

Allard K. Lowenstein Oral History Interview – RFK#2, 12/02/69
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Biographical Note

United States Representative, New York, 1969 - 1971; delegate, New York, Democratic National Convention, 1968. In this interview, Lowenstein discusses assisting Robert F. Kennedy [RFK] with the Day of Affirmation Address, RFK's involvement in localized politics, and his personal and professional demeanor, among other issues.

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Allard K. Lowenstein – RFK #2

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Second Oral History Interview

with

ALLARD K. LOWENSTEIN

December 2, 1969
Longworth Building, House of Representatives

By Larry Hackman

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

HACKMAN: So you might just pick up there and tell me what other feed-in you had on that trip. I shouldn't say other; so far there isn't any there. [Laughter.]

LOWENSTEIN: That's exactly right.
That's appalling. I can't remember a thing.
"It was, I thought terrible, and after I looked at it for a few minutes and realized that from the point of view of the South African opposition, as well as from Kennedy's point of view, it was a disastrous speech." Yeah, that's accurate.

HACKMAN: Right. I think you told me that one of the things you were upset with then was one of the speeches he gave on that trip about

the boycott of South Africa, and you fed that in. What... you know, you didn't put that on tape.

LOWENSTEIN: That was way later, because that was not in South Africa. On the way back he was asked in Nairobi, ^{Salaam} maybe it was Dar es ^S, but I think it was Nairobi, ^S where he stood on sanctions in South Africa. And he said he was against sanctions, and at that point because there was no other plan, and what the Africans in South Africa wanted, what the U.N. felt, ^S the general thrust of anti-apartheid opinion was sanctions. And it wasn't really that I felt that it was wrong for him to be against sanctions--'cause a case can be made against them-- but that ^S I was sorry that. ^S It seemed to me that ^S that position ought not to have been taken quite as lightly as it was without considering more carefully than he had the views of Chief [ALBERT JOHN] LUTHULI and other people that he had met, and who would have given him the reasons why there was a desirable ^{aspect} prospect to trying sanctions. That's ^a footnote. But, ^S You want

me to go back to the. . .

HACKMAN: Yeah. I just want to pick up from that point maybe what can you remember on when you first came in. What kind of recommendations did you make in terms of the speeches he was going to give on that trip and what are his reactions? Do you talk to him, or do you talk to [Adam] Walinsky, or who do you talk to at that point?

LOWENSTEIN: I talked to him. Then I talked to Walinsky and I called Francis Suzman, as it says.

HACKMAN: Right.

LOWENSTEIN: And I said, "Please come as quickly as you can and bring the South African--if you can find one--with you." She may have suggested several, but my view was that unless I had some South Africans there--since it was clear that this had been done by people who thought they were experts on South Africa, and whose views were so different than mine--that my views would be just outweighed, or not even weighed. So, she did; she came on the next shuttle, and she got Treber Coon to come with her, who had been the president of

Treber Coon?

[National Union of South African Students]

NUSAS ... and together, the three of us and Adam sat on the floor in that second room, just fooled around with the papers for the speech and picking it apart sentence by sentence, saying this... why this was wrong and why that was wrong. Kennedy would come in... ^{and} poke his head in. We'd talk to him for awhile and we'd go out ^{and} he was in the living room seeing people come through ^{us} and talk to him out there. ⁴¹ And he took the criticisms ~~maybe not enthusiastically~~ but very well, and he was apparently interested in criticism. He wasn't... as I said there, ^I he wasn't sure whether he would present this, or whether... but he was obviously concerned. Adam took it well, and wanted to find out how to overhaul it. And so we worked at it for a long time; hours and hours, I mean it... you could compute some ^{of it} ways, from the fact that when I got there and called Boston, ~~and~~ ^I then had to get to the airport, take a shuttle down, get in, and then stay on and on. So it went on for a long time. ^{after} They were there it went

on for several hours. ^SAnd we came up with
 pretty much of a different draft of that
 again. ^FIn fact, the beginning of the speech
 he makes on Africa was something I had sug-
 gested to him to do. that day, ^{Getting the}
 thought of what ^{it} should be, curiously enough,
 from an old Kennedy trik, which was ^{from [John F.]} the Jack
 Kennedy, particularly: the habit of beginning,
 leading people to thinking he's talking about
 one thing, and then turning ^{it} to something else.
 "I've come here to discuss a great... one of
 America's greatest living, |||" and so on, and
 so on, ^{and} You'd think he was talking about
 Franklin D. Roosevelt, ^{and} and he uses facts which
 are exactly the same except ^{your guy's} ~~there's~~
 Barry Goldwater, or Herbert ^{Hoover} told ^{So I} Kennedy,
 because I thought the beginning of the speech
 would be very rough for him, to get some start
 that would be appropriate, but ^{light}, and
 that would make ^{it} clear that he was not coming
 there as a sort of missionary from ^a superior
 moral planet. What I thought ^{he} we ought to do
 was to start out by saying that he came... he

wanted to speak about a country which had been found^{ed} by European settlers three centuries before, and that had had terrible problems, indigenous ⁽ⁱⁿ⁾ population, and just go on with a whole list of things which would....

to Every South African would be clearly South Africa, but in fact which at the end, he would say "I refer, ^{of} course, to the United States of America.

And he did that in that speech in Johannesburg

91 Well, anyway, how much more of that speech you wanted to know, ^{but} the general feeling I had from that meeting is ^{of} surprise, really was, ^{that} I came away much more impressed with the reasons he was going, and much more impressed with him, and his sponge-like desire to talk about things and ask questions, and see through superficialities, and tackle some tough things. And, although you'd have to find this out from some... I don't know who now, ^{but} he must have come away with a warmer, higher feeling about me, because our relationship before that had been very tenuous, very.

← when I'd see him at Reform Democrat things occasionally, or whatnot. He obviously knew my name, since. . . . I don't understand that; that may be unfair. I think he did remember more than that. I had been to his apartment before that, but it was. . . . I was one of the three million people in the city of New York that he had some political borderline relationship with. I think the only specific thing he knew about me really was that I was involved in South Africa. More than that to distinguish me, no. Now, I'm saying all this sloppily, I mean if this was a. . . . Because I already checked and it strikes me even as I say it that. . . . I don't even remember when he went there. It was what, '66?

HACKMAN: '66. July of '66, which was about the same time as the [Samuel] Silverman thing, which didn't you talk to him about?

LOWENSTEIN: Yes, that's right. So I did; I must have. Now was. . .

HACKMAN: It was almost the same time. It could have been before or after.

LOWENSTEIN: Because I was.... The first time I talked about the Silverman thing, he called me to his apartment. I don't know if this is before or after this, but I remember he called me to his apartment. He was in his bathtub when I got there.

HACKMAN: It's got to be before. It's got to be a little bit before.

