vote count which I was getting from Hy Raskin, primarily, and from Pierre and Andy Hatcher [Andrew T. Hatcher], who at that time had joined the Kennedy group for the Convention and later stayed and became one of the press secretaries in the campaign and assistant press secretary to the President. He had worked for me for many years. And I kept abreast of that and kept trying to show these people that we were only going to look ridiculous with a divided delegation because they were over the top, that they really did have it locked up. They didn't believe it.

GRELE: Was there any debate over the timing of Governor Brown's release of the delegation?

BRADLEY: Lots of debate over it.

GRELE: What were the alternatives?

BRADLEY: There really weren't any alternatives. There was a little alternative in timing. But while the Governor hadn't made a public pronouncement for Kennedy, it was well known to the delegates that he was for Kennedy. We had held it until the delegation met here in Southern California to see if we couldn't, at that time, influence more of them. Fred Dutton [Frederick G. Dutton] was also involved in this. He was the Governor's executive secretary at the time. We were hopeful that once they came together and got a little feel of the Convention, they would see that the Kennedy thing was the way to go, and we'd be able to get more votes. It didn't work particularly. So the Governor was unable to hold the delegation anyway. The argument was made by Congressman Holifield [Chester E. Holifield] and others that the delegation was pledged to vote for the Governor on the first ballot because it had been a favorite son delegation—or an unpledged delegation. And the “unpledged” was the proper terminology because it was really not a favorite son delegation, and they were free to vote at any time for whomever they wanted. So most of the argument over holding the delegation was that it came from a misunderstanding of our own rules and laws.

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GRELE: I know there has been bitter debate among Kennedy supporters as to whether or not the Governor felt that he could control the delegation. Do you feel that he felt that he could control that delegation?

BRADLEY: No, I think he knew he couldn't control the delegation entirely, but I think he hoped he could be persuasive enough to win them over, and that's what he tried to do. He met with a lot of people in his own suite. We were bringing people in and having him talk to them and doing what we could to win them over.

An interesting sidelight to this Convention was that there was a delegate, Mrs. Helen Pedotti [Helen L. Pedotti] from Santa Barbara, and when Senator Kennedy had toured California, Mrs. Pedotti, who was the county chairman for Santa Barbara, rather than scheduling a large meeting in Santa Barbara, had prevailed on us and the Senator to go to Lompoc, a small town in northern Santa Barbara County because for her purposes that was the best thing he could do. She hadn't had a major speaker there for a long while. The area was growing and it was getting more Democratic, and she felt that something should be done to pull it together. And the Senator was rather caustic about going to a “population center” like Lompoc. I remember him asking during the Convention how that lady who took him to Lompoc had voted, and she had voted for Stevenson despite the fact that I had had a two-evening session with her and I thought I had her convinced. But she voted for Stevenson.

He remembered things like that. He had a tremendous memory and a very quick slashing wit which he didn't exhibit in his speeches. I think that sarcasm, he realized, is a very difficult and dangerous tool for public speaking. But it was a very effective one with staff members and people around close to him.

GRELE: How effective was Mr. Unruh in marshaling support for John Kennedy?

BRADLEY: The argument still rages over that. Jess had lined up some support, but in being persuasive he was a little ponderous and I think actually hurt the situation. He adjourned one meeting when there was a discussion going on, and he didn't want the vote to be taken at that time.

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So he adjourned the meeting, and people were mad at him personally for his tactics. He was a little too heavy-handed on the whole thing.

GRELE: Were there any long lasting effects in terms of the Democratic Party organization and the Democratic Party in California as a result of the '60 Convention?

BRADLEY: Yes, I think there were although they tended to disappear as it got closer to the campaign. The more liberal elements of the party were still reluctant and thought we had chosen the wrong person. The same people who had been in '56 complaining that Stevenson wasn't speaking out on the issues had become complete Stevenson devotees and were very unhappy with it for a while. But Kennedy's appearances in California tended to do away with that, and of course, the Nixon [Richard Milhous Nixon] candidacy tended to bring them back in. The Peace Corps speech in San Francisco, I think, finally took all the doubters into camp, and we heard very little about it after that.

