

**Pierre E. G. Salinger Oral History Interview – RFK#2, 04/18/1970**  
Administrative Information

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**Biographical Note**

Pierre E. Salinger was an investigator, U.S. Senate Select Committee to Investigate Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, 1957 – 1959 and Press Secretary, Senator John F. Kennedy, 1959 - 1960. This interview focuses on finances for the 1968 campaign, trips and problems in different states during the 1968 campaign, and Robert F. Kennedy [RFK] during the Kennedy Administration, among other issues.

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Pierre E. G. Salinger – RFK #2

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Second Oral History Interview

with

PIERRE E. SALINGER

April 18, 1970  
Beverly Hills, California

By  
Larry J. Hackman

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

HACKMAN: You reminded me at the end of the last interview of a couple of things that we ought to talk about. I think I'll just start off with them and not stick to a strictly chronological order. The [Howard R. Hughes] thing in Nevada: What can you remember about that?

SALINGER: In almost any Kennedy campaign . . . We had trouble raising money for Robert Kennedy's campaign. People don't like to give to people they think are already rich and can spend their own money in political campaigns. We had a meeting in Steve's [Stephen E. Smith] office and we were going over potential givers in the country. I mentioned that I thought Howard Hughes might be approached. They asked me if I had the entree to Howard Hughes and I said I was very close with [Robert] Bob Mayhew, who's the outside man for Howard Hughes.

So, I flew to Las Vegas and set up a meeting by telephone with Mayhew. I saw him, spent about an hour with him. My approach to him was that we wanted some money for the campaign, that Mr. Hughes really, with his kind of unique position in life and the amount of money he had and everything, didn't need a President of the United States, he could survive very well without one, but he needed probably a President who had the imagination that Robert

Kennedy did who would understand some of his concepts. Anyway, I made the case and Mayhew said he would present it to Hughes the next day and would call me the next day. I told him that I would be at the Benson Hotel in Portland. I went, I think, to Las Vegas on the way to Portland.

The next morning he called me and he said that Mr. Hughes had agreed to give Kennedy \$25,000 and that I could come to Las Vegas any time and pick it up; they were going to give it to me and they wanted to hand it to me personally. So, I said I would be down between the Oregon primary and the California primary. Well, then Bob lost the Oregon primary and things were really in a . . . So I called Mayhew as I went from Oregon to California and said, "I can't quite make it." He said, "Just come down after the California primary." Then, of course, Bob was killed.

The day after he died--I was preparing for the funeral; I was in New York--I got a call from Bob Mayhew. In a very simple message he just said, "I just want you to know that Mr. Hughes said that the money is as good today as it was yesterday." Eventually, the money was paid. I always thought it was a rather remarkable thing about Hughes.

As long as we're talking about what Hughes did, Hughes did another nice thing at that time involving Bob. That was that Kathleen [H. Kennedy] after Bob was killed went to the Indian reservation. Ethel [S. Kennedy] called Nicole [Salinger], my wife, and asked if Kathleen and her girlfriends could come out here and spend the Fourth of July holidays. The life was very tough on the reservation and they wanted to get away for a couple of days. So, we were delighted to have them.

They were in a kind of a remote place in Arizona as I recall. Anyway, I called Mayhew and Howard Hughes provided a plane, flew them from the reservation down to Los Angeles and then back again to the reservation, which is, again, very nice.

HACKMAN: Yes. Well, you also had some other involvement in Nevada in '68. Can you remember who else you talked to out there? Was Hughes of any help on politics in Nevada? Do you remember that at all? Grant Sawyer?

SALINGER: I don't remember getting involved in delegates in Nevada in 1968.

HACKMAN: I thought I saw in one of the black boiler room books. . . .

SALINGER: It's possible that I did. Now, I'd have to go back and look through it.

Let me tell you another anecdote. This is an anecdote I think

ought to be put in the really deep freeze until like fifty years from now, but I'm reminded of it by saying that I went to Oregon. They ran out of ready cash in the Oregon. Did I tell you this story?

HACKMAN: No, but I was in [Allard K.] Lowenstein's office one night and some kid who's in Lowenstein's office said, "Ask Pierre Salinger about the \$50,000 that got lost in Washington." So, I mentioned it to you last time but you didn't put it down. So, why don't you?

SALINGER: Well, anyway, just before I left for Oregon-- actually I didn't go to Las Vegas on the way to Oregon: that must have been another time because I recall very clearly how I went to Oregon. I'm trying to think of the name of the fellow who was kind of handling money around the campaign. It was one of the old fellows from the John Kennedy days.

HACKMAN: Yeah, I know. Out of Steve Smith's office, you mean?

SALINGER: Yeah.

HACKMAN: Yeah, I can never remember the name.

SALINGER: Kind of an Italian name. [Leo Racine]

HACKMAN: I can never get it.

SALINGER: It's not. . . . But anyway, he showed up and handed me \$50,000. I have had a terrible back problem for the last six or seven years; I try to avoid carrying any bags, if I can, when I travel. Even the thought of the \$50,000 was not enough to make me careful of the thing because my back hurt so bad. So, I stuck the \$50,000 in between a number of shirts and I checked three bags from Washington to Portland and we had a plane change in St. Louis.

When I got off the plane in Oregon, I was met by Jim McManus and [William R., III] Bill Gruver. We went down to pick up the baggage and two of the bags came. The third bag didn't come. The third bag is the one that had the \$50,000 in it. It was a disastrous feeling because there was nothing I could do about it. I couldn't complain to Eastern Airlines. I mean, I could tell them that the bag was missing, but I couldn't tell them about the value of the bag because that would immediately alert somebody to go into the bag and take it out; the bag was not locked. Second, it was illegal to take that kind of cash into Oregon. So, I couldn't make any great outcry about it. I mean I felt a little like Carmine DeSapio did when he put the money on the back seat of the taxi cab.

It was a long night. At about 9 o'clock the next morning there was a knock on the door in my room. There was a guy from Eastern Airlines who brought the bag. As soon as he came, I locked the door, opened it up and there was the \$50,000.

HACKMAN: What was the money for in Oregon?

SALINGER: I don't know. I turned the money over to [William] Bill vanden Heuvel. I suppose it was for precinct workers and things like that. I don't know what they used it for exactly.

HACKMAN: Did you get involved in that kind of thing in other places in the '68 primary?

SALINGER: No, that was the only time that I carried any cash in that campaign as I recall. I raised some fairly good amounts of money for the campaign from various sources, but that was the only time that. . . .

HACKMAN: The thing that I had a note on in Nevada was that there was some effort made with Grant Sawyer, who, I guess, was a former Governor at that time, who was a [Hubert H.] Humphrey guy. There was some chance of pulling him off of Humphrey. Can you remember it?

SALINGER: No, I had nothing to do with that. I know Grant Sawyer. I did not talk to him during that time.

HACKMAN: Did you get involved in whether Robert Kennedy should make some kind of issue for the Nevada thing on gambling?

SALINGER: Now, that rings a bell with me. I think somebody did mention to me that one of the reasons why the whole Nevada delegation was going to be against him was a feeling that he was going to crack down and try to get gambling eliminated.

HACKMAN: Yeah, that's right.

SALINGER: There was an attempt to obtain some assurances from Robert Kennedy that if he became President, he would not try to interfere with what was essentially a state matter.

HACKMAN: Yes, that's the kind of statement that was made, yeah.

SALINGER: It was a woman. It was a national committeewoman who talked to me: It wasn't Grant Sawyer.



HACKMAN: Out there you mean?

SALINGER: Yeah.

HACKMAN: Yeah, I've forgotten her name. I don't have it written down.

SALINGER: As a matter of fact, now that you begin to put it in my mind, I think that Mayhew, at the time I was talking about the contribution from Hughes, suggested that I call this woman who was a national committeewoman. He gave me a rundown on who the delegates were and who the possible delegates might be for Robert Kennedy. I think that's how it turned up in the boiler room operation.

HACKMAN: Yeah, okay. Okay, I want to skip back to the beginning of the campaign. I believe you said that the day before the announcement or on the day of the announcement you were talking to Steve Smith about who might do what in the campaign. Do you remember that at all? Maybe it was only a discussion of what role you might play.

SALINGER: No, I don't remember having any discussion of roles as it worked out. The day that Robert Kennedy announced happened to be the day I taped the first of my television shows--first and last, I might add. I remember that after Bob announced--he announced on a Friday--I got a call from Teddy's [Edward M. Kennedy] office saying there was to be a meeting Saturday morning at Teddy's office. It was to be Saturday afternoon, I guess. Bob was going to come up and march in the St. Patrick's day parade because I remember I saw him in New York before I went to Washington.

At that point there had not been any precise discussion of the roles. But I remember that I called Keith Barrish, who was the chief person in my company, and told him I'd like to take a leave of absence. He gave me one immediately. So, I went to Washington the next day for the meeting where there was some attempt made to divide up areas of immediate responsibility for the first week or ten days of the campaign. Even at that time, there was no discussion as to what I would do on a permanent basis. I was really in a kind of a funny position because I didn't want to move in on Frank Mankiewicz's operation, and yet that was probably my best expertise.

Anyway, at the meeting at Teddy's office, it was decided that the first thing I should do would be to fly to California and to work with [Jesse M.] Jess Unruh in putting together the California delegation, the idea being that in the creation of the delegation Bob would have certain ideas of people he wanted to put on the delegation, to make some effort to get them in and to make sure

that Jess didn't just kind of pack the delegation with his people. So, I went to California and never left the airport, really, because the operation all took place at the International Hotel at the airport.

HACKMAN:(?) [John E.] Nolan was out at that point, and I know he got involved in interviewing some of Unruh's people who then took campaign roles.

HACKMAN: Did you get at all involved in the selection of those people [Art] Seltzer, [Steven E.] Smith, [Ray] King?

