

John W. Douglas Oral History Interview – RFK #2, 06/24/1969
Administrative Information

Creator: John W. Douglas
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Biographical Note

John W. Douglas (1921-2010) worked for the Kennedy Administration on the release of Cuban exiles involved in the Bay of Pigs and then, in 1963, led the Civil Division of the Justice Department as Assistant Attorney General. In 1966 he left the Justice Department to work on his father's, Paul H. Douglas, campaign for the Illinois seat to the U.S. Senate and then later worked on Robert F. Kennedy's 1968 campaign for the U.S. presidency. In this interview, Douglas discusses organizing RFK's campaign for the primaries in Indiana, the struggle to gain support from labor groups and politicians, and RFK's strong dedication and political platform, among other issues.

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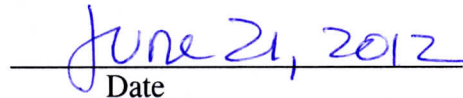
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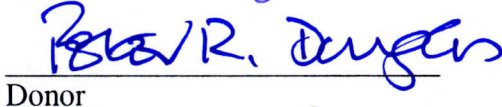
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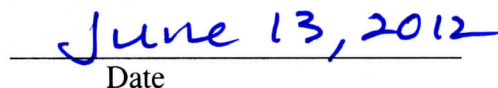
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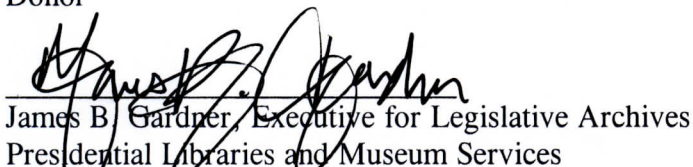
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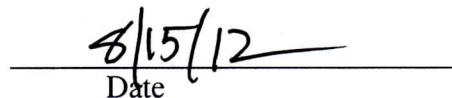

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John Douglas – RFK #2

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Second Oral History Interview

with

John W. Douglas

June 24, 1969
Washington, D.C.

By Larry J. Hackman

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

HACKMAN: Before we go back to Indiana, I just wanted to go back for a second and ask you if you ever got involved in any discussions of which primaries to go into?

DOUGLAS: No, I didn't. The only discussion I ever had with Bob Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy] on that was in the December 1967 luncheon which I've described to you previously, where we talked about the possibility of his running. He said he thought that he would do reasonably well if he went into the primaries, and I certainly agreed with him. In fact, I thought he'd do very well.

HACKMAN: Did you ever discuss with him at a later point or find out from other people what really was the deciding factor on Indiana? Because I know for awhile there was some question as to whether he'd go in or not.

DOUGLAS: The only thing I know about that was second- or third hand. At the time I just assumed that there were only a limited number of primary states and that, because of his late entry, Bob really had to go into all that he could. In retrospect, it was probably fortunate that his first showdown with McCarthy [Eugene J. McCarthy] came in Indiana because it was a state where Senator Kennedy was starting from scratch and, therefore, a victory in that state couldn't be discounted on the grounds that

there was a strong Kennedy organization or strong Kennedy supporters. There were none of those things and, as a result, it meant that a victory there couldn't be written off.

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Secondly, I think that the Indiana voters were the kind who came to appreciate somebody like Bob Kennedy as time went on. They seemed fairly direct and straight-forward, disposed to measure a candidate by what they saw of him and how he struck them, and not by any preconceptions based on what they'd read or what others had said.

HACKMAN: Were there any other conversations that you had with Robert Kennedy between the time he announced and that meeting at the pool when he asked you to come to Indiana?

DOUGLAS: Well, I saw him once in Indiana prior to the time he asked me to come in and help on the organization side. I'd gone up into Lake County at the request of somebody in Washington to see how the organization and how the issues in that section of Indiana seemed to be shaping up. That, of course was a crucial part of the state because a very impressive percentage of the Democratic primary vote came out of that northwest district. While I was there, Senator Kennedy made a speech in Gary. I spoke to him briefly after the speech as he was getting into his car.

HACKMAN: That's not the same time you go out on that early scouting trip? Is this the same one when you talked to George Zazas?

DOUGLAS: I'm not sure. It may have been. I spoke to George Zazas in Indianapolis. I may have gone on up to Lake County thereafter. I rather think it may have been another weekend, perhaps a subsequent weekend. But it was in the very early states and before I saw Bob at Hickory Hill.

HACKMAN: Who would have requested something like that of you at that point?

DOUGLAS: Ted Kennedy [Edward M. Kennedy] asked me if I would go out. I was finishing with the Speakers Bureau at the time. As that effort got organized in a relatively little amount of time, he stopped by the little cubicle where I was working and asked me if I'd do that. I said I would.

HACKMAN: You said that the day of the New Hampshire primary at the time of your talk with Robert Kennedy, he'd said that one of the things he was dreading was talking to McCarthy.

DOUGLAS: Well, he didn't use the word "dread," but he said he wasn't looking forward to it.

HACKMAN: Did you know anything about the relationship between those two people up to that time?

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DOUGLAS: I knew practically nothing about the relationship between them.

HACKMAN: Do you know anything about what attempts were made then during the first few days after Robert Kennedy announced, or during the coming weeks really, to work something out with the McCarthy people, McCarthy and the McCarthy people?

DOUGLAS: No, I don't. All I know is that Ted Kennedy had flown up to...

HACKMAN: Green Bay, I think?

DOUGLAS: Green Bay—someplace like that. I think he did that before Bob announced. I had watched Bob's announcement of his candidacy in Ted Kennedy's office. I just happened to see Ted and he asked me if I wanted to watch it there. I gathered that the encounter with McCarthy was cordial but chilly, but where I got that impression, I honestly don't know.

HACKMAN: You talked briefly about setting up the Speaker Bureau. Can you go into that a little more as far as what exactly was involved in getting it off the ground?

