

John Seigenthaler Oral History Interview – JFK #1, 7/22/1964
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Biographical Note

Seigenthaler was aide to Robert F. Kennedy during the 1960 Presidential campaign and Administrative Assistant to the Attorney General, Department of Justice (1961). This interview focuses on the activities of the McClellan Committee, work on the book *The Enemy Within*, Seigenthaler's involvement in the 1960 presidential campaign, Robert Kennedy's leadership role at the 1960 Democratic National Convention, selection of the vice presidency, and Seigenthaler's interview with Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr., among other issues. Seigenthaler's address to the American Society of Newspaper Editors is included as an addendum at the end of the transcript.

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John Seigenthaler

August 29, 1986

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Date

John Seigenthaler
JFK #1

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First Oral History Interview

with

John Seigenthaler

July 22, 1964
Nashville, Tennessee

By William A. Geoghegan

For the John F. Kennedy Library

GEOGHEGAN: John, I believe you first met President Kennedy [John F. Kennedy] through his brother Bob Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy]. Would you tell me the circumstances under which you first came into contact with Bob Kennedy?

SEIGENTHALER: Yes. The first time I ever met Bob Kennedy was sometime in April of 1957. And it's an interesting story. Our relationship didn't get off to a very fast pace or a very

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favorable pace. During the course of 1956 I was working as a reporter for the *Nashville Tennessean* and my specialty in journalism at that time was investigative reporting. I was involved in a whole series of stories about the Teamster's Union concerning the violence in the Teamsters Union here in Tennessee. Late in 1956 the McClellan [John McClellan] Committee – Bobby then serving the McClellan Committee as chief counsel and President Kennedy was then a member of that committee – And at that time they had started their investigations in Portland. And there were a good number of news stories about that. Then earlier in 1957 those investigations led to hearings, and it became apparent that the McClellan Committee was going to be in business for a while, exposing Teamster violence all across the country. And so, in early 1957 I

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began to think in terms of getting the McClellan Committee interested in what was going on in Tennessee because we had a horrible situation here. Teamsters had infiltrated law enforcement. They had corrupted the courts, and they were organizing by means of violence. They had roving teams of bombers and attackers and strong arm men. I had been doing stories about this, and I wanted to get the McClellan Committee interested. So I think in April of 1957, I went up to Columbia to a seminar on investigative reporting that was held at the American Press Institute for about three weeks. And before I left there was an industrialist here in Nashville who had been at Yale with Sarge Shriver [Robert Sargent Shriver, Jr.], and he, through Sarge, arranged for me to have an appointment with Bob Kennedy while I was in New York. Bob was conducting preliminary

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investigations in the garbage racketeering in labor management affairs in New York. And so I went up to Columbia and had this appointment arranged one day. The second day I was there Clark Mollenhoff [Clark R. Mollenhoff] who had been a reporter for the Cole publications, and still is – was their Washington correspondent – spoke to our seminar about the McClellan Committee and the work it was doing. And I talked to him about my appointment with Kennedy the next day. He called Kennedy too and told him I was coming in; it sounded to him like I had a good story that he thought it might be worth listening to. So I went in the next morning to meet him and to talk to him. And I went into the office, and there was a girl there. I introduced myself, and she gave me a rather cool reception, said that Mr. Kennedy was

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very busy. I told her that I had an appointment with him. She said she'd see and would I have a seat? I waited for a while. He finally came out and said, "How are you? I'm glad to see you. I understand you've got a bad problem down there in Tennessee." I said, "Yes, I have." And he said, "Well, I'd like you to tell my assistant about it, Mr. Adelman [Jerry Adelman]." And he took me into the next room and introduced me to Mr. Adelman. He said he had to leave. And he left. We had about five words. Mr. Adelman was very sympathetic and listened to my whole story. He said, "That's very interesting." It took about an hour to outline what I had in mind to tell him about all the problems we had in Tennessee in connection with the Teamsters Union. He said, "Well, could you put that on paper? I'd like to

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show it to Mr. Kennedy." I said, "Yes, I'd be glad to put it on paper." So, he said, "Fine, when can you get it to me?" I said, "I can get it to you within twenty-four hours." "Oh," he said, "it's not that important if you can get it to us within the next week or two." And I said,

“Sure, I can get it to you within a week or two.” And he said, “All right.” I went back to Columbia and filled out the memo and stopped by Washington on my way back to Nashville at the end of the seminar. I had my memo prepared, addressed to Mr. Kennedy. I took it into his office which was then 101 at the Senate Office Building, down in the basement of the old Senate Office Building. I walked into his office, and he was standing there. At that time he was conducting preliminary investigations into the Scranton case. They were just

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for having hearings on the Scranton case. I walked in. The same Italian lady who had given me the cold should in New York also gave me the cold shoulder again. She didn't recognize me as having seen her. But I recognized her. While I was trying to talk her into letting me talk to Mr. Kennedy, he came out of the office, and I introduced myself. He obviously didn't remember, but shook hands and said, “Oh yes, I'm very interested in what's going on up there. Have you seen Mr. Adelman?” I said, “No.” He said, “Well, his office is right down the hall. Go down there and give him that memo.” I said, “Well, I've been in touch with the office in the last two weeks, and there have been some other developments there that you ought to know about.” He said, “Tell those to Mr. Adelman.” So

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I went down and saw Mr. Adelman again and related them again. And he said, “Well, we should have that material in the memo.” I said, “Well, I'll stay up here an extra day and prepare it and put it into the memo,” which I did. I went back to Nashville and stayed a couple of weeks. I tried two or three times to call Mr. Kennedy and never was able to reach him. I finally got Mr. Adelman and told him that the problems were still going on down there and that nothing had gotten better while I was away and that there was a local group trying to create a revolt in the Teamsters Union in Tennessee. They were suffering because of the pressure from the Teamster's officials. And Mr. Adelman said, “That's all very interesting. Could you print it in a memo and get it up to me right away?” So I did. And things went on for

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a matter of weeks. I became more and more disgusted and more and more despondent about whether we were going to get the McClellan Committee involved and interested. And so finally I decided to find out who I knew that knew Senator McClellan. I found a man here in Nashville named Harry Avery. Harry Avery was an investigator for the _____, had originally come from Arkansas, and knew Senator McClellan quite well. I arranged for Harry Avery to go up and see Senator McClellan. I told him the whole story, and he had some information he had developed on his own in the area of arson. So he went up to see Senator McClellan. He came back and called me on the telephone and said, “I've got to see you right away.” He came by the office. He was elated and said, “I think we're going to make real progress. I went up and talked to Senator

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McClellan. I talked to Senator McClellan, and he was very interested in the story. I gave him all the details that you gave me.” And he said, “After listening to my story he called Mr. Kennedy, and Mr. Kennedy came up. Mr. Kennedy came in and Senator McClellan said, “This man’s got a story he wants to tell you about Teamster activity in Tennessee.” And Mr. Kennedy said, “Yes, we’ve heard about that. We are very interested in that.” And he said, “Senator McClellan told him to take me down to his office. So he took me down to his office and was very – he showed a great deal of interest. And he told me after I gave him a brief outline, he said, ‘Listen, I want you to talk to my assistant Mr. Adelman, about this.’ And he said he’s got some background on this. And he took me to Mr. Adelman’s office. Mr. Adelman listened to me outline

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the whole story. And Mr. Adelman said, “That’s all very interesting. I’d like to have a memo on that. When can you get it for me?”” And Harry said, to me, “Now I told him you were going to prepare a memo and get it up to him within forty eight hours.” And I said, “Harry, we are not going to hear from them again. I’ve given them a memo.” And I gave Harry then a copy of the memo, which he sent to Adelman. And we didn’t hear anything for about ten days. And then one day I got a telephone call from Mr. Kennedy. And he said that he was sending Mr. Duffy and Mr. McShane [James McShane] down, and they did come down. We got into the Teamsters investigation here. After an extensive and exhaustive investigation of a period of a month we had hearings in Washington. And during the period of that investigation and during the hearings

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in Washington I got to know Bob Kennedy better and better. As a result of those hearings we were able in Tennessee to bring about the impeachment of a judge, the dismissal of a district attorney, the subsequent defeat of a sheriff, the fine of several state police officials and the reprimand of police officials in Nashville and Knoxville. And the effect of it was that the state was pretty well shaken up by the effect of that investigation. And, of course, during the hearings in Washington I got to know Senator Kennedy [John F. Kennedy] – not well, but slightly. He was very interested in the case hearings.

GEOGHEGAN: Do you recall your first meeting with Senator Kennedy [John F. Kennedy]?

SEIGENTHALER: Yes. It was very brief. I talked with Bob about the third day of our hearings

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and said that I would like to have an opportunity to meet his brother. And he called his brother on the telephone and asked him if I could stop by. And I did go by that evening. It was a very brief meeting.

GEOGHEGAN: What were your impressions of the Senator at that time, if you recall?

SEIGENTHALER: Well, of course I thought he was a nice fellow. He went out of his way to say to me how much interest he had in the job we had done in Tennessee and he did not know where it was going to lead. He took a few minutes to say that he thought that the work that we had done in the area of investigative journalism was very worthwhile. I really had the feeling that he took some time out of a busy day and I appreciated that. Really more than anything else I wanted the opportunity to meet him. I asked him if sometime later I might interview him, and he said anytime

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that I wanted he could arrange it. He said that he was very interested in the industrial development of the South. He said he thought some of these problems in labor management affairs were coming to the South because industrial development was just beginning to come to some areas of the South. It was a very brief conversation – five or ten minutes. I didn't want to take a great deal of his time, but I was impressed by his friendliness more than anything else and by his, first of all, willingness to give me that little time and by his willingness to give me an interview later on if I wanted one. The opportunity never came. I never had the interview with him.

GEOGHEGAN: Did you think of him at all at that time in terms of a presidential candidate?

SEIGENTHALER: No. I really was much more impressed after the hearings with his brother. I

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had such a bad start with his brother. I told.... Many times since then I've talked about that first meeting with Bob. I remember one time much later on the President came to Bob's house for dinner during that period we were working on – I was helping Bob on a project and the President came to him home for dinner.

GEOGHEGAN: This was before he was President?

SEIGENTHALER: Yes, long before. And Bob took real delight in getting me to tell the Senator the story of my first impression of him – that first meeting, the story of how Jerry Adelman had kept saying – how he kept saying, "See Mr. Adelman," and how Mr. Adelman kept saying, "Send me a memo on it." And the President laughed about that, got a good chuckle out of it. But by the end of those hearings,

that first encounter with Bobby Kennedy.... I mean as I told him, "I thought you were a phony who was

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too busy to listen to something that was vitally important. I was not willing to accept the fact that they were just too busy to get to Tennessee because they had so many other things working. But by the end of the hearings I was greatly impressed with Bob Kennedy. And I remember talking to him – this was in 1957, the investigations started in late 1957 and ended with hearings in December of 1957. So throughout the year of 1957 I got to know Bobby Kennedy better and better through his investigators and as a result of those hearings that were held.

Then, in December of '57 those hearings were held and in early 1958 the investigations in Tennessee that were precipitated by that powerful disclosure power that the McClellan Committee had brought on investigations in Tennessee into what was going on here. It led to investigations of all the charges

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against police officers and against the courts and against the politicians who had condoned and permitted and encouraged the organization of Teamsters Union by the use of violence. And then we had the impeachment investigation, the impeachment filed. And Bob came down and testified.

I remember talking to Bob at one point in Florida. I don't remember where I was. I was in a telephone booth. And for some reason I telephoned him to give him some late development in the investigation of Judge . It was just enough for him and for the President to have this hearing. He wanted to know what the follow-up action was going to be. So, I remember calling up on the telephone from a telephone booth – And he was in Florida – and talking to him about this and saying to him I guess the

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Governor said that there was going to be an investigation. And he had employed a lawyer to investigate. Bob called the Senator to the telephone and said, "Tell him. He's very interested in this." And after it was over Bob said, "I know that if you people in the area of journalism will keep applying the spotlight of publicity to this matter that it will be successfully concluded and that these crooks who are involved will be exposed and deposed." And I was very much impressed with his concern. And I was from the beginning impressed with him and more impressed with him than I was with the President because, of course, I knew him so much better.

GEOGHEGAN: During this period did you ever discuss with either Bob Kennedy or then Senator Kennedy any legislative proposals to deal with the problems that were of interest to you and the Committee?

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SEIGENTHALER: I did. I talked to both of them about it many times. Of course the legislation didn't come until much, much later. The legislation didn't come until it seems to me – I could be wrong – but it seems to me it was in 1959. But I did throughout that period talk with ...

