Patrick J. Lucey Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 08/01/1964
Administrative Information

Creator: Patrick J. Lucey
Interviewer: Leon D. Epstein
Date of Interview: August 1, 1964
Place of Interview: Madison, Wisconsin
Length: 50 pages, 1 addendum

Biographical Note
Patrick J. Lucey (1918-2014) served as chairman of the Wisconsin Democratic Party from 1957 to 1963. This interview focuses on the 1960 Democratic primary in Wisconsin, the tension between Wisconsin Democrats over the primary, and John F. Kennedy's campaign, among other topics.

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Suggested Citation
Patrick J. Lucey, recorded interview by Leon D. Epstein, August 1, 1964, (page number), John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.

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of Patrick J. Lucey

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(Date) 19 December 1964

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Patrick J. Lucey– JFK #1

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Patrick J. Lucey

Interviewer: Leon D. Epstein
Leon D. Epstein

This is an interview with Patrick J. Lucey, formerly State Chairman of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin and a key figure in the Kennedy-for President effort in the 1960 spring primary in Wisconsin. The interview is taking place in Madison, Wisconsin, on the 1st of August, 1964 and the interviewer is Leon D. Epstein.

LDE: Now let me ask you as the first question, since almost everything about your relationship, given your part in the campaign, is crucial to understanding the presidential primary here, when you first met President Kennedy?

PJL: I first met him at the 1952 Democratic National Convention. It was being held at the Stock Yards in Chicago. I was in the Stock Yard Inn and was introduced to him there. He was a young congressman then, about to launch his campaign for the U.S. Senate against Henry Cabot Lodge. He was very deeply involved in the Stevenson effort and while I was sympathetic to Stevenson, in fact Stevenson was my secret preference for the nomination, I was nominally a Kefauver delegate, or alternate delegate, and the Kefauver people felt that they were getting a very raw deal. And I, too, began to absorb some of that and was

annoyed, just in the interest of fair play, at some of the tactics being used against Kefauver. And my conversation with Kennedy involved principally the selection of a vice-presidential candidate. I said to Kennedy, "I understand that you Stevenson people are even willing to accept a southerner for vice-president in order to nail down the nomination?" And he came back with a remark that went something like this: "Well, if you northern liberals are going to sit on your hands and not come around to support our man, the people who participate in putting together the votes to nominate him are obviously going to have a voice in selecting his running mate." And I was more right, of course, than I realized because John Sparkman became the nominee. But at this point my temper was a little out of control and while I didn't say all the unkind things to Mr. Jack Kennedy that I felt toward him at the time, I walked away thinking to myself that, particularly after his reference to <u>you</u> northern liberals, which seemed to separate himself from that classification, I walked away thinking that if I lived in Massachusetts, I'd probably be voting for Lodge.

LDE: This was 1952, at a time when you, along with most of the Wisconsin Democrats, hand't tasted very many of the fruits of office. We were still, here in Wisconsin, the Democratic party out-group, weren't we?

PJL: Yes, yes. I was then working as the organization director for the party, a full-time job. And had been doing that since January of 1951, after I'd been defeated for Congress.

LDE: Let me again pick up the story of your relation to Kennedy. Between that time (1952), and let's say the 1956 national convention, when Kennedy was rather briefly a candidate for the vice-presidential nomination, had you any relations in that period? Had you seen him?

PJL: None at all. None at all, and I again went to the convention in 1956, this time not as a delegate or alternate delegate, but simply as a guest. And I sat up in the balcony and I was impressed with him when he narrated the movie that the national committee had prepared. But when it came to selecting the vice president, after Stevenson threw it open to the delegates, I was a Kefauver man. I wasn't at all sure that it would strengthen the ticket to have a Roman Catholic even in the No. 2 spot at that time.

LDE: So that your early experiences with Kennedy, first the incidental meeting, which personally was important to you in 1952 when you reacted to his remark about northern liberals, and then again in 1956 when he was a vice-presidential candidate, or rather the candidate for that nomination, these two experiences led you to think nothing about a future tie with Kennedy or think of him as a future presidential possibility?

PJL: That's right. It was the furthest thing from my thought.

LDE: Well, then, we come to the time in October 1957, when you became chairman of the state Democratic party in Wisconsin. Between the 1956 national convention, that is between the summer, 1956, and October, 1957, had there been any relation with Kennedy in that period?

PJL: Not directly. I had been chairman of the Proxmire campaign committee in the special election which culminated in August of 1957. Senator Kennedy had come in and campaigned in Milwaukee and up through the Fox River Valley to Green Bay for Bill Proxmire. And though I was chairman of the campaign committee, I did not happen to be over in the eastern part of the state when Kennedy was here and therefore I did not meet him or talk to him or have any contact with him during that period. I was, however, aware that his campaign effort in behalf of Proxmire seemed to have a considerable effect in the Fox River Valley and this, of course, gave me a more favorable attitude toward him than I had previously had.

LDE: But then not long after, you became state chairman in October, 1957. There was a Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner, I believe in May of 1958. Does that coincide with your recollection?

PJL: Right, that's right.

LDE: Now, had you been involved directly in bringing Senator Kennedy to speak at that Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner?

PJL: The first contact I had with Kennedy's office was not too long after I became state chairman. I think it was still in 1957. I received a call from Ted Sorensen, and Ted seemed to be simply seeking my advise on the advisability of Kennedy accepting an invitation from the Milwaukee Press Club to speak at their annual Gridiron Dinner in Milwaukee. I can't remember exactly how that went, but as it turned out he did not accept the invitation. But during the course of my discussions with Sorensen, all by telephone, the idea occurred or developed

that maybe instead of his coming to speak to the Press Club he ought to be the speaker for our Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner which would be held in the spring of 1958.

LDE: And he did subsequently come so that your relations with Kennedy, to a large extent through the Sorensen telephone contact, were established some time early in 1958. Maybe I shouldn't call these relations, but wouldn't you say that the key was his appearance at the Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner in the spring of 1958?

PJL: Yes, that's true.

LDE: And did you then establish at the time of the Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner a personal relationship of any kind with Senator Kennedy?

PJL: Well, we hit it off very well, and Sorensen suggested that Kennedy was quite an attraction on campuses. And it happened also, at this time, that a young law student, here at the University of Wisconsin, was clamoring for a speaker for a law banquet. So somehow the thing all fell together and Kennedy came in on Friday afternoon instead of Saturday afternoon and he came to Madison instead of Milwaukee. And we had a banquet in Great Hall (of the student Union) by one of the law fraternities, and then he went to the main theater at the Union and spoke to a capacity crowd of students. He gave a speech that was one of his standard speeches for campus audiences. It had a lot of literary references in it, but I was a little critical of it. I thought it was a sort of a speech that a valedictorian might give rather than the kind of speech

you would expect from a Senator aspiring to the presidency. The audience, however, apparently was less critical than I and responded very well to his speech. The next day we spent a very busy day. John Reynolds was in town and he and I and Sorensen took Kennedy over to meet with Mr. Evjue. Then, I believe, we held a press conference at the old Park Hotel and finally took his chartered plane and flew over to Milwaukee. We got over there quite late for a luncheon that had been scheduled at the Schroeder, but we did get to the luncheon. Again it was a capacity crowd. And after that I think that he held a press conference or made an appearance. I believe he made an appearance on a T.V. program before getting ready for the dinner. So he had a very full 24 hours of campaigning.

LDE: Now as you indicated, by this time, the spring of '58, he was already being considered and no doubt was thinking himself of the possibility of running for President in 1960.

PJL: I don't have any doubt in my mind that he began running for President the moment that he failed to defeat Kefauver for Vice President in 1956.