SALINGER: No, I did not. Dick Nolan (John E.) was handling . . . . I was strictly working with the selection of the delegates. As I recall, I got calls from Washington or New York or maybe it was relayed to me through Dick Nolan. I don't have the precise recollection of how it's handled at the moment but, for example, I got a call saying that they wanted to have representatives of students on the thing. We went out and found student leaders. They wanted to make sure that there was a good black representation. They wanted to make sure that Cesar Chavez was on the delegation. There were people that had been associated with Bob in the past that they wanted to make sure of like Shirley MacLaine. I think they wanted to get Andy Williams on the delegation.

Then there was quite an argument about my own position on the delegation. Actually, I started the argument myself because at that time I had not made a definitive decision not to go ahead with the television show. I check with, I guess, [Myer S.] Mike Feldman on what would be the equal time situation. In other words if I was a candidate for delegate, would it cause any FCC [Federal Communications Commission] problems? Well, anyway, I think his judgment was that it wouldn't cause any problem, but I decided I'd stay off the delegation. Then I was given a commitment by Jess; after the election there would be vacancies and I would be named to the delegation.

HACKMAN: Can you remember discussions at that meeting in Edward Kennedy's office about what other people were supposed to be doing, maybe that meeting and then subsequent to that? What was your understanding of how responsibilities were to be divided?

SALINGER: I don't remember really, precisely. As I recall, that meeting was more about the immediate things that had to be done in the next two or three days, I mean, moving people out to various areas, less than a discussion of precise roles. In fact, I think one of the great problems of Robert Kennedy's campaign was that they never really sat down and had a discussion as to precise roles.

HACKMAN: As your role developed in the campaign, how did you handle that? How much of a problem was it to know who you were supposed to go to on what?

SALINGER: After I did the California thing, I finally had this discussion with Bob. I said to Bob that I thought the best way to handle it was, first of all, I should not be the press secretary of the campaign--that should stay in Frank's hands--and that he should make a decision as to who would be the road man and who would be the inside man. You needed an inside man and you needed a road man on the job. I remember that we discussed that for a while and he said, "Well, I want you with me."

I spent a couple of days with him on the campaign in California. Then it became absolutely obvious to me that that was just going to produce a disaster in the long run because so many of the press people who had now turned up on the campaign were really more my contacts than they were Frank's. So, I finally went to Bob and said, "You know, it's not going to work this way. What I ought to do is go into Washington and handle the inside work with the Washington press as well as setting up the campaign press organization in the various primary states. That should be the division. Frank should stay on the road and we should have some kind of a liaison operation." That's the way it finally worked out.

HACKMAN: As time went on then, how much of a problem did you have, when problems would come up in what you were doing, of either getting to Robert Kennedy or getting to whoever else should get in on the thing?

SALINGER: That was a fair sized problem. Basically, if I couldn't get Bob, I'd try to get a decision out of Ted Kennedy or Steve. Then when [Kenneth P.] Ken O'Donnell came in, I leaned on him quite a bit because we had had that kind of a relationship at the White House.

There was a considerable amount of friction in the headquarters staff of Bob's campaign. I mean, there were an awful lot of people around there who didn't like each other and thought that the other was too important. There was a lot of that unfortunately. Ken O'Donnell, for example, was most unhappy about the arrival on the scene of [Lawrence F.] Larry O'Brien. There were a lot of people who felt that [Theodore C.] Ted Sorensen had a role in the campaign that was far beyond his importance.

I say this not in really any. . . . I don't think in the long run it would have been any real problem. I can't think of any time that a campaign had been created that rapidly and moved into

gear that fast. It was bound to have that kind of problems, so you just had to put up with them. I tried as much as I could to stay out of the day-to-day strategy of the campaign and to concentrate on the press aspects of the campaign.

HACKMAN: What kind of problems did you have in getting your side of the operation going then at the Washington end or in the states?

SALINGER: None, really. Basically none. I mean, I geared up very rapidly. I figured I had a license to do the job, so, I went out and got people and put them in the primary states. I went to guys that I knew, that I could rely on or hurry. For example, Indiana was the immediate problem. I remember I call Bill Gruver in California--and, incidentally, you ought to talk to him; he's here and he's pretty good--and he agreed to go to Indiana. Then I tried to get the fellow who had been a press secretary to [Matthew E.] Mat Welsh.

HACKMAN: There's a guy named Jim McManus who gets involved.

SALINGER: I'll get to him in a second. This is another fellow; he also was secretary to Mat Welsh at one point. This fellow kind of dillydallied, he couldn't make up his mind whether he wanted to come to work for him, but he suggested Jim McManus. Jim McManus was working for Westinghouse [Broadcasting Corporation] at that time in a contract poverty deal that Westinghouse was running. Anyway [James L.] Jimmy Greenfield was at Westinghouse at that time. What Jim wanted more than anything else was to get a leave of absence so he wouldn't get trapped out if anything happened, so Jimmy arranged that with the Westinghouse people. Jim McManus came to work; Jim McManus headed up the operation in Indiana. Then the Indiana guy said he was available, so I sent him to Nebraska. He was also a very able fellow.

Then I also picked up a fellow named--well, we have to think of his name because he's played a rather interesting role since Bob's death.

HACKMAN: Not Hugh McDonald?

SALINGER: No, the guy who is now the press secretary to Charles Goodell. I'll think of his name in a minute. We put him in Nebraska--well, he was the original guy in Nebraska. Then he got into some fight with Sorensen's brother [Philip C. Sorensen]. They felt he was not doing his job, I thought he was. Anyway, we had some conversation and I just decided I'd move in on it right away before it got out of hand. I sent the second fellow in Indiana out there over him but left him out there. He turned out to be very good. The first fellow turned out to be fine when he had

somebody over him.

Then Gruver and McManus were leapfrogged into Oregon from Indiana. Hugh McDonald was put in as kind of my assistant in Washington. I always felt he was awful light. I liked Hugh as a fellow, but he had a small amount of experience and his judgment was not always too good. Some stories appeared, I mean, he was backgrounding people left and right on stuff that he really shouldn't have been. I finally had to kind of slow him up.

Then we needed writers awfully bad, people to write releases who had had experience. I brought Barbara Coleman in who had been with me at the White House. Then I had my own secretary that I brought from California. Then I brought a fellow in from the New York Times. I don't know what's happened to him and I can't remember his name at the moment. I'll think of it. It's a short name.

HACKMAN: I've got some lists here. Let me see them.

SALINGER: We did a couple of innovative things that had never been done in a political campaign before which were worthy of some note. Xerox had perfected in late '67 or early '68 a system that permitted people to send documents by telephone, basically is what the system was. So, we set up a system so that the candidate had one of these Xerox machines and we had one of them in the headquarters. We could send speech drafts out to him on the Xerox machine and they could send back actual copies of speeches as delivered and messages and stuff like that.

HACKMAN: Did it work?

SALINGER: Not totally. I knew a little bit how tough it is on the road to campaign. It's awfully hard to get people to gear up after they've been through like eighteen hours a day of campaigning, have them gear up the machine and start sending out what they should send to us or to receive from us. But it worked moderately; and I'm sure, thought out well, it would be a tremendous help in any political campaign. It would work well.

HACKMAN: Were there any other new things that you can remember doing in '68?

SALINGER: That was the one I remember the most. Let's hold on a minute; let me just look through this.

HACKMAN: I was thinking maybe [Richard C.] Dick Drayne was one of the people you were thinking about.

SALINGER: Dick Drayne! No, he wasn't one of the people I

was thinking about. Dick Drayne was a very able fellow. Now, he worked with me. He was, of course, a great deal more able than Hugh McDonald. I came to really rely on him a great deal. Dick Drayne would handle the Washington office principally when I was gone. After we got the Washington office organized and everything else, then the idea was for me to go into the primary states about ten days before and take over the primary operation, press operation, headquarters operation while Frank was traveling with the candidate, which I did in the three states where we operated.

HACKMAN: So, you were on the first trip on the road with Robert Kennedy in California. Then I believe you came back through part of that western swing, at least?

SALINGER: No, I dropped him in Los Angeles.

HACKMAN: Well, anyway, can you remember, after that first trip, getting involved in either a discussion with him or a broad discussion with the top level campaign people about what kind of changes had to be made after that first trip, either in terms of how you tried to present him during the campaign or . . . ?

SALINGER: Well, I remember that there was a feeling that his television was inadequate and that we were really going at it in too haphazard a way. I wanted to try to bring some expertise into the thing. I argued very strongly. I'd had a call from--who was the motion picture producer or director?

HACKMAN: [Charles E.] Guggenheim?

SALINGER: No, no. This was the guy who did "The Train" and "Grand Prix" and "The Fixer." Frankenheimer, John Frankenheimer. John Frankenheimer had been in touch with me and said he really wanted to work for Bob Kennedy. He was one of the really good guys in this business. Anyway, as I recall, I talked to Bob and then I talked to Steve and Teddy and they agreed that John Frankenheimer should come on immediately and start filming the campaign and putting together with the idea of half-hour program spots and so on. So, I remember I called John Frankenheimer one night or one afternoon around 4 o'clock California time. He was on an overnight plane to Indianapolis, showed up the next morning and stayed with the campaign the rest of the way.

HACKMAN: How does the relationship between Frankenheimer, I guess Guggenheim was involved in some of this stuff, Papert, Koenig and Lois [Advertising Agency]--I mean, is there a lot of duplication here and overlap?

SALINGER: There was some duplication and there was . . .

HACKMAN: [Richard N.] Goodwin gets in then sometimes.