GEOGHEGAN: You're referring with Bob Kennedy?

SEIGENTHALER: Yes, with Bob. I remember sitting in his living room talking about it at some point when he was on the telephone talking to the President about it and talking about the possibilities of getting the legislation through and about the help that he was getting from people like Congresswomen Green [Edith Green]. It's not very helpful because it's just a sketchy recollection that I have. But I remember that Congresswomen Green was very, very helpful in getting legislation through the house.

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GEOGHEGAN: What did Bob Kennedy see to be the legislative need at this time?

SEIGENTHALER: Well, of course in the early days he was simply exposing the corruption that existed on the theory that if the exposure went to the heart of the matter that the need would be developed. There were several areas that he was interested in. First, he was interested in the misuse of union funds. Secondly, he was interested in promoting democracy for rank and file members inside labor unions. Thirdly, he was very much concerned about the corrupt relationship that existed between management officials and labor officials, to the detriment of rank and file union members. And fourthly, he was interested in the corruption that existed in the area of public officialdom on the labor management negotiations: for example, public officials who condoned

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and encouraged corruption in labor management relationships because it was politically beneficial to them. These were the four general areas he was thinking of. These were the areas that, as I remember it, he wanted to get into. These were the points he thought the legislation should effect.

GEOGHEGAN: During these years of 1958 and '59 and in 1960 were you on a first name basis with the Senator?

SEIGENTHALER: No, I was never on.... I don't ever remember calling him "Jack" in any relationship that I had with him, in the whole period of relationships

that I had. In 1958 I was at Harvard on a fellowship, and he came back to Massachusetts to run for re-election. Bob called me and said, "Are you interested in this?" And I said, "Yes, I am." I said, "I'd like to do some stories on his campaign in Massachusetts." By this time, of course the Kennedy name was, as a result of the

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McClellan Committee hearings, was becoming more and more prominent. Everyone remembers, in Tennessee especially, his defeat in '56 to Senator Kefauver [Estes Kefauver] and the gracious manner in which he accepted defeat and pledged to support Kefauver. So, he was a person who was of some national interest here. And I remember saying that I'd like to have an opportunity to travel with him someday. And Bob said, "Well, that's great because I'm going to be there some and I think he'd enjoy that." And I spent maybe one day a week of three or four weeks traveling with the Senator in his campaign for re-election. He was opposed by a Republican who was unknown, and Italian fellow who lived on the second floor over a grocery. And the Republican strategy was that – "We'll run a nobody against Kennedy, and

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he'll get enough Republican votes to create a problem for Kennedy because we obviously can't beat him. So they ran a non-entity against him in the hopes that he would poll a substantial Republican count and that this would in some way be embarrassing to Kennedy. They figured, I think, that Kennedy would stay away and wouldn't bother to come back and campaign. Of course they were in error. He came back and ran as if he were running for his life. He really put on a full scale political campaign. He worked his head off. I remember from three or four occasions going with him during the course of a day. And one day, for example, there were four of us in the car with the driver: Kenny O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell], Johnny Powers [John E. Powers] who was then a member of the legislature in Massachusetts and who I think was running for mayor of Boston that year or had just run for mayor

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of Boston – I can't remember, it seems to me he was preparing then to run for mayor of Boston, and the Senator and I were in the car, and the driver who was really an attractive and intelligent fellow himself, and who later turned out as I remember, to be the United States Marshall in Boston. We'll have to check that, but I believe that's.... But anyway Johnny Powers put him through one of the most difficult days of campaigning I ever say anybody go through. And I covered tough campaigns in Tennessee. He took him every place; factories, the fisherman's wharf, to a luncheon. It was a grueling day. I remember going into a factory, some sort of a textile factory. It was about a four story building. And he started on the ground floor and went through and shook hands with everybody on that floor. And then the second floor and

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the third floor. I remember there was no elevator in that building. If there was, we didn't go up the elevator. We walked up. For the first time I recognized that there was something wrong with Jack Kennedy, something still wrong with his back. It was a painful thing for him to have to walk up those four flights of stairs, rough. And he never mentioned it; he never said a word about it, but you could tell it was difficult for him to walk. I remember as we went through the fourth floor Johnny Powers said to him that one of the girls who was working there had just come over from Ireland. He whispered to him before he got there, he said, "This girl's just over from Ireland." And the President went by and shook hands with her. Her face just lit up. She was enthralled with the opportunity to meet him. And of course she couldn't vote. But

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he said to her – she said, "I'm pleased to meet you," and he said, "What part of Ireland are you from?" And it was a shock to her, and she laughed. And she said, "How do you know I'm from Ireland?" And he said, "With a brogue like that where else could you be from?" Immediately all the girls around within earshot crowded around. And she told him what county she was from. He told her he had relatives from the adjoining county. He spent some time there with her. It was not just a political discussion. He really enjoyed talking to her about the old country. You just can't imagine how pleased she was.

GEOGHEGAN: How was his rapport with the crowds during that campaign as it compared later when he was president?

SEIGENTHALER: Well, it was personal I thought because it was in many ways a different type of campaigning. I mean the fisherman on the wharf.

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He made a point of going out and shaking hands, taking the time to shake hands with every fisherman that he could find down there. Of course it was nothing like the problem of speaking to ten or twelve thousand people. He was talking to a couple hundred fisherman. And the Union leader there who introduced him was a tough, hard-bitten fellow. I remember what his attitude was. It was a different type of campaigning. I think rapport was good, I'll say that, and he seemed to enjoy it. I said to him – there was a place at noon where he made this speech and after it was over this little girl came up to him and handed him a bouquet of flowers – and I remember I said to him, "Politics is politics the country over. They do the same thing in Tennessee." And he laughed then. And then we had a little discussion with Kenny O'Donnell in the car as we were driving along

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about whether it paid off to do this or whether we do it just because the opposition did it. We were driving along in the car, and there was an old Irish fellow. It seems to me that his name was McCaffrey, but I could be wrong because it's been so long and it was just one incident. But I remember writing a story about it. We were driving along, and there was a fellow in his undershirt up on the side of the building painting his house. He was up on a ladder. I say it was his undershirt, maybe it was a sweatshirt. But he was really an old fellow. Johnny Powers recognized him. And Johnny Powers said, "Stop the car, Jack. That's Mr. McCaffrey." And Jack got out of the car and before the old man realized it was coming up the ladder behind him. And he said, "Mr. McCaffrey, this is Senator Kennedy. I hope you'll

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vote for me." And the old man looked down and recognized him and was so surprised that he almost fell off the ladder, and he almost dropped his paint brush. He started to reach down with the paint brush and he put the paint brush in the bucket and said, "God bless you, Senator, I'm for you," and he reached down and shook his hand. And I'll tell you that that man would have been happy if he had fallen off the ladder. I'm not sure I ever realized what charisma or charismatic quality was until I saw him operate. The light that was in that old man's eyes and the affection that the girl from Ireland displayed.... I mean those were touches. I don't have any doubt that Mr. McCaffrey would have voted for him against an Italian Republican regardless. But he took the time to get out and go up and shake hands. I guess Mr. McCaffrey knew everybody in

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the neighborhood. But that was the thing that I was really impressed with during that campaign, his willingness to take the time to stop and to talk and spend time with people when he obviously was going to win by a substantial margin.

GEOGHEGAN: Did this seem to be an effort aside from the fact that it was a physical effort? Did it seem to be any sort of a mental effort or personality effort for him to do this?

SEIGENTHALER: No, I thought it.... It was a physical effort to climb the ladder for example. I thought it was a pretty easy thing with him very easy with him. And then I remember, the other two things I remember about the campaign and one was a luncheon at a place called Jimmy's. He was waging such a campaign that reporters were coming in from other parts of the country. And I remember going one day and we went to lunch at Jimmy's restaurant on the fisher-

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man's wharf there. It's a restaurant that looks right out over the bay and the ships come in. It's very picturesque. Jimmy's [Jimmy Duolos] the fellow who runs the restaurant. He gave us a table very close to the window, and I remember he ate two bowls of clam chowder. It's

funny I think, but he ate two bowls of clam chowder. The reporters who were there were all extremely friendly. I don't remember why but almost everybody at the table aside from Kenny O'Donnell was a newspaperman. I thought he was a master at dealing with those reporters that day because he established with all of us a very friendly, easy relationship. Here I was a reporter from Tennessee, and he couldn't have cared less. It had absolutely nothing to do with his victory up there. He would never read what I would write about it. And yet every question I asked him he took the time to answer. He

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answered in such a way, however, that it was interesting to everybody that was sitting there. Now I remember Rollie Evans [Rowland Evans, Jr.] was there. It seems to me Rollie Evans from the *Herald Tribune* was there, but I could be wrong about that. I can't think of any of the others, but there must have been maybe ten reporters. *Newsweek* had somebody there. There must have been ten reporters sitting around that table. And he was very easy, very relaxed.

Then the other thing I remember about that campaign was the last night. And this was really an experience. The night before the campaign ended.... Bob had been in and out throughout that campaign and had telephoned me several times, had seen me several times. I remember I was living in a place called Medford, which is a suburb of Boston. He said he'd call me on the afternoon of the eve of the campaign.

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He said, "Would you and your wife like to have dinner with Ethel and me? Well, I've got to make a couple of speeches for Johnny."

GEOGHEGAN: Did he refer to him as "Johnny"?

SEIGNETHALER: Yes, off and on he did. Off and on he did. I think probably I heard him call him Johnny as much as he called him anything, as much as he called him Jack. And he said, "Teddy's going to speak for him a couple of places, and I'm sure we'll run into him at some point during the night." So I said, "Of course, we'd be delighted to go." He also asked me to invite Wally Turner [Wallace Turner], who was then a Nieman fellow with me at Harvard. Would you make a note, Bill, to ask me about Bob and Louis Lyons and the President speaking to the Nieman fellows. This is going to last a hell of a lot longer than I thought it would take, I'm sorry. But I told him I would.... Do you think this is important?

GEOGHEGAN: Yes, yes I do. Go ahead. Don't worry about the time.

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SEIGNETHALER: So I said to him, "Fine." He said, "Would you ask Wally Turner and his wife?" Wally Turner was a Nieman fellow with me. He won a

Pulitzer Prize working for the *Portland Oregonian* on a Teamster exposé out there. And so Wally and I and our wives drove in and met Bob at the Ritz Hotel in Boston and went with him for a couple of appearances. Late at night there was a traditional closing for Kennedy, for all Democratic candidates. And I don't remember where that is. But traditionally the Democratic candidates close at some point. But there was also a meeting at 1 a.m. in Mattapan, which is a suburb of Boston that then was inhabited largely by Jewish people. And they were having this rally in this small auditorium in Mattapan. Bobby said he would make that speech. During the course of the evening it became difficult

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to say for sure we were going to be there in time. Maybe it was a midnight meeting instead of one. And he called the headquarters and said he didn't know if he could. And someone there said they'd get word to both Teddy and the Senator and that they'd try to make it. And the result was that about one a.m. we pulled into this parking lot beside the auditorium at the Mattapan, three couples, Bob driving. It was a very small auditorium. We walked into that auditorium, and it was literally jammed packed. We had to be escorted down front. And after we got down front we saw that the President and his wife and Teddy were there. When we came in, the Lieutenant Governor, a man named Bob Murphy [Robert F. Murphy] – maybe he was just a candidate for Lieutenant Governor, but it seems to me he was the Lieutenant Governor – was speaking. Mrs. Furcolo [Kay Furcolo], the wife of the Governor had already spoken and she was sitting there, on the platform. They had a brass band. Murphy was talking and he'd been talking. And

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when we came in he stopped for a few minutes and acknowledged the presence of the distinguished brother of the distinguished Senator from the distinguished state of Massachusetts. He was a typical political speaker. He was not very eloquent. The things that he was saying were the same things those people had heard all night long from every politician who stood up to speak, and he had this disability; he couldn't end the speech. The fact that Kennedy was waiting to speak just increased the pressure on him to end the speech. He would try to build up to a climax, "And furthermore I'm urging you," and then something else would occur to him and he'd be off again. He'd been talking a good while before we arrived. And he talked for maybe ten or fifteen minutes after we got there, all the time trying to cut it off; all the time trying to end it. And finally almost out of desperation he built up this climax

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again. He said, "And furthermore I am telling you people here, you people here in Mattapan that if you will go out tomorrow and vote for Kennedy, vote for Furcolo, vote for Murphy, and if you will go out tomorrow and vote the straight Democratic ticket the Democratic Party is going to bring home the bacon for you for the next four years." And nobody there could believe their ears. Everybody in the house was Jewish, even the band leader. And here was a

guy who makes a terrible political faux pas. There was the only smattering of applause when he sat down, was mine and Wally Turner's and our wives'. It was just dead. The master of ceremonies stood up and said, "Thank you Mr. Murphy. And now the moment we've all been waiting for, the great Senator who I predict will be the next President of the United States, Senator John F. Kennedy." This was 1958. And there was a good deal of applause. But you have to consider that it was about the worst, the worst

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situation. Here's a guy you're running on the ticket with. He makes this terrible blunder. He stood up and said, "Ladies and Gentleman, everything that can be said in this campaign has been said." And he paused for the effect of that to sink in. There was a little laughter because Murphy had said about everything that anybody could say. And he said, "So rather than burden you with another political speech my brothers and I are going to sing you a song. I wonder if the band knows "That ole Gang of Mine?" The band did know "That ole Gang of Mine" and they started singing. Now I'm trying to remember whether it was "that ole Gang of Mine" or "Heart of My Heart". It was one of the two. I guess it was "Heart of My Heart". They sang "Heart of my Heart". At any rate they sang it for a very short time and then the Senator said, "Everybody sing." And they turned the worst situation possible into the best situation. Everybody was singing by the time

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they got through. And they sang the chorus twice. They sat down to just uproarious applause. I remember that so well. The morning after the election I looked at the papers to see how Mattapan went. And Mattapan went for the whole Democratic Party, including Robert Murphy. Larry O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien] was there that night. And I thought that facility he had for turning the worst situation into an advantage was really fantastic. And that was the first opportunity I'd really had to see it.

