

**Justin N. Feldman Oral History Interview – RFK#1, 10/23/1969**  
Administrative Information

**Creator:** Justin N. Feldman  
**Interviewer:** Roberta W. Greene  
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**Biographical Note**

(1919 - 2011) Consultant, Department of Commerce, (1961-1966); campaign aide and New York political adviser to Senator Robert F. Kennedy. discusses Feldman's role in JFK's presidential campaign in New York state, the organization of the campaign in New York, contact with RFK after he became attorney general, and discussing a run for the Senate in New York, among other issues.

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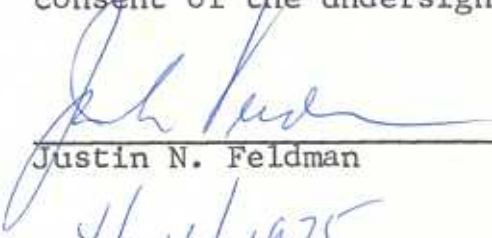
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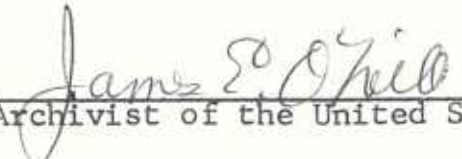
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Justin N. Feldman – RFK #1

Table of Contents

<u>Page</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1	First contact with Robert F. Kennedy [RFK] regarding 1960 Democratic National Convention
2	Operation and structure of the New York Democratic party
3	Citizen groups in New York during 1960 campaign
4	Support for Lyndon B. Johnson in New York
5	Tension between John F. Kennedy [JFK] and campaign leaders in New York
6	Appointing posts in the administration
7	RFK working with the leaders of the reform movement
10, 13	The Landis report and RFK's role in it
11	Appointing Dean Rusk as Secretary of State
12	Contact with RFK after being appointed attorney general
12	Various United States Attorney appointments
19	Personal interest in Landis case
20	Comments on RFK's loyalty and humanity
22	Dialogue about RFK on the tour of the FBI building
23	Contact with RFK after JFK's assassination
24	Discussing the possibility of RFK running for the Senate in New York

Oral History Interview

With

Justin N. Feldman

October 23, 1969  
New York, New York

By Roberta W. Greene

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

GREENE: Would you begin by discussing, to the extent that you think it's relevant, your association with Robert Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy] during the 1960 campaign and Convention [Democratic National Convention]?

FELDMAN: My first association with him directly in 1960, apart from some peripheral things, was in Los Angeles. I went, on arrival in Los Angeles, to the headquarters and found that he had been looking for me, among others, because he'd heard that I knew where Franklin Roosevelt, Jr. [Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr.] was, and he was very anxious for Franklin to perform a special chore. What it turned out to be.... Can we flip this a second? [Interruption]

GREENE: Sure.

FELDMAN: He was concerned because Elliott Roosevelt was a delegate from Colorado—having been elected as a Kennedy delegate-at-large. The delegation, as I recall—and I may be only approximate on the numbers—was split twelve-eleven or twelve-ten or something like that. It was close, and they had a unit rule. Elliott's alternate was for Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson], and they couldn't find Elliott. Therefore they didn't know whether they had this state or didn't have this state. Bob was obviously anxious to track him down, which we eventually did, and he was able to cast his

vote and there was no problem. But in the course of that I got involved with the convention operation, worked in a limited way with him [Robert Kennedy], somewhat with Ted [Edward M. Kennedy], but principally with the New York delegation, reporting back to him

[ -1 - ]

both directly and indirectly.

The time after the convention when I had some involvement with him was shortly thereafter. As is our wont apparently—the party was very split in New York. The reform group was headed by Mrs. Roosevelt [Eleanor R. Roosevelt], Herbert Lehman [Herbert H. Lehman] and Tom Finletter [Thomas K. Finletter]. DeSapio [Carmine G. DeSapio] was the national committeeman and the New York county chairman and pretty effectively the state leader, although the leadership of the state had been taken out of his hands at Los Angeles—the delegation went for Kennedy [John F. Kennedy] without his cooperation. Bob was very aware of the fairly duplicitous role that DeSapio had played in Los Angeles. He was also aware that the reform group, as then unconstituted, was pretty much Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson] oriented, and still unhappy about the fact that Stevenson was not the nominee and unhappy about John Kennedy for a lot of reasons we all know.

I had a call from him at one point saying that he was coming to New York with Byron White [Byron R. White] to try to figure out what they ought to do in New York to structure the campaign. I spent some time with him in that process, some of which was pretty interesting. I didn't want to get too directly involved because I was of neither group. While I had had some party affiliations and connections, I had been fairly aloof from both groups. I was in the background, more or less. I was meeting with Bob, with Byron White, in the evenings and lunch or at breakfast in the morning, or talking over the phone about what the events of the day had brought on while he was having his meetings with DeSapio, and then going and having his meetings with Herbert Lehman, and then trying to talk to Mrs. Roosevelt, who wasn't sure she wanted to talk to him.

It was all very complicated, but there was one amusing anecdote. I remember standing in the kitchen of his father's [Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr.] apartment at 277 Park Avenue. You can see the building—now it's an office building—right from this window, it was then an apartment house. And I was standing in the kitchen with Fred Dutton [Frederick G. Dutton], as a matter of fact, because neither of us were involved specifically in the meeting, while he was meeting with a group of these young reform leaders, seeking their suggestions on how the campaign in New York should be structured and who should operate it, who should control it, who should be the executive director or chairman or whatever title would be involved. And whatever name Bob would suggest, the reformers found some problem with—he was too close to DeSapio; he wasn't a real reformer, etc. And, whatever name they would suggest, was someone who had not supported John Kennedy, who had no relationship with the campaign and they had no sense of how conscientious he might or might not be. They were at an impasse.

Finally Bob suggested the name of R. Peter Straus, the owner of the radio station WMCA. Straus had been elected as a Stevenson delegate from the West Side of Manhattan, but had switched to Kennedy and voted for Kennedy on the first ballot, rather than Stevenson, because he had

concluded that Stevenson had no chance and that that first ballot might make the difference. He'd been elected with some reform support and had been a Stevenson delegate. So Bob suggested that maybe he ought to be the executive director of the special Kennedy-Johnson campaign committee. And one of the reform district leaders, named Kathy Hemingway, responded quickly by saying, "Well, we couldn't go for Peter Straus, he voted for Kennedy." Bob responded by saying, "I thought this was the Kennedy-Johnson campaign committee we're talking about, not the Stevenson-Johnson campaign committee," at which point Dutton and I in the kitchen both guffawed and gave away our presence. That's an anecdote, but it was the kind of thing he was going through in trying to structure a campaign. Finally we evolved something which turned out to be reasonable satisfactory. One of my law partners became the executive chairman, Tony...

GREENE: Akers [Anthony B. Akers].

FELDMAN: Akers. And we brought Bill Walton [William Walton] up to New York. He made his office in my law office, and among the three of us we were able to keep things together for a while.