DOUGLAS: Well, it wasn't difficult. It was a case of getting the names of individuals who would not only be willing to speak for Senator Kennedy, but also trying to get ideas of who would be good for which kinds of audiences. I spoke to a number of people to get lists and ideas and suggestions. Arthur Schlesinger [Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.] was particularly helpful. The names fell into place fairly well. There were the usual problems of communications. I'd say we'd call back, and then I sometimes forgot to. It was a question really of building up cards in a card index.

One thing I think I learned from that experience was that out-of-state speakers could be very effective. There had been a feeling, in a number of states, that it was a mistake to bring in outside speakers, that it would contribute to a feeling that Bob was trying to overpower the state. This was wrong. A great deal of good work was done by speakers from outside the state. Very effective work was done by people who weren't particularly well known nationally. For example, Marian Schlesinger [Marian Cannon Schlesinger] and John Bartlow Martin's wife [Frances Martin] did a wonderful job in Indiana and, to some extent, in Oregon. They concentrated on the suburbs and the universities. They were impressive personalities, spoke very well and, as a result, were able to eliminate or soften hostility to Bob among those groups. I came away feeling that if we'd

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done more effective and aggressive work in the scheduling of outside speakers, it would have made quite a difference because, as I say, good speakers could convert many individuals from being hostile to being receptive.

The candidate himself had to win them over. But the out-of-state speakers made that job easier. There were a number of people like that. Arthur Schlesinger himself was very effective with many kinds of audiences, particularly in the universities. Of course there was a great demand for the big names. But getting a Speakers Bureau established was essentially a mechanical job. Once it was set up, there was no need for me to stay with it.

HACKMAN: With McCarthy in, did you have a problem in just getting a sufficient number of academians to do this type of work, or was that a problem?

DOUGLAS: Well, it was a minor problem at the start. At that time I didn't realize what heavy demands there would be for speakers for Bob. So we didn't go as all out in recruiting as we should have done. We underestimated the ultimate demand for speakers coming from the Kennedy people inside the various states, and we also underestimated the contribution which such speakers could make. So we probably shot for a figure which was too low.

There were a number of people in particular areas such as Connecticut, as I recall, where academians were not willing to commit themselves. There was a feeling that they might come around some time in the future, but they had been committed to McCarthy and so we left them alone at least initially. There were quite a few in that category.

HACKMAN: Were you working primarily on the academic side, or were you also working with businessmen, or actors, or artists...

DOUGLAS: No, we were looking for all kinds of speakers, not just the professors. Of course there were few businessmen who were interested, or if they were interested, were willing to get out on a limb. Bob Kennedy just did not appeal to that particular group.

HACKMAN: Any at all that he'd gotten close enough to, to do this for him?

DOUGLAS: Well, there were some, of course, whom he'd attracted and who supported him. People like Roswell Gilpatric [Roswell L. Gilpatric], for example, who was one of the few names in the financial-commercial-legal world who would actively go out and speak for him. But there were others who liked Bob—people like Tom Watson [Thomas J. Watson, Jr.]—who did not formally come out for him. Then there were

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some who couldn't speak for one reason or another.

But there were a number of very good speakers; Adam Yarmolinsky turned out very well. The Speakers Bureau was constantly building up its roster. The process became more

sophisticated after I left. It improved and the number of names was expanded. In any event, I stayed with the bureau about a week or ten days and then left after it was set up and operating.

HACKMAN: What kinds of financial arrangements would be made with people whom you were trying to get to be speakers, or was there any clear policy on this?

DOUGLAS: The only policy was that we'd only pay for their transportation expenses. I'm sure that in some cases we didn't pay for transportation.

HACKMAN: During this early period when things were getting organized and they were very much in a hurry to get things going, how well did things seem to be organized? What kinds of problems were there? Maybe you can tie this into the roles that people like Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen], Smith [Stephen E. Smith], O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell], and Edward Kennedy were playing in the early period. Was it hard to get decisions made and to understand who was supposed to be doing what and all of this?

DOUGLAS: Well, I had the assignment of working in fairly specialized areas, so that I really didn't get into the fields where that would become a problem. I basically went ahead, did what I had to do and tried to leave those individuals alone unless I had to discuss something with them. I was never entirely clear as to what responsibilities Ted Sorensen had and what Ken O'Donnell's were, but it never was a matter of any consequence so far as my work was concerned. Ted Kennedy clearly had more responsibility than anybody else and tended to spend his time in the primary states or talking to delegates and leaders directly.

HACKMAN: Did you get any feeling of how interested Robert Kennedy was in the organizational aspects of the whole thing? I mean, I'm sure it was a time problem to stay on top of these things. But I think some people have implied that he wasn't that interested in running a campaign as he had been previously, or as he had done previously. Does that strike you as making sense or not?

DOUGLAS: Well, your observation sounds quite sensible. He certainly did not get down into details at the times that I saw him.

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On organizational matters in this campaign he tended to paint with a fairly broad brush. This didn't surprise me because his basic approach in the Department of Justice had always been to carve a problem up into general areas and assign somebody in whom he had confidence to each area. Then as individual things came up, he would deal with them either directly or with the person to whom the responsibility had been assigned. He didn't try to monitor it in a detailed, consistently ongoing fashion, although at critical times he would

be very interested in details.

In the last stages of the Indiana campaign we didn't have enough literature out in Lake County. So he got Bill Haddad [William F. Haddad] to turn out some special pieces. He seemed interested in the television work.

But he was essentially a candidate. He was going at it eighteen hours a day, so there really wasn't time for him to spend on organizing effort.

HACKMAN: You don't get the feeling that other people found it a great problem to get him to make decisions or to pay attention to...

DOUGLAS: Bob jumped into the campaign in quite a hurry. He had so many diverse and independent personalities involved in the campaign that it was a difficult thing to nail down. There was certainly nobody playing the role in the 1968 campaign that he had played in 1960. Perhaps he wished there was such a person. But in any event, he didn't appear to take action to arrange such a setup. What the reasons were for that I don't know, but in any event that was the way it turned out.

HACKMAN: Was it obvious in the early days that people were competing a great deal for roles in the campaign?