GEOGHEGAN: Tell me John, when did you first learn from Bob Kennedy or then Senator Kennedy of his intentions, the Senator's intentions, to run for the presidency?

SEIGENTHALER: Well, I don't know. I don't remember when it was.

GEOGHEGAN: Was it something you more or less assumed he was going to do during this period of 1958, 1959?

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SEIGENTHALER: Yes, I think it was. I was very hopeful that he would; extremely hopeful that he would.

GEOGHEGAN: You don't recall any specific occasion, at least as you recall, when a

decision to run was communicated to you, a definite decision?

SEIGENTHALER: No. I remember that I knew about the meeting that they had at Hyannis Port. I don't know I knew it, but I knew that a meeting was to be held. I was not invited to it, but I knew there was going to be a meeting in Hyannis Port and that the key people were going to be there. And I knew, or it seems to me now, that I knew after that meeting that the decision had been made to run.

GEOGHEGAN: This was in October 1958 I believe, or about that time?

SEIGENTHALER: Well, maybe it was Christmas of that year, wasn't it? I don't know. It could have been.

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GEOGHEGAN: But was it in late 1958?

SEIGENTHALER: I think. I'm not sure, Bill.

GEOGHEGAN: John, after the 1958 campaign in Massachusetts what was your next involvement with either Bob Kennedy or President Kennedy that's significant?

SEIGENTHALER: Well, I remember I talked with Bob several times on the telephone throughout the time I was at Harvard. And toward the end of my time at Harvard – this must have been March or April – he talked to me about the possibility of his writing a book on his experiences with the McClellan Committee, and he asked me if I would be interested in editing that book. I told him I would be interested in it. But after he mentioned it the first time, we never talked about it seriously again until, as I remember it, I was going home. He asked me if my wife, and I and my son would stop by and visit with him on my way back to Nashville. And I told him we would. We drove down from

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Massachusetts to Washington. I remember our car was overflowing with our belongings. We stayed with the Kennedys. I had stayed there before, briefly. This was the first time I think I had really gotten to know the whole family. It was the first time I had seen him over a sustained period of time. I had seen him briefly either at lunch or dinner in times of the McClellan Committee. But this was the first time that I got to see that he was the same with the children all the time. And I was.... I remember we were going into dinner one night and, of course the McClellan Committee hearings were still going on at this time – this would have been in May of 1959 – we were driving into dinner.... We were having dinner at a French restaurant, and we were meeting a group of people; Pierre Salinger was one of those, and a number of others

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were there. Walter Sheridan was there. We were driving in. He was driving. He said, "I'm thinking about writing a book." And I said, "You mentioned that to me." And he said, "Why don't you edit it for me?" I said, "I'd love to do it." I think he said, "Why don't you work with me on it?" And I said, "I'd love to, but I've been away from the office for nine months and I don't know if I could get my leave extended." He said, "I would think that they would feel that it might be a good experience for you. What do you think?" I said, "I think they probably would feel that way." He said, "How long do you think it would take?" And I said, "I don't have any idea." He said, "Well, why don't we try to do it in two months." He said, "It's not as if I didn't know the subject." And I said, "That's fine with me." So, the next day at breakfast he said, "Are you going to call your editor?" I said, "I think I'll wait until I get down there and talk to him about it."

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So I drove back and talked to him about it, and he approved extending my leave. I went back to Washington two weeks later.

Shortly after the Kennedy children went up to the Cape and Ethel went up to the Cape. We worked on the book from Monday till Friday, and then on weekends he would fly up to the Cape and I would fly home to Tennessee, or my wife and son would fly up and we'd spend the weekend in Kennedy's house, in the Hickory Hill house. It was during that period when he went to work on the book he was serious about it, which must have been June or July. I can't remember exactly. It seems to me June. But he resigned from the Committee. Of course, the _____ of it is that the legislation was still pending then. He had many conversations with the President about the progress on the book – the then Senator, about the progress on the book. I remember on one occasion he went up to the Cape on Friday and there was some

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editing still left to do. Senator Kennedy was going to the Cape on Saturday. I remember driving out to the airport to meet Senator Kennedy to give him the portion of the book that I had edited. He was waiting for me at the ticket counter, and he asked me if I had time to talk to him. I said, "I do." He had a few minutes before the plane left, and we walked over and looked out the window, and we had a conversation about the book and how it was coming; whether I thought it was possible to put all the millions of words of the hearings into the space that would be necessary to put into a book. He asked me that in a rather light way, and then we talked about it. It was just a brief, friendly conversation in which he went out of his way again to be nice and to show me that he was interested in me as a person who

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was working with his brother. One thing I do think was interesting about Bob during the course of writing the book was the industry that he put into it. There's always the question I think when a fellow in public puts his mind to writing a book, always the question that's going to be asked by people who don't like him or who are his enemies; the question of whether he actually wrote the book. Somewhere in his file that Italian woman who protects him, Angie Novello [Angela M. Novello], has a stack of yellow pads Bob typed. He took it upon himself to write the first draft of this book in longhand, and then I would cut and edit. And then Angie Novello would type from the editing that I had made on his original yellow pad, draft. And then he would go back over her typewritten draft and edit again. She kept all that. We would work until maybe ten o'clock at night, and I

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would go to bed. Before I'd go up to bed I'd go upstairs from the guestroom where I was staying, go upstairs to the bathroom on the second floor to shower. I'd go by his door and he'd be sitting on the edge of the bed in his pajamas writing in long hand. In the mornings I would get up about seven-thirty, eight o'clock and I would go up and walk by his door, and he'd be up already writing again in long hand. He would write and then he would.... After we got into it a second girl came out. A girl named Dottie Fry. Dottie Fry came out. He would write in longhand. I would edit that and turn it over to Dottie Fry as we got into it. After he got tired of writing he would dictate to Angie Novello, and she would type it and then I would edit that. We had only a limited amount of time. He had to get into the work of the campaign, I had to get back to the Tennessee newspaper. And we

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literally made up our minds we were going to do that job in two months. As it later turned out, it took about ten or eleven weeks. But I remember that we worked very hard. We'd work all morning. Then we'd have lunch. We worked until the middle of the afternoon, maybe three or four, and he'd say, "Let's go for a walk." He and I would go for a long walk. He would carry a football and pass the football back and forth. And we had long conversations usually not about the book. But if some problem would come up, we'd discuss the problem in the book. But more often than not we talked about his brother, who by this time was obviously going to get into the campaign. We talked sometimes about his family, about his father, about many things. I think during those walks I got to know Bob Kennedy better than any other time in my life, better than I got to know anybody during my whole life. He was completely candid with me about

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everything, I thought. I'm confident that's so. There was no question that I asked about him that he ever hesitated to give me an explanation on. There was no question about his father that I ever asked that he hesitated to give me an answer on; no question about his brother that he wasn't completely forthright on.

One of the interesting things that come out is that it turned out Harper and Row, or the Harper Brothers then, published the book. And the fellow that handled Senator Kennedy's books for Harper was a man named Evan Thomas, and he was the son of Norman Thomas. And of course when we started on this book, we weren't at all sure that after he had completed it that a publisher would take it. I remember he had these conversations on the telephone with Evan Thomas. He'd met Evan Thomas, but didn't know him very well. And we had these conver-

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sations. So, he talked to Evan Thomas on the telephone. Evan Thomas said, "Well, you send us up maybe three chapters after you get them completed, Bob, and we'll take a look at them and see what they look like." So, we sent them up. And I remember we told them we'd have them off to them say by Friday of next week. And we worked feverishly to get through with three chapters by Friday of next week, and his insistence on writing every word in longhand and dictating every word of the first draft slowed us down. But it made us work that much harder. And we sent it off, say on Friday by air mail to New York. And by Saturday night Evan

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Thomas had called him on the telephone, and he was elated and very enthusiastic about what he had received, very excited about it. He said they wanted to write. And he was going to come down over the contract, which

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he did. And one of the most interesting conversations I ever had was walking through the hills the first afternoon Evan Thomas came down with Bob Kennedy, the son of capitalist Joe Kennedy and Evan Thomas, the son of socialist Norman Thomas. I thought it was very interesting to hear these two.

GEOGHEGAN: As a result of these conversation you had of these walks with Bob Kennedy, what did you learn about the relationship that existed between Bob and his brothers and between the brothers and the father [Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr.]?

SEIGENTHALER: Well, it was very, very close. It was a family relationship that was like none other that I was aware of. He, for example, was much closer to his brothers and much more intimate with his brothers than I was with my own brother. It was a different sort of relationship that he had, especially with the President. It was a different sort of relationship. It was just not a brother to brother relationship. It was a relationship

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two friends would have; two confidants would have; two business associates would have; two college fraternity brothers might have. They were closer than close. And they had that easy, relaxed relationship. Would you make a note to ask me about how Lyndon Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson] became vice president? I don't know, but if you ask that question it will lead to pertinent conversation. But, they really had a fine relationship, a good relationship. And they were both dedicated. Dedicated is not a good word, but what is a good word for a relationship when father and son...? They respected their father, and they also loved him. They respected his judgment on political matters. And they respected his judgment on people. Now it was not until sometime later that I had an opportunity to talk to their father at length, at great length one day, that I really came to understand and appreciate their relationship with him. I remember asking Bob, after I got to

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know him pretty well, about his father and Neville Chamberlain [Arthur Neville Chamberlain]. And this probably isn't the place to discuss that, but....

GEOGHEGAN: Go ahead.

SEIGENTHALER: But what I remember is how candid he was. He was well aware his father had been subject to a great deal of criticism because of his association with the Chamberlain government and his friendship for the Chamberlain government. And Bob very candidly said, "My father had respect for Neville Chamberlain and affection for him. My father did not want our country to get into a war needlessly. And if there was anyway, to avoid it, to have his sons and the sons of others killed needlessly. And he showed a great deal of restraint. It was a long, detailed conversation and explanation of the mutual friendship that he had enjoyed with the Chamberlains.

GEOGHEGAN: Did Bob indicate that he agreed with his father's judgment in this matter?

SEIGENTHALER: Yes, I thought he did. Yes, I thought he did

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agree with it. He respected it. You know the thing that impressed me about Senator Kennedy and about Bob Kennedy throughout my relationship with them, and still impresses me greatly about Bob today, is that I never knew either one of them – many times I wouldn't have any way to know about the President – but I never knew Bob Kennedy to make a snap judgment on anything. Before he made any conclusion, he exhausted sources for facts, and he'd try to find out from as many different people as many different things as he possibly could. Of course the reason he was so valuable to the President as an advisor was that he would not make a snap judgment. He never made a decision on the basis of some

stomach reaction in his life. If he ever had a visible reaction that influenced his advice to the President, I don't know about it. No matter what his own stomach told him, he damn well made his own investigation. And

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that reminds me of something with regard to the State Department and the investigation of... Sumner Welles, protégé in the State Department. I... you'll just put that down when we come to it; I can remember. I think we probably better work late tonight, go to dinner, and then maybe we can go to my house and we can pursue it there. But he was never really, to my knowledge, has never made a snap judgment. You know the Hickory Hill seminars that were started later on. Bob made a conscious effort to find out from as many different sources as he possibly could as many different things as he possibly could so that he would be in a position to advise the President. During these long walks he draw that phase _____. He really let me know that this was a family whose patriarch had instilled in them the call of public service above and beyond anything else. It really was impressed with them. I came out of that experience working on that book

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completely enamored of the Kennedys and especially of Bob. At that time I had made up my mind that I was going to do everything I could in my power to make Jack Kennedy President because I... though you know there are so many poor little rich boys whose parents have a lot of dough who wind up on the beach somewhere sunning themselves and aren't very interesting; they're spending dough on women and fast automobiles.... I was really impressed with them.