GREENE: Besides the leadership question, what were some of the issues that were being debated? I know there was some conflict about having citizens groups to supplement the regular organization.

FELDMAN: Well, DeSapio obviously wanted the whole campaign operation, organization, fund-raising effort and everything to go through the Democratic State Committee and through him. The reformers wanted it all in their structure. Bob's hope was in finding some middle ground, some structure that could accommodate the best of both, while permitting the organized core, or the cadre, of both groups to operate on their own, so that we'd end up, in effect, with three groups. They would be the Citizens' Committee for Kennedy-Johnson, which would be a Kennedy operation, the state committee that we would work with to the extent we had to let them work on the old-line regulars and the ambitious young reformers, who felt that they wanted to use a national campaign for the purpose of building their prestige within their own communities at the expense of the regulars. The regulars wanted to do it at their expense and so forth. We let them work independently, funding some of them, at times funding all three groups, and trying to keep them off each other's neck, not always successfully.

GREENE: Was the split in the reform movement to some extent between the younger and the older members? Did it seem to break down that way?

FELDMAN: It tended to, yes. It tended to really break down between the—well, I can't say that it was really the older and the younger. It is perfectly true that because of a sense of structure and what a campaign is about and the

importance of an election

[-3-]

that we were able to bring Mrs. Roosevelt around and Herbert Lehman around before we were able to bring around the Kathy Hemingways, so in that sense maybe it was older and younger. The people who were really involved in the day-to-day struggles within the reform movement, the power struggles in the neighborhoods and so forth, were the difficult ones because they weren't sure that there was a Kennedy constituency in town. They were still playing the Stevenson game because in their neighborhoods, which were essentially middle class and upper middle class Jewish neighborhoods essentially, there wasn't much Kennedy support in those early days. We were all confident that it was not Nixon [Richard M. Nixon] support, and that eventually someone would come to the conclusion that it was no longer an election between Stevenson and Kennedy but rather Kennedy and Nixon. We knew that it would work out somewhere along the line, but the struggles were very difficult.

GREENE: I have one question back on the convention period. Did you ever hear a story—and I can't tell you where I got this—that John Kennedy made an agreement of some kind with Prendergast [Michael H. Prendergast] and DeSapio and, I suppose Buckley [Charles A. Buckley] too, to select Lyndon Johnson and John Bailey [John Moran Bailey]? Actually I think it was before the Convention even opened. Did you ever hear anything of that kind?

FELDMAN: No.

GREENE: That he agreed to...

FELDMAN: I never heard anything of the sort, and I think there were lots of indications to the contrary certainly that we all know about. The only Johnson support in New York really, apart from DeSapio's hidden support, was Ed Weisl [Edwin L. Weisl, Sr.], who didn't really matter except through his business, political and legal connections. I mean he didn't have a political role at that point—but Ed Weisl, and Eliot Janeway, and then Adam Powell [Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.], Ray Jones [J. Raymond Jones], and a group of Harlem leaders whom Weisl had brought together with Johnson at one point.... Therefore I would be very skeptical about such a story because I don't think that Buckley would have been necessarily pushing Johnson for the vice-presidency, or that DeSapio would have been pushing him. DeSapio really saw Johnson as a possibility only after he had gone for Symington [Stuart Symington, II]. He saw Symington as a possible stalking horse for Johnson, and that was his technique. So he was really in no position, I think, to deal for Johnson, and I don't think he really did. I would be very skeptical about that.

GREENE: You get so many of these things.

FELDMAN: Oh, sure.



GREENE: It's interesting to see how far they have spread. What other meetings did you attend besides this one very informal one in the course of the early part of the campaign?

[-4-]

FELDMAN: The '60 campaign?

GREENE: Yes.

FELDMAN: Well, there were several. As I said, dinners with White, meetings with Bob and Byron and occasionally with Jack English [John F. English] and two or three other people, and then with Bill Walton when he got to New York. They were just strategy sessions and discussion sessions. There were none of any particular significance or value, I suppose, except one I was involved in—a meetings with DeSapio and Walton and others when a call was placed to Bob Kennedy in what then developed as the famous fight, or disagreement, where John Kennedy thought—quite rightly—that DeSapio had broken his word to him on the question of Mrs. Roosevelt and Herbert Lehman speaking at the rally in New York that the President spoke at on the Saturday night before election.

GREENE: The last one?

FELDMAN: Yes. I was in the room when that discussion took place and when DeSapio called Bob Kennedy. Bob took a very strong position about the fact that Lehman and Mrs. Roosevelt were to speak. Then I was involved in...

GREENE: What was DeSapio's response in this?

FELDMAN: He ended up, after the telephone conversation, saying in effect that—we had arranged for Bob to call DeSapio at the meeting, Walton and I, because we were doing the negotiating—he was quite sure that Bob understood and wouldn't insist on it, that he'd had many friendly discussions with Bob about the reformers and the structure of the campaign in New York, and he was sure that Bob... And so forth. This kind of thing had been going on—so finally we concocted another meeting for the purpose and arranged for Bob to phone DeSapio during the course of the meeting to reinforce our position. DeSapio's response afterward was, "Okay, but I don't know that he's running things up here. We'll have to think about it; we'll see," and so on and so forth, "Although probably it'll work out, but I'm sure he understands I'll have problems, and I'll have others to accommodate," and that sort of nonsense.

GREENE: The usual thing.

FELDMAN: So that ended up, of course, with our getting John Kennedy to call him; he made the promise to John Kennedy that he'd keep his word.

GREENE: Were relations very strained between them and DeSapio after that? I know they were with...

[-5-]

FELDMAN: Between the Kennedys and DeSapio?

GREENE: Right.

FELDMAN: Oh, absolutely. Bill Walton tells the story—I've even read it somewhere, maybe in Teddy White's [Theodore H. White] book—that Bill Walton was sitting with President Kennedy in Hyannisport election night getting the early results. And when the results started to indicate some hope—it looked better, as a matter of fact, earlier in the evening than it did later in the evening, if you recall—one of the first things he did was to turn to Walton, and say, "It looks very good, and we'll get that son-of-a-bitch DeSapio." [Laughter]

GREENE: What about Prendergast? Was this the source of the problems he had with the Kennedys later?

FELDMAN: Yes, it was the source of the problems—the breaching of his word. He had been in on that agreement. It was just that they had broken their word; there was no question about it. They'd broken their word to Bob and they'd broken their word to the president.

GREENE: Do you remember any discussion in any of these sessions about posts in the administration?

FELDMAN: None.

GREENE: None?

