

Paul Corbin Oral History Interview – RFK#2, 07/14/70
Administrative Information

Creator: Paul Corbin

Interviewer: Larry J. Hackman

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Biographical Note

Campaign worker, John F. Kennedy for President, 1960; Robert F. Kennedy Senate Campaign, 1964, Robert F. Kennedy for President, 1968; Special Assistant to the Chairman, Democratic National Committee, 1961 - 1964. In this interview, Corbin discusses his personal and professional relationship with Robert F. Kennedy, among other issues.

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Paul Corbin – RFK #2

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Second Oral History Interview

with

PAUL CORBIN

July 14, 1970
Nashville, Tennessee

By Larry J. Hackman

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

HACKMAN: One thing you said last time, you made a statement that Hoover disliked you, or I think you said he hated you. Why was that so, and how could you tell that?

CORBIN: Well, let me say this. I want you to scratch that whole thing about Hoover because it has no bearing-- yes it does, but I didn't think that I went that far, and I really didn't want to discuss that phase of it.

HACKMAN: I was thinking maybe then you'd remember, if you don't want to talk about that specifically, just remember talking with Robert Kennedy about Hoover and what he thought of Hoover and the FBI. A number of other people have talked about that, but I thought you might have had specific conversations about it with him.

CORBIN: There were off-the-cuff, casual remarks made by Bob, I would say with no in particular specific relationship to a specific event. He did have respect for the integrity of the FBI agents--that I know because that relates to this remark I made about Hoover which I don't think I should go into on the tape.

HACKMAN: We'll scratch that.

CORBIN: That whole story would probably take two days of taping. And I think you have an idea what it is.

HACKMAN: Yes.

CORBIN: It's an interesting story, but. . . . But I'd like to tell it because it really shows the kind of man Bob Kennedy was. He was the most terrific (unintelligible). He had a great respect for the integrity of

the agents he knew. That's about all I wanted to talk about Edgar Hoover. Ten years from now no one will even remember Hoover. Who gives a shit about him.

HACKMAN: Okay, well, in terms of either while Robert Kennedy was at Justice or later when all these disputes came up about wiretapping and bugging, do you remember his offhand remarks about those things, what he thought accounted for that whole dispute?

CORBIN: Well, the only time I ever discussed wiretapping and bugging with him was when I was working on an investigation case for him. I noticed for about a week that there was a car sitting in front of my home, and the street I live on there's no cars parked because there are only five or six homes there. There was always one or two men sitting in the car. And my wife remarked that she went out and asked them what they were doing. And they said they had permission to sit there. And my wife said--this was a public street--she said, "It's rather odd that you're sitting there twenty-four hours a day and changing shifts." He told her it was a free country. But he shifted a half a block up the street towards (unintelligible) Place. So I called Bob, I told Bob, "What the hell is going on? These bastards must be wise. They're watching me." I said, "What's the point in watching me?" I said, "They know where the hell I'm at. I'm on the Democratic National Committee. Why should they be sitting there watching me? I've got a feeling I'm being followed. And I wouldn't be a bit surprised if my line's being tapped." He said, "Stop being a Walter Mitty. The line ain't being tapped." I said, "How the hell do you know if it's been tapped or not?" He said, "Oh, stop playing cloaks and daggers. Who the hell taps wires?" That's the only time I ever discussed wiretapping with him.

HACKMAN: Yes.

CORBIN: I'll take that back. He had just finished--this is when he was Senator; your question was when he was Attorney General.

HACKMAN: No, it was both.

CORBIN: He had just finished his successful campaign for Judge Silver. . .

HACKMAN: Silverman [Samuel J. Silverman].

CORBIN: Silverman against another. . .

HACKMAN: Klein [Arthur G. Klein].

CORBIN: . . . judge. And I was at his pool the next morning after the election. And I said, "Bob, the boys are calling me. They're nervous as hell, Steingut and the rest of the boys. They figure that you're going to challenge them in every district. Of course, you and I know this is all a game, that you give a shit who the judge is, all you're trying to do is create the image that you're for reformers, which you have successfully done, especially from this criticism that you've had on this wiretapping. This will sort of get you back." He said, "Why? Do you think it can work?" I said, "It will work very good." He said, "All right, call the boys up and tell them not to worry." And I said, "I'll do that." And I said, "By the way, I think you've gone overboard on these reformers in New York. They're all sick, frustrated neurotics. The first time you call them to the barricades, they'll all be in their plush apartments with their windows drawn. We've gone over this a thousand times, Bob, about you and reformers, and you'll find out in the end they're really going to shove it up your ass because you're too independent and along the line you're going to break with them. And they're going to kill you, and they will be your Achilles' heel." "Are you trying to say that you have now changed your whole position in New York about reformers and the machine?" "No, I haven't changed my position." I said, "Be for the reformers, but don't let them own you." He says, "Thank you. I just don't know what I'd do without your priceless advice." A remark like that. [Interruption]

HACKMAN: Okay. When you say he said "Call the boys," other than Steingut, who were the people that you would call to reassure in New York?

CORBIN: The only ones that I would call were the big leaders, and that would be Steingut; Jack English; that would be James Wilmont in Rochester; it would be Peter Crotty, who was succeeded by Joe Crangle [Joseph F. Crangle], but I usually talked to Peter Crotty; and there was fellows like Ed Gossier up in the north and Dominick Assaro. I'd call about four, five, six. All you need is four or five leaders in New York gives you the combination for the majority.

HACKMAN: What about anyone in Albany? What about O'Connell's guys? Did you ever have any. . .

CORBIN: Yes, I was the man, the only man, that dealt with Dan O'Connell. Here's an interesting story about Dan O'Connell. Dan O'Connell, 1960--I believe I discussed it in one of my--I did discuss Dan O'Connell in my first

interview.

HACKMAN: I believe so.

CORBIN: I would talk to Dan O'Connell and tell him not to worry and he never did. Once he got a call then he didn't care what other people said or what the newspaper said. You just call Dan and say everything was all right.

HACKMAN: What about Burns? Would you deal with Burns at all or was that directly through Robert Kennedy or what?

CORBIN: Well, I can tell you a story about Burns. I never talked to Burns, and I'll tell you why. Bob Kennedy got elected to the Senate. He called me up and he wanted to know who we should select as chairman of the Democratic Party. I said, "I'll have to give it some thought, Bob. What do you want?" "Who do you"--he got impatient. I said, "I have to give it some thought because I have several names in mind. One is Dan Macnabe from Albany, and of course we always have Johnny Burns. There's Jack English to consider and there's Joe Crangle." "All right, you think about it and I'll call you in a day or so or you call after you've got a name. But keep in touch" or something. I then called Dan Macnabe who informs me that he just got a call from Ben Smith in Gloucester. Oh, I figure Bobby's playing a game now. He called me and he called Ben Smith. He's shopping around and he hasn't made up his mind. So I call Bob and I said, "Bob, I understand you've been shopping around for a state chairman. If you're shopping around, I'll tell you exactly what you're looking for, and stop looking. John Burns from Binghamton. Because I know exactly what you're looking for. If you want a patsy, he's it." "Okay. Get busy." And he hung up. It's going to be Burns. Now, at that time he had a Senate staff of Joe Dolan and I think it was Walter Sheridan at the time, Bernie Ruggieri was in the act--I can't remember his specific title, but it was taking place. But I was not on the Senate payroll. I was on the family payroll so I had to be very cautious because the Rochester papers, the Gannett papers, had taken after me and ran a series of stories on me. So I didn't do a thing. About three days later Steve Smith called me, "What's new on Burns?" I said, "I ain't done a thing." "Well, get busy. You and I are going to divide the state. I'm taking so many counties and you take the following." He gave me--I can't remember the names. He gave me Rochester and he gave me Steingut, he gave me about twenty, twenty-five sections. He picked out the ones that I (unintelligible) when Jack Kennedy was president. And I discovered that Bernie Ruggieri was two-timing JFK--somebody was double-crossing us down the line. I was talking to leaders and they were saying, "I just got a call from

somebody who told me not to vote for Burns, to hold back." And I had a general revolt, by the way. They didn't want Burns. So I called Bob and I said, "Bob, they don't want Burns because they're wise to the deal. They want a strong leader. (unintelligible) Burns." "You do as you're told. It's going to be Burns. You wanted Burns." I said, "Don't say I wanted Burns. I wanted Burns because that's the kind of guy you're looking for." We went into a hassle. "Well, get busy. And it's got to be Burns." "Well, hell, it will be Burns, but I'm just giving you the reaction, you know." I then get a call from Burns. He said, "I understand that you're costing me votes, that you're sticking your nose in and you're making calls in New York." The first thing it indicates is that he's not in with Steve and Bob in making that remark, that he didn't tell him that I'm working. I said, "Burns, I'm telling you, you might as well find out that those who work for Bob Kennedy or are associated with Bob Kennedy don't take a piss without talking to him. And I'm one of those guys who don't take a piss without talking to him." I said, "You're going to be the same way, John." I couldn't help but start jabbing at him. That's my nature, jabbing at people. "Oh," he says, "I didn't know that." I said, "By the way, Johnny, you better be thankful that I'm calling because you could never make it." (Unintelligible) wondering what he was going to say to that. And John Burns is a lovable guy, I like him and we've become very close friends with him, him and his wife. And I remember when Jack Kennedy was alive and I was handling patronage from New York at the Democratic Committee, Johnny Burns came up--he was mayor at the time--he was looking for a job at \$7,500. And Bob was paying him--we were paying him thirty--the New York Democratic Party was paying him thirty because up to the time John Kennedy was President, there was no salary connected with that job. And when we dumped Mike Prendergast and put this little guy Billy McKeon from Auburn in who'd steal the gold filling out of your teeth, Bob decided to pay him thirty thousand bucks a year so he wouldn't steal. By the way, that didn't stop him from stealing. I can give you a whole tape recording of how we caught him stealing, but that's another story. That New York is infested with corruption. Johnny Burns, by the way, is an honest man.

HACKMAN: Did he work out satisfactorily? Did he serve or play the role that Robert Kennedy felt he needed played?