GEOGHEGAN: Well, tell me about the campaign. How did you first become involved in the campaign?

SEIGENTHALER: Well, I came back to Tennessee after we finished on the book. Bob went to work in the headquarters that Steve Smith [Stephen E. Smith] had already opened up in the Esso Building, and I came back to Tennessee to go back to newspapering. I wrangled a couple of.... The editorship here had changed. Ted Ball had replaced Colman Harlow as editor, and Harlow had granted the original leave, but Ball had

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extended it, and by the time I got back I was working for a new boss. The owners of this newspaper were from Texas originally. _____ was from Texas and his son, _____ Jr., who had become publisher was from Texas. And they were very strong for Johnson. It had always been a Democratic newspaper. It supported every Democrat since _____ came out in 1936, and they were committed to Johnson. The editor's family had an old tie with Lyndon Johnson and Sam Rayburn [Samuel T. Rayburn]. But it was made quite clear to me that I

would be permitted and encouraged to develop any news stories about Kennedy that I cared to, and they sent me off to Wisconsin because of the primary. They sent me to West Virginia because of the primary there. And I was part of the six man team that the *Tennessean* sent to the Convention to cover the Convention. I saw the President both in Wisconsin and in West Virginia. I stayed in West Virginia for a

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week, and during that period I came into Charleston, West Virginia, I think. One day just as he was pulling out I was right behind him Chuck Roche [Charles Roche] was with him. He was traveling with him as his press man. The one thing that really always impressed me about the President was his good humor, especially when it was time to relax. I remember in West Virginia there was a press club. Maybe it was Hometown. I think it was. Probably the only good place in town to eat was the Press Club, or the best place in town to eat was the Press Club. All of his staff would gather there. Now one day I was there and many newspaper men were there. Sam Huff [Robert Lee "Sam" Huff] was campaigning with Teddy. This is a little story, but it's an interesting story. Joe Alsop [Joseph A. Alsop] was covering the campaign. Of course Joe was very close to the President. And I remember coming into the Press Club one evening. I was alone. There was a big table

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and Ethel was seated at this table. Bobby Kennedy had been campaigning, and he asked me if I would meet him there for dinner. He had not arrived. Ethel asked me to come over, and she introduced me to Joe Alsop. Later, Bob came in, and still later Teddy and Sam Huff from the *New York Times* came in. We were introduced all around. The President was somewhere else. He was not there that day, but he was coming in the next day. While we were talking, Joe Alsop was telling us how tough it was to poll a slab of pork. And if you know Joe Alsop, he speaks with a decided British accent although he's from Connecticut. He was saying how tough it was, how difficult it was to conduct a poll, a door to door poll with a slab of pork. Of course everybody sat there and listened while Joe told – have you heard this story? – while Joe told this story of going up to the door and knocking on the door and the miner's wife came to the door in her apron with a little child at her apron

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strings picking his nose, with muddy feet.... But, anyway Joe told this story about interviewing a slab of pork with the lady with the disheveled hair and the broom in her hand and the child with mud on its feet and snot at its nose. While we were talking, Sam Huff and Teddy came in, and Sam stopped beside Ethel and Teddy went back to the back somewhere. About halfway through Joe's dissertation about the slab of pork, Sam Huff leaned over to Ethel and said, "Who's the Englishman?" And Ethel interrupted him and said, "Oh, I thought you knew. Sam Huff, Joe Alsop. Joe Alsop, Sam Huff. And they shook hands, and Joe continued with his story about the difficulties.... After it ended Sam began to talk about how he'd been campaigning in the Panhandle. Joe said, "What do you do, Sam?" Sam said, "I

play football.” “You play for a living, do you?” “Yes, I do.” “I knew a fellow who played football once at Harvard. No, maybe it was baseball. Hell,

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I don't know. I can't even drive a car.” At any rate they got into a discussion about football, and it was really a fabulous discussion. Now Elaine came back and put it on paper. But at any rate when Bob came around eleven o'clock, the party was pretty well broken up, but I was still there with Ethel. I had repeated this story to him and did a fairly good job of imitating Joe's accent and Sam's West Virginia twang. And the next night when the President was in town, we had dinner. Bob went out of his way insisting that I relate this story. The President got a real howl out of it. He just laughed and laughed. So he had a terrific sense of humor.

GEOGHEGAN: What did you do in the campaign?

SEIGENTHALER: Well, I went to the Convention. I went to the Convention and covered the Convention, spent most of the time upstairs in Bob's suite. My assignment out there was to cover the Kennedy camp. My editor by this time

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had become emotionally involved on Johnson's side and was somewhat upset that the Kennedys were doing so well. So was the publisher. They didn't like it a damned bit. But they had told me before I went out that I was free to do all I could for Kennedy because they were going to do all they could for Johnson; they were going to beat me; and that they were going to beat us. Well, at any rate that worked out. That's not important. But I watched Bob operate from that command post. The one thing that impressed was the effort that he made and that the President made and the pains they took to make certain that those states that were going against them would not be upset with them after the victory. I can remember Bob talking to a number of leaders from southern states, and I sat in on some of the meetings. I remember him taking them over the states; the votes they had in the various states and saying to them, “Look, we're going to win this. I know that's

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difficult for you to accept because you've never had any dealings with us. We know we have the votes to win this. Now, we need your help after this Convention, and I hope you'll come back to me and talk to me again.” Invariably he left them with a feeling of friendship. And the only person that I remember his talking to in – having a discussion with.... There was some talk about Stevenson [Adlai Stevenson] nominating Kennedy to return the favor that Kennedy had extended to him in 1956 because Kennedy had made one of the nominating speeches, one of the seconding speeches. Walter Reuther had been one of those who had been assigned to help on that and also to help get the support of Hubert Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey]. And when it became apparent that Stevenson was going on with his feeble

attempt to get the nomination and that Humphrey was going to go along with him, I remember one conversation that Bob had on the telephone with the President and the subsequent conversation

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he had with Walter Reuther in which he said to Walter Reuther, in a much less friendly tone, a much more brittle tone than he used with any of the southerners – he said something to this effect – “Look, I just want you to know that we know you’re for us, and we appreciate everything you’ve done for us. But I also want you to know that the one assignment we’ve asked you to deliver you haven’t been able to deliver; and I think it’s rather significant. We’re going to win this, and we’re going to need your help after it’s over, but I just wanted to call your attention to the fact that as of right now you haven’t been able to give us Stevenson: you haven’t been able to convince him that he ought to do this: and you haven’t been able to convince Hubert Humphrey that he ought to do this. And it’s disappointing to me and it’s disappointing to the Senator.” After he hung up we had a conversation in which it was apparent to me that this was not an effort to chastise Walter Reuther or put him in his

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place or put him down, but he was hopeful that by this conversation he could stimulate him to do even more than he had done up to that date to get him to do it.

Another thing that I was impressed with out there was the effort that they made to get the younger people on Kennedy’s side and the success they had with it. I remember a conversation he had concerning Terry Sanford [James Terry Sanford] going down and having a press conference saying that he was supporting John F. Kennedy. And I remember Bob calling the Senator and saying to him that this had been arranged, and this was his idea as to how they should proceed; that Sanford had seen Kennedy that morning and was very impressed with him and he wants to do this and thinks the way to do it is to have a five o’clock press conference and announce it in advance. And they did that. He said, “We’ll do that today, and we’ll have Howard Edmundson tomorrow.” Now, I could be wrong about the sequence.

GEIGHEGAN: There have been some people who had felt that

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Bob Kennedy’s leadership role at the Convention and in the campaign has been overstated somewhat and that the campaign strategy and planning was for the most part under the direction of people such as Larry O’Brien and Kenny O’Donnell. Would you comment on that?

SEIGENTHALER: Yes, well they had their offices.... Kenny, at the time I was there Kenny and – this was generally the line-up as I say it, and I was there

several days – Kenny and Larry were operating in an office across the hall from Bob. Angie Novello and a couple of other girls were in the room between them. Teddy had a room down the hall. Steve Smith was one floor down with the President. I don't really know what role Larry and Kenny played. I know it was an important role. But I also know that Bob had a vital role, and I know that he had access to the candidate that none of the others had, and I know that he was very effective in dealing with people. If there was some problem that came up that the others

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could not resolve, they came to him with it.

GEOGHEGAN: Who were these others that you're referring to?

SEIGENTHALER: Now, well, I mean I'm talking about Kenny and Larry and Teddy too. I went with him and he made several speeches to the delegations during that campaign. But I mean I don't know what role he played. I think it's interesting to... For example he once analyzed it this way: his theory was that the Convention was not won at the Convention; that when Teddy Kennedy was seen on television jumping up and down waving the banner of the state that finally gave Kennedy victory that he hadn't just happened to stop by that delegation. He'd been working with them months and months and months before that. And as he said many times, the Convention was not won here. His father won it in New York with the ground work he did with people like Charlie Buckley [Charles A. Buckley] and Gene Keogh [Eugene J. Keogh] and by the work that Bob had done and Steve had done in the Esso Building in August and September of 1959;

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and that the work at the Convention was really sewing up everything they had. I know this. He had a complete tally on the votes they were going to get forty-eight hours before they got them. And it was not ten votes off. I know this too: that in recommending people for positions at the Convention, Bob Kennedy played a role. For example, John Hooker's [John Jay Hooker, Jr.] father, John Hooker Sr. [John Jay Hooker, Sr.], was on the platform committee, and he doesn't have the slightest idea how the hell he was on the platform committee except one day he was notified he'd been selected to serve on the platform committee. I know damned well Bobby Kennedy got him on there. Kenny O'Donnell didn't know John Hooker. Larry O'Brien didn't know John Hooker. So, while Kenny and Larry had a vital role and a vital function... Kenny O'Donnell before the Convention was Bob Kennedy's administrative assistant... When I first met Bob Kennedy, Kenny O'Donnell was not his administrative assistant. Bob brought Kenny in later to be

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his administrative assistant for the McClellan Committee, and he was very efficient and very effective. When the President ran in 1958, Kenny was with him, up there running, and Larry was in the office up there. So I think Larry and Kenny did do an effective job, and they were hard workers and very able men. But I wouldn't say they were more important by any means than Bob was.

GEOGHEGAN: Tell me about the selection of the vice-presidency. What do you know about that?

SEIGENTHALER: I don't know a great deal about it. I know that, of course, after the Convention everybody was tremendously interested in who the second choice was going to be. And there's a lawyer here in Nashville named Jack Norman who was on the Democratic Executive Committee and he had prosecuted Scheufield along with Hooker. He went down to Virginia to prosecute Scheufield. I ran into Norman in the lobby of the hotel and he said, "Go upstairs with me. I'd like to see Kennedy if possible." We got

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up there and there was just a crush of newspaper people jammed against the door. You couldn't get anywhere near the place. We turned around and started down the hall and as we did the President came out of the doorway and walked by. He did a double take. He recognized me and he recognized Norman, and he stopped and he said, "Hello there. How are you? I'm glad to see you." And we both turned around and congratulated him. He said, "Please come to see me. Your state's very important; Tennessee's very important to us and we want to carry Tennessee." And then he was besieged. The newsmen came in and he went in another door. They had that whole suite of rooms along that floor. He was operating between rooms and had somehow gotten away from the other door where the press was gathered and had come down the hall, and he came out the door as we came by. But anyway, an hour later Norman and I went downstairs, had some coffee, and came

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back up. This time we went up to some floor, and we were coming down on the elevator. As we passed the seventh floor where the President.... Oh, we went up to the eight floor to see Bob. He was not there. We got back on the elevator and started down. We came to the seventh floor and Bob got onto the elevator. There was nobody on the elevator at that point but the three of us. He was going up. We were coming down. When it opened he got on and went down with us rather than go on up. As soon as the elevator door shut he said, "How would you like Lyndon Johnson as vice-president?" In my opinion he'd come right from the room after the final decision had been made. And I was greatly surprised because from conversations with him earlier I thought Stuart Symington was a cinch. And I had written a story the night before based on what he said, but not attributing it to him, that Stuart Symington was going to be the choice. And I said to him

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he'd be a very popular choice in Tennessee. Jack Norman said, "That's the smartest political decision that's been made at this Convention." And Bob said, "I'm glad you're happy about him. I'm glad it's satisfactory because that's what it's going to be." Some other people got on the elevator, and we said nothing more until we got down to the ground floor when Norman and I got off in that thrust. He said, "Come to see me later, John," and I did. But we left. The only time I ever heard him talk about that for maybe a year was when I was in Bob's home one night for dinner. We were sitting out on the patio, the two of us, and the President was on the telephone talking to him and they were discussing some pending legislation. I don't know whether it was urban affairs in which Weaver was going up or civil rights, but it was a very tough problem for the Administration and the President was involved. The question that came up was whether Lyndon Johnson was giving his full

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support. And I remember Bob saying, "We were right at six, eight, and ten and wrong at two." And I interpreted that to mean that there had been a discussion during the course of the morning from six, eight, and ten until the final decision was reached. And I may have the hours wrong. It may have been, "We were right at eight, ten, and two and wrong at four." But that was the discussion....