GRELE: Would you say that that was the crucial speech that he delivered in California during that campaign?

BRADLEY: Definitely. That was very late in the campaign, however. It was a smash success. It was a great place to give that speech. San Francisco's always been a town that was interested in foreign affairs and had liberal attitudes toward them; it's the gateway to the East. The papers liked the speech; it was a well-attended meeting at the Cow Palace; it was a mob scene.

That brings another incident to mind. Those last two days of campaigning in California—Northern California—he had spent his one day touring the peripheral areas of the San Francisco Bay area and then into San Francisco for the speech at the Cow Palace, and we had a terrible time getting him out of there. We drove him into the Cow Palace in a small car, inside the Cow Palace, and he made an entrance through the center of this screaming mob—the largest crowd ever assembled there—many of whom broke in. They broke down the gates and caused a considerable amount of damage. And coming out, we

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just had a terrible time getting him through the crowd. I'd torn my suit. I was a mess and tired. We got to the plane—he had the *Caroline* there. Just before he took off, I said—we were talking about the crowds and the adulation, and I told him I didn't know how he stood it

several days on end; here I, with two days of it, was just beaten to death. So when he got on, I said, "I certainly am glad to see the last of you." He laughed and went up the stairs.

I saw him at the inaugural ceremonies. I was with Mrs. Smith, who had come back to become the Treasurer of the United States. He saw her in the crowd and had worked his way over to ask her if she had found a place to live and arrangements for her family and everything. He'd always been very fond of her and was very nice to her. Then he turned toward me, and I said, "It's certainly good to see you again." And he said, "Well, that's a switch from last time." And I didn't know what he meant. I thought he was needling me, but I didn't understand it. No smile or anything with it. It took me several hours to figure out that I had not seen him since the time when I said I was glad to see the last of him.

GRELE: He remembered?

BRADLEY: Yes. He was actually a very thoughtful man. And when I was in the White House, every time that I was back, Pierre or someone would tell him that I was there, and he usually found a moment to call me back and ask how things were going, always very friendly. To me, he asked questions, political mainly. They were very good questions, and he always listened to the answers, unlike some politicians that I've known. He really was interested. He was very perceptive. He required.... He put you on your mettle, sort of, to give him very good answers and to be very concise about it because he always gave you the feeling of urgency and that maybe you were taking his valuable time. But he did find out a lot in a hurry from you.

GRELE: Were you with him on that first campaign swing through California in September?

BRADLEY: Yes, I was.

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GRELE: How were the crowds?

BRADLEY: Well, the crowds were.... This was the train trip?

GRELE: Yes.

BRADLEY: We had an argument over the train trip. I was the advocate of the train trip. There was a feeling on the part of some people here and a lot of the national staff that this was too early to do this. But the crowds were—they weren't tremendous crowds. They were uniformly large, though; they weren't small crowds. He made an excellent impression. And he liked the train campaign, incidentally, very well. I think it was a very successful trip. And that was early. And then, of course, he came back, and the difference of the crowds when he came back the second time was tremendous. They had really picked up by then.

GRELE: What do you attribute this difference to?

BRADLEY: Oh, I think increased interest in the campaign. People had watched him on television. He had to really got to people and really pick them up. Of course, there's always a great deal more interest right close to the campaign. But the adulation of the crowds, the jumpers, the little girls that screamed and everything, weren't around too much in the early part of the campaign. That all seemed to take place later.

GRELE: How effective was Edward Kennedy working in California?

BRADLEY: I think he was quite young and quite inexperienced and, I think, not too effective. I don't think he had any real concept of how to proceed on the job. But he found his way along pretty well. Hy Raskin came out again and stayed with him in San Francisco for a while. Then he decided what his responsibilities should be, and I think he was quite effective. His presence was very good; he was a great substitute for his brother in speaking. He had a

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tremendous appeal to the young people. Every place he went, he drew great crowds of young people and, I think, generally increased interest in the campaign quite a little bit.