CORBIN: Oh yes, very fine fellow--as Bob would say and Steve would say--very fine fellow, great guy. Yes, he's worked out very good. [Interruption] A very fine fellow. A very fine fellow. You see, this really should be taped. When John Burns became a chairman and Bob became a senator, the first thing the Kennedys would do, Bob would do--

and I suspect Teddy's doing in Massachusetts. [There was] no money in the till of the Democratic Party. So Steve would very generously pay him the salary. Kennedy'd pay him and of course the moment the guy cashed the check he's hooked. So that's what Steve did to old Burnsie.

HACKMAN: Was that so with McKeon, too, when he took over?

CORBIN: No, no, no, no. McKeon. . . . There's quite a story about that about how McKeon became state chairman, but I don't think it has any historical value except it's just another illustration of party maneuvering and politics and double-crossing.

HACKMAN: Let me just ask you did you talk to Robert Kennedy about it before it was done?

CORBIN: Oh, I never did a thing in New York, not a single thing, I never talked to anybody, never made a decision, without talking to Bob Kennedy. And he was aware of every move and gave me--not direction because, as he used to say, "You're not a virgin, Paul, when it comes to politics, so why should I keep teaching you things? Just go ahead and do it." But I never did a thing in New York, not a thing, never gave a guy a job, never made a move without Bob Kennedy knowing it.

HACKMAN: Who was . . .

CORBIN: Or Steve.

HACKMAN: Yes. Who did you work with other than those two on that though in getting the job done? Steingut, who else up there?

CORBIN: As far as strategy . . .

HACKMAN: No, as far as getting McKeon in.

CORBIN: Strategy in only Bob Kennedy and Steve. Well, at that stage of our association there was no discussion of strategy. It was, "Do it Paul." They knew that I would figure out my own way of doing it. They would just say, "Okay, put him in." They figured I would do it. If I roughed up somebody, so what. McKeon--no one was. . . . I never put anybody in without talking to Bob. However, there are exceptions. There were exceptions when--politics sometimes move very rapidly, you know, and it's a question of judgement. And you'd exercise it, and then he would ask you what are your

motives on making that decision. And you'd explain it to him. But he would always ask you what was your motivation that led you to this decision.

HACKMAN: We sort of got started on this by talking about wiretapping, and you mentioned your suspicions about your home. But did he ever feel that his own home or his office was wiretapped? Did he ever say anything about that?

CORBIN: No, never discussed that, never discussed that.

HACKMAN: Okay. Let me switch to something else. One thing you said last time was that you used to go in to see Robert Kennedy on Saturday mornings and you'd talk about things, have a good time, and ride around in a car. And one of the things you said he did was you used to talk about people and dissect people. And I was wondering if you could remember his comments about some of the people in the Administration. I don't know what kinds of people you were talking about, but either Cabinet members or people on the Hill.

CORBIN: Yes, we talked. Oh, we'd just be kidding and I'd be discussing something about politics and I'd mention this Cabinet officer--"the son of a bitch--before he got in didn't have a pot to piss in and now he's sitting between two American flags." And he'd make some comments I remember about Harlan Cleveland and Luther Hodges and Herb Klotz [Herbert W. Klotz] in Commerce who was highly regarded by Bob Kennedy. But he would make remarks about Herb Klotz' private life and some of Herb's conquests amongst the women of the jet set. But he had a high regard for Herb Klotz--which I do--one of the finest men in Washington.

HACKMAN: When Robert Kennedy would talk about people, other than the fact that he was obviously disturbed with some of the things you were reporting to him, what other kinds of things about . . . [Interruption] I was asking you when Robert Kennedy was talking about people what he would dislike about people or what would upset him. You were talking about Herb Klotz. Now, would something like that turn him off on somebody?

CORBIN: No, we were just--no, no, no, no. He liked Herb Klotz and he just sort of--he'd gossip, you know. We'd talk about somebody and he'd just give you a little gossip. He was just like everybody; he'd gossip about people and talk about people. No motivation, just chitchat driving along, bullshit.

HACKMAN: What kind of things would really turn him off about people if he heard something about them. Can you remember anything?

CORBIN: He had a great love for children and always was concerned about children and concerned if the fellow who was taking care of his wife and how he treated his family--a great concern for family life and children, fond of children. And animals, a great lover of animals, birds, just a great love for animals. He was very tolerant of people. We'd talk about a fellow involved in some corruption and he'd say, "I wonder why he did it." And he would answer his own question. He'd say, "I suppose, Paul, he has a large family and that motivates him." And I said, "Well, I don't know, Bob. Hell, we've all got large families. I've got a large family." He said, "I guess you're right." But he was always trying to find why the fellow was doing it, sort of sympathize for him. He'd think it was because of family. He would never say the son of a bitch was no good. He would try to justify it or try to find explanations of why.

HACKMAN: Would he talk about members of his family a lot to you?

CORBIN: That came gradually, very gradually. And it started out in I would discuss members of his family during the latter part of the Wisconsin primary. And he would merely listen and occasionally make a comment about his father and his mother. We'd have a conversation--I don't know if I've repeated this to you.

HACKMAN: You talked about continuing conversations that you had with him about his father and he should speak about his father and all of that. I was really thinking more about other members of his family.

CORBIN: Yes, he did. I discussed He said to me, "You're quite cute, Corbin. You talked to"--no, I'll tell you how it came up, which revealed what they did in their spare time at home. He said, "We had a little skit at a party last week, Corbin, and we were mimicking you. And Steve was saying that you had told him that you liked Jean Smith the best of all. And then you told Eunice that she was the best of all. And then up in Wausau you said to Pat in Rhinelander, 'Boy, if it wasn't for you Pat, this whole operation would flop!'" He said, "You're telling every one. Which one do you really like best of all?" I said, "I like Jean because she's the shyest. Pat is effective politically because of her being Lawford's [Peter Lawford] wife. Eunice was more politically astute than all others and had a touch of professionalism about her." Then

he would listen and say nothing. Then in Wausau, where Pat Lawford came in to have a reception--she came in to meet some women's groups and talk on the radio and television. And she told the local chairman of the citizens' committee--Bob Deans his name is--he's now a judge--to make sure that he picks her up ten minutes before the fashion show. So he went up to the hotel room and he knocked on the door. And then she told him not to bother her, said she'd be down in a few moments. That was Pat Lawford. So he went up and was all nervous, you know. The guy was waiting for the radio. He came back in five minutes. She told him to get his butt away from that door or she'd have him arrested. And he came down and complained to me and Teddy was there. He said, "Well, I can take it being on the team, but the bellhops heard and it's all terrible." Teddy said, "Don't worry about it. I'll get her to do it. I'll get her to do it. Don't worry about it." And Teddy did get her to do it. Then I took her from Wausau to Rhinelander. And she turned on the--no, she said, "What's Proxmire [William Proxmire] doing?" I said, "He's for Jack." "That's not what I hear." I said, "I don't know what you hear. I know Bill and I know Ellen. Basically he's for himself, but he wants the Catholic vote so he's. . . ." Then she turned on the radio in my car. And the thing that irritates me--the radio in my car is for my wife only. I cannot drive and listen to the radio at the same time. It just irritates the hell out of me. She turns on the radio and Sammy Davis, Jr. was on. "Terrific, isn't he?" "He gives me a pain in the ass. I wish you'd turn the radio off." She turned it up. And I turned it off, and she turned it up. And I shut it off. She sat there for about three minutes and turned it on softly and left it that way. And she says, "You're bigoted." "No, I just don't like Sammy Davis, Jr., period. It's got nothing to do with bigotry. He just gives me one pain in the neck." And she said, "just keep your eyes on the road and let's not talk anymore." And we never said a bloody word until we got to Rhinelander. So I commented to Bob. I says, "you know, I'm with your sister Pat. She's a real firebrand." "I don't want to hear about that, Corbin," and he cut me off.

But in Washington about a year later, we're walking down the street by the Mayflower. I said, "How's that hellcat of a sister of yours?" And he said, "Who? Pat?" I said, "Boy, she's a mean one." He just laughed, "She's all right, Paul." I said, "Is her husband making her feel miserable?" "Don't get nosey", then a little laugh. Then we talked about--oh, we had great discussions about Sargent Shriver, great discussions. And he would continually ask me what I thought of him. [Interruption] But he just made a comment about the sort of--really saying what he wanted to say, which he didn't say he was a no good rotten son of a bitch. But he didn't say that. He said, "I suppose," (Unintelligible).

HACKMAN: Yes.

CORBIN: He didn't say the first part. Now, every person who had a relationship with the Kennedys, they quote the Kennedys as they saw them. But they would make one statement. And they never would go. . . .And the people were afraid to ask Bob because, of course, you know by interviewing people, he did not like to be questioned. If that hasn't come up, it would come up. He hated to be questioned.

HACKMAN: Yes.

CORBIN: I questioned him. As Seigenthaler will tell you, I was able to question him and he would answer. I don't know how many other persons had that--who he allowed. You probably found out, but I. . . .And I remember one time Dave Hackett asked him and he chopped his head off, though he loved Dave Hackett. Dave Hackett, he considered his closest friend was Dave Hackett. But I was able to question him and he would answer. And if he wouldn't want to answer, he'd say, "I'd just rather not discuss it." And I would say, "There goes that old goddamn bullshit you don't want to discuss it. You're just like a little kid. I'm no Jack to take your toy away." And then he would answer. Then he would answer. So I never had that problem. The other guys, they could ask him and he'd say no. They'd run. See, hell he wasn't that kind of a guy that you had to run from.

HACKMAN: Was there anyone he--what about Steve Smith, for instance?

CORBIN: Oh, well, Steve, he would. . .

HACKMAN: That's different, huh?

CORBIN: Very close, Steve really never knew him until--I'm giving you my version--he never knew him until he became Senator. He got to know him much better--I would say got to worship Bob--after he really began to work with him closely. Up until then he was just a brother-in-law. But I think when he became senator and he worked with the senator, a close relationship came about. Because I noticed in talking to Steve that Steve would talk about Bob with a certain reverence, the way I used to talk about him--which is understandable me being a stranger, but is unusual coming from a brother-in-law. And I detected that reverence he had about Bob. So I assume he got to really know him because he worked very closely. I mean, no one worked as close to Bob Kennedy after '64 than Steve Smith-

-I would say much more so than Teddy.

HACKMAN: Yes. You were talking earlier about you used to talk about he used to ask you about Shriver all the time. What do you remember about that? Would he ever say what he thought?