GEOGHEGAN: You mean you think he was referring to the Convention?

SEIGENTHALER: Yes. Oh, I had no doubt that that was what he was talking about. When he hung up the telephone, I didn't push it. I had tried two or three times before that to get the real story about how Lyndon Johnson was selected.

GEOGHEGAN: Did Bob ever indicate a reluctance to talk about it?

SEIGENTHALER: I never really had the feeling that he wanted to talk about it, not because he had anything to hide; he just felt that that was a confidence between his brother and himself that he didn't care to get into. Now, after the

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President's death Phil Potter – it seems to me it was Phil Potter [Philip Potter] – wrote a piece in the Baltimore.... He's with the *Baltimore Sun* I believe, but he wrote a piece in one of the magazines about him. And when he was planning on writing it.... It was before he ruled Bob out as vice president at this time. And while he was in the process of being written, Ross Bass called me on the telephone and said, "I've just had a conversation with President Johnson, and he told me the story – we rode in from Burning Tree together – of how he

became Vice President.” Bass told me a long story about Bob Kerr [Robert S. Kerr] coming in and holding a pistol up to his head and saying....

GEOGHEGAN: You were talking about Ross Bass’s conversation with Lyndon Johnson.

SEIGENTHALER: We had a long discussion and long conversation with Johnson as they were riding in from Burning Tree. And Johnson told him that Sam Rayburn had first been against him taking the

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vice presidency. And secondly that Sam Rayburn had said that somebody.... Somebody said, “Would you want Dick Nixon [Richard M. Nixon] to be President?” And Sam Rayburn said, “By God that settles it in my mind.” And Bob Kerr came in and put his finger at Johnson’s head and said, “If you take it, I’m going to blow your brains out” – or “You ought to have your brains blown out,” or something. And then after talking to Rayburn in the bathroom, he changed his mind. He came out and put his finger up again and said exactly the opposite. After Bass talking to me about this, I talked to Bob and said, “Let me relate to you what Bass said,” And Bob Said, “Yes, Phil Potter’s doing a story on it. He talked to me about it, and it’s not far from wrong and it’s pretty accurate.” And the next time I talked with Bob in Washington I said, “Were you satisfied with Phil Potter’s story?” And he said, “Yes.” I often felt that if I had pressed Bob about the story before his brother was killed that he would have told me

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about it – if I had pressed him. But since his brother died I’ve had a very difficult time talking to him about anything that involved his brother. I don’t know whether it’s a psychological barrier on my part or his. A few times he’s gotten into it, but it’s come very slowly. He said, “Yes,” that night about Potter’s story and I didn’t pursue it. The one thing I know is that Johnson did not try to make it appear that Bob had been against him. Bob acknowledged that he had been the emissary who went down and discussed it with him. But the difference in Johnson’s version and what I gather from the sketchy conversations I have had with Bob is that it was the President’s decision to take it and it was Johnson’s desire to have it rather than Johnson being the reluctant dragon who had to be wooed into taking it. And I think that’s probably the more accurate statement although he was not dissatisfied and was understanding that Johnson wanted to appear reluctant to have it forced on him.

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GEOGHEGAN: Do you think anybody other than Senator Symington and then Senator Johnson were under serious consideration?

SEIGENTHALER: Well, I know Scoop Jackson [Henry M. Jackson] thought he was,

honestly thought he was. And again I think they discussed all the possibilities. You know what you said about Johnson in Texas is true, but the same thing applies to Jackson in the state of Washington. And that's 22 electoral votes out there he would have been able to deliver that we didn't get. Rossalinni carried Washington. We didn't. I know they were weighing all the possibilities. And among the problems with Johnson was just what happened. All the liberals were against him. We jumped way ahead of the chronology here, but that's all right.

GEOGHEGAN: Well, coming up following the Convention, what did you do in the campaign?

SEIGENTHALER: Well, I came back to Tennessee for a... Oh, there's one interesting thing. I don't know if you want to get into this now, but at the Convention I asked Bob to let me interview

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his father. And he said, "You can't interview my father. The only person who had interviewed my father, tried to interview my father is Jerry Vanderhorst." He said, they met him at the airport and they misquoted him at the airport. They quoted him as saying something like – very loose – as if to say, "He's my boy and I'm his old man and we're going to tear this town apart." His father got off the plane and he was quoted as saying that. And he said, "Dad's very, very sensitive about doing anything that's going to hurt Johnny. Jerry Vanderhorst found out he was staying out at Marian Davies place and went out there. And he threw him off the premises; refused to talk to him." He said, "Anybody who knows my father and who read that quote" – and I don't know what the quote was; I can get it – "would know he just doesn't talk like that. That's not his way of talking." "But," he said, "the interesting thing he said and he was misquoted and one of his old friends from New York called him up long distance and said, "Good work, Joe. That's the fighting spirit.

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That's just what we need. Give them some more of that." And he said, "However he'd decided he doesn't want to say anything." I said, "Look..." As I say, he said I couldn't interview him because he said his father said he didn't want to be interviewed. But he indicated to me if I really wanted to do it and that if I would make certain that I did not put his father in a position of having to comment on questions that might result in a sensational news story on my part, that he'd be willing to go to him. I said, "Look, I'm as committed to Kennedy as anybody." And he knew that. The long and short of it is that he did arrange for me to interview his father, and it was a fascinating two hour interview.

GEOGHEGAN: Is this the long conversation that you referred to earlier in the interview that you had with Joseph Kennedy?

SEIGENTHALER: Yes, yes.

GEOGHEGAN: At what time did this take place – the period?

SEIGENTHALER: It was on the morning of To place it

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exactly... one afternoon the Kennedy forces sent to each delegation a telegram asking for the opportunity to make a Kennedy presentation to those delegations. The Johnson forces seized on this, and Johnson made a big think of announcing that he was accepting the invitation; the Texas delegation was accepting the invitation and that they were inviting Senator Kennedy to debate Senator Johnson before the Texas delegation: and that they would welcome him at such and such an hour today. So, I got out there at the appointed time. I came about five minutes early. And Bob had called me back after I had.... Oh, he called his father while I was there and said, "Dad, John Seigenthaler, my friend, would like to interview you." And his father said, "Well, have you explained to him that this is my son's fight, not mine." Bob said, "I've explained all those things to him. He does not want a sensational news story. But since you have not been interviewed he would like to be the one to get the

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interview with you, and I would like for you to do it." And his father said, "Fine, tell him to come in the morning." So I got out there, and I had seen him a couple of times before that. It was just, "Hello, how are you? I'm glad to see you." "Yes, I know John. Fine." But I hadn't had four words with him. At the time I talked with him, I had been working on Bob's book. We had dinner one night at the Pavillon Restaurant in New York. But he was across the table. Ed Sullivan was at the table, and we really hadn't had an opportunity.... I hadn't any conversation with him. I'm sure he really didn't remember or recognize me from my face. He said, "Come on in, I'm glad to see you." And we walked through a large towering hallway. But do you want to get into this?

GEOGHEGAN: Yes.

SEIGENTHALER: It's an interesting story.

GEGOGHAN: I think it should be recorded.

SEIGENTHALER: Well, it was a towering ceiling and the room on

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the right had a television set in it. He was wearing swimming trunks and a sports shirt, matching sports shirt, and he had on a straw hat with the brim turned down – a very narrow brim which he had turned down all the way around.

He took me out to the patio. We went right straight through this hallway, and it opened out onto a patio, and there was a portico and it had a ceiling around it. He had been sitting in a chair listening to a portable radio sitting on a table. There were lawn chairs there, steel, white steel. He had this sun umbrella up. It had tilted over one of the chairs. We walked out and he took the chair under the umbrella and put me in the sun; and it was blazing hot sun. I sort of laughed when I sat down. I thought, "He's going to get rid of me quick because he put me in this blistering sun, he obviously doesn't want to talk to me." So, he said.... I said, "I understand your hesitation about wanting to talk to me, and I want you to know that I'm not looking for a

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sensational news story. I want to get something of the flavor of the father of the candidate. I'm not trying to embarrass you but really trying to get a story that will in some way let the people know that the father of the candidate is here and some of the things that he's thinking." I said, "The fact of the matter is if you want to keep silent, if you want to let this be your son's fight, that in itself is a news story, and that's the story I'd be willing to tell." And I said, "Anything you say that gets away from that I'll be glad to treat it off the record because I realize what's at stake here." And he said, "Well, that's fine. That's fine." He said, "I've been misquoted many times. It never really mattered for my own sake. I never really cared much for my own sake." "But," he said, "this is Jack's fight, and this is his effort. He doesn't need me making wise cracks or making speeches for him."

So we were sitting there and the radio

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was on. The first time the news came on he said, "Well not, isn't that the God-damnest thing you ever heard of?" I began to talk to him about his family and his children, and then the news came on with this telegram from Johnson. "Well," he said, "isn't that the God-damnest thing you ever heard of?" He said, "If I were Jack, I wouldn't get within a hundred yards of him. We got this won. Jack's got the votes. Johnson can't change them, and he's desperate. So this is the action of a dying man going down for the third time." And he said, "Hell, I wouldn't touch him. I wouldn't go near him."

I read the other night in the *Founding Father*, this book which is really an unfair attack on Joseph P. Kennedy if there ever was one written, talk about bias. Have you read it?

GEOGHEGAN: No, just the reviews.

SEIGENTHALER: God damn, it's enough to make you sick. But anyway, it makes him a coward and appeaser and all the things he's not; doesn't give him any

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credit for raising three great sons. But anyway, the *Founding Father* says that when he was in Marian Davies' mansion, he was running things from a battery of

telephones. The thing that interested me, the telephone was located maybe twenty-five or thirty or forty yards away from us under the shade of the ceiling, the area that was ceilinged. As I told you, you walked out onto this portico and there were columns ceilinged for maybe a distance of ten feet, and then you were out in the opening. We were sitting out in the opening, and there was some shrubbery between us and the phone. While we were talking, the telephone would ring. He'd get up – if there were any servants in the house I didn't know it – he'd get up; he'd walk to the telephone; answer the telephone himself; talk to whomever he wanted to talk to; hang up; come back. He talked to Peter Lawford. He talked to John Knight, the newspaper man. Those are two I remember he talked to. But it rang a

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couple of other time, and he went over and answered it. But he began to tell me about his family. And I'd ask about the President and Bob and Teddy. I asked him about the quotation, "Bobby's more like me than any of them. He hates like me." You remember that? It's a famous quotation.

GEOGHEGAN: Yes, yes.

SEIGENTHALER: That was a misquote. But I was interested that he didn't complain about any of the misquoting. We got into the discussion of Louis Lyons, which I mentioned a while ago. Louis Lyons was a *Boston Globe* reporter who had gone to interview him. He thought the interview was off the record. Two other newspaper men who went, one of whom was a Nieman fellow, treated it off the record – both of them treated it off the record. Louis wrote the whole story. The story was extremely embarrassing to him and led to his really national embarrassment. Louis Lyons was then in the early years of being

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a curator for the Nieman Foundation. He was also a reporter for the *Boston Globe*. He won the most respected name in journalism. At the time I applied for a Nieman fellowship I asked Bob if he would write a letter recommending me. And he simply said, "At the time my father was Ambassador to the court of St. James Louis Lyons wrote the story that came right at the time of his resignation, and I would not be the best one to recommend you." So I said, "Fine," and let it go at that. During this interview with him I brought up Louis Lyons' name. After the first ten minutes of the interview I had everything I could get, but it was a fascinating conversation; sitting there talking to a man I was confident would be the father of the next president of the United States. I had all that he could tell me and was willing to be quoted as telling me about his idea about raising a family. He talked about Rosemary [Rosemary F. Kennedy]. The story had just come out in *Time* that Rosemary had been mentally retarded. _____

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he said, "I don't know what it is that makes eight children shine like a dollar and another one dull. I guess it's the hand of God. But we just do the best we can and try to help wherever we can." He said, "Eunie [Eunice Kennedy Shriver] knows more about helping the mentally retarded than any other individual in America." He was talking about the work that Eunice had done in the area of research in mental retardation. He said, "She knows more about the subject than anybody else in America." And this was part of the discussion about all of his children.

