

**Gerald J. “Jerry” Bruno, Oral History Interview – 10/29/2002**  
Administrative Information

**Creator:** Gerald J. Bruno  
**Interviewer:** Vicki Daitch  
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**Biographical Note**

Gerald J. Bruno (born 1926) was a political advance man for both John F. Kennedy (JFK) and Robert F. Kennedy (RFK). This interview focuses on Bruno’s role as an advance man for the Kennedys, the difficulties and tragedy of JFK’s trip to Dallas, and many of the public misconceptions regarding RFK, among other issues.

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Gerald J. “Jerry” Bruno

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Oral History Interview

with

GERALD J. "JERRY" BRUNO

October 29, 2002  
Salisbury, Maryland

by Vicki Daitch

For the John F. Kennedy Library

DAITCH: I'll just set up the tapes by saying my name is Vicki Daitch, and I'm talking to Jerry Bruno at their beautiful home in Salisbury, Maryland. Trees everywhere! I love this. Okay. Well, you know, since that's what we were just going to be talking about, maybe we can just start off by talking about the march [1963 March on Washington]. It's not going to be in chronological order, but I think that's important.

BRUNO: Yes. When Bob Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy] called me, he was the attorney general, he was very concerned about the march. He thought that it would end up in sort of a disaster because they weren't well organized. So what he did, Kennedy got U.S. Marshal Jim McKane [James McKane], who was the head of the U.S. Marshals, and brought together about 40 or 50 of us. He was very concerned that nothing go wrong, that it be well planned. He wanted us to see there were no problems.

So what we did, we set up watches at all the places where the buses were going to come in, one at Union Station and The Mall itself, and others were lookouts to spot problems. Whenever we spotted any problems, we would report to the U.S. marshal, and then he would solve it. One of the things that I remember, we were at this meeting

talking about potential problems, and they did nothing about toilets.

DAITCH: That could be a problem.

BRUNO: And here they were talking about 100,000 people, and what was going to happen if someone had to go to the bathroom. So we started to think about what we could do. We brought in all of these Port-o-johns, and we placed them all over the malls and all over the city. The day of the march, with lookouts at every critical place and a telephone line connected to Kennedy's office, if anything went wrong he would know about it immediately.

My place was at the Lincoln Memorial right next to Abraham Lincoln's statue, right where the podium was. I had a telephone by the pillar, and I think I was maybe about 20 feet from the podium. So everybody that was part of that program, Martin Luther King [Martin Luther King, Jr.], the head of the UAW, United Auto Workers....

DAITCH: Was that Walter Reuther [Walter P. Reuther]?

BRUNO: Walter Reuther. And I remember distinctly. I was on the phone with Bob Kennedy, and he wanted to know how everything was going. I said, "Fine, so far." All of a sudden I heard a lot of arguing in the background. Just before the program was going to start, Martin Luther King and Walter Reuther and the bishop of Washington, D.C., the bishop was refusing to give the opening remarks, the prayer, because John Lewis--who now is the congressman from Georgia. He was head of SNCC [Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee] at the time--he wanted to denounce John Kennedy [John F. Kennedy], the president, who had been, very, very helpful in this march.

The bishop was refusing to give the opening prayer unless Lewis toned down his remarks, Lewis refused. He's a big Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, supporter today. But at that time he was determined that he was going to just lambaste the president, and it looked like there was going to be problems. I got on the phone, and I explained it to Bob Kennedy. And he said, "Well, keep me informed."

I saw the bickering going on, and finally I think it was Walter Reuther who got him aside, and he said, "Listen, would you tone this thing down, or else we're going to have a disaster here." And then Martin Luther King got him aside and calmed him down. At that point they all had agreed that he was going to tone down his remarks about the president. I picked up the phone, I got the attorney general, and I explained that they had solved their problem, and the program was going to start, and it looked like it was going to be a success.

DAITCH: Oh, neat! What a neat story. How interesting. Now he would have been a young guy, Lewis. I wish I could think of what his name is. But he would have been a young, probably hot-headed. . . .

BRUNO: Lewis was very, very hotheaded. He had marched with Martin Luther King in all of the demonstrations in the South. Then he went on to become a congressman, but at the time, boy, I tell you, he could have blown the whole thing.

DAITCH: Absolutely.

BRUNO: ...you never know what would have happened to the crowd.

DAITCH: Sure. Yes. It changes the whole mood. What would somebody do if you called and said...I mean this is a different situation where you were standing in a key place...but say somebody standing out in the crowd somewhere by the....

BRUNO: At the end of The Mall?

DAITCH: Yes, say at the end of The Mall or someplace off, and they see a little skirmish, or they see somebody starting to get up on a soapbox and create problems, what would you do about that anyway?

BRUNO: Well, we had the marshals. We would've arrested them.

DAITCH: Just like quietly go in and remove the one or two people that were causing trouble.

BRUNO: Yes. That was the overall plan. If there was any agitation of any kind, any demonstrations, the marshals would go in, not with guns, but quietly remove them. And that was Bob Kennedy's overall plan, to make sure that there was not going to be a demonstration, not to have anybody upset, but to do a peaceful protest and a peaceful march.

DAITCH: Now, did they end up, do you know, whether they ended up arresting many people?

BRUNO: No. You know, the success of that march was because of the labor movement, the UAW. Randolph [Asa Philip Randolph] head of the porters' union, they brought most of the union members in to the march. Labor behind the scenes was the real, real heroes of that march. They would not have pulled it off without labor.... They provided the money for the buses that brought all those people in, they provided the real organizing ability to bring all of the labor unions together, AFL-CIO, the UAW, the old CIO. They didn't really receive the credit that they should

receive.

DAITCH: Right. Because I'd never heard that.

BRUNO: For the march.

DAITCH: Now were there a lot of white labor people who participated in the march?

BRUNO: Oh, yeah, the labor unions. Their members. Steelworkers, the UAW, the United Auto Workers. But they were mostly the old CIO.

DAITCH: Why did labor.... I mean because there was a time not so long before that when the unions excluded African-Americans. Why...?

BRUNO: Not the UAW. I was a member of the UAW.

DAITCH: Yes.

BRUNO: My background was I was with the Local 72, United Auto Workers, in Kenosha, Wisconsin. It was American Motors. And that's how I got active in politics. But the union itself, I remember back in the early fifties, we had an executive board member that was black, the first black. And Local 72 was the biggest union in the State of Wisconsin. But the UAW was probably the first in the labor movement that didn't discriminate. And look at Detroit.

DAITCH: Oh, yes.

BRUNO: Those locals, from the United Auto Workers, was the main reason they wanted this coalition, and the blacks in the election were getting more and more powerful.

DAITCH: It strikes me that labor was really thinking ahead already at that time. Because, you know, at that time there were still many, many, many blacks who couldn't vote, weren't allowed to vote. And the shift really didn't happen until after the Voting Rights Act.

BRUNO: When we talk about labor, George Meaney, who was the head of the AFL-CIO, was not as progressive as Walter Reuther. It was the leadership of Reuther.... There were three brothers, Victor, and I forget the other one. But Reuther was such a dynamic, dynamic leader. He could rally a crowd. And, as you know, he got shot.

DAITCH: Yes.

BRUNO: But I always admired his ability to organize. I was very active in the longest UAW strike in history, the Kohler Strike in Kohler, Wisconsin. I used to go to the picket line, from.... Local 72, every Sunday night we would head for Kohler. There would be locals from all over the area. On Monday we knew that there would be confrontation, and the scabs would try to cross the picket line. We would always have a skirmish, and two were killed during that time. They used to have nightsticks; with teargas, and they used to let the teargas go, and two got killed.

DAITCH: From the teargas? Oh, my gosh!

BRUNO: Yes, if you fired too close to the face.

DAITCH: Ooohhh. I didn't know that. Were the Mine Workers very active in the civil rights, in the march and that sort of stuff?

BRUNO: No.

DAITCH: No?

BRUNO: No.

DAITCH: I didn't think so, but I thought I would ask. What other unions were, say, the next most active from the Auto Workers?

BRUNO: Steelworkers.

DAITCH: The Steelworkers. Obviously the.... What was Randolph's union?

BRUNO: Randolph?

DAITCH: A. Philip Randolph's, the porters?

BRUNO: Oh, he had the railroad porters, the people that worked on the trains.

DAITCH: Right, the sleeping car, those people.

BRUNO: They were the porters, the baggage people, and all of that.

DAITCH: Right. He would have been an old man probably by that time, right, by the march?

BRUNO: Yes. He was active, but not as active as Reuther.

DAITCH: What about King? Did you actually talk to him? Or what were your observations?

BRUNO: He was sort of subdued. He let Reuther do all the talking with Lewis. I know it's John Lewis. What we can do is just when they're transcribing, they can just amend the transcript and go back and say "John Lewis" since we've found out that that's the right person. Not John L. Lewis. John Lewis. He was the head of SNCC that was arguing with King and Reuther about the Kennedy Administration.

DAITCH: We were talking about something completely different, and we decided we had to do that. You had said there were a couple of things you didn't want to wander away from, so let's talk about the things that you told me on the phone, that you definitely want to talk about.

BRUNO: Well, the thing that I want to talk about is the Dallas trip.

DAITCH: Well, should we go backwards then? We'll talk about Dallas, and then we'll go back and if there are other things that we can talk about, we'll do that.

BRUNO: Okay. I've got my folder on Dallas.

DAITCH: Oh, good.

BRUNO: I put it all together. I've got all the dates. We had just completed an 11-state conservation trip with the president, and it was a real success. I remember the end of that trip was a couple of months before the Dallas trip. The president, at the end of the trip was going to go to Palm Springs, and he was going to rest over that weekend. We had 22 stops in 11 states.

DAITCH: Oh, wow!

BRUNO: It was a huge success. This was September 24, 1963. The trip was completed, and not one flaw in that whole trip. I remember Kenny O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell], who, in today's terms, was the chief-of-staff. He called me, I was staying at the hotel, and said, "The president wants to see you." The president was staying at Bing Crosby's ranch in Palm Springs. I got in a car, and I went down to the ranch.

The president was in the pool. I sat at the side of the pool, and it was just him and

I, and he was paddling all over. He had this big, big grin on his face. He said, "What did you think of the trip?" And I told him I thought it went very, very well. He said, "You know, we're going to start the '64 campaign." he said, "I think I've found my issue." The issue was spelled out at Salt Lake City, Utah, at the Mormon Tabernacle, and it was nuclear disarmament. He had just signed a treaty. And the tremendous response he got from that conservative audience was amazing.

And he talked about some of the things in the coming campaign, some of the things that we'd have to do. Like make sure we get the crowds out. He was... a real politician that respected crowds. He felt that if there was a crowd and he had a message, he could tell immediately if the message was getting through to the people. During the whole campaign of '60, he just had a feel for the things that he did by the reaction of the crowds. So it was our job to get the crowds, and it was his job to convince the people. And if he had the right message, he knew immediately. If the message was not right he would know.

DAITCH: And he was good at reading that?

BRUNO: He was a genius at that. He just stood there in that pool with this big, big grin on his face, and starting to talk about the '64 campaign. He wanted to make sure that whenever we'd go into a state, the key thing was that we bring the people out and we get them involved. And he talked about this. He went on about the way the people responded to his message at the Moron Tabernacle. This lasted for about 15, 20 minutes. Then all of a sudden he got out of the pool, and he went into his bedroom.

I stayed around at the ranch, talked to Kenny O'Donnell, and also talked to Dave Powers [David F. Powers]. Then I think it was about ten o'clock that night, we had all the bags packed, and we got on *Air Force One*, and we went back to Washington. And that was the last time I talked to him

Then on October 20th of 1963, Kenny O'Donnell called me, and he said the president was going to go to Dallas, Texas. I went to the White House. I was working out of the Democratic National Committee, I would do most of the president's trips. Kenny told me about the trips, "Go talk to Walter Jenkins," who was Vice President Johnson's [Lyndon Baines Johnson] right-hand man, "and then go see Ralph Yarborough", who was the senator from Texas. There was a huge disagreement and huge dislike between Yarborough and Johnson. He also told me, "We don't have a clear idea of what we want to do in Texas." He said, "Feel them out and see what they want to do." Kenny gave me a copy of the proposed trip of Governor Connally.

So I went to see Yarborough, and he had a clear idea of what he wanted. Then I went to see Jenkins, and he had his idea. Neither of them thought along the same line. Yarborough hated Johnson, and hated Connally [John B. Connally, Jr.]. There was a primary that was taking shape in Texas, and it was between Don Yarborough, who was going to run against John Connally, for the nomination for governor. I found out later

that the reason Governor Connally wanted John F. Kennedy to come to Texas was to have the president stop the feuding, and get Don Yarborough not to run against him.

When I went to Ralph Yarborough, he told me, "Don't listen to the Connally people because they're not going to give you the best interest of what the president should be doing." And when I went to the Connally people and the Johnson people, they told me, "Don't listen to Yarborough because he doesn't control the politics in Texas." I sat down with Kenny again and I told him what I had found. He said, "Well, you know, it's not going to be an easy trip. So go down to Texas and meet with Connally." Then Kenny O'Donnell gave me the schedule that Connally proposed. This was the schedule that Connally put together. [See attachment]

I flew to Texas, we were then going to go and look at these sites. We got into a private plane, Cliff Carter [Clifford Carter], who was Johnson's man, and there was someone that was representing Connally, the governor, and myself, and we got on that plane and started to visit the sites.

San Antonio was fine; there was no problem at all. He was going to dedicate the Aerospace Center site and then motorcade through downtown San Antonio. Then we went to Houston, and he was going to give a speech at the Rice Hotel. We'd motorcade there.... The president was big on motorcades. During the campaign we did motorcades. He would get in a car, and we'd have these thousands of people lining up the road, on the side of the road. Every once in a while during the campaign, he would stop and mingle with the crowd. And that was his trademark, motorcades. So as president he did the same thing. In Houston we would have a motorcade from the airport, go to the Rice Hotel, and then give his speech, after an overnight in Houston, and then go to Fort Worth. So there was no problem at San Antonio, and there was no problem at Houston.

We went to Fort Worth and to Texas Christian University, and we looked over the football field where he was going to give his speech and receive the honorary degree, and when I was talking to the college officials about the visit, they said, "There must be some misunderstanding. The president's welcome to give a speech, but we're not going to give him an honorary degree." And I said, "Why not?" They said, "We have never, ever in the history of the university given an honorary degree to a Catholic." And I said, "Well, I'll get back to you." I got on the phone, and I called the governor.

DAITCH: Oh, my gosh!

BRUNO: And I said, "You know, your tentative schedule says that the president would receive an honorary degree at the university. My understanding, talking to the president of the university, they will not give him an honorary degree because he's Catholic." And he said, "Well, let me work this out. I'll meet with the board of regents." He said, "I'll get this settled."

In the meantime the governor's going to meet with the Board of Regents, I went on to Dallas where we were going to motorcade after Fort Worth. I went to the Statler-Hilton where this was going to be the stop where he was going to have a... luncheon of

the Dallas Citizens Council, and I found out that the room was booked. They had a bottlers' convention scheduled for that day. They said, "We can't break it. It's too big of an event, and we're not going to have a luncheon here, even if it is the president of the United States." So that was two big holes in our schedule.