GRELE: Did the Kennedy supporters come from the club movement, the party organization, or just outsiders?

BRADLEY: Well, both. But there were an awful lot of outsiders. This was a great new movement, again, tremendously weighted on the young side. All of a sudden we found that we could—which was really unheard of—could get high school kids to distribute things door to door; they really took responsibility; they would do it; they wouldn't dump them in the first sewer that they came to, and things like this. So we took great advantage of this. I know my son recruited a group at his high school, and they distributed to the whole of Marin County, then my home county. And they all showed up. They all showed up when they were supposed to, and they did the work. I convinced myself of it by going out and seeing that they worked, stuck papers under every door according to the instructions and everything. This was the great change. Stevenson had never really appealed to the young that way.

GRELE: What would you say were the major problems facing the Democratic Party and John Kennedy in California in 1960?

BRADLEY: Well, the main resistance to Mr. Kennedy came, of course, from the Bible Belt, the fundamentalist religions were reluctant to take a Catholic candidate. We had problems in the Central Valley, in the San Joaquin Valley, and, as a matter of fact, I think Johnson helped considerably in his tour through there.

In some way or other he made Kennedy more acceptable to these people, although we still didn't do well there. We lost Kern County, one of the Southern Valley counties which was Democratic but heavily Protestant. A problem throughout the state was with the non-minority wage earner. Kennedy seemed to make a good deal of inroads into the normal problem area of the Democratic Party, the suburbanites, but lost some support with the majority wage earner. And we lost the state, of course, by a narrow margin.

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We lost some traditionally Democratic areas because of this.

GRELE: Were there any major attempts in California under Congressman Thompson [Frank Thompson, Jr.] to organize the Mexican and Negro votes?

BRADLEY: Yes, but they were very.... The Mexicans were quite excited about the Kennedy candidacy, and the efforts to organize them were very poor.

GRELE: Who had responsibilities for this?

BRADLEY: Poorly organized. A young fellow came here who I think was from New Mexico [Phoenix, Arizona]. I'm trying to recall his name. I know his last name was Irish not Mexican. Carlos McCormack [Carlos J. McCormack] was responsible for it primarily. He made pledges of money support to people, and the money was never forthcoming. Some of these things caused some problems, but the vote in the Mexican-American areas was overwhelmingly pro-Kennedy. And part of it I think was the Catholic—the religion worked in his favor in that area.

GRELE: Did the Kennedy people tend to align themselves with one particular group in California politics, like now Senator Edward Kennedy or Hy Raskin, did they tend to go towards one...

BRADLEY: No, I don't think so, although the state was divided in the campaign, North and South campaign. I was restricted to the Northern campaign. So my observations of the South—I was here a few times, but I didn't know it as well, although we cooperated over the phone. Jess Unruh ran the South, and I ran the Northern section of it. I dealt with different people than he did. He dealt with Bobby and Kenny O'Donnell, and Larry O'Brien primarily. And they let us alone pretty much. Teddy was in my headquarters in San Francisco, in our headquarters, and I presume that his reports on the campaign were favorable, that he thought we were doing well. We didn't get any of the visitations and very little of the traveling group to stimulate us. They seemed to bypass us pretty much.

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GRELE: How did the final vote show up between the North and South?

BRADLEY: Well, we won in Northern California, and it was lost in Southern California.

GRELE: Do you have any ideas why?

BRADLEY: Well, Northern California traditionally is more Democratic than Southern California. He carried Los Angeles by the slimmest of margins, and then the Orange and San Diego, which was overwhelmingly Nixon's, finally ate up the margin. After several days of vote counting he fell behind and then lost it by—was it thirty thousand votes? It wasn't very much.

GRELE: Was there any problem with Nixon being a home-state candidate?

BRADLEY: You know, I really don't think so.

GRELE: Familiarity breeds....

BRADLEY: No, I just don't think that people here are too affected by that. Warren [Earl Warren] was on the ticket as vice president and didn't carry the state; Truman [Harry S. Truman] carried the state. I don't think they pay too much attention to it here. It's hard to prove.