SALINGER: Goodwin was part of the Frankenheimer operation. Goodwin was writing the stuff for Frankenheimer. Frankenheimer did basically two things: he'd take the kind of question and answer things that Bob did in Indiana and in Oregon and Nebraska with groups of people. Then he did the documentary. We did kind of a half-hour documentary in each state. "Robert Kennedy in Indiana" which were montages of stuff that Frankenheimer's people had shot. Goodwin would be writing the script for those, you know, for the voice-over on it. That's where his principal role was.

I didn't really have much to do with Guggenheim's people. I don't remember running into them very much. The Papert people were always close to us. In fact their office was across the way from us in Indiana, but I would think that [Donald M.] Don Wilson would have a much clearer idea of how these relationships worked out because to me it was kind of a blur. I mean, we had enough problems of our own without getting involved in that.

HACKMAN: Did you ever get any feedback from Robert Kennedy or from anyone else about how well the TV things were going after Frankenheimer came in, how satisfied he was?

SALINGER: Well, I think that Kennedy liked the TV as it started to emerge after Frankenheimer came aboard. He thought it was better.

HACKMAN: What were the early problems?

SALINGER: Well, I think the problems were more a lack of plan. I mean, I don't think anybody was doing-- there was nobody really filming him as he went along, capturing those moments that you really have to capture if you're going to show the candidate in his natural habitat rather than in a kind of a manufactured situation. Bob was damn good on the stump and good with people and we weren't capturing that. I think that was the major thing that I was pressing when we tried to get Frankenheimer in there. We needed somebody to get him as he was.

HACKMAN: I've heard there was some kind of debate taking place about what kinds of things you show him doing and, in fact, what kinds of things he does in terms of appearances, primarily ghetto versus suburbs or crowds versus crowds in motorcades, whatever?

SALINGER: I was not in on the central part of those discussions but I remember on the edge of those discussions that there was a feeling that maybe there was too much association with blacks in the early part of the campaign. Also, I do remember myself calling Bob several times in the first ten days of the campaign and also talking to Ted Kennedy and talking to Steve about what I thought was a terrible, strident tone to Bob's speeches in those early days in an effort to try to bring those down into focus. They were tough speeches. The one, for example, that got me particularly involved was the speech he gave at the Greek Theater in California when they talked about the dark, dark impulses. . . .

HACKMAN: Darker impulses.

SALINGER: The darker impulses and so on. I think he did move away from that stridency. Of course, that gets down to the central argument of the campaign, which has been talked about now in three books, as to whether the old Kennedy hands came in there and tried to change Robert Kennedy back into a more conservative mold and take away. . . . Personally, I never got into that fight at any point except at one time. The only time I ever saw a confrontation between the so-called "old politics" and the "new politics" was in Oregon when we were debating on whether he should debate [Eugene J.] McCarthy. At that time I was the guy who was trying to put it together for him to debate him. [Adam] Walinsky and all these people were on my side--I was on their side, let's put it that way. I think that was an unfortunate decision not to debate him in Oregon; I think that may have blown the Oregon primary.

HACKMAN: Can you remember after, let's say, the Greek Theater speech or maybe some of those other early speeches that created similar problems what you did to try to track that down in terms of dealing with specific reporters? I know [Robert J.] Donovan in the Los Angeles Times was one of the guys who was criticizing him for being inaccurate and too passionate or whatever.

SALINGER: Well, I remember one of the central issues was people trying to find out who wrote the speech. I was getting a lot of feedback from the press which I was communicating on to Bob and to others that they thought that he was going too far on the thing. That was mainly my role, as a conduit of the information that I was getting from press people who I thought Bob respected.

HACKMAN: Was your operation putting out the daily digest of the press thing?

SALINGER: Yeah, we did the daily digest.



HACKMAN: Who was that sent to then? How was it handled?

SALINGER: The daily digest was sent around to everybody involved in the campaign as well as out to the candidate. That was one of the things we xeroxed out to him. That was one of my ideas.

HACKMAN: Would those things be fed to the press also?

SALINGER: No.

HACKMAN: Skipping back a little bit, did you get involved at all in discussions of which primaries to go into, Indiana, some debate on New Jersey or Florida or anything like that?

SALINGER: No, I did not.

HACKMAN: You took an early trip out, I believe, to Indiana, sort of a scouting trip, is that correct?

SALINGER: That's correct.

HACKMAN: What can you remember? Who did you talk to and what did you report back?

SALINGER: The trip was for the purpose of getting my operation planted out there, getting McManus aboard and getting the thing started. I talked to a lot of people at the headquarters. I came back feeling we had a very tough job there. I remember at the time in Indiana. . . .

Some other things happened in Indiana on that trip as I recall. That trip happened to coincide with the assassination of Martin Luther King. It was during that trip that I had my first confrontation with the [Eugene C.] Pulliam Newspapers, which is not on the subject you're asking, but since I'm thinking about it, I wanted to tell you about it.

HACKMAN: No, that's all right.

SALINGER: That speech of Robert Kennedy's after the assassination of King was probably one of the greatest, if not the greatest speech he gave in his lifetime. When I went to pick up the Indianapolis paper the next morning, I read the entire paper through without being able to find any reference to the speech. So, then I read back through it again, and buried down in about the eighteenth paragraph about the Young Democrats or something was about a four paragraph mention of Robert Kennedy. So, I thought I could see the portent of things to come and I decided it wouldn't hurt to go by and see [Eugene S.] Gene Pulliam, this is the younger

Pulliam who runs the paper there who I'd gotten to know rather well when I was at the White House because he was the chairman of the Freedom of Information Committee of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, I guess.

HACKMAN: Right.

SALINGER: So, I called up and asked if I could come by to see him and he said he was delighted and was very cordial. I said, "Listen, I'm not here in any way to complain about treatment by the paper; I haven't seen enough of it to. And I don't expect you to be for us because I know you're not going to be for us no matter what happens. All that I'm saying is that I hope that we get a fair break in the paper. We just want an even treatment in the paper. I thought this morning it was not quite even." And he said, "Well, as a matter of fact I was a little disturbed by this morning myself." He said, "I knew Robert Kennedy was in town last night and I looked around for the story and I couldn't find it myself in the paper." So, I said, "Well, that illustrates the point better than anything I could say so why don't you. . . ." So, I left rather cordial. I mean, he took me around, introduced me to a couple of guys, and I went away. Of course, I mean that was one of the great wasted calls of all time because we were really killed by those newspaper.

HACKMAN: Well, why don't you just follow up with that on through. How much more talking did you do with him or other people at the paper?

SALINGER: I did no more talking with him. I figured it was worthless to talk to him. We yelled at the local political editor from time to time. McManus had dealt with them over a long period of time and knew them well and was constantly on their backs, but it just did absolutely no good. I mean they were just determined to kill Bobby.

So, I guess it was the Sunday before the primary that I decided it wouldn't hurt to make an issue out of it. [Interruption]

HACKMAN: About the Sunday before the end of Indiana when you went to . . .

SALINGER: Well, I called up Bob. I said I thought we'd taken enough from those papers and I thought that it might be helpful to us if we made an issue out of it. So he said, "Fine, go ahead." So, that's when I sent the telegram to the chairman of the American Society of Newspaper Editors asking that they make an investigation of the Pulliam papers.

All apart from the political considerations, because obviously

there were some political considerations in it, I'm still outraged by the response I got from him: that that's not their job, that it's not a policing organization, that they have no influence over other newspapers.

HACKMAN: That response wasn't anticipated then?

SALINGER: No. I don't think I anticipated that they would do anything about it, but I thought that the response was so bad that it really revealed the lack of desire of the whole newspaper profession to look at their own problems. They have got them and they've got them no place worse than in Indianapolis or in Phoenix where Mr. Pulliam operates.

HACKMAN: How did you try to get around that situation in Indiana? Here's the biggest newspaper in Indiana  
. . . .

SALINGER: Well, we got around it through television. I mean, that was the only solution.

HACKMAN: No other newspapers that reached into the area that you could. . . .

SALINGER: There were no other newspapers of any consequence reaching Indianapolis that could help you at all. They have a monopoly in Indianapolis; they have both papers. Now, I'm not convinced, however. . . . In fact, I'm fairly convinced that the opposition of those papers helped us in the long run in Indianapolis. Bob ran well in Indianapolis, despite those papers. They went too far in my opinion. I think that people began to sympathize with Bob for the treatment he was getting from those papers. They've seen that treatment given to others. We got the same treatment in the 1960 campaign from those papers.

HACKMAN: In terms of getting around it through the use of TV, does that mean you just tried to get him on TV a lot or is there a specific contact that you have to make with TV stations to try to do certain kinds of things.

SALINGER: Well, we tried to make it as simple as possible for the TV stations to get the information. We even had a crew to travel with the candidate who would produce film for stations who didn't have the funds or the desire to go out and cover it themselves. In addition to that, of course, we're talking about buying a lot of time. We bought a lot of time and tried to use that as best we could.

HACKMAN: Okay, now getting back to that first trip you took out to Indiana, can you remember why you came back

with a feeling that it was going to be tough? Did you have any contact with Gordon St. Angelo or any of the local pols in Indiana?

SALINGER: I don't remember seeing Gordon on that trip, I may have talked to him on the telephone.

HACKMAN: There has always been some suggestion that people were unclear as to what role he had, what his position really, was, that he was playing slightly favorable when in fact he wasn't.

SALINGER: Well, I never had the impression that he was playing favorable at all. I remember that was one of Larry O'Brien's theories that we shouldn't be too tough on Gordon because he was going to be with us in the long run. I never accepted that. Certainly, in Indiana. . . . The guy was either with us or he wasn't with us, I mean, it was that simple. I remember, I think I talked to (Andrew, Jr.) Andy Jacobs and some of his people on the first trip I went out there. I remember when I was out there I did a background of some of the press that was out there in which I said that I thought that we were in for a tough time in Indiana. Then, of course, the next day there were all kinds of stories saying, "It's the return of Pierre Salinger and the old poor-mouth technique that he used so beautifully in 1960." They said, "Now we can recognize it." But I meant it; I was serious about it, I thought we were going to have a tough time winning that one.