DOUGLAS: I wasn't personally aware of that. I didn't see this kind of jockeying. I tried to stay away from the candidate as much as possible just because it didn't seem to me to be particularly useful to be around him when I had things to get done. So I wasn't aware of the jockeying. But there was a considerable amount of complaining of one kind or another from one person to another at various times. But I have now way of knowing whether that was par for the course in a presidential campaign or not. I'm inclined to think that there was perhaps a little more of the complaining and friction than one would expect. I think one reason was that there were different groups of people with different backgrounds and different connections with the candidate. And then it was all thrown

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together in such a hurry. Bob mentioned one thing to me about 1960 in our Hickory Hill chat. The people who had been working on President Kennedy's [John F. Kennedy] 1960 campaign had been individuals who were not then established figures in their own right. In 1968 that was no longer the case. Many of those same individuals were now well recognized, with public identities.

Bob accepted this situation as it existed. The fact remains, however, that there were individuals in the campaign who had become persons with their own national reputations. This made organization more difficult.

HACKMAN: I think one of the things you had mentioned last time was some sort of conflict between the New York advance people and the Massachusetts organization people. Is this basically what you're talking about, or is it a

higher level than that?

DOUGLAS: Well, that, of course was one of the elements of friction in Indiana. The advance men would come into a community to arrange a trip. The candidate would want a crowd. He would want things to go smoothly. And their job was to see that it went smoothly and to see that the scheduling was correct. They themselves had only a limited amount of time in which to work. They were a very efficient, effective, and loyal group. But they also tended to bang in and out of a particular city in a hurry. They might leave some bills for the district coordinator to take care of. They might inadvertently snub a particular leader with whom the district coordinator was trying to work.

That particular type of friction was almost inevitable. By the end of the campaign in Indiana, while frictions remained, I don't think it was affecting the campaign itself.

HACKMAN: Is this primarily Bruno [Gerald J. Bruno], or does this go on down the line?

DOUGLAS: No, it wasn't just Jerry by any means. It was all of the advance men, or most of them. They were an able, aggressive, determined lot. Many of them had worked with Senator Kennedy and they felt they knew what he wanted. At the same time, the district coordinators had to live in their districts for the rest of the campaign. In addition, some of them were used to doing things in a less decisive and blunt fashion than those in New York had been used to doing it.

The group from Massachusetts was an experienced group. They worked in Massachusetts politics. They knew their way around. They

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knew how to recruit volunteers, how to build an organization, how to get credit, how to rent store fronts, and they worked on developing a campaign posture which would appeal to the local groups. But initially they were handicapped by the fact that many of them had grown up in Massachusetts politics working for Senator John Kennedy and Senator Ted Kennedy. And of course it was an entirely different kind of a ball game in Indiana in 1968. By the end of the campaign, the differences had been pretty well erased. I forget who it was who said that by the time the election day came around, just all of the things that should have been done from an organizational point of view finally had been done. Things fell into place.

HACKMAN: Could you tell me exactly how you would get involved in situations like this? You talked about yourself earlier as someone who went in to try to smooth out relations between these people on these differences. What were you spending—where physically, and doing what—most of your time?

DOUGLAS: I spent most of my time in Indianapolis because that was where the headquarters were, that's where the telephones were and where the people coming in inevitably flocked. Gerry Doherty [Gerard F. Doherty] worked

with the district coordinators; he spent most of his time on that. If he had a problem on the schedules, for example, he might ask me to straighten it out. In the last few days of the campaign, for example, Bob wanted to touch as many bases as he possibly could. The district coordinators were concerned about that because they wanted an uninterrupted last few days to get their organizations set for Tuesday morning. So they were upset when they were told that they had to help get a crowd out, for example, in South Bend after the candidate had been in there two or three times already. I guess my job was just general troubleshooting. I didn't get into the issues a great deal.

HACKMAN: Did many people feel that he was scheduled in the same places too many times over and over again, or is this something that just sticks out about South Bend?

DOUGLAS: South Bend does stick in my mind. But in the last forty-eight hours there was a feeling among a number of the district coordinators that too much was being asked of their limited resources, and that a lot of their key workers who were supposed to be calling to get out the vote had to call to get out a crowd. Some also felt that people might well get upset with an apparent last-minute blitz kind of nonstop campaigning.

HACKMAN: Would this be particularly true on that last day when he made this swing all over the state? Was there great

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debate on whether he should do this or not, or do you recall that at all?

DOUGLAS: There was no great debate about it that I was aware of. I think Joe Dolan [Joseph F. Dolan] knew that this was what the candidate himself wanted to do. As a matter of fact, my impression was that Joe was encouraged by Bob to schedule longer days for Bob than Joe himself would have suggested on his own. But in any event, I sat down with Joe and helped him work out the last itinerary for the final day of campaigning, which was a smash.

HACKMAN: Was the candidate frequently dissatisfied that he wasn't given a heavy enough schedule?

DOUGLAS: I myself never heard that he had complained that he was given too much. Bob was usually anxious to take on more than what was assigned to him. The Indiana primary effort which Bob made was probably without parallel in modern American political history. For three or so weeks, it was morning until night. But this exposure was what really made him a strong candidate in Indiana and enabled him to overcome a hostile press.

HACKMAN: Can you recall there being much discussion as to whether you spend this much time in personal appearances as opposed to the amount of time you spend with TV and trying to...

DOUGLAS: There was some talk about that. There was a feeling among some people that the crowds were fine but that you could overdo it. Their theory was that too many crowds would whip a backlash on the part of people who were upset about change and yelling crowds. At times the schedule was arranged to take those considerations into account.

John Martin made a real contribution in Indiana. He made suggestions about topics and places that would appeal to the Indianans as Indianans and not just as members of the larger national community. There was an effort to have Bob go to historic places such as Vincennes where there wouldn't be just large, yelling crowds. Of course when Bob started out in some cities the crowds were not there. They tended to build up on each successive visit. The campaign built quite well.

One thing I might say was that in the last stages of the campaign Bob became concerned about the way things were going. I'm not sure it was justified. But you may recall that there was a publication of the results of a Harris [Louis Harris] poll limited to Indiana. And the Harris poll was not put out as an official Harris poll, but some

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newspapers apparently got access to it and printed it. It showed a decided slippage in Bob's vote. This was published in the last stages of the campaign. I'm not sure just when.