GRELE: After the election you went to the inaugural?

BRADLEY: Yes, we arranged for and took a big group of people to the inaugural. We put on one party, which I referred to previously, that the President attended. We had a wonderful time! It was a great, great celebration. (That was Lytton's [Bart Lytton] party.) It was chaotic, and the blizzard just served to make it ludicrous. But everyone had a wonderful time even though many of them missed some of the events. You couldn't get to the gala. People were isolated in parts of town by the blizzard, but it was a very happy affair. The inaugural of Johnson, which we also took a group back to, wasn't nearly as festive as the Kennedy one was.

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GRELE: During the campaign did you have an opportunity to talk to John Kennedy at all?

BRADLEY: Yes, I talked to him when he was here. I rode with him.... They were using the *Caroline* first, and then the press were flying in a larger plane, and I flew with him once. He also came here once on his way to Alaska early in the campaign, and we arranged a rally at the San Francisco airport. Now, there was a real difference in the crowds. We'd had trouble getting a few thousand people to the airport. I

guess maybe we had six or seven thousand people there, but it was an effort. We really pushed them to ask them to come, bring buses, and one thing or another, although we didn't have much notice of the trip.

We were not really familiar with the drawing power. So when we started at the Cow Palace rally, for instance, we engaged in an operation overkill, I guess, encouraging people to come in buses who later couldn't get in. You couldn't get within five miles of the place. I really think we oversold that a bit. But the net result was very good.

GRELE: Do you recall any private conversations with John Kennedy which might not be part of the public record?

BRADLEY: No. Of course, I tend to remember humorous incidents more than others. I recall going to get him on the San Francisco trip. He was to speak at the Cow Palace, but earlier he was to address a fund-raising dinner at the Palace Hotel. I went up to get him, and he hadn't understood the arrangements. He had taken his suit off and was sitting down on the bed, just starting to take a bite out of a steak, and I told him he had to go downstairs. He gave me a very strange look and wanted to know what that was about. I told him. So he started to dress again to go down. No, he was still sitting on the bed, I guess, at the time, and I told him that it was the same bed President Harding [Warren Gamaliel Harding] had died in, and he replied with some unprintable remark and was kidding me about bringing him all this good news.

He also was conscious of his height. In San Francisco, Mayor Shelley's brother, who was a police lieutenant or plain clothes man of some kind, had been assigned to him. He was

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six-feet-seven or six-eight or something of the kind. He called me, he said, "Would you please get rid of that policeman. He makes me feel little." [Laughter] So I explained to him it was the Mayor's brother. But later on he got back on it again. He said, "Find a way, please find a way, to get that fellow out of the way." So I went to the Mayor and explained this to him, and he asked his brother to drop off the detail, but I don't think they were very happy about it. I had several conversations with him after he was President. They were all quite serious. He wanted to know the effect of his policies here, and what people thought about it.

GRELE: After the election were you asked for recommendations on appointments?

BRADLEY: Yes, we were.

GRELE: Postmaster General Day [J. Edward Day]?

BRADLEY: No, we were not. I understand that the story there was that a fellow named Hugo Fisher [Hugo M. Fisher], who was then a State Senator from San Diego, had been slated to take that position, and Unruh did not like him, and he was asked for a substitute name, and he threw the name of Day into the breach. And it was quite a surprise to us when he got it. I knew Ed Day, but I never thought of him in those

terms. He hadn't really been that active, although he had been a pro-Kennedy fellow. He was new to the state and wasn't too well known. We did get the President to call Mrs. Libby Smith and ask her to be Treasurer. She had refused. We had made the suggestion. He thought it was a good one. We made it through Salinger, I believe. She said she didn't want to go back. And I told Pierre, as I recall, that I thought a phone call would tip the balance, and he called her and asked her to serve, and she went back immediately. We made quite a few other recommendations. They all weren't followed, but some of them did go back. Jack Henning [John F. Henning], who is still Under Secretary of Labor, was one of the suggestions that we made.