FELDMAN: None whatsoever. The only discussion that I was involved in that involved a post was a very humorous one. During this period of Bob's visits to New York with Byron White and so forth, there was a New York Post reporter named William Haddad [William F. Haddad], who was terribly, terribly troublesome. He was quite anti-Kennedy, particularly anti-Bob. He kept referring to him as the former McCarthy [Joseph R. McCarthy] aide and kept reporting on these meetings in a rather unpleasant way. Bob called Walton one day—Walton, as I said, had been making his office with me—and Walton came in and said, "I just got a call from Bob. He wants to know if there's some way we can get this guy Haddad off his back and off this kick because he's prematurely disclosing the discussions that he's having with one side or the other, and as a result it's

exacerbating the situation. We'll never get these groups together." And then Walton said, "Well, you know about Haddad. What's the best way to handle it?" So we talked about it. I didn't come up with the idea—the idea became Bill's idea spontaneously. He invited Haddad up to the office, talked to him, talked to him about his ambitions and goals, finally called Bob Kennedy. At that point I was on the phone with him, and Walton said, "Okay Haddad's not going to bother you anymore starting next week." And Bob said, "What do you mean,?" Walton said, "He's [Haddad] not going to

[ -6 - ]

write any more stories about you or anybody else for the New York Post, at least for the duration of the election." Bob said, "Gee, that's great. How'd you handle that?" He [Walton] said, "He's reporting to Washington on Monday as your assistant." [Laughter] I [Feldman] said, "What?" Walton said, "Yes, I hired him as assistant to the campaign manager. He's reporting down there on Monday."

GREENE: That is really something. [Interruption] What were the general impressions...

FELDMAN: Bob's response?

GREENE: Yes.

FELDMAN: "Fine. I'll send him over to work for Shriver [R. Sargent Shriver, Jr.]" But anyway....

GREENE: What was the general impression among the reform people, especially those who had opposed Kennedy, of Robert Kennedy?

FELDMAN: As of when?

GREENE: During the campaign. Well, if it changed, explain how it changed through the campaign.

FELDMAN: It didn't change, really. They had little contact with him. His involvement in the New York campaign was principally by contact with Walton, sometimes with me, Akers, or through other people. So once he had this thing structured, he spent very little time up here, if any. They had no basis for changing their view of him. The view was the traditional view of that period of the ruthless, snippy kid brother, not terribly bright. I don't have to paint the picture; everybody has, I'm sure.

GREENE: Did you attend that notorious reform meeting where he told them that he didn't really care about the feuding and the problems of the reform movement, that he just wanted to elect Senator Kennedy president?

Remember that?

FELDMAN: Yes, that was the meeting in the apartment.

GREENE: I didn't realize it was the same.

FELDMAN: Yes, that was the meeting in the apartment that was called—oh, the whole competition about the way it was called. It was called initially because a fellow named Harry Sedgwick, who had gone to college with him and had been known in college as Duke Sedgwick, apparently called Bob at one or two o'clock in the morning when he'd come back from something, reached him at the apartment and

[-7-]

told him that he would set up a meeting with the real leaders of the reform movement, so on and so forth.

Bill Ryan [William Fitts Ryan] called me about ten o'clock the next morning, and said, "What the hell does Bob Kennedy think he's doing? What's he dealing with Sedgwick for?" And he started screaming, "I speak for the reform leaders, and it's my people," et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. I called Bob and said, "What's this meeting you've authorized Sedgwick to call?" because apparently Sedgwick had said to him, "You know I can get you together with the right people, and we'll solve the whole thing in fifteen minutes, I'm sure." And Bob said, "Well, have them come to the apartment at four o'clock tomorrow afternoon." So I called Bob and said, "I got a call from Ryan, who's screaming, 'What the.... Why are you dealing through Sedgwick, who's Sedgwick? This is a new dimension.'" And he said, "I don't know who the hell Sedgwick is. He's called Duke Sedgwick. He called me about one o'clock in the morning. He told me that we had played football together on the same team at Harvard and we were old buddies and that he could straighten this thing out." He said, "You bastards certainly aren't straightening it out up there and nothing else is happening; I'll try anything." So he (RFK) said, "Fine. Bring them to the apartment at four, and we'll straighten it out." I said, "Well now, Ryan said that his faction's all.... And we're now caught in the middle of this thing." He said, "Well, tell Ryan to bring his people too." And that's how....

GREENE: That's how.... I didn't realize it. I saw, I believe...

FELDMAN: You hadn't realized that, but you've been poking around awful hard if you even knew that there was this meeting. [Laughter]

GREENE: Well, I didn't connect the two incidents, but now I see what it was. You were appointed by Tony Akers to some...

FELDMAN: Administrative committee.

GREENE: ...Administrative committee of the citizens committee. Is that right?

FELDMAN: Right.

GREENE: What were your responsibilities, or was that kind of a formality?

FELDMAN: In the process of working out a citizens committee arrangement, they had to work out a structure because reformers have to have a structure and they have to know who's in what spot, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

GREENE: They really need the title.

[ -8 - ]

FELDMAN: So they wanted to be sure. They found Tony acceptable and someone who would operate in good faith, but they wanted to be sure that there was some check on him. So they came up with this notion of a five-man administrative committee—I think it was five.

GREENE: Five or seven.

FELDMAN: Seven, whatever.

GREENE: Something like that.

FELDMAN: Then, of course, that was fine, provided it was a Kennedy oriented administrative committee. My relationships with the reformers, even though I was not of them, was good enough so that they couldn't tag me with a DeSapio, or tar me with a DeSapio brush. It would be difficult for them to find me unacceptable. They knew I was someone who had been working with the Kennedy operation since '59, that I had a relationship to the family; they knew I was Tony's law partner. So, essentially, I was one of the people who was to work out in the open on strategy on this committee and provide some balance within the committee and some ballast for Tony if he got into trouble.

GREENE: How well did it work out?

FELDMAN: It worked reasonably well in that anything anybody wanted to get done was done. There was some bickering and personality squabbles—the usual stuff at campaign time: "I can do it better than he can." and, "Where did you find him? He's not good enough," and, "In 1937 he supported so and so." But Bill Walton did a really very good job. And Bill was able to mollify most everybody.

GREENE: Was there a conflict between him and the regulars?

FELDMAN: The conflict between Walton and the regulars developed as they thought he was favoring the citizens committee more, and they thought he was supposed to be there as an overseer of the citizens committee. He quickly found that the regulars were doing nothing. The one thing that this group did was, when they did finally get into it, they furnished enthusiasm and energy and hard work, while the regulars did nothing except look for money and for roadblocks. So it turned out that he wasn't getting along with the regulars, although he came up, I would think, with a predilection for getting along with them rather than the reformers.

GREENE: Did you ever have any conversations with Robert Kennedy about his general opinion at this time of the reform movement, particularly of the leaders?

[ -9 - ]

FELDMAN: Oh, yes. He thought they were crazy. He thought they were absolutely nuts, and he thought that they were irrational. He thought that they were anti-Catholic with some merit. He thought that they were visiting the sins of the father so to speak—I'll come back to that later when we talk about a later period. No, he had very little tolerance for them, very little tolerance.

GREENE: Does that go for Mrs. Roosevelt and Lehman, too?