GEOGHEGAN: Did he make any comparisons? Did he comment upon their differences?

SEIGENTHALER: Well, yes. Well, not really their differences. He was so willing to answer any question I asked him about them and about himself.... We got into a conversation, first of all, when this newscast came on about Johnson asking the President to debate him. And he said, "In desperation, going down for the last time." He said, "If Jack asked me about it, I'd tell him to stay away from it. Don't go within a

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hundred yards of him. That's the act of a dying – going down for the third time.... That's a desperation play. If he asks me about it, I'd tell him what I'd do about it. I wouldn't touch him. I wouldn't go near him." But he said, "But I'm sure before it's over with, he'll go over and debate." So we discussed that for a little bit and then got into the children.

I asked him about the quote on Bob. And he said, "You know, each child's different. Each person is different." He said, "I think in rearing these children their mother [Rose F. Kennedy] was a great influence. I was involved in business. I traveled a great deal. I tried to encourage them to be competitive, but their mother also encouraged them." I asked him about lending Joe [Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr.] and Jack to study under Laski [Harold Laski]. He said, "Well, I was confident that they were both mature enough and sensible enough to be able to hear the other side and still make a choice for themselves." He said,

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"I was confident when I arranged for them to study under Laski that they had received enough education and had developed intellectually to the extent that they would be able to cope with anything that he had to offer." And he said, "My opinion has always been that you don't have to worry about the other side. We've got all the arguments on our side. We've shown that our system can work and that we don't have to worry about the other side. So this other side has something to offer, and it opens up new avenues of thought. So I was not the least bit afraid about sending them to study there." He said, "I think both of them benefited from it." And then began the discussion of all the children. He said he thought Bob was not just the most determined of his children, but had tremendous will power and was maybe the most determined person that he had known. As a young man he was dedicated to the proposition of – again, what I said earlier – exploring every avenue that....

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In his association with Herbert Hoover [Herbert C. Hoover], in that association he had worked hard. He had worked hard with McClellan. Every time he took a step, he benefited from it because it was a broadening experience for him. I asked him why none of his sons had gone into business. He said that he thought each one of them was more interested in public service than he was in making money. He said, "I didn't encourage them to make money because I thought it was more important too. I wish that during my lifetime that I could have been more able to devote more time to public service. I did what I could. I devoted the time I could and it was greatly rewarding to me." He said, "There's really no need for them to make money. I can tell you this. My daughter Pat [Patricia Kennedy Lawford] has a good enough head on her shoulders to manage my business if it ever becomes necessary for any of them to." He said, "Steve is a brilliant fellow. Sarge Shriver is a very capable man. Their brothers-

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in-law can handle whatever problems come up in business." He said again that Pat was so well informed in a business way that if it ever became necessary for her to do so she could manage the business.

During the interview Jean [Jean Kennedy Smith] came in. Jean at that time was pregnant. She was going swimming. She walked by and she said, "Daddy, did you hear that Lyndon challenged Jack?" And he said, "Yes, I heard it." She said, "Well, what do you think?" He said, "Well, I think he's a damned fool if he goes near him. We've got this thing won. It's all sewed up. He's got no business engaging in a debate," or something. I wouldn't say those were his exact words, but that was the tenor of what he had to say. She said, "I know daddy, but he's challenged him to a debate." And she went on by the pool, and he turned to me and he said, "You see. You see. That's the way they are. And he'll debate him." Well, within five minutes the flash came on ...

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GEOGHEGAN: Did he say that with a sense of pride?

SEIGENTHALER: Yes, oh, with a sense of extreme pride and with a sense of good humor, as if he knew that's what was going to happen...

GEOGHEGAN: As if he had some influence in welding their character in this way?

SEIGENTHALER: Yes, I don't think there was any question about it. Now, he may have had some influence in the decision to debate him. I don't know. But this was what he was saying.... Within a few minutes it came on the air that Senator Kennedy had just announced he would debate him and he would be President. His attitude immediately.... He almost didn't... I mean he didn't look back for a

minute. His attitude to me immediately was, "Jack is so much sharper than this guy. It was then Johnson's mistake. It would have been smarter politically not to accept it, but once they challenged him, I knew he was going to do it. And he will absolutely take this fellow apart. He has got so much more in the way of background facts. He's so much sharper than _____

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that there just won't be any question of the outcome." I said to him, "What do you think of the outcome?" He said, "There won't be any question of the outcome. We'll take it – the debate. He'll take him on and we'll win the debate."

GEOGHEGAN: Did he use the first person plural pronoun?

SEIGENTHALER: "We." Yes. Well, I'm not sure Bill, but it seems to me that he did.

GEOGHEGAN: Did he use it often through the conversation?

SEIGENTHALER: Not with relation to Jack's campaign, he didn't. I very distinctly remember he said, "I don't want my enemies to be my sons' enemies or my wars to be my son's wars. I lived my life, fought my fights, and I'm not apologizing for them. And I don't want my sons to apologize for any of my fights or my wars." I mentioned the Louis Lyons thing, for example. And the way that came up was in this way. I said, "You know, I'd like to know about the Louis Lyons matter." He said, "That man was dishonest." He said, "I know how you feel about it."

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I said, "Well, it's interesting that you would say this because both Bob and Senator Kennedy came to Harvard and spoke to the Nieman Fellows during my year there." He said, "You fellows who had worked within the newspaper business and had covered that committee hearing are responsible for that. I don't blame them for going up there." Not "blame them." He said, "I'm not surprised that they went up there."

[END OF FIRST TAPE]

and met with the Nieman Fellows. I don't want my enemies to be their enemies or my wars to be their wars." He said, "I've fought my fights, and it's now time for a younger generation." He said, "You know, I listened to Eleanor Roosevelt having a press conference yesterday, and I was amazed to hear her get up before that crowd and say that her son had won the campaign in West Virginia for my son. You know, my feeling is that her day and my day is past. It is time for the younger generation, the

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second generation of leadership to come along. Now, I don't want to hang on. I don't want to be a grafting father." He said, "They'll make it on their own. They don't need me to fight my fight again." After I wrote my story, I wrote long, copious notes regarding this interview. It's been a long, long time since I looked at them, I could check them out and balance them against this.

GEOGHEGAN: Did you get the impression as a result of this meeting or any event that occurred during the campaign that the President's father was deeply involved in the campaign strategy or in behind the scenes work?

SEIGENTHALER: No, I didn't. I had this feeling, and he said this, and I have every indication that this is what happened, and that this in general terms is what the real relationship was. He was there if they ever needed to call him for advice. And he gave them his honest opinion, but that if they didn't call him on a day-to-day basis for advice about problems, he didn't expect

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them to. And I think it was more than just taking an opportunity to be critical of Eleanor Roosevelt. I mean he was saying what he felt. "If they call me, I'm here. They know where I am. They've got the phone number. They can call, and I'll tell them what the hell I think. They can take it, or they don't have to take it. They've got the facts available." I know that they did talk with him from time to time and that they did talk with him frequently, but I have the idea, the impression, that they talked with him less to get orders – I mean I don't believe he ever gave them any orders. I'm sure he never gave them any orders.

GEOGHEGAN: As a result of this long two hour conversation...

SEIGENTHALER: Halfway through this conversation he got up and took the shade off of himself and put it on me, just to indicate to me that he was beginning to enjoy the conversation himself. It was very flattering to me.

GEOGHEGAN: As a result of this experience how would you describe his personality?

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SEIGENTHALER: He was completely relaxed. He was an easy man to talk to. He was not domineering or arbitrary or vicious. He was firm in his convictions, proud of his family, proud most of all of the independence that he had given them. He didn't make any bones about the fact that he had made an effort to help, but he didn't take any credit for anything that had happened. I think he was satisfied with his sons and proud of his sons and his family.

GEOGHEGAN: How did your own impression of him compare with what we shall describe as the stereotyped public image of Joseph Kennedy?

SEIGENTHALER: Well, I didn't have any doubt about the fact that he was tough and a man of steel. I think that the image of him is true and that he's a man of firm ideas, strong ideas. But anybody who has the image that he's a domineering father who pulls the strings and his sons and daughters jump, that's just no anywhere near the fact. In addition to everything else, he was a very charming host. I mean before I left.... I

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told him I wanted to get back to town to see the debate. Morton Downy came in while I was there. Morton Downy and his wife were going to take a swim. Mr. Kennedy said, "Come on over and take a swim with us, John. I've got a pair of trunks. I'm sure they'll fit you, and I'd love to have you take a swim with us. Then we can have lunch and you can go back to town." I said, "There's nothing I'd love to do better, but I really can't stay." I said, "I've worn my welcome out and I've got to go." "Hell, you haven't worn your welcome out." He took me out and shook hands with me. He called the cab himself. He called the cab for me. After I left there, I had the feeling that I'd been in the presence of not just a great man of American finance, but in the presence of a great father, a fellow who, you know, most of his life had been making money but who also had been spent making some great children. And he was aware of it and proud of it.

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GEOGHEGAN: I've been trying for some time to get you into the campaign. So let's try that.

SEIGENTHALER: After the Convention and before I came back – you might make a note about the Convention. One day during the convention for example I – I'm just going to tell this one brief story because it comes to mind. One day during the Convention Lyndon Johnson called a press conference and attacked Joseph P. Kennedy. I don't remember whether he said, "My father never carried Chamberlain's umbrella," or "I never carried Chamberlain's umbrella," but I was shocked by it. I went directly up to the eighth floor and told Bob what he said. I went in and told him, "Johnson attacked your father." Of course by this time John F. Kennedy had clobbered Lyndon Johnson in debate. Johnson had spent ten minutes....I came in to cover that debate. Johnson spent his time talking about the tough job he'd been doing in Washington while Kennedy was out campaigning. He was his usual jovial,

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sincere factual self as he talked about the tough time he spent in Washington while Kennedy had been out campaigning. He told his delegation how Kennedy's absentee record had been atrocious during that period. Just before the President came up, he and Bob had about two

words. Bob came with him, sat on the platform right beside him. They had about two or three – well, fifteen seconds, and then the President got up...

GEOGHEGAN: Did you overhear what was said?

SEIGENTHALER: No, didn't have any idea. The place was just packed. The President stood up and made some remark about the applause. You know, debate Johnson before the Johnson delegation, Texas delegation. He thanked them for their courtesy in asking him to come, and then he made a few light remarks about the difference in applause. Then he talked about how he knew Lyndon had been back there working hard all summer and because he and Hubert knew

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things were in such good hands they had gone out and campaigned hard and left Lyndon to mind the store. He congratulated him on his record and was sure that those statistics that he had delivered were accurate and that he was glad he left things in such good hands and he was glad they were able to take care of everything while he was gone. Everybody got a big laugh out of that. He treated the whole interview as a very light sort of thing. Then wound up by making a few serious remarks about what the campaign was all about, and after this was over, we're going out and bringing about a Democratic victory in November. He wound up by saying things that ever Democrat would have to applaud. He literally clobbered him.

So during that afternoon I'm sure that Johnson strategists got together and pulled what I'm sure Joseph P. Kennedy called that night an even more desperate measure, the attack on him. The only reason I mention this now is because some months later Bob

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saw Lyndon Johnson at a party, and Johnson said to him something to the effect of, "You don't like me. You never liked me." And Bob told me about this conversation. Bob said, "Do you remember saying to me something at some time in the past about something Lyndon Johnson said about Dad at the Convention?" I said, "Hell, yes. I remember it very well. He attacked him. He said he never carried Chamberlain's umbrella." He said, "Well, it's interesting because last night," he said they were somewhere – "and Lyndon was talking to me about this incident." He said, "I know why you don't like me. You think I attacked your father, but I never said that. Those reports were all false. They were an error. I never did attack your father and I wouldn't, and I always liked you and admired you. But you're angry with me, and you've always been upset with me." When I got back to Nashville, I went through our *New York Times* clippings file and got the *New York Times* story out – not my story because

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obviously I wanted to be sure that somebody else heard him, and the *New York Times* quoted and I sent it off to Bob. I never heard any more about it. I just sent him a note and said, "This

is the *New York Times* story on Lyndon's attack on your father." But I thought that was an interesting thing, that Lyndon would go out of his way that much later.