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GRELE: You say you had several conversations with the President where he asked you the effect of his policies. Do you recall specific policies and your advice?

BRADLEY: I don't remember the conversations too well. I know one of them was after the Bay of Pigs. He wanted to know what the reaction to that had been. This was quite soon after, and he obviously was quite concerned about it. I also went in one time with...

GRELE: If we could stop for a moment here. Do you recall what you told him the reaction was?

BRADLEY: Yes, I do. I recall that I told him that I thought people were concerned and that people knew that we'd made an error, but that I thought that they were in a fairly forgiving mood about it, which seemed to be what happened. I think his candor in admitting an error was a great stroke. I think if he tried to defend it, he would have been in great trouble. I told him that I thought that was the effect. As I recall, he said he was happy, that he hadn't received information that he should have, and he hoped that it got through to the public that that was the case.

GRELE: Do you recall any other times?

BRADLEY: Well, there were several other meetings. He came to Palm Springs twice as President. I was involved in the arrangements for both of those affairs. Our relationship with the White House was quite close. Whenever there was any question about California, or when they were going to do anything in California, we were contacted, usually by Pierre.

GRELE: When you said, "we," whom do you mean by we?

BRADLEY: It's a collective thing for the Northern California Democrats—Roger and Libby being the two main leaders in it. They're a very close-knit group in

the North, unlike the South, in Democratic politics, so we operated very closely together.

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GRELE: Did the President involve himself at all in the 1962 election in California?

BRADLEY: Yes, he came out here and made a resounding speech for the Governor at the Palladium. I think he went to Northern California. I don't really recall. But he was quite concerned about it and quite helpful about it. I talked to him about that on two occasions also. He always said that whatever he could do to please let him know, that he was very interested in maintaining the Governor's control of California.

GRELE: Do you recall his opinion of Nixon's running in California?

BRADLEY: Yes, I do. Unfortunately, this quote got out some place. He said to the Governor and I at the Beverly Hilton Hotel, "Well, I killed him, and you should bury him out here." And the quote was quoted somewhere, and I don't think he liked it very well because I heard back from Pierre that he suspected there was a leak. And I think there had been, and I think I was responsible for it. It was funny, and I think I had said something about it. He didn't think it was a very presidential-like quote. He seemed to dislike Nixon pretty thoroughly, and the idea that Nixon could become governor out here was appalling to him. He was worried about it obviously and showed great interest in it, and was very pleased afterwards.

GRELE: Did you have any contact with Adlai Stevenson during the period when John Kennedy was President?

BRADLEY: Yes, on several occasions.

GRELE: What was your impression of their relations?

BRADLEY: Stevenson was obviously dissatisfied with his role vis-à-vis politics. I think he thought that he should be consulted with more on general policy in politics than he was. He also was out here during the 1962 campaign. As a matter of fact, he finished up the campaign out

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here. He would express this dissatisfaction with sarcasm, and say, "Well, of course, they don't ask me." But he seemed to be quite interested in his role in the U.N. He never said anything to any of us that would indicate that he was dissatisfied with his relationships with the White House as it pertained to his role in the U.N. If there was, he never expressed it.

GRELE: Do you recall the last time you saw John Kennedy?

BRADLEY: No. I think it was at Palm Springs. Yes, that's right. It was at Palm Springs. I had seen him twice while he was there. Hy Raskin, who also maintains a home in Palm Springs, and I were there to meet him when he came in. Oh, we'd gone out to the airport, and we found a great civic ceremony under way. So we'd stepped aside. The Mayor and councilmen and others were out on the ramp. There was a big crowd there for such a very little place. As he started to drive away, he spotted us and stopped the car, called us over and chatted with us for a minute, then later requested Pierre to bring me out to the house. He was staying at the Crosby [Bing Crosby] house. I went out there and had a chat with him, sitting by the swimming pool. I think that's the last real contact I had with him.

GRELE: Do you recall what that chat was about?