I then went and met with the Dallas Citizens Council, who was the group that Connally looked to for direction. The people there were Eric Johnson, who was the president of that council, and he was also the president of Texas Instrument, there was the chairperson of the State Democratic National Committee, his name was Irving [Frank C. Irving], also Robert Cullum president of Tom Thumb; this was a chain of like 7-11's, he was also president of the Chamber of Commerce.

DAITCH: Oh, okay.

BRUNO: They were called Tom Thumbs.

DAITCH: What was his name?

BRUNO: Robert Cullum.

DAITCH: Bob Cullum. How do you spell that?

BRUNO: C-U-L-L-U-M. He was the owner of the Tom Thumb food chain. They were very disappointed in the hotel, and they said, "We're going to have to come up with an alternative." But my sense in meeting with that group, the Dallas Citizens Council, that they were so interested in the image of Dallas, they weren't concerned about the president. When the announcement was made that the president would visit Dallas, a Major Walker [Edwin A. Walker], a retired Army general, bought a full-page ad that had the flag flying upside down. He called the president a traitor because of Cuba. And he said, "Let's show our disagreement with this president."

The other incident that happened was Adlai Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson] had been in Dallas to make a speech, and someone had spit on him. There was this feeling that with the president coming, and with Walker agitating the extreme conservative people, that they were scared that this would tarnish Dallas. And they wanted to make sure that there would be no incidents, that nothing went wrong with his trip. So they were really concerned about the image of Dallas.

They were going to come up with an alternative. I suggested that what we ought to do is have a place where the public could come. They said, well, we don't know if we should do that. We don't want to have people come, we won't be able to control the crowd, and we may have an incident. They were going to work on that, we had two holes in our schedule: Fort Worth and Dallas.

Connally was meeting with the board of regents, he was going to get back to me. I was in the hotel. I was waiting for his call. In the room with me was the head of Texas

Instrument, Johnson. And I think Bob Strauss [Robert Strauss].

DAITCH: And who was he?

BRUNO: He was a real Johnson and Connally man, who went on to be a power in Democratic politics. He ended up being ambassador to Russia under George Bush [George H. Bush], the first George Bush. We were in a room at the Driscoll Hotel.

The phone rang, and it was Connally. I got on the phone with him, and he said, "I just left the board of regents, and they're firm on not giving a degree to the president." He said, "We'd still like to have a rally there. Is it possible that the president would go and give his talk there and not get the degree?" And I said, "It's my feeling that since everybody knows he was supposed to get an honorary degree, for him to go and not get it, would be awful for the president. I'll get back to the White House."

DAITCH: It's insulting.

BRUNO: So I called the White House. I talked to Kenny, and he said, "Absolutely not. No degree, no visit." So I got back to Connally, and I said, "It's off. We're not going to Texas Christian University." So we had to redo the trip.

DAITCH: When you're planning this, this is late October?

BRUNO: Yes.

DAITCH: You're planning about a month ahead. Okay. So you're trying to....

BRUNO: Not even that.

DAITCH: Right. You've only got a few weeks to make all these arrangements.

BRUNO: About three weeks.

DAITCH: Yes. Okay.

BRUNO: So Connally came up with an alternative. We were going to have a breakfast in Fort Worth instead of the university. And it was going to be sponsored by Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce. The trip, the way it stood, we were going to go to San Antonio, that was set. We were going to Houston for a dinner at the Rice Hotel for Carl Albert. He was the congressman from that area, he was going to retire. Instead of spending the night at Houston, we were then going to fly to Fort Worth and spend the night there. So that changed. Then get up early in the

morning and have this breakfast. And instead of motorcading from Fort Worth to Dallas, which is only about 22 miles, it's very short, because we had that gap, we were then going to fly from Fort Worth to Dallas.

In the meantime, Connally was trying to put together an alternative for the luncheon. He came up with the TradeMart. The Yarborough people and labor, State AFL-CIO, President Hank Brown [Henry Brown], was one of the leaders who wanted a public rally. We went to look at a couple of sites, and one of them was the Woman's Building at the state fairgrounds. I went to look at that, and it looked ideal. We could put maybe 10,000 people in there.

I went to look at the TradeMart where Connally wanted to have the luncheon.... It's a mall, sort of a mall with shops all over, and it was going to be right in the center on the first floor. All around it were like bookstores and card shops and everything. There were just stores all over. On the second floor there was more stores. And to get across from one side of the mall to the other where the shops were, there were two catwalks. And that's where the people, the shoppers, would cross over and go from shop to shop.

When I went to look at that, the TradeMart... well the Secret Service. The first impression we had was that it didn't look safe because of the catwalks. The president would be on the first floor, and above him would be these catwalks. If someone would ever get on that catwalk... with the luncheon below was a dangerous thing. So my feeling and the Secret Service's was that we shouldn't go to the TradeMart. We should go to the fairgrounds.

Connally was bitterly opposed to that because he didn't want to have a public gathering. He wanted a controlled crowd that he could control with financial backers of his. His whole purpose of the trip was to show that the president was supportive of him and not Ralph Yarborough or Don Yarborough. So this in-play took place which is why Connally was bitterly opposed... to having an open rally.

DAITCH: How would the open rally have made it look more like the president supported Yarborough?

BRUNO: With an open to the public rally, Yarborough supporters would come. The TradeMart was by invitation, only big, well-to-do Texas contributors would be invited, and they would be Connally backers. It would be Connally's crowd.

DAITCH: Oh, I see.

[Change to Side B of Tape]

DAITCH: Who was asking for a public rally?

BRUNO: Yarborough and labor leaders were insisting on a public rally, and I've got

some letters that'll show you. I met with Connally. He said, "Let's go have lunch, see if we can settle this dispute." So we went to the Forty Acres Club in Austin. I was sitting at the table, and I remember.... I'm not very tall, and Connally, I think I came to his belly button or something like that, kept looking down at me and telling me that, "This is my show. If the president doesn't want to do it my way, the president doesn't have to come. This is my state, and I invited him. And if he doesn't do it my way, we don't want him."

All of a sudden he gets out of his seat, and he goes to a phone. I heard him asking the operator, "Get me the White House." I guess he gets Kenny O'Donnell, and he talked for maybe two or three minutes. He came back, and he said, "I just talked to the White House." And he said, "They want you to go back to Washington, and they'll tell you what we're going to do." So I said, "Fine. That's all right with me."

So the next day I left and went back to the White House, and I sat down with Kenny O'Donnell and Jerry Behn. I had with me pictures of the mall and the catwalks. Jerry Behn [Gerald A. "Jerry" Behn], who was the head of the Secret Service, I told him about how unsafe it was, about what could happen at the luncheon, that there was a general feeling from most of the people, outside of Connally, that wanted the fairground. And my gut feeling was that we ought to go to the fairground. It would be a much safer and better setting.

And I said, "We agree on San Antonio, we agree on Houston. These are all Connally's picks. We agree on the Fort Worth Chamber breakfast, which was Connally's." I said, "He was not truthful about the Texas Christian visit where the president was supposed to get a degree, and they won't give it to him. We were supposed to have this luncheon at the Statler-Hilton, and they refused to give us the room because of the bottlers' convention." And I said, "I don't think we ought to go to the TradeMart."

Kenny and Jerry Behn agreed with me. After looking at the pictures, he said, "You're right." But Kenny said, "I don't know what to do with Connally. He is the governor. Let me think about it. In the meantime, set up all the other stops."

What happens.... The Secret Service has a man, an agent-in-charge at each stop. Then I would put a political person there. At San Antonio I had Max Edwards. The Secret Service had [Dennis Halderman]. At Houston I had a Marty Underwood [Martin Underwood], and the agent was [Ronald Poncias]. At Fort Worth I had John Burns, and the agent was [Bill Duncan [William Duncan]]. At Dallas I had Jack Puterbaugh [Jacob L. "Jack" Puterbaugh], the agent was [Wind Lawson]. Then the last stop was going to be Austin, which was a fund-raiser, and there was no problem about that. They were selling tickets for that. My guy there was Max Edwards and Jim Corcoran [James T. Corcoran], and the agent was [Bill Payne [William Payne]]. So we were ready, the only problem with Dallas was where to have the luncheon.

In the meantime the concern was Johnson, who was in the state. Johnson was supposed to be selling tickets to the fund-raiser, and the tickets weren't going too good. I remember getting a call from Kenny O'Donnell that said, "My understanding is that Johnson's not really working as hard as he should to make the fund-raiser a success." So I

got a hold of the vice president's man, Cliff Carter, and I said, "The White House is pretty disturbed about the ticket sales." And he said, "Well, the vice president's doing all he can, and so is Connally. But they're unhappy with the way the trip is being put together, the Dallas stop especially."

We had a meeting that night in Johnson's suite. His wife [Claudia "Lady Bird" Taylor Johnson] owned the television station in Austin. Above the station on the top floor was this suite. Johnson met with a lot of supporters that were going to be pushing the tickets. And I remember Johnson, that night he had this reception. I approached him a couple of times. I said, "You know, the White House is not too happy about ticket sales." And his remark to me was, "Tell me about Bobby Baker [Robert Baker]."

There was a scandal brewing with Bobby Baker. Bobby Baker was sergeant-at-arms in the Senate when Johnson was majority leader, and the attorney-general was investigating Bobby Baker's scandal. If that scandal proved damaging, Bobby Baker could end up in jail, and that would damage the vice president. And the vice president was concerned that if this broke out, he would not be on the ticket in '64. He asked me two or three times, "What are Larry O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien] and Kenny O'Donnell doing on the Bobby Baker scandal?" And I said, "Mr. Vice President, I don't know. They never talked to me about it." He said, "Well, I'm concerned about it." I said, "Yes, but they're concerned about you not selling tickets." And he looked at me, and he walked away.

This gives you a picture of the situation we were in going into Texas. We couldn't get anybody to cooperate or be concerned about the trip or the president. Everybody had their own concerns.

DAITCH: Private agendas, yes.

BRUNO: Private... you're right... agendas. Johnson was concerned about the Bobby Baker scandal and what the attorney-general was going to do about it.

Connally was concerned about Don Yarborough and whether the president was going to show favoritism to Don, Don could knock him off in the primary. The Dallas Citizens Council was worried about the image of Dallas. In the meantime General Walker was running all these ads about John F. Kennedy... John F. Kennedy is a traitor because of the Cuban Bay of Pig's.

I'm back at the White House, and they're trying to sort this all out. Kenny O'Donnell came up with the idea that what we ought to do is send Bill Moyers [Bill D. Moyers] down. Moyers was deputy director of the Peace Corps, from Texas, close to Lyndon Johnson and close to the Connally people, and see if he could sort this all out.

Bill Moyers went down, tried to talk to Connally. Connally insisted on the TradeMart. So I think it was three or four days before the president is to fly to Texas, they announced that the TradeMart was going to be the place. So the trip was set. He was going to dedicate the space medical center at San Antonio, do the tribute to the congressman in Houston at the Rice Hotel, overnight at Fort Worth, do the Chamber of

Commerce breakfast at Fort Worth, and then fly to Dallas so we could be there at noon for a noon rally and go to the TradeMart for a luncheon.

The thing that, 'til this day it disturbs me, had we gone to the fairgrounds, the president would have come to the downtown from a different direction. We would have still done the motorcade downtown. But instead of driving in front of the book building where Oswald [Lee Harvey Oswald] worked and had positioned himself, we would have been over a block away from that building where Oswald was. And would've been making the turn off the freeway going at a greater rate of speed to the place where the motorcade would start.

You know, it's hindsight, and I don't think it was a conspiracy. But I think it was bad judgment on the part of Connally, the vice president, the Dallas Citizens Council, and that group that were all interested in themselves not what could possibly happen to the president. So I'll never know whether the course of events would have changed had we gone to the fairgrounds. My feeling is it would have. There was no reason for us to go to the TradeMart, but history will tell.

DAITCH: Yes, there's all those what-ifs.

BRUNO: I'll show you some of those letters.

DAITCH: Okay.

BRUNO: The White House gave me all of this before I left.

DAITCH: Robert McNeill, Democratic National Committee.

BRUNO: Here's another one.

DAITCH: So this person is suggesting that the Democrats do something to ameliorate the fears of the Hispanics?

BRUNO: Yes. Here's another. People were concerned. The White House gave me all this correspondence before I left to let me know it was not going to....

DAITCH: That it wasn't going to be easy?

BRUNO: It wasn't going to be easy. Here's a leader of the Hispanics writing to the president. They all call themselves the "loyal Democrat."

DAITCH: So all these people are listing their friends and supporters as the people who should be involved in the trip. I see. So these would be the Yarborough people.

BRUNO: Yes.

DAITCH: I take it this trip was exceptional because of the nature of the politics? I assume there were some politics everywhere, but this seems like a real snake pit.

BRUNO: Yes.... This is the one from the AFL-CIO.

DAITCH: The poll tax that he's making reference to?

BRUNO: Yes, that was an issue.

DAITCH: Yes.

BRUNO: Someone else who wrote this one.

DAITCH: So she's saying the Dallas County Executive Committee is not supportive of the Democratic Party?

BRUNO: Yes.

DAITCH: Now, is this usual, too, that they would give you a package of any whatever letters from whatever area?

BRUNO: Oh, yes.

DAITCH: Just any information they had?

BRUNO: Oh, yes. They always did that. This would give me some idea of what had to be done to set up the president's trips so the trip would be a success. You wanted to make sure that if there were disagreements, you try to put them aside and bring out all of the supporters for the president and not get involved in local politics. And we tried to do that at every stop. We did this during the campaign, and we did that when he was president.

DAITCH: It's interesting that... I mean what a difficult job, trying to get all these local people together. But I get the feeling that Dallas was so much more difficult. Was it usually once you got there and you had an approach to people, was it normally more easy to put together, to get them to support the president instead of local interests?

BRUNO: If you brought all factions together, it was easy. They would all benefit by having a huge turnout. But this was so different. There was no way we could bridge the gap between Yarborough and Connally. Johnson in many ways stayed in the background because he was so fearful of what would happen with the Bobby Baker scandal. Connally had become the power in Texas that Johnson used to be. But as vice president he had lost some of his clout, Connally had really moved in to that vacuum and taken over the state.

DAITCH: So Johnson didn't really have any leverage to...

BRUNO: No. Not as much as he thought he had. Connally was determined that he was going to run the show now. And Yarborough was determined that he was. Yarborough felt that there was this movement to do away with the old-time party, the Good Old Boys, and bring in more blacks, more Hispanics into the leadership role. That was Yarborough's idea. But we could never bridge the gap between the two of them. I know Larry O'Brien, who was a real political operator in the White House, and Kenny O'Donnell realized how hopeless it was.

Going into '64, we needed a united party, and that was the White House's concern. If we were going to succeed against Barry Goldwater [Barry M. Goldwater], they needed a united Texan political party. Connally in all of his interviews disputes the fact that there was no other way that he could have resolved this, and that the TradeMart was the best place. But he was so wrong.