FELDMAN: No, he had great respect for them. They were pros. He had problems with Herbert Lehman because he had problems with Julie Edelstein [Julius C. Edelstein], whom he didn't like, who was often speaking for Herbert Lehman, or pretending to, claiming to. So there were some problems there. He quickly found that he had an ally in Mrs. Roosevelt, who didn't like Julie Edelstein either, and so he was in the position during those few weeks where when Edelstein was saying, "The Senator's position is..." He would talk to Mrs. Roosevelt, who would say, "I don't think it is the Senator's position," while Bob had to be deferential to Senator Lehman. If his secretary said, "He wants you to speak to Edelstein because he's weary this afternoon, taking a nap," he couldn't do anything else. Mrs. Roosevelt always was able to get through. So, in a sense, they formed an alliance there that worked out quite well.

GREENE: That's very interesting. Is there anything else on '60 that you think we ought to mention?

FELDMAN: Not really, I don't think, not in terms of the campaign.

GREENE: Okay then we can move ahead to that transition period. I know you mentioned on the phone that you were working, at least peripherally, on the Landis [James M. Landis] report.

FELDMAN: No, I was working intensively on the Landis report. Which was only peripherally on the rest of everything else that was going on. I mean the Landis report I was heavily involved in, but I don't think the Landis report by any means represents the bulk of what was happening. I had some contact with Bob during that transition period only, I guess, because he knew I would be working with Landis. He dealt with Landis from time to time. But he was busy on lots of things and on the whole staffing and talent search thing. Although Shriver was most directly involved on a broader scale, Bob was involved in a more intimate role. I said that quickly over the phone because I knew that I'd been in Washington for those two or three months before the Inauguration most of the time. I would see him from time to time, but as I think about it I don't know that I had any significant contact with him or any meaningful contact with him. He told me later on about one anecdote that occurred during the time that really doesn't involve him as much as it does Dean Rusk, so I don't know that it's....

[-10-]

GREENE: If it's interesting put it down.

FELDMAN: Yes, but as I say, this is secondhand. I had luncheon with him in New York. This was after he was in the Senate, soon after he was in the Senate. It must have been early '65. Fred Freed, who was doing NBC white papers and was doing one on nuclear proliferation—and I knew Bob had expressed some interest in this—asked if I'd arrange lunch. The three of us had lunch, and after talking about Dean Rusk, Bob said that he and the president had read Rusk wrong the first time they met him. And he described a meeting that they had during the transition period. I believe he said it took place in a Georgetown house, which was presumably the first time the president had met Rusk, Rusk having been suggested to him by a number of people. Apparently the three of them spent several hours together. When it was over, the president told Rusk he obviously knew that he was there because he'd been suggested to him as a possibility for secretary of state, and while he wasn't prepared to make any decisions or any offers at this particular time, that certainly he was most impressed and hoped that they could see more of each other in the next few weeks, and certainly it would appear that it could work out and so on.

Bob said, "The President and I often laughed about it afterwards, but we shouldn't have." He said, "Rusk's response was one of clichés. He sort of stood in the door shuffling his feet, with the door half open, and he said, 'Well hello, Mr. President, of course you know it's a great honor to be something that would... but I would certainly understand if it couldn't work out, but I'd be very pleased if it did.' He said, as he walked down, 'I just want to assure you of one thing, Mr. President, that if it were to work out, that I would bend every effort to make certain that when I left the job I would leave the world in the same condition in which I found it.'" And he walked out the door. And Bob said, "The President and I just broke up in laughter, and agreed that, well, it's a pretty embarrassing and difficult situation even for a grown man, and so you have to forgive him a few clichés and a few inappropriate remarks." But he said, "You know, we discovered later the son of a bitch meant every word of it." [Laughter]

GREENE: I think Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen] uses some variation of quote in his book, the one that just came out....

FELDMAN: Oh really, I haven't seen it.

GREENE: ...because I was just reading, in your waiting room in fact, a Harper's review of it by David Halberstam, and that's one of the things that he makes a great...

FELDMAN: That's interesting because I'd never seen that story anywhere, and the one time I heard it was at that luncheon at which he told it.

[-11-]

GREENE: That's really something. Anyway, then Robert Kennedy became attorney general. How much contact did you have with him then? Particularly I was thinking on New York politics. How much did he get into that?

FELDMAN: Not an awful lot, to my knowledge. He was not in it a lot. I did see him and suggest to him, as others did, Bob Morgenthau [Robert M. Morgenthau], for U.S. attorney. I did occasionally send him a note with some notions of what was going on, which would end up with a phone call from Angie Novello [Angela M. Novello] suggesting that I talk to Byron White or Joe Dolan [Joseph F. Dolan]. That usually meant judgeships. I would occasionally call—sometimes get through to him, sometimes leave a message through Angie—if there was something that I thought he ought to be aware of. I'm trying to think of that particular period in New York politics. I guess I then became counsel to the party in New York County (chairman of the law committee)—what some people call Tammany Hall. DeSapio was ousted; Wagner [Robert Ferdinand Wagner, Jr.] became the focal point of the party structure in New York after the '61 primary. There was never any great deal of affection for Wagner...

GREENE: In the administration?

FELDMAN: ...in the administration. Wagner had behaved rather peculiarly during the campaign, and in the pre-convention 1960 period. I guess they were dealing with Wagner; they were dealing with the state chairman, Billy McKeon [William H. McKeon], who had been an active Kennedy supporter and who succeeded Prendergast with Wagner consent. I had some relationship with that event, simply I think it was a phone call from Bob at one point asking me to confirm or deny Billy's pro-Kennedy credentials. It was that sort of thing.

GREENE: What about over the Morgenthau nomination?



FELDMAN: He wasn't that enthusiastic about the Morgenthau thing in the first instance. He later became a great believer in Bob Morgenthau. Bob Morgenthau had been a friend of mine. He'd been the Bronx coordinator of the citizens committee and he had done a very good job. He'd become the Bronx coordinator with some difficulty from Buckley but with some acceptance from Buckley, in part at my suggestion, Walton's and Akers. Then...I'm trying to think now how it happened that a fellow named Bill Gaud [William S. Gaud], who later became AID [Agency for International Development] administrator, who got a lot of jobs because of this incident...But somebody—I don't remember the details now; that's funny it's the sort of thing I usually do remember. Somebody arranged for Bill Gaud to see Bob Kennedy. Bill Gaud was a self-styled candidate for the United States Attorney with no political connections, certainly not in New York. He lived in Greenwich, Connecticut, and the law permitted the appointment of someone who lived either in the district or within twenty-five miles of the district,

[-12-]

so Gaud technically was capable of holding the post. I don't know if it was Gene Keough [Eugene James Keough] or somebody else who arranged an appointment for Gaud to see Bob Kennedy. At the time Buckley was unhappy about the Morgenthau suggestion, which was coming at Bob from various people: Walton, me, Helen Keyes [Helen M. Keyes], and a little more directly, Bob knew Byron White at law school. They had been close. Byron was for it so he had some support. But Buckley was unhappy with it. Gaud apparently got to see Bob, and sold himself.

