

Paul B. Fay, Jr. Oral History Interview – JFK #3, 11/11/1970
Administrative Information

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Biographical Note

Fay was a personal friend of President Kennedy; Under Secretary of the Navy (1961-1963). In this interview, he discusses Admiral George Anderson, Fay's role as Under Secretary of the Navy, President John F. Kennedy's (JFK) relationships with heads of state, foreign visits, JFK's interest in General Douglas MacArthur, the missile gap, and the Kennedy family, among other issues.

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Paul B. Fay, Jr. – JFK #3

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Third Oral History Interview

with

Paul B. Fay, Jr.

November 11, 1970
San Francisco, California

By James A. Oesterle

For the John F. Kennedy Library

OESTERLE: When the tape machine broke down last night you were talking about George Anderson [George W. Anderson, Jr.], Admiral Anderson.

FAY: Right. And I think we had just started to talk about the Navy League Convention down at Puerto Rico – San Juan, Puerto Rico. During that time the Secretary of the Navy, Fred Korth, went down there, and I think several other of the top people in the navy, but I stayed in Washington. In other words, Bob McNamara [Robert S. McNamara] insisted somebody always had to be in Washington, and so it fell to me to stay in Washington so I did not go down to the Navy League Convention.

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Another thing that was a surprise to me, that I didn't realize that there was as much friction as there was between George Anderson and Fred Korth. Well this all came to a head down at San Juan, Puerto Rico.

There was a luncheon, and at the luncheon on Saturday George Anderson was speaking. Now, this was told to me by George Anderson. He was speaking. In the middle of his talk – and the Secretary of the Navy was sitting at the table; Fred Korth was seated at the table also, and that evening Fred Korth was to give the major address at the final banquet. George Anderson was giving a speech on the difference between “aye aye” and “yes sir,” and

“aye aye” meaning “I accept the order. I’ll carry it out without reservations.” “Yes sir” meaning, “I accept the order but it isn’t exactly what I buy as far as the order,” which is a difference, and it gives the commanding officer an opportunity to be able to separate in his mind whether, you know, how totally his subordinate was carrying out, and also made him

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rethink the question, whether maybe the order should be thought over. Anyway, so during this luncheon Fred Korth received a message, and George Anderson was not conscious that Fred Korth received a message. But Fred Korth, right at this point – on this “aye aye” and “yes sir” – Fred Korth got up and left the head table. Well George Anderson was really kind of stunned by it, because it was right in the middle of his speech, and there was no note passed to him or nothing like that, just Fred Korth got up and left. And what Fred Korth was doing was, he was going out to pick up the phone. Ros Gilpatric [Roswell L. Gilpatric] was calling him to confirm the decision they’d made earlier that they wanted to try to get, I mean, the decision had finally come to a head and evidently the decision had been made with Bob McNamara and the President that George Anderson would be relieved and that Dave McDonald [David L. McDonald], who was then over in Europe – had a position, a four star rank over in Europe – would replace George

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Anderson. Well, Fred Korth went to the phone to speak to Ros Gilpatric, and Ros Gilpatric at that time said, “Would you phone Dave McDonald and find out whether he would come back to the United States and to the Pentagon to discuss the possibility of taking the job as CNO [Chief of Naval Operations]?” So Fred Korth immediately put the phone message through – I mean it went right through the Pentagon from San Juan to Europe – and then he asked Dave McDonald if he would come back to consider the position. And then Fred Korth went back to the luncheon table and sat down.

Well, George Anderson still didn’t know what had gone on, and so no sooner is he off the podium and the luncheon is over when he gets a phone call from Dave MacDonald, wanting to know what’s going on, that he’s being called back to be interviewed to take the job as CNO. As George Anderson said, “How naïve of Fred Korth to think that my fellow officer isn’t going to tell me or ask me what’s going on,” when really the thing to do would have been to have a

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confrontation with George Anderson and tell him, “Well, things aren’t going the way they should, so therefore you’re going to be relieved.” Anyway, this was a little farther on.