LDE: This was then still some time, of course, before his own reelection as Senator, which came in '58, didn't it?

PJL: Right.

LDE: Now if this is a fair question, did you discuss either with Senator Kennedy or with Sorensen or anyone else on Kennedy's staff the possibility of the presidential race in 1960 and if so, did you talk at all about the Wisconsin primary in '60, this early, that is in '58?

PJL: Well, I'm sure that we did before the year '58 was over, but certainly when he came in for the Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner we did not discuss it. I remember that night after the dinner, my wife and I went to our hotel room and my wife was convinced that Kennedy was presidential timber. And my reaction was that this whole combination of Jack and Jackie was just a little too cute and I didn't think the American people would buy it.

LDE: While you seem to indicate here that as late as the middle of 1958, you yourself were not yet committed, apparently, but you were thinking about it, talking about it with your wife, when did you first, let's say in your mind, become committed to the Kennedy candidacy?

PJL: Well, in the spring of 1959. In jumping to that, I don't want to omit the fact that he made a number of appearances in Wisconsin between the spring of '58 and the spring of '59. In the spring of 1959 we held the Mid-West Conference of the Democratic party, in Milwaukee, and while Kennedy could not be there, Hubert Humphrey was and Ted Sorensen was. And Ted and I, after a late banquet meeting where Hubert Humphrey spoke, went up to my hotel room and Ted asked me point blank whether or not I was prepared to support Kennedy for President. After some discussion, I told Ted that I still was not convinced that from anything that I had seen of Kennedy himself, or anything I had read of his voting record, that he was a convinced liberal. But by this time I had become so sold on Ted Sorensen that I told Ted that if he would give me his assurance that he felt

that Kennedy was a genuine liberal that I would give him my pledge of support because I felt that it probably would not be possible to nominate and elect a more liberal candidate than Kennedy.

LDE: This is an interesting connection you have established here with Sorensen. This is a little off the subject of direct relationship with Kennedy, but since he himself was so close to the President it's reasonable to ask this question. Was this compatibility you established with Sorensen related at all to the fact that he himself was originally a mid-western person who came out of Nebraska with a background a little bit more like Wisconsin liberalism than say that of an easterner?

PJL: I think there was some of that. It certainly became evident from our first telephone conversation that we sort of reached each other and we got along very well.

LDE: Well, there seems no question that the crucial time from your point of view is the spring of 1959. This is when you became a convinced Kennedy supporter and ready, I suppose at that time, as has generally been your fashion in Wisconsin politics, when convinced of something to go ahead publicly in support. You became publicly identified with him in the spring of 1959, didn't you?

PJL: Well, I was in a funny kind of situation because I was state chairman, and there was sort of an unwritten tradition that the state chairman was supposed to preserve some degree of neutrality in these matters. And so while I was an avowed Kennedy supporter, and did everything I could to advance his candidacy, I did not publicly declare my support of him then.

And when I was a candidate for reelection as chairman in the fall of 1959, I did not declare for Kennedy. I was approached by some of the Humphrey people and was told that they were going to try to beat me for reelection on the issue of my being committed to Kennedy. And I informed them in private conversations that I was committed to Kennedy, that I did not intend to publicly declare myself until after the primary, and that then my position going into the convention would reflect the results of the primary, but that I was for Kennedy, that I would use my office in whatever ways I could short of a public announcement to support his candidacy, that if they wanted to oppose me because of my position on Kennedy that I would welcome that because I thought I could win and this would be interpreted in the press as a test vote between Kennedy and Humphrey.

LDE: Then in the spring, still going back to the spring of '59 (which is somewhat before the point you have reached here in discussing the October '59 state party convention), there was organized in the late spring and summer of '59 a Kennedy for President group in Wisconsin with Mayor Ivan Nestingen of Madison as chairman. Did you have a hand behind the scenes in that organization?

PJL: Yes, very definitely.

LDE: I think it has been interesting to many people, since you were known to be close to Mayor Nestingen at the time, that he became the chairman of the organization. What was the strategy in choosing him?

PJL: Well, partly because of my public neutrality, partly because it did not seem advisable to have an Irish Roman Catholic heading up the campaign mechanism for the first Irish Roman Catholic president.

LDE: Mayor Nestingen, it has sometimes occurred to me in thinking about this, might have had another virtue in the eyes of Wisconsin liberals as a Kennedy supporter. While, of course, most Democrats or almost all Democrats around here opposed Senator McCarthy, who was anathema for most liberals in the state, Nestingen had been a rather conspicuous opponent of Senator McCarthy in the - - -

PJL: "Joe must go" movement.

LDE: Yes, he'd been head of the "Joe must go" movement, and I thought to ask whether this was considered as relevant as the religious angle, Nestingen of course being Protestant, in that there was a suspicion in Wisconsin that Kennedy had been soft on McCarthy.

PJL: Well, of course, that charge was made rather freely by those opposing Kennedy. I don't recall that that came into consideration, although it may have. The way that Nestingen got involved is rather interesting because I believe it was at the time of the 1958 visit, in the spring of '58. Sorensen indicated that he and the Senator had heard some very good things about our mayor in Madison and since he was coming to speak on the University campus anyway, couldn't I arrange for them to meet Nestingen. Now, I wondered how Nestingen's fame had traveled so extensively and it was only years later that I

found out that after the 1957 trip in here, when Kennedy came in to campaign for Proxmire, Sorensen and John Reynolds had become very close friends. And at one point when John Reynolds happened to be in Washington, and at this point they didn't know Pat Lucey, Sorensen asked John Reynolds if he would head up a Kennedy organization in Wisconsin. John said that he did not think that it was wise to have an Irish Catholic politician heading up the organization. And he at that time suggested to them that the obvious choice to head up their organization was Ivan Nestingen. And, so when Sorensen called me in early '58 and made reference to Nestingen, it was really on the recommendation of John Reynolds. But I didn't know that at the time.

LDE: Now if we can skip ahead here to the time rather late in 1959 and right at the beginning of 1960.

PJL: Before we get into that, there's an incident that happened in this Mid-West Conference that I think ought to be recorded.

LDE: Yes, I was going to ask you, before we skipped to the later period of the winter of '59-60, whether there was anything in the interim that you would put in.

PJL: Well, my pledge of support, I think, occurred late on a Saturday night and I did not realize at the time how quickly I would be pressed into service in behalf of Kennedy. The very next morning I ran into Jerry Heaney, who was the national committeeman from Minnesota. Before the Mid-West Conference met, a rumor was about that this was to be a "stop Kennedy" conference. I was asked about this by Cy Rice of the

Milwaukee Sentinel, and I said I couldn't conceive of how they could use the Mid-West Conference to stop Kennedy. But when I ran into Jerry Heaney the next day, and I had known Jerry when we were students together at St. Thomas College in St. Paul, Jerry informed me that as far as the Wisconsin primary was concerned, that any prospect of a contest had been eliminated because he and Humphrey and Governor Gaylord Nelson had met the night before and they had agreed that Gaylord would be a favorite son stand-in for Humphrey. I'm sure Heaney felt even then that I was somewhat friendly to Kennedy, if not thoroughly committed. So my problem was obvious, and that was that I had to stop the "stop Kennedy" movement before it got started. So I spent part of the morning hours thinking about what I might do to counter this move, because if this once became public knowledge it might very well have accomplished its purpose.

LDE: We're talking now about the spring of '59?

PJL: Right. So that afternoon, it happened that the state administrative committee was meeting. And so I dreamed up a resolution having the administrative committee go on record as inviting all liberal democratic presidential aspirants to participate in the Wisconsin primary. This, of course, created a great deal of annoyance on the part of the Governor. And when the Governor proceeded, or through people friendly to him in the newspaper business, to get out the word that he still might be a favorite son candidate, Bill Proxmire got involved in the act and said that in case the Governor became a favorite son that he, too, would consider a favorite son candidacy and that they would have a contest for favorite son.