LOWENSTEIN: Well, then, I'm incorrect in what I've just said, But, anyway, I was in his apartment about this Silverman thing. And I remember it was the first....that time I was.... the first time I had really been exposed to his humor. And I remember the first thing he said after we started talking, was he said about ^{how} ~~the~~ the reform movement had wanted him me to get involved in it, and finally after all this time, and now he was going to get involved in the primary fight, and all of a sudden they ^{being} were very skittish, and they wanted to have interviews with Judge Silverman. And I remember him saying, "What the hell do they want to interview Silverman about? I ^psuppose

they want to ask him how he feels about Vietnam, so they can decide whether they should support him for Surrogate." He paused here and he said, "They'll probably ask him if he wants to issue blank bullets to the American troops." That was the beginning of that conversation about Judge Silverman. I told him I'd help him with the Reformers on Silverman.

That was subsequent to the primary with the . . .

Yes, because then, I think earlier on during the [Theodore S.] Weiss- [R. Peter] Strauss- [Justin] Feldman contest for the Reform designation for the congressional seat in the 19th. In fact during that period he had told people that he wanted me to win, so we must have known each other earlier on. He had told people; in fact, he had said audibly in front of people who were political strangers. And, of course, both Strauss and Feldman were saying that they were Kennedy campaign managers in their literature. I never mentioned him in the campaign at all, and when it came back to me I was surprised that he had said that. So somewhere before that

we had dealings which had made him feel that I was somewhat different from the political reform people that he didn't think much of.

HACKMAN: What... Did you ever get a feel for what his feeling was about Feldman? Justin Feldman. Did he ever talk about him?

LOWENSTEIN: Yes.

HACKMAN: What kind of regard did he have for him? Do you know?

LOWENSTEIN: Yes. I... Well, I'm sure it was changing. I mean, I'm sure that it was not static. I think he preferred Feldman to a lot of the people in the reform movement. He thought Feldman was more realistic and less dogmatic and all that. But Feldman... the fact that in that contest of those four people that he did not prefer Feldman for the nomination would indicate that ^{the} ^{ness} close- that Feldman used to talk about was not a reciprocal as Feldman thought it was. Now, the person who would know all about that would be Ronnie Eldridge because she was his link with the reform movement, and his feeling about Ronnie

Eldridge was enormously enthusiastic. And
 Ronnie Eldridge is also a very genuine, a very
 honest person. She's almost incapable of
 the kind of ~~trying to~~ dissembling that so many reform
 people went through in that period. She was
 fond of Feldman, so she would know any par-
 ticular relationships about Kennedy to reform
 democrats. And really the organization
 aspects, because you know he ^{later} readily sup-
 ported her in a very contorted way for the
 county leadership. And that was, of course,
 again, you could know the dates better than I,
 but I was in England when that came up. And I

...she phoned me, or I phoned her, I can't
 remember, but I remember we talked on the
 phone in England during the race, because
 there was something she wanted me to do.

That... I can't remember now how it came up,
 but something came up where she phoned me, or
 I phoned her. I think what it was was that the
 nomination for the House ^[of Representatives] in the 19th having
 been resolved in this four-way thing the
 question ^{had} came up whether I would accept the

nomination in the 17th where there was a general resistance to [Jerome L.] Jerry Wilson who wanted the nomination. Most of the Reform clubs felt that he was a regular, and the peace people felt that he was muddled on the war. There was very deep resentment against Jerry Wilson among the people who were active in the clubs for those two reasons, or many of the people. The only alternative that appeared was, seems to me, Peter ~~Bassett~~ ^{BERLE} I think. So the Village--the VID [Village Independent Democrats], and some of the Reform clubs--had, in my absence decided they wanted to run me in the 17th in the primary. There were discussions with Kennedy about that, whether I should run in the 17th. There was a period when I thought about it and weighed it very, very seriously.

In fact, what happened was--and this I'm foggy about also--I never said I would run because I had inhibitions about running twice and other reasons that

were confusing me. I didn't live in the 17th, and so on. But the feeling against Wilson was so strong, or the unenthusiasm for Wilson was so strong in some of the clubs that when the votes were counted in the club meetings, I had many more votes than Wilson did without saying I'd run. And then we went into a very complicated waltz about whether I'd run or not. Wilson didn't want to go into the primary, the club vote having gone my way; Wilson didn't want to go into the primary. He said he didn't have the money to enter, and if we had a primary the Republicans would win the seat, so what he wanted me to do was promise I would not enter the primary before he would. This is not on your subject ^{Right?} though. [^] This is all completely... I forgot about this whole episode about Kennedy's involvement...

HACKMAN: Is Kennedy involved?

LOWENSTEIN: Yes. Kennedy was involved in... only in that during that period I talked with Kennedy about running. Kennedy told me then directly [^]

whereas
~~were~~ it in the contest ⁱⁿ ~~it~~ the 19th I had
 not heard from him directly which was that
 he wanted me in Congress. And that he....
 he was very generous about my political
topics ^{promise} and what he wanted to do, and so
 forth. And he did not urge me in or out of
 the 17th. He said that he felt the question
 of whether to go into a primary was just too
 complicated. ³ he did not want to get involved
 in ^a primary with the Silverman thing going on,
 and so on. So, we talked about the Silverman
 thing and the 17th in tandem during that
 period.

HACKMAN: Okay. Let me just ^{||.||.||}
 [Interruption]

HACKMAN: . . . get back to Africa again. That time. . . .

LOWENSTEIN: Is it okay if Johnny sits here for the rest of this?

HACKMAN: Sure. Um, you were talking to him about the speech.

Was his schedule set in terms of where he was going and the groups he was speaking to, and did you feed in on that? Can you remember ^{any} the changes made?

LOWENSTEIN: Yes. Well, I don't know how set it was. I ^{saw} ~~was~~ it. He showed me the schedule and I made suggestions about it, people I thought he should see, and places I thought he should go. How much influence that had I don't know. I told him, for instance, that I thought it was that there were several people that, no matter what happened, he had to see, most important of which was Albert Luthuli. And I told him about Albert Luthuli and my recollection of it is that he was very, very ^{fussy as to who he was,} ~~finely enroped to what~~ ^{even have} may not [^] had heard of him, but I went through a long thing about [^] I told him that I thought this was one of the very few genuinely great men in the world and if, ^{South Africa, he did} in going to [^] rather not see him it would be depriving himself, but also would be politically unwise because this was a gesture that everybody would understand. And Luthuli was under

a ban. He had to go to Groutville [Reserve, Zululand] to see him. He later told me--I suppose this is generally known--that it was one of the very, very great moments of his life, being with Iuthuli, that it was something that had meant a great deal to him. He made a point to thank me for having told him that I thought he ought to go to see Iuthuli; I thought that would be important.