HACKMAN: I don't have an exact date either.

DOUGLAS: Bob had also talked to Teddy White [Theodore H. White]. Bob reported that Teddy White's comments were that McCarthy's television was better and that Kennedy's television was poor. That was said to be one of the reasons for the apparent slippage reflected in the leaked Harris poll. And, in addition, telephone polls by an outside outfit which had been retained to conduct telephone canvassing...

HACKMAN: For Robert Kennedy?

DOUGLAS: Yes?

HACKMAN: Would this be Matt Reese [Matthew A. Reese, Jr.]?

DOUGLAS: Matt Reese's group reported some last minute figures that indicated real problems. What they had done was to try to identify favorable and unfavorable and all the rest. They indicated that Bob was in trouble. I'm not sure whether Bob ever heard about the results of the telephone poll.

HACKMAN: Anything that he did in the last period to try to compensate for what he thought was...

DOUGLAS: Well, it probably spurred him on to make an all-out effort. You'll have to check with the advertising people to find out if they stepped up the commercials.

HACKMAN: This would be Wilson [Donald M. Wilson] primarily and his operation? Or who would this—on the advertising side—Wilson was on the TV side, wasn't he? Guggenheim [Charles E. Guggenheim]?

DOUGLAS: Yes. Don Wilson or the Papert, Koenig, Lois firm would know whether they tried to increase the ads. I remember it surprised me when Bob said something to the effect that he hoped the election results would show Harris up.

HACKMAN: Can you remember particularly what Theodore White was upset about on the TV things, and then if Robert Kennedy accepted this? What was of such great concern? Was it primarily frequency?

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DOUGLAS: As I understand it, White had commented to Bob about the quality of the television. I don't know whether White was expressing his own opinion or the consensus of others. But at any event, this was White's considered judgment as related to Kennedy after the news of the Harris poll appeared. But by the night before the primary when he had had supper with a number of us, he was satisfied with what he'd done. He felt that he'd done all he could. He liked the people in Indiana. He thought that they had given him a fair hearing; they had listened. He thought they were independent and would make up their own minds. He asked me how I thought he'd do. And I said, "Well, I think it'll be tough, but you'll win."

HACKMAN: On this whole thing of how much TV versus how much personal appearance and crowd appeal, can you remember something about how people split on this issue?

DOUGLAS: No, I really can't.

HACKMAN: Did you have a feed-in of a viewpoint that got involved in this?

DOUGLAS: Well, I favored a maximum amount of personal exposure. The walking tours were important. I thought that you probably could overdo caravans of cars. But there was no substitute for personal exposure.

HACKMAN: You talked about polls, particularly the last Harris poll. Can you recall earlier polls that had an impact on the direction of the campaign? John Kraft [John F. Kraft] did one very early, at the end of March. Can you remember any impact that it had?

DOUGLAS: No, none at all. I think I saw it, but I don't think it had any impact.

HACKMAN: Other polls commissioned during that primary?

DOUGLAS: No, I don't think there were. Of course, the time to the primary was so short that such polls would have been pointless.

HACKMAN: Were you out in Indiana as early as the Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson] withdrawal on March 31?

DOUGLAS: I had been in Indiana that weekend. But I left Sunday to come back to Washington. My wife met me at the airport and told me the news; I was absolutely incredulous.

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HACKMAN: Incredulous that he really meant it?

DOUGLAS: Incredulous that President Johnson would take that position and wondering in my own mind whether there might be some reservation later on down the road.

HACKMAN: Did you discuss this then with Robert Kennedy at any point?

DOUGLAS: No, I didn't.

HACKMAN: Did you get any feeling for any kind of consensus on the part of other people involved in the campaign as to whether this was...

DOUGLAS: The consensus seemed to be that President Johnson was out of it and that it would be awfully difficult for him to get back in. There was also a feeling for a short time that Bob Kennedy perhaps could lock it up quickly. But it soon became apparent that that was not possible. The labor unions stiffened, Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey] became active, and the Johnson administration started to work.

HACKMAN: You said you didn't get involved much in issues during Indiana, but can you remember getting involved in general discussions, now, of how you would discuss President Johnson, the war, the whole administration, in Indiana, after the withdrawal?

DOUGLAS: I felt that Bob needed some overall thesis to pull his campaign together and that he stood in danger of appearing too peripatetic and scattershot in his approach to issues. So I, and I'm sure many others as well, tried to come up with some ideas as to how the various positions he was taking could be brought together within some kind of single framework, and thereby give the campaign a sense of cohesion and unity. And when I say cohesion and unity, I'm talking about ideas and issues rather than about organization.

I thought back on some of the things that Bob had said in our December '67 luncheon about presidential leadership. But I didn't go at it quite the same way. I thought that perhaps he could put forward his candidacy as an effort to restore some of the traditional democratic values, that somehow we had gotten off the track, that while this was not the fault of any particular individual or of any particular party, nevertheless that this was the basic ideological and spiritual problem. Further, that wasn't enough, however, just to plead unity or to urge adherence to some kind of noble characteristics or spirit, but rather that this had to be carried out in specific ways, in specific

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programs, and had to be fought for.

That seemed to me a valid formulation. It reflected Bob's own ideas. And it was also one that I thought put Bob's best foot forward, because McCarthy was vague when it came to specifics. I thought that a contrast between a candidate with a specific program against one with generalities was favorable to Bob.

On the other hand, it seemed to me that if Bob didn't have some kind of overall framework, he would fall into the pitfall of having a series of twenty-two point programs and thirteen point programs, which were supposed to solve everything. People were tired of that kind of approach because in a sense that had been President Johnson's way of going about things. So, in any event, that was my suggestion. I think it had some influence, but how much is hard to know. I think Bob had some of those same ideas himself.

HACKMAN: How did you get something like that to him?

DOUGLAS: I think I put it down in a memorandum and sent it to him.

HACKMAN: Did you ever have problems...Did you ever feel that you needed access to him personally at any points during the campaign?

DOUGLAS: Only three or four times in Indiana, as I recall.