LDE: I take it, without putting too much of a fine point on this, that the favorite son strategy with Governor Nelson as the favorite son was basically a "stop Kennedy" strategy and to some extent a pro-Humphrey strategy?

PJL: Well, completely. What Jerry Heaney told me was that the deal had been made and that Nelson's favorite son candidacy would simply be a front for Humphrey's slate of delegates.

LDE: Now, we still come to what is the crucial question, that is the decision of Kennedy to enter the primary. At the time that you participated, in the spring of '59, in the stop "stop Kennedy" effort at the Mid-West Conference, you didn't know that Kennedy was going to enter the Wisconsin primary? This wasn't decided?

PJL: No, that's right, that's right.

LDE: And it's fair to say that during this period it would have been contemplated by Nestingen and by you and by the Kennedy people, but not finally decided.

PJL: That's correct.

LDE: Now this decision as to whether to come into Wisconsin, I take it, was debated for a long time in such a way as to involve the Wisconsin Democrats for Kennedy as well as the Kennedy people, and it was regarded as a very risky decision to take. Even after the decision was made and the primary was held, there must have been some second thoughts as to whether this was right?

PJL: I don't think Ted Sorensen was ever in favor of coming into the primary and I think to this day he would probably argue that they would have done all right without coming in. I'm not

sure that he would do that, but he was opposed. He was never sympathetic to the idea. I'm told that, at one time, the only two advisors who were urging it were the Ambassador, Joe Kennedy, and myself.

LDE: Was it true that, in addition to yourself, the people in the Wisconsin Kennedy group, Nestingen and the others, were in favor of it?

PJL: I think that's true, but as I pointed out in a number of communications to Kennedy and to Sorensen, I felt that our position had to be that he should come in, but that we couldn't avoid having a rather provincial view and that the decision had to be made by them at the national level rather than by us.

LDE: And, of course, it was made that way.

PJL: That's right.

LDE: Without any question, do you happen to know for the record who besides the father, Joseph Kennedy, Sr., in the Kennedy group ever came around in favor of it?

PJL: I think the decision was made by Jack Kennedy himself. I think it was made in the face of opposition from quite a number, probably the vast majority, of his close advisors. On the day that he announced, in January of 1960, I was with him at the airport when his plane broke down while he was trying to get from Wisconsin to Nebraska because he wanted to declare in that primary the same day. There was about a three-hour wait at the airport and we had a lot of time to stand around and visit. And he came over to me and said "Well, now that you've conned me into this thing, how do you feel about it?"

And I said "Well, that I would feel pretty terrible if you lost." And, after teasing me a little bit about it, he grinned and he said "Well, don't feel that way about it." He said, "As of today, my chances of getting the nomination are a lot less than 50-50. If I win the Wisconsin primary, they'll be just slightly better than 50-50. So if you look at it that way, I'm not gambling very much."

LDE: Of course, even if his chances were, say, at that point as little as one out of three, in other words considerably less than 50-50, if he came into Wisconsin and lost the Wisconsin primary quite decisively---

PJL: He would have been dead.

LDE: But could he afford roughly a stand-off in Wisconsin, since he was running against Humphrey, who had certain seemingly natural advantages here, while he couldn't afford a loss?

PJL: I'm not even sure he could have afforded a stand-off. I think that the victory he won here was perilously close to what could have been put down as a defeat. I don't think that he could have afforded a single defeat on the primary route.

LDE: There have been allegations, which you've probably heard, about the long discussion and newspaper stories, in let's say the couple months before January, 1960, when Kennedy did announce, in which all the risks of the Wisconsin primary were stated and indications were that this was a hard one for Kennedy to come in on what was close to Humphrey's own ground. There have been allegations that all this talk was a little bit

calculated and maybe phony in an effort to build up Kennedy as the underdog when he did finally decide to come in.

PJL: It goes without saying that primary victories are psychological victories, and if you're managing a presidential campaign and you don't set the stage for the psychological effect that you want from a primary, then you're not a very effective manager of a campaign. I think, however, that their concern was sincere, and certainly the results of the primary bears out that their concern was valid.

LDE: It would seem that way to me in looking back at it, since we knew there was an element of risk all the time. Now could I ask you this? Was there very much work done in Wisconsin by way not only of seeking advice from people like yourself and other Democratic political figures in the state, but was there work done by survey organizations on opinion---

PJL: Lou Harris did considerable polling. These polls were kept pretty closely guarded. I examined a couple of polls--one completed perhaps a year or so before the primary, and one that was much more current. And they, I forget exactly what they showed and I'm sure they're available, but they provided grounds for some optimism, at the same time they showed where the dangerous areas of the state were.

LDE: There surely must have been, in the Wisconsin case, a calculation based on what is usually regarded as a peculiarity of our primary in that it's possible for voters normally of one party to cross-over into the party's primary where there happens to be a contest. So that in a way this matter of testing opinion in Wisconsin, wasn't just a matter of testing opinion of Democratic voters, but rather of all voters, wasn't it?

PJL: That's correct.

LDE: So that you would have taken into account the number of Republicans who might have come into a contested Democratic primary?

PJL: That's true. When the decision was announced, at least, not whether it was true when the decision was made, but by the time the decision was announced, Rockefeller had already pulled out and so there was no likelihood of a contested Republican primary.

LDE: It was plain by then that the Wisconsin Republicans were going to have a straight Nixon slate and there wasn't going to be any contest at all. Do you think, just to talk about the hypothetical, if Rockefeller strategy had been different and he had decided to come in, fight Nixon and the whole Wisconsin Republican organization in 1960, that Kennedy would have then stayed out and conceded the state to Humphrey?

PJL: I don't know. I don't know what he would have done in that case.

LDE: It would have been extremely difficult. There would have been no cross-over vote, I should think, or hardly any, in a case of that sort. Wouldn't you suspect that the Rockefeller-Nixon contest would have been a dominating affair?

PJL: Well, I don't know. The Democrats in September primaries, in recent years, have been getting about as many votes as Republicans have, and I think that what you would have had, if Kennedy had come in and Rockefeller, would have have been two well-financed and hotly fought primaries, with the vote

perhaps being divided very nearly even. I think perhaps the Republicans would have had a somewhat larger vote because they usually do better in spring elections than they do in fall elections.

LDE: It would certainly have been an interesting full-employment measure for Wisconsin, wouldn't it? With all of these fairly well financed campaigns?

PJL: I think that the Rockefeller candidacy might have had an adverse effect on Kennedy's prospects in the 6th and 8th districts. However, his margin there was so overwhelming that I think he would have carried those districts in any event. In the two Milwaukee districts, I don't believe that Rockefeller would have cut in appreciably because the votes that Kennedy got there, I think, were Democratic votes. That takes care of four of the districts. In the 7th, the Rockefeller thing might have made a difference.

LDE: I have a little different kind of question about something that came up very soon after the decision of Kennedy in January of 1960 to enter the primary. There was a meeting of the state party's Administrative Committee at which there was a discussion and decision about how the state's delegates should be allotted. I'm sure you remember the incidents because you presided over the Administrative Committee at the time. Now you might, without my intervening any more, want to explain all of this and what happened, but let me point this question first. I think what were're concerned about is that, since the Administrative Committee decision seemed to be

favorable to Humphrey, why more of a fight wasn't made about it within the Administrative Committee?