HACKMAN: Did you ever get involved in any discussions of what to do in the South in the campaign?

SALINGER: Well, I had some discussions with Robert Troutman. I'm trying to think. I'm going to be spending a couple days with Bob Troutman next week and maybe in my conversation with him I can refresh my memory on what the hell we talked about.

Troutman, incidently, was put in charge of the 1968 [Democratic National] Convention arrangements in Chicago as he had been in 1960.

HACKMAN: Is that something that came out of one of the fall meetings, or when does that take place? In Sorensen's new book he says that one of the decisions made either in the October or December '67 meeting is that you start doing something in terms of organizing for the Convention, in terms of facilities whatever. Do you remember that? Coming out of it?

SALINGER: Yeah. It wasn't the October meeting, but I do remember something about the December meeting

because I remember I had a conversation with Troutman. I remember putting in a call to the telephone specialist out here at the Pacific Telephone Company who would handle our problems in Los Angeles and asking him to start kind of feeling around with his people as to whether he could get loose and be assigned to Chicago to work with us in setting up our phone systems there.

HACKMAN: Speaking of O'Brien, what did he spend most of time doing after he came with the campaign?

SALINGER: Talking to the press.

HACKMAN: Yes. Any one directing what he was doing, or was he more or less operating on his own?

SALINGER: He was operating on his own. I mean, I got the distinct impression that he was kind of just placed out there. He really didn't have a hell of a lot to do; the campaign was already running. He didn't seem to me to be involved in any of the day-to-day decisions on how the campaign was being run. I never remember having to check with him about anything I ever had to do.

HACKMAN: Yeah. What kinds of problems did his conversation with the press present to you? Were there many?

SALINGER: No, because he was fairly skilled about that. I don't remember him saying anything outrageous but I don't remember him calling me up and telling me what he was going to say to the press before either.

HACKMAN: What were your problems in terms of--maybe they were some of the same problems Mankiewicz had--controlling what people were saying of the campaign? Was there any way that you could get a hold on that?

SALINGER: There was no way that you could get a hold on that in that particular campaign. The only thing was to make it so easy for yourself to be approached, to set up an operation that enticed people to come there and check in with you before they did anything else when they got to a state. You had some hold on it that way, but that was about the only way.

In all these states what I tried to do was to create in the press office--that was the inside deal--such a basic source of information for the press--I mean, getting everything for them that they could possibly want--that they almost were compelled to come there when they first arrived in the state, which would give you an opportunity then to talk to them and give them some

idea what you thought was going to happen.

HACKMAN: Did that in fact happen?

SALINGER: Yeah, it did. The press is really broken down into two groups, the ones that are traveling constantly with the candidate, and therefore Frank had direct access to them, and then the specialists and the people who come in in the last ten days of a campaign to follow it to its climax. Those people, generally, were kept contact with through the headquarters.

HACKMAN: What about people within a state, sort of the local press, either in the major cities or, say, in Omaha or Lincoln or on . . .

SALINGER: Yeah, that was, of course, the job that we sent these guys into the state to handle, the local press. They did a good job. Jim McManus knew these people across the state.

HACKMAN: Okay.

SALINGER: I'm trying to think, did we have a beeper in Indiana?

HACKMAN: Yeah.

SALINGER: Yeah, I think we did. Oh yeah, we brought what's-his-name in.

HACKMAN: I can't remember his name either.

SALINGER: My beeper man.

HACKMAN: He was the guy who did it before.

SALINGER: That's one thing I remember I had a discussion with Steve as to whether we could pay the cost of bringing him in. He was my beeper man when I ran for the Senate in '64; he's damn good.

HACKMAN: When did you next get to California after you were out here in March? I think you told me last time you didn't get into California until the last ten days.

SALINGER: That's right.

HACKMAN: Were you getting many reports back from California as things developed on what the problems were?

SALINGER: I was getting reports back on California and that was basically the only problem I ever had in the campaign, kind of an interaction with the. . . . I never was able to pin it down, but every once in a while I would hear from friends of mine in California that they had been told flatly by people in the Kennedy campaign that I was being kept out of California on purpose because I was a controversial figure in California because I had been a candidate there myself. Every time I would try to pin that down I was not able to pin it down. But I didn't go to California. I had a couple of opportunities to go to California which I passed up on my own. Not being able to pin it down, I didn't want to really exacerbate the situation, so I stayed out of the state. That was the only place I really had any conflict with Frank. For some reason or the other Frank thought that he was a bigger expert on California than I was and he got himself assigned out there.

He went off the campaign--Dick Drayne went out to take his place --and Frank went out there. Frank had not been in California for four or five years, was not really up on the political thing, didn't have the relationship with Jess.

HACKMAN: It had been longer than that really.

SALINGER: Now, see, part of the thing was that I had not been exactly on friendly terms with Jess in the period from '64 to '68, but we kissed and made up at the beginning of Bob Kennedy's campaign. We had absolutely no problems, and we weren't going to have any problems. But people thought that we still had that lingering feud going between us, and I think maybe that was part of it.

HACKMAN: Well, who were you hearing from in California? What were they telling you?

SALINGER: Well, I was hearing. . . . I'm trying to think now who the principal people I was talking to were. I can't think of the precise people, I mean, as people would come through, I would talk to them. I guess [Frederick G.] Dutton was out there quite a few times. I remember the major theme that I was getting was that there was a lot of friction in the campaign, that Jess wasn't doing everything he could for Bob, that the national direction of the campaign was unfortunate because they didn't really understand the California situation and they were trying to impose ideas that didn't work in California. This is the kind of thing I was getting back.

HACKMAN: When you went out there the last ten days, what did you get involved in?

SALINGER: Well, in the last ten days then I got involved in

the press operation principally. I stayed out of everything else.

HACKMAN: Where, mostly down here?

SALINGER: In the headquarters on Wilshire Boulevard.

HACKMAN: What were the press problems at that point? Remember a fellow named [Richard] Dick Kline?

SALINGER: Very well.

HACKMAN: How well was he doing on what he was supposed to be doing?

SALINGER: Well, Frank didn't like him, I did like him. Dick tried to do the best he could in what was basically an unfortunate situation for him. Frank thought he was lazy; Dick is a pretty effective fellow. So, there was that kind of friction. By the time election day came we had too many people in California. There were just too many people who didn't know anything about California trying to tell people in California how to run their campaign. The fact that we won in California was miraculous in my opinion, in view of the campaign. It was an atrociously run campaign.

HACKMAN: In terms of newspapers out here, any personal contact that you had with editors, whatever?

SALINGER: Well, I knew the writers all very well, I mean the political writers. We got a pretty good ride from the press in California. I don't remember any place where we were really getting screwed by the press in California.

The major thing was trying to handle those requests for the special things that people wanted, you know, CBS [Columbia Broadcasting System] had a California special and they wanted to do five minutes with Bob. The BBC [British Broadcasting Corporation] wanted to do this, and the French were there. That's what you end up spending your time on, those problems.

HACKMAN: Was [Edwin O.] Guthman a significant help on the [Los Angeles] Times, or does that enter into it or anything?

SALINGER: I think I would say no, not, I mean.

[BEGIN TAPE ONE SIDE II]



SALINGER: It was kind of train-meeting operation, our press operation. We had so many people coming up to give speeches. We had to arrange their schedules. And we worked from [Charles] Charlie Evers to [Arthur M., Jr.] Arthur Schlesinger. We had--what's the name of the guy that used to be head of the Consulate department at the State Department?

HACKMAN: Abba Schwartz.

SALINGER: Abba Schwartz and, I mean, it was just a constant progression of guys that simply appeared one day and said, you know, "What am I doing today?" You'd try to find fifty people who would listen to him.

HACKMAN: Can you remember a big debate going on out here as to, again, what group you appealed to, the minorities versus the suburbs? Did you get involved in that?

SALINGER: I didn't get involved in that, but it was obvious in the television debate that whoever got involved in it had decided. The thing that actually won the election for him was the statement he made on television . . .

HACKMAN: The Orange County thing?

SALINGER: . . . about McCarthy wanting to send blacks to Orange County. McCarthy didn't realize--that was the fantastic thing about it--for about twenty-four hours that he had just made one of the great boo-boos of his life.

HACKMAN: What about in Indiana? There have always been a lot of rumors that there were problems in the way the organization was going. One time [Gerald F.] Jerry Doherty, who was Edward Kennedy's guy was running it and then along comes John Douglas. Did you get involved in any of that?

SALINGER: No, I saw the fights going on. Then there was [Joseph F.] Joe Dolan, and then there was [Gerald J.] Bruno who was blowing his top about once an hour and screaming and yelling.

HACKMAN: What was it all about? Did you get a feel for it?

SALINGER: Scheduling was one of the central things, where he was going to go on this date and how he was being scheduled. Terrible fights between Dolan and Bruno's people and Doherty's people. John Douglas was kind of a peacemaker in the thing, as I recall, more than anything else.

HACKMAN: You basically tried to stay out though?

SALINGER: Basically, I tried to stay out. I had my hands full talking with the press.

I'm big for trains in campaigns. I think I was one of the first to suggest in the campaign, if not the first to suggest that we do trains into various states, basically on my own experience that trains have been a damn effective way of campaigning. The press liked them.

HACKMAN: Can you remember getting involved in other discussions of that kind of thing? You know, in some places he was using, what was it?--STOL [Short Take Off & Landing] system, you know, the airplane hops around states. Did you get involved in that, the scheduling and all?