But, anyway, after I got back to Tennessee Bob called me and asked me if I would come to work in the campaign, and I told him, "Yes. What do you want me to do?" He said, "Kenny was working with the President, traveling with him and that he [Robert F. Kennedy] was burdened and that he needed to get out and make some speeches and wanted to know if I'd come into the campaign and work in the campaign headquarters as administrative assistant and take some of the burden off of him. And that's what I did. I worked up there in Washington during the whole campaign.

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GEOGHEGAN: Did you travel much out of Washington?

SEIGENTHALER: No, I didn't travel at all. I stayed right there, operated largely by telephone with Bob. I was a clearing house for any information between Bob as he went out and made speeches and the President as he was making speeches somewhere else. I had very few conversations with the President directly, however. I had so many with Kenny. Dick McGuire [Richard V. McGuire] was dealing with Kenny too, much more frequent than I was. Sometimes Kenny would call me directly. Sometimes Dick would call me. There are a couple of instances that are interesting. One was one day Kenny called me and said – it was late in the campaign. Dick McGuire called first, came in and said, "Kenny's going to call you." Kenny called in a couple of minutes. And Kenny said that the President needed as many fresh ideas as he could get to inject into his speeches. There had been some difficulty about getting information that was being prepared by Archie

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Cox [Archibald Cox] and others to the President, always that communications problem. He said, "I've talked to the President about this. I'm wondering if you would call Arthur Schlesinger, Ken Galbraith [John Kenneth Galbraith], Archie Cox, and somebody else" – there were four people – "I'll try to think of this too – everyday and ask them if they have any ideas, any new ways really of saying what he has been saying. He's satisfied with the theme. He thinks that it's too late in the campaign to change the theme. But he thought that some of them might have some new ideas, and he wants to make sure they get through. I will call you each day at such and such an hour." This was maybe the last ten days of the campaign. I called each day and Kenny called three or four times each day. Then he said, "Look, it's getting very difficult for me to call. Would you give the information to Dick McGuire?" It was an interesting thing. After the campaign was over, the first time I saw the President after the campaign was over, he went

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out of his way again to say, “Thanks for serving as a middle man. It was very helpful.” I don’t know if he ever used a line, the important thing to me was that he knew that this was a little thing that I had done. So, the business in this campaign headquarters was so hectic and so pressing that you really didn’t have time to think. The stories that I could tell about that would largely be about Bob, rather than the President.

GEOGHEGAN: Where were you election day or election night?

SEIGENTHALER: I stayed in Washington. Bob asked me to go up to Hyannis Port and I told him I’d rather stay in Washington. I had frequent conversations during the night with him and a few with the President.

GEOGHEGAN: What was the President talking to you about?

SEIGENTHALER: Everybody was unable to go to Hyannis Port, and that’s the reason I wanted to stay in Washington. I told Bob that I thought there’d be a lot of people there who would want to come around and celebrate the victory; that I was certain there

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was going to be a victory. And I said, “I think it would be worthwhile if someone was here who had contact with you.” During the course of the evening various people would come in. I’d talk to Bob and say, “So and so’s been here. Would you thank him? Then he’d thank him and get on the phone with him, and sometimes the President would come on and thank him. Generally that’s the sort of conversation it was. Maybe some of them might have a funny story to tell and somebody would have an interesting story to tell about something that was happening.

GEOGHEGAN: When was the first time after the election that you saw...

SEIGENTHALER: Well, I stayed down several days and then I went up to the Cape a couple of days later.

GEOGHEGAN: What was the purpose of that trip?

SEIGENTHALER: Just that Bob asked me to come up. He just was being nice. I had worked like hell, and he thought I was entitled to see and shake hands

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with the man that had been elected. I went up there and Bob asked me in his presence if I thought I could write a book about the campaign from my standpoint, and I told him I was sure I could. The President said, “You should do it. It would be very valuable.” Of course I never did.

GEOGHEGAN: Teddy White [Theodore White]...

SEIGENTHALER: Newspaper men.... Well, Teddy White's book was a book from the campaign trail. This would have been more of a workbook, an organizational book than it would have been the story of the campaign. But Larry O'Brien did an awful good job on the one he did. The role I played, it was comparatively significant job beside the role Larry O'Brien played. I wrote a long memo on it and put it in the file.

GEOGHEGAN: How did the campaign strategy develop? Who participated primarily in that?

SEIGENTHALER: Do you want a beer?

GEOGHEGAN: Yes, that's.... How did the campaign strategy

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develop? Who so to speak acted as the board of directors for this purpose?

SEIGENTHALER: Well, when I came in of course it was underway. Bob and I talked a couple of times about my coming in and working. I told him that I thought we had a tough time in Tennessee and that it might be that I could have been more help here. My paper endorsed Kennedy immediately after his nomination, and we were for him. However, later on he called and said he was swamped with work, and he could use... if I could come to serve as his administrative assistant. I told him I would, and I talked to the paper about it. They were happy to give me a leave. And so I left and went up.

The first day I arrived there and walked in they were already underway. And the organization as it had been set up was something like this. In the.... Scoop Jackson had been named chairman of the Democratic National Committee, but his administrative assistant was a fellow named John Salter. Also working with him

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was a fellow named Dan Martin. Scoop Jackson's role largely was that of speechmaker. He had very little to do with the actual organizational detail. His office was.... But we kept him posted and through Salter let him know how the campaign was developing. He was always very willing to be helpful in any way that he could. If we had any suggestions or ideas, we forwarded them to him through Salter. Then his office separated Bob's office from the large room that was occupied by Larry O'Brien, Ralph Dungan, Dick Donahue [Richard Donahue] who were principally in our area in the Kennedy team, and Earl Plumess and Jim Row who were in there for Johnson. Now, Larry and Ralph and Dick primarily handled the

advancement in the various states and dealt with the advancement. The Johnson headquarters was across the hall from us. And they handled the scheduling of the vice presidential candidate and the organization of the vice presidential campaign. In the office on the other side of us Dick McGuire had the

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scheduling operation and Polly Fitzgerald had the women's organizations. The Kennedy women worked through Polly Fitzgerald and scheduling there. And he President's scheduling was handled through McGuire and John Noland and Dick O'Hara and maybe one or two others. Bob's office was in so to speak the nerve center of the whole operation. I'm sure that he was... Now, in the insularly organizations, the Farmers for Kennedy, the Veterans for Kennedy – you know, where the citizens were – these were all okayed in other areas. And, as I say, Larry was handling largely coordinators in the various states, dealing with their problems. He was helping service them. He was also working on things such as coordinating the various congressional campaigns. And Ralph and Dick Donahue were helping him. Jack, do you want to get us a couple of beers across the street?

JACK: Certainly.

SEIGENTHALER: Thanks Jack. But generally Bob was there, or he was on the campaign trail, and he acted

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really in a decision making capacity. A serious problem arose at one point for example on the question of a southern campaign headquarters. Senator Smathers [George Smathers] wanted to set up his own campaign headquarters for the thirteen southern states and completely exclude the Democratic campaign from any activity in the southern states, fund raising, speech making. There were certain people they didn't want in the southern states. And this effort got underway and went along a while before Larry O'Brien and Dick Donahue found out about it. When they did find out about it, they came to Bob. Bob was not there. I was there. They talked to me about it. I talked to Bob about it. A short time after that Bob was on an airplane with Smathers, headed into the southern states, and he had a showdown with him about it. He said, "Senator Smathers, I can tell you're his friend. But I can tell you Senator Kennedy is not going to submit to this type of operation. We're not

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running a southern campaign as a separate wing of this organization. We're running a total effort." And Smathers had heard all sorts of rumors and reports that a couple of his associates had given him advise on. Bob called them face to face with Senator Smathers and made admit they'd been giving him bad information. And he killed that effort. Larry O'Brien got the congressional campaign under way. Larry's idea was that if the congressional candidates could be given a role of supporting the national ticket as well as their own campaigns, that

Kennedy would benefit tremendously. Bob, after thinking about it a while, decided on Dick Bolling [Richard Bolling] to head that effort. He called Dick Bolling in and talked to the President about it. The President was very hot on Dick Bolling. For the first time the national committee made television time available, regular time available at the end of the President's nation-

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wide networks. For example, five minutes – this was Bob's idea; he worked it out with Bolling – five minutes on the tail end of a thirty minute Kennedy telecast would be delegated to local candidates, congressional candidates who had problems in areas where that could be done. This was made available at no expense to local candidates, and it was very effective.

Bolling had many good ideas about how to coordinate their effort into the total effort. Larry was very effective in setting these things up and in coming up with these ideas. Bob was very effective in implementing these ideas and in getting them done and giving them direction. The question came up on some of the other operations, efforts. The nationalities division for example was.... Did Hooker tell you about how Bill Henry [E. William Henry] came into the campaign?

GEOGHEGAN: Not on the record. He mentioned it a little bit this afternoon before we had lunch.

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SEIGENTHALER: Bob and the President talked about how _____ used the nationalities division to a very good advantage in 1948. And Dick Donahue was given the job of working that up. But Dick Donahue had many other assignments too, and Bob needed somebody to devote full time to the nationalities operation. Bill Henry came up for the American Bar Association's meeting. Bill Henry came in to see John Jay. I had never met Bill Henry. John Jay said, "Come on over. I want you to meet a friend of mine." Bill Henry came in to meet me. And while he was there, I introduced him to Bob. Bob said to him, "Why don't you come on up and work on the campaign?" after a little conversation. "Why don't you come up and work in the campaign?" And Bill said, "We've got a very difficult time in Tennessee. I'd love to work in the campaign in Tennessee." And Bob said, "Will you give it some thought?" He said, "Yes, I will." The next day Bob was out of the office. The third day Bob was in the office. Bob was out making

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a speech. I think in New York. The third day he was back in the office. Bill Henry came in to say goodbye, and Bob came in while he was there. He shook hands with him and said, "Oh, are you going back to Tennessee?" He said, "Yes." And he said, "Well, I'm sorry to hear that. I was hoping you'd be able to take on a special assignment for Senator Kennedy and me." He said, "Well, what is that?" He said, "We need an effort made among the nationalities groups all across the country. I need a personal representative to go out and visit these groups

and see whether the works' being done. I was hoping you'd take on the assignment." And Bill Henry said, "Well, it sounds very interesting." Bob said, "Well, come in and spend a few minutes." They spent ten minutes, and Bob talked him into doing it. Bob talked to him for ten minutes, and I think talked him into it. He convinced him that he could be of great service, more service here than he could

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in Tennessee. When they walked out of the office, Bill said, "Well, I'll go back to Tennessee, and I'll be back here on Monday." Bob asked him if he could make it on Friday. Bill said, "Yes," and he did. He worked during the course of the campaign traveling all across the country. He accepted no salary. He may have paid his expenses. And after it was over he came back to Tennessee.

One day Bob called on the telephone and said, "You know our friend over in Memphis?" And I said, "Yes." He said, "I was talking to Hooker about him, and I wondered if he wanted to go into the FCC." This was maybe six months later. "What do you think?" I said, "Hooker's a better friend than I am. Let him ask him." So, a little while later Bill Henry called and said, "I'd love to take it. Is there any possibility I can be chairman someday?" So I called Bob back and he said, "Sure, I think that could be worked out if he did a good job. I think that could

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be possible at some point, but I couldn't make him a promise." And that's how he became involved, and that's how he became chairman of the FCC. But Bob's role in the campaign was he talked almost every night to his brother wherever he was, and they discussed strategy. They discussed the personalities of the people involved. Bob kept him informed on conflicts that were going on in the organization here. And he gave him his own ideas about speeches.

Bob was very discouraged in the early stages about the civil rights effort. He had several meetings with Harris Wauford and that group, you know, to try to stimulate interest among them. The difficulty was that most of the people we had working in the civil rights division were not willing to get out into the field, and they were not practical in their political dealings. A fellow named Oliver Hill from South Carolina was NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] for example. He was one of the few really willing to get out and work in the

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field. Frank Reeves was a good man, and anytime anybody needed Frank Reeves he was there. But Frank Reeves kept saying to us that he didn't want to get out of the main stream. He didn't really want to get out of Washington. He wanted to be close to decision-making rather than out talking to Negro groups whose help was vitally needed. The question of Martin Luther King came up during the course of the campaign and whether Martin Luther King would be willing to endorse Kennedy. This was before the arrest of Martin Luther King. Harris Wauford had been talking to Martin Luther King, and Harris Wauford was

urging that President Kennedy, as it were, embrace Martin Luther King and go out of his way to pay him some special tribute or give him some special recognition. As I say, this was before that arrest that made history in the middle of the campaign. I remember sitting in on three or four of those meetings with those people, and they were very unsatisfactory meetings. We had...