PJL: Well, a very vigorous fight was made on the day that the vote was taken. The issue involved this. Wisconsin had had 25 delegate votes up to then and our allotment was increased to 30. The question was, would we add five at-large and continue two from each district, or would we have two and a half from each district and five at-large. ~~I guess I mis-spoke myself.~~ In other words, would the five additional be at-large delegates or would they be divided for half votes for each of the ten districts. This was important to both candidates because the ideal thing from Kennedy's standpoint would have been a winner-take-all. By this time we were fairly confident that we would get the popular vote but we were not sure how the districts would break down. And naturally Kennedy wanted a clean sweep if at all possible. A winner-take-all primary would have produced a solid Kennedy delegation at the convention. The Humphrey people were fighting to have as much strength at the district level as possible on the theory that while they probably would not win the popular vote they wanted victories, district by district, to count as much as possible. The Administrative Committee, on previous test votes, had pretty well demonstrated that the Humphrey forces were in the majority. We thought that we might be able to win this thing. I went to Governor Nelson and pointed out to him that this was a very crucial vote and that it was an attempt on the part of the Humphrey people to change the ground rules for the contest after the contest had

been joined. He seemed to agree with me and he called Sam Rizzo, who was at that time the leader of the Humphrey forces on the Administrative Committee. He and Ed Bayley informed me that they thought I would be pleasantly surprised at Sam's attitude at the Saturday meeting, that Sam probably would make the motion for the formula that I was advocating, which was two votes for district and ten at-large. This to me was sort of a compromise decision because really what Ted Sorensen was pushing for in the conversations I had with him was to go for a winner-take-all primary. But I knew we didn't have the votes to do that. There were one or two switches. When we went into the meeting, I felt we had a majority of one. We had a commitment from Frank Nikolay that he would support us and we had the vote of Rose Grobe who was the 5th district chairman. We got into the meeting and Frank Nikolay switched his vote. Although it was a secret vote, he said so afterwards. And Rose Grobe begged off because there was a dinner being held in her honor that evening, and she had to go home and get dressed for it. She was replaced by her alternate, who was John Phelan, and John was known to be a Humphrey man. And as a result, with Nikolay and John Phelan voting with the Humphrey forces, the vote was 14-12. Had Nikolay stuck to his commitment and Rose Grobe stayed and voted as a Kennedy supporter, it would have been 14-12 the other way.

LDE: I don't suppose this turned out to be so crucial really, since it wasn't a matter of delegate votes only, that is delegate votes as such that were being competed for in the primary, but it was a chance for a show of strength.

PJL: It could have been critical. It meant, when we went to the convention, that we had two fewer votes for Kennedy from Wisconsin than we would have had under the other formula. It also hurt because in carrying four out of ten districts, Humphrey came away with ten delegate votes. He would have otherwise had eight. And I think that from the standpoint of the psychological effect of the victory, it would have been a little cleaner if we would have had the formula I had supported.

LDE: In terms of the campaign itself, since it was set up so that the delegates were distributed to the advantage of the district formula rather than state-wide, did this mean that in planning the Kennedy primary strategy here that special attention was given to certain districts which were thought to be marginal? I take it that it must have been assumed that Kennedy would carry the two Milwaukee districts, the 4th and 5th. The question was the margin, wasn't it?

PJL: That's true. Well, and also the 6th and 8th were thought to be pretty safe. I did all the scheduling, and he campaigned here something like 29 days from January until April. I had a map where I had charted out tours by day and then individual events within each day's campaign. And I remember we had very few days scheduled in the Fox River Valley and, except for one reception in Green Bay, practically nothing in the 8th district. We campaigned very heavily in the 7th. The Alsop brothers did a piece on the 7th early in the primary in which they claimed that the 7th district was the key district. They said that if Kennedy lost the 3rd, 9th and the 10th, all

contiguous to Minnesota, that this would not be particularly damaging. They said that if he lost the 2nd district, which was Stevenson home territory, that this would be interpreted simply as Stevenson people voting for Humphrey. But that if he lost the 7th district, which was agricultural, not contiguous to Minnesota, that this would be the crucial district. And so we did put a lot of effort into the 7th district campaign.

LDE: This turned out to be a district Kennedy did win. He lost four districts?

PJL: He lost four. He lost the 3rd, 9th and 10th, all contiguous to Minnesota but also all rural and, as the papers pointed out, all heavily Protestant. He also very narrowly lost the 2nd district, which we thought he was going to win.

LDE: Living in the 2nd district, the one that centers to some extent about Madison, I can remember well that there seemed to me a kind of concentration here, and I suppose, ahead of time, I might have thought that Kennedy had a good chance to win this district. Do you have any explanation as to what did happen here? Was it a loss of the Protestant, largely Protestant farm vote to Humphrey on a combination of perhaps religious grounds, and perhaps also the fact that Humphrey did have more direct appeal to farmers? That, plus some defection of the intellectuals in Madison because of their Stevenson commitment?

PJL: I think it was a combination of things. In the first place, he carried Waukesha county handily, and the vote in the other counties, Columbia, Dodge and Jefferson, was quite close. He lost the district because he lost Dane County. And

I think he lost Dane County largely due to the hatchet job that was done on him by the Capital Times over a period of a couple of years. I remember one time we had breakfast with Bill Evjue, and Kennedy came in with a sheaf of press clippings from the Capital Times. He laid them before Mr. Evjue and he said, "If I were to form an image of myself based on these clippings, even I wouldn't vote for me."

LDE: Now, this was during the primary campaign that there was this breakfast meeting with Evjue?

PJL: That's right.

LDE: Now, did you have the feeling that it was Evjue himself who was responsible for the Capital Times campaign?

PJL: No, I think the man who was doing the work was Miles McMillin.

LDE: The chief editorial writer of the Capital Times?

PJL: That's right. And, as far as I know, the working reporters at the Capital Times voted for Kennedy.

LDE: Now, this kind of job that was done on Kennedy was not so much in the primary period itself, was it?

PJL: No, it was a build-up over a period of two or three years.

LDE: Some of this involved criticism of Kennedy because of his father, some of it---

PJL: The McCarthy business.

LDE: The McCarthy business. I can remember efforts to try to counter this by Mayor Nestingen himself, who at one time, it seems to me, wrote a letter to the Capital Times putting his

personal stamp of approval, which he was in a good position to do as the head of the "Joe must go" movement, on Kennedy's stand on McCarthy. Was this part of a deliberate effort to try to take the sting out of that charge?

PJL: Oh, sure, sure. But the effectiveness of the Capital Times attack on Kennedy, I think, was reflected even in the vote in November of 1960, when by this time the Cap Times rather lukewarmly endorsed Kennedy. Consider that in Dane County, Bob Kastenmeier carried the county by 23,000 votes, and Kennedy carried it by only 3,000. Normally, you would not have this spread between the national ticket and the congressional vote. And I think that this was a sort of hang-over from the editorial abuse that Kennedy had taken over a long period of time from the Capital Times.

LDE: And the effectiveness of a single newspaper in this respect is partly because it circulates most heavily to Democratic voters?

PJL: That's true.

LDE: So its focus is not so much general in the community---

PJL: Well, I think that and I think too, that the Cap Times, because it puts its editorials on the back of the paper instead of on an inside sheet, and because it is a form of personal journalism, it influences the voters more than most newspapers do.

LDE: You aren't suggesting, when you mention it has its editorials on the back page instead of on the inside of the paper, that it only has them on the back page, are you?

PJL: No, not at all.

LDE: It seems to me I see one, more than once in a while, somewhere else.

PJL: In the news stories.

LDE: Now, this is curious that a newspaper should be this effective. Did you have any impression of the attitude of the rest of the press in the state toward Kennedy? Was the Milwaukee Journal neutral, friendly, or hostile?