DAITCH: I would have to think that he thought the TradeMart was the best place for his reasons. But you would be the person to ask because you literally planned and organized these things for years, and you had a very good feel for what the better place would be.

BRUNO: Yes. And the White House was in a very, very touchy situation because, first of all, they wanted desperately to carry Texas. With a split there was no way we were going to carry it. Barry Goldwater would have carried it. The other thing that we all lose sight of is the fact that Texas Christian University rejected a president of the United States based on his religion.

DAITCH: Yes, that's unbelievable.

BRUNO: Because he was a Catholic. That threw that whole schedule into turmoil. We would have spent the night at Houston, flew into the university, given the commencement speech, received the honorary degree, and then motorcade to Dallas. And we would have again come in from a different route for the downtown motorcade. So if I had to blame anybody for that trip, I would have to blame the University of Texas Christian and the board of regents for rejecting a president of the

United States based on his religion. This is unbelievable! Until this day the story never makes it into the press.

After my book came out, I was invited to address a college in Dallas, Southern Methodist University, and I raised that point. And I never in all my... I went to 68 universities to give talks on my book... I received a standing and long ovation when I pinpointed how a university could deny the president an honorary degree based on his religion.

DAITCH: It's shocking. It's so offensive.

BRUNO: But, you know, when you look at the schedule, this was not my schedule, this was Connally's schedule.

DAITCH: Yes, it's right there in black and white.

BRUNO: I didn't make this up.

DAITCH: Right, right.

BRUNO: I didn't propose it. The governor of Texas proposed it. It was his idea. This is the original schedule I got before I left. This is what the governor had in mind. For the University to reject the governor and the president based on a man's religion in this country....

DAITCH: Right. It's offensive. My first thought when you told me that board of regents, whoever you talked to there, had said, "We can't do that because we've never given...."

BRUNO: No, I hadn't talked to the board of regents. I had talked to the president.

DAITCH: Oh, the president of the university?

BRUNO: He said it was his understanding that the board of regents would not give him the honorary degree. So when I went back and I told Connally that the president told me that they wouldn't, he said, "I'll go talk to the board of regents." He said, "I'll turn them around." He was very cocky about that, like it was no problem. But after he went, he said, "I couldn't turn them around. I couldn't convince them."

DAITCH: It's unbelievable.

BRUNO: He said, "We ought to go anyway," and I said, "I don't think so."

DAITCH: No. I wouldn't have.

BRUNO: This is my disappointment, if it was done the right way, I don't think he would have been shot. I don't think he would've been assassinated.

DAITCH: Maybe not. And you never know. It's too late now. But it's disappointing. For you it must have left kind of a....

BRUNO: It does. I've got maps that show the way the trip from Fort Worth to Dallas and downtown would have taken if we had stopped at the University and if we had stopped at the Fair grounds not the TradeMart.

DAITCH: Now this, again, would be the kind of thing that you would have, copies of maps; you'd draw things out, map things out.

BRUNO: Yes. Here's the TradeMart, here's the fairgrounds, and here's the downtown. If we would've gone to the fairgrounds, we would've come from a different direction to go downtown. The TradeMart.... Here's the airport, you got on the freeway here, and here's the book building. He came in through here to go down here, and he went right in front of the book building to get onto the freeway his car had to slow down to make the right hand turn that was in front of the book building on the way to the TradeMart. If he would have gone to the fairgrounds, we would have come in this way and gone about two or three blocks away from the book building, and go through the downtown and on to go to the fairgrounds.

DAITCH: I've seen that map before, I think. I have this vision of a really sharp turn, right?

BRUNO: A really sharp turn. Off of the downtown main street the president took a real sharp left. He had to go very slow to make a sharp left. And then you go right in front of the book building to get onto the freeway. By coming the other way, you take this cloverleaf, they didn't have to slow down. Then you get to about here, and that's where the crowd starts, and then you just move slowly. But he would have been coming in much faster and much farther from the book building.

DAITCH: But these things are published in advance, right? So the person....

BRUNO: Oh, yes. Well, we want the people to come out.

DAITCH: Right. You want them to come out, so it's possible that he would have just found another place to try to shoot from.

BRUNO: No, this is where Oswald worked. There was no other place in that area where he could have gone to set himself up. I don't know if you saw that movie by Oliver Stone. Did you see it? *JFK*?

DAITCH: *JFK*. I don't think I saw that one. I saw... I watched *Thirteen Days* not too long ago. I don't think I saw *JFK*.

BRUNO: They talk about the fact that the Secret Service didn't protect him, that there were open windows. People were all over that place with open windows, and they said the Secret Service didn't protect him. That's a bunch of baloney. Number one, we encourage people to throw confetti out. That's what we have a motorcade for. We want people to get out, to wave. Throughout all of our motorcades, we encouraged people to do that. The fact that we went right under the window of Oswald, where he worked, that was not part of the motorcade, we'll never know. But that still doesn't leave the question of why a university wouldn't give a degree... that could have changed the trip. And Oliver Stone never even mentioned it.... I don't know who they talked to, but.... Remember, there were motorcades through downtown San Antonio and Houston that were announced long before the Dallas motorcades and nothing happened.

DAITCH: I don't either. I need to watch the film.

BRUNO: That's all they keep making a point of is that the Secret Service never had all the windows shut. That's nonsense.

DAITCH: Right. Well, I don't know if it was a different world then, too. But, as you say, that's part of getting people out, making them feel involved. I don't know how you could possibly do that. I don't know if you could even do that today. Does that seem reasonable to you?

BRUNO: After the Bob Kennedy assassination, I did a Ford Study for the Ford Foundation based on personal appearance. Remember after Bob Kennedy was assassinated there was some talk of isolating the candidate, not having personal appearances anymore because of the threat of assassination. I did a study. And that study showed that where the president had not gone, there was a real drop in turnout; and where the president did go, there was a much higher turnout.

DAITCH: Really!

BRUNO: And there was no way you were ever going to convince John F. Kennedy or Robert Kennedy that they were not going to have public appearances. In a

democracy, for us to shut off public appearances is unheard of, and you can't do that.

DAITCH: Right. It's reasonable.

BRUNO: But in the same sense, why do you have this hatred like General Walker with paid ad's flying the flag upside down, calling him a traitor, and you have people spitting on Adlai Stevenson. You have this hatred. Then it was communism. Today now it's patriotism.

DAITCH: Now it'll be Muslims.

BRUNO: Muslims. The sniper that they caught, did you ever hear of anybody being caught sniping like the sniper, and the first thing mentioned, he's a Muslim? I mean when McVeigh [Timothy McVeigh] blew up that building in Oklahoma, they didn't say a Christian was captured.

DAITCH: Right. Exactly.

BRUNO: Or a Jew was captured. I mean it's unheard.... This Son of Sam was Jewish. The big headline wasn't "Son of Sam, a Jew, Caught Killing People!"

DAITCH: Yes. But that's the new, it's going to be the new enemy.

BRUNO: And that's what spreads hatred.

DAITCH: Absolutely. And everybody is subject to it. I mean I see people who are perfectly reasonable, rational people get caught up in it, and they begin to make these statements, monolithic "they," "they, the Muslims, all hate the rest of the world." Or "they all teach their children hatred."

BRUNO: Well, Jerry Falwell, what did he say? He said that Mohammed was a terrorist.

DAITCH: Right. Thank you for that little intellectual bit of analysis from Falwell. Yes, that kind of thing is scary.

BRUNO: You can't have full-page ads in a Dallas paper without creating hatred.

DAITCH: Absolutely.

BRUNO: And then, on top of that, having the university reject a Catholic.

DAITCH: I can't imagine.... I mean could you not just tell the president of the university, okay, I'll tell the president of the United States that you're not going to give him a honorary degree because he's Catholic? It just makes no sense.

BRUNO: The West Virginia primary....

DAITCH: Oh, yes. Tell me about that primary. It's a fascinating thing.

BRUNO: In Wisconsin, John F. Kennedy was supposed to carry seven districts, congressional districts, and he only carried six. So that sort of gave a big boost to Hubert Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey]. He claimed a victory because Kennedy didn't carry seven, he carried only six out of ten. So the big battle was going to be West Virginia.

There's only 2 or 3 percent Catholic in the State of West Virginia. When we got there, Bob Kennedy had organized the state. He sent Joe Gargan [Joseph Gargan], who is the cousin of John F. Kennedy, and I to do advance work for JFK. And we would go two days ahead of the candidate, and he would come through these hollers, these old mining towns. With about one or two days notice, we put up posters, and we'd maybe buy an ad that said the next president's going to be at the steps of the courthouse. And I remember we went into this one town called Crumb, West Virginia.

DAITCH: I've heard of Crumb. I can't remember where it is.

BRUNO: It's a little town. I remember, God, there was this really, really beautiful young girl, and she had... for a dress she had these sewed-up, throw-away flour sacks she had sewn together, and she had stringy hair. She came, and we were putting up the sign, and she wanted to know about this guy John Kennedy. And we explained it to her, and she said, "You know I ain't never seen anybody like that. Am I really going to be able to see him?" I said, "Yes, bring all your friends." And she looked at Joe Gargan and me, and she said, "Do you think I'll ever get out of Crumb?"

DAITCH: Ohhh.

BRUNO: Crumb had all coal miners, and I think we got about 500 people. It was just an unbelievable sight. And John Kennedy was just so tickled. We would stop at a coal mine, and he'd go down into the shaft.

DAITCH: Did he?

BRUNO: And we had FDR, Jr., then [Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Jr.]. He would be

campaigning. God, he was like a god over there, Roosevelt [Franklin Delano Roosevelt].

DAITCH: You bet.

BRUNO: And two days before the election we stopped doing rallies. And Larry O'Brien, who was also in charge of the campaign, sent me to Logan. My first reaction was.... I'm at the Kanawha Hotel. I'm staying there. I remember somebody calling me, and he said, "Come down to the doughnut shop." They wanted to meet me. I went down to the doughnut shop, and they had the county leader. And the first thing he said to me was, "You got the bag?" And I said, "What are you talking about?" He said, "Ain't you the bag man?" I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Ain't you got the money?" I said, "I ain't got no money."

DAITCH: What was that about? Were you supposed to pay them for their votes or what? What is the deal?

BRUNO: Well, in West Virginia, the big race is not the president or the governor, it's the sheriff. And the sheriff is the key figure in that county. He turns out the vote. The sheriff is the most powerful man in the county. And there's bootleggers and everything else. And if you go up in the hollers up there and they don't know you, they'll shoot you if they think you're from the Feds, that you're going to shut down their operation. And so he wanted to know if I was the bag man, and if I was carrying the money for the workers. What they do, they have these mud parties. [END OF TAPE #1]

DAITCH: Mud parties.

BRUNO: The day before the election they have mud parties, and they give everybody a bottle of booze. And give them a ballot, and give them a card election day. The guy inside the poll will take out one corner of the ticket, if you vote right. And when you come out, if it's cut at the right place, then you get more booze, you get your pint. And they called these "mud parties."

I remember election day. I was with the county leader, and I said, "Let's go visit some of these voting places." He said, "Alright. Let's go." And I had a description of where every one was. And I said, "Let's go to this one." He said, "Oh, no. No. We moved that." I said, "You moved it? Last night it was there." He said, "Yeah, we moved it."

DAITCH: A polling place?

BRUNO: What they do, they would move a polling place.

DAITCH: Portable polling.

BRUNO: If it wasn't a favorable polling place, they moved it. If it was a favorable place, they left it.

DAITCH: Oh, my gosh!

BRUNO: So this is all controlled by the sheriff. Candidate Hubert just picked the wrong sheriff. We were able to pick the right sheriffs.

DAITCH: So you literally did? I mean was it just happenstance, or did you literally go in there and figure out who the sheriffs were that....

BRUNO: This was all done before. This was all done by Matt Reese [Matthew Reese] from West Virginia. And he ended up becoming a real big political consultant in this country. But he had it all figured out. He had run races in the past in West Virginia. He's from West Virginia. Him and Bob McDonough [Robert P. McDonough]. When we went in, the groundwork was all laid out. We already had the sheriff candidates that were going to support us. And don't forget, Bob Byrd [Robert C. Byrd] was against us. He wanted Johnson to be the nominee. So he supported Hubert, figuring if Hubert could knock out JFK, Lyndon would be the nominee. But, again, West Virginia's a rough, rough political state. And I understand they still do it. They still do it.

DAITCH: Not so much in the areas where I grew up. But, yes, out in the coal fields.

BRUNO: Hollers.

DAITCH: Up the hollers.

BRUNO: I wanted to go up a holler once. I said to this guy, "Take me up there." He said, "Man, I ain't takin' you up there!" He said, "Unless you go with someone that they know, they're going to shoot you. They're going to shoot you."

DAITCH: Oh, yes. And he's not kidding. I mean the violence is just legendary. I mean I'm a few generations removed. But my grandfather, you know, he was a miner, and he was active in the UMW, and he was a drinker, and all this, the whole thing. I've got plenty of skeletons in my family closets having to do with that. I have always heard, though, that Kennedy was really genuinely moved by the poverty that he saw.

BRUNO: Oh, he was. God! A person could not be human not to realize the poverty in those hollers, in those mine towns, especially like that girl in Crumb. I mean here's someone that desperately wanted... she had heard about the outside world and wanted to be a part of it, and knew that she would never get out of Crumb. And that's all they had... those shacks... chickens running all over the place. Ugh! And the company stores.

DAITCH: Oh, yes.

BRUNO: Miners would buy everything on credit. And then they would take the money from their paycheck. And the prices were so high.

DAITCH: Oh, sure. They gouged them. And they had no choice.

BRUNO: It's just so depressing. I mean you'd have to be heartless to go into West Virginia and not come out feeling that you really truly wanted to do something for those people.

DAITCH: You know what, too, they loved him. I mean maybe not unanimously everywhere. But I remember I had a great-aunt who was politically pretty active when she was a younger woman, and she campaigned for Kennedy. When she died, she didn't have any children. So my mom and I went over and cleaned out things. And she had a button, a "Vote for JFK for President" or something. You know, just a button, had his picture on it. Then somebody had put.... I guess it said "JFK for President." And somebody had then covered with masking tape the word "for" and written "the." So after he won, "JFK the President." And the masking tape was still on there. I still have it. I just thought it was a neat thing. But people certainly loved him, and they appreciated, I think, the fact that he....

BRUNO: Well, JFK had the Appalachia Program.

DAITCH: Yes. Well, he had the program, and he actually did something for them. But he also was there on the ground. He talked to people. And I think they appreciated the fact that he literally had been there, had seen them and talked to them. You know, not very many people care enough to visit West Virginia. And granted he was getting out the votes. But people took it very personally and appreciated it, I think.

BRUNO: Yes. He didn't have to go into those mines.

DAITCH: Yes.

BRUNO: He wanted to. He wanted to meet with the miners. He was quite a guy.

DAITCH: Yes. Tell me about him. I mean I've seen videotape of him, and he just was so charismatic even on old black-and-white video. He was such a charismatic guy. What was he like in person?