So, there were specific suggestions like that which he might have done even if I hadn't suggested them, I don't know. I did make comments about the kinds of people that I thought he should be sure to see in Johannesburg, people that I told him I thought he should be sure to see--not people from various banned groups--so that it wouldn't look like what he'd done was to come in and take a sort of tent and village tour. I thought he ought to see people in the Liberal Party and I had named some of them that I thought would help the people as well as him because he asked to see them. I told him some about Helen Suzman, whom he knew about, but of course with Francis [Suzman] there it gave him a great new impetus to Helen. In fact, Helen

later ^{me}
~~may~~ have told him that she worked on his speech some,
^{or}
~~and~~ made comments about it when she, when he saw her
 in Johannesburg. So, I presume that some of these
 things had some impact on what he did ^{when he was} there.

HACKMAN: Did he say who he relied on to that point in terms
 of the South African trip and maybe African policy
 in general, or maybe South African policy in general?
 Who did he look ^{to} ^{it} for?

LOWENSTEIN: I never asked him that. I heard from somewhere that
it was the--that he'd been having meals and meetings,
 ever since he decided to go to South Africa, with people
 from South African industry and generally people from
 the Oppenheimer level of political action, ^{progressive} addressing
 party people and business community people; But that
 was second-hand. He didn't. . . . He probably referred
 to it in the course of conversation. I know that in
 the general chatter we went through that day, he
 mentioned people he'd met from South Africa and that
 all of them were white business people, But I didn't
 ask him for anything more specific about that. ^{For one thing,} According
^{to} ^{the} ^{relationship} at that time, ^{it} really wasn't that clear.
^{another} ^{the}
 91 For him, time was very limited. I mean, ^{you were very sensitive} ~~in that sense~~

that if you were with him you wanted
~~we were waiting for a brief period for him to get~~
~~your~~ [^] let him know what you're
~~the points across, to know what we're doing. But~~
~~that was a fine area.~~
^{you could obviously find out about.}

HACKMAN:

~~OK~~, when you came back and you talked to him about
 the speech on the boycott policy, what was his
 reaction? Did he make any change^s? Did he ever do
 anything about that ^{to} come^g around?

LOWENSTEIN:

Your chronology is very helpful, because when he came
 back he was involved heavily in the Silverman campaign.

I remember having ^{how he} come back and landed and he said
 something like, "everybody in Nairobi is for Silverman."

I mean, it was some remark like that. And the next time
 I saw ^{he} him was always involved with the Silverman campaign.

I ¹ was on street corners with him and, of course, his
 visits to street corners, as you know, were ^{extraordinarily} pandemonium, ^{ous}
 or something. There was no where you could. . . . And

I rode in cars with him several times. And ⁹¹ the South
 African thing was never the primary topic and therefore
 we never focused very much on it. He thanked me for
 the help with his speech and was very correct with that.
 He told me Luthuli, I remember specifically he mentioned
 how much that had meant to him. And we talked some

1924

about the kids, the fact that the President ^{of NUSAS --} knew us.

It seems to me he visited the President ^{of NUSAS --} after Ian

[Ian] Robertson had been banned. And he told me about visit-

ing him and something about jumping up and down because ^{he thought} there were bugs in the ceiling. It was something ³ I

remember--You know there was that sort of conversat-

ion. ^{talked} And we. . . . He got himself the same kind of ⁴¹

I don't know what the word is ¹ but the same kind of

magic that South Africa works on so many of us. [^] It happened to him. I mean I fell in love with the place

and never got it out of my system. And some of that

happened to him. He ^{really} felt much more interested in it

and concerned about it than ⁿ any rational reason would

have indicated ^{he} it should. There was that general sort

of bond about South Africa and we referred to obscure

things about his visit. But, ^{thing . . .} the only ² I sort of

^{deleted} detoured ^{on} him around the sanctions thing only to say

^{I thought} that it was foolish of him to have taken a public

position flatly on the question without discussing it,

it and he did not. ⁴¹ my recollection is that he had not

discussed it with blacks in South Africa. that Helen

Suzman had told him that she ^{was very much} would ~~voice~~ [^] against

sanctions and that he relied on that as a statement representing opposition ^{opinion} pending, which was not true. It was representative of white upper class opposition opinion. So but on the merit^s of sanctions I don't recall ever having ^a sort of lengthy argument about it because the circumstances of the visits were ^{always} not a major point. I wasn't in the middle of a great campaign for sanctions. All I was hoping that Kennedy's identification with blacks and with down-trodden people wouldn't be sacrificed. on symbolic statements that could have been more ^{Carefully} heavily thought through before they were made. And that I wanted his word because I did get protests from a lot of the Africans about this fact that he'd said that, who knew that I'd had something to do with ^{his} the South African speech and some ^{relationship} ~~how~~ related it to him. And

4 I passed along that response to him, But I never made a major effort to persuade him ^{he should} to support sanctions in that sense. I ^{told} ~~did tell~~ him why I was publicly supporting sanctions and I told him since his life, his role in life was so completely different, it was quite possible his role ^{was properly} ~~in apartheid was different~~ to oppose sanctions. Because

I always felt Helen Suzman^{was right to} opposed sanctions in the sense that she had to in her situation. It wasn't that I was trying to persuade, but it was that I felt that was one of the things I felt--I think I felt guilty that I had^h briefed him on why some people were for sanctions before he left. But I should have anticipated the question, and felt somewhat that I had been negligent and derelict in not telling him this would come up and why it was a symbolic question of importance to a lot of blacks who he was going to be dealing with.

HACKMAN: ^{OKay} OK. On the Silverman race can you remember anything then when you were riding with him, any discussions with him of either how to run that campaign or how to treat people involved, anything like this?

LOWENSTEIN: He was very, very irritated at Weiss, ^{vivid} which is bitter in my mind because, of course, I was working for Weiss.

HACKMAN: Why was he irritated?

LOWENSTEIN: Well, he was irritated. . . . The kind of thing he would say is that he called Weiss very derogatory names, implied that Weiss was trying to ride in

on his coattails and that he had made it clear he
 was not endorsing Weiss; he was only endorsing
 Silverman. He was ³ ~~the~~ fact that Weiss was on
 Silverman's line on the machine was such a boon to
 Weiss that if Weiss had any decency ^{or intelligence} ~~entitled it to~~
^{he would} ~~him~~ and be grateful for that and realize that he was
 going to inherit this fort. He said that Weiss was
 forever climbing up on soundtracks ^u to appear with
 Kennedy when Kennedy ^{had said} ~~would say~~ he wouldn't do it.
 He resented that very, very profoundly. I remember
 that very, very much, that I had to constantly ^{kind of} try
 to moderate his resentment to Weiss and say to him,
 "But, my God, look at the alternative." (And Weiss,
 of course, at the same time was being very bitterly
^{anti-} ~~around~~ Kennedy which persisted later ^{on}. He felt
 Kennedy was dismissing him as a kind of irrelevancy
 and that he, Weiss, was bringing great strenght ^h to
 the Silverman campaign by allowing his people to
 work for Silverman or whatever. So, there was general
 bad feeling ^{if there can be} ~~between the two~~ ^{bad feeling} ~~giving~~ ^{between}
 a mouse and an elephant. I mean, it was an awkward
 thing. It was an awkwardness about money: who would

pay for what headquarters and whether the literature would mention all the kinds of things that could come up and the chief thing I remember in that situation was trying to be a kind of mediator to keep his resentments at Weiss from being great enough so that he. . . . One point I think that I remember