CORBIN: Oh yes, we discussed Shriver at great lengths. The first time Shriver's name came up--see, I lived in Janesville, which is the First Congressional District, and we divided the state in the primaries. I was shifted to seventh. And I was very anxious to find who my coordinator was. And they put Sarge in charge in the First Congressional District, which was my hometown. He was very pompous, snobbish, and it was easy to recognize the, all those faults--he had a lot of virtues, very capable. And he would always go for the socialites in the community and build an organization who were also snobs. And I would point that out to bob. He would listen, never comment, but never stopped me so I knew I had the green light. So I kept pointing it out all the time. And every time I'd find something--and I was doing it, of course, for the purpose of finding things about the Kennedys because they were a fabulous family and just getting to know him. In West Virginia we traveled a lot together and then we really established a rapport, Bob and I. We talked about Sarge. And Sarge got mad at me one time in Huntington. I irritated him. I think he despised me. I stood for everything he disliked, I was rude, crude, rough, used foul language and in front of him and this used to irritate him, and did everything on purpose just to irritate the hell out of him. I'd sit there for hours and talk about sex to his secretary about him. And he'd just--one day I turned my back in the Huntington Hotel, in the headquarters and he threw a telephone directory at me when my back was turned. And he controlled himself, "I was going to toss it on that table" "(unintelligible) missed" There was no table, and (unintelligible) threw it at me. And Mary Ann who was his secretary, turned white, she was very white. I told Bob about it. He said, "What the hell would you have done if he had hit you?" I said, "Well, if he wasn't your brother-in-law. . . ." He said, "Shit, you're an old man. What the hell--he'd make mince meat of you. "Well, at least I'd get a couple." Bob never stopped me. And then he ordered me to report to Huntington the night of the election, Sarge. And of course, hell, I'm going to be with Bob at the Hotels. So I met with Bob in his room and I answered the phone. Sarge said, "What are you doing there? You get down to Huntington." I said, "Oh, for Christ's sake, Sarge. I ain't about to go fifty miles near you. I'm with Bob." "You're in my district." I said, "I'm not in your goddamn district." I said, "Bob sent me in here just to spy on you,"

which wasn't the case at all. "I'm going to stay right here." And then Bob took the phone and said, "And pay no attention, Sarge." But I got that lick in about spying, which was the farthest thing from the truth. But Bob would not deny it to him.

Then, of course, we really got into discussion of Sarge when it counted, after the assassination of Jack Kennedy. He came in one day, and of course we were talking about the presidency. There were citizens' committees, draft committees popping up in the mid-West for Bob. And I reported to him that there was about to be formed a committee "Sarge Shriver for President." "Well, I suppose they don't like me." I said, "No, it's not a spontaneous one, Bob. It's the same kind that we got." He said, "What?" "It's not a spontaneous one; it's organized." "Who the hell is doing that?" I said, "Sarge." "Don't come into my office and start playing games with me. And start that poison." "Bob, I'm telling you, this is the man's name," And I gave him his name, the man's name who started it. "I had a fellow quiz him. He had talked to Sarge Shriver. Sarge says go ahead." "Dreadful!" I said, "Watch out." I said, "let me tell you something, Bob"--I can remember saying this to him--"In the old days, the Arabs had a custom. When they would capture prisoners from another Arab tribe, they would take a sword and give it to the father and they would give it to his son. And as they were eating the feast of victory, they would say to the father and son, "'Okay, go at it, and whoever survives is free." And the father was trying to kill the son and the son was trying to kill the father." And I said to him, "Bob, LBJ is playing that same game, just like the Arabs. He's getting Sarge, whispering in Sarge's ear, and you're going at each other." He said, "What the heck; he ain't going anywhere." And I said, "But remember, he can make a lot of noise. He's got all these Peace Corps workers across the country." This came up time and time again, manifestations of Sarge where subsequent events--as I suppose most people have told you, he was up to those things all the time. I don't know how much you know. He was guilty of all those things.

HACKMAN: Did Robert Kennedy come to believe that strongly over time?

CORBIN: It wasn't a question of believing it. He knew it. He knew.

HACKMAN: The thing in '64, the first time it comes up, you know though that that was clearly the guy had a conversation with Shriver. It wasn't Bill Haddad or somebody doing it on Shriver's behalf, it was Sargent Shriver?

CORBIN: The fellow I'm talking to doesn't even know Bill Haddad is alive. The only contact he had was Sarge Shriver

and myself, and he hated me with a passion. He still does and very much alive. If he could kill me and get away free, he'd do it. He called Sarge Shriver and Sarge Shriver told him to go ahead. He gave him the go sign, didn't say no, gave him the go sign. I immediately contacted another individual from that state and they put political pressure on him. And under pressure, zap, the guy quit.

HACKMAN: What is this? Wisconsin?

CORBIN: Yes.

HACKMAN: You mentioned that there were citizens' groups starting for Robert Kennedy in the mid-West. Where other than Wisconsin was that working? Or was Wisconsin-- Wisconsin's the chief one I assume.

CORBIN: No, there were others. There's South Dakota and Iowa. There were genuine ones--they were all genuine, but they were started by Bob Kennedy partisans.

HACKMAN: Who other than Lucey is involved out there?

CORBIN: Lucey's the chief architect.

HACKMAN: That includes all those states of just Wisconsin.

CORBIN: Pat Lucey had contacts throughout the mid-West. I really don't know how much he did because I was in the East at that time in Washington, was involved in New York and New Hampshire.

HACKMAN: You weren't talking a lot to Pat Lucey then?

CORBIN: Oh, I always talk to Pat Lucey, talk to Pat Lucey every other day.

HACKMAN: Was Robert Kennedy talking to Pat Lucey?

CORBIN: He would talk to him occasionally, but about a specific thing, it would not be this.

HACKMAN: He wouldn't have talked to him about that?

CORBIN: Oh no, absolutely not.

HACKMAN: So it would have been . . .

CORBIN: Oh no, Bob Kennedy would never, never talk to Pat Lucey

about this kind of an operation.

HACKMAN: Did Bob Kennedy know that you were talking to Pat Lucey about this? Let me just ask you, how would you keep him informed and how often, if at all?

CORBIN: How often what?

HACKMAN: How often would you talk to Bob Kennedy about what Lucey is doing or what anybody is doing in Wisconsin or South Dakota?

CORBIN: I wouldn't specifically say Pat Lucey, I would just say I understand that some--I gave him a newspaper clipping. I'd bring clippings.

HACKMAN: How would he respond?

CORBIN: I wish I had control of the English language to describe at that time Bob's mood after his brother's death. He was really moody. Each time he'd respond differently. Sometimes he was sad, he was never jubilant at that period, he was never jubilant. It was good news but he was sad. He was (unintelligible) the death of his brother. So his mood at that time as I saw was never jubilant, was never gleeful.

HACKMAN: When you say it was good news, was it good news in the sense that there was a possibility of something for him in 1964 or good news in the sense that it was embarrassing to Lyndon Johnson or created a little problem for Lyndon Johnson--or is it one or the other? Maybe it's both. I don't know.

CORBIN: I will just give it as I see it. I don't think it was to create problems with LBJ. I think it was for himself as I see it.

HACKMAN: Okay.

CORBIN: I don't think it had any relation to LBJ.

HACKMAN: You said earlier that gradually . . .

CORBIN: Ah, I'll take that back. I believe it did have a relationship with LBJ because he thought it might be helpful if LBJ put him on the ticket for Vice President. It wasn't to irritate LBJ or to create problems for LBJ, it was just Bobby thought that this would have some influence on LBJ's judgment.

HACKMAN: Okay. You mentioned last time in the little bit when you talked about New Hampshire, you mentioned that there was at one time some money involved to get something going.

CORBIN: Oh, why don't we forget all about that? I'd rather not talk about that.

HACKMAN: Okay. Let me just ask you, did you have to have funds to do anything in the mid-West?

CORBIN: I didn't have to have funds to do anything in New Hampshire.

HACKMAN: Well, why don't you explain that?

CORBIN: There's people who were willing to put up the money right then and there.

HACKMAN: People from New Hampshire?

CORBIN: Right in New Hampshire, right in New Hampshire.

HACKMAN: Okay. So anything that would have been needed in Wisconsin would have come from Wisconsin or wherever?

CORBIN: At that stage of the game we were down usually with the fellow who had started it. He'd call up half a dozen people and get the money.

HACKMAN: Okay, let me skip back to something else. You were talking about him talking about his family and gradually he would begin to talk about this more. Did you ever hear him talk more about--would he talk about his sisters a lot later on, you know, what kind of relationship he had with them?

CORBIN: He spoke about his relationship with his father and mother and Jack and I believe he talked about his relationship with Eunice--or Eunice's relationship with him. That is the extent of his discussion.

HACKMAN: I just think in terms of history, most interesting would be whatever he had to say about his relationship with the President, I guess. Can you remember that?

CORBIN: Oh yes, we had many discussions about that. He'd try to imitate his brother. You've heard that?

HACKMAN: Yes.

CORBIN: He talked about his brother, about his relationship with his children. He talked about his relationship to Ethel at great length. I told him (unintelligible) He talked to me one time about twenty minutes about Rosemary up in St. Coletta in Wisconsin. I don't think people should talk about that.

HACKMAN: Well, I'm sure biographers would be interested in it. I don't know how much you want to . . . [Interruption] As I say, the one that's most important, though, and a lot of other people talk about is his relationship with the President.

CORBIN: Well, any discussions he had with me about the relationship with the President were usually brought about, were precipitated by something we were doing and what he had to do to get the President to see his point of view and the problems which faced him in getting through to him, because of Kenny O'Donnell was around feeding him. And he'd have to--and I would raise the point, "After all, you're his brother." And he went on at great lengths to explain to me that because I was associated with him and certain people were associated with the President, it was sort of an unwritten rule not to criticize one that the President was friendly with. That came up with John Gomens of Hawaii. He was critical of John Gomens and asked me to get him out of the country, get him to Hawaii as quick as I can "and get him out of your house right now" because he was staying at the house. I said, "Will you talk to Teddy?" He would not do that because he would not want Teddy to talk to him about me and he wouldn't want to talk to Jack, similarly about Kenny.

HACKMAN: I'm not following you.