BRUNO: Well, I met him in '57. Proxmire [William Proxmire] was running for the US Senate. Joe McCarthy [Joseph R. McCarthy] died. Proxmire had run for governor three times, '52, '54, and '56 and lost. I met Proxmire in '53 and had stayed with him after two defeats. Then Joe McCarthy died, and there was a special election. In that special election there was a very popular congressman, Clem Zablocki [Clement John Zablocki], who ran against a two-time loser, Proxmire. And Proxmire beat him. Proxmire had just gotten divorced.

The Senate is controlled by one seat. There was Senator Neeley [Matthew M. Neeley] from West Virginia, who was dying. The governor of West Virginia was a Republican, and he had said that if Neeley died, he was going to appoint a Republican, which would have changed the Senate leadership. And Richard Nixon [Richard M. Nixon], who was vice president, would cast the deciding vote. Johnson would not have been majority leader. Kennedy would not have been head of the Rackets Committee, Labor Committee. It would have changed everything. So in that special election everybody under the sun descended on Wisconsin.

The National Committee wanted desperately to have Kennedy come into the state for exposure. We wanted Kennedy because he was a Catholic, and Proxmire had just gotten divorced, and we had just beat Clem Zablocki from Milwaukee, a Catholic area. We were scared running against a two-time, very popular governor named Kohler [Walter J. Kohler, Jr.]. So they brought Kennedy in, and we arranged for him to go into the south side of Milwaukee and Green Bay, which is very, very Catholic.

I remember Kennedy arrived, and Proxmire was a real loner. He just never wanted to have anybody involved in his campaigns. And Ellen Proxmire, his wife, they had just gotten married, her and I, talked Proxmire into agreeing that it would be best if Kennedy came in to go into these Catholic areas. We had set up a stop for Kennedy in the south side of Milwaukee at this public park that had this statue of a Polish leader, and he was going to lay a wreath there.

Kennedy arrived, and we brought him to the park. We had this wreath. There was not much press there because he was not known at the time. He lays this wreath. He had someone on his staff taking photos so they could use it at some time. I remember after they laid the wreath, we went to a Catholic church. But Proxmire didn't want to stay with him. He wanted to take off, he was a real handshaker. He'd go to these stores and factory gates to shake hands. And Kennedy was so pissed off because Proxmire didn't want to stay with him.

On top of that, the guy that was supposed to take the picture had forgotten to put the film in. So he's really furious. He said, "I laid this wreath." He wanted the photo,

and that didn't happen. And now Proxmire doesn't want to be seen with him. So he didn't want to go on to Green Bay. I got a hold of Ellen [Proxmire], and I said, "You know, the senator is not going to go to Green Bay. He's really ticked off at Prox because he doesn't want to stay with him." She said, "Let me talk to him." She finally convinced him to: "Get on the plane, go to Green Bay with him, and be seen with Kennedy. He's going to help you with the Catholic vote." He finally agreed.

Proxmire wins, and in 1958 he runs for the full term. He wins the full term in '58, and he puts me on his Washington staff. I'm on this little subway going from Senate Office Building to the Senate, and this guy is sitting next to me, and it's John Kennedy. He remembers my name. He said, "How's Wisconsin? How's Proxmire doing? Is he still anti-everybody?" I laughed, and I said, "No." He said, "You know there's a chance I may run for president. What do you think of my chances?" I said, "Well, Humphrey's very viable. He's like our third senator. He's always been around for labor. He's going to be a tough guy to beat."

I met him two weeks after that. He was conducting a hearing on rackets. They took a break, and he was walking in the corridor. He spotted me, and he said, "Come on with me." We went into his office, and he wanted to talk politics. He got a call, and he said, "I'm not going to be able to talk. Why don't you come and have breakfast with me tomorrow morning? Evelyn, my secretary, will give you the directions." So the next morning I went. He started talking about politics, about Wisconsin, and he knew that state better than I did.

DAITCH: Really?

BRUNO: Then he said, "You know, I'm thinking of running for president, but I'm undecided on Wisconsin or Nebraska. I've got to pick one or the other. I want to get organized in both of them so when I do pick, I'll be organized. But I'm leaning more to Wisconsin. Why don't you go back and organize it." Pat Lucey [Patrick J. Lucey], who was head of the party, was a Kennedy man. Also, Ivan Nestingen [Ivan A. Nestingen], who was the mayor of Madison, a Scandinavian, was the president of the Kennedy for President Club. And he said, "Go to work for them . . . they'll put you on my payroll... and organize the state." I said, "Well, I just came to Washington. I'm a factory worker. I'm not PR or a lawyer I can not go back to a law firm." I said, "I'm taking a real gamble. If you lose, I don't know if Proxmire'll take me back. I go back to the shop." He said, "I've got a pretty good chance." I talked to a few of my friends, and I said, "You know, what the hell have I got to lose? A year ago I was a factory worker, and today the guy who thinks he's going to be president wants to hire me. What have I got to lose?" I had just gotten married. So I went back, and I talked to Proxmire. And I said, "I'm going to work for Kennedy." Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey] had also asked me to work for him.

DAITCH: Really!

BRUNO: And not because I was good. I wasn't that good. I'd never got involved in politics before. But I was so associated with Bill Proxmire, I was one of the very few that stuck with him. I came from labor. So if anybody talked about Jerry Bruno, they always thought of Bill Proxmire. I had gotten a lot of press coming from the factory, joining Proxmire's staff. So my identity with Proxmire gave Kennedy such an advantage that it was like having Proxmire endorse him, which Proxmire refused to do because he liked Humphrey.

The papers, that's all they talked about: "Proxmire Aide Joins JFK." Two days of stories and a press like that, Proxmire got furious, and he denounced me. He said, "Bruno is on his own. I'm not for Kennedy. I'm neutral." In fact, he favored Hubert. But I also had all of the names of the Proxmire people. So I was able to put together a pretty good organization.

I remember the first time Kennedy's going to make an appearance. It's at Marshville, Wisconsin. He wants to get a feel for the state. We were going to have a box-lunch, dinner, \$2.00 a box. After we started organizing it, selling tickets, we read in the paper that Wisconsin Rapids, which is 30 miles away, is going to have a fund-raiser, and Richard Nixon, the vice president, is going to be the main speaker.

I remember Kennedy calls me, and he said, "Did you know that Nixon was going to be 30 miles away?" He said, "Do you think we could outdraw the vice president of the United States? That's the same night, the same time, and we're 30 miles apart." He said, "Do you think we could do it?" I met with all of the party people. They thought we had a pretty good shot at it, but we were going to have to work like hell.

I remember every day for a week and a half, Kennedy would call me, wanted to know how many tickets were sold, who I contacted, who I didn't contact, why I didn't. I mean the guy was a very detailed guy. You would think that he had other things to do, but he was so zeroed-in on that first event, he had such a knack for knowing that the national press was going to try to compare the two visits.

That was my first taste of John Kennedy in a real tight situation, and he was not anybody to play games with. And if you didn't have the answers, boy, I'll tell you, he wanted to know why you didn't. I learned later that you could never make two mistakes with the Kennedy's. You could only make one. After that you're gone.

But we outdrew Nixon, and he was extremely happy. On top of that, there was a huge scare about cranberry juice. It was tainted. Somebody got sick. And they had to pull the cranberry juice from all the store shelves. That's the biggest industry in that part of Wisconsin. So the Chamber of Commerce gets a hold of me, and they want to know if John F. Kennedy will toast a drink with cranberry juice. And I said, "It's tainted. He's liable to get sick." They said, "No, no, no. There's nothing wrong with the juice."

The lieutenant governor at the time was Phil Nash [Phileo Nash]. He had a big cranberry farm. And he was for Humphrey. He said, "We've got to get JFK to have a toast with cranberry. And on top of that," he said, "Nixon's going to do a toast. JFK's got to do it." So I called headquarters in D.C. and I said, "The senator's got to have a toast

with cranberry juice." They said, "Well, let me approach him, and we'll get back to you." They called back, and they said, "Yeah, he'll do it." I thought to myself, that's all he's got to do is get sick.

DAITCH: Yes. Right.

BRUNO: You know, he was game for anything. He was funny. He had a sense of humor. When he came to Wisconsin he would come with Kenny O'Donnell, Larry O'Brien, Dave Powers, and Jackie [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy] at times, in the *Caroline*, his private plane, and myself. We'd go from place to place. He would ask me about the next stop. One day it'd started snowing, and we had about five stops to go.

We ended up going to Kenosha, my hometown. On Washington Road there's a hill, and the snow had started. The car he was in started to skid. And he's such an impulsive guy. Before you know it, he's out of the car, and he's pushing the car. He's pushing the car up the hill. And Ivan Nestingen, the mayor of Madison, is driving.

DAITCH: The senator pushing....

BRUNO: That was the lead in the papers: He's pushing his campaign ahead. [laughter] He was also fidgety. When he walked in a hall, he'd always tap, he'd tap the wall with his hand. He'd walk, and he'd talk to you, and he'd be tapping. He was fidgety, very fidgety. He never showed that. I've also seen his anger. The *Milwaukee Journal* had a reporter by the name of Ken Fry [Kenneth Fry]. He was really anti-Kennedy, anti-Catholic. He was for Hubert, and he was supposed to be a reporter that was covering him.

Every crowd we had, if we had a thousand people, Ken Fry's story would be, 999 at the rally were Catholic. And we'd have these receptions, 10,000 people. The lead of Ken Fry's story was that out of 10,000, 9,000 were Catholic. I went to him, and I said to him, "Ken, how do you know 9,000 are Catholic?" "Oh," he said, "listen, that's a good story." I showed these to Kennedy, and he was furious. And on top of that, Ken Fry started writing stories about a split between him and Jackie, that Jackie was on the verge of getting a divorce. And that's all we needed.

So I put all the JFK stories together, and the next trip he made, I said, "This is what Ken Fry's writing." He said, "Arrange an appearance before the editorial board of the *Milwaukee Journal*." I did that. He went there, and he just lambasted them. He said, "Look at this! This reporter is not reporting the news. This guy has got a grudge against me. He's anti-Catholic." And they took him off from covering JFK.

I remember at one reception, the receptions that the Kennedys were famous for; they called them the Kennedy teas. Polly Fitzgerald, one of the cousins, organized them. I don't know if you ever heard of these receptions.

DAITCH: The teas, yes.

BRUNO: They'd have this receiving line, and everybody would go through. Jackie would be there with JFK. During one of these receptions in Milwaukee, Jackie got tired; she was pregnant. And she motioned for me to get her out of that receiving line. She said, "I'm going to go back to Washington. I'm tired." So I put her in my car, and on the way she was laughing. She said, "You know that Ken Fry. I can't stand him." She said, "I wrote him a note, and it's not signed. Stop at a mailbox. I'm going to mail it." "I gave him a piece of my mind." [laughter] So I stopped at a postbox, and she dropped it in. She had this big smile, and she was so delighted. I brought her to the airport, and then she took off for Washington, D.C. She always had a sense of humor.

DAITCH: Yes.

BRUNO: On a plane, when everybody was down, she would lift us all up. She'd make us all laugh. Kennedy was tough. Boy, he was tough with those editors.

DAITCH: Yes. Apparently that was a big. . . . I mean obviously it was an important part of the campaign, was to avoid the Catholicism issue. I mean it shouldn't be an issue.

BRUNO: You invite the public. How do you know if everybody's Catholic? To say that 99 out of 100 are Catholic at a rally, you're just raising the Catholic issue.

DAITCH: Exactly. Yes. It's silly. I had heard before that he got angry about that in some other context. I can't remember what it was. But I suppose it was an issue that sort of dogged him.

BRUNO: Yes. I want to tell you one other story. This is how impulsive he'd get and fidgety. I picked him up at the airport, there was Ted Kennedy [Edward M. Kennedy], Kenny O'Donnell, and myself. Teddy was real young at the time. He was the youngest brother. JFK was scheduled to go live on camera at this television station, and his plane got in a little late. We're in the car, and he says... he's looking at his watch, "You know, we've only got five more minutes. Do you know where the TV station is?" I said, "Yes." And he said, "Well, you know we've only got four more minutes."

We're coming to a crossroad, a red light. I said, "Senator, I'm going to have to stop." He said, "No, don't." He said, "Just go right through." I said, "But there's a policeman right over there." And he said, "But he's looking the other way." I said, "All

right." I'm approaching the corner. JFK's in the front seat, he says, "You're all right on the right." Teddy's in the back seat, and he says, "You're all right on the left." And Kenny says, "Go through! Go!" I go right through the red light, and I'm hoping the cop doesn't turn around. We get at that station, and he's got about 30 seconds, and he's moving through that hall, and he's tapping the wall as he goes.

DAITCH: But you don't say that like it was a bother or like it was oppressive.

BRUNO: No, no. It was amusing. [laughter] I had never been involved with anybody that thought he was going to be president of the United States. He was just so common, you know, he was just like anybody else. But he was so intense. And he was not a good speaker then.

DAITCH: Really?

BRUNO: During the course of that campaign he took a speech lesson... he started to speak from his diaphragm. He had a speech guy doing it.

DAITCH: Working with him?

BRUNO: ...give him some lessons.

DAITCH: No kidding! I mean because most of the video that I've seen of him was later. But what a quick study! Because you're talking about early 1960.

BRUNO: West Virginia. And then the convention in LA, the acceptance speech, you could see he was developing into this national figure. Then the campaign started. The first major campaign stop we had was in Detroit, Michigan, Labor Day, the kickoff of the campaign. He arrived from Alaska on a private plane. He now had a campaign plane. I'm going to just tell you something. During this period, not like today, we had no Secret Service protection.

DAITCH: None?

BRUNO: Today candidates, even when they announce, during a primary, if you receive 5 percent of the polling numbers, you get Secret Service protection. This was not put into place until after Bob Kennedy got shot. And President Lyndon Johnson, through an executive order, ordered that all candidates from now on had Secret Service protection. We had none then. So when we had to put together a stop, we had to arrange for the sheriff or the police, and all the protection. And Kennedy was so big on motorcades, we needed a lot of police.

The first stop, he arrives the night before Labor Day at the airport, and this huge

crowd, maybe about two or three thousand came out to greet him. And I had them behind a fence, I had a rope, and they were excited. He's now the nominee, and this is his first big stop. He gets off of his private plane, and he's at the steps, and you could just see this big smile, and they're starting to cheer. All of a sudden, in my excitement, I let the rope down. I also got carried away. And these two or three thousand people just swarmed him, swarmed him; they engulfed him. And they're crawling at him. We had to get the police to make a way for him.

But the headline in all the papers, and it became the big lead story in the magazines, was this huge crowd descending on Kennedy. This warmth, this excitement. And from then on stories about the squealers and the jumpers and all the stories about people running to touch Kennedy, it all started with that, by accident, I dropped the rope in my own excitement, I was so excited because of this cheering.

DAITCH: Oh, that's funny.

BRUNO: And we had that first rally at Cadillac Square in Detroit. It was a huge turnout. It ended up in Muskegon where we had a motorcade. We were about four hours late, it was now dark. People were still standing out there waiting to see him. From then on that's all the stories and the footage would be about, the crowds swarming him.