Ronnie Eldridge would know this but I think I remember

that he was about, he was on the verge of saying something particularly, specifically, critical of Weiss and endorsing Leonard Farbstein. I remember that he came-- that

he was talking in that tone and so angry about the thing and I remember that I told him that it would be very, very foolish; first of all, because it would be foolish for him, Kennedy, to be alligned with that particular wing of the party in that way, but beyond that that he was being much more harsh on Weiss. And that I was a good judge of that; I mean, I had been involved in his contest and that my view of it certainly should carry some weight as to whether Weiss would be a good congressman. Now, it's also true and we're saying all this now, these personal recollections of his are really very private for now.

I mean that's the ^{share} ~~and in this~~ kind of thing we're sure. He was very hostile to ^{Fitts} [William] Ryan and I remember him calling Weiss a "pint-size Ryan" or something ^{phrase} like that. If you knew what he thought of Ryan to begin with, that, of course, was a You had that general atmosphere of. . . . And to put flesh on the skeleton, Ronnie Eldridge is the person because ^{2 by} ~~she~~ then, was whenever he wanted advice on reform politics or people, he would call her and . . .

THIRD VOICE: I apologize, Al, ^{this is the quickest thing I} ~~for the people standing~~ ^{could get} here.

LOWENSTEIN: Oh no, that's fine. I'd even forgotten about it.

THIRD VOICE: You had?

LOWENSTEIN: Yeah. Did you get something to eat? Do you want anything?

^C HADKMAN: No, I'm fine.

THIRD VOICE: I'm going to get him a Coca Cola.

LOWENSTEIN: Can I have a Coca Cola too?

THIRD VOICE: Yeah.

LOWENSTEIN: This is really great. You did great.

Um, the people whom he liked in reform politics you could count, you know, on one hand. And the people he disliked were ^{legion} ~~leeching~~ and part of his problem was that it showed. He was much too honest, as you know, to conceal it. So that there was-- the alliance was very, very uneasy because he felt much more comfortable with almost anyone other than these reform people.

HACKMAN: Who were the other reform people that ~~who~~ he likes?

LOWENSTEIN: I can remember an awful lot of dislikes. Ronnie should be the one who answers that. I'm trying to think if I can remember him being really affirmative about anyone else, and Justin was. . . . He was fond of Justin. There was not any animosity to Justin at all. He thought of Justin as being--as having a greatly exaggerated sense of his own potential. He didn't see Justin as what Justin saw himself as, sort of the great leader of

the party. But he liked Justin, personally, and I think he would of if he ^{'d} lived, ~~try~~^{ied} to help Justin become a judge or one of those things. I mean I had the feeling that he didn't see Justin as a political leader of any consequence, but that he felt he was a decent guy and that he. . . .

And so in that sense Justin was higher on his affection list than most reform people were.

HACKMAN: Does this feeling about the reformers carry down to his other people in New York? I guess I'm thinking specifically of [Stephen E.] Steve Smith and maybe the people on the staff, whether [Thomas ^{M.C.} Tom Johnston or [William D.] ~~Vandenhoof~~ ^{vanden Heuvel} for whatever he does in New York.

Is this part of it? Do they have a lot of trouble getting along with the reformers?

Or Smith, I guess, is most important.

LOWENSTEIN: You ask it comtemporarily, [?] cause an awful lot has changed since those days?

HACKMAN: No, I'm asking in terms of '64, '67. '68.

LOWENSTEIN: Well, in those days there was ³yes, there was a great difficulty in getting along and that went back to the Jack John Kennedy campaign and the whole peculiar ambivalence of the reform movement towards the Kennedy's anyway. The reform movement was heavily [Adlai E.] Stevenson and the-- in fact when I--in '60 and this is not, I think, useful for you because my marginal involvement then was too marginal. ³But I was elected in '60 [Democratic National] to the convention and in a district where I said I would support whoever the district wanted. And we took a vote in the district and it was 80 ^{percent}%, close (ot) 80 ^{percent}% Stevenson. And I was not as devoted to Jack Kennedy as I was to Robert Kennedy, but I was an enormously strong Jack Kennedy fan when he was in the House and I was with Frank Graham. But I felt, having given a commitment that if I was elected I would go with the district, I'd stay with it to the convention. I did ⁴and Robert Kennedy, you know ^{it was} during

his
~~of~~ being the cutting edge of the whole
 Kennedy operation ^{and} he was extremely cross.
 Now, whether he ever remembered that. . . .
 He teased me about it once years later,
 but I don't think he's going to remember
 that because someone told him about it.
 I don't think he ever connected me to the
 '60 business. But the reform scism ^h had ^{begun}
~~gun~~ back then; no question about that; that
 the tension had been very much present then
 in '60. [Interruption]

? : is this one minute extending?

omit?

LOWENSTEIN: No. This is during the debate on the
 resolution. It's not a one minute; it's internal
~~external~~ debate. [Interruption]

HACKMAN: ^{Okay.} ~~O.K.~~ Let me switch to something else.
 You commented briefly, off tape I think,
 the first time we talked that for quite
 a while you had a lot ^{of} trouble knowing how
 to deal with Robert Kennedy, really how
 to talk to him, what kind of things to say,

what he wanted from you. Can you put that on tape because I think that's interesting that someone like you. . . .

LOWENSTEIN: Well, part of it was me. I'm enormously shy around anyone that's famous or that represents some sort of power or importance. I still am and I was even more so then; I was very. . . . And because of that I had a tremendous resistance to sort of pushing into people who are in positions of importance or fame. So, therefore--and I cannot speak when I'm around them, you know, unless they ask me something or start a conversation so that this shyness and this sense of not wanting to push onto people and watching everyone else pushing on them--everyone always wanting something from ^{him} ~~them~~ was especially true of Robert Kennedy. I mean, of all the people that I've known, it was more true of him than anyone. He was the most of all these things, the most.

HACKMAN: The most.

LOWENSTEIN:

Yeah, so that--and unlike Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt for instance, who was the person I'd knowⁿ close before who was most nearly in that situation, but who always solicited the opinion of anybody around her that looked like they were shy; that was not Robert Kennedy's style. So that where with Mrs. Roosevelt she had gradually-- I had gradually come to feel quite free because I realized she really, for some reason, did like me and there was genuinely a-- some sort of rapport of some kind that made what I said of interest to her. So I gradually over- it took time, but I gradually was able to overcome this sense of whatever, inadequacy, I guess.