PJL: I thought the Milwaukee Journal was very fair. They did not endorse either candidate. One or two of the reporters on Milwaukee Journal, it seemed to me, tried to exaggerate the religious issue. For instance, one time in Racine, we had such a crowd that it was bursting the seams of the hall for a reception for Kennedy. Yet the key item reported by the Milwaukee Journal concerned the religion of the local hostesses for the reception. The reporter had interviewed all of them about their religion and discovered that 21 out of 22 were Catholic.

LDE: I seem to recall, from that very good book written by Theodore White, that he has a comment something along this line, which checks with what you're saying. That the religious issue became prominent because the newspapers said it was prominent. And I think he has some special reference to the primary here?

PJL: I think that's true. He expressed it much better than I can, but I think his point was that when you take this combination of factors and traditions and prejudices and all the rest that go to make voting patterns, and you sort of

separate them out in the public press, that it does tend to distort and to cause people to vote on the basis of one factor or another more than they would in their normal voting habits.

LDE: We talked a little bit about strategy with respect to congressional districts. Let me ask you now about strategy in the primary campaign with reference to particular groups. It has been argued that the Humphrey campaign was, in this respect, more a traditional one in that it regarded various groups as electoral blocs and went after them in more of less a traditional way. Was any of this done in the Kennedy case?

PJL: Not to the same extent. I think that it's a fair comment that Humphrey did conduct more of a traditional campaign in appealing to voting blocs. The Kennedy campaign was, for a very large part, just an effective presentation of a celebrity. He spoke with obvious detailed knowledge on various issues when the occasion arose, particularly on labor legislation. But he also spoke knowledgeably about foreign affairs, about atomic energy and about all these other things. But the appeal, it seemed to me, was something different. And it was a broad appeal. It was an appeal to young people. In the Kennedy campaign, for instance, there was very little effort made to go into the 2nd and 6th and 13th wards of Milwaukee and woo the Negro vote as such. When a reception was held at the Schroeder Hotel, an effort was made to make sure that invitations went to people in the Negro community as well as throughout the rest of the city. But there was not the same kind of rallies in the

Negro churches with the evangelical zeal that became part of the Humphrey campaign.

LDE: Now, take a group like the Wisconsin farmers who could be assumed to have started off, especially in so far as they were Democratic voters, to be pro-Humphrey, because of the long association with Humphrey and because the nature of his appeal in Minnesota to farmers was rather similar to that in which Wisconsin farmers would be interested. Was any effort made to break into that strength?

PJL: To break into the farm strength of Humphrey?

LDE: Of Humphrey.

PJL: The fact is that an effort was made. I think one of the efforts made was that we scheduled Kennedy at the rate of about eight, nine, or ten speeches a day, and we took into account communities with a thousand people or more. We also tried to get him in front of every REA convention we could find. In fact, one time we flew him by helicopter from Richland Center to Lancaster in order that he could appear at an REA annual meeting and another one in Gays Mills, which happened to meet on the same day.

LDE: The reason I raise this about the farm vote is that it would seem to me that it would have been very hard to compete with Humphrey in terms of having favored farm legislation.

PJL: It was hard to compete. In fact I remember one night, Bobby said "Find me a farmer to head Kennedy's farm committee." It wasn't easy. And we finally came up with a fellow by the name of Wally Mewlberg up in the northwest section of the state, in Pierce County.

LDE: With a group like this, even though, as you say, you did schedule talks before essentially farm groups like the REA and any other farm group you could get to, wasn't Kennedy's appeal here, in contrast to Humphrey's, likely to be one which, instead of appealing to farmers as farmers, was an effort in some way or other to cut across that group, and to appeal to them on some other basis?

PJL: That's true.

LDE: Personality, maybe religion, maybe something else. In this case probably not religion, since there wouldn't be very many Catholic farmers?

PJL: No, I think that's true. However, he did make frequent reference to a bill that he and Proxmire had co-sponsored that was of interest to the dairy farmers. He did not ignore the farm issue, but I think he realized he was at a terrible disadvantage.

LDE: Let's take another group here of highly organized people, who, if anything, may have been more Democratic in their voting pattern and in their support than farmers in Wisconsin. That is the unions, where Kennedy would not have had this same disadvantage that he had in relation to Humphrey on the farm vote, but yet where Humphrey had contacts built up over many years with trade union leaders in Wisconsin. What efforts were made here in Wisconsin by the Kennedy organization to establish some participation by union members in the Kennedy campaign?

PJL: We brought in Jerry Bruno from Senator Proxmire's staff very early in the summer of '59 to be the first and, for a long time, the only full-time paid Kennedy worker. Jerry had been in local 72 of the United Auto Workers, the American Motors plant in Kenosha. He had also worked during the Kohler strike on the picket lines up at Kohler and therefore was thoroughly identified with the labor movement. And Jerry did a tremendous job in developing individual union leaders, many of them at the local, rather than at the district or regional level, who would support Kennedy openly. Also Dave Rabinowitz, one of the most prominent labor lawyers in Wisconsin, and an early Kennedy backer, did a great deal to keep the Humphrey support from really becoming consolidated. Early in the campaign, Johnny Schmitt, who is now the vice president of the state AFL-CIO and its COPE director, was an early Kennedy backer who later pulled out of the movement under pressure from some of his colleagues in the labor movement. There was a tremendous amount of pressure to consolidate Humphrey's forces and to bring about a formal endorsement by the Wisconsin labor movement of Humphrey. The endorsement never quite came off and I think that Dave Rabinowitz had a lot to do with it. Jerry Bruno was very helpful on this front, and also it seemed that Walter Burke, while he was not in a position to come out publicly for Kennedy, at least I don't believe he did, but I understand that in the inner circle of labor he kept the labor movement from getting fully committed to Humphrey.

LDE: The problem here was basically to neutralize labor as an organization and to win over as many union leaders as possible to the Kennedy side even though the bulk of union leaders might have been personally favorable to Humphrey?

PJL: Right. And another thing, I think, that helped us was that the union leaders knew, in many instances, that the rank-and-file were not with them. Harvey Kitzman was a very diligent worker for Humphrey and yet as regional director for the United Auto Workers, he not only was unable to take local 72 in Kenosha, his largest local in the state, away from Kennedy, but he finally just accepted this as an established fact and did not try to make inroads there because I think he felt that it would endanger his own position in the union.

LDE: I wonder, apart from the personal appeal which by this time Kennedy had, for various reasons, to rank-and-file union people, whether there was any effort made to sell union leaders as well as other Democratic party people in Wisconsin on the idea that the choice at the national convention was going to narrow down to one between Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson and that really Humphrey at that time, in 1960, wouldn't have had a chance for the nomination anyway and that opposing Kennedy here really meant keeping votes away from the only man who had any serious chance, except Johnson, to be nominated?

PJL: Yes, that argument was made.

LDE: I can remember hearing this, which is why I bring it up. I don't mean this was an argument used with rank-and-file voters particularly, since it was complicated, but I can

remember hearing it mentioned. As a matter of fact, the only time in the campaign when I met Ted Sorensen, it was a point of view which he expressed. Do you think this had any effect? Did anybody support Kennedy for this reason or become neutralized for this reason?

PJL: I don't think very many did. I understand that it had more of an effect on West Virginia.

LDE: Now the question that's come up so many times about our primary, and which we touched on before, is the extent to which it would have been strategy by the Kennedy organization to win the primary state-wide, and in certain key districts, by attracting normally Republican voters to cross-over into this one contested primary we had in 1960. How much deliberate effort was made to gear the campaign to this?

PJL: I don't know that any deliberate effort was made. The party organization that I headed, if we had polled the membership, would have been largely a pro-Humphrey organization. So we had to reach out beyond our regular known Democrats to find people in local communities to work, and so we were sort of forced into the position of reaching out and bringing in, if not Republicans, certainly people who considered themselves independent voters to participate in the Kennedy effort.