CORBIN: Well, I'll give you a specific example on what I mean. In Newsweek magazine--you've probably read the article where Ben Bradlee. . . .

HACKMAN: Yes.

CORBIN: So I went. . . . Bob at that time was going to fire me. I got that from John Seigenthaler, not from Bob. He was running to the elevator and said "Fire him. I don't give a damn." And John said, "Well, give him at least a chance to talk to you," That's John Seigenthaler talking. And I told John I don't believe it to this day. I said, "He might have

said something. You have a tendency to puff it up, John, and color it up." So I came down to see Bob. He said, "I'm just going to ask you one question. Did you read last week's Newsweek?" "No." "Then you should have known that he's an enemy of ours. He ripped my father apart. If you'd have read the goddamn Newsweek magazine, you'd have known he's an enemy without this cry baby stuff that he's a friend of my brother's. If you'd have read that, you'd have known." And he says, "Ben Bradlee's hated you from the Wisconsin days, Paul." And then he related an incident about a supposed conversation I had with Bradlee on a trip when John Kennedy was Senator going from Madison to Waukesha. I can recall sitting in the car with Ben having the conversation. I said, "Bob, that son of a bitch is lying. He's taking everything out of context." "I'm just telling you that's what he reported to me. Two years ago. Hates your guts, and you dumb guy you talk to him. I said, "Off the record. Don't you think a man's word . . ." Well, he said, "It's out of my hands, Paul. We're going up to Hyannis Port this weekend and the family are going to decide what to do with you." Now, you can get the other version of this from Lem Billings if you have any additional interest if it. So he said, "And of course I can not say a word in your defense because you're involved and you're mine so I've got to keep quiet." I said, "What kind of a goddamn kangaroo court do you run up there in Hyannis Port? If you can't . . ." "I can't say a word." The day after, the day after--I think I told you that didn't I before--so they go to Hyannis Port and they'll decide whether to can my ass or not. It's up to the President because I make a remark that "if Jack doesn't do better, we're going to run Bobby in four years." Now, the plane is due back, I believe, 11 o'clock on Monday. And I'm anxiously awaiting my fate, figured I'm a dead duck. I figured this is the real ready-made excuse that Jack Kennedy has to have for him to say to Bob, "bang-o." So Lem Billings, who was dropped off of the plane, the Caroline, in New York as the plane is going on to Washington, calls me. "Corbin, you're in great shape. Guess who saved you?" I said, "tell me the whole story." He says, "Somebody saved you." I said, "What happened?" He said, "After dinner Jack opened up the question of Corbin. And he said, 'Your friend has done it again, Bob. I suppose you've all read the Newsweek article.' And guess who saved you, Corbin? Jackie. She said, 'Now, Jack, I thought it was awfully funny. I could just see Corbin sitting there. And you damn well know if he had a chance to run Bobby he'd run him. I think it's kind of cute.' And the next thing, Jack shifted to another subject so it looks as though you're safe. But don't tell Bobby I told you." So Bob gets there. The first thing, I'm calling every five minutes to know as soon as he arrives. I said, "Bob, what happened?" "What happened when?" "At the meeting." "What meeting?" "Where they were supposed to fire me." "Aw, don't bother me with that junk",

as if nothing ever happened.

HACKMAN: Yes. That's it.

CORBIN: That was it. So when I say they never attacked--Bob Kennedy would never go to Teddy, "I don't like your guys." He would never go to Jack and say, "I don't like your guys." And they respected each other. In fact, the conversation I had with my wife this morning relates to that very thing. They had a party at Ethel's house last night for Hoff [Philip Hoff].

HACKMAN: I was going to bring you the pictures and I forgot to do it. There was a story on it.

CORBIN: And I talked to her this morning. She's telling me the people who were there. And she had told me, discussed with me the last week, that she was very much concerned that all these people were buying two tickets for twenty-five bucks and would steal all the souvenirs and all the things from the house. And she said, "What do I do?" And I said, "Get a hold of Walter Sheridan." "Well, Ethel didn't tell me . . ." "Get a hold of Sheridan and have him have his guys in there and watch. The first son of a bitch that takes something, Walter will take care of him. Now, you do that, Gertrude." And she said she will. And I called her when I get here last week just as I got back from Atlanta. I said, "Did you talk to Sheridan yet?" "Yes, he's going to do it, but nobody notified him." I said, "Well, you notify him, dammit. Don't you know how to use power? I keep telling you, they give it to you. Use the damn thing. They can't ask every five minutes and tell you what to do. They expect you to do it. And they'll back you up even if you make a mistake. Get a hold of Sheridan and all the guys." She said, "You know, Paul, a couple of Teddy's boys came around. Where did he find them? They have no idea what's going on." "Well, you better not say a word." She said, "I know. I know, they're Teddy's boys so I have to keep quiet." And she said, "I don't know why Teddy's boys have to move in on Ethel's party." I said, "They'll move in if you let them move in. Dammit, Gertrude, you've got the power. Just pick up the damn telephone and just assign people. And Ethel expects you to do that, but don't tell her what you're doing because that involves her. And by telling her, she has to acquiesce to what you're doing, and she wants you to do but doesn't want to go on record as approving. So just don't bother her and keep doing it. This morning she says, "Well, the people who came there, Paul. . ." I said, "How many souvenirs did they steal?" She said, "You wouldn't believe it. The guests who were there were walking around the house as if they were on sacred ground. And they

tiptoed and they just touched things and carefully put them down. And they made a tour of the whole house. And it was amazing with what reverence they acted towards the home and were careful not to disturb anything." She said, "Walter Sheridan had all his boys watching everything. And Teddy's guys," she said, "they just irritated me. Young kids who don't know anything about politics . . ." And I said, "You better not say a word about it because you know what the rules are." So that's what I mean. They just don't . . . [Interruption] She said they were walking around and were just surprised when people. . . .

HACKMAN: Yes. In Robert Kennedy's problems in getting some things across to the President, was that mainly on politics or was it ever on policy or was it just in terms of . . .

CORBIN: I knew nothing about policy. I never any time discussed anything about policy. I mean, I would make remarks to Bob when I was alone and he'd just laugh. The only time I ever made a remark about policy in the open, for which he did not reprimand me, is on the Oxford situation. When I was fixing up some eggs, I was frying some eggs when he was Attorney General, he had a meeting of all his staff. And I walked in with the eggs and I said, "It's going to get worse before it gets better." He said, "You know, I believe that's the statement of the day. It's going to get worse before it gets better. Thank you, our eminent astrologist, Mr. Corbin. I want to assure him we didn't know how to conduct this office without his advice." But policy, never discussed policy, never discussed it.

HACKMAN: Would he ever talk about family problems like the Lawfords? Did that upset him a great deal?

CORBIN: Yes, it did. He discussed it once only, and that, I believe, when he knew she was going to get divorced. And I was up his house and he had a party. And he was talking to Pat, and I busted in on them. And he cut me off and a dirty look, which hurt him because he had a contradiction. It never hurt him if he cut you off. But it was at his house, and he was funny this way, he felt he owed me an apology because I was a guest in his home. So he came over to me and he said, "I didn't mean anything, but she was talking to me about a difficulty with Peter so I cut you off. I'm sorry." I said, "Boy, you're always the gentleman of the Court of St. James. It's the first time I've ever known you to apologize for--but the only reason you're doing it is because it's in you home, Bob. Don't be silly." He says, "Is that right?" Like some child, "IS that right?" I said, "That's right, Bob. You'd never do it

except because it's your home."

HACKMAN: You said--well, we've talked about Shriver a little on the political thing, but did he ever talk about what his opinion of Shriver as a Peace Corps. . .

CORBIN: Yes, he thought he was pompous. Now, maybe I planted that word in him, but he said, "He's pompous, isn't he, Paul?" I said, "Yes, he's pompous." He said, "The fellows don't like him too well." I said, "Well, he's got the Peace Corps who like him. I don't like him. The fellows that work with me; Sheridan don't like him; I don't like him. I said, "I don't like him because he's pompous, he's a snob. He's not my cup of tea."

HACKMAN: Okay. Would he ever talk about family finances?

CORBIN: Yes, once--no, I wouldn't say that. The first time was in Wisconsin. I had chartered a plane around March and we'd float around, make four or five or six stops. Then we got to the final destination. He walks off first and I follow him. "Hey Bob. The guy wants his dough." "Don't bother me." I said, "Bob, the guy wants his dough, for crying out loud. He's just a small pilot." "Don't bother me with these things, Corbin." I said, "Don't give me that act, that crap about this crumpled dollar bill. That's an act. This guy wants to get paid, Bob, and you'd better pay him." "I haven't got the money, Corbin. Tell him mail a statement to my father." I said, "Where?" I said, "Get back," because he was heading for the airport. So he came back and said, "277 Park Avenue." I said, "Well, I've got to have a talk to you about this bullshit. It could cost you votes. This poor guy ain't got money for gas. Don't come with this crap walking away, send the bill. If they pay him like they pay me for my gas, he'll never get paid." I said, "In the future you'd better make. . ." "That's your job." [Interruption]

The next time we talked about finances was after I moved into Washington. And he said, "Why don't you move close by me to McLean?" I said, "No, I'm not going to be one of the serfs in the Kennedy mansion. I'm over in Belle View. A nice home." "What are you going to pay?" Well, I said, "I don't know. About fifty some odd thousand bucks. I ain't got the money. I've got to peddle my house in Janesville." "Oh, I'll loan it to you." I said, "You will? It might be fifty, sixty thousand." I'm just testing to see how far. . . "Whatever it is, I'll loan it to you." He says, "I'll have to charge you interest." I said, "Fine. That will be all right. What will you charge?" "I know nothing about interest. Do you think 8,9,10 percent will be

enough?" I said, "For a guy who don't know a goddamn thing about interest, you sure came up with the right figure." "Well, you call Steve," he says, "and Steve will come up with it. Just tell him I said Steve would give you the money tomorrow. Don't worry about it." I said, "Thanks a lot, but I don't need it. I'll peddle my house." And I said, "You must be really loaded." "Now, what would you call loaded, Corbin?" I said, "You've got ten million bucks?" "Well, why do you come up with ten million bucks, Paul? Why do you say ten?" "Well, I don't know." I said, "That's what they banter around." "Is that what they banter around, Corbin?" "How many do you have?" "I don't know what the hell I've got." "Have you got ten million?" "None of your business." "You've got ten million, ain't you? No wonder you can afford to let me have the money. Maybe I will take the money." "I don't know what I've got." That was the extent of the conversation.