BRADLEY: No, I don't. He was quite relaxed although I think we did talk politics a little bit, and he inquired after the Governor, who was not down there. This was really a private rest trip for him for a couple of days. He was in a very cheerful mood and was asking whether the boys, the press and the staff, were enjoying themselves, and comparing it with Miami Beach. They had had a great civic welcome for the group, and they had quite a party. Some of them were a little hung-over, and he was making some humorous remarks about that. He was aware of the people around him. While he was quite intense and required some excellence in performance, you always got the feeling he was aware you were doing it. I was always very happy to do anything for him because I did feel that he appreciated it.

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GRELE: In your contacts with him in working with him and for him, in a sense, did you have the same impression of the frenetic quality that the work demanded?

BRADLEY: Yes, I did. Very much so. He always seemed to have great spirit on people around him. They were always interested in what they were doing, no matter what it was. He seemed to get tremendous effort from them. They uniformly were very fond of him, I know. After his death, Pierre was making his decision whether to run for the Senate or not. I had been very distressed with Pierre's behavior. He was very despondent. A good deal of time had passed by this time, and he obviously wasn't adjusting to working with the Johnson Administration or with Johnson. Johnson came out here to meet with President López Mateos [Adolfo López Mateos], which had originally been planned for President Kennedy, and the plans had been picked up again. Pierre kept seeing the different styles in the approach of Johnson and Kennedy at that time, and he was very low and upset about it.

GRELE: How were the relations between Governor Brown and the President?

BRADLEY: They were quite warm although the Governor was in great awe of Kennedy, and he seemed uncomfortable around him at times. The Governor's staff felt it very keenly. The Governor always gave the impression that he felt something of an intruder when he was around Kennedy as the President. It's very interesting: there's a picture in the Governor's office now of Kennedy roaring with laughter. The Governor had dumped a cup of coffee in his lap on an aircraft carrier—I forget which carrier it was. The President had picked the picture up later and endorsed it and sent it back to him. I forget what the message is, ["It only hurts when you laugh."] but it's very humorous. The Governor would say, "I don't know why it is, when I'm around him, I'm always all thumbs." They were very cooperative. When we wanted something from the federal government, or the Governor's office wanted cooperation, we got it very, very readily.

GRELE: Did this at all affect the relations between the Governor and Jess Unruh?

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BRADLEY: Oh yes. There was a competition, sort of, over who was Kennedy's man in California. But a lot of it was speculated by the press. I must say that Kennedy went out of his way to reassure the Governor that the Governor was number one as far as he was concerned, although Jess had great entrée especially with Kennedy's staff—he was still very close to Kenny and Larry—and this would lead to new rounds of press speculation every time either one of them went to Washington.

GRELE: That's the end of my questions, unless you can recall something that we might have missed.

BRADLEY: I'll think of it as soon as you leave, I'm sure.

GRELE: Well, when you get the transcript back, if you notice that we've omitted something, just pencil it in.

BRADLEY: I wish I had a little more time to organize my thoughts. We've been a little busy here.

GRELE: Yes. A hectic time. Do you have any final comments you'd like to make?

BRADLEY: No, I don't, except that I don't think I'll ever spend any time in politics where I feel more personally involved than I did with the President. I, when starting out, had not been too impressed, and then it really picked up as I worked with him. I somehow felt that it was a real family affair, my relationship with the President: and with the staff in the White House. It was a very close one. You know, really, it wasn't that close, but you got the feeling that you were really participating in his welfare some way or another.

GRELE: Someone's told me that he made politics satisfying. Did you feel that way?

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BRADLEY: Yes, I did. I think that that got into our staff and right down the line, that everyone felt that it was somehow very important what they were doing; even though it was stuffing envelopes or making last minute arrangements, they thought it was of vital importance, and they always wanted to get involved in it. When he made his later trips, of course, the arrangements were taken over largely by the Secret Service and the White House travel staff. There was grave disappointment on the part of my staff that they no longer had to do these terrible jobs.

GRELE: Well, thank you very much.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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