LDE: Switching to another kind of subject still connected with the primary, you mentioned before the many appearances you scheduled for Kennedy. Between January and April, do you know how many appearances he made? Let's say, first, to give a set speech or series of remarks before a group, however small or

large. We'll eliminate now just the straight hand-shaking thing down the street, but how many public appearances in the broad sense of that term do you think he made?

PJL: Well, in his 29 days of campaigning, from January to April, we used to schedule him very tight. Seven, eight or nine appearances a day, where he actually got up and made a speech.

LDE: Time, a certain time where he was to speak? Time and place?

PJL: That's right. Scheduled events.

LDE: Now, let's just make sure we have this key piece of information in the record. This was over a period of----?

PJL: It was over a period of three months--January, February and March. And during that three month period he had actual campaign time of 29 full days, which would mean that he probably made close to 250 individual speeches.

LDE: This is a great deal to cram into 29 days. It means you hopped him around largely by plane?

PJL: No, no most of it was motorcade, although occasionally we'd bring a plane in. I wanted to use helicopters in the 10th district, and they decided that that would look like an excessive expenditure of money so at the last minute we had to cut down the 10th district tour because the distances are so great that you just couldn't cover as many appearances as you might want to.

LDE: What he would tend to do, of course, would be to fly in from Washington in his plane and land somewhere in the state and then branch out?

PJL: Yes, that's right. Motorcade.

LDE: Motorcade from there and perhaps an occasional long hop in the state. If he went, let's say, from Madison to Superior, he might go by plane, but otherwise he was traveling around by car?

PJL: Right.

LDE: He didn't have a bus?

PJL: No, he didn't use a bus, he used cars.

LDE: I wonder, before I get to talk with you about the results of the primary, whether there was anything else you wanted to say about nature of the primary campaign that my questions haven't raised, or for that matter any recollections you have of the way in which John Kennedy appeared in the campaign? His own reactions to it, I think, would be especially interesting. His own reactions to our state, perhaps.

PJL: Well, the first official campaign appearance that he made, after he had declared his candidacy, was at Oscar Mayer's, about 5:30 or 6:00 in the morning. Because this was sort of the kick-off, he was blessed with a good supply of national press corps and this was a much celebrated plant-gate appearance. However, he did not care for this type of campaigning and subsequently we minimized the plant-gate appearances as much as we could.

LDE: Even though this had become, by then, a kind of set style in Wisconsin, established originally by Senator Proxmire, to stand at the plant-gate, especially early in the morning, and shake hands as people went in?

PJL: I don't think that Kennedy enjoyed campaigning as much as some people thought he did. I think that he found it a necessary chore and realized that he had to at least project an enthusiastic approach to it if it were to be a successful use of this technique. But I think he forced himself to some extent to go through this type of campaigning.

LDE: It is a very peculiar type of campaigning when one seeks the presidency of the United States, isn't it?

PJL: Just like running for sheriff.

LDE: A combination of the personal appearances and hand shaking. Even though you got away from the plant-gate strategy, it is true that in addition to the many public appearances you scheduled for him, he did, in coming into small Wisconsin towns, do a certain amount of going up and down the street, didn't he? Talking to people?

PJL: Yes, that's true.

LDE: Going into stores, etc?

PJL: And he didn't eliminate the plant gates. We had a lot of plant-gates. I remember one time early in the campaign, I had him scheduled in Beaver Dam, I believe it was, and I called there to talk to Tom Welles, who was in charge of a local event, to see how it was going. Kennedy got on the phone himself, very much to my surprise, and said that it was a good crowd and that he thought it was well arranged. But, he said, "These hotel receptions lead to my meeting too many of our kind of Democrat, rather than the kind that I meet at plant gates." And so he said that for an afternoon affair,

maybe if there was a change of shifts at the local industrial plant he would be better off to be there than at a reception of this sort. Then, when I said, "Well, what do you mean by our kind of Democrat?" He said, "Well, you know, the Lucey-Kennedy kind of Democrat." Meaning that apparently most of the crowd at the hotel were Irish Catholic.

LDE: A great deal was made in the Wisconsin primary, as I guess in others in which Kennedy took part, by the large number of people in the family who came into the state. Did you have anything to do with scheduling their appearances? The sisters as well as the brothers?

PJL: Yes, the girls came in. I remember very early in the deal I was in Washington at Georgetown at their home and Jean Smith was there. The President's sister. I said, "When are you coming out to campaign in Wisconsin?" And she said, "Well, as soon as I'm invited." And as state chairman I thought maybe it was incumbent on me to extend the invitation. And I said, "Well, from whom do you have to receive an invitation?" "Oh," she said, "from Bobby." Bobby was the family campaign manager. When the girls came in, they permitted themselves to be scheduled very tightly, and Helen Keyes, who had handled their coffee hours and teas in Massachusetts, came out, and she was the prime scheduler. However, she had help from a lot of local people who would set up these teas, usually at an interval of one hour, and the girls would simply move from one tea to the next. They'd have a local person as a driver who knew the addresses and knew how to get there, and they would come in and

have their coffee and meet all the ladies present, talk for a few minutes and then move on to the next tea or coffee.

LDE: Did you have a great deal to do with the Milwaukee headquarters of the Kennedy campaign organization in the spring? Headquarters which were run by Bobby Kennedy?

PJL: Well, when they first set up in Milwaukee they were in a little dumpy place on the second floor. Then finally they got an old abandoned department store building's first floor, down in the heart of the downtown district. We also had an office here in Madison on the Square. And at one point it appeared that the campaign was going to be directed largely from this end. But we didn't have very big space here, and the air transportation was more convenient in Milwaukee. For a number of reasons, that became the real nerve center. However, out of the headquarters here, we got a lot of volunteer work. Mailings and things of that sort. So we really had two state-wide headquarters. I did all the scheduling for the President, for Jack Kennedy, out of here. Bobby's schedule was handled out of Milwaukee. The girls were scheduled pretty much in the field. When Mrs. Kennedy, Rose Kennedy, came in, I scheduled her, and for a long time there was a dispute going on about whether Mrs. Kennedy should come in or not. Bobby thought that she should. Kenny O'Donnell thought that she shouldn't and I was caught in the middle. And finally Bobby called me early one morning, as he was inclined to do, and got me out of bed, and said "What about the schedule for mother?" I was working on it, but I hadn't really shaped it up yet. So at this point I called

Kenny O'Donnell, and I said "Look, I've dragged my feet as long as I can. If you want to keep Mrs. Kennedy from coming in, you better deal with Bobby directly because I'm going to go ahead with the schedule." The argument that Ken was advancing, and that I tended to agree with to some extent, was that we had three problems with Jack Kennedy: his youth, his religion and the amount of money that he had. While his mother was then, I think, approaching 70, everybody assured me that she looked like a woman of 50. And how could you possibly convince people that a man is old enough to be President when he has such a young looking mother? But Mrs. Kennedy did come in, over Kenny O'Donnell's resistance, and I think she was quite an asset in the campaign.

LDE: There was a general impression that the family was an asset, if only because it was such a glamorized family, and probably genuinely glamorous as well as glamorized, so the people were anxious to meet them wherever they went.

PJL: And they were so energetic. Sarge Shriver was really in charge of the 1st and 2nd districts. And yet, in addition to stage-managing these two districts, and setting up campaign headquarters and getting the car-top signs made down in Chicago and shipped up here by truck load, etc., he in addition to that was out making his quota of five or six speeches a day. The same thing was true of Bobby. I felt that Bobby probably ought to do one or the other. Either he ought to manage the campaign or he ought to make himself available as the celebrity that he was, in his own right at that time, and

simply be on a speaking tour. But he insisted on doing both and did both quite well. It was amazing to me how he could find the amount of energy that he was able to put into the thing.