HACKMAN: What there, on your ideas there, other than the personal appearances we've been talking about and some of the scheduling conflicts, could you do to get the blue-collar vote, which you mentioned?

DOUGLAS: Well, there were a number of ways in which perfectly appropriate appeals could be made to blue-collar workers: that they were a neglected, bypassed part of American society in many ways; that they had been forgotten by the administration to a significant degree; that the Vietnam war was damaging to them; that a number of inequities in the social and economic situation hurt them—such as inflation, consumer frauds, tax privileges for the wealthy, etc. I thought it was possible to appeal to this group, not only on the basis of the kind of person Bob was, but on the basis that he was a candidate who would accord them recognition which they had not received and were not receiving.

HACKMAN: What kind of response did you get? Who did you propose these things to?

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DOUGLAS: I passed those ideas along to Ted Kennedy. He was receptive. But I didn't get into a lot of discussion with Bob about that because he'd asked me to do something else. He had a lot of people working on issues.

HACKMAN: I'm going to have to switch this tape.

[BEGIN SIDE II TAPE I]

HACKMAN: Okay, anything else on that?

DOUGLAS: Well, there was a discussion one day on a program of federal aid to local police forces and state police forces. I can't remember who had first thought of the idea. But the idea had been kicking around for some time that a way in which the federal government could help the local communities and state authorizes in law enforcement was by federal grants. There was a suggestion that an approach could be made on the basis of the matching funds formula which had been applied to the federal highway program. I forget what the percentage was. But in any event, in that program the federal government supplies the bulk of the funds if the states supply a small percentage. I thought that the same kind of approach might be useful in law enforcement.

That proposal didn't get anywhere because there were a lot of bugs in it that needed to be refined and we didn't have the time to refine them. I took it up once with Adam Walinsky and he was quite opposed to it in the general form which had been outlined to him. He thought it went too far in terms of federal participation in local law enforcement. He was also concerned about the standards for federal grants. After I had spoken to him, I agreed that we would have to do considerably more work before the idea would be in shape to have the candidate make a speech about it. Bob had expressed some interest in it when I was at his house at Hickory Hill before I came out on a full-time basis in Indiana. In any event, nothing came out of it, although I think eventually there will be a lot of federal funds in state or local law enforcement. The problem will be how to work it out. In retrospect, I think there was too much emphasis in the suggestion on aid to state police and state law enforcement and too little on the local role. I'm glad I pulled back from the proposal.

HACKMAN: I think you just mentioned last time that there were some people who felt that he was speaking too strongly on law and order, crime, or whatever you want to label it, at that point. Can you recall anything about the split on this question, and your role?

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DOUGLAS: Yes. There was no question that Peter Edelman [Peter B. Edelman], Jeff Greenfield, and Adam Walinsky thought he was speaking too strongly on that. I rather doubt that this view was justified. Certainly his written speeches didn't indicate it. I remember one time asking Peter why there was all this flak about the law enforcement statements. Peter said, "Well, you know, there's really nothing in the speeches that I could complain about," when he said "I," he meant himself. "But," he continued, "if you're out there listening to him, one would think that he was coming down extremely hard on that issue and was not stressing the justice side of things strongly enough."

HACKMAN: He was taking off from the text, you mean?

DOUGLAS: Yes. But if you read those statements in the light of today's rhetoric, one would have to say that Bob's statements were models of moderation and good sense. What Peter complained about was the intonation of the speeches. But I was sympathetic to what Bob was saying and couldn't get excited about the intonations.

HACKMAN: You said that Peter Edelman said that it wasn't anything that was contained in the speeches that they were writing. Do you know if anyone else got involved in the writing of speeches or giving Robert Kennedy materials to use like that during this period other than Peter Edelman, Walinsky, and Greenfield? Was Goodwin [Richard M. Goodwin] or others, do you know?

DOUGLAS: Dick was working initially on youth organization and later on television. But I'm sure he had ideas and presented them. John Bartlow Martin was preparing some short historical references. John was trying to take the candidate's approach, his personality and his views on issues and placing them in some kind of historical setting or geographical context that would be attractive to Indiana voters. I don't know to what extent his words actually were incorporated in speeches.

HACKMAN: Was there much of a problem in finding something for someone like Goodwin to do, or O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien] to do, when they came into the state like this, sort of...

DOUGLAS: At the end of the campaign we did have an awful lot of people. But my impression is that in a crisis, Bob's approach was to take chances on having too many people rather than too few. That is a sensible approach,

but it insured some confusion and some overlap. Dick and Larry were clearly very useful. But how it was decided that one would do a particular thing, I have

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no way of knowing because I wasn't in on those discussions.

Larry certainly kept busy. He talked to the press, to the radio and the television people. He talked to many of the local political figures and leaders and, I think, was helpful in neutralizing the opposition of some of the local political figures. He also made some suggestions about the election day procedures and techniques. Of course, he was out of the state from time to time. He was easy to work with.

Dick, of course, was always extremely busy. But exactly what he was doing I don't know because he was out of the state a great deal working on television. For a while in Indiana he was responsible for the student workers. He was, I thought, sensible, bright, and pleasant.

HACKMAN: Now most of the people who've written about Indiana, or particularly who were writing about it at the time—you get the picture of Branigin [Robert D. Branigin] having the party completely under control there. And you've talked about people at least trying to neutralize some of the people within the state. Can you recall in the very early days, what attempts were made maybe to deal with Branigin directly—I would doubt that—but people on down the line and the state government, the party chairman, committeemen, people like this? Any possibility of movement at all to neutralize these people?

DOUGLAS: Well, there was a long discussion with Governor Branigin. I'm not sure who told me about it, whether Bob Kennedy did, or Ted Kennedy did. There had been a long discussion between one of them and Branigin. It must have been after the time that Bob declared, but prior to the time that he actually entered the Indiana primary. I don't know who said what.