Bob was so taken with the nation that instead of going through some political leaders and so on that a guy would just walk in his door and say, "I want to be United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and here are my qualifications. I have no political background and no political hang-ups and no factional ties, et cetera, et cetera," having gone through all the factionalism in New York, that apparently he promised it to him. And the word got out that he'd promised it to Bill Gaud, and Buckley started screaming. Buckley started making statements about, "Well, the next time Bob Kennedy wants some votes in New York I'll send him to Greenwich, Connecticut," making statements to the press and others. As it ended up of course, nobody ever knows. Although I suspect it was straightforward, nobody every could be really sure; there were those who didn't know. Buckley's prestige was so much on the line at that point—having been the principal supporter in New York, having lined up the New York delegation for Kennedy in '60 and the rest, and as the chairman of the House Public Works Committee and everything that went with it—that he finally was prepared to accept a Morgenthau appointment because it was a Bronx resident, and perhaps he could claim credit for it or have it at least appear that he was not being bypassed, even though everybody knew he'd been fighting it. So it ended up going to Morgenthau as a way of mollifying Buckley because of Buckley's outrage at the promise to Gaud. Now whether Bob set us up that way, nobody will ever know. Maybe there are those who do; I certainly don't.

GREENE: I certainly never heard that before.

FELDMAN: That's about the Morgenthau story, as I recall it. You're looking at your tape, is that a problem?

GREENE: Yes. I was thinking I ought to change it instead of interrupting...[Change tape] If there's nothing else on the New York politics of that period, what about the Landis case? I know you got involved in that to some extent.

FELDMAN: Yes. Jim Landis was my law partner, and I was involved in that only in the sense that.... No, it wasn't so limited. He had been.... After the Landis report, he became, as you know, special assistant to the president, was at the White House, and was reorganizing the regulatory agencies. While he was in that

[-13-]

position it was determined by somebody—I guess in the course of a security check or what have you—that he hadn't filed tax returns. The first I'd heard of it was a phone call from Joe Kennedy one day asking me was it possible. He was more circumspect than that. He started out by saying, "Who prepares it? Who's your law firm's accountant?" I told him that it was somebody that his accountant had recommended. And he said, "Who prepares the firm's tax returns?" I said, "He did." "And who prepares the partners' tax returns?" and I said, "Well, they do that individually. Either they do it themselves or they have an accountant do it." He said, "Is it possibly that Jim hasn't filed tax returns for five years?" I said, "I just can't believe it; it's impossible." "How can we find out?" I said, "His secretary might know; she's been with him awhile, might have some involvement in it." "Well, you damn well better find out, and also find out where he is. I want to talk to him right now." In reconstruction, it turned out that he reached him while he was talking to some industry convention in Pittsburgh. In effect he told him he'd better get back to New York and get those tax returns prepared and filed right away. Apparently he also suggested to him that he go talk to Bob to get Bob's advice on how this thing should be handled.

GREENE: None of this had become public at this point?

FELDMAN: Oh no, none of it had become public. It didn't become public for two years thereafter. He went and talked to Bob. Bob said he didn't really know what could be done about it or how, but suggested he talk to Mortimer Caplin [Mortimer M. Caplin]. And he called Mortimer Caplin and arranged for him to go over and talk to Caplin. Caplin advised him that there was a procedure in the [Bureau of Internal] Revenue that if before the Revenue Service comes after you, you voluntarily file your returns, although delinquent, then they're accepted. There's no publicity, no prosecution, and that this is a known, established procedure that applies equally to everyone because it is meant as an encouragement to people who are delinquent to voluntarily come forward and file their returns. And he suggested therefore that Jim get the returns prepared and filed at the earliest possible date.

Landis came back to New York and did that—and it's a long, involved story which is really irrelevant here—filed the returns, and an investigation of something else turned up the fact that the returns had been filed late because initially they were just put in a file. And an investigation was started as to whether or not—not whether or not they'd been filed late—but whether or not his filing was complete first of all, which was routine for late returns, and second of all whether his filing was voluntary. The procedure at that time was that the investigation was made at a local level as to whether or not it was voluntary; it was sent forward to Washington and to the commissioner. If the commissioner determined it was voluntary, that was the end of it; if the commissioner determined it was involuntary, it would go to the Justice Department with a recommendation for criminal prosecution. Landis being an essentially

[-14-]

honest fellow—he was honest, but eccentric and neglected his personal affairs, and all sorts of things like that—when asked by the Internal Revenue Service people, “Why did you file when you did file?” he stated, “Because Joe Kennedy told me I'd damn well better,” and stated the whole bit. When the matter went up to the commissioner for a determination as to whether his filing was voluntary or involuntary, Caplin, instead of making the determination one way or another, sent it to the Justice Department, not with a recommendation for prosecution because it was involuntary, but taking the position that the file was ambiguous. Obviously, if a friend of the taxpayer suggests that you better file when a taxpayer confides to a friend, or if a friend of the taxpayer discovers, et cetera, it would be deemed voluntary. However, since the friend of the taxpayer in this case was the father of the president of the United States, he was not prepared to make the determination as whether that was under compulsion or voluntary, and therefore asked the Justice Department to make the determination. When it got to the Justice Department and Bob heard about it, he was absolutely infuriated.

GREENE:           There was no contact at this point between Caplin and Kennedy?

FELDMAN:        Not that I'm aware of, and Bob told me there was none. And had there been he probably would have said, “Do whatever you want to do.” But he was infuriated by what he felt was governmentally unsound—make the decision; you have the job, don't be afraid to call it voluntary because the guy's a friend of the president of the United States, and don't feel that you have to prosecute him because he's a friend of the president of the United States. Make the decision. And Caplin didn't, and Bob lost respect for Caplin at that point. He frequently from thereon would talk about it. When it got to the Justice Department, it went first to Lou Oberdorfer [Louis F. Oberdorfer], who was assistant attorney general in charge of tax division. Lou Oberdorfer had a problem. I don't know if you know the background of the Landis relationship with the Kennedy family. He'd been the family adviser, legal adviser, lawyer, friend...

GREENE:           Yes, to some extent. He wrote a book with...

FELDMAN: He wrote a book with Joe Kennedy—with or for. There were those who claimed that he wrote Profiles in Courage; there were a number of stories to that effect. He denies it; he admits to having been the inspiration for it in the sense that he had written President Kennedy a letter when he was flat on his back at Florida during that period giving him instances of courage of people in public life, and suggesting that he might look into them, which then gave rise to the book. Be that as it may—it's unimportant—it was a close relationship, on a personal level. He had written all of the campaign speeches in the Senate campaign speeches in the Senate campaign in '52 and again in '58, and so forth.

[-15-]

Oh, during this investigation—having resigned from the government really sort of because of the tax matter, he was named as a correspondent in a divorce case involving his secretary, so it turned out that everybody thought it was on account of this that he resigned. During the period of the investigation, during the period of all of this, he continued to serve the administration. He wrote the Berlin Wall speech; he did almost all of Bob's speeches in that quick round-the-world tour that he took, spending weeks in the Justice Department working on them.