I knew nothing about what had gone on. On Monday morning after this weekend, why I was leaving the Pentagon and walking out the mall entrance to go over to the Bureau of Personnel to give a talk before some reserve officers who had come in, and I saw Admiral Anderson’s limousine down in the front. He was seated in the back seat with Admiral Smedberg [William R. Smedberg, III] who was the Chief of the Bureau Personnel. Now

these were two men who I looked on as friends and had a good relationship with, and so I stuck my head in the door – the door happened to be open as if one was going to get out, you know, momentarily – and so I stuck my head in the door and said, “All right, what are you two plotting?” With that, George Anderson leaped out of the car, and with his face flushed and obviously concerned said, “I’ve

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been fired.” And I said, “George, I can’t believe it.” He said, “I mean I’ve been fired.” I said, “Listen, I can’t talk to you about it now. I’m going over to the Bureau of Personnel, but I’ll come back and I’d like to talk to you about it when I come back from the Bureau of Personnel.” So I went over to the Bureau of Personnel and made my talk.

When I got back in my office I told my aid to let Admiral Anderson know at his convenience to come by if he had the free time. Well Admiral Anderson came right down, and he told me the whole story I just told you. And he was really worked up and concerned and wrought by the whole situation. He was bitter, but also he was a man who had devoted his whole life to the military, and really a great patriot – whether you believed in what he stood on different issues, he was a great patriot. I really didn’t know what to do, and I said, “Listen George, you’re the Commander in Chief of the Navy. You have the right to call the President of the United States and ask

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him for an interview, or at least to have a chance to have your day in court. You’re the senior man in the United States Navy.” So he rang up the President [John F. Kennedy] and he asked for an appointment. Ironically, Jack Warnecke [John Carl Warnecke] was supposed to see the President right after this period that George Anderson’s appointment was made for, and George Anderson’s appointment was made for – he would have had about fifteen minutes. Well he went over there.

Well no sooner had the President gotten the call from George Anderson when the President called me and said, “What’s going on over there? I just got a call from George Anderson. He wants to see me.” I said, “Listen, George Anderson’s been fired. My personal opinion is – I’m not arguing the question of whether he should or should not have been fired. That’s up to Bob McNamara and you. What I’m really disturbed about is the method in which he was fired.” And I told the President the background behind this, and the President said, “God damn it, can’t

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anybody else do anything right around here, or do I have to do every bloody thing?

The feeling was – and my feeling very strongly and the President concurred – was that there’s ways to fire people, and here particularly somebody that’s served his country so well. They could have brought him in, said, “George, you and I or McNamara or Korth, we’re obviously not on the same wavelength. There’s a disagreement. I’m boss. You have to answer to me. You’re not answering to me. You’re opposing my things. Now you have your

choice. Either you can get in line or make a complete turnabout. If you just can't do it, that's your business, well then we'll be happy to work with you to pick your successor. You can nominate the people you think are right. You can, you know, make a contribution on the way out. It won't be that you're fired. It'll just mean that your tour of duty will be terminated." Anyway, the President was asking me – but he was going to make up his own mind obviously – but he said, "What

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am I going to do about this?" I said, "Well why don't you give him an ambassadorial post? Jerry Wright [Jerauld Wright], and admiral out in Taiwan, has an ambassadorial post. There's another admiral that's over in Greece." He said, "I've already given out – the only thing that's possibly available is Portugal, and I've really given that position out. Maybe I can do something about that."

Well, anyway George Anderson went over to see him, and instead of being over there fifteen minutes he was over there about forty minutes or forty-five minutes – because Jack Warnecke was delayed that long, so he knew how long George Anderson was in there. Finally when George Anderson left, Jack Warnecke said the President came out to see him, and Jack had all these displays about Lafayette Square in the Cabinet room. And he said the President was worked up and flushed and obviously tense, on edge, and he came in and he said, "Fine, fine, fine. These are things that Jackie [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy] should take care of. Let

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Jackie work these things out with you." In other words, Jack Warnecke said he just had a couple of minutes and the President was gone. He was obviously very, very upset about the previous meeting.

So then now I'm having lunch over in the Secretary of the Navy's dining room, alone, when George Anderson comes directly from the President over into where I am. And George Anderson came into the room and sat down and started to cry. Here is the CNO of the navy, a four star admiral – and I had to get up from my seat. I said, "George, I can't take it. I just can't take it. You just can't act like this. You just have to stop. I just can't talk to you." Because I was getting emotional about it. He said the fact that he had served his country, you know, for all these years, and to have to go out like this. But he said the President had offered him the ambassadorial post. And he said he had a good mind – you know he said, "I don't know about any ambassadorial post. What I want to do is, I want to get out

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and just tell the United States and the people in the military what an awful thing Bob McNamara is doing to this country." I said, "George, if you go out and do that, you're going to be sour grapes. Everybody's going to figure you've been fired because you were incompetent in your job, and it's going to be sour grapes. You'll be zero for the rest of your life. Here you've served your country. You've got another opportunity to continue on in a

position of great importance. Why turn the tables back and go out where everybody's going to say, 'There's George Anderson'? Whether you like it or not, Bob McNamara's boss and he's going to remain boss." So he said, "Well, I have to talk to Mary Lee [Mary Lee Sample Anderson] about it." So he went to Mary Lee, and evidently they decided they would accept the position.