SALINGER: No. You see, what I was mainly bogged down doing, if I was not in the primary state I was in Washington where I was filtering hundreds if not thousands of requests for articles by him on various subjects and quotes by him for various publications around the country, trying to put out stuff for specialized types of publications. Breaking down publications across the country, you could hit their special interest. The foreign press swarmed into the country, including my wife--that's how I met her. That was in '64 she swarmed in, but I mean, you know, that type of thing.

You were trying to keep some basic liaison with the campaign so you weren't saying things that were too far out from what the campaign was trying to say in those days. You went more on gut feeling, actually, most of the time on what you were saying in the press than you did on any great direction. I don't remember getting a substantial amount of briefing direction from anybody. You know, occasionally, I'd get some briefing direction, but most of the time I was going on instinct of what the candidate was saying, on what we were supposed to be saying and how we were supposed to be moving.

HACKMAN: Can you remember anything significant about Nebraska? Any problems peculiar to Nebraska?

SALINGER: No, I remember after Indiana Nebraska was a hell of a lot easier. It seemed to be a lot easier.

HACKMAN: At the Indian . . .

SALINGER: There was a bomb--you know about the bomb threat in Nebraska?

HACKMAN: Yeah, I've heard. Maybe you've got something else.

SALINGER: Well, you know, they cleaned out the hotel, I think it was the day of the election or the day before the election, with the bomb threat.

HACKMAN: Did you ever talk to them about security during the campaign?

SALINGER: Well, the one time, of course, was the conversation we had at Frankenheimer's house which was about ten days before he was killed. That, of course, has been published quite extensively.

HACKMAN: What about at the end of Nebraska? You made a statement about McCarthy, this defeated McCarthy or McCarthy was finished. Is that completely your own?

SALINGER: That was my own, that was my own direction.

Let me go back to Indiana a minute. One of the things we devised in Indiana, and actually it was Bob's idea originally, was the summary of the election results. In other words taking the results and putting them together in a fashion which put us in the best possible light--statistical, political economics, social analysis of the returns which we stayed up all night doing in Indiana after the election and which we then had a briefing the next day to the press about--to make Indiana look. . . . We did that in every state where we ran a primary.

HACKMAN: Now, this was sort of new in '68?

SALINGER: Yeah. We never did that before, never did that before. That was damn effective with the press. I mean, they began to look for it after the things, how many counties we. . . . It was tougher to do in a state where you lose, like Oregon, but I don't know. You ought to get those copies. Those were all mimeographed and they should be available.

HACKMAN: Yeah, they're probably at the [Kennedy] Library.

You also at least took one trip into the State of Washington and in Hawaii, anything in either one of those two?

SALINGER: Well, I was sent to Hawaii to represent the Senator at the State Democratic convention there. I would say that that trip was largely unsuccessful from the standpoint of. . . . I mean, in other words, we held the delegates we had and maybe added a half

delegate or one delegate more, but we didn't make any real impact. The situation was pretty well locked up.

Washington was different. I went to Washington to address the King County Democratic convention. There I think it made a substantial difference. I think it was one of the best speeches that I gave in my whole life and brought the convention to their feet which [Walter F.] Mondale had not done and the other guys had not done. I think that Bob would have done exceedingly well in the Washington delegation if he had not been killed.

HACKMAN: Yeah. Do you remember in Hawaii getting involved in discussions of cooperation with McCarthy or how to split the delegation?

SALINGER: Yes, I tried to put that together, as a matter of fact.

HACKMAN: Some guy named [Thomas P.] Tom Gill being involved who was the Lieutenant Governor?

SALINGER: Yeah. Tom Gill, who I knew well, was the Lieutenant Governor out there. But we were never able really to do it there. Now they were able to do it in Washington with the cooperative move between the McCarthy. . . . I was pushing that very strongly at that time, but I figured there would be no problem because we would emerge with the leading candidate and pick up that strength as we went along.

HACKMAN: Was that ever discussed with Robert Kennedy, I mean, how much strength to give the McCarthy people in any of the states that you visited?

SALINGER: I think that was pretty much handled on a state-by-state basis and not handled with any overall direction. Now, I think that in both those states it was pretty much left up to my judgment to see when I got there what could be accomplished by putting that together. It didn't work in Hawaii, but in Washington it was pretty clear that that movement was already moving very strongly and that to have been against that would have been a terrible mistake in Washington.

HACKMAN: How well was [James] Whittaker doing in Washington? Here's an example of a friend who doesn't have much political experience.

SALINGER: But he was doing damn well. He had managed to get some fellows out in front who had a lot of political experience. I remember a bright young lawyer was handling the thing and was damn good. The fact is that after Bob was killed, I went back to Washington for [George

S.] McGovern and was able to almost pick up that entire group of people as McGovern supporters.

HACKMAN: When and how did you first get into Oregon?

SALINGER: I went to Oregon the day after Nebraska.

HACKMAN: Yeah. For the last part, right.

SALINGER: No, I didn't do exactly that. I went to Washington for a day, I guess, or two days to look at the office and then went out to Oregon. That was the same trip where I took the money out. I went to Washington on that trip. When I got to Oregon I really, . . . I mean the first twenty-four hours in Oregon I really had the sense that we were down the tubes in Oregon. It was very depressing, to arrive in Oregon. The thing was that nobody could figure out anything to do to change it because if you were going to carry on the central theme of Bob's campaign which had to do with poverty and blacks and people, this subject was absolutely falling on dead ears in Oregon. They couldn't care less. I mean the black ghetto in Portland was maybe five city blocks or something. It just was not a ringing issue. Second, the McCarthy people had a tremendous confidence. I saw a lot of the McCarthy people while I was in Oregon. They used to come over to the Benson [Hotel] and drink at night. We'd sit in the bar and have a couple of drinks. In fact, I made a lot of bets with the McCarthy people, lost money to them.

Then the debate thing was definitely having an impact across the state. We kept trying to tell Bob and everybody that people were really reacting to it.

HACKMAN: Was he primarily opposed to it or were there strong feelings on the part of other people?

SALINGER: Dutton was very strongly opposed to it. Frank Mankiewicz, I don't think, was for it much. As I recall, vanden Heuvel was ambivalent on the subject. Really the only people that were for it were Walinsky and [Jeff] Greenfield, and they were kind of irritating Bob at that time so he was paying less attention to them than he normally might have. So he didn't do it. He had an opportunity to do it the Saturday night before the primary, which would have been very good.

The Oregon primary, incidentally, was one of the places. . . . You know about the Drew Pearson story about the Oregon primary, about my paying barmaids money to spy on the McCarthy people? Have you heard about that? Well, it deserves to be mentioned because it's part of the. . . . Drew Pearson, of course, had made a big thing about Martin Luther King wiretaps.

HACKMAN: Right, right.

SALINGER: And that was something I got into extensively involved personally. They turned over all the documents to me from the Justice Department so that we could intelligently talk to the press about the situation without lying to them about it. About three days after the Oregon primary in California, McCarthy gave a speech at the Ambassador Hotel in which he charged that I had bribed barmaids in the Benson Hotel in Portland to spy on his campaign and it was another evidence of the kind of a fascist mind of Robert Kennedy that I would be involved in this kind of activity. I mean it was the most outrageous, goddamn thing. I sent him a telegram demanding a retraction, and less than twenty-four hours later I got a call from [Benjamin C.] Ben Bradlee saying that Pearson was in with a detailed column on the subject that was for release on Thursday, two days after the California primary.

I had the column sent to me. The source of the column was Senator [Mark O.] Hatfield of Oregon. So I called Senator Hatfield and I said that was the most outrageous, goddamn thing I'd ever seen, did he have any personal knowledge? On what was he basing his things. Then he said he had good information. I said, "I'm going to sue Drew Pearson, and I'm going to sue you, too" I've scratched Hatfield off my books forever as a result of that conversation. I never heard a guy that was more. . . . He had some kind of a game going with McCarthy; I don't know what it was. His press guy was around a hell of a lot during the Oregon primary, a fellow named Travis Cross, who was kind of active around there. I never quite could figure out what he was doing, but I'm sure he's the source of this story and the basis on which it was made.

So then [Herbert J., Jr.] Herb Miller--I retain Herb Miller as my lawyer--we sent telegrams to Drew Pearson. Then of course, Bob was killed and the column was pulled. I mean, I'll never know whether the column was pulled because Bob was killed or because Pearson was critically worried about it.

HACKMAN: What can you remember on the King wiretap story regarding your discussion with Robert Kennedy and the people around him? Were there contacts with Burke Marshall and Herb Miller and whoever else?

SALINGER: Well, somewhere in my file I have all those documents; I'll have to look at those documents to refresh my memory.

HACKMAN: These are things that came from where?

SALINGER: These are things that came out of the Attorney

General's Office.

HACKMAN: But he had had them before?

SALINGER: Yes.

HACKMAN: And not things that you had to go to the Justice Department to get?

SALINGER: No, no. He had them. What these documents showed in effect was that [J. Edgar] Hoover was lying. There had been some kind of taps placed on Martin Luther King but the idea that those taps would still be effective in 1968 on the basis of Robert Kennedy's thing was totally preposterous.

HACKMAN: Right. Any disagreement on how to respond to that column?

SALINGER: No, I don't remember any disagreement about that. I mean, I think Bob was very clear how he wanted to respond to it. The main thing that we all agreed was that we shouldn't lie about it so that my statement at that time was very carefully worded, if you'll recall. I don't remember exactly what I said but I remember it was said in such a way there was no way somebody could come back and say I lied about it.

HACKMAN: Any effort made to keep newspapers, particularly in California, from running that?

SALINGER: No, not that I remember.

HACKMAN: Had you had earlier reports coming out of Oregon in the campaign about trouble before you went out there?

SALINGER: The only reports I'd gotten was that the McCarthy people were moving into Oregon early and were digging in pretty good out there.

HACKMAN: Did you have an understanding in your own mind earlier in the campaign as to who was supposed to be in charge of Oregon?