But anyway, when this reached Oberdorfer, Oberdorfer disqualified himself because—this is wild—when Bob Kennedy had wanted to appoint Oberdorfer assistant attorney general of tax division, and Oberdorfer was coming up for Senate confirmation, the Senate staff indicated to Oberdorfer that they thought there were some problems that he had, some conflict of interest problems which might interfere with his confirmation. Oberdorfer told Bob this, and Bob sent him to see Landis and me to have us advise him as lawyers as to what he could do to resolve the conflict of interest, so that perhaps he could satisfy the Senate committee, which we did. We came in, we talked to him for about an hour and a half and made some suggestions to him. He said, "Thank you very much," he would follow them. He did follow them, he explained this to the Senate committee, and so forth. But when the memo from Caplin came in to Oberdorfer, Oberdorfer sent it on to Bob Kennedy disqualifying himself from making the determination which Caplin refused to make, on the ground that [Oberdorfer] having once employed Landis for purposes of legal advice under circumstances which Landis did not send him a bill for his services, he felt that perhaps his judgment might be attacked, and because of the sensitive nature of the matter he would disqualify himself.

GREENE: Pass the buck.

FELDMAN: And that really colored the Oberdorfer-Bob Kennedy relationship because this again was not Bob's style. Bob ended up disqualifying himself too, and sending it to Katzenbach [Nicholas deB. Katzenbach] for decision. But I don't think he really did disqualify himself. I'm sure he and Katzenbach discussed it, and I'm sure that it was felt that at this point, with Caplin having done what he did and with Oberdorfer having done what he did, that the administration—this was by now '63, the summer of '63—the administration was very uptight about the upcoming '64 election. They were very concerned. They couldn't stand the breath of scandal or cronyism, or any of those

things, and I think they just decided that they had to prosecute. Be that as it may, they decided to prosecute. I told Morgenthau at the time that I thought that there was some psychiatric evidence to indicate that...

GREENE: Yes, we came across that.

FELDMAN: ...that Landis had some difficulty, and that this wasn't a deliberate thing, and so forth, and that maybe we ought to put him before a grand jury. Katzenbach called me

[-16-]

and asked if he could come to see me, and came to New York to see me. He was afraid to face Jim, and told me that Bob was a little upset with this notion that we would try to handle it on a psychiatric basis because, after all, the president of the United States had reorganized six federal agencies...

GREENE: ...on his recommendations.

FELDMAN: ...on the basis of Landis' recommendations. And on behalf of the administration he had negotiated, although it wasn't proved at that time, the executive agreement with the Soviet Union on air travel, et cetera. And the implications that the government had used someone who is having psychiatric difficulty, because not everybody will understand what that meant—that that just simply meant some neuroses—might even be more serious than the government's deciding not to prosecute because he was a friend. But Bob was upset and so on and so forth. And Bob felt that I was making this decision, and not Landis, and wanted Katzenbach to determine from me, because he would take my word for it, whether this was Landis' view or my act of friendship and loyalty in pursuing this notion. So I said, "I'll talk to Landis," and explained Bob's position to Landis. Landis said, "Of course the government has to prosecute. I would think they have no alternative. What happens to me is much less important than what happens to the re-election of the president."

Begin SIDE II TAPE 1.

FELDMAN: So that's what happened, but nobody anticipated that there was going to be a jail sentence.

GREENE: I think he got thirty days.

FELDMAN: He got a ridiculous jail sentence, and this is an example of some fairly intensive direct contact with Bob as attorney general. He was given a thirty-day jail sentence, which meant nothing. You either give a guy a year or five years or something or a fine, which is what everybody anticipated, and what had been the case in all other similar instances. But this Judge, Sylvester Ryan [Sylvester J. Ryan],

imposed a thirty-day jail sentence. When I heard about it, I was really furious. I really thought we'd been double-crossed by the Justice Department sort of as the price of not involving the government through this psychiatric plea, and the price of pleading guilty and not putting the government to a trial so that there would be daily publicity about a Kennedy associate. We had had their agreement to at least put this on a date when it would go before a judge who would show some sense of humanity; nobody was to speak to the judge or anything of this sort. The day it came on this judge disqualified himself because he had been a law school and college classmate of mine and had been a Kennedy appointee.

[-17-]

GREENE:           Who was that?

FELDMAN:       Bill Feinberg, Wilfred Feinberg, who is Abe Feinberg's [Abraham Feinberg] younger brother. He disqualified himself, and the chief judge, Sylvester Ryan, took it. When I heard about it—Bob Morgenthau called me and told me that he'd sentenced him to thirty days—I said, "You can't send him to jail. The guy can't survive it." He emotionally can't survive it. What can we do?" And he said, "There's only one thing we can do." and he said, "The attorney general has the right to determine that he should serve the sentence in a hospital and not in a jail." I said, "How do we get this done?" And he said, "I tried to reach the attorney general, but he's unavailable: he's out of town. I couldn't get him. I'm told he's on a fishing trip on the high seas off Nova Scotia." So I called the White House and reached Evelyn Lincoln [Evelyn N. Lincoln], and said, "Evelyn, you've got to find the attorney general. I have to talk to him. You've got to tell the president that they have sentenced Jim Landis to thirty days in jail, and this is just outrageous!" And she said, "Does the president have any power to do anything about it?" I said, "No, he doesn't." "Who does?" she said. I said, "The attorney general can determine that he can serve this thirty-day sentence in a hospital." She said, "Fine. Where are you?" I told her, and she said, "Stand by." Bob was supposedly fishing off Nova Scotia, but it wasn't a half hour later that Bob Morgenthau called me and said that Bennett [James V. Bennett], the director of the Bureau of Prisons, had had a phone call from the attorney general saying that the attorney general had certified that the Landis term should be served in a hospital.

The net result of that was that Landis was sent to the Public Health Service hospital on Staten Island and put into a psychiatric ward. His wife [Dorothy Landis] called—this was over the Labor Day weekend. It had been partially contrived that the publicity might be minimized if it were over the Labor Day weekend. And his wife said, "This is impossible. You've got to get him back to Harkness Pavilion, back to the Columbia Neurological Institute," where he had been for several weeks before this came up because we were concerned about what he might do to himself. So he went from the hospital to the courthouse, and now from the courthouse to the Public Health Service hospital, where they took his belt away from him, they wouldn't let him have a razor, they wouldn't let him shave, they wouldn't let him have any cigarettes. He was in a big ward with a lot of very, very sick, psychotic prisoners. She said, "You've got to do something about that."

So once again I tried to find the attorney general. I guess this was over the weekend, and I was saying, "Well, let's see what it's like tomorrow when we call Bennett." And I

talked to Morgenthau, and finally I got Angie Novello and arranged that I'd be down to see Bob on Tuesday morning after Labor Day, '63. I came down there, and Angie said, "Bob's been delayed"—he had to go to the White House first—"but he asked would you talk to Nick first?" So I said, "I've talked to Nick, and

[-18-]

Nick doesn't think the administration should do anything." She said, "Well, why don't you talk to Nick again?" So I talked to Nick, and he was saying, "Oh, my God, after having determined that he was going to serve the time in the hospital we now take him out of the Public Health Service hospital, and send him up to Neurological Harkness Pavilion Presbyterian. How do we arrange for guards?" And I said, "I've got a memorandum that it's been done before. You can have prison guards there, and the family will pay for the prison guards' food"—and that's the only thing—"and we'll pay the hospital expense over and above the allowance." I had a memorandum of law, and I went through it with him; and we talked to Morgenthau, and Morgenthau agreed that I was legally correct. But he said, "How can we do this, send him up to Harkness Pavilion?" He said, "There'll be a whole series of stories, and we're back where we started from—cronyism and favors to friends."