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didn't really have the feeling that they were coming to grips with the political difficulties involved. Finally, maybe in the second or third meeting, Louis Martin spoke up for the first time and passionately disagreed with Harris Wauford and set out in very precise, practical terms what their division – civil rights division of the campaign – had to begin to do if they were going to be successful. Louis Martin had been a very practical politician and a successful politician among Negroes. And from that point on I thought Bob placed more credence and more of a responsibility in Louis Martin in his role than he did with anybody else in that group, outside of Sarge Shriver. Now this was just one of Sarge's many efforts of course.

GEOGHEGAN: Did _____ become involved at all or observe any of the decision-making process with respect to the famous call to Martin Luther King's wife [Coretta Scott King], or was it to Martin Luther King himself?

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SEIGENTHALER: No, it was to Martin Luther King's wife. When it happened Sarge, I think, working with the President after a telephone call at night with Bob, decided to call Martin Luther King. As everyone knows, there were strong pressures against doing it. I don't know what happened at the other end, what preceded the President's call to Mrs. King, but I know that when Bob came in the next morning, he was incensed over the action of the judge in refusing to grant bond. I've always said Bob Kennedy's the most moral man I ever met. This was an action that really upset him. He was going to upstate New York to make a speech that day. He had talked to the President the night before. I know that he had been a part of the decision to call Mrs. King. Prior to that, the encouragement that he had received to give some recognition to King's work... there was really not an opportunity to do it without being obvious. I always thought that both the President and Bob constantly, during the campaign and after-

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wards, looked for legitimate reasons to give recognition and to pay tribute to Negroes who deserved it on the theory that if you can find an instance that deserved recognition, that you would give general recognition to the race and to the cause of civil rights. Bob was really upset on this particular morning. I say upset. He couldn't understand why the judge was acting as he acted. He said, "You know, it's not just a problem of civil rights here. It's a

problem of law. This man had the constitutional right to be able to make bond, and this judge is preventing it.” He considered telephoning the judge while he was there or sending him a wire. He decided, no, he wouldn’t do it. I drove him to the airport. We talked about what I was going to do that day and when he would call me and what time I would talk to him. I would talk to Kenny and work out some ideas with Kenny and that I would talk with this one and that one in the office. Just general

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conversation. But there was some of the conversation still about that judge in Georgia. He got on the airplane and flew to upstate New York. And later in the day somebody – Roger Tuffey – came in and said, “Do you know if Bobby made any call to some judge in Georgia?” I said, “Hell, no. He didn’t make any call.” But he said that the judge in Georgia said that he did and, “Shall I make a denial?” And I said, “Yes, say that sources in the National Democratic Committee said that no such call was made by Robert Kennedy.” So, a couple of hours later Bob called – maybe an hour later. He said, “How are things going?” I said, “They’re going fine.” He said.... And I told him I had done this and I had done that. And I said, “By the way, there’s one problem. That judge in Georgia’s an absolute idiot.” And he said, “Why?” And I said, “

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[END OF INTERVIEW]

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ADDRESS TO ASNE

By John Seigenthaler

1963

I am honored, as I know John Strohmeier is, to be a part of this panel with two such distinguished members of the United States senate whose work in the area of congressional investigations has had such a salutary impact on our national ethics and morality.

The subject - "Morality in Washington" - calls to mind the question of corruption and dishonesty and conflicts of interest on the part of federal public servants---because Washington is the symbol of government.

And corruption in government of course has been a vital concern of the American press, at least since Zenger exposed Governor Cosby.

To begin my part in this discussion, I want to talk briefly about the question of press cooperation with congressional committees---where it starts and where it should stop; and discuss, too, whether the checks we have and the safeguards we rely on are adequate; and whether our involvement---the press involvement, I mean---is deep enough or whether we are too complacent about the subject of government morality.

I represent a newspaper and come from a community which benefited directly and substantially from the work Senator McClellan's committee did in 1957 when his select committee invaded the field of racketeering in labor and management. As a working reporter, I had an opportunity to observe at close range the machinery of the staff of that committee, both in the field and here in Washington. I was impressed---and I think the nation came to be impressed---with the great amount of research, with the huge file of background data, with the vast volume of preliminary material which that committee staff developed over a period of months in order to conduct a few days of hearings. Extreme care was taken to substantiate evidence to corroborate statements; to substantiate evidence, to document testimony that was to be given so that what the committee finally heard was fact---not fiction.

And some of you who had similar experiences---in Scranton, Pennsylvania and Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington, and elsewhere, are as aware as I of the good that can

come from such investigations and mutual cooperation between the congressional committee and the press.

Now congressional investigating committees are interested primarily in determining and exposing for congress the needs for new laws. And, of course, that exposure is a matter of public interest and as such it is certainly of interest to us.

We in the press may have interests in matters which the committee may develop which may be outside the scope of its inquiry; information which may reflect on the honesty and character and integrity of public officials or those in the public eye in business or labor or politics.

If there is some indication of dishonesty or conflict of interest and if the press sees as its role the exposure of such conditions, then the committee can be of great service by providing leads and avenues of investigation which its work brings to its attention, but which may be outside the scope of its inquiry because of the requirements of the legislative intent. The committee can facilitate work by investigative reporters and can provide short cuts and open doors which are closed arbitrarily by public officials; through its prestige and subpoena powers the committee can command statements and records of a quasi public nature, or private files of public officials, which deserve and demand public scrutiny.

And there is great good that can come from mutual cooperation between the press and congressional investigators. Great good can come to the public which both seek to serve.

But while this is so it is my feeling that this relationship should never become too intimate or cozy. There are dangers we should guard against. Some Washington correspondents seem to want to create national heroes because their committee investigations make headlines.

Unfortunately, as we know, the high calibre of investigative work which is demanded of congressional committee staffs by our two guests, Senator McClellan and Senator Williams, is not required by all congressional investigators. And we in the press do have some relevant responsibilities to make sure that there is nothing that grows out of mutual cooperation that would prevent our making known to the reading

public irresponsible conduct on the part of congressional committees. We must be alert to such matters as the failure of committees to act in certain cases; we must be alert to the protection of rights of witnesses before committees; we should be concerned, as Creed Black said in his FoI committee report, with the fact that congress continues to have an intolerable number of committee sessions in secret.

Most of us would agree, I think, that congress is making a responsible and conscientious effort to serve as a watchdog on the executive branch of government. I wonder, however, whether we are not coming to rely on congress to serve as the only watchdog on morality in federal government. I wonder whether we are not accepting the work of congressional investigator as all that needs to be done.

Are we, as editors, coming to think of the federal government as something too big for us to try to tackle on questions of morality?

Are we coming to look on crusading journalism--on muckraking--as forbidden practices?

Since General St. Clair was investigated in the 1790's congressional investigating committees have been a part of our national life and they have done great good. But I wonder if in 1964 we have not come to have a sort of visceral feeling that all is well because the congressional investigators are still on the job.

Let us explore for a moment the two areas of federal government where there have been relatively few investigators in recent years.

It seems to me that we in the press are completely ignoring the possibility that there may be some flaws in the checks we have on the legislative branch and on the judicial branch.

I have no desire to attack any member of the Senate or the House, or any judicial officer. But as a practical matter it seems to me as an editor and as a former servant of the federal government that we are naive if we accept as fact that corruption in government is limited to the executive branch.

Are we ignoring to a dangerous degree the fact that the same political system that produced the executive branch is the same system that produced every member of congress and every judicial appointee?

I am as aware as anyone of the work that the Justice Department and the FBI does in criminal investigations when there is substantial evidence of wrongdoing. We have seen some evidence of this recently wherein two members of congress were indicted and convicted.

However, such investigations are limited as they must be to violations of the law and in many cases they do not touch on twilight areas of conflict of interest. Unless there is a grand jury investigation and an indictment there is usually no public disclosure. There are cases, as I have said, in which there are indictments returned against congressmen or federal judges are sometimes returned---but history indicates they are rare.

And when these investigations do not develop adequate information to proceed no public disclosure is required, unless a Committee makes an investigation---or unless the press makes the effort.

And again, the attitude of the press too often in recent years has been characterized by disinterest when it was its opportunity to initiate the investigation.

Let us consider for just a moment the examination we make of members of the judiciary. I have great respect for the judiciary, but checks on its members are necessary. Now what checks do we have? First of all, when his name is up for consideration the potential judge is subjected to a searching investigation by the FBI. Then, of course, the American Bar Association makes an investigation on him and turns its ratings over to the Department of Justice. Then the proposed judge is given a hearing before the judiciary committee. Then he is nominated by the Senate, if he passes all the inquiries.

Now from that point until he does the federal judge is free from scrutiny. He does not have to stand for re-election; he does not have to worry about the appointment being rescinded. His private life is closed, unless there is clear evidence developed that he is--or may be--corrupt.

We assume that the robes of the federal judiciary somehow endow the judge with integrity for the rest of his life.

We have been fortunate in this country. There have been only eight impeachments

in the judiciary and only four of those impeached by the House were convicted by the Senate. But there have been a large number of other cases in which judges have resigned after an interrogation was initiated; after investigations which reflected on their integrity were started. There were two such cases in the 1940's.

And since that time, and especially since the act creating 80-odd (ck) judgeships in 1961--that all about the judiciary has been wholesome and decent and right.

And let me point out another flaw in our system. Can anybody imagine, should evidence be developed on a corrupt judge, that the House or Senate, burdened with the present-day volume of pending legislation, could find the necessary 20 or 30 days to have an impeachment proceeding.

All of this, it seems to me, suggests that the impeachment process is obsolete and that our system of checking on the assets of judicial officers assumes too much---and does so to a degree that could be dangerous to the system of justice.

Now in the congress we do have elections and during these elections---every two years for the House and every six years for the Senate---the opposition is frequently able to develop facts which reflect on the character or integrity of the legislator. But often these criticisms are political. And sometimes they are not political, but are considered so because they are questions raised during a political campaign.

The Justice Department, it is true, does move sometimes into the activities of congressmen and senators---and sometimes corruption is brought to light. Recently two congressmen were tried and convicted in Maryland, for example.

But this example is far less than the rule. It is the extreme exception. Frequently such inquiries never get out of the stage of secret FBI investigations. Not because of the inability of the FBI, but because all conflicts of interest or all violations of moral ethics are violations of the law.

And my research, which certainly is fallible, indicates there has not---until the present Baker investigation---been a serious investigation by a legislative body at the national level of itself since 1897 when a special committee of the Senate was set up to look into charges---charges "published in certain newspapers" according to the resolution---concerning the ties between the sugar interests and senators considering

action on sugar legislation.

The power to remove a senator or a house member, unlike the impeachment process required for the judicial officer, is vested in the house ^{body} ~~body~~ of which the individual legislator is a member. The constitution provides that either the House or the Senate may remove a member by a concurrence of two-thirds of its members.

I am unable to find a single case of removal from either house since the time of secession. The last case of which I am aware, aside from that, involved William Blount, from my native state of Tennessee, who after his removal from the U. S. Senate for "a high misdemeanor entirely inconsistent with his public trust" returned to Tennessee where the voters of that enlightened state promptly named him governor.

There was the McCarthy censure, of course, where the senate took action against a member. But I think we would all agree that the question raised there was basically one of ideology and did not develop personal corruption of the senator for monetary gain.

Well, from all of this it seems to me that we traditionally have accepted that yesterday's procedures are adequate to deal with today's society where temptation and opportunity is rife. We in the press are so given to taking a man for granted---until there is a crisis. We deplore inadequate, lax restrictions---after the crime is exposed. When we talk about honesty in government certainly all of us would agree that we are talking about the very fabric of our society. Each of us, as editors, must of course, decide for himself what the responsibility of his own newspaper will be; whether he will make any effort to be what Douglass Cater has called the "fourth branch of government---checking on each of the other three branches.

Are our safeguards adequate? Are the provisions against corruption in all branches of government ample? Is the system sound? Are the precautions all that are needed?

I will not presume to answer the questions. But I do think we all should consider the questions. If we ignore the problems that confront yesterday's government today and if we fail to stimulate thought and action about how to change when change is needed, then in my opinion our readers across the nation will accept the provisions that

may have been good enough for yesterday---until they are forced to consider it
by a shocking scandal that will only damage and shake the confidence of us all.