LDE: When you speak of having scheduled the President, then Senator, in his speaking tour, and other people, you mean arranging public speaking engagements and any other appointments or receptions there might be by calling people in the communities they were going?

PJL: That's right.

LDE: Is it in this respect that your usefulness to the Kennedys was particularly great because of your contacts around the state as party chairman?

PJL: I think so, not only as party chairman but because I'd been the party organizer in '51 and '52 and I'd probably had, at least at that time, a larger state-wide acquaintanceship than anyone else in the party, with the possible exception of Bill Proxmire.

LDE: The reason I raise this question is actually a more general one. It has often been said, I think with considerable truth, that the whole Kennedy campaign technique, that goes back even to his first congressional race in Massachusetts and then the senatorial race and so on, was to ignore, because it was largely weak and ineffective, much of the old style organization and to conduct a highly individual, personalized campaign. To use an organization, it's true, but an organization that was a personal family organization. Now that was really true here, and, of course, given the technical neutrality of the state

organization, it had to be so, but they did really make use in this way of your organizational contacts?

PJL: That's true. And also we adopted a policy very early in the campaign that the facilities of party headquarters would be available to both candidates on an equal basis. This meant that for mailings they had the machinery up there, the addressograph equipment, etc., that they had our mailing lists. We had a complete set of phone books, for example. In some communities where we didn't have a good contact and we wanted to make sure that Kennedy had a good turn-out, we would sometimes send out a mimeographed flyer to everyone in the local phone book. We had those phone books at party headquarters. So it was considerable help to the Kennedy organization to have access to the party facilities. If I had been for Humphrey and publicly committed and willing to simply close the door of the party headquarters to Kennedy, I think this would have put him at quite a disadvantage.

LDE: Now this meant that while Humphrey could also use the facilities, the mailing lists and so on, that at least this much was open to the Kennedy people and he could take advantage of it. It might also be worth noting, which you know so well, that when we speak of an organization in the Wisconsin Democratic party, we're talking about something rather new-fashioned anyway, aren't we?

PJL: That's right. At that time, we probably had in the neighborhood of, oh, maybe 15,000 or 16,000 members. This was new. As a matter of fact when I took over in 1957 the membership

was about 6500 or 6700. It had been, a couple of years before that, it had been as high as 10,000 but never more than 10,000. So the whole idea of even a cadre type party organization was relatively new.

LDE: This, I think, is of some significance because when you talk about organizations the thing that comes to mind is, say, the kind of organization that is so run down in New York City in recent years, or perhaps the very old Massachusetts or Boston organization. This isn't really what---

PJL: No. Not that type of organization. And also the organization here is not oriented as those organizations were. It is not a patronage-oriented organization, it's principally a matter of concerned citizens, who are issue-oriented and who believe in a set of general principles, coming together and working for candidates who support those principles.

LDE: Could you give me some kind of rough estimate or impression as to when you were getting help, say in scheduling Kennedy or getting people to organize locally for Kennedy, roughly what percentage of them were people who had previously been active over a period of a few years at least?

PJL: People whom I used to schedule events were mostly people who had been active in the party. Now, once we got a field organization going, they developed new contacts, many of whom have since come into the party, but people that I did not know. The first scheduling that I did I had to do by telephone. By calling people I knew and setting up events. But as time went on, I was aided by the Kennedy field organization because they managed to put a person in almost every district and once

he established contacts I gave him leads. Once he established contacts he was able to develop new people. Toward the end of the campaign, I would simply call Chuck Spaulding in Eau Claire or I would call Ben Smith in Superior and say, "Here, you're going to have the candidate for one day beginning at 9 a.m. such and such a day. According to my map he hasn't been in the Spooner area. Maybe we ought to work out a swing through there." And then I would suggest a route and they would go around and establish the actual events.

LDE: While you did, through the Kennedy organization, in effect, recruit some new people to Democratic politics who subsequently may have become active in the organization, you did make use, from the start, of people previously active?

PJL: Right. Another interesting side-light on this is that it confounded the Kennedys. They couldn't understand it, but we had many people in the organization who, though committed to Humphrey, would work on the Kennedy schedule and set up events and they'd work just as hard to turn out a crowd for Kennedy when he came into their town as they might work the next week to get out a crowd for an event for Humphrey. And this apparently was not the way it works in Massachusetts. They just couldn't believe this and they wondered about the sincerity of these people, but the proof of the pudding was that when they'd come into these towns the crowd would be there.

LDE: How did you explain this to them when they asked about it?

PJL: Well, I tried to explain to them simply that these people were dedicated, that they want to build the party, and

that they don't want to get side-tracked by personalities. Therefore, as long as the man met the test of being a northern liberal, they were willing to help him out.

LDE: Was it the Kennedy suspicion that they were simply trying to hedge their bets?

PJL: No, I don't think so. I think particularly of the Dahl family over in Viroqua. Chuck Dahl and his wife, and his father Paul Dahl, they were as thoroughly committed to Humphrey as anybody I know, and yet when Kennedy came into Vernon county they did their best to turn out a crowd for him and I don't think that they are the kind of people who would have that interest in politics if they were trying to hedge any bets.

LDE: This would indicate that the primary hadn't been generally so bitter as it has sometimes been made out to be, if you had devoted Humphrey supporters like this who were willing to arrange a Kennedy schedule for the community. The bitterness seems to me pretty limited?

PJL: The strange thing is, there was bitterness, bitterness of one camp toward the other camp, but also antagonisms developed within the camps. I think that this is generally true, particularly when the candidate loses. But it seemed to me that there was more bitterness among the Humphrey people to each other than there was in terms of inter-camp bitterness of Kennedy people to Humphrey people, or Humphrey people to Kennedy people. And there was some antagonism within the Kennedy organization too.

LDE: Could I turn now--I think we've probably gone over the campaign as much as we can unless there's another thing you

can think of--to the results and ask you whether these results, which were 56 per cent for Kennedy state-wide and 44 per cent state-wide for Humphrey, with six districts Kennedy and four Humphrey, whether these results accorded with your expectations? I'll ask you about the Kennedy expectations.

PJL: Well, in terms of popular vote, I was claiming that Kennedy would win by 100,000. He actually won by 107,000. So, in terms of popular vote, I was very pleased. However, I thought the vote would be distributed differently. And the Saturday night before the primary I put in an envelope a prediction that we would carry all 10 districts. Well this, of course, proved to be rather disappointing. I did not think that the Humphrey campaign on the farm issue would have the impact that it had, particularly in the 9th and in the 3rd district where he won overwhelmingly. Now it may be that the religious thing was there, and that this farm issue simply gave them a more legitimate reason to express themselves as they already wanted to express themselves. But that was the most disappointing part--the vote there. I had thought we would carry the 10th and we only missed carrying it narrowly. I had thought that we would carry the 2nd, and again the vote was quite close. All and all, the district break-down was disappointing.

LDE: It was disappointing enough, looked at now from the Kennedy side, so that from the other side it encouraged Hubert Humphrey, who apparently had thought, along with you and some others, that he wouldn't do quite this well. That is, he thought this by the time he was getting near the end of the primary, or

so it has been said. And he came away from the Wisconsin results thinking he hadn't done so badly, and it was this that caused Humphrey to go to West Virginia, was it not?

PJL: I think that if Humphrey had not carried the 2nd district he would not have gone to West Virginia. And if he had not gone to West Virginia and provided the competition that Kennedy needed to prove that he could win where there were no Catholics in a contested primary, I'm not sure whether Kennedy would have been nominated.