A With Kennedy, of course, Kennedy, if you were silent, Kennedy was, you know, you'd sit, sort of stare off, whatever, and you wouldn't really be sure if what you said would be of interest and you weren't really very clear about why you were there at all. The

non-verbal communication which became part of the real bond later was part of the difficulty in the beginning, because as silent as he could be, and where someone else would be full of bubbling things to say, I guess I would generally tend to be silent too. And-- so part of, I think part of the whole difficulty was simply that the time that I'd be with him would be so limited, and I would be so unsure what I should do with that time to make him feel it was worth his time that I would ~~and~~ I never sought to see him, which was another thing. And unless there was something that he wanted. . . . Now, they asked me to work for him at some point during this period; I don't know if that's ever been recorded anywhere.

HACKMAN: I think you told that to me off tape and its not down.

LOWENSTEIN: And I don't know what they had in mind in great detail, but Tom Johnston was, seemed to be sort of the instigator. He asked me

if I'd be interested in working for Kennedy in any of about a dozen different ways. They had several things in consultancies, and they had volunteers and they had full-time staff. I remember when he asked me I went to talk to Ronnie Eldridge about whether, at first, I'd be more useful to Kennedy as an independent person than I would be as an appendage, considering the enormity of the appendage of the ~~the~~ entourage.

And I talked to him once about that, whether I should work for him. We talked about that.

41 And I remember feeling then that the incentive to work for him was that I really felt this tremendous desire to be of use to him, and by then it was clear to me that I was a Kennedy person, and that if I could be useful to him, that that would be something I'd rather do than pursue my own career, and that I realized that; but that ~~it~~ ^I also ^{had doubts} ~~adapts~~ that I could be useful to him, being in his employ, because

of the enormity of the orbit and the fact that I would never fight my ^{way} through it. ^{would be that} What would happen, I was fairly sure, I'd be one of the myriad ^{of} people who would report to Tom or somebody about whatever it was, and never be sure that the thing had any relationship to the need or the impact or anything else. ^o I remember during that period when I worked for him having this ambivalence or this conflict of being very flattered and very, as I guess anyone would have been, and also very interested, but also very dubious that that would be ~~a~~ ^{the} place, given my hang-ups and the nature of his operation; whether I would really fit in in any constructive way or simply be one of the people who, because I wasn't brash in the good sense or whatever, that ^o I wouldn't just really be able to do very much for him. ^o I would say that the first beginnings of really my feeling comfortable with him and eventually close to him didn't

vi
Dump Johnson!
come till (Tom Johnston) All during those
it was
periods part of the sense that you were
always sort of on probation and that if
you didn't have something useful to say or do
you shouldn't be there; [^]because I was
certainly never a social friend in the
sense that you were there because you were
found attractive. You were there because
there was something that he wanted from
you, And, or in the case of a lot of
people, you were there because there was
something you wanted from him. And
having this aversion to asking things of
powerful people, I never asked him for
anything. Maybe that's ^{one reason} when he didn't
like me. I guess I never, I don't remember
ever asking him for anything which ^{of course,} was
what almost everybody in politics was
doing all the time. But I don't know if
that illuminates anything or not.

HACKMAN:

Why don't you eat some of that spaghetti?
It's going to get cold.

LOWENSTEIN: I can talk and eat too.

HACKMAN: ^{Okay.} ~~O.K.~~ From the time of the conversation on the South African trip up to the time in '67 when you started to talk "dump ~~Johnston~~ Johnson" what are the other things you talk about? What's he interested in from you?

LOWENSTEIN: How much time are we talking about now? What's the intervals ^{so} so I can remember?

HACKMAN: Well, we're talking about I'll say Silverman ^{and} in South Africa ⁱⁿ July of, July or August of '66 ^{so} ~~that~~ we're talking really about ^{a year} almost a year, before you start talking to him in the fall of '67 about "stop Johnson."

LOWENSTEIN: That's right. Now "dump Johnson" began in the spring of '67, not the fall, because in the early summer I flew to California with him to this ^{m.} [Jesse] Unruh dinner. . .

HACKMAN: That's August ^{4th} fourth.

LOWENSTEIN: August ^{4th} ~~fourth~~. So, it was well before that; ^{of course,} ~~because~~ you'd have to date it what was I

doing that year? I guess I was teaching at City College. I saw him down here several times in the Senate on senate things. I had one very, very odd experience that I've never told. And this is really, . . . this doesn't get shown around does it?

HACKMAN: No, well, [Interruption]

LOWENSTEIN: For some reason that i can't remember, I was asked to come to his office. It was when his office was on the first floor in the new building before he moved. Whatever the reason, I was supposed to go over there and meet him. And when I got to the office they said, "oh, he's having a hearing, he's on ² some committee ^{that's} ~~is~~ having a hearing." It seems to me it was on urban problems in the old office building, So I went to the old office building and there was Helen Suzman who was visiting. And he saw her; he saw me. and he was surrounded by people and what not and he said to me, "Can you bring Mrs.

Suzman over to the office? Can you lead her over to the office and stay to lunch?" She's having lunch with us." So I said, "no, I can't stay to lunch."

And he said, "well, that's silly. Why can't you stay to lunch? We can sit down and talk." So I said, "well, I'll argue with you later," and I said, "so I said," I'll see you at your office." So I walk^{ed} Helen Suzman over to the office and when we got there she worked herself up into a real stew over my staying to lunch, but really angry. I'd never seen her that way before. She was petulant and she said, "I want to see him alone," And you know, so I said, "well, fine, it's all right with me."

And I delivered her to him and I said, "See, I delivered" whatever, you know, and he said, "well, I've got three places in the office. You've got to sit down and eat." I said, "I can't, I've got an appointment; I've got to leave." He said, "oh, don't be

ridiculous. You can eat a lambchop first."
I remember it was lambchops. ^{And} he lead
me into the office or pulled me into the
office and Helen ^{was sitting there} ~~seemed like she was~~ ^{just} stewing.

And there were the three plates for this
lunch, ^{so} I gobbled my food down as quickly
as I could and then made some excuse and
fled. ^{And} I never ^{have} had understood what
was eating her, whether she was just tired
and felt intruded on ^{or} whether she had some
secret message she wanted to convey to him.
I've never asked her about it. It was just
very peculiar. I'm very fond of her and
we've been quite close but she behaved so
very badly about that and it was just
^{some} ~~something~~ that I never quite ^{and} of
course he was completely oblivious, I
guess, to the fact that she thought she
was going to see him alone and that she
expected that ^{but} she did get to see him
alone sometimes ^{because I left after the} ~~over a~~ lambchop or whatever.

But that ^{just} came back as a sort of flash back
of seeing him in his office. I don't

remember what that. . . . Obviously,
there was something on his mind that day he
wanted to talk about. I presume at some
point during that day that we talked about
it, But what sticks out in my mind is this
peculiar business of eating a lambchop and
having Mrs. Suzman in a stew.