So I said, "Well, I've got a date to talk to Bob, and I've got to disagree, and I'm going to talk to him." He said, "Fine." So I went upstairs—by that time he was back from the White House—and I told him the story and told him the circumstances Jim was in. And he said, "Well, what do you want to do?" I said, "I want him transferred to Harkness Pavilion. I want him to serve his time there, the Neurological Institute." He said, "Who can do that?" I said, "You can." He said, "How do I do it?" I said, "You certify that this is the appropriate place for treatment for him," and I said, "We'll give you all the medical backup on him that you need—the doctor who says he shouldn't have his treatment disrupted." He said, "What does Nick say?" I said, "Nick says that you shouldn't do it." He says, "Does he say I shouldn't do it, or I can't do it?" I said, "He says you shouldn't do it." "Oh," he said, "I can't believe that," and he punches the intercom. He said, "Nick, Justin's up here. Do you say we can't do it, or we shouldn't do it?" He [Katzenback] said, "I don't think we should do it. The press, the publicity will negate the whole effect. They'll still say the whole..." And so on and so forth. He [RFK] said, "Is Justin's legal opinion correct that I can do it?" And Nick said, "Yes, I think it is." He said, "You know, Nick, I don't understand you sometimes." He said, "Sure we have to worry about the reaction of people in the press, and so forth, but," he said, "if any goddam reporter wants to say that the Kennedy administration, having prosecuted one of the best friends they've ever had—somebody who's been practically a father to me, who helped me get through my law school exams, and who's been close to Ted and close to the whole family and close to my father, and has done us so many favors—if they want to say that, having prosecuted him, having exposed him to the public through this, that we are now soft on criminals by having him serve that stupid thirty days in some degree of comfort," he said, "They can just go to hell!" He said, "Now if Justin is right legally, you two work it out. I'm sending him downstairs."

GREENE:           So that was the end of it.

FELDMAN: And that was the end of it. He transferred him. But, you know, it was an incident which was very important to me personally because it involved a very dear, close respected and loved friend. And seeing Bob react in just that way when he just.... At that point, he said, "You know, I've done my public duty; I'll now do human duty."

GREENE: And there wasn't, really, any adverse publicity about it that I could ever find.

FELDMAN: None whatsoever, not really. There were some snide comments here and there—"Kennedy friend is serving his prison jail term"—but nothing, nobody really went after him.

GREENE: As I remember, the judge in sentencing him made it clear that in his mind at least, it was an alcoholic problem.

FELDMAN: Yes, he kept saying that.

GREENE: So you probably could have done it on a psychiatric basis.

FELDMAN: There were any number of ways of doing it probably on a psychiatric....I'm sure if we put him before a grand jury on a psychiatric basis, the grand jury would never have indicted. I think they knew that, but they were concerned that the story would leak out, that the grand jury didn't indict because they were concerned about the effect on the administration. One of the few people who really understood this was Jim Landis. I disagreed with it; I thought they could have defended it, they could have taken a stronger position and so forth. It didn't affect my feeling about Bob or the president or anything else. I think they could have gotten away with it. If they had judgment that they couldn't, and elected to handle it this way.... But I always did at least admire Bob's strength in that situation. When it came later on to Landis' being disciplined by the bar association—a proceeding was brought to discipline him—the attorney general of the United States and the deputy attorney general of the United States both wrote the court letters explaining why they prosecuted, which is very interesting. I don't know the extent to which you want documents, but I have a copy of it somewhere. The attorney general wrote a letter in which he said, in effect, had Jim not been a close friend of the Kennedy family he never would have been prosecuted.

GREENE: Yes, we would be very interested in having them, or a copy of it if you can't...

FELDMAN: Yes, I have that.

GREENE: Give us the original.



[-20-]

FELDMAN: And Nick Katzenbach wrote a letter explaining, saying that he had personally made the decision to prosecute and explaining why. The attorney general, in signing the letter—which was typed and perhaps dictated for him by someone else; I don't know—but in signing the letter added a postscript in his own handwriting, addressed to the court saying, “Please be good to him,” or “Please be nice to him,” or something of that sort. I have it here. But Bob showed great feeling.

Then a year later Landis was found dead one day, having drowned in his swimming pool under circumstances which I don't believe, and I don't think anyone else believes, was suicide. I think it was just a coincidental thing because it was just a week after his suspension from the bar became effective—so the timing made people suspicious.

But, nevertheless, when I found out about it that day, I immediately called Bob that night at home. I think we told him about it, and he was absolutely stunned and absolutely shocked. He insisted that I go up and see Dorothy—I hadn't yet done that—and call him to tell him what sort of shape she was in. And I called him the next day, again, about the funeral arrangements. He came up for the funeral, and I guess it's probably the only time in history that anyone could have seen the attorney general of the United States weeping copiously at the funeral of someone whom he had prosecuted. But it affected him tremendously. Given the public obligation as he saw it, the public duty and the decision that he thought had to be made, he really behaved with great sentiment and humanity and decency.

GREENE: Did you see evidence, in perhaps later association, of this type of loyalty?

FELDMAN: Yes, later on I did. This was the first evidence I'd seen of it. But, of course, it was sort of the first nonpolitical contact I'd had with him or if not political, there was some social contact. But this was the first instance I saw of the “other” Bob Kennedy. It left a tremendous impression on me at the time. Of course, I was so affected in terms of my own emotional reaction. And I had disagreed with his judgment—it's one qualitative thing—which was one of the reasons why when we talked on the phone, I injected the Landis thing.

GREENE: It's good that you did because I would have had no way of knowing at all.

FELDMAN: I don't know how significant it is.

GREENE: I think it's a very interesting story, and, of course, you don't get any sense of this from what's been in the newspapers.

[-21-]

FELDMAN: No. I've given this story to Vic Navasky [Victor S. Navasky]...

GREENE: Oh, for his book.

FELDMAN: ...for his hook. Vic will, I suppose, use some of it. But I've always thought it was significant mostly because it was very significant to my understanding of Bob Kennedy.

GREENE: But from everything that's known, this was a very significant trait in him.

FELDMAN: Yes, I'm sure that that decision to prosecute Jim came very hard. He tolerated it only because of his greater loyalty to John Kennedy, the administration, and the fact that he did not want any kind of an extraneous issue injected into what appeared like it might otherwise be a difficult campaign for other reasons. He certainly didn't want his own integrity attacked when he was obviously going to be at issue because of the whole civil rights problem of those years. He talked later on about the fact that it was one of his toughest decisions.