DAITCH: Yes. That's interesting. And building on that...

BRUNO: And running after him in the motorcade. God, he would be so happy.

DAITCH: He loved that?

BRUNO: Oh!

DAITCH: It seems a little scary almost.

BRUNO: He'd look around, and he'd look to see where I was, and he'd count the bands. This was his big thing, bands. He wanted bands at every corner, at every stop.

DAITCH: Really!

BRUNO: He was big on bands because for every band there were 60 players, they each had a mother and father, so they all came out to see them. And then their friends. So, if you put a band at every corner, you automatically get a crowd.

DAITCH: That's clever.

BRUNO: And he would always ask me, "How many bands have we got at the next stop?"

DAITCH: Not that he's a music lover, but....

BRUNO: When he was president, he went to Berlin and gave that speech, "I am a Berliner...." And then he went to Ireland, and then to Rome. Well, I had Italy. I was in Italy. And the stories about huge outpouring of people in Berlin, the crush of people, and Ireland, it was just unbelievable. The papers in Rome kept writing stories: If you want to see the president, watch it on television. People were hurt, people couldn't get near him, and they advised people, stay away. Well, it so happened that they did.

He gets to the airport, and no one is along the route, no one. He went to visit the pope. Let me come back to this story. He went to see the pope. He wanted to see Pope John, the one that died.

DAITCH: I get them mixed up.

BRUNO: The old one. He was there temporarily and called the Vatican Council. He wanted to see John F. Kennedy, the first president that was Catholic. We had made arrangements to go see the pope. He died. And so they had to cancel the trip. Then I get a call from Kenny O'Donnell, and he said, "The trip's on." I said, "They haven't named a pope yet." He said, "They will in two days." Cardinal's meet in secret, and then they send this puff of smoke to tell the world we have a new pope. And until that time you never know who the pope will be. But we knew a couple of days before.

DAITCH: Well, if you're the Catholic president of the United States. [laughter]

BRUNO: Back to the story, nobody showed up. And I'm in Naples, the next stop. I'm on the Isle of Capri. I'm reading the stories about huge crowds all over, and I figure Naples is going to be a snap. These people just turn out to see the president. I get a call from Pierre Salinger, and he's got this terror in his voice. He said, "The president is up in arms. Nobody showed up in Rome. Naples is the last European stop. He wants this trip to be remembered by the last stop. It's got to be a success or the whole trip's going to be a failure. And he's counting on Naples."

DAITCH: No pressure.

BRUNO: Yeah. So I get done sunning myself, and I head back to Naples. The mayor

of Naples is a communist; he was elected mayor. And the president of Italy is a conservative. He doesn't like the mayor, he doesn't want the mayor involved in the president's trip to Naples. So I took it upon myself, "Screw him." I called the mayor, and I made an appointment. I said, "I'm representing the president of the United States." "He wants me to meet with you and ask you for your help to bring out the crowd for his arrival in Naples."

He said, "If the president wants me, I'm more than happy to help." I said, "But you've got to get the mayors from surrounding cities." Then I said, "Do you have any bands?" He looked at me and said, "Bands?" I said, "Yeah." I'm Italian, but I can't speak it very well. I had an interpreter. Lots of bands. "Oh," he said, "no problem." Threw up his hands. "Lots of bands! Lots of bands." He said, "Yes, we could do that." So I mapped it all out for him. And each corner, a mayor from a city, and the mayor had to bring his band. And all along the route for about three or four miles, we had it all mapped out.

So the president arrived at the airport in a helicopter at the NATO base. It's right outside of Naples. That's where Benito Mussolini used to address the crowd. They have this monument that had a stairway that went to the top, that he would climb. It was about three stories high. And he'd address the crowd when he was allied with Hitler. It's now the NATO base.

The president arrives with the president of Italy. They have their conference. Then they get into the motorcade. And just before we start, he calls me. He says, "How's the crowd going to be? How's the bands?" This is Naples, Italy. I said, "I think we're doing all right. I think we're doing all right."

So the motorcade starts, and the crowd was so enormous we lost the press, the truck carrying all the TV cameras and still cameras. They couldn't control the crowd. There was a gap of about three blocks between the president and the TV cameras and the reporters covering it. So none of it got covered.

DAITCH: Oh, no!

BRUNO: It must have been 10 or 15 deep, and there was no way they could control the crowd. And the police kept telling me: "We've dealt with popes, we've dealt with kings, queens, don't tell us how to do it." We got to the airport, and the Secret Service, some of them were just battered. But the president was the happiest guy. He put his arm around me, wanted to know how we got that turnout. I said, "Mr. President, it's all my cousins who came out to see you." I went back on *Air Force One* with him. He was so happy.

DAITCH: That's great! That was a great triumph, wasn't it? That whole trip was just wonderful for him.

BRUNO: Yes.

DAITCH: Wow! Amazing stuff! Let me see if I have.... Did you work for Bobby after that?

BRUNO: Oh, yes.

DAITCH: You did, didn't you.... I don't know. Did you talk before about that in your other interview?

BRUNO: Yes. [CHANGE TO SIDE B OF TAPE]

DAITCH: You told me a story on the phone, and I don't know if you told your earlier interviewer this or not. I think it was about having a campaign headquarters, maybe in Wisconsin or someplace, across from a Catholic church or something?

BRUNO: Marquette University. A Catholic cathedral. I had come to Wisconsin, and I didn't have much of a budget. So I opened this headquarters. It was above a drugstore, but it was right across the street from the University of Marquette. Bob Kennedy wanted to come see the headquarters. I picked him up at the railroad station. Bob Kennedy had a way of... I had never met him before, but I had heard stories about him. He never carried any money with him, and he never bought a newspaper. But he'd stop at the newsstand and read all the newspapers, but never buy one.

He gets off the train, and his coat lining is undone; I remember that, I don't know why. I introduce myself, and he heads to the newsstand. He reads all the papers. Then after he reads them all and puts them back, he says, "Well, let's go." So we get in the car, and he says, "Let's go to the headquarters." I arrive at the headquarters, and he looks at it... he says, "Is this the headquarters?" I say, "Yep." He looks at the headquarters, and he looks at the cathedral. He says, "Do you think we needed to be identified with the Catholic Church?" I said, "No."

DAITCH: Oooops!

BRUNO: Well, it was two weeks after that we moved the headquarters. We got a new headquarters. But he ran the show. He was deeply involved. And after he came in, he organized the state. He broke up the state into ten congressional districts. He put a guy from Massachusetts in every one of the districts. He had "Lem" Billings [Kirk LeMoyne Billings], Dick Donohue [Richard Donohue], Ben Smith [Benjamin Smith], who ended up in the Senate, he took John F. Kennedy's seat, in each one of these districts.

People were getting a little edgy over these foreigners coming into Wisconsin. So we had to convince them that we had no expertise on running a presidential campaign.

And then Bobby would calm them down. But he was hands-on. He was a real, real organizer. And he left no details undone.

The first thing he wanted to do, after he put his people in place, he started doing the receptions. The first key to a reception is to bring a core of who's going to set the reception up. We were going to have one in my hometown of Kenosha, and he wanted to meet the first core who was going to put this reception together, he expected 5,000 people. You start with a core of 50 people. Then each one of the 50 submits ten names, and then each one of the ten submits five more. And they submit names on cards so there's no guesswork. Then when the invitation goes out, they go out to four or five thousand people.

So he says, "You know, the success to this reception is the core group." So we get to the hall where he's going to meet the core group I didn't notice any cars out there. So I said, "Why don't we wait a little longer." We're in a bar. The meeting is downstairs. I said, "Why don't we wait in the bar, and play pool or something?" I didn't want to tell him I didn't think many people were down there. So he got a pool stick out. He flung it around. He said, "Come on, come on. Why are we wasting time? Let's go meet them. I want to get them going." I couldn't stall him anymore. So we went downstairs, and there were eight people.

DAITCH: Oh, my gosh!

BRUNO: He looked around, and he looked at me, and he said, "Why don't the eight of you introduce yourselves?" So they started. "I'm Margaret Andrea; I'm Jerry's sister." "I'm Mary Bisciglia, and I'm Jerry's sister." So all five of my sisters. He said, "Did I come all this way to meet your sisters?" "You know, we've got to do a better job of organizing these things." But he talked to them. He told them what they should do. Then he sent his cousin, Polly Fitzgerald, who really did the receptions, but he never forgot the first meeting; that's all I had were my sisters.

DAITCH: That's great.

BRUNO: He never let me forget that.

DAITCH: I'll bet.

BRUNO: But it turned out really good. We finally ended up having Alan Ameche, who used to be a football player, for the Baltimore Colts, who was a star quarterback for the Kenosha High School team. A real big hero. Later a pro football player. They brought him in. Kennedy was late, and Jackie was there singing songs with Alan Ameche and kept the crowd going until we arrived. There must have been maybe four or five thousand people at that thing. It was just enormous, that was my first encounter with Bob Kennedy.

The next encounter with Bob Kennedy was in West Virginia. Larry O'Brien had sent me to Logan; the headquarters was in... let's see, Charleston?

DAITCH: Charleston.

BRUNO: Charleston at the Kanawha Hotel. The Boom Hotel was where Humphrey stayed. After the results came in, Hubert came to our headquarters to congratulate John Kennedy. After he had congratulated him, Bob Kennedy took him around and introduced him. Then he called me, and he said, "Why don't you bring the senator back to his headquarters?" And on the way back Hubert is really crying. It didn't take much for Hubert to shed tears. He couldn't believe that he had lost. Bob Kennedy had given me the great task of bringing him back to the hotel. Hubert was so depressed.

That night in the Kanawha Hotel, in the basement, the first time I saw Bob Kennedy really unload. He had a couple of wines, Dave Powers was at the piano, and they were singing Irish songs. They sang until about two or three in the morning. After, we all got on a plane for the next campaign, which was Oregon. I've never, ever seen him that happy, like he was then.

Bob Kennedy was a tough bastard. You know they say John Kennedy was tough. But Bob was ruthless because he had to be. He was ruthless with Jimmy Hoffa [James R. Hoffa] when he was counsel to the Rackets Committee, prosecuted him. And as attorney-general he was ruthless. But he became a different man after he became a senator. He became the most caring, touching human being I've ever known.

DAITCH: Really!

BRUNO: He sent me this letter that I showed you.

DAITCH: Oh, yes. About the oral histories.

BRUNO: I was working at the Department of Agriculture. I worked for Johnson after the assassination, and I did trips for him just like I did for Kennedy. Then after the '64 campaign, I just wanted to get out of it. Bill Moyers, who was one of the top guys in the Johnson Administration, asked me where I wanted to go. And the only one I knew really was Orville Freeman, Department of Agriculture. So I ended up as special assistant to Orville Freeman, doing congressional liaison. And that's where Bob Kennedy called me. That's why in his notes he said, "What are you doing for the farmers in New York?"

DAITCH: Oh, right, right.

BRUNO: But it was a couple of weeks after that he calls me, and he said, "I want to

see you." I went over there to his office, and he said, "I've got an office in New York, and I need one in Upstate New York. It's going to be Syracuse." He said, "I want you to head that office." I said, "Senator, I've never been to Syracuse." He said, "That's all right, I need you. You've got to go." I said, "I just started at Agriculture. I like it there. I'm going to be a career government worker. I can't go back to a law firm. I'm going to end up in a factory somewhere." "Don't worry," he said. "Don't worry about it."

DAITCH: Those Kennedys are going to get you in trouble. [laughter]

BRUNO: I couldn't say "no" to him, and I end up in Syracuse. The press release that I was going to be the Upstate office manager for his office was all about my farm background, that I was a head man in the Department of Agriculture, I knew agriculture. Upstate New York is a lot of agriculture. When we would visit farm areas, he'd introduce me as the expert in agriculture. After one meeting where he introduced me to the farmers as the farm expert they all crowded around me, wanted to know about what to do about dairy farm management and their wheat allotment.

Him and I would get in the car or the *Caroline*, and we'd go from little town to little town. He loved Upstate New York. He loved to go to the wine country in Naples, New York, in September, and they had the wine-picking ceremonies. He just loved that. He enjoyed Upstate New York much more than New York City, he said, "they're all politicians, and you can't get them all together." He wanted to knock out Carmine... he was a Tamany leader. De Sapio [Carmine De Sapio]. Carmine De Sapio controlled New York politics. He did it through probate judges, they do the estate claims. Probate judges.

DAITCH: Probate judges, yes.

BRUNO: And that's what kept the politicians alive, probate judges. They would then get kickbacks. So Bob Kennedy decides that he's going to get rid of Carmine De Sapio. There was this judge race, probate judge race in Manhattan, which was the base of Carmine. And Carmine had a candidate. So the liberals came up with Judge Silverman [Henry Silverman], who was going to run for judge. I moved to New York City for about two months working with Steve Smith [Stephen E. Smith], the brother-in-law, who ran that campaign.

Well, Silverman wins. Now it's up to the reformers to select the leader to replace Carmine. And I remember the reformers calling me. They wanted the senator to get involved. I said, "He just got involved. He just knocked off Carmine De Sapio. Now it's up to you people to come up with a leader." They said, "We've got three candidates, and we can't decide."

So I went back to the senator. I said, "They can't decide. They want you to decide." He said, "I'm not going to get involved." He said, "It's in their hands. They

wanted to pick the leader. Let them pick." So I went back to them, and I said, "He's really upset. He said he did his job. He got Silverman elected, got Carmine out of the picture. You have to decide among the three candidates." Well, they ended up in such a squabble that it looked like a disaster. They said, "You've got to get the senator." So I went back to him again. He said, "Jerry, no matter what they tell you, I'm not going to get involved in this thing. I've got other business to do." He said, "Politics... the reformers said that they wanted to take over. Let them do it."

So I went back, and I said, "Under no circumstances." Well, it ended up they had the three, they couldn't decide on the three. They all three ran, and the regulars got in. Carmine's guy gets back in. He threw up his hands. That was a taste of New York politics.

DAITCH: Oh, boy!

BRUNO: He liked to come Upstate. He liked to go into these small little towns. He liked to go skiing. There was a lot of criticism that he was skiing Aspen all the time, and New York's got two or three ski areas. People wanted to know why doesn't the senator ski here? I got him on the phone one day, and said, "You know, they're really bitching you because you're not skiing here." And he said, "Set something up. I'll go skiing. I love to ski." So I set it up, four or five TV cameras that came to cover Kennedy ski. It was right outside of Canandaigua, it was in the Finger Lakes area, it was icy. It was not like Aspen.

DAITCH: Right. That's why he likes to ski Aspen better.

BRUNO: Yes. And the cameramen were watching him. I was down at the bottom of the lift, and I saw him coming down. I saw him fall. And he got right up. He skied down. When he got down, he didn't go back up on the lift. He came to me, and said, "Let's go. I want to go back to the hotel." I drove him back, got everything out. And he jumped in the tub.

DAITCH: He hurt himself.