HACKMAN:

Well, does he call you at all on reform politics
or politicians in New York or ^{what} does he call you
on? you know, I think, in some of the
reading I've done, people seem to imply
that he's talking to you about what's
going on in the anti-war movement and what's
going on with the young people. Is that so?
What kinds of things?

LOWENSTEIN:

He was always on the war, if I could just
remember what was happening in the war I could
remember more clearly, but we had, over a period,
over that general period, sporadic conversa-
tions about the war, about Johnson, and he
never masked to me his feelings about Johnson

even before we were in any way close.
 I guess he never masked from anybody. ^QI
 remember one trip with him, ~~It~~ must
 have been in that period when I went to
 a Veterans Hospital in Queens with him.
 Do you know when he went to the Veteran's
 Hospital in Queens? He couldn't have
 done it very often. ^Q It was an unpublicized
 trip to a Veteran's Hospital in Queens
 with kids who had been wounded in Vietnam,
 and he just suddenly said can I ride
 out to Queens with ^{him} ~~them~~. And I went out
 and that was another one of those days
 that made me a zealot for Kennedy because
 he behaved in that hospital like nobody
 else in the world could have or would
 have. What happened to him was so genuine
 in the hospital and was so what should
 have happened, and he was the only man in
 the world who could have meant anything to
 those kids and he did and there was none
 of this tripe that politicians would have
 said otherwise. There was clutching hands

and, you know, clearing your throat. And we went through that hospital and it was very clear how deeply the war bothered him even before he made many public statements about it, and I never had the doubt^s about the ^{genuineness} genuineness of his feeling about things that many people did. It was ^{that} that kind of event, when it happened, was just to^d genuine to ever have been artificial. And it was in that period that I went from being, in my own mind, pro-Kennedy because he was on the right side of issues to being, to feeling about Kennedy the additional enthusiasm that made me a Kennedy fan. But it was events like that, I mean this ^{ride} right out and then this inspection of the hospital that were mostly what we'd do. I mean it was very, very, usually it was apparently spontaneous. He must have ^{had} a list somewhere of people whom he liked to check in with occasionally, and when he would find he

³he was going to go someplace and had
 a car it must have occurred to him, ^{"Well,} we'll
 call somebody up and if you can get him,
 get him and if you can't get him ^{"and"} and so
 he would use this time to do an extra
 thing. ⁹I find myself doing it now on a
 lesser scale. I know there are people I
 should see periodically and don't ³ and if
 I'm going to go someplace I say "do you
 want to go along?" ³ And that would happen.
 I think I saw as much of him in cars
 during that period as I did in any specific
 office. ^{be} cause I was frequently riding around
 with him to places. ⁹ A couple times I was
 in his apartment at specific kinds of
 meetings. One day I was there when [Yevgeny]
 Yevtushenko came, and you probably
 will be able to find out when that was.
 He was very excited about seeing Yevtushenko,
 I mean like excitedly eager about it.
 and I didn't see Yevtushenko, he
 cleared the decks for Yevtushenko, but

I was there that same day, for some reason.
 I also remember being there one day and
 I can't remember why, I guess if I could
 look at a calendar I could tell you why --
 on November 22nd. Or maybe it was -- it
 was either November 22nd or it was John
 Kennedy's birthday, But it was a day
 that I remembered before I went there
 was a very special Jack Kennedy day. And
 I remember going in feeling very unwilling
 to go in and not quite knowing what to do
and that was ^{during} the period I was not very--
 when I was still feeling awkward at
 conversations, anyway, but I remember being
 there on one of those days and having
 him talk about-- the first time he talked
 to me at all about his personal things --
 not about the President, as he always
 called him, but about what he saw himself
 doing. And that was the first sort of
 personal conversation we had. He seemed
 very ruminative on that day, maybe because

it was ^{the} a day. ² ~~I'd never heard him~~ ^{he never referred to the day.}

It's like when Ted Kennedy called me up in May of this year and asked me out to his house on June 6th for breakfast, ^{he} never said, never referred to what day it was and I never did and I never knew whether he was aware of it. I mean, we spent the whole morning talking about everything, about him, the year, and everything, ^{but} it's one of the things that just, I presume, could be coincidence, ^{but} It seems unlikely that it would be coincidence.

HACKMAN:

Do you remember what were the things he was saying about his own feeling, or his goals or whatever at that point?

LOWENSTEIN:

You mean at . . .

HACKMAN:

At the time of his--yeah.

LOWENSTEIN:

The clearest recollection I have and ¹ this also tends to blend in with the things that came later that, you know, when I had a clearer depth of it, ¹ But it's the kind of thing which now, ² which since then

you've read everywhere about him, about
 the^e fact that you have to live for now^g
 I mean, this whole bit that he didn't believe
 in long plans ahead, and I remember a lot
 of it seeming to have special relations to
 Jack Kennedy, that at that point, when before
 all the memoirs and all sort of analyses
 appeared, that it seemed very much more of
 a sort of a personal statement thanⁿ I think
 it was. I mean, I think that it was pretty
 much, although it was more personal than
 anything I talked to him about, it was
 pretty much what had become a standard
 statement of that life that he would make
 to anybody who he'd talke^g to about life.
 I don't view it now the way I did then
 of being some sort of breakthrough
 and some sort of deeper insight, but
 it was in our relationship a different
 dimension of it. I remember we sat in the
 living room, in that beautiful green room,
 with all the Kennedy things around and

this view of the river and the UN, and
 everything ⁱⁿ and those sort of deep chairs.
 and it wasn't a meeting. ^{I remember} And I'm not sure
^{feeling = sort of the first time} ~~so the first time it wasn't anything there~~
^{was} were no kind of agenda, ^{Sinking} and so sitting in
 the chair I remember seeing a pad that
 said something ^{on it} either like "Ethel Kennedy"
 or "Hickory Hill," I don't know what, but
 something specifically Kennedy there;
 feeling all the oddity that one did in
 those days of really being in the Kennedy
 house, and being with this man, and not
 being there as a sort of minor head of
 state or even a major head of state the
 way it always had been. And this time
 we were just there as human beings and
 all of that is a very different feeling.

and . . .

HACKMAN:

Yeah, ^{Okay.} O.K. Can you remember in your
 conversations with him on Vietnam, can
 you recall any differences between the
 two of you on the way you saw what was

happening in Vietnam? Were there any arguments back and forth about what was going on? That's the first part of the question, I guess. Number two, what kind of things, if any, did you urge him to do that he did or didn't do?