Ted Kennedy talked to a great many people. He talked to labor people, as did Bob Kennedy from time to time. Larry talked to district and county chairmen. Indiana is one of the more politically conscious states in the sense of partisan affiliation and interest. The election showed that the party organization was not as important as many people thought. Nevertheless as compared with most other states, the county chairmen and county officials have more of a role to play than in most other states. Two important reasons for that were that the Indiana governor was a Democrat and that patronage was an accepted way of life.

But there were very few officials in Indiana who supported Bob Kennedy openly. There were a couple of county commissioners in Marion County (Indianapolis) and a prosecutor in Terre Haute. But very few others. There was considerable help given on an informal basis by

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various officials in Indiana such as Congressman Brademas [John Brademas] and

Congressman Jacobs [Andrew Jacobs, Jr.] and to some extent Congressman Hamilton [Lee H. Hamilton], Senator Vance Hartke, and Senator Bayh [Birch Bayh]. They gave us the names of people who might be interested. Some of them called up their friends and said go ahead and work for Bob. It was all done on an informal basis.

HACKMAN: Ever close to any real breakthrough on any of these major figures that you can recall, either Bayh or Hartke particularly?

DOUGLAS: Well, Hartke came very close to a formal endorsement. I mean he travelled around with the Senator the last day. I don't think a formal endorsement by him would have added any more to what he actually did.

HACKMAN: What about the Lieutenant Governor, Robert Rock [Robert L. Rock]? Is it, Rock?

DOUGLAS: Rock. He was engaged in a prospective convention fight for the nomination to succeed Branigin. Branigin's faction of the party was opposed to him. They wanted to nominate a man from South Bend named Bodine [Richard C. Bodine], who'd been the House Speaker. So in a sense that contest was tied in with the primary day for the presidential primary election. My understanding of the Rock position was that his faction of the party, the Rock-Welsh [Matthew E. Welsh] Manfred Core [J. Manfred Core] section of the party, was interested in defeating the Branigin-Bodine-St. Angelo [Gordon St. Angelo] faction of the party. And therefore, they hoped that Branigin would be defeated in the primary contest because that would reduce Branigin's standing and power in the party and thereby make it easier for them to nominate their candidates. But they weren't about to come out publicly and expose themselves to the charge that they were supporting an outsider against a home town Hoosier. So they stayed in the background and most of them formally endorsed Branigin. I think that Manfred Core may have given some names to Gerry Doherty or to Larry O'Brien of people who might be willing to work; but any support they gave was covert and limited.

HACKMAN: What, if any, understandings were there, that you know of, about what would be done after the Indiana primary in terms of whether people would support Robert Kennedy or whether they would support Humphrey? Or were there any commitments depending on the way the vote ran, or anything like this, with Bayh or Hartke or any of these people?

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DOUGLAS: No, I don't know of any commitments on that score at all, if any. I would frankly be surprised if there were any. Oh, you mean if Bob were to win, would they support him?

HACKMAN: Right as opposed...

DOUGLAS: Under the Indiana law, all of the delegates to the convention would have had to support Bob on the first ballot at least.

HACKMAN: I wasn't thinking that's the way it ran, but I don't know.

DOUGLAS: It was commonly understood that the person who won the Indiana primary, even by a plurality vote, would pick up all of the delegates to the national convention. Certainly after the primary election we understood that's what would happen.

HACKMAN: So you don't remember there being much concern with the thing...

DOUGLAS: There really wasn't much concern about that. People felt, particularly in this day and age, that any candidate who won a primary would get the support of the state convention for the Chicago delegation, that the party could not survive a selection of delegates contrary to the wishes of the primary voters.

HACKMAN: What can you remember about trying to get labor support in Indiana? You'd mentioned labor. Did you get involved in this thing?

DOUGLAS: Well, when I went out there one time I called one of the Indianapolis labor leaders on the phone. He didn't know me. His name was Max E. Breydenhal; I think he's now the head of the Indianapolis AFL-CIO [American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations] Council; he was a member then of the United Auto Workers. I was really just trying to take soundings to get some ideas as to what labor might be interested in out there. He wasted no time in letting me know that he was very much opposed to Senator Kennedy.

HACKMAN: This was a UAW man?

DOUGLAS: He was a UAW man. The UAW itself was very helpful to Bob. But not Breydenhal; he was less tied to the UAW than to the AFL-CIO. He was very adamant; he came right out without going through any of the normal pleasantries.

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And I recall that Senator Kennedy in my presence called a vice president of the Steelworkers [United Steelworkers of America], I think his name was Dougherty [Harry O. Dougherty]. Bob didn't ask him for his support; he merely asked that he remain neutral. He pointed out that he was running against Branigin—that Branigin had never been considered pro-labor—and that he (Bob) had voted for, worked for, and supported measures favored by organized labor. He obviously got a turn-down because he slammed down the phone.

The AFL-CIO attitude was an eye-opener. It was one of the most surprising aspects of the Indiana campaign. Branigin was running as a favorite son. The AFL-CIO was

supporting him and secured Kennedy's support for many of the measures which they'd considered important and, by the same token, labor and Branigin had feuded.

There was a lot of activity by the AFL-CIO in Indiana. Al Barkan [Alexander E. Barkan] of the AFL-CIO political arm had been out in Indianapolis several times. I remember going out on the plane with James O'Brien, [James C. O'Brien], who was the head of the Steelworkers political action group. I think he was going out there to organize for Branigin. He made no bones about it although he was sympathetic to Bob. The labor union officials in the northwest section of the state, particularly the Steelworkers, were for Branigin. This whole episode showed the degree to which the national AFL-CIO were opposed to Bob Kennedy.

HACKMAN: Well, you'd mentioned the one UAW person. Did you get any feeling for the UAW other than him?

DOUGLAS: The UAW generally was the most sympathetic of all of the labor groups. They endorsed Bob in particular areas.

HACKMAN: Did Jack Conway [Jack T. Conway] come in at all, can you recall, in Indiana?

DOUGLAS: Not that I recall.

HACKMAN: Did you ever hear of people talking about what understanding had been reached with Walter Reuther [Walter P. Reuther] by this point?

DOUGLAS: No.

HACKMAN: What about trying to organize the youth vote, the work on campuses and this whole thing? How much did you get involved in that?