LDE: I've wondered whether the nature of the victory in Wisconsin, which did look so much to be influenced by a religious pattern, whether this had anything to do with a kind of opening up, which seemed to me to begin in West Virginia and to run through the national campaign itself after the nomination, if this had anything to do with the opening up of the religious issue by Kennedy and speaking about it. I don't want to say speaking more frankly, but just speaking about it at all.

PJL: Yes, I think it did. I went down to West Virginia after the Wisconsin primary and I spent three days there. There was a feeling that Kennedy was not being scheduled properly down there, and Bobby called me and wanted me to go down and schedule his brother. Well, this seemed like a rather odd assignment because I knew less about West Virginia than perhaps anybody in the Kennedy organization. I did read the atlas very quickly and flew down the next day and met with the people who were doing the scheduling. And after one day I was convinced that the people who were doing the scheduling knew what they were

doing and that I had very little to offer and I had plenty to do back here in Wisconsin holding the party organization together in the aftermath of the primary. However, while I was there I made one speech for Jack and I traveled around the state a bit and talked to people in filling stations and stores and restaurants just to try to get some sort of feel to the situation. And it seemed to me that if they were allowed to vote on the religious issue, Kennedy would lose. I ran into an operator of a filling station who said that he was going to vote for Kennedy because, he said, "You know I can't vote for that fellow Humphrey, he's a Catholic." Well he was confused as to which one was Catholic, but it was obvious that if he ever knew he would vote his prejudice. So my recommendation to the Kennedy people was that instead of bringing the religious issue out and sort of laying it on a platter, that they ought to conduct a campaign of remedies to the economic ills of West Virginia that would sort of over-shadow the religious issue to the extent that maybe the people could be persuaded to vote on the economic issues rather than on the religious issue. Now this, of course, was a sort of a long-shot proposition because Humphrey had his credentials in this business of economic democracy too. But at the time the chance of winning in West Virginia seemed very remote and I was just sure that they couldn't possibly do it on the religious issue. Well, obviously I was very wrong, because he went on a state wide TV network and laid the religious issue out, and he won on the basis of it.

LDE: While this had been muted in Wisconsin? The idea was that this wasn't a relevant issue to a political decision and therefore shouldn't be talked about?

PJL: That's right, very much so. In fact when Rose Kennedy went to La Crosse, she wanted to go and call on her old friend Bishop Treacy, who was from Boston, and I raised enough cane about it that she finally decided that she would not do it. Simply because I felt that, particularly in the western part of the state, you couldn't afford that kind of exposure.

LDE: I don't think I have any further questions to ask you about the primary or even about the results but, before closing, though, we'll give you a chance to say anything you might want to add about Kennedy personally. It seemed to me this kind of schedule you've outlined for him during these weeks when he was flying in from Washington to campaign would impose a very great physical and, I'd say, nervous strain on anybody. I wonder how you found, since you must have seen him a good deal during that period, how you found he reacted, first physically and then psychologically?

PJL: There were a couple rules that we enforced rather, well, not as strictly as we might have but at least they were guide lines. Kennedy always wanted to have about an hour or an hour and a half free time prior to the dinner hour. He also wanted an hour of free time at noon, even if he was scheduled to eat at a luncheon. He would spend an hour in the hotel and let the luncheon get started and then he would

come in and join the luncheon. Sometimes he would have eaten in his room, sometimes he would eat what was served, then he would get up and give his speech. Now this was done, I think, for two or three reasons. One, I think that it was a very fatiguing schedule and obviously the candidate has to look fresh and animated at all times. Also, it gave him a chance to be in touch with his Washington office. And he took long distance calls during these free times and was kept informed as to developments in Washington. Other than that, however, he was a bear for punishment and just would resent it if there was any kind of a lull in his schedule. And many times, because you get behind time on the schedule, these free periods were infringed upon and sometimes they just weren't available to him.

LDE: You didn't find, aside from what the physical fatigue in a situation like this would be, a growth in a kind of irritability in trying to keep a schedule of this sort?

PJL: No, he, in my relationship with him, never once displayed a moment of irritation or frustration. He always seemed to be completely calm. Bobby, on the other hand, was always the center of activity and wherever Bobby was there always just seemed to be a swarm of things going on. Whereas with Jack, he was, well, sort of the center of the hurricane. There might be a lot of activity in all directions stemming out from him, but where he was there was calmness and seriousness, and he was always very patient, very courteous. It was really rather remarkable that he could maintain his composure under circumstances such as he was exposed to here.

LDE: I wonder if there is anything else you would like to add before we conclude this interview.

PJL: Well, I think the most remarkable thing about Kennedy, apart from his being able to remain calm during crises, was his ability to be objective about his own campaign. I have managed a number of political campaigns and you can find a candidate who is cool-headed and objective about everything else, but once he gets in the heat of a campaign he loses objectivity in terms of his own chances of winning, in terms of what the press is doing to him or what the people are doing for him. However, this was never true of Kennedy. The day that he entered the Wisconsin primary he could assess the effect of his winning here and his standings among the aspirants. On the day he announced, and all the way through, he just seemed to be able to stand off, as though he were another person, totally disinterested in what was going on, and assess the effect of various elements of the campaign and make studious judgments about what they ought to do next.

LDE: Is there anything you would want to say further about his reactions to Wisconsin. This is, perhaps, a provincial point of view on my part, but you saw a good deal of him during a period when he was spending, I think for the first time in his life, a lot of time in the mid-west.

PJL: Well, he always had happy things to say about Wisconsin in his public utterances, and even in private conversation he never had anything unfavorable to say about Wisconsin. And yet, I couldn't help but sense, oh, a feeling of, sort of, a

wry feeling toward Wisconsin. He had worked so hard here and accomplished less than what he had hoped to accomplish and it got to be a sort of a joke about the weather. The dull, dark, cold days sort of became known as Kennedy weather because during the 29 days that he campaigned here in the pre-primary period, we had very few sunny days. Even when he came in earlier before we got into the primary period, we didn't seem to have very many bright days. And when he came to the J-J dinner in '62 the weather was overcast and some remarked, "Well, it's another Kennedy day."

LDE: I wondered if there was any connection back to the very start of our interview here when you first met him in 1952 and he spoke to you about "You northern liberals," thinking here of the Minnesota-Wisconsin style of the Democratic liberalism in the late forties and early fifties, whether this ever came up again in his discussion in the 1960 period?

PJL: I asked him one time if he remembered the incident in '52 and he did not, so apparently he made a much greater impression on me than I made on him.

LDE: But, I wondered if some of the, say, reaction to the kind of liberalism, which we think of as an almost mid-western populist variety, that you noted occasionally in the newspaper locally, or something like that, whether this again came up again in his discussion. Did he show any awareness of a difference between what he thought of as an eastern style urban liberalism and what might have seemed to him, at least, a partly old-fashioned populist progressive liberalism in the mid-west?

PJL: No, I don't remember any discussion along those lines. He did on one or two occasions stress the fact that on some issues no constituency could be more conservative than his and that as far as a political leader being asked to bend his own constituency in his direction he felt that he had gone as far as Humphrey had in his constituency. The McCarthy issue became a source of some annoyance to him. I remember one night, when he spoke in Appleton, he answered a question about McCarthyism rather curtly for him. But in general it seemed to me when he came in here he was pretty much in accord with our position on most of the issues. Even on the sales tax he thought, in an interview over at WHA and WHA-TV, that it was a most unfortunate form of taxation.

LDE: Well, if there's nothing else to add I thank you very much and we'll conclude the interview.

PJL: Ok.

Signed:

Interviewee: Patrick J. Lucey
Patrick J. Lucey

Interviewer: Leon D. Epstein
Leon D. Epstein