BRUNO: He hurt himself, he didn't want the cameras to capture it. He called me into the bathroom, he was sitting in the tub soaking in hot water and he had tears in his eyes. He said, "I think I may have broken something."

DAITCH: Oh, my gosh!

BRUNO: He said, "It's all back here.", pointing to his neck. He soaked in the tub for about an hour. He thought he was going to be all right. But later he found out that it was within an inch he could have broken his collarbone.

DAITCH: Oh, wow!

BRUNO: It came that close when he slid on the ice and he fell. He got up, he didn't show any sign of being hurt because of the cameras all over the place. But when he got in that tub, you could just see the pain and the hurt in his eyes, just unbelievable. Another time he was...

He had a real dry sense of humor. He couldn't stand political leaders in Utica, New York. There was another Tamany leader we had a candidate, Dick Assaro [Richard Assaro], that was going to run against the Boss controlled Utica politics. I remember calling the senator, and I told him, "You have got to go to this rally for Dick Assaro. He's got a good chance of getting rid of the Tamany leader." And he said to me, "How do you know that the guy doesn't have any Mafia background or Tamany background?" I said, "Well, I'm pretty sure because the paper is going to endorse Dick Assaro." I said, "The paper would never endorse someone that had some Mafia background." He says, "All right. If you're that convinced, I don't want to get involved if the guy's got any shady background." One thing Bob Kennedy was scared of getting involved with was people with Mafia background.

So we had this big rally, Dick Assaro gets elected. After he's elected, I'm having a meeting with the editors of the Utica paper that had endorsed Dick Assaro. I said, "How did you end up endorsing Dick Assaro?" They said, "The only reason we endorsed him was because Bob Kennedy endorsed him." I said, "The only reason we endorsed him was because you endorsed him."

DAITCH: Oh, no!

BRUNO: And I asked, "What do you know about Dick Assaro?" They said, "Well, you know, he's got some gambling background. It's not much, card games. The guy's clean." I told this to Bob Kennedy, he said, "You mean to tell me that they endorsed him because I did, and I endorsed him because they did?" He said, "We've got to be more careful than this."

DAITCH: Oh, my gosh! What about the Appalachia stuff? I'm sure it's documented elsewhere, but I had never heard about it.

BRUNO: Well, they had this meeting of the Gambino Family, and they decided that their leaders were all getting knocked off, being sent to prison. Kennedy had been very involved in the Senate Rackets Committee, especially with the Teamsters, and they had Mafia backing. And they decided to hold this meeting in Upstate New York so they wouldn't draw attention. Some state trooper came upon them, and was curious about all these Cadillacs and all of these chauffeur-driven cars coming into this little town of Appalachia. So he started investigating. And before you know it,

the FBI's zeroed in on it, and they nailed them all.

DAITCH: Wow!

BRUNO: This was before he became a senator. One of the things he was awfully careful about was not getting [involved]... especially in Upstate New York... with Mafias. Or that type. That's why he was so fearful.

DAITCH: Yes. Makes sense. Why do you think.... A lot of things involved, but obviously his brother being assassinated, and he was so close to him, then he becomes a senator. I mean it sounds like a huge, not necessarily a turnaround, but just what's different about him in 1965 than in 1962 or '63?

BRUNO: He became much more concerned about poverty. I remember going... he wanted to visit a place in Appalachia. He sponsored the Appalachia Bill, that whole part of West Virginia. Well, 13 southern counties of New York was part of Appalachia. They were eligible for grants. He wanted to visit those southern tier counties that were part of Appalachia. So I put together a stop that had a sheep farm. Kennedy would be talking to the woman that lived there. She was in poverty. She had about ten sheep that she would shear and sell for wool. She lived in this shack.

I picked him up. We went to the house, the shack, and it had a dirt floor, and she had to pump the water in the kitchen. And they had this big pot-bellied stove. They had one bedroom. She had this picture of a serviceman on the wall. And the senator said to her, "Who's that?" She said, "That's my son. He's in Vietnam." He said to her, "What's your son going to do when he gets back?" She answered, "He's going to come here, and he's going to help me farm."

He looked around, later we were back in the car, and he said, "Here's this kid fighting in Vietnam for a better world, and he's going to come back to this?" He said, "This is unbelievable. Does she realize what conditions she's living in?" She was so proud of her son in service, and she had these ten or 12 head of sheep. And she thought she had it all. She wasn't crying about poverty. I picked her just so he could see what conditions were in this area.

DAITCH: Right. And she's just going about her business.

BRUNO: She was going about her business. She wasn't asking for any help. And he couldn't believe that her son would sacrifice his life to come back to a condition like this. Another example was he wanted to go see a migrant camp. So outside of Rochester, New York, there was this farm, this farmer, that had migrant workers that would pick his cherries and onions. It was maybe 20 miles from Rochester, you know, where Xerox and the University of Rochester are located.

DAITCH: Yes. Eastman Kodak.

BRUNO: This migrant farmer had three buses, and the migrant workers would live in these buses. No running water, no toilets, no nothing. If they had to go, they had to go in a field. So I set this up. He was going to bring Jake Javits [Jacob Javits] with him, the other senator. Rockefeller [Nelson A. Rockefeller] was the governor of New York. I remember arriving at the airport, and he had about four or five cameras covering the visit, two were networks. We got in the car, and we were driving to the farm. He said, "How's the conditions?" I said, "Pretty bad. Really bad." And he said, "What do I do?" I said, "Well, what you ought to do is go into the buses where migrants are living in."

So we got to the farm. He gets out of the car. The farmer got word that we were coming. So he's standing there with a shotgun in his hand and said, "What are you two doing?" talking to the two senators. Bob Kennedy said, "We want to see the living conditions of the migrant workers." The farmer said, "This is my property, and you're not going to come on my property." And he said, "Well, I'm going to go anyway. I want to see the conditions of the migrant workers." So he walked past him. He said, "Come on. Let's go." to Jake Javits. And they went, and I showed them where the buses were, and he went into the bus, and there were kids with big bellies, just little kids in diapers around that dust, living in the bus. It was the most filthy, disgusting scene you ever wanted to see.

He saw all of that. The press was taking pictures of it all. Then they had a press conference, and he said, "We've got to do something about conditions like this." He called on the governor to do something about the conditions in these migrant camps. He was going to go back to Washington with Javits, and they were going to introduce legislation.

DAITCH: Now these were American citizens? I know some working conditions for migrant workers have to do with immigrants.

BRUNO: A lot of them are from the area. They would pick the crop, and then go on welfare.

DAITCH: Gee. It's very sad.

BRUNO: Upstate New York has a lot of these camps. There is one right outside of Cornell University. King's Ranch. It's a huge migrant camp.

DAITCH: No kidding!

BRUNO: There's a lot of grapes to pick and apples, they've got a lot of farm crops that

have to be picked and why wasn't it picked at the lowest cost.

DAITCH: Right.

BRUNO: But he never forgot that. The other thing about Bob Kennedy, was this fear of assassination. In 1966 he decided he was going to campaign for friends of his brother. And so we chartered this plane. We were going to be on the road for about two weeks, going from state to state, and we arrived in San Francisco. Here again, we had no Secret Service protection. We were going to go to Berkeley. The sheriff's office had got word that there was a sniper in the area. Somebody with a rifle. They had tracked him in another state, and he was heading in Kennedy's direction. So when we got to the university, we told him that we got this call. He said, "I don't want to be worried about that." So he went ahead and did the speech. It turned out that nothing happened.

Another time in Salt Lake City, he was to speak at the armory. He was campaigning for someone over there. We got a threat that the building where he was going to give a speech, there was a bomb in there. And they didn't want the senator to go there. He was at the hotel. The police got a hold of me, and they said, "Go tell the senator to cancel his speech." I went and told the senator, and he said, "Who's in the building?" And I said, "About 10,000 people."

DAITCH: Oh, my gosh!

BRUNO: He said, "Do the people know?" I said, "No." The police had not told them, first they wanted to make sure Kennedy didn't go in. He said, "Well, go tell the chief of police I'm going." I went back to the chief and he said, "I won't let the car go near there." We weren't that far away. I went back, and the senator said, "Look, if the people are there, I'm going to go." He said, "If they won't let me drive there, I'm going to walk."

So we left the room, and walked to the armory. As soon as he got in, he grabbed the mike... he didn't want to be introduced... he grabbed the mike, "I have something to tell you. I don't want you to panic. I want you to be calm. And I'm going to stay here with you. But I've been told that they think there's a bomb in the building. Don't panic because it's going to cause people to get hurt." "I'm not going to give a talk. We're going to walk out of here calmly." And they all started to go out very calmly. And he waited for everyone to leave. I looked around, and I said, "You know, if this bomb's really in here, we're going to go sky high." And I said to Joe Dolan [Joseph Dolan], who was his chief-of-staff, those people out there are petrified and Kennedy didn't show one bit of emotion. He stood there until the last one was out, and then he left. It happened there was no bomb there.

Another time we're in Montana, Butte, Montana. And he's going to give a speech at the courthouse steps. We got a call from the sheriff.... Bob Kennedy was already on

the platform. They thought that they had spotted a guy with a rifle on a roof of a building that was right in the direction of Bob Kennedy. And they wanted us to get the senator away. Joe Dolan and I said, "No way is he going to leave."

What we did, we got around him. We wanted to protect him until he was finished with his talk. In the meantime they tried to track down the guy with the rifle. And it turned out to be nobody. When we're in the room, we told the senator. And the senator, I remember him telling us to stop doing this. He said, "If someone wants to kill me, there's nothing you can do about it. And furthermore," he said, "people that shoot don't talk, people that talk don't shoot." And he said, "I don't want to live my life in fear. I don't want to be under this protection all the time. And so let's stop it, and let's do what we have to do."

He lectured us for about two or three minutes. Then Joe Dolan and I are talking. Having a couple of beers after that he said, "You know, Bruno, you're really smart. You were up in front. You're short. The guy's going to miss you, he's going to hit me." He said, "You're all heart." [laughter]

DAITCH: Yes. Oh, gee. What a way to live. Those guys both valued courage, didn't they, both of the Kennedy brothers. And they had it in spades, both of them. Just amazing.

BRUNO: They never flinched.

DAITCH: Those are amazing stories.

BRUNO: I traveled with him all the time. I feel bad about what happened at the Ambassador Hotel. The Kennedy's were big with receptions that Polly Fitzgerald would set up. What happened at these receptions, when Bob Kennedy would come in, he would come in the front door and go through the crowd. And there would be a long time before they could assemble that receiving line again. Polly came to me and said, "Jerry, do me a favor. Bring him in from the back so he doesn't disrupt the whole receiving line."

So I went to the senator, the reception was at the Ambassador Hotel. This was our headquarters. I said, "Polly's got the reception for us tonight. She wants me to bring you in the back way, not the front, and I know you don't like to do that. But Polly is begging you not to disrupt the receiving line." And he said, "All right. Let's go through the back." So I got the maître d' of the Ambassador Hotel, and I said, "Figure out a way from his room, a back way to the reception in the ballroom." He did that, and the reception went fine.

The night of the election, it was about ten o'clock. I was scheduled to go to Buffalo, and we were going to kick off the New York campaign after California. I went up to his room, and I said, "Senator, I'm supposed to go to Buffalo. I really don't want to go." I said, "They're going to announce the winner tonight, and, you know, I spent three

weeks here, and I'd just like to stay for the finish." He said, "No. New York's one of the most important states. It's my home state. If I don't carry New York, I'm never going to be nominated. You've got to go."

So I left at ten o'clock. I went to the airport. I'm on the plane, and a stewardess called me. It was about a couple of hours after that. And she said, "Are you Jerry Bruno?" I said, "Yes." She said, "The pilot wants to talk to you." I went to the pilot, and he said, "We just got a call that the senator was shot. They want you to come back to LA."

So the plane landed in Cleveland. I got on a plane, and I was back in LA, and he was at Good Shepherd Hospital. I went, and there were about 12 of us: There was Teddy, Steve Smith, the brother-in-law. Pierre was there. Andy Williams. Jimmy Breslin, who wrote a column for the *New York Post* at the time. And I think it was about one o'clock Teddy came to me and he said, "It's not going to be long." He was brain dead. Still not dead. And he said, "If you want to say your goodbyes." So I went in the room. He was on the slab. Ethel was lying next to him with a sheet over both of them. I stood there for about two or three minutes. And then I left about ten minutes after that, they said "he's dead". We started to make plans.

I remember what was then President Johnson made that directive that all candidates would be protected. And he sent *Air Force One* down to carry the body back. We did shifts around the casket, six of us at a time. Then we made the arrangements to have the train carry the body from New York to Washington. [End Tape #2]

BRUNO: Well, we had the trains all assembled. And on our way, there were just thousands of people along the way. There were people on golf courses that stopped golfing and stood there and saluted. Old-timers at a railroad crossing took their baseball caps off. A woman with her kids. People would get on the tracks, and put coins. As the train went over it, it would leave an impression, and they would be souvenirs. And we tried to... there were these trains coming the other way at full speed. And I tried to get them to stop all trains going in the opposite direction. And they didn't. The railroad, I guess, is very, very bureaucratic. Two people were killed.

DAITCH: Really!

BRUNO: One was electrocuted. He was up in a telephone pole, and I guess he fell. We would get these reports as the train was moving along. At one point I threatened to stop the train. Steve Smith, the brother-in-law, who was in charge of all this, had asked me to be in charge of the train. They had a phone hook-up. I finally got to corporate headquarters. And I said, "There's hundreds of media people on this train. They're going to know that unless you stop all trains going in the opposite direction, we're not about to have any more people killed. We want this train stopped." They finally agreed to stop all the trains going in the opposite direction.

We got to the cemetery, and this is sort of humorous. Steve Smith, one of the pall

bearers, they're carrying the body, and they can't find the marker. He calls me, they're still carrying the body. He says, "Jerry, where's the marker?" I said, "I don't know. Let me go look." So I asked three or four people, they are still circling around. Steve finally leans over to me, and he says, "I'm sure he's going to know that we got this whole thing screwed up." They must have made two or three circles before they found the right place to put the body. But here's a funny scene. I'll show you this [photo].

DAITCH: Oh, good!

BRUNO: This picture. Bob Kennedy is chasing me. He's on a horse. We're at a county fair in Buffalo, New York.

DAITCH: Oh, that's great!

BRUNO: He gets up on this horse, and he's chasing me. Then after he finally gets tired of the horse, we're in a car. He said to me, "You know, my brother was on a white horse."

DAITCH: "My brother was on a white horse." What did he mean by that?

BRUNO: I don't know. I never asked him to explain it. I got very, very close to him. Here's this picture of him and I walking in New Hampshire, at the airport. He was going to go to a stop in New Hampshire. We got off the plane, and somebody called me. And they said, "There's a phone call for you." It was somebody from New York. They said, Dean Markum [Dean F. Markum] who was very, very, very close to Bob Kennedy, like a son... was just killed in a car accident.

DAITCH: Oh....

BRUNO: The senator doesn't know about it. As he got off the plane, I told him about Dean Markum... I told him I had just gotten the call. He said, "Go get Ethel on the phone for him." While we were waiting to get Ethel he said, "Let's walk."