DOUGLAS: I didn't get involved in that except from time to time when some problem came up. It was a continuing effort, and it

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was hard to tell how successful it was. The students certainly were of great help in getting some of the campaign literature distributed. Of course, they wanted to canvass; they didn't want to just distribute literature, they wanted to engage in discussions. On the whole, they were a distinct plus, but how much of a plus I just don't know. They came in by the bus loads, although not so many as McCarthy had.

HACKMAN: Going back to the whole scheduling thing, can you remember any discussion of how much time you spend on campuses as opposed to how much time you spend on other kinds of appearances, and Robert Kennedy's feelings about this?

DOUGLAS: Well, that was a source of continuing discussion. I don't think it was ever resolved. The fact was that while the candidate might discuss it from time to time, basically he liked to go there. He liked the give-and-take of the audiences; he liked the people there; he liked the challenges. He was at his best in a place like the University of Indiana Medical School where he told off a virtually all-white audience and won a lot of converts in the process. It was a place where he was stimulated. I once talked to him about going to the suburbs. This was long before he'd gone into the campaign. It was out at Hickory Hill. I think it was in '67 sometime. I had just mentioned to him that my father [Paul H. Douglas] had probably made a mistake in '66 in spending less time than he should in the suburbs and more time in southern Illinois where the vote was light. The reason he'd done it, I thought, was that he liked to campaign in southern Illinois, and he didn't really enjoy campaigning in the suburbs. I said that I thought that one of the problems was that the suburban voters had sensed that in my father, and that it had hurt him. Bob Kennedy had said at the time, "Well I understand exactly how he feels because I feel the same way. When I go out to some of the suburban areas, I just get no kick at all out of them." And I think that kind of approach, which I believe is common to most candidates, underlay part of Bob's decision to continue campaigning on the campuses. He enjoyed it and was stimulated by it.

HACKMAN: Now some people have written and said that he was very upset with the young people going to McCarthy. Can you recall discussing that with him? Is that the impression you had, that it was that important to him, not just the numbers, but the whole idea of that happening?

DOUGLAS: It was my impression that it did bother him. But I think he felt that eventually they'd come around, which they would have done certainly after California.

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HACKMAN: What can you remember about the time around the King [Martin Luther King, Jr.] assassination? Did you talk to him after this happened at all, or get involved in discussions of how you'd handle this in terms of the rest of the campaign?

DOUGLAS: No, I didn't discuss it with him directly at all. That came at a time before I went out to Indiana for the three week stint. I received a call from Jim Gaither in the White House on the night of the King assassination very late after I had gone to bed. Jim was an extremely able and dedicated young attorney who'd worked for me in the Justice Department and who had been working for Joe Califano [Joseph A. Califano, Jr.]. Jim called me and said that he and Ramsey Clark and Harry McPherson [Harry C. McPherson] and some others were in the White House. He said that they were concerned about the assassination and its possible consequences. They wondered if Senator Kennedy knew about what the administration was trying to do in response to the

assassination. He mentioned, as I recall, that they were calling or had called some of the other Negro leaders.

And as the conversation went on, I said, "Well really, if you're concerned that the Senator know all about this, you really ought to call him directly because I don't know where he is precisely at the moment." But I said, "If you want, I'll speak to Burke Marshall, who probably is being talked to concerning the assassination." As I thought of it, it seemed to be that the purpose of the call was to try and see that Senator Kennedy knew what the White House was doing. Well, I thought this was rather odd. Why didn't they call Senator Kennedy themselves. So I said, "Well, why don't you get hold of Burke Marshall or Ted Sorensen because they're probably talking to the Senator now, if you don't feel you can talk to him directly." And I don't know what more was done about it. I thought it was rather strange. At the time it seemed to me that they must be concerned that Senator Kennedy might make the situation worse rather than better. They didn't say so in so many words, but it seemed to me that was the likely purpose of the call.

HACKMAN: How much did you get involved in fund raising in Indiana, if at all?

DOUGLAS: Not at all.

HACKMAN: How much of a problem was availability of funds to do the things that needed to be done out there? Ever serious?

DOUGLAS: Well, it was serious. But I don't know how it was handled. The time was short. The candidate was going around at a

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rapid clip. There were demands for radio spots and television spots. His appearances, receptions, the staff's hotel bills, car rentals, and the direct coordinators' cars all added up to a constant problem in meeting bills. Leo Racine locked himself in a room at the Indianapolis headquarters. Creditors were pounding on his door and he refused to acknowledge that he was there. It was like something out of Dickens. The creditors were occasionally lined up, three or four of them, in the corridor outside. Money was tight. And I guess some of the bills were not paid for a considerable time.

HACKMAN: Ever have any feeling of why the money was tight—lack of communication with, oh, I guess Steve Smith and Helen Keyes [Helen M. Keyes] who were handling it at this end, or...

DOUGLAS: I think the money simply wasn't available. Bob got into the campaign so quickly that I doubt if much had been raised. They had to raise funds as they went along. I think that they were hoping to raise the money at some major fund raising efforts. But of course successful fund raising affairs demand the candidate's presence. The candidate could hardly be an effective fund raiser and also campaign in the primary states. So I think the decision was wisely made that he had to run

and do well. Then perhaps the funds would become available.

HACKMAN: Any problems that you can recall on how much money you give to local people in Indiana to organize their areas or to get the vote out or whatever?

DOUGLAS: No. You ought to talk to Gerry Doherty about that. I really don't know. election day workers at the polls—those providing transportation, et cetera—were the only people who received any money. That was a standard practice in Indiana and it was a surprising thing to the Massachusetts people who were used to volunteers.

HACKMAN: The only thing I had found in a memo was that I think in Lake County, Jack Ortega—you probably remember—who was organizing the Mexican-American and black vote up there, felt that he needed more money to put things together. Lake County traditionally had worked this way.

DOUGLAS: Well, it was true that in Lake County, as in several other sections of the state, workers on election day expected to be paid. Someone once said that a volunteer in those areas was someone who offered to let you pay him before he offered to let your opponent pay for his work on election day. It was an accepted way of working on election day. It appalled people from Massachusetts.