HACKMAN: Yes.

CORBIN: Now, there was another discussion about money. I came in one day and he said, "Why don't you go buy yourself a couple suits?" I said, "You know, you forget there's such a thing as money, Bob. Your old man left you all the dough and you're a big spendthrift. You never earned any of the goddamn money. That's your whole problem about you." He said, "You're jealous, Corbin, aren't you? You're just jealous because. . ." "No," I said, "Bob, you know I didn't mean that. "Do you think I'm missing anything in life," he said, "by not working for a living?" I said, "Yes, but I wish I missed the same thing, Bob." "Well, you think it's all right?" "Shit, yes. I wish I had it. Don't ever let that bother you, Bob, that your old man gave you all that money. I wish that would happen to me." And he was sort of happy about it and he laughed. And then, oh, I would say a dozen times at least in the years that I knew him, I would rib him about money, his father leaving him money and not working for it. And he'd keep on saying, "How do you know how much you have?" That was the whole extent of the conversation.

Oh yes. He did say to me. . . .He was telling me--it was in the early days of Wisconsin--how his father promised him a certain sum of money if he didn't smoke. He went all through this jazz with me. And I said, "I don't believe that thing. It's the same kind of crap that you're dishing out at the coffee hours. It's a pattern that they use that can win votes. I don't believe that ever happened." He got offended. Because, heck, you thought was a game they were pulling, brainwashing everybody. And I told him that and he got offended. He said, "That's the cheapest way to win."

HACKMAN: When a campaign would start, well, let's say in during '60, but then in '64 or '68 or whenever, how would he and Steve Smith in talking about planning for the campaign talk about money and how much was available? Would that be a concern?

CORBIN: That never came up. I never heard it discussed; I was never party to that discussion. He did tell me after each campaign how much it cost.

BEGIN SIDE II TAPE I

HACKMAN: Well, when you were talking about '64 or whenever, you mean that's really what had to come from the family?
[Interruption] I was asking you if when you were talking about the money if that's what came from the family?

CORBIN: All I can recollect exactly--to make it fast--is he asked me how much I thought it cost, and he told me twenty million dollars. I don't know if it came from the family or where it came from. I do know this was a matter of record. He spent two million four hundred and fifty thousand roughly--maybe two million four hundred thousand, two hundred and a half million, or maybe two million and three-quarters--in 1964.

HACKMAN: You mean to say of his money?

CORBIN: His money. He raised exactly a little less than a half a million dollars for the U.S. Senate in 1964, a little less than a half million dollars. The rest was his own. Now, did anybody give you any figures on 1968?
[Interruption] After Bob's assassination, quite some time went by. But Steve would periodically say to me, "You've got to come, Paul, to help me settle these bills." And I know Steve. When he says he wants your help, he expects you to be there the next day. This was the first time in my association with the Kennedys, I ducked because his request was vague. They're always vague, but he expects me to be there. And he knew that I knew that I wanted them. Suddenly, I was on the telephone one day and he said, "Paul, we have three million six hundred thousand dollars in debts, three million six hundred. We've got no dough. We're going to have a series of dinners. We expect to raise a million dollars. Do you have any suggestions?" I said, "Well, I understand you have a couple of fellows sending bills now." "Disastrous, Paul. I ain't putting you on." I said, "Well . . ." He said, "What would you do?" I said, "I'd settle for fifty cents on the dollar." "That will reduce it, Paul, to one million and three-quarters, a little more than that. We expect to raise a million from the Democratic National Committee and then with

these dinners we'll be able to swing it." So we first went and they had dinners in Boston. They had dinners in New York. And they were going to have dinners in Washington and Los Angeles. So he asked me to meet him in Los Angeles at the Beverly Hills Hotel. And I appeared on the scene and Steve was there. And he had his auditor, a little man called Dick Corbett. And he said, "Paul, I want you to be on the telephone, settle all the bills, and work through Corbett. And in the middle of [unintelligible] he said, "Don't use your name because you're hot as a firecracker." He said, "If you have to use a name, mumble, 'Corbett'. They won't have any idea if you're Corbett or not." I says, "Fine." And we set up an office and I start settling bills. And the first one at fifty--it was easy. I adjust the second one to 33 1/3; that was easy. So I chopped it to 25 percent.

HACKMAN: These are debts from what campaign?

CORBIN: '68. Then I could write you a book on what happened. Vice. In going over the bills, Larry, I saw all the bills of all the campaign workers and I was able to really for the first time in my life prove--and I couldn't prove and it bothered me then--the corruptness of the fellows around him. This was living proof. Because they never have had a political guy okay they bills. Now, once in a while Steve would ask me to okay bills in the political campaign of '64, even '60. But I discovered that these were the bills that they couldn't settle or there was question about then so they gave them to me maybe a hundred thousand of the crackers. Here is a portfolio of three million six hundred thousand dollars. And I saw the bills of Dick Goodwin and Ted Sorensen, Larry O'Brien, Jerry Brown. Jerry Bruno cost us over a million dollars, a million and a half dollars. Incredible. I called up Steve and I said, "Steve. . ." "I don't want to hear about it, don't want to hear a damn thing about it." I said, "Goddammit, this thing is weird, Steve. It's sickening. It's. . ." "I don't want to hear about it." And then the letters of complaints came pouring in. I was using the names of Mr. Schoefield, Mr. Brian. And I'd get abuse, you know, "Why should we settle the bill on fifty cents on the dollar, whatever it is,"

[REDACTED] and Jackie with [Aristotle] Onassis." And we got sued by the Ambassador Hotel, which of course you knew--I don't know if you knew that or not.

HACKMAN: I think I've heard that.

CORBIN: So I said to Steve one day when he was over at the Beverly Hills Hotel--he came for the second or third time to arrange for a dinner--"How goes the dinner?" [Unintelligible] I said, "Steve, there's one thing--of course you knew that as a politician I was going to ask you some questions." "Ask me, I don't have to answer these things." "These bills for three million six hundred thousand are recent bills from the last three weeks of the campaign. How about the other ones? If we spent three million six hundred thousand, Jerry Bruno blew over a million dollars in California, down the drain." I said, "Look at that." "Don't want to see it." "That's criminal, for Christ sakes. Look at this, this, this, this. You guys must be crazy."

HACKMAN: What kinds of things?

CORBIN: They come into a town, they rent a hall, they rent whole suites of rooms for the press. That should be paid by the New York Times or the pressmen. They go down to electrical companies and rent the speaker system, amplifiers, chairs--you follow me?

HACKMAN: Yes.

CORBIN: When their rally's over, they just hop in their cars and they leave. They leave everything there. They're all stolen. We get charges for installation and charges for the things that were supposedly rented and never returned. Town after town after town, city after city. Rooms in various hotels in cities, whole floors where Bob was supposed to--I know Bob's schedule, I knew he couldn't be in San Jose at this time, even if it was a year later. Hell, I was out in California and he wasn't there. And men, campaign workers, buying suits of clothes at the hotel haberdashery and charging them to their rooms, typewriters.

HACKMAN: Why was it different than it was in '60? Wasn't there anyone who was doing any directing at all on that kind of thing?

CORBIN: There was an idealism in '60 as far as I was concerned. The people that they were using in '68 were not the same guys as the '60 one.

HACKMAN: You mean they changed or they were different people?

CORBIN: I mean they had changed. They had changed. I had always--and I'm not saying "I" here because I'm making the review, because I'm on record and everybody hates

me because I accused everybody because I called their shots in '60. They were no fucking good; well they were no good in '68. Bob was dead, but we ought to be able to show them up. He would have died because he was a [unintelligible]. One look at a bill and he could tell you exactly what the guy was doing, one goddamn look, whether the guy was stealing or not.

[REDACTED]

He'd rent forty cars and you'd find ten of them in the desert of Utah eight months after the goddamn campaign. Well, so I said to Steve, "This is just for the last few weeks of the campaign." I said, "I want to know what about the ones before? Did Bob pay them?" "Bob paid them." I said, "I don't get it." I said, "Steve, no man has that much cash available to pay. Without knowing your corporate set up, what did he have to sell to get it?" Well, he went into the whole details of how it was done, repercussions of a battle [unintelligible] afterward. Teddy tried to get the power of attorney from his old man so he could pay the bills because he was motivated by having no static because he was running for President. He didn't want to have these guys mad. And the old man said no and would not give him the power of attorney. Have you ever heard that before?

HACKMAN: No.

CORBIN: So they had to go out and raise. . . .And the letters of complaints were going to Ethel Kennedy on to me, Steve Smith and Teddy. Of course, Ethel's would go into the basket with perhaps something written on them, "I'm sending Bob's bills." Now, Teddy would forward them to Steve with a note, "Cut this out". Steve would forward it to me, just forward it to me with no comments. So one day a real nasty one, the son of a bitch had taped a conversation of mine. When I was trying to settle the bill, the guy was taping the conversation and transcribed it and sent it to Teddy. Teddy sent it down to Steve. I picked up the phone. "Is it true?" "Every word of it. Every word I said was true." I said, "They took out a few sentences but that doesn't change the general theme." "You were pretty rough on him!" "Well do you want to pay the seventy thousand or do you want to settle for a third? Which is it, Steve? The other formula didn't work." "Keep settling, Corbin, but can't you ease up?" "Can't be done, Steve. You owe a guy seventy-six thousand dollars and you offer him a third, it's costing him fifty grand. He's going to fight. And I've got to fight. There's fifty thousand bucks, Steve, on this particular one right there. Now what do you expect him to say to me and what do you expect me to say to him?" "What do you mean," he said, "giving the guy ten seconds to make up his mind yes or no?" "That's what I did. He made up his mind and he took it."

"Sorry, Paul. I guess you had to do it." I said, "Look, Steve, you ain't paying me for this. You know, this is on the house." He wasn't paying me. "This is on the house. I paid my own bloody way out in California." I said, "Sure. You're picking up the tab at the hotel," which I would eventually settle for one-third on the dollar. I said, "Ask your fellow Corbett." He said, "Corbin, come on. He follows you around like a puppy, Corbin. I sent him down there, and you've got them brainwashed." "No, he's not brainwashed because he's trying to settle them too but he can't so he throws them at me." The point is, Bob was broke when he died.