DAITCH: It must have been an amazing thing to be traveling like that. You know, it's funny some of the things you're saying are sort of echoing a little bit what I was just talking to Mr. Wilkins [Roger Wilkins] about yesterday. You now, he didn't really... young black man, and he thought during the Kennedy Administration, was sort of critical, that they're not doing enough for civil rights. But he said that he came to admire them, you know, both as he grew older and gained perspective, but they changed. I mean they were young then. The things you're telling me about the things that they saw and did, and the poverty in Appalachia and New York; they also saw the South,

and they saw segregation, they saw all these things. And they grew as men. I mean this is the impression that I'm getting. Is that... do you think that's an accurate thing to say?

BRUNO: Yes. Very accurate. This [photo] was in Watts after the riots.

DAITCH: Was it?

BRUNO: That's Johnson, the Olympic guy, Rafer Johnson. And that's Medgar [Medgar Evers]. I was the only white guy in the car outside of Bob. We went right through Watts, right where the riots had been. But he was quite a guy. He'd have been a great, great president.

DAITCH: Do you think he always.... I mean the comment about his brother being on a white horse, I find that a little interesting. I wonder if he always felt a little overshadowed by.... John F. Kennedy died at probably the moment of his greatest success, and he was growing as a president and as a person. You know, he was loved and mourned and revered. That is the image, the last and only image of John Kennedy. And for a younger brother, who is very accomplished in his own right, but I wonder if he always sort of had that image that he needed to live up to.

BRUNO: I think he did. I think toward the end of that campaign... I think in many ways he had a message that no one else was talking about, and only he could deliver that. He felt very strongly about it. He was the only one that could bridge the gap between the hard-hat, white, blue-collar worker and the black. He demonstrated that in Gary, Indiana, when we had a motorcade 14 miles long going from a place that was all white into Gary, which was almost all black, and they were all together. For some reason Bobby could bridge that gap like no other one can. And they understood him.

He talked a lot about poverty. This image of Bobby that's being distorted today. He talked in Orange County, California... that he didn't think that a poor black family should be moved into a white neighborhood and put on welfare.

DAITCH: You mean to take a poor black individual, like a child, into a white family?

BRUNO: No a housing development.

DAITCH: Or a family into a housing development?

BRUNO: He didn't think that was right. He thought that we should be able to give these people a job. He didn't like welfare. He talked about that. That just degraded people, he would say. He thought these people ought to be able to make a living, and they ought to make a decent living. And they ought to be given the

right to go where they want to go, not be put there. He stressed that, that they have as much right as anybody else.

He, in many ways, really understood how to appeal to the hard-hats. And if you're ever going to do anything for the blacks, anything for the poor, you're going to have to get the hard-hats on your side. And he did that. He was able to do that.

DAITCH: It's an interesting phenomenon, too, because he comes from such a different world himself, you know. He has no connection with working people.

BRUNO: No, none at all.

DAITCH: Nothing in the South or Appalachia or anything.

BRUNO: I only went to the eighth grade. And I would be at a meeting, and he would always insist that I be there. And he would always ask my view. Nobody else ever did. He just had a sense for people. He would always ask my opinion. He was that kind of a guy. He'd insist that when we had town meetings, that we not handpick the people, that we put out a public notice. He wanted everybody to voice their opinion. He didn't want me to set up any meeting where I had handpicked them. And he got a pretty true picture of what the people wanted. He loved town meetings.

DAITCH: Really? He seems to have that openness to, from what you're describing, to listen to people no matter who they are. I think a lot of... we all do it. It doesn't matter if you come from a wealthy, well-educated background or whoever you are. Maybe if you come from a working-class family, like I do or you do, maybe you have a little bit of a chip on your shoulder that you don't want to listen to some highbrow university professor or something. Everybody picks and chooses who they give more credence to or who they want to listen to. It sounds like he was developing into a person who listened to everybody and tried to make something out of it.

BRUNO: In many ways when he decided to run for president, he hesitated a long time because he didn't want anybody or the press to feel, that... he had this dislike for Lyndon Johnson... that it was a grudge fight. He wanted to make his case, he hesitated too long that that's when Gene McCarthy [Eugene McCarthy] went in. If he would have got in first, that's all the stories would have been, that he wants to get rid of Lyndon Johnson, he wants to carry on a tradition. He wanted to make sure that that was out of the way before he went in.

He told us that at a meeting we had at Steve Smith's apartment. There were about 12 of us. He was deciding when to announce. Never, ever said, will I, only when do I want to announce? He knew he wanted to go. And the reason he wanted to run for president, the programs like the Appalachia Program, the Poverty Program, all of the programs that he had fought for in the Senate, were not being funded by Johnson. And he

wanted to make that case. He said, "It's unfair that we pass legislation and don't fund them. What Johnson was doing is spending all this money on Vietnam. And the programs that need to be funded are not being funded."

He didn't want that message to be clouded by, he's running for president because he dislikes Lyndon Johnson. He wanted to talk about the issues, like unemployment, that cut across middle-class and lower middle-class and the poor. I think, after Indiana, he started to hit that, and then in California. The message got lost in Oregon because of the Teamsters there, they're pretty powerful. In California he finally got it back.

I remember we're in a room, and he thought that if he won California, he'd be able to get on the phone with Dick Daley, Richard Daley, and he was pretty sure Daley would fall his way. And if Daley went, he would be the nominee. There was no question in his mind. When we first sat in a meeting about when he was going to announce, he turned to all of us and he said, "Who do I have? You tell me, who do I have?" Nobody could name one political leader. He said, "I'll tell you who I have. I've got Jesse Unruh from California. Period. I don't have anybody. And quit kidding yourselves that I'm just going to rush in because I'm a Bob Kennedy and everybody's going to support me." He said, "We're going to have to go into the primary's. We've got a sitting president. It's going to be a tough, tough row to hoe." He emphasized it. He was so sure that if we won California, that once Daley got on board, that then the other states would support him. Because we're still in the time when politicians pick the presidential candidate, nominee.

I was a delegate to the '68 convention. I remember the reform movement that opened up the process to women, minorities, and everything like that. That reform enabled George McGovern to become the nominee. But prior to that it was the politicians that selected the nominee, and he knew it. And he was deeply concerned that we don't have the political leaders. He was such a thorough politician that at times he was the campaign manager and at times he was Bob Kennedy the candidate. He knew what had to be done, he also knew the way you get it done.

DAITCH: Right. You have to get elected.

BRUNO: He was such a common sense individual that could produce the results and not live in a dream world that, you know, you want to help all these people, but first he was a realist. If you were going to deliver, you had to achieve one to get the other. And he knew how to play the game.

In many ways Bill Clinton [William J. Clinton] proved that you have to give a little to get a little bit back. We forget that we have such a strong conservative force in this country. It's so embedded. Here was John F. Kennedy elected in 1960, and couldn't get a Medicare bill out of the Ways and Means Committee by a congressman from Arkansas who was a Democrat.

DAITCH: Arkansas, yes.

BRUNO: And you found that with Bill Clinton. He couldn't get his health-care bill, the one that Hillary worked on, couldn't get it out of committee. Now you have a Bush who rams through bills through committee without even a debate. I mean that's the system. He's producing for the conservative side, we haven't been able to produce for the liberal side. I think RFK could've done it if he was elected president. I think he had the knowledge and the guts and the know-how to get it all done. He would've been a great, great president.

DAITCH: Well, I think that's a good note to stop on. [Pause] Okay. We're just back from lunch, and we're going to talk about Bob Kennedy and Stan Tretick [Stanley Tretick], who was a photographer.

BRUNO: Stan Tretick, was a photographer, covering Bob Kennedy, when we would get death threats. Tretick would sense that we were trying to protect him and he would do whatever he could to make sure that no harm would come to Bob Kennedy. He would get the other photographers around. He understood that the candidate was in danger, and we had to do everything possible to make sure that we didn't have an assassination.

DAITCH: Really! You mean he...?

BRUNO: Tretick was good about that.

DAITCH: Gathered the other photographers closer in so people couldn't approach?

BRUNO: Yes.

DAITCH: Is that right? Wow!

BRUNO: He was really good. He would admit that he was partial to Bob Kennedy. He liked the way Bob Kennedy campaigned, and he liked what he stood for. And he used to tell me, you've got to bring him into the crowds more. You've got to do this, and you've got to do that. He would always encourage me to do different things. He said, "Because I used to see it in other campaigns." Now coming from a photographer, you know, that's very, very odd.

DAITCH: Yes.

BRUNO: And he'd get mad when somebody would bad-mouth the Kennedys. He was that sort of partisan. And then at the end of a day, we always had a press room, and there'd be a lot of beer, there'd be sandwiches, stuff like that. The press would gather, and the wire service would send their stories. Tretick was always

there to tell me that what we did wrong. You ought to be doing something better.

DAITCH: Yes. Well, he has the right vantage point to do that because he's taking pictures. But it's interesting that he.... Because Mr. Stoughton told me, and I think this is probably true and true of most photographers, if you're taking a picture, especially back then, cameras were more complicated and it wasn't everything automated, you're busy. You're busy focusing and getting everything lined up right and whatever you have to do. You're thinking about the technical aspects of taking the picture more than you are about what's going on. And you'd have to be pretty....

BRUNO: I asked him, I said, "Stan, how do you know you've got a good picture?" He said, "I don't. Once I zero in, all of a sudden I see it." He said, "You have to see it only then you know it's there." He said, "You can't plan it. You just have to have that sense."

A technique that the Bush people copied from us, whenever we wanted to get a crowd, we would do the invitation's, we would have a rally, but we wouldn't call it a rally. We'd say an appearance by the president. We would have invitations, we'd have color-coded invitations, and VIP invitations that would go out to the labor leaders and political people, we'd give them ten each. If they wanted more, they would have to ask for them. We would never take for granted that we were going to get 10,000 people by announcing the visit, we did that by invitation. The Bush White House does that today. And they use the excuse that it's for security purposes. But the real motive is to make sure you get a crowd.

DAITCH: Right. So if you send out invitations rather than just saying everybody's welcome, people feel special.

BRUNO: Inviting them, yes. If you have a candidate like John Kennedy, everybody reads about 10,000 people, 40,000, 50,000 at the event, nobody wants to come if they don't think there's a place for them.

DAITCH: Right.

BRUNO: And they say it's for security reasons. But that's to insure that you're going to get a crowd and who you want.

DAITCH: Yes. That's interesting. I like that. But it's a trick. So tell me, we were talking....

BRUNO: Stan Tretick.

DAITCH: Yes, we were talking about Stan Tretick. We were talking about Bob

Kennedy's which.... I've been really focusing on John Kennedy most of the time, but obviously the library has Bob Kennedy's papers there also, and we should probably talk about him a little bit more, his development as a senator. You were in New York when he was a senator most of the time?

BRUNO: I headed his office in Syracuse.

DAITCH: Right. What kind of a feeling did you get about his work as a senator? What was he concentrating on, what was he doing?

BRUNO: He was really interested in projects for small towns. Are they going to get a water system? Are they going to get a drainage system? There are grants that the government gives out, for water treatment plants. He wanted me to go into these towns and find out if they needed federal help to upgrade their water treatment system. He'd ask the mayor, what help can Washington do for you, for your urban renewal, for your housing, for your water treatment, for your sewers? He was really interested in that. And he thought he could make a difference, especially in Washington, for them.

He put together the North Country Council in the upper part, the Adirondack Mountains. There's Watertown on one side by the St. Lawrence Seaway, and then there's Plattsburgh off of Lake Champlain. There's four or five counties up there, and they could never get together. One county would say, "We have to have the grant here. If we're going to develop, it has to start in Watertown." Plattsburg would say, "We're going to have to begin with Plattsburgh or Lake Placid. This is where it should begin." So nobody got anything.

So Bob Kennedy came up with this idea, let's have a council of all of these county leaders, and see if we could have a regional plan, where they would all benefit and we could then fund the regional plan, and they would all benefit. This was his idea. And they loved it in the North Country.

DAITCH: It's a great idea, yes.

BRUNO: But these are the little nitty-gritty things that he would like to get into that nobody ever talks about. Schlesinger [Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.] wrote the book "Bob Kennedy and His Times". But the whole thing he missed was the work that Bob Kennedy did in Upstate New. He was great at bringing all of these leaders together and explaining to them, you're fighting, and you're dividing, and you're getting nothing. Unless you unite and work as a unit, then I'll be able to help you.

DAITCH: Yes. And he genuinely like doing... he wasn't just politicking?

BRUNO: Oh, he loved to go to these county fairs, small little county fairs, and jump

up on a horse and things like that. Just spontaneous. This was him. And he loved to do that.

DAITCH: Did he bring Ethel and the kids when he did stuff like that ever?

BRUNO: No, no. It would just be him and I. Occasionally if it was a big affair, then he'd have Ethel. Very seldom did he have the kids, very, very seldom. In fact, when he did have the kids, I would always have to have someone there that would baby-sit. Or if he had the dog.

DAITCH: He brought the dog?

BRUNO: Oh, yeah. God, and then I'd have to get a dog-sitter. He had me put together citizen groups in each county. They would be called "clippers." They would, they would have four or five people in Albany County and they would clip. They would clip all anniversaries, they would clip all high school awards.

DAITCH: From newspapers?

BRUNO: From newspapers. They'd send them to Washington, and he'd send them thank-yous or congratulations. Somebody got an award for a prize pig at a county fair, it would be in the paper. This was his idea, to have these clippers. His office couldn't get all the papers and get that done so fast. So they would clip, send the story to his office and they would send a letter back.

DAITCH: Oh, nice.

BRUNO: And these clippers, we had two of them in Albany: Maureen and Liz. They were just great. They still communicate with me, and they still call themselves clippers. And whenever Bob Kennedy went rafting right outside of Albany and he had the big dog, Brutus with him, he said, "Do you think one of the clippers will take care of Brutus?" I said, "Let me ask them," and they always said, "Yes." He came back from rafting, and gathered the dog, thanked the girls. Really, really terrific volunteers. They just adored RFK. RFK would ask, "Was Brutus all right?" And they said, "Aw, he's just wonderful." After he left, they got me aside, they said, "We didn't have the heart to tell him. Brutus tore up the back seat of my car, and it's going to cost two or three hundred dollars to fix."

DAITCH: Wow! Ooohhh!

BRUNO: Just wonderful, wonderful people. He was in a parade in New York City. If they heard he was going to be in a parade, they would go from Albany to

New York just to watch him in the parade. He spotted them. He stopped the car. Told them, "Get in the car." And at the end of the parade he took them up to the apartment with him, and he served them some ice tea. He had all his staff over there, and he just praised them to high heaven.

And he would always say, "Those two clippers from Albany." And he'd always refer to all of these helpers as clippers. He'd always ask if we were going to Elmira, who are the clippers in Elmira? [laughter]

DAITCH: I don't know. Where do I get my hair trimmed or something. The clippers.

BRUNO: And one of the things that he wanted them to do, community projects, if people had old eyeglasses, to donate them to people that couldn't afford them.

DAITCH: Sure.