Oh, I have one other attorney general story. Easter vacation '61, 2, 3. It must have been '62—no, it couldn't have been. Well, it's irrelevant, the date. My kinds wanted to take the Washington tour, and I had asked one of the New York congressmen to arrange for the special White House early morning tour, the Bureau of Printing and Engraving, the FBI, the typical tour. Shortly after having done this, I had a call from an FBI agent in Washington saying that they noted that there had been a request made for me and my family to take the FBI tour, along with another group on the congressional tour. They knew that it was given only at certain hours and so forth, and that sometimes it's not convenient for people to fit it in their schedules. Whoever the hell he was—he mentioned his name; I guess public relations man for the FBI—he wanted me to know that they were very anxious for me to take a privately conducted tour, which they would be happy to arrange on any day and at any hour my family might find most convenient. It so happened that it worked out that it would be better if we didn't have to take this—then we could go to Bureau of Engraving on Tuesday instead of Wednesday, that sort of thing. We were travelling with three kids who were quite small and quite young at the time. So I allowed as how that was fine, and I would call and make a date, and we did.

We went down at the appointed time, and in taking the tour we went into the second room, and on the wall was a picture of J. Edgar Hoover on the left and a picture of the attorney general of the United States on the right. And the agent who was taking us through and making spiel was one of the agents who ordinarily makes the spiel. I later found, by hanging back, that the next group got the same spiel; it was standard. It went somewhat as follows: "On the left is a picture of Mr. J. Edgar Hoover, the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and

[-22-]

on the right is a picture of Robert F. Kennedy, the attorney general of the United States. The Federal Bureau of Investigation, as you know, is one of the agencies of the Justice Department. Mr. Hoover has been the Director of the Bureau since 1924, two years after the attorney general was born." [Laughter] Well, I guffawed. I don't know whether it was two years, or at which time the attorney general was two...

GREENE: It was a year before, actually, Robert Kennedy was born in 1925.

FELDMAN: A year before the attorney general was born.

GREENE: It makes it even better.

FELDMAN: Yes. As I say, it was approximately this way, but this was the thrust.

GREENE: I bet there was a lot of that.

FELDMAN: I guffawed, and the agent looked and I just didn't say anything. As I say, I sort of hung back and gathered that this was the standard thing.

GREENE: That's funny.

FELDMAN: So I called him later that day and told him about it. And he said, "I don't believe it." I said, "It's true. You check it. It's going on right in your own building."

GREENE: Take the tour.

FELDMAN: "Take the tour, or have somebody take the tour." Sometime later he told me he had checked, and it was right. I don't know if he ever did anything about, or was able to.

GREENE: Is there anything else in the administration period?

FELDMAN: I have another half-hour, if you need it.

GREENE: Okay. Did you see much of him during the post-assassination period, the months after the president was killed?

FELDMAN: Not until April, May-somewhere in there—of '64. I didn't know what to say, and I didn't hear from him. But in or about April or May—it must have been May—I had occasion to be in Washington on something or other, and I stopped in at the Justice Department and dropped by his office. Angie said, "I'm sure Bob would like to see you. Why don't you wait around?" "I don't want to disturb him," one of those things, "No it's fine." I went in, and we chatted, just talked generally. He wanted to know what was happening in New York

[-23-]

and in New York politics and so forth. And then I told him that I had heard that Jack English had suggested to him the possibility he might run for the Senate in New York, and that one of

the reasons I had dropped by was that I wanted to add my voice, for what it was worth, to the support of that notion. And he pooh-poohed it, "It's ridiculous. It makes no sense," et cetera. Then we talked some more about New York and New York politics and Keating [Kenneth B. Keating]. I came away with the feeling that while it was ridiculous, it wasn't necessarily completely out of the question; it might be in the scales somewhere. Then I saw him again in June—I forget now whether this was before or after the president had said he did not want anybody in the Cabinet...

GREEN:               That was before, if it was June, because that was July 29th.

FELDMAN:           That was July 29th. Okay, then it was before. That's right, it was before. And I dropped by the office again, this time to tell him that I'd heard from a lot of people that they were kicking around the notion he might come to New York. [Interruption]

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[-24-]

Justin N. Feldman Oral History Transcript – RFK #1  
Name List

**A**

Akers, Anthony B., 3, 7, 8, 9, 12

**B**

Bailey, John Moran, 4  
Bennett, James V., 18  
Buckley, Charles A., 4, 13

**C**

Caplin, Mortimer M., 14, 15, 16

**D**

DeSapio, Carmine G., 2-6, 9, 12  
Dolan, Joseph F., 12  
Dutton, Frederick G., 2, 3

**E**

Edelstein, Julius C. C., 10  
English, John F., 5, 24

**F**

Feinberg, Abraham, 18  
Feinberg, Wilfred, 18  
Finletter, Thomas K., 2  
Freed, Fred, 11

**G**

Gaud, William S., 12, 13

**H**

Haddad, William F., 6, 7  
Halberstam, David, 11  
Hemingway, Kathy, 3, 4  
Hoover, J. Edgar, 22, 23

**J**

Janeway, Eliot, 4  
Johnson, Lyndon B., 1, 3, 4, 24  
Jones, J. Raymond, 4

**K**

Katzenbach, Nicholas deB., 16, 17, 19, 21  
Keating, Kenneth B., 24  
Kennedy, Edward M., 1, 19  
Kennedy, John F., 2, 4-7, 9, 11, 15, 17, 18, 19, 22,  
23  
Kennedy, Joseph P., Sr., 2, 14, 15  
Kennedy, Robert F., 1, 2, 3, 5-24  
Keough, Eugene James, 13  
Keyes, Helen M., 13

**L**

Landis, Dorothy, 18, 21  
Landis, James M., 10, 13-22  
Lehman, Herbert H., 2, 4, 5, 10  
Lincoln, Evelyn N., 18

**M**

McCarthy, Joseph R., 6  
McKeon, William H., 12  
Morgenthau, Robert M., 12, 13, 16, 18, 19

**N**

Navasky, Victor S., 22  
Nixon, Richard M., 4  
Novello, Angela M., 12, 18, 23

**O**

Oberdorfer, Louis F., 15, 16

**P**

Powell, Adam Clayton, Jr., 4  
Prendergast, Michael H., 4, 6, 12

**R**

Roosevelt, Eleanor R., 2, 4, 5, 10  
Roosevelt, Elliott, 1  
Roosevelt, Franklin D., Jr., 1  
Rusk, Dean, 10, 11  
Ryan, Sylvester J., 17, 18, 20  
Ryan, William Fitts, 8

## S

Sedgwick, Harry, 7, 8  
Shriver, R. Sargent, Jr., 7, 10  
Sorensen, Theodore C., 11  
Stevenson, Adlai E., 2, 3, 4  
Straus, R. Peter, 2, 3  
Symington, Stuart, II, 4

## W

Wagner, Robert Ferdinand, Jr., 12  
Walton, William, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, 13  
Weisl, Edwin L., Sr., 4  
White, Byron R., 2, 5, 6, 12, 13  
White, Theodore H., 6