Then – to show you how things go on – there was a National Press Club luncheon, and he was invited as the principal speaker. And he went out of his way to ask me to come to sit at the head table at that

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particular luncheon. I was a little bit late when I went over to the luncheon. But just before I went over to the luncheon the President called me and said, "That son of a bitch Anderson sent his speech over here today for me to clear, in which he was.... Here I had just sworn him in as ambassador two or three days earlier. If he doesn't have the good sense to realize that he's still part of my team, and not to go over there and start to attack McNamara at this press luncheon.... I just don't understand him, what makes his mind tick. I don't want you to tell him that I've read his speech, because when he called back to find out whether I'd read it, I told Kenny O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell] or somebody to say that the President didn't have a chance to read it, but he was sure that whatever Admiral Anderson said it would be all right."

Well then, the minute I arrived and at this kind of a head table room where people go before they move in to the head table, why George Anderson came right up to me. And he said, "Red, the President

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didn't get a chance to read my speech, and I'm concerned about it." I said, "Well listen, George, you know what is right and what is wrong. You're not going to say anything as ambassador of the United States, you're not going to say anything that's going to be detrimental against the administration. Why should you worry?"

Well then, he tried to hedge the thing. Well then he went in and he spoke, and of course I knew what roughly, the essence of what he was going to say. So I was seated there at the head table on his right. Well after he finishes his speech – which really was about 85 percent of it was, you know, motherhood and God and country and America, and the Star Spangled Banner and the flag – but 15 percent of it was an attack on McNamara. And so when the speech finished, everybody rose to their feet to clap. Well I had to make a decision whether I was going to sit through the clapping and make a big incident out of the speech, or whether I was going to rise and give a quick clap and sit

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down – which I did. I guess I was the last up and the first down.

And then the question and answer period came, and George Anderson just completely went 180 degrees from what he said in his speech. In other words, as the questions came in

where they were an attack on McNamara, he lauded McNamara. In other words, his conscious had really gotten him after he had given the speech, so he tried to undo everything he said in the speech. Well, when they left, when the speech was over and he said to me, you know, what did I think of the speech, and I said, “Well George, there was 85 percent of the speech that nobody could complain with. There was 15 percent of the speech that I thought was not proper.”

Right at that moment somebody came up to me and said, “You’re wanted on the telephone.” I said, “Well who it is?” And they said, “It’s the President.” So I said, “Where’s the nearest phone?” So I went kind of backstage – there was kind of a stage there – and there was a phone on the wall. So I got on

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the phone and I picked it up, and finally I got through and the White House operator said, “One moment, Mr. Fay. The President’s calling.” And the President came on the line. This guy had to be the greatest guy that ever lived. He got on the phone and he said, “God, I hear from Pierre Salinger you were leading the cheers for George Anderson.” I said, “Now listen. I was not leading the cheers for George Anderson. But if I sat there and didn’t get up to your newly appointed ambassador, it would appear that here a close friend of yours was totally displeased, and you might have been in a position where you might have to say, ‘Red Fay’s representing me or at least Red Fay knows y thoughts, so therefore maybe George Anderson should not be sent to the position.’ So therefore,” I said, “I didn’t do anything about it. I’m leaving it up to you.” The President said, “I’ll tell you what, if I wasn’t having so many problems right now I’d kick that bastard’s ass out of here so fast it would make his head swim.”

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Then he said, “I’ll see you later,” and hung up.

But to me – I mean I wrote it in – not for publication – but I wrote it all out so it’s down in Stanford, in the Hoover [Herbert C. Hoover] Library, for twenty-five years after the time my book was published, or after my death, or whenever I deem. At least a minimum of twenty-five years from the time my book was written, because I really think as long as George Anderson is alive, it’s not proper to have this sort of thing out.

OESTERLE: I didn’t realize that you did deposit material at the Stanford Library [Hoover Institute for War and Peace]. Was there anything else that you deposited there?

FAY: I deposited all of my manuscript, and the manuscript with Bobby’s notations on the margins. I really did it out of – you know, my first thought would have been to give it to the Kennedy Library, but I felt that because of all the friction with Jackie, that Jackie never would have allowed it to go into the Library. So, since my alma mater is Stanford, and since

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Jack Kennedy went to Stanford, why I had kind of an affection for Stanford and everything about Stanford, that for that reason I was happy to give it to Stanford. So that's where it is.