BRUNO: Since they had no more use for them.

DAITCH: Yes. They do that a lot now.

BRUNO: This was part of community service that he wanted people to do. Go help serve Thanksgiving dinner. Whenever we went into a county, the first thing he wanted to do was meet with the clippers and the volunteers. He would meet them all in a little room, maybe eight or nine of them. He would ask, "What did you do?" "What project did you work on last month?" And he'd go through the whole thing. And, they would just be so worked up when he left. And this would take an hour of his time.

DAITCH: Absolutely. Yes. Wow.

BRUNO: No one ever captured that side of Bob Kennedy.

DAITCH: Oh, it's an amazing thing, you know, that sort of personal bonding with people, and then it spreads. I think what I'm seeing out of what you're saying is that I guess sort of a ripple effect. He's the center, he sends you out. You gather the clippers. It keeps going. They ask their friends to help, and it just goes out and out and out into the community everywhere. And that is an amazing kind of thing.

BRUNO: I have to tell you this story. He wanted to see a Syracuse University football game, but he didn't want any publicity. And they were hot that year. He called the day before, and he said, "I want to go to the football

game." I couldn't get any tickets. It was impossible. I called the college president, and I said, "The senator wants to go to the game. Is there any way we could get him a seat?" He couldn't.

I finally got a friend who got another friend to get me a ticket. And the one thing the senator said to me, "Jerry, I want to sit on the Syracuse side." "Now remember that. I don't want to be sitting on the other side." I said, "Don't worry, Senator. I've got this friend. He's got a couple of tickets. He said they're good." He said, "Fine." So he arrived. We go to the game. And I left him. Well, it turns out that the tickets are on the other side.

DAITCH: Woops.

BRUNO: On the opposite side. The ticket he has is between two enormous women that must have weighed 400 pounds each, and you could barely see the senator. He couldn't move. They were on both sides of him, and he was squished in, and I could see him. He was looking all over the place for me, and he finally spotted me, and he's waving. I'm sort of ignoring him. I know what he was going to say to me. I waited for half time, he says, "Get me out of here! Get me out of here! Get me in a different place!" By that time we had found a couple of seats on the Syracuse side. But I still see his face. He's in agony. He's got these two enormous females on either side of him, and they're crushing him. And he doesn't know what to do. [laughter]

DAITCH: And he's not even on the right side.

BRUNO: He's not on the right side.

DAITCH: Oh, my gosh! That's great. Poor guy.

BRUNO: You know, he didn't bitch about it. At the time he was angry. But not for long.

DAITCH: What are you going to do? That's funny that he was softer... maybe "softer" is not the right word, but you didn't find that he was as sharp in later years in terms of criticizing or getting mad when things went wrong? [Change to Side B of Tape]

BRUNO: Here's a good example. He went to a women's college, Skidmore, in Saratoga Springs, NY. Very prestigious women's college, and I arranged an appearance for him. He gave a speech on New York issues. After that he had a question-and-answer period. They had a jammed, jammed house. Must have been at least a thousand women in there. After about the fourth question, someone wanted to know about abortion. This was maybe '65, '66, abortion wasn't that big of an issue.

What is your position on abortion? His answer was: "I'm against abortion." He hadn't developed an answer for it because it was not that big of an issue.

DAITCH: Right.

BRUNO: And he went on to explain, "I've got ten children."

DAITCH: Good grief!

BRUNO: "I don't believe in abortion. How could I believe in abortion? I've got ten." Then he went on to explain his wife doesn't believe in abortion. But he said, "I do believe that everybody has a right to decide for themselves."

And the guy persisted. It happened to be a man. And he said, "That's not what your religion teaches you. You're a Catholic, I'm a Catholic, and it's a sin. You can't say that a woman has a right to choose." And he was really arguing.

The students, all women, were starting to really get angry at the person for asking the question and arguing with the senator. They were all on his side. And he said, "Why don't we sort of calm this down. I'm never going to change you, and you're never going to change me. I fully understand what your beliefs are, but I want you to understand my belief."

We got in the car, and I said, "Senator, why in hell out of 2,000 girls did you happen to pick the one guy in the audience to take a question from?" He looked at me, and he said, "I didn't see his collar." It happened to be a priest. He said, "I didn't see his collar."

DAITCH: Oh, my gosh!

BRUNO: And he said, "I realized that the students were going to tear this guy from limb to limb, even though he was a priest, they were so angry." And he tried to calm them. Instead of riling everybody up, he wanted to calm them down. He pleaded with the priest, let's tone this down. He said, "I fully understand why you want to argue your position. But you have to understand mine." And, he really avoided a disaster.

DAITCH: Well, he could have been in trouble. Boy! Yes. It's funny because you think about him being such a hothead. It's all I've ever heard about him is he was a hothead and all this stuff. But again, maybe from the earlier years because I've spoken with more people during the era when his brother was president, when he was such a hothead, and so tough, and would get angry about things, and charge ahead, and all of that. And what you're describing is completely different.

BRUNO: A Kennedy had never lost a campaign. He lost Oregon. After the defeat, I'm on the phone with him. He's getting ready to come to California. He said to me, "I now understand how it is to be a loser." He had never experienced that before. And he said, "It's got to go right in California. I'm coming into LA, and the first thing they're going to see after my defeat in Oregon is what size crowd I'm going to get." And he said, "We're going to have to double our effort it's going to be the first reaction to see if the loss had an effect."

So we worked like hell, and we had such a tremendous gathering at the airport. And then the motorcade, there were thousands along the way, people trying to claw at him, pull out his cufflinks and his tie. But at the end of that day we met with him, and he said, "I think this is going to go our way." He was just that sure.

DAITCH: This is what he pays you for.

BRUNO: The biggest delight in his life.

DAITCH: Yes, exactly. He loves it. That's great. That is so funny. This stuff is so fascinating because I never, ever thought about any of these things, the logistics of doing a campaign. It's so interesting.

BRUNO: I'll tell you one.... I was in Syracuse as his Upstate representative for about three weeks, and Kennedy decides he wants to come to Syracuse. Hank Bersani was a real Kennedy fan, when he ran for the senate seat, he insisted that Bob Kennedy go to this high school auditorium. When I went to look at the auditorium, you could put 2,000 people in there. I said, "Kennedy's just coming in, and the school's out of session. How do you know you're going to get that many people here." "Oh," he said, "Bob Kennedy has such a following. They'll all turn out. In fact, I don't even think we've got enough seats here."

There was no way I could talk him out of it, and he had been a loyal Kennedy supporter. Joe Dolan, chief-of-staff, said to me, "Don't get this guy mad at us because, during the campaign he was high on Bob Kennedy's team, and we're not about to get him mad at him." So I said, "Okay."

So the senator arrives, and he has to be at the auditorium at ten o'clock. I picked him up in a car. He said, "How's it going to go?" He said, "How do you like Upstate New York?" I said, "Well, I'm just feeling my way around." I said, "I'm getting to know everybody. And Hank Bersani, your guy here, had set up the auditorium. And Hank insisted we go to this auditorium." "Well," he said, "you know Hank's a good guy." And I said, "All right."

So we got to the high school and Hank's at the door waiting for us. And he's got a face on him that looks like he lost his mother. I said, "What's wrong, Hank?" "Oh," he said, "let's go, let's go." "They're waiting for the senator." We got in there, and there were 36 people I counted. Thirty-six!

DAITCH: Oh, no! How did they learn to be politicians? That's the other thing, too.

BRUNO: Their father.

DAITCH: But he wasn't an elected official that he went out and did all this campaigning and stuff.

BRUNO: Well, yes, he did. No, he didn't do campaigning. But he was always an FDR supporter. Joe had his hand in the Wisconsin primary, going back to JFK. He used to relay orders to Leo Racine, who was on Joe Kennedy's [Joseph P. Kennedy] payroll. And Leo was sort of the eyes and ears for Joe Kennedy. He came up with this tabloid distribution, and it was Joe's idea that we organize the City of Milwaukee into blocks and have a block captain. And at a given day, each block captain was given so many flyers. Each captain would have maybe 20 houses. We must have had thousands of captains, and on this given day they distributed this John F. Kennedy tabloid. Now why Joe Kennedy, with the millions that he had, couldn't have just put it in a mailer, an insert in the newspaper....

But he was so keen on organization. He developed this block-by-block plan for the tabloids. This was his idea. He would bombard us with, Who's doing the tabloids? Who's the block captain? He was involved. And when Leo wanted something, it was because Joe wanted it.

BRUNO: Well, do you have some more questions?

DAITCH: I'll turn the tapes off for a couple of minutes, and we'll see if there's anything else. [Pause] ....record about John Treanor.

BRUNO: Yes, John Treanor was from Massachusetts. He did advance in the Wisconsin primary. Then in West Virginia it was John Treanor, Joe Gargan, and myself, the cousin, who did advance. If you never interviewed him, you ought to. He's got more funny stories.

DAITCH: John Treanor?

BRUNO: Yes. He tells this story about the candidate coming into Eau Claire, and he had this local guy who was going to set the trip up, his car there. Kennedy arrives with Kenny O'Donnell, and they're in a hurry. And Dave Powers. And this volunteer, this local guy, is really hip, and he's grabbing the candidate's bag, putting it in the car, and he's moving them all in. And JFK says, "Let's go!" He gets into the car, and he stops dead. Kennedy says to him, "Why aren't we going?" He says, "Give me a minute, give me a minute." He gets out. What happened was in his rush he locks

the keys in the trunk, and he doesn't have the keys. I can't tell it anywhere near the way Treanor does.

DAITCH: You guys worked hard. You know, I'm thinking about this, and I'm thinking you're always traveling. It's day, it's night, evening stuff. And the candidates.

BRUNO: I wasn't home for six months.

DAITCH: Oh, my gosh!

BRUNO: Once I left, I just kept going. That's why I got divorced.

DAITCH: I'm not surprised.

BRUNO: The night of the election, we're at Hyannis Port waiting for the returns, and the returns didn't look too good. We're staying in a motel. It looked like Illinois was not going to come in. It looked like we were going to get beat. I think maybe it was about two or three in the morning I went to sleep, as most of us did. Then when we got up everything had changed. We went to the armory. I remember he's now the president-elect, and he's coming through the door, and Jackie taps me on the shoulder. She says, "Good job, good job."

DAITCH: Wow! Must have been incredible.

BRUNO: Did I tell you the story about he was president-elect and his visit to the LBJ ranch?

DAITCH: No.

BRUNO: Kenny called me. This was after the election. He's at Palm Beach, Florida.

DAITCH: Palm Beach. Palm Springs is California.

BRUNO: Palm Beach, at the Kennedy home. Kenny called, and he said, "Come down. We're relaxing. We're enjoying the victory." Gargan was there, and Treanor was there, and we're sitting by the pool. I remember Dave Powers called me. They're having a touch football game. He said, "You want to play?" So I went in. We lined up. It was touch football. Somebody threw a pass, and I grabbed it in midair, and I ran for a touchdown. Powers gets me aside, and he says, "Goddamn it, Bruno!" "You never intercept a pass to the president." Broke up the game. Nobody wanted to play anymore.

So we sat around, we did that for a couple of days. Then Kenny says, "You're going to Texas. The president-elect is going to meet with the vice president-elect." Three of us were going to go: Treanor, Gargan and myself.

DAITCH: Texas?

BRUNO: We're going to Austin. We arrive in Austin, we meet with Lyndon. And he says, "How's the president?" We said, "Oh, the president's doing fine." He starts out by saying, "You know, I used to be his boss. I was majority leader, and he was just a little old senator. But now he's the president. He's my boss. Whatever you want me to do, you tell me. He's my boss. I'll do whatever he wants."

He showed us where he was born. He's driving us around in this big convertible. He's showing us where all the cattle are. And he knew all the different breeds. Then we get into the ranch, and he says, "What time is the president going to arrive?" And I told him about ten o'clock. He said, "Well, I got this for the president." This big cowboy hat. And I said, "The president won't put that hat on." He said, "Well, he's got to wear this hat."

Just a little while ago he said, Now he's the boss. I'll do whatever.... Now he's starting to tell us what to do: The president's got to put the hat on. Then he said, "What're all those guys doing with the phones?" I said, "He's the president of the United States, Mr. Johnson." I said, "The president has to have his own secure phone." The Secret Service now are in charge. And this is the way they're going to do it." "Doesn't he trust me? Does he think I'm going to lift up the receiver and hear who's he talking to?" I said, "He's now the president of the United States, and there are certain things that the Secret..." We never had Secret Service before. "...certain things that the Secret Service demands, and one is a secure phone." "Aaahh!" He throws up his hands. "What've they got to do that for? This is my house. This is my ranch."

So that night the president arrives, and he tries to put the hat on Kennedy. Kennedy just moves his arm away, shoves it aside, and he just smiles at him. Cameras are clicking away, he makes sure he's not going to get that hat on. And I knew he'd never put that hat on. He takes him to the ranch. He's got us staying about six miles out at a guest house, a real small sort of cabin. Treanor, Gargan, and I... there's three bunks, and we're in there. And about.... Sure I didn't tell you this story?

DAITCH: No.

BRUNO: It's about six in the morning. I look out the window and one of the cows got their head in our window and pushed its nose in the screen. And I said, "Treanor! Gargan!" I said, "Look at that! There's a cow in our cabin!" So we moved it out, and I looked, and there's three big cars pulling up. In the first car is Johnson. He's got his big cowboy boots on. He's got his big, big cowboy hat on. He's got his big cowboy outfit on. He's got his rifle crooked in his arm.

DAITCH: He's going to shoot the cow?

BRUNO: They're going deer hunting.

DAITCH: Oh, no!

BRUNO: Out of the second car comes John F. Kennedy. He's rubbing his eyes. He's got loafers on, and he's got this sport jacket on. He looks like he's going to a football game at the university, and he's rubbing his eyes. He's trying to stay awake. And then following him is Kenny O'Donnell. And Kenny, his hair is all up, and he's got loafers on just like the president. He's got these sporty pants on. And they're looking around. They can't see us, and they don't know we're watching them. Kennedy says, "Where are we going, Lyndon?" He says, "We're off! We're going to bag a deer!" We're sitting over there watching, and we can't stop laughing. We're about to roar. And they finally all crawl into this jeep, and they head out into the woods.

DAITCH: Oh, my gosh! Did they bag a deer?

BRUNO: No, he didn't. Yeah, Johnson did. What Johnson used to do, he used to have his guys out there, and they used a spotlight. Johnson never missed. He always bagged a deer because they....

DAITCH: Oh, good Lord! That's illegal.

BRUNO: I know it. He wanted to make sure he bagged a deer. John Kennedy never fired the rifle. He was unbelievable, that Johnson.

DAITCH: Did you like him, I mean as a person? He was obviously different.

BRUNO: Johnson was alright. I disliked Goldwater. I didn't want to have Goldwater elected president. And Johnson was nice to us. All the time we were at the ranch, Lady Bird would come out and give us beer, wanted to know if we had enough beer, and if we were all right, if the cabin was all right. We spent about four days setting this all up. She was terrific.

[End of Tape #3] [End of Interview]