SALINGER: Well, my understanding was that it was supposed to be divided between vanden Heuvel and Mrs. [Edith] Green.

HACKMAN: Robert Kennedy never dished out any blame for what happened in Oregon, did he, other than himself? Did he explain what he felt went wrong?

SALINGER: Well, my wife could maybe remember a conversation she had with him about that subject. I don't know if we really want to get it on tape but I think he did feel that vanden Heuvel was partly responsible for it.  
[INTERRUPTION].

. . . a number of private conversations with Bob Kennedy between Oregon and California. She told me that her recollection is that he was highly aggravated about Oregon but that he didn't blame anybody specifically for it.

HACKMAN: One of the things that I'd heard you'd gotten involved in, and maybe this grew out of your conversation with McCarthy people to come over for Robert Kennedy after California.

SALINGER: I was not involved in that.

HACKMAN: No?

SALINGER: It seemed to me that Mankiewicz or Greenfield or Walinsky or one of those were having conversations with the McCarthy people. It's possible that I had conversations with a couple of California McCarthy people but I don't recall it at the moment.

HACKMAN: Yeah, okay. Maybe you could talk more about your fundraising activities around the country in '68, other than what you've mentioned.

SALINGER: I suppose I raised \$75 or \$80,000 dollars in the campaign from various sources, some of which was my own money. I put in \$15,000 of my own money in the campaign.

HACKMAN: Where did the money that you raised go? How did it get into the system and then get used?

SALINGER: Usually, it went to Steve. For example, I had a movie contract to do a movie of my book with National General Corporation on which they owed me a final payment of \$10,000 in 1969. I told them that if they made me the payment in 1968, I'd give it to the campaign and accelerate in that way. And at Continental Airlines I not only got a contribution out of [Robert F.] Bob Six, but he returned the money that I'd put as an officer into a kind of political fund that he had there with the understanding that I'd give it to the campaign.

I think I also picked up a substantial contribution from John Factor. It was very helpful, about 25,000 bucks.



HACKMAN: Can you remember particular people that you went to who you would have expected to contribute that didn't? I mean, if you don't want to name names, just kinds of people and factors involved.

SALINGER: No, I don't because I only did it on an almost direct hit basis with people I knew I could get it from.

HACKMAN: Can you remember anything about the last night in California, conversations with Robert Kennedy that evening about future plans or about the way things were going in California?

SALINGER: Well, he had been out to the beach all day and I had not bothered him during that time. When he got to the hotel, I called him and briefed him on South Dakota. I remember him saying, "We got to get to New York soon," you know, right away because it's going to move everything into New York. That was the last conversation I had with him. I had several conversations with Dutton and Mankiewicz during that period.

At one point I was sent down to the lower floor of the Ambassador where there were about 2,000 people waiting for Bob to give a speech to them to hold them because he was not coming down fast enough for them.

HACKMAN: Any feeling for his optimism or pessimism that night about both California and what was coming?

SALINGER: Well, in the conversation I had, he was very up, I mean he was very optimistic. . . .

HACKMAN: Had California returns come in yet, many of them?

SALINGER: No, this was before any returns came in from South Dakota.

Have I related to you the conversation about ten days before, this famous Romain Gary conversation?

HACKMAN: No, no.

SALINGER: Well, that's the weekend before. I guess Bob had called Nicole and said, "You know, I want to take a day off, find me a place where I could get a day off and rest." So we got Frankenheimers' house at the beach. The Frankenheimers were there, but they said Bob could have it. They moved out of it and went to town for a couple days. Then he called again and said, "Why don't you put together a kind of a

fun lunch on Sunday. Try to get some people out there that would be a little different."

Who the hell was there? I forget. I think Shirley Maclaine was there, maybe the [Andy] Williamses. But among the people who were there were Romain Gary and Jean Seberg. It was during that lunch which was a very pleasant occasion when Romain Gary said to Bob, "You know, somebody's going to try to kill you." It was right in kind of the middle of the lunch conversation, although nobody was having lunch at a table. It was kind of a buffet thing; people were sitting. . . . The conversation practically stopped when he said that. Now, he'd said that to me once before at Paul Ziffren's house about four weeks earlier. He said, "Somebody's going to kill Robert Kennedy." He'd been much more. In this case all he said to Bob was, "Somebody's going to try to kill you." Bob said to him, "Well", he said "running for President is a game of chance; you either make it or you don't." I think that that was all that they said on the subject.

Romain Gary has just finished a book in which this conversation is supposed to be in it.

HACKMAN: Really? Fiction, you mean, or non-fiction?

SALINGER: I don't know how he's disguising it. It involves a whole period of his life which involved Robert Kennedy's campaign, his wife's affair with Clint Eastwood on the set of "Paint Your Wagon" and then her involvement with the Black Muslims.

HACKMAN: I'll have to read that. [Laughter] That's quite a potpourri.

SALINGER: I'm supposed to be in it quite extensively, so I don't think it's fiction.

HACKMAN: That's really all I've got on the campaign unless some other things stand out in your mind.

SALINGER: Well, I'd have to go through my campaign file which is down at the office. Maybe I could do that sometime.

HACKMAN: Well, sometime that should come to the Library. Someone could get the details on it. Before we start on the Rackets Committee [Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor and Management Fields] thing, maybe I could just get you to chat about the books that have come out on Robert Kennedy since then: [Jack] Newfield, [Milton] Gwirtzman, and vanden Heuvel.

SALINGER: Well, I'll tell you right now, I've just reviewed

Gwartzman and vanden Heuvel's book for the Los Angeles Times. They're coming out with a new literary section here in three weeks. It's the lead review in there.

HACKMAN: That can stand for that then.

SALINGER: And I speak highly of the book.

HACKMAN: So do I.

SALINGER: I think it's the best of the books by far. The next in order I would put Newfield. I put Jules Witcover's book in a somewhat different category. It's more a reportorial book and it's less involved than either Newfield or [David] Halberstam. I like Halberstam's least of all.

But I have to be honest with you, I'm very subjective about these books. Newfield and Halberstam both seriously misstate my own views on whether Robert Kennedy should become a president and my own views on his political thing. I mean, they make me sound like a heavy conservative, which I'm not at all. It is true that I had been a hawk on Vietnam, but I'd come over before Robert Kennedy became a candidate for President. I think Newfield's is a damn good book. All of the books have got a lot of the guys in them, Witcover's less than any other except. . . .

HACKMAN: Well, I heard Witcover had a lot of Dutton simply because he's traveled with him.

SALINGER: And Halberstam is almost pure Walinsky.

HACKMAN: Walinsky, right.

SALINGER: Newfield is pure Newfield; he doesn't need to talk to anybody else.

HACKMAN: One other thing I wanted to throw at you, and that's the Robert Kennedy-Paul Corbin relationship. Everyone seems to get involved in and debates over the relationship and what he should do about it, getting Corbin fired at the Democratic National Committee and everything. Did you ever get involved in any of that?

SALINGER: I never got involved in it, but I thought it was a curious relationship. I was not a great admirer of Corbin's; I'm not today. I never could quite understand why Bobby wanted to have him around, but, I mean, it was very clear that he did want to have him around because you couldn't really have a conversation with Bob. . . . I had a couple with him about Corbin. I suppose the greatest living

expert on Corbin, probably, is Kenny O'Donnell.

HACKMAN: Yeah, he's quite an expert.

Okay, why don't we talk about the Rackets Committee for a while?

SALINGER: Have you tried to interview Lyndon Johnson about this? [Interruption]

HACKMAN: Now, you've got that chapter that starts your book With Kennedy on some of this stuff on the Rackets Committee. What can you remember in your first conversations with Robert Kennedy about his reactions to what he knew about the situation so far? Was he surprised and shocked a great deal about what he was learning?

SALINGER: Yeah, he did not know as much as I did at that time about [James R.] Hoffa. He probably had quite a bit of information about [David S.] Beck because I think about that time he'd been in touch with [Wallace] Wally Turner, and [William] Bill Lambert and [Edwin O.] Guthman and so on, but on Hoffa I clearly had more information than he did. I wouldn't say that he was outwardly shocked, but he was damn interested. I mean he questioned me at some length during that first meeting which lasted about an hour and a half.

HACKMAN: What I'm really trying to get at is just in what he discovered about Beck and Hoffa and everything to that point, the whole amount of corruption and I guess what it showed about human nature. Was that something new to him?

SALINGER: Yeah, I think it was probably new to him. I mean, I don't know how new it was to him, but I think he was amazed at the extent to which corruption existed in those unions. Of course, this is back in, you know, what I consider Robert Kennedy Phase I days. This is Robert Kennedy "Life-is-black-and-white" days. I mean there were good guys and bad guys for him in those days; there was no in between. He began to see some shades of gray as the thing went on. I remember one of the first guys that kind of struck him as a gray shade was a Teamster [International Brotherhood of Teamsters] leader from Seattle named Frank Brewster who was kind of a jolly rogue. I mean, he was a thief, but he was a . . . .

HACKMAN: The guy who became vice president then when Hoffa became president, is that the same Brewster?

SALINGER: No, Brewster was the head of the Seattle area of the Teamsters when Beck was on the Teamsters.

HACKMAN: Now, this is sort of a tough broad question, but

what did Robert Kennedy then carry into the future, the John Kennedy Administration or the Senate period, that comes out of that [John L.] McClellan hearing period? Are there things you can put your finger on?

SALINGER: I don't quite see the relationship. I mean, the McClellan period was a formative period for Robert Kennedy and it was also a period when he came to national attention. The one legacy that he won for that for himself was the ruthless charges that he had to run against in his own campaign. I mean you can directly trace that to the television impression of Robert Kennedy during the McClellan Committee hearings, so that that was for him the political legacy. For his brother it was entirely different. His brother wasn't tainted with that, and therefore, having participated in those investigations and getting the best of the world, which was going after racketeers, and not the worst of the world, which was looking like a tough son-of-a-bitch, he benefited in the public eye from the McClellan Committee hearings.