HACKMAN: So that's what you meant when you said that.

CORBIN: I mean he's broke. I mean exactly what that statement says. And you could project it as to what it means to his widow. Do you understand what I'm saying?

HACKMAN: Yes.

CORBIN: Huh?

HACKMAN: I guess to, you know. . . [Interruption] Let's talk about something else then.

CORBIN: He's broke, Larry. Do you know what that means, Larry? [Interruption] When Bob became a presidential candidate, he no longer could be a campaign manager. If he had left it entirely up to Steve, it would have been a different story. But Teddy entered the picture. And Teddy was trying to capitalize on a presidential campaign having learnt something from Bob, who was campaign manager for Jack in '60. So if he was going to become known across the country as a man who put his brother in, he wasn't going to be the tough guy that Bob was because of the image. So as a result you have Teddy running the show but not being tough because he didn't want to get anybody mad at him. Well, the leeches around him--the pros and leeches around him--recognize that quick. So they had a hey day on the money angle. Bob, being a candidate, he had no time to even look at it. He had schedules to speak and strategy and debates, whether to debate, not to debate, read speeches, go to receptions, quick receptions for fund-raising, which he needed. And again, Bob tried to pattern his brother Jack. Even the scheduling we'd have tremendous battles. I said, "You're always, always leaning toward the same bloody schedule your brother Jack did ten years ago." And I wasn't even near the schedule because I was in San Francisco and he might be in Omaha and I'd be talking to him over the phone. It got to the point he wouldn't talk the call, wouldn't take my call because it was always a

battle on the telephone. He said, "Don't you scream at me, Corbin. I'm not going to take it." Violent words over the phone. I said, "You're going the same bloody route your brother Jack did. Ten years have passed." The last time I talked to him he screamed. It was over the same thing because he didn't have anybody there to watch him. And Steve, it was him down in Los Angeles, Oregon going on, Indiana going on, they transferred him fast to Los Angeles because we were in trouble; and if McCarthy lost [won] California, Bob was through. So the crucial state became California and Steve was there. While they were having a heyday in Indiana, he sends--and I can't understand to this day--he sends Bill vanden Heuvel to Oregon. Sure, because he said he came free. He came free my ass. He cost us millions and cost us the election. And I would talk to Steve--Steve wouldn't take my call because he knew what the story was. He'd take it. I mean, I'd call him Monday and I wouldn't get him until Wednesday. The first time in my life. Because if I call Monday at 9 o'clock and he was tied up, I'd get a response in five minutes. "What do you want? I don't want to hear it, Corbin." One commitment I got out of Steve. I went down to pick up some money at the Beverly Hills Hotel to take back to Seigenthaler. I went down and saw him. I said, "Steve, this goddamn thing"--he was relaxed, we had a scotch. "This thing is just running away, Steve." He said, "I promise you one thing. Right after California." I said, "And, Steve, what is going on in Washington?" He said, "What do you know?" I said, "I've got a guy who's working there. I planted him. I'll tell you what's going on." He said, "I know. I sent Lem Billings up there. I've got reports. But I promise you one thing, Paul. Right after the election, the day after, the next day, we're having a meeting in L.A. and I'm firing everybody, just like you did in 1960, Corbin, in Washington, you had me fire everybody."

HACKMAN: What were the reports?

CORBIN: Utter confusion. Hackett wasn't paying attention to his work. He was running his agency then, didn't give a damn. It was just utter confusion. The Boiler Room was a disaster. Those girls were disastrous. Now, you can talk to Seigenthaler and I don't know what the hell he's going to say. I don't know where they found them. The whole operation was dismal. [Unintelligible] were blowing money like it's going out of style. Steve said, "We'll fire everybody, Corbin. We'll start from scratch the day after the primaries." "You ain't going to start from scratch, Steve. You've got New York facing you. And brother, from the reports I get," I said, "I'm not so goddamn sure we're going to win." I said, "I'm not so goddamn sure, Steve." "Is that all you've got to say to me? You come all the way down from San Francisco to tell me that?" "That's

right." So I wasn't very popular then. Nobody wanted to talk to me. Now, John was aware of it, John Seigenthaler, but he wouldn't fight. And I don't blame him because if you fight, it gets to the point where you outlive your usefulness. But I thought, because I felt--and time has proved me right--maybe I was indulging in self-elevation--that I felt that my relationship with him was such that I could scream at him and talk to him, because they certainly never questioned my loyalty or my honesty toward him or my motives and I knew that and they admitted it. So I told him these things. Steve said we'd fire everybody. And I said "Look at this." "I'm aware of it." And then when Bob was assassinated and I raised all these points about these fellows, "I don't want to hear about it, don't want to hear about it, it's all over, pay it."

HACKMAN: Other than the things that you've talked about, what were you spending most of your time doing in the campaign in '68? You said early you were doing some work in the South. How did that come about?

CORBIN: I'll tell you exactly how it came about. I came up to the headquarters the day they opened up or were moving in furniture in Washington. And I had my office and Steve was coming in--it was right next to Steve's. And I came in one day and Steve said, "Paul, Teddy wants you out in the field. He doesn't want you. You're hot as a firecracker. They're bringing up the House Un-American Activities Committee." I said, "That's a lot of shit." He said, "That's right but Kenny's here. And we have to make a decision, Paul. We can't fire all these guys in the Irish Mafia because of you. Everything you say about them is true, but we need them. Kenny's got a lot of chips to pick up. Larry has. We've got to have these guys. Now, they're plotting against you right now. Kenny sees you and then they're all seeing you. You just irritate them and they've just got to eliminate you. They can't have you around. I'm going to talk to Seigenthaler, who's your friend and our friend that knows you, and you work with Seigenthaler." I said, "Where am I going?" "The South." I says, "Fuck, no." "All right, Paul, let me tell you something. Where am I going to send you? New York? Chicago? Where it's easy? Where I can send anybody and deal with Daley. All the talents you have, use it in the South." I said, "That's a real snow job." He said, "No, Paul. We've got zero there. Now, you use your talents, Paul. Go down to the South, set up your headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee and start working." I don't know if John told you what I did.

HACKMAN: He Hasn't talked to me about '68.

CORBIN: Well, I came in to Nashville and I took the first state

of North Carolina and South Carolina and this is what I did: I had the list of every delegate elected. And I saw "HHH", all Humphrey people down the line, white and black. I called up a white guy. [Interruption] I picked up the phone and I called the guy, a delegate, and I'd say, "This is so and so from the Democratic National Committee. I'm glad to see that you're voting for Humphrey. We have to do something about the blacks in this country. We have to give them freedom and we have to elevate them. We have to give them a piece of the pie." (Unintelligible) I'd call a black for Humphrey, "How are you, sir. Let me tell you, I've been talking to these goddamn nigger delegates all day long and they've been driving me nuts. I'll tell you, if Bob Kennedy gets in we're fucked. He'll elevate the black man, he'll put him in the Cabinet, he'll do everything they say." Ask Seigenthaler. Utter confusion for the twenty-four hours. Guys started switching. Humphrey guys switching to Kennedy, the blacks switching to Kennedy. First day report, "Steve, I've got seven: North Carolina votes, South Carolina, Mississippi." The Democratic Party is issuing denials every fucking minute. Nobody believes them. Seigenthaler calls Steve, "The son of a bitch is performing miracles. Here's the delegates," boom, boom, boom, boom.

HACKMAN: Can you remember any numbers given at what dates, at what time?

CORBIN: What the hell's the difference in numbers? What do you want numbers for?

HACKMAN: Because I want to know what they were counting on in terms of the South.

CORBIN: Well, I don't know. Hell, I wasn't. . . .Maybe Seigenthaler's got it. I didn't keep any of this shit. But anyway, Seigenthaler is then. . . .California then becomes crucial. I'm transferred to San Francisco. That's where Seigenthaler was going. And the only reason that Steve had me transferred, he just wouldn't let me on the loose alone in the South. He told me that. "I'm not letting you loose, Corbin." He said, "You can go back afterward. Go back after (unintelligible) I was using, by the way, when I had to have certain people call back, they'd call Seigenthaler. I was using John's name so I had to use a Tennessean if they'd ever call back. Like I called newspaper guys. I forget--John knows who they are. I'd say, "I'm calling for John Seigenthaler." And we started busting that goddamn South. I'd sit there and talk to black delegate and say, "Boy, I'm telling you, if this son of a bitch Kennedy gets in, these fucking niggers will run this. . . ." Gasp. I could hear the guy gasp. "Where did you get my name?"

"Oh, I have a list of all the delegates. You're a delegate." Utter confusion in the South. The Democratic Party was issuing denials every day.

HACKMAN: When did you go to California then? When Smith went out or earlier or later?

CORBIN: No. I believe I went before Smith went out or the same time Steve went out, maybe a day or so difference. I believe I was in California a day ahead of him. It was the same time. Seigenthaler came out. Of course, you know what I did in California. Did Seigenthaler tell you?

HACKMAN: I haven't talked to him about that yet.

CORBIN: Well, the tactics were so good in the South, Seigenthaler said, "Well, what can we do here?" "Watch!" So I set up a special telephone in John's suite. I'm living at the Palace Hotel [Sheraton Palace Hotel]; John's living at the Fairmont. Every morning I leave the Palace and go to the Fairmont. I had this private line and I'd call McCarthy headquarters. I'd say "This is Tom Bryant, cattle rancher from the northern part of California." I said, "Send somebody down. I want to give them a check for ten thousand dollars. Let me tell you right now, we cannot have this Jew-loving, nigger-loving bastard Kennedy get elected." It moves all the liberals from McCarthy to Kennedy. Then I would call up . . . I had a list of every chairman for McCarthy. And I'd say, "Be at the airport tonight. Don't tell the other groups and we'll have a bus to celebrate the victory of McCarthy in Indiana. Get all your people. Free bus, go there. Free planes, go there." Of course, there was no plane, there was no bus. (Unintelligible) would say, "Our team is going to Indianapolis. How come I'm not invited?" Utter confusion. They all go the fucking airport. There's no plane and shit . . . And then Seigenthaler gets the story about some guy-

[redacted] is coming out to take over the press corps in California, be campaign manager.