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I know that Ted Kennedy was amazed that one couldn't rely on having an all-volunteer force of workers on election day. There were many volunteers state-wide. But in some of the areas there just weren't enough volunteers.

HACKMAN: How much of a problem was it in just getting campaign materials and literature, particularly from the Washington end, I guess?

DOUGLAS: That was a continuing problem. Kevin Leary was the person in Indianapolis who was responsible for the statewide distribution of materials. He did a very good job.

HACKMAN: Were there a lot of problems in dealing with the Washington headquarters in getting decisions made or getting action on things?

DOUGLAS: No. The Indiana campaign was run almost entirely from Indianapolis.

HACKMAN: How are you time-wise?

DOUGLAS: I've got about another five or ten minutes.

HACKMAN: Okay. You commented last time that the press operation seemed to you sort of isolated from the rest of things that were going on, and you'd said that Salinger [Pierre E.G. Salinger] had come in and set this up. Why was it isolated and was anything ever done to really...

DOUGLAS: I really don't know why it was isolated. The press office was overwhelmed by demands. They had the national press on their backs. There were the network news teams; frequently, there were daily shots of the Indiana campaign on the evening news programs. Then there were continuing inquiries coming from all over the place. So they were under tremendous pressure. They were unhappy because they didn't get copies of the schedules soon enough. On the other hand, some people in scheduling and elsewhere felt that the press office really didn't do anything but put the schedule out and help get the people on board the buses and so forth, that they should have been working on stories and features and things like that. I don't think it was any particular person's fault, but I don't think it was a particularly happy experience for any of the people in the press office during that period.

HACKMAN: How much time did Salinger spend in the state on this, just setting it up, or did he stay at all?

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DOUGLAS: He was in and out, and towards the end he stayed.

HACKMAN: How does Mankiewicz [Frank F. Mankiewicz] fit into all this? Was he in it at all or is that a part of the problem in Indiana?

DOUGLAS: It certainly wasn't a problem in Indiana. Frank was either traveling with the candidate or in Los Angeles. I didn't see too much of Frank in Indiana.

HACKMAN: I think some people have said that maybe part of the problem is that the press staff here is very inexperienced in Indiana. Does that make sense to you? Jim McManus?

DOUGLAS: Jim McManus, Bill Groover.

HACKMAN: Was Hugh McDonald in Indiana much at all?

DOUGLAS: Hugh traveled with the press.

HACKMAN: Dick Drayne [Richard C. Drayne], I think, was...

DOUGLAS: Dick had traveled with the candidate, didn't he?

HACKMAN: I think he did quite a bit. Drayne and McDonald were together quite a lot.

DOUGLAS: Yes, they traveled with the candidate. I don't think there was anything difficult with that aspect of the press operation. I was thinking of the people who operated the office in Indianapolis and put out the materials to the press. The only criticism I heard of them was that they didn't do enough in the way of inspiring stories. But this was difficult because, of course, the candidate was off with the press in the front lines and that's where the press liked to be. I've never heard any criticism of Drayne's work.

HACKMAN: Did you get involved at all with local editors or publishers or anything like this since there was such a problem with the Indianapolis Pulliam [Eugene C. Pulliam] papers?

DOUGLAS: No.

HACKMAN: Anything that could be done, or do you know if any efforts were made to deal directly with the people at those newspapers in Indianapolis?

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DOUGLAS: No. The only thing that brought those papers around was the attention of the national media on the coverage by the local papers. The broadcast by Roger Mudd [Roger H. Mudd] on CBS [Columbia Broadcasting System] was particularly effective. Shortly after that and some editorials criticizing the *Indianapolis Star*, the local coverage of the campaign improved greatly.

HACKMAN: What about the Salinger letter to the Society of American Newspaper Editors? Was that his own idea? Do you remember this at all?

DOUGLAS: Yes, I remember the letter. I don't think I knew much about it at the time.

HACKMAN: If you're pushed for time we probably should...

DOUGLAS: I've got a few more minutes.

HACKMAN: Okay.

DOUGLAS: You'll want to talk on the labor matter with the Kennedy campaign labor man, Jack McNiff [John McNiff]. I think O'Brien of the Steelworkers helped recommend him.

HACKMAN: Can you remember what the outcome of Indiana...Did you discuss this with Robert Kennedy—what his reactions were on the percentages, the way the vote ran, or didn't you get a chance to do this?

DOUGLAS: I rode back on the plane with him to New York. He left the plane in New York; I went to Washington in the plane. I only saw him briefly. He seemed pleased. I think there were some in the Kennedy camp who'd expected to come closer to 50 percent. And of course, quite a few of the press people took that approach that he had not made a real breakthrough because he'd not gotten 50 percent or more. But at least when he got on the plane he was quite satisfied, and I think he was satisfied earlier that morning when I'd seen him out at the airport motel. I had told him there that Hartke was sore at him—something which I guess he knew anyhow.

HACKMAN: What was that all about?

DOUGLAS: Well, when it came time for Bob to go down to the ballroom at the Sheraton-Lincoln and make his victory statement, Hartke had said, "Well, perhaps I shouldn't go—this will take some of the attention away from you." Bob had agreed with him and gone off without him. I didn't know anything about this at the

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time. I had come over from across the street at campaign headquarters where I'd watched on television the victory announcements which were being made at the Sheraton-Lincoln. I got to the Sheraton-Lincoln after the celebration had broken up. Hartke and Mike Sperling [Miklos Sperling] were stepping out of the elevator. Both of them were very annoyed. Sperling said to me, "Oh boy, Senator Hartke's really upset." I asked what about. And he said, "Well he was treated badly." So when I unsorted all of it, Sperling said that Hartke had done a lot for Senator Kennedy in Indiana and had not been treated right on election eve.

The next morning I told Fred Dutton [Frederick G. Dutton] of this. About that time Bob came into Fred's room. He was tired and he said, "I understand Hartke's mad at me. What do you think I ought to do?" And I said, "Well, I think you ought to try to patch things up." Bob replied, "Well, I'll ask him to come back on the plane with us," which he did.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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