HACKMAN: I guess what I'm really trying to get at again is Robert Kennedy's view of business ethics, financial motives, the way things work in American society.

SALINGER: Well, yeah, I think he came away very distrustful of business ethics. I worked on a number of business cases with him--which we can go into if you want because they're rather interesting--and his finding out that the bigger the business was the more corrupt it was and the guys had less if they had any really basic moral principles. His contempt for lawyers that came out of the McClellan Committee hearings was fantastic. I mean how the legal profession covered up for its own and how the legal profession, really, ethics were guided by profit motivations and all kinds of other considerations rather than the. . . . I think all those things were very much ingrained in Robert Kennedy as a result of the McClellan Committee hearings.

I remember the first time. I was in charge of--well, yeah, I was in charge of it--the investigation of Nathan Shefferman. Walter Sheridan came out and joined me. That's when I first met Walter Sheridan. In tracking down Shefferman's activities, one of the things I did was interview a man who later became the president of Sears, Roebuck and Company who was then a vice president of Sears, Roebuck and Company who outright, flatly lied to me for two and a half, three hours during an interview. And if you compare the transcript of what he told me--and that's one of the things I may have in my files--against his testimony before the committee, it shows how he was brought by the investigation to finally confess to the truth but how he had really tried to lie his way out of the situation.

We had a guy who was a very big important trucking executive up in Michigan who we caught giving money, paying bribes and things like that. I remember him breaking down in Robert Kennedy's hotel room and crying and begging not to be put on the stand. I think all of those things had an effect on Bob.

HACKMAN: What was O'Donnell's role at that point?

SALINGER: O'Donnell was the traffic cop really. O'Donnell was the executive assistant to Bob and he was the guy that kind of kept track of where the investigators were and what they were working on and kept a central system going for Bob on investigations.

HACKMAN: Did you ever have the feeling that O'Donnell was as much John Kennedy's guy as Robert Kennedy's guy at that point?

SALINGER: I didn't know enough about that relationship at that time to make that judgment. He seemed to me to be. . . . I got the impression he was more Robert Kennedy's guy, to tell you the truth.

HACKMAN: No feeling that he was sort of keeping watch on Robert Kennedy to see that he didn't make mistakes that would create political problems for John Kennedy.

SALINGER: No, I never got that impression whatever.

HACKMAN: Okay.

SALINGER: Do people have that impression?

HACKMAN: No, just one person has made that kind of statement and I don't think it's substantiated with many details, that's why I. . . .

SALINGER: No, I don't think that's true.

HACKMAN: Yeah. What kind of a relationship did you come away from those hearings with vis-a-vis O'Donnell?

SALINGER: Terrific. I would say that of all the guys that I associated with during the whole Kennedy years, my association with Ken O'Donnell is the closest, it has been. It suffered, it's gone through rather traumatic periods because Kenny's a very tough guy and he's not an uncritical guy. We've had our fights, but I think we've emerged from that probably stronger friends than I am with anybody else in that whole crew.

HACKMAN: Can you remember him ever resisting any of the things that Robert Kennedy or you might have wanted to do in the McClellan period?

SALINGER: No. The one ticklish investigation that we got involved in that I recall--the only time political considerations ever came into any discussion of any investigation that I was involved in was the investigation of the mayor of Gary, Indiana, and the district attorney, a guy named [Metro M.] Holovachka, I forget whether he was the mayor or the district attorney. I remember there was some concern about that one because that's a very Democratic section. That's one of the classic quotes that I got from John Kennedy. "Yeah," he said, "don't wound them, kill them."

HACKMAN: Can you remember anything about what kinds of people Robert Kennedy was attracted to in that period especially in terms of the staff and his relationship with staff investigators? What kinds of people did he like and what kinds of people didn't he appreciate?

SALINGER: Well, the social friends that developed among the staff were principally myself, LaVern Duffy, I guess, Paul Tierney, Carmine Bellino, Wal.

HACKMAN: Sheridan?

SALINGER: Sheridan.

HACKMAN: Why do you think those people?

SALINGER: Well, I suppose, in Sheridan and myself maybe he saw a little more than just investigator. My own relationship with Bob Kennedy is a fascinating one because in a . . . I mean, Bob Kennedy is basically responsible for anything I am in my whole life. I don't know whether I've said that before, but that's true. The thing that Bob Kennedy did for me, that put together the pieces of my own life at that time, was to organize me, to make me see where it was necessary really to schedule yourself, to have your mind uncluttered as to where you're going, and things of that kind.

He was tough to work for because he never would settle for anything that was not just 100 percent. I think probably in my own life because I came up in doing various things when I was very young and I was reasonably bright and I could get away with doing things at 90 percent of efficiency or even 80 percent which were better than most guys were doing it at 100 percent so I sometimes would gear down. I found out with Bob Kennedy you couldn't do that, you had to do it all the way.

HACKMAN: Do you remember particular things that irritated him, not just in your own but in other people's performances?

SALINGER: Well, he hated sloppiness, people who would do a sloppy piece of work. He was very, very-- interviews were very important, how people were interviewed, how you would bring out information. For example, I remember the thing that he liked about me was that after I got into the swing of doing things, that he knew that if he sent me out to look at somebody's records that I would come up with the one document or the one thing that was in those records, that I would be able to spot it and understand its significance. And he had guys that worked for him sometimes would go through a whole thing and not spot the significance of a particular document.

HACKMAN: Can you remember getting involved in either any investigation of or discussion of what had happened to the earlier Hoffa hearings, '53, '54? There were a couple of House committees particularly interested.

SALINGER: Yeah, I did that myself when I was a newspaperman.

HACKMAN: You brought that information when you came to the job then?

SALINGER: Yeah. There was that famous--I'm trying to think of the Congressman. It was a Michigan Congressman.

HACKMAN: Well, there was a guy named Wint Smith, then there was a guy named George Bender.

SALINGER: Bender. There was somebody else though.

HACKMAN: Maybe there was another one?

SALINGER: There was even more. There was a Congressman in Michigan who brought the investigation to an end abruptly one day. Somebody went and asked him why. He just looked up in the air and like that, rolled his eyes.

HACKMAN: Was there ever any thought given to doing anything with that information later?

SALINGER: Well, I think we did introduce some evidence into, you know. . . . I think it was discussed during the hearings how the other investigations came along. We didn't really make an investigation of the investigation, if that's what you mean.



HACKMAN: Yeah, okay. What can you remember about relations between the committee and the committee staff and the Justice Department in that period, '57-'59 let's say?

SALINGER: Pretty good, pretty good. Let me restrict that a little bit. With the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] it was very good. That was the first time we ran into Courtney Evans, who was assigned by Hoover to cooperate with the committee. I think probably, the Administration was generally for that whole thing. I mean, in other words, the investigation of the labor unions was not something that would bother the [Dwight D.] Eisenhower Administration a great deal since it was a select committee and there were an even number of Republicans and Democrats. The one point where we got into conflict, obviously, was when they tried to do the counter-investigation of Walter Reuther.

HACKMAN: You don't remember having any feeling that the Justice Department, either [William P.] Rogers or a couple of the other people over there. . . ? Malcolm Wilkey was an Assistant Attorney General and a guy named Jim Dowd was in some.

SALINGER: I didn't have that. I mean that was not at my level.

HACKMAN: Okay.

SALINGER: I was out in the field all the time. When I'd go into a town I remember I don't ever feel that I failed to get the cooperation of the FBI in the particular town, or the U.S. Attorney.

HACKMAN: You don't remember any discussion in the '60 campaign possibly using a charge of [Richard M.] Nixon involvement or some kind of Nixon arrangement with the Teamsters not to have the Justice Department prosecute certain. . . ?

SALINGER: No.

HACKMAN: No. None whatsoever? Okay.

SALINGER: I'd like to know if that's true.

HACKMAN: Okay, you mentioned the FBI. You don't recall any problems with the United States attorneys' offices and cooperation? What about the IRS [Internal Revenue Service], either in Washington or. . . ?

SALINGER: I don't remember any problems with the IRS either.

HACKMAN: Bureau of Narcotics?

SALINGER: I didn't work with them very much.

HACKMAN: Okay.

SALINGER: I did work with the IRS in the Hoffa case and the Shefferman case and a number of others that I got into.

HACKMAN: Do you remember anything about getting a reaction from the House and Senate leadership in terms of the investigation that was primarily Johnson and [Samuel T.] Rayburn in that period, ever any feedback from them?

SALINGER: Again, outside of my level.

HACKMAN: Yeah. Okay, you mentioned Gary. Can you remember other states, or particularly cities, where local officials were a problem in terms of what to do?

SALINGER: Well, I remember a specific investigation that there was a real effort to cool but it was nonpolitical. It was rather interesting. It was an investigation I did on the Boilermakers Union [International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers] in Galveston, Texas, where the official of the Union was the brother-in-law of one of the secretaries on the committee, one of the civil service secretaries who had been there for a long time and who really raised hell with Bob and tried to get the hearing called off and threatened, yelled, and screamed at me about it and everything else.

HACKMAN: What happened?

SALINGER: We went on, we had to. I don't remember. I'm trying to think. I can't think of any political things that I got into anyway.

HACKMAN: You don't remember in '60 in either the delegate hunt, the Convention, or the campaign, problems in particular states or cities, because of investigations that had taken place in '57-'69.

SALINGER: I'm sure there were such problems, but I wasn't really in the delegate hunting business in those days.

HACKMAN: Well, do you remember requests coming in in the '60 campaign to declare unions in certain states as being "clean" unions? I know at one point

Robert Kennedy, I think, made a statement that the Teamsters in California were a "clean" union.