LOWENSTEIN:

Well, there were never differences so much about what was happening as there was about what he should do about what was happening. ~~There was never--~~ he never tried to persuade me that the war was right, but he did have a greater bias toward some of the things that his brother had been committed to in those days than I think he had later. ~~I don't think he had--~~ I think his thinking was so much more pro-war ^{then} than it was later. I don't think he really had been ~~he~~ ^{affected} hadn't been ~~accepted~~ either by the blacks or the kids or the poor the way he came to be later. I mean, there wasn't that dimension of re-examination

of some of the traditional ^{Cold War} ~~pro-war~~ thinking that ^{...} I mean, I think a lot of that had begun . . .

HACKMAN:

When is later though? When is later because we're talking of, I guess, about conversations in what, late '66 and early '67?

LOWENSTEIN:

Yes. Well, all this was going on all the time, and the erosion of his old views and the looming of the new ones was something quite phenomenal to experience. And you could see it; I mean, certainly the war did that to a lot of people. I think the Dominican thing did it to him because I went to the Dominican Republic and that's something that I told him a lot about. I remember now sort of chewing his ear off once about "the horrible thing" we had done in the Dominican Republic and, "why hadn't more been about it," ^{said} and how [?] "could we excuse it," [^] "that kind of thing," because that affected me very much, and

I think it affected him much more than perhaps was immediately apparent because it was the kind of thing which had to add to the doubt of the credibility of what was being said about Vietnam, and feed into these general ^{suspicion} ~~sufficiently~~.

Now, of course, all during this time the last thing that was in his mind was running for President in 1968. I was committed against Lyndon Johnson by then so that the marginal ^I ~~the~~ tangential references to stopping Johnson, opposing Johnson, were frequent in things I was talking about all that period, ^{not} ~~not~~ that I was urging him into it or that I was discussing it as a serious movement, but just to say, you know, "we're not going to accept this thing again." And I talked to him a good deal, relatively, in the sense that out of the limited times I'd see him, I would talk to him a good deal about Martin Luther King

and about why it was important that we get blacks. I mean, he was still very, very much at the fringe of understanding a lot of the black stuff when I first began talking with him which is '66. He, you know, had grown a long way from the [James] Baldwin thing in '63, you know, when he had that "62; when he had that business there, and he had come to have [understanding] through his brother and through Mississippi and through a lot of attorney general things. It very much deepened ^{his} conviction about the thing, but a lot of the black militant thing. . . . I mean, I remember one thing that we spoke about was what people should he see to get-- in this quest to understand a lot of things that he was just sort of sensing and there were some meetings ^{at} which I helped to suggest some people he should go to, or people to go to his apartment that were there to throw out their own ideas and sort of try to

reach him. ² But it always seemed as ^{if} ~~if~~
it was no question that this was for him,
in assessing what he really wanted to do
with himself. There was an awful lot of
re-examination of both domestic and
cold war world political assumptions
that he had just accepted before. So, I
think one thing that you could say is
that in a very real sense he jumped over
over the whole sort of New Deal liberal
thing that everybody in New York was
caught up with, because he was really
not a liberal at all in any of the
traditional senses that you might define
the term. And when he was with [Joseph R.]
Joe McCarthy and when he was growing up
as a kind of ^{of} all the things he was in
that period, he certainly was not a great
friend of blacks, or of labor, or of
traditional all the Roosevelt-Kennedy
resentments were there. I mean, they were
so profound on Mrs. Roosevelt's side, as

well, that. . . . So when he came
to being transformed on a lot of these
questions or when his views on the war
and on the domestic crisis, influenced
by New York, and influenced by the assassination, and
influenced by his perceptions as he traveled
places and his capacity to get new ideas, all
all that happened, I think he managed to
avoid getting bogged down in a lot of the
kinds of shibboleths that had trapped a
lot of other people, and certainly his
experience ⁱⁿ ~~with~~ Bedford-Stuyvesant. I
remember that aspect of trying to figure
out what to do with black self-develop-
ment, in black, Kennedy, and everything
else, well, Robert used to talk about that.
A But to go back to the question about the
war, the general thing that, of course,
I was one of those people, of which I'm
sure there were a legion, that were
constantly urging him to take a leadership
in fighting against the policy on the war.

When he finally did it, it was sort
of ^{his} coming home because it was so clear
he'd wanted to do it, and he was ^{chafing} chicken-
to do it, and he had all these conflicts
in ^a miniature ^{sort of} replica or forecast of the
whole presidential thing. Should he break
with the President on the war? Should he--
whether ^{it was} responsible, or wouldn't much more
^a attention be paid because he was ^a Kennedy
and Kennedy's brother, ^{and} would that be
fair, ^{and} would he be jeopardizing the kids
in the battle and all that? And later on
I remember how he--I don't remember when
the trouble occurred, I remember when
the trouble occurred that he told me
that was proof of how dangerous it was to
oppose the President, ^{because they could} if you manipulate
events and ⁱⁿ some way create a national
crisis. We always had that feeling that
if he said something about Vietnam, the
President would do something which would
discredit it or make him look foolish.

Q Then there was that whole business about his trip to Paris. Now, when was that?

HACKMAN: That's in February of '67.

LOWENSTEIN: Well, I remember seeing him when he came back. He had had a terrible scene with the President that he was very frank about, and I can't now remember how much of it he told me then, and how much he told me later. But I mean, I remember he told me something about it then, more than I had expected he would tell me about it, and how frightened he was at what this meant that if the President would react that way.

It was the first time that I remember him specifically questioning whether Johnson was really sane, and that kind of question. I don't remember if he used the word "sane," but the question ^{was} ~~is~~ ^{was} whether he was really in control of himself then. What did this portend and what should he do now that he had been through this? And it was clear

it moved him to doing something. I mean he came out much more prepared to move than he would have been prepared to do before. In fact he said, I remember him saying that ["] maybe you guys were right; you fellows were right. This is just something that is such a basic difference that we've got to do more than we've been doing about it, ³ and it is an issue that we can't sort of stand aside and try to influence from the inside with that kind of thinking." He came out of that.

HACKMAN:

In your conversations with him about the black people, the black leaders that he should be talking to, what was his response? Did he talk to many of the people you suggested? Were there new people that you introduced him to? Or is he reluctant in some cases?