HACKMAN: For McCarthy you mean?

CORBIN: Yes. I get it forty-eight hours in advance. I call up the campaign manager. "This is Ralph Graves. I just came in for the New York Times, new correspondent covering California. I wonder if you have a biographical sketch on this new campaign manager [redacted]"

"What are you talking about?" [redacted] is coming taking over here. He's taking over your job. Weren't you notified?" "You must be crazy." Hang up. I call every press

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guy all through the state. Of course, they started calling to each other. "It's a Kennedy plot." Forty-eight hours later Finney is announced. Havoc all through the fucking ranks. They were resigning left and right. They're coming over in droves to the Kennedy team. Seigenthaler can't believe his eyes. He said, "I can't believe it. Get the fuck out of town before they ever catch you." He said, "You've already done it? Get the hell out." "Where to?" "Mexican-Americans called up, asked for (unintelligible)." He had a book written by Harry Harris. Do you know Harry Harris? Brilliant guy, head research man in California. He showed us we had to have the blacks and the Mexican-Americans. "You get that and you shove it to the majorities." "Corbin, you're in charge of all of San Joaquin-Salinas Valley." John will tell you the other story. But anyway, I go to Salinas. But that's got nothing to do with Bob Kennedy. This was in Salinas. I come in there and I drive down the street and I see a great big sign right next to the Fox Theater downtown--best location in the city--"Robert Kennedy for President Headquarters". One thing of deference Jess Unruh, every county, every city we came to there was a headquarters and a telephone and a desk and a chair and somebody sitting there. They weren't the best in the world. They might have been the worst in the world--they usually were the worst in the world, the most corrupt elements in the community--but there was a sign in the best location and a telephone. He delivered that to Bob Kennedy which I personally am eternally grateful to Jess Unruh for doing that. Without Jess Unruh it couldn't have been done. I came in, don't know anything about Salinas, I went over to the headquarters, and a Mexican lady was there, Massally (unintelligible). And I said, "Are there a lot of Mexicans in town here?" "Why do you ask?" "There must be. Otherwise you wouldn't be sitting here." "There are a lot of Mexicans. They're all communists. They're like that communist Caesar Chavez. They've got those Viva Kennedy clubs all Red infiltrated." I can't believe it, she said that. I said, "Well, it may be true, but we have to win. We should all get together, you know, unity. That's the way the communists talk." I said, "Where is this Viva Kennedy club." "Well, it's in the Mexican part of town." So I drive down there and I park. I see a million kids when I walk in, a guy's running leaflets by hand on an old broken mimeograph machine. A Mexican is sitting there. I walk in and he looks at me with suspicion. "I'm representing Robert Kennedy." They sent me to a man who was working for a government agency under LBJ, Andy Enzualda, Salinas, California. So he's working for the government. So I go back to Sally Guterias in my headquarters and I said, "Who's Andy Enzualda?" Absolute Red right from Moscow. Agitating. Look at the paper yesterday, his address to the county board." And I looked in the paper. So I went out to see Andy (unintelligible), he's got a

beard on." He had short hair with a long beard, mustache. "Are you for Kennedy?" "Yes, I am. I'm on the slate as a delegate." "Oh? How did you manage to do that?" Dr. Bowersox [Robert J. Bowersox] from Monterey is her county chairman and he's a token, put me on there. Of course, what good does it do? I haven't the money to go as a delegate. So after I win, if I win, he'll sell my seat to some contributor." I said, "Oh?" I said, "Hey, you don't know me, never seen me before. I'm a cattle rancher from North Platte, Nebraska." And I said, "I know nothing about politics. I just love Bob Kennedy and I'm here to contribute my services." I said, "One thing is very fortunate, I know the Kennedys personally so I've been able to talk to them. Now, let me say right now, Andy, if you are a delegate, you are going to Chicago." "I don't believe it. Out of money." I said, "You'll go if I personally have to sell five head of cattle to send you to Chicago." "I believe you. Sit down. Let me tell you something," he says. "I'm working for the Job Corps. And let me tell you something--you're honest with me--I hate gringos. They always betrayed my people." He goes on. I said, "I'll tell you what we do. We cannot have two clubs; we cannot (unintelligible). How would you like to move your headquarters over there?" "Too far for my poor people to go downtown. I've got to stay over there." I said, "All right, there's only one woman." "Yeah, I know, Sally (unintelligible)", he says. "She's the court reporter. She's part of the machine. She's there." "Well, she needs help, has no volunteer workers. Will you provide me volunteer workers to work out of my headquarters downtown, the Fox Theater?" "Yeah, if you let me use your machine." Here's a guy begging. "What do you want the machine for?" "I want to get my people registered to vote." Here's a guy begging. I said, "Okay, Andy." "What does Sally say?" "If Sally won't okay it, we get her ass out." He said, "But what about Dr. Bowersox?" I said, "Don't worry about Dr. Bowersox. We'll settle that in a hurry." So we move. I bring over about half a dozen Mexicans into the headquarters. We walk in. I said, "Sit down." "Will you let me use the telephone?" "Sure." "I'd like to call a man forty miles away." "Call whoever you want. Anything you want." Sally says, "Well, you don't need me any more. You haven't paid me for last week." "What do you mean, 'You haven't paid me for last week'?" "I'm supposed to get 250 a week. you haven't paid me for last week." "Well, we'll take care of that, Sally. Don't worry about that. I'll see you have money." She said, "I talked to Dr. Bowersox. He never heard of you. Why don't you tell Dr. Bowersox?" I said, "Oh, who's Dr. Bowersox?" "He's the chairman." So I'm there about a week and finally decide to call him. I get static from Seigenthaler. "Don't tell me what to do, Seigenthaler." "Okay, Corbin." "What the fuck do you know about the field? You're an office man. I'll take my sweet fucking time with this Bowersox."

Bowersox is getting crazy. Bowersox comes down to meet me in Salinas. He had his local chairman, a real estate guy. We go over there. We talk to Dr. Bowersox. I said, "Look, Doc." He said, "I'm going to call Jess Unruh." "Well, let's go to the office, Doc. We'll get this settled right away." I said, "Jess, do you know who this is?" "What are you doing in California?" "I'm in Salinas Valley, I'll let you talk to Dr. Bowersox. He has a little question as to what I'm doing here." "Doctor, you do what that man says. You do anything he says." "Who is he?" "Never mind. You just do what he says, Doc. He will not betray you." I says, "Thanks, Jess. Let me say a word to you here. When I get through with this county, they'll all be for Bob Kennedy for President and Jess Unruh for governor. That's my payment to you." I said, "We'll make some deals here, and you'd better make them stick, Jess." The Doctor is sitting there. He [Unruh] said, "What do you mean?" I said, "You've got a twenty-three man board, executive board of the Democratic Party. Sixty percent of the people in this area are white and black out of Monterey, Riverside. You ain't got a one black or Mexican on your board of directors. I'll tell you what I want: I want it based on the vote, on the Mexican vote on a percentage basis, what they cast. That's what I want. Do I get it?" "You've got it, Corbin." "You hear that, Doctor? Okay, now, how much money have you got?" "What do you mean money?" I says, "Ah ha, you don't know the Kennedys. We don't come and give you money. We're like the (unintelligible); we come and take. How much have you got?" I said, "You've got to hustle the dough to pay for the goddam rent. You're paying for this phone, paying for the paper for these Mexicans' mimeograph machine. I've opened the account next door at the typewriter company. Boys, anything you want for the Viva Kennedy Club charge it to Dr. Bowersox." Bowersox is a machine man. Machine man! I said, "Come in Doctor, let me tell you something. You hate my guts; you'll love me when I get through. One thing I want you to do: stay out of my fucking way. If you do that, you'll be a hero. If you get in my fucking way, I'll pulverize you. Just stay out of my fucking way. Every time we issue a statement, you'll make it; every time a guy has to take a bow, you'll take it. If they win this county, you won it. Just let me do it. Your fucking system has never worked." "Go ahead." He stepped aside. The last chapter is: we organized, we went to the work sheds, to the fields, to the carrot sheds, the artichoke sheds; we registered voters by the thousands. I made a speech: "Never mind, you Catholics. A lot of you came to church on Sunday and said you don't have to vote for Bob because he's going to win because you lit a candle and prayed. It doesn't work. You've got to register; you've got to vote."

Now, one night--and you question John Seigenthaler--I'm in the headquarters at 3 o'clock. I think I told you this story,

didn't I? I'm sitting at the telephone, a guy walks in. I spotted him right away--political guy, one of the Kennedy guys. He's tired, he's beaten--it's three in the morning. He walks in with the typical machine, California arrogance. He's an Unruh man. Unruh is in power because (unintelligible).. "Are you Bryant?" "Sit down and shut your goddam mouth while I'm on the phone, you punk." "Yes, Honey." "Blow jobs, I don't do blow jobs."--I'm just creating a conversation. The guy on the phone says, "What are you talking about?" I was talking to Jack O'Brien, who's now working at (unintelligible). "You got a guy in there, Corbin?" I says, "Yeah." "Okay, I'll keep it up." "Well, I'll talk to you later, sweetie. I've got some jerk who just walked in. He looks like an Unruh man. What do you want, punk?" "Just a moment," he said, "I came in here to find out . . ." "Who sent you?" "Braden, Watson, and Seigenthaler." "Oh, Seigenthaler? What does that fucking jerk want, Seigenthaler, that stooge from Washington." "Well, they want to know how much money you need." "For what?" "For volunteer workers." "What the fuck are you talking about? Money for volunteer workers? How many volunteers do you want? Do you want five hundred? We'll ship five hundred to San Francisco." "Don't tell me that, Mr. Bryant. I was born in this town. You can't find five volunteers." "We'll see you tomorrow morning and talk about it." He said, "You're full of shit," and walks out. A few days later I got a call from Seigenthaler. "Hey, did you kick a guy called Moss's ass out of the office? Let me tell you what happened, Corbin. I sent these guys all over to see how much money (unintelligible) wanted so they could check in all the areas. Bob came in yesterday. All these guys were reporting. This fellow Moss comes in. He says, "Mr. Kennedy, there's a fellow called Bryant in Salinas, where I was born, (unintelligible) Bob said, "Why?" Bob doesn't know I'm in Salinas. The guy said, "He's got every Mexican organized. He's got the town seething. They're buying him a house so he can run for mayor. He walks down the street and there's thousands of Mexicans following him. He broke the barrier in every restaurant in town; Mexicans can eat anywhere." You know what Bob does? Ask John. "John, it's him, isn't it?" "Yeah, it's him."