SALINGER: Yeah, I do remember that.

HACKMAN: Were there other requests like that?

SALINGER: I may have even been involved as a kind of an intermediary in that particular one, but I don't remember any others, no.

HACKMAN: Can you remember any feeling on your part or on your part and Robert Kennedy's and others about [Patrick V.] Pat McNamara's decision to go off the committee at one point?

SALINGER: I remember we discussed it at the time. I think that the feeling was that the heat was too much for him at home to stay on the committee.

HACKMAN: How would you differentiate between the motives and attitudes on the hearings of the Republicans, particularly [Barry M.] Goldwater, [Karl E.] Mundt, [Carl T.] Curtis and [Homer E.] Capehart when Capehart comes in to replace [Irving M.] Ives?

SALINGER: Well, Ives was the only Republican who I thought was completely disinterested in the hearings, in other words, he was trying to get to the facts and didn't have an axe to grind. Goldwater and Dean Burch I remember, were particularly active in the whole Reuther thing. That's when I first met Dean Burch and he was kind of put in charge of Goldwater's type of investigation thing. I remember the one thing that struck me at the time was how inept he was, how really, even if there had been something in the Reuther thing, he would have never found it because he just didn't have the ability to do it. Curtis and Mundt were strictly mean types.

HACKMAN: Different from Goldwater.

SALINGER: Yeah, I liked Goldwater. Goldwater is as an individual is one of the nicest fellows you'll ever meet in your life. You wouldn't say that about either Mundt or Curtis; they were not very nice fellows.

[Joseph R.] McCarthy was on the committee when I first went to work for them. My impression of him, of course, was that he was a drunk at the time.

HACKMAN: Do you remember discussing him with Robert Kennedy?

SALINGER: Never.

HACKMAN: Or anything about Robert Kennedy's relationship with him at that point?

SALINGER: Never, never had any such discussions. McCarthy died soon afterwards. I just remember seeing McCarthy come to a couple Committee hearings and it looked to me like he was on dope or drunk or something.

HACKMAN: Yeah. In your book you mention, and other people have said it, that when you came on, McClellan warned you about ever going to the press on anything. How did that work out? Did you get involved in Robert Kennedy's relations with the press . . .

SALINGER: No.

HACKMAN: . . . during the hearings?

SALINGER: Well, yeah, yeah, to the extent that on cases with which I was familiar Robert Kennedy would often have me brief the press on the background of a hearing, but I was very careful on the road not to talk to the press. Of course, I testified a lot before that Committee and I became known around the country, was on television quite a bit, so that when I went in on investigations sometimes the press would try to talk to me. Bob Kennedy didn't want me to talk to the press any more than McClellan did. I had a good relationship with McClellan.

HACKMAN: Never any great complaints then about television appearances or talking to the press or anything?

SALINGER: No, no, none that I know of.

HACKMAN: What kind of arrangement was there with people like Guthman, [Clark] Mollenhoff, [John] Seigenthaler in that period who knew something about what was going on and had some information they might have been feeding in?

SALINGER: You are mentioning now three relationships that Bob Kennedy had particularly but my understanding was, you know, that they'd give us the information, we would develop it for them and then we would give them some break on it in the release of the information. I don't remember dealing with either Guthman or Seigenthaler, but I do remember dealing with Mollenhoff in stuff that he had brought us where we'd briefed him and where he had some jump on the story.

HACKMAN: How did the Mollenhoff-Robert Kennedy relationship

work at that time and then on down the road?

SALINGER: At that time it was fine and I admired Mollenhoff at that time. Mollenhoff has changed drastically since those days or else I just didn't perceive it at the time. It seemed to me there was a difference in Mollenhoff between the . . . [Interruption]

BEGIN TAPE II SIDE I

SALINGER: My relationship with Mollenhoff changed drastically, of course, after I left the committee. In the time that I worked for John, I never had a particularly good relationship with Mollenhoff. My own recollection of Mollenhoff during that period was mainly hectoring [Robert S.] McNamara and the President at press conferences on various subjects. But I think that he maintained a friendship with Bobby during that time. I don't know how his relationship with Bobby was the last couple of years after I left the White House.

HACKMAN: Can you remember newspapers or magazines or individual reports that gave the Committee staff a lot of trouble during that period, or on the other hand, that were very helpful?

SALINGER: Well, both of those things are true. I mean we had papers that were. . . . I'm trying to think of the specifics now, but that's twelve, thirteen years ago.

HACKMAN: Some of the guys I've just read about or heard about who were covering it [Edward W.] Ed O'Brien, Don Irwin, [Joseph A.] Loftus, [Edward F.] Ed Woods . . .

SALINGER: O'Brien was terrific. Don Irwin was terrific. Ed Woods was damn good. Joe Loftus was good. The New York Times would hit the committee once in a while editorially on civil liberties grounds.

HACKMAN: Do you ever remember anything in terms of either the New York Times or the New York Daily News in terms of feeling that there was Teamster pressure on them, that this had anything to do with their editorial policy?

SALINGER: No. I remember that the one vicious job that was done on the committee and on Bob Kennedy was done by Jim Bishop. I remember that I drafted something like a sixteen page letter to Jim Bishop with fifty-five or sixty errors in fact that he had. The suspicion was at

the time that he'd been taken in by the Teamsters.

HACKMAN: Do you recall any discussion of, let's say, any investigations that Robert Kennedy wanted to undertake that you or other staff people that he relied on were particularly opposed to?

SALINGER: No.

HACKMAN: Were there many proposals or sort of a proposal floating around at the time that you might do a lot more on the business side as opposed to the strictly labor side?

SALINGER: I remember that there was a lot of discussion that we ought to do more on the business side. The only real business investigation we had was the Shefferman investigation. But I don't remember any intensive discussion about it.

HACKMAN: Remember a discussion of when and how to wind up the hearings? Was that a problem, deciding when to stop and how to stop?

SALINGER: Well, I left the committee before they wound up. [Interruption]

HACKMAN: Do you recall any differences at all on how to proceed between Robert Kennedy and John Kennedy throughout the hearings?

SALINGER: If there were any, I didn't know about it.

HACKMAN: Yeah. Did you get at all involved in the decision for him to write the book, The Enemy Within or at all involved in the writing of it?

SALINGER: Yeah. I didn't have anything to do with the decision to write the book but once he started to write the book, I went out and I spent a lot of time at the house going over the chapters and adding stuff that I knew or making corrections. I mean I was reading the stuff as it was coming out of the typewriter. Since I had written most of the reports of the committee on the various investigations, even those I had not participated in them myself, I was used for that purpose.

HACKMAN: What can you remember about the writing process? Did he find it difficult to write or easy to write?

SALINGER: Well, what he was doing basically was dictating

the book to [Angela] Angie Novello and then turning it over to John Seigenthaler to kind of whip it into shape. He seemed to do it with a great deal of facility. He did it rather rapidly as I recall. I think he wrote the book in three or four months.

HACKMAN: You don't remember any discussion of the timing, when to bring it out?

SALINGER: No.

HACKMAN: That's really all I have on that period because it seems to me that anyone really wanting to go into detail is going to have to go through your papers and they can get a lot out of there and the Sheridan book.

SALINGER: Right, right.

HACKMAN: I just wanted to discuss briefly during the Kennedy Administration what you can remember just about the direction of the development of your relationship with Robert Kennedy, any particular things that you can remember?

SALINGER: Well, I would say that my relationship with Robert Kennedy was principally social during the John Kennedy Administration. In other words, once I went to work for John Kennedy, I found that as far as policy stuff and day-to-day discussion of things, it just didn't work to talk to both of them about it, so I concentrated on working with John Kennedy. There were a couple of occasions when our lines crossed, principally at the time that that television outfit was filming "Crisis" . . .

HACKMAN: The Birmingham thing.

SALINGER: . . . which Bobby was for and the President was really against. I was pushing it. I remember after it came out, the President didn't like it and blamed Bobby and I for the disaster he thought had occurred, which was not a disaster at all; it was damn good.

HACKMAN: Yeah. Any problems in terms of needing any control of the kinds of things that either Robert Kennedy was saying to the press during the Administration or that Guthman and other people at Justice were doing?

SALINGER: I never remember that. You see, what I did was I created this kind of a working group made up of the press guys from the various. . . . Ed Guthman

was a member of that group, and we discussed issues. That was mainly where I think the issues were discussed, rather than any directive. . . . I don't remember getting a directive from the President ever to call up Ed Guthman and get Bobby to do something or anything. We handled the news of the Justice Department in relation to the White House in pretty much the same way we handled the other Departments. You know, I'd be in touch with Guthman on something the White House was going to say or they were going to say. We handled it on that level.

HACKMAN: How did Robert Kennedy change during the Administration?

SALINGER: Well, I think the change was mainly in expansion of his background. In other words, he emerged as an individual in his own right during the Administration. He was absolutely the critical figure in that Administration, not just in matters involving the Justice Department but certainly in the Cuban missile crisis and the aftermath of the Bay of Pigs.

HACKMAN: Ever talk to him about how satisfied he was at Justice and what his own plans were for a second Administration?

SALINGER: No. I principally got back together with Bob Kennedy in a discussion of his own life after John Kennedy was killed, I don't know whether we went through that.

HACKMAN: I think that's where we picked up last time.

SALINGER: Yeah. We had a number of discussions about my candidacy and his candidacy and that kind of thing.

HACKMAN: Let me flip through again to make sure. Are there other things that you think we should talk about?

SALINGER: I have a transcript of the first one, don't I?

HACKMAN: Yeah, I sent it to you when you were in Paris.

SALINGER: Well, I have it then in my office. Why don't I go through that and go through this one?

HACKMAN: You said you had some notes and memos on the '68 campaign somewhere?

SALINGER: Yeah, they're at the office.