LOWENSTEIN:

^{never saw him}
I ~~wouldn't say~~ reluctant. I don't know whether ³ he always followed through, But I would give him suggestions of names and he would always be eager to get the

suggestions. Now, you'd have to check with [^]I don't know [^]his calendar to see which ones were included in what affair. A couple times [^]I can't remember whether it was once or twice [^]but I was asked to some sort of ^{these} seminar things he would have. I remember once he had Franklin D. Roosevelt III, who was at one, or had helped to organize one, or was involved in one, and then talked to me. And I didn't get to it. [^]I was out of town, or something came up where I couldn't be there. And I know that these things--that he felt he was getting a lot out of these things because he would make references to people he met at them and say that this had been ^{and} he asked me, "do you know so and so," or "what do you think of so and so," you know, get a judgement about what that was all about. Of course it came to ultimate, not fruition, but sort of an apex of what had happened

to him, how much he had grown, and
 in all the ways that he grew in
 Atlanta, right after the assassination
 of King, cause that extraordinary night when
 he took on the whole black militant
 leadership and the ^[Southern Christian Leadership Conference] SCLC but a lot of
 very, very tough people who were there
 to humiliate him, and what right do you
 have to come to us and ask us to help
 you run for President? kind of thing.
 He and handled it with, I mean it was,
 handled is not the right word. because
 I think it was genuinely out of him
 and handle implies it was manipulated.
 Out of him by then had come such a
 depth of understanding about what lead to
 these bruises and why these people functioned
 in ways that were so different than he'd
 been used to and all that, he was just
 extraordinary in coping with it. And that
 was, of course, in April of '68, And it
 was almost an unbelievable growth to

a

have gone ^{from?} to where he was in '65 and '66 to deal with these people ^{to} this kind of person ^{when} you think about how far that kind of person had also moved in that two years.

HACKMAN: Yeah.

LOWENSTEIN: You can measure it. I remember sitting there just in awe that night and just wondering how in the world--first of all, how in the world he managed to do it with such grace and strength and insight; but then how he, of all people, managed to do it, remembering how long it had taken. . . .

HACKMAN: Can you see that [Adam] Walinsky and [Peter] Edelman had that much ^{of an impact} effect in this area? (Are they doing, you know, are they basically trying to get him to talk with the same people you would be trying to get him to talk to?

LOWENSTEIN: Oh, yes, / And much more effectively because they were there all the time.

HACKMAN: Yeah. ~~o.k.~~ Okay.

LOWENSTEIN:

And that they were the inside agitators and we were complementary, but without their being at the heart of the thing I don't think that we would have been able--I mean those of us who were oriented that way outside would have had very much effect.

HACKMAN:

Yeah. ^{Okay} O.K. What about, then, the campus groups that you have contact with or other kinds of groups? Which ones are you particularly interested in and are there any relationships that come through you ^{that} or grow on that side of things? Or just what kind of things does he want to know?

LOWENSTEIN:

Well, a lot of people he would meet on campuses would tell him, apparently, tell him about me or ask him to remember me or something like that 'cause I kept running into. . . . He ~~would~~ ^{used} he used to make jokes about it that, "Do you know everybody ^{on} of every campus in the country?"

that sort of remark when he'd come
 back from some place, So I knew
 that people. . . . I think probably
 that added to his sense that I might
 have something to contribute because
 these spontaneous sort of things would
 happen. But his trips to campuses were
 almost never trips in which he could pause
 and look anybody up, so that it was never
 really something where I'd say, "now, when
 you get to this college look these people
 up." That just didn't seem to be the
 nature of his trips. But ^{if} what I did do
 was to try to get people to meet him
 from various campuses. I took to his
 apartment several times people that I
 felt would be particularly of interest
 to him and vice versa. That was beginning
 to be very good just at the point when ^{the}
 presidential thing cut it off. I mean,
 that had begun to become, not a regular
 thing, but often enough, ^{and} I began to

feel at ease enough about it so that I could say to him, "there's some people I really think you should meet. When do you want me to bring them by?" instead of waiting for him to say, ^{as} that I had done for years, you know, the other... I don't know how many of those people by naming ^e he would ever recall, but obviously there began to be some--whatever the word is ^g the blackboard got writing on it.

HACKMAN:

Yeah. ^{Okay.} ~~Ok.~~ How does he react to a specific view of things? What does [Students for A Democratic Society] SDS mean to him in that period? Or how does he react to long hair? Any feel for this kind of thing? Do any of these people turn him off if they're sincere? Or is he clear in his mind on some of these things?

LOWENSTEIN:

Well, I think it's clear that his preferences in people changed very significantly in the last years of his life. I mean, I

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think if you look at the people who he
 was closest to earlier on and look at
 the people he was closest to at the end
 I don't think Rafer Johnson and Roosevelt
 Grier--I just think most of those people
 would have left him turned off earlier
 on. And I think that what he began to
 perceive was real about people and ^{important} influenced
 him, but also was influenced by what he
 was becoming, ³ and quite clearly said to
 Cesar Chavez ² And once you know what ^a
~~he says to~~ Chavez I don't think you look
 at the Mexican or Spanish-speaking community
 with the same bland sense that they're
 all the same and none have that much to
 contribute that you might have otherwise.
 The whole sort of unconscious Wasp ¹ wasp's is
 hardly right, but unconscious pseudo-wasp ¹
 arrogance that was--that underlay so much
 of what he had grown up with and that
 underlay his social set for so long. All
 that just began to began to become less
 and less important and less and less real.

4
And and certainly some of the things he did
after his brother died that took him into
places where he discovered what his
brother had meant to these people, ^{thou} and

???

should not want but the

vast numbers of people that he never
himself had ^{contact} to ~~put up~~ with, would point

???

to his brother's picture in a shack in
Mississippi someplace, and where black
people were, and ^{really} relative ^{the} to what whites

were doing. All that had to have a
contagious kind of effect on each new
event, and he had that much more sympathy
and interest in. . . . 4 I remember

Lucille Cohn told me a story once. She's
hanging somewhere in here. She's about
ninety, ^{she} adored Jack Kennedy and worked
in a reform club in Manhattan. She's
an old woman and he spoke at the Lexington
dinner and she was, or went to it, and she
was sitting there and she had on some
kind of a Jack Kennedy bro^och. And when

he came by, he saw her and he leaned over and looked at it. And she said, "they loved" it was German, I think, and she said something like, "they loved him in Berlin, too," or some sentence like that.

And then he kissed her on the cheek and said, "you're nice," to this very old woman, very funny looking old woman, and she looked up and said "you're nice," then he kissed her on the other cheek and walked off. And

in that capacity to just completely change that woman's life was always there with him, but the kinds of things he did with people were so different in the last few years than they were, I mean when he was Attorney General. I'm sure you've heard these stories before about going into a room and really just, you know, some young lawyer's there and just destroying the guy, saying ["] what the hell ^{are} you wearing that ridiculous suit for ^{the} just, you know, completely what was the basis for the

later
latest sense of ruthlessness. But, so
little of that appeared ⁱⁿ and when I knew
him well, that in ^{the} ~~the~~ end there was this
constant sense with him that--he'd ^{be} come
almost like Mrs. Roosevelt in that sense in his own
^{different way --} ~~that~~ there was almost the sense that anyone
was left happy. He was always himself the
way she was always herself. He never ^{knelt} ~~eopped~~ ^{knelt}
out to ^{the} mood or to the style the way so many
people do. But within that context he
was very much more concerned about all the
kinds of people that later on loved him so
much, ^{And} that was reciprocal. You know,
an old lady sitting there with a broach on.
I think we should stop because you're
late for your wife and they're waiting
out there, but I don't know. . . .