OESTERLE: Was Anderson's feeling toward McNamara shared by other people in the military?

FAY: Oh, there's no question about it. McNamara by the military, is – like some of them, they vehemently hate him. I'd say that the people who really worked with McNamara – the military who had positions of responsibility close to him in his office, or worked for people like Alain Enthoven, who actually had these jobs directly working for McNamara or McNamara's top lieutenants so to speak – they all, in my opinion, almost to a man idolized McNamara, and idolized what he was trying to do – I mean, really saw the greatness of this man. But those who were removed from it looked like here was a man who was trying to suddenly – oh, not suddenly, but in fact – was trying to indicate that

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the military hadn't done their job very well in the past, didn't know how to plan, didn't know how to budget, didn't really carry their job on in a professional way. So therefore he was stepping in there to do this job which had been done inadequately in the past.

Even today, you know, they think awfully highly of – particularly of Dave Packard [David Packard]. I don't think so much Laird [Melvin R. Laird]. I don't think Laird is thought as highly of in the Nixon [Richard M. Nixon] administration as Packard is. At least this is the feedback that I get from the military people that I know. Packard is a very imposing, very impressive guy. You know, as Tom Connolly [Thomas F. Connolly], who is the head of Navy Air now, he said, "There's something about walking into that office. Here's this fellow, 6'5" or 6'6" in height, and you know that he's worth three hundred million dollars. You know he's made it all himself, and you know he was quite a football player in his day and a very bright and very articulate guy. You can't help but be

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impressed with him, even before he opens his mouth." So he's made a real niche for himself, and he has a lot more warmth in dealing with people than Bob McNamara has.

OESTERLE: Do you have any other observations about navy and your role as Under Secretary that you might want to record?

FAY: Well, I really think the important thing is my role and how it related to the President. Of course as Under Secretary, and being a close friend of the President, why the position of Under Secretary got a lot more visibility than normally. So that because of our friendship with the President, why Anita [Anita Fay] and I

really got asked to everything that Cabinet officers would be asked to. I mean, we were entertained on every level, at every embassy, and we entertained, well literally almost all the Cabinet officers that we thought were attractive, that really were pleasant to be with. I can say with a great deal of pride that I think that the bride and I know how to entertain so people have fun.

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And as a result, why once you get kind of that sort of a stamp, why then you're invited to go places because number one, the people want to have you around because your relationship with the President; and then the second is that they felt they can at least feel comfortable with you. And so I think for these two reasons – but obviously mostly because of our relationship with the President – why we saw an awful lot of people of prominence throughout the Washington area.

And interesting enough, on the embassy row, there are about four ambassadors and their wives who really became very close friends as a result of this. And after the President's death – well obviously my relationship with Lyndon Johnson was not as a close friend – why those four still remained very good friends until this – well to this day, two of them are still very good friends, namely the British ambassador and his wife who tragically was killed, but still David Harlech [William David Ormsby-Gore Harlech] never comes to the United States that he doesn't stay with us or spend some time with us.

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And then Nicole Alphan and Hervé Alphan – Nicole was here just last year and we had a party for her when she came through. But it was just part of the scene because of the President.

I was trying to think of things that happened. When the President – I can remember one that had to do with the shipyards. When McNamara got on board, the first thing he studied was the question of leaving the shipyards open. I mean there were many shipyards which he felt were expendable. Three that went on the list immediately were Boston, Philadelphia, and San Francisco. The then Congressman Jack Shelley [John F. Shelley] – who was mayor of San Francisco after – got wind from somebody who he was a friend with that the San Francisco shipyard and the other two were being seriously considered to be closed. He went to the President about it, and the President called me up.

I guess we hadn't been in office four months. And the President called me over to his office and he said.... Oh, he called me first and he said,

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“Will you find out what the story is about the shipyard situation?” So I found out that serious consideration was being given to closing the shipyards. And he got over there and he said, “Redhead, can you see what the image is going to be to the people in San Francisco and Boston if after we're here three months, that suddenly the Boston and San Francisco shipyards are closed? That's one thing that you and I know isn't going to happen. If

McNamara wants to close other shipyards, fine, but he's not closing Boston or San Francisco. So will you get that message over there?" So through this – actually he got the message over, but he wanted to make darn sure that I was watching to make sure that this thing wouldn't slip and get so that maybe possibly they were going to be closed.

Oh, I'll tell you another thing which was fascinating, and this shows how really acute and – I mean how politically savvy and sophisticated the Kennedys were as far as politics. Now you remember a fellow named

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Ed McLaughlin [Edward F. McCormack, Jr.]. I think it was Ed McLaughlin – it could have been a name very similar to that – who was running for the United States Senate on the primary ticket against Teddy Kennedy [Edward M. Kennedy]. Teddy as you remember was appointed initially. He succeeded Ben Smith [Benjamin A. Smith, II], and then very shortly after his appointment – I think it was Ed McLaughlin, if I'm not mistaken. Well, the record will show. So this fellow had been in the United States Naval Academy. He'd been through the Naval Academy. But I didn't know – then he had duty. But the President rang me up and he said, "Listen, I don't want this to go any farther than just you and me. I don't want anybody to know where the request came from. I want you to get this guy's jacket over in the Bureau of Personnel, and look through that jacket yourself and find out if there's anything in that jacket hat in any way would indicate that this guy, you know, that he'd had a bad record or something." Because evidently they must have found out that Ed – or whatever

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this fellow's name was – had left the navy, and maybe there was a cloud over why he left the navy.

So I went through the jacket, and amazing enough, this fellow had really been relieved. He'd been discharged, and he had been given I think an honorable discharge, but the discharge really had been because under certain circumstances he really was rather irrational. Under great pressure, under great strain why he broke down, which obviously wouldn't be a quality that you'd want to have in a United States senator. If he's been under great harassment or strain he's not going to react in the proper way, and because of this, from a medical point of view, he got an honorable discharge from the navy. Well I got this information for the President, but the President – obviously it was never used because it was never needed to be used. But the interesting thing about it was that they were that sharp to run every possible thing down, and he had it in case the information was needed.

You know, there's been a lot said about the fact

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John Kennedy was responsible for the assassination or the downfall of Diem's [Ngo Dinh Diem] regime, and that the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] had been instrumental in setting up the plot. Well, I am satisfied in my own mind that this is not the case as far as Diem's death. I think the President was very concerned that Madame Nhu, his sister-in-law,

had been able to acquire too much power, and so therefore was – her actions were not in the best interests of the country. And I think what he wanted to see happen some way in which her influence could be lessened so that the role of the United States on a limited basis, on a diplomatic basis, could really move ahead. But she was such an ambitious, scheming person that she built up this antipathy I believe.... I mean, I'm not that much an authority on history, but all I can remember at the time was with the President at the time when Diem was killed. And I can remember his comment saying how concerned he was as a human

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being and saying – and referred, he said, “That goddamn bitch. She’s responsible for the death of that kind man. You know, it’s so totally unnecessary to have that kind man die because that bitch stuck her nose in and boiled up the whole situation down there.” Now I’ve paraphrased the President’s comments, but that was his feeling. And so therefore in my mind I would never accept the fact that the President in any way had anything to do with the death of Diem. Because John Kennedy just wasn’t that way. He just would not be party to the assassination of an individual, because he’s too bright, and he’d know there are other ways these problems can be solved without having a man actually fingered.

I’ll tell you one other thing that came up that had to do with the.... There was a navy enlisted man out here in San Francisco that – oh, I forget, this might have been 1952 or ’54 or ’56, sometime during that period – went berserk aboard a navy ship tied up at Treasure Island. He killed I think two

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officers and wounded another. He finally was brought down off the bridge of the ship by a chaplain who talked him out of that. It was a very tense situation, and this fellow was court-martialed and condemned to death. But he went all through the Eisenhower administration without ever having to face the death penalty. Well no sooner does the Kennedy Administration come in when this issue comes before me.

Prior to that I’d been privy to the press and all the – I mean to me it really was a case of a berserk animal, really, going wild, and I just never wanted to give that animal a chance to go back into public life or into civilian life with the opportunity to possibly kill again. There’s nothing in his record to prove that he had changed, and so when the decision came I said, “Well this isn’t my decision as to whether he was to die or not to die.” But because it was a serious thing and because he is black, why I called the President up, and I said, “Now listen, I’m faced with a decision

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over here. My personal feelings are that it is not my decision to decide whether this man dies or doesn’t die. The decision was made by the courts. I’m not going to inject myself into a situation. I’m sure that if the courts, with all their deliberations and all their studies felt the man should die, then I’m not going to stand in they way of their decision.” The President – I had to love him for that – he said, “There you are, my Under