That's what we did in the Salinas Valley. We really organized them. Now, let me tell you what I did to Dr. Bowersox. I was going to San Francisco the day of the election. I wasn't staying in the field. The guy who stays in the field the last day hasn't done his job because if he had, you don't have to be there; it should run alone, the people alone. The night before I metENZUALDA and Martinez--they're great guys. Here's this fellow, Martin Manez, Salinas. I went up to the restaurant the last night I was there, the one that would never break, the Hyatt House. And I came in the bar and they wouldn't let in the bar Mexicans. We came in and we all sat down. I said, "Three green

chartreuses." Nobody moved. I hear a big (unintelligible) "Hey you son of a bitch, you come over here and you serve us three green chartreuses." I'm living at the Hyatt House and I owe him forty-four hundred dollars. I've been waiting for that. I said, "What about you, my friend" Do we get three green chartreuses or don't we?" I said, "I know what this is all about. You are going to serve Mexican-Americans in this bar--and you start with me and my two friends, Andy Enzualda, who is very well-known, the local communist agitator, and Martinez, the unemployed schoolteacher." "I will do it myself." "Oh no, that waitress does." You check Andy Enzualda and he'll be happy to give you the whole story. The waitress comes up. The table is dirty so she gives the rag to the Mexican. Do you know why? She will not wipe this table. I pick up the rag, "Hey, Mr. Manager, come here. Come over here. Tiptoe over here. I owe you forty-four hundred dollars. Come over here. Now, you tell her to wipe this table or you don't get your forty-four hundred dollars." "Marie, wipe the table." "Now apologize to my two guests." You ask these two guys; I'll give you their names. So she apologized to these fellows. I said, "From now on, you be a good Christian and serve everybody from now on because it's easier now once you've bucked the crowd," and I walked out. Now, I said, "Fellows I want you to do one thing: tomorrow night we're going to win; we're going to win big. We're going to win Monterey County." "Impossible." "You're going to win Monterey County I'm telling you. Now, I'm calling Dr. Bowersox, and I'm telling Dr. Bowersox to be here tomorrow night. And you're throwing a great big party--tacos, enchiladas, all Mexican food. Now, you have a big sign: 'Viva MAPA' (Mexican-American Political Association). Not the Democratic Party, boys, it's MAPA that did it. 'Welcome our hero, Dr. Bowersox.'" "That son of a bitch." "He'll have to name you guys to the board. He made a deal with Jess Unruh. You're part of his deal. There are forty-two members of the board; you've got fourteen." Fourteen blacks and Mexican-Americans dominate and took over the Democratic Party in Monterey County. Bowersox quit. And you want to know something? In spite of the assassination, Andy Enzualda went to the Convention. Now, how did he go? I got a hold of Jess Unruh, I said, "Jess, I'm going to give you a list of people and the whole valley is yours lock, stock and barrel. Send them all a letter and tell them Mrs. Ethel Kennedy has told me what you have done for her husband. Mrs. Ethel Kennedy has told me that her husband, Robert, had told her what you had done for him before his assassination. I want to thank you, Jess Unruh." They've all got it framed right next to the crucifix in their homes. You ask Seigenthaler--I'm not shitting you--he'll tell you the rest of it.

That's how we won. Those were good days.
[Interruption]

This little stinking town. I walked into the Viva Kennedy club one day . . .

HACKMAN: This is in Salinas?

CORBIN: Salinas. In the Fox Theater. And all these kids are following one guy around. Here's the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. They're following him around. I said, "How come you're not in school. You're always hanging around here." (Unintelligible) "Oh, I'm a perfect example of malnutrition. I'm twenty-eight years old." He was that big, looks about eight years old. "Where's your mother?" "She works in the fields. Today in her birthday." "Come with me." So I walk down to a store, a gift shop; it was run by a lady from Winona, Minnesota, a Swede. She was for Bob Kennedy. I talked to her. I said, "I want the most expensive glasses that you have. It's going to be a gift." "Well, I suppose a man should send a gift to his wife if he's away so long, Mr. Corbin." I was going by another name, I think it was Schoefield, actually. So I pick out a dozen glasses--I knew they cost me four dollars apiece; they were forty-eight dollars, gift wrapped. I said, "Have you got a card?" "Yes." "What is the name of your mother?" Happy birthday, signed his name. "Give that to your mother." "You're making a mistake. Buy him the penny candy. You're corrupting this town." I buy him the penny candy. This is the punch line: I drive the kid down to the house about a mile. I said, "Give that to your mother from you. Tell her that you're earning your money and the Kennedys paid. You bought it for your mother's gift. I'll see you tomorrow." The next day I forget about it because things are moving so fast in politics. "Hey, how did your mother like the glasses?" "She bawled me out." I said, "Why?" "She said because I bought glasses, she had to go buy beer to use the glasses. And she used up the grocery money to buy beer. She said I should have bought beer instead and we'd drink it out of the bottle. But she had to use the grocery money to buy beer so she could use your new glasses." And that was a real (unintelligible)

I went into the Exchange Club, the last holdout. It's like the City Club. And I walk in with this little Mexican kid. The headwaiter comes up, "Yes sir." I said, "Two." He looks at the little fellow. "Whites only." "What did you say?" "Just a moment." He goes in the back.. A little huddle. They make a decision: seat the guy. I go over. We sit down. The waitress comes, "Barney, what are you doing here? I'm going to tell your mother." Mexican waitresses. I said, "Listen, you common slut, this should be a great day in your life to be able to have a Mexican come in and you wait on him What do you mean you'll tell his mother? You should be proud to tell his mother how proud you

are. Now, you go wait on him. Bring a menu." She comes back, "I want to apologize. You were right. It is a great day. Now, what will you have?" "Anything he wants." Roast beef he wants. Rocky ice cream he wanted. I'll never forget it. The first time I heard it, rocky road ice cream, which is a sort of chocolate kind of an ice cream. And I said, "I'll tell you what you do now. You have every waitress come over and say hello to him, every Mexican waitress to come over and shake his had. Every one now. Come on, line them up one by one." It's one o'clock; the place is loaded. One by one the waitresses came up, "How are you, Barney. Nice to see you." Enjoyed the scene. Everybody's watching me. I'm--hilarious. I'm having a lot fun.

We walk out, you know, "No tip for her. She doesn't deserve one for what she said to you when you sat down." Then I said, "Thank you very much." He [the owner] said, "Thank you. I've been waiting to serve a Mexican for years."--the guy who ran the fucking Exchange Club. I broke it for him. I don't know if he meant it or not, but as many as these guys that got whipped, and took it gracefully. We bust that wide open town.

Do you know what the Teamsters are worth in that town? The teamsters were the growers. There a guy called Lynch [Thomas C. Lynch] running on the Humphrey LBJ ticket--all the corrupt elements. [Interruption]

HACKMAN: [Unintelligible]

CORBIN: Kennedy, the name Kennedy. I couldn't [unintelligible] anybody else. These people that write to me, they call me, send me Christmas cards, the Mexicans.

[Unintelligible] The finest people I've ever met are the Mexican-Americans. Did you ever meet them? Their morals are unencroachable. very strong religious, sincere--and screwed left and right by everybody. See, that valley, the San Joaquin and the Salinas Valley, they use what is called a short hoe. Do you know what a short hoe is? They hoe by hand, and they use a short hoe where a guy has to stoop all day long.

HACKMAN: Yeah, I've used one before.

CORBIN: Instead of a long hoe they use a short hose so their backs are bent from the hot days in the sun, every single day. Poverty! Oh I'll tell you this one. I move into Monterey Mark Hopkins Hotel. Right next to--a suburb of Monterey is called Riverside. All black. I walk into the headquarters in Monterey--no blacks around. [Interruption]

HACKMAN: . . . the socialites.

CORBIN: Yes. Well, let me tell you this. [Unintelligible] no

sense in screwing around there and I go to the blacks. I'm in the motel and my maid's cleaning up. I said, "What is your name?" She says, "Mrs. Humphreys." I said, "Oh, my name is Kennedy. You're joking, aren't you?" "No, I'm not." I said, "Who are you for?" "I'm for Kennedy." I said, "Do you think you can get a whole group of people together at your home? I work for the Kennedys. I want to organize your people in the Democratic Party." She says, "You must be joking." I says, "No." I said, "You call me." "What time can you be there?" I said, "Seven o'clock." To make a long story short, she calls me at 7 o'clock. "Nobody believes me. What white man would come into a Negro section to organize?" I said, "You tell you neighbor to keep her goddam mouth shut and mind her own business. I'm coming down. I'll be there at 7 o'clock. You have some people in your house." I'm bringing Jack O'Brien, who's my aide, down to the house." I come in there. [Unintelligible] one little barrel, card table, tablecloth, cookies, orangeade, seven Negroes.

Jack O'Brien makes the pitch regarding a Rose Kennedy reception. He's talking about Mrs. Kennedy and so on. I said, "They don't want to hear this. Sit down, Jack. They want to hear about the revolution and exploitation of the Negroes and no jobs and discrimination. that's what they want to hear about. And I'll tell you what's worrying you. They won't let you in the Mark Hopkins Hotel, will they?" "That's right." "Well, I'll tell you why we are: because you're going to be standing right next to Mrs. Joseph Kennedy with a blue ribbon saying "Distinguished Guest, Committee Chairman. That's you Mrs. Humphreys." "I've got to work in the hotel. I'm sorry. She's having the reception in the hotel." "I will talk to the manager tomorrow." So every laundry worker, every maid is on the reception committee, on the platform, in the Mark Hopkins Hotel, with all the Dr. Bowersox wives. They were shaking the hands of the laundry workers. That's Mrs. Rose Kennedy. Give her the whole pitch. All the laundry workers and all the waitresses and all the chambermaids will dress in their dollar ninety-eight J.C. Penny dresses, stand with a great big blue ribbon, black with ivory teeth, shaking hands of all the socialites--and they shook their hands; they had to before they could get to Rose. Now, that's what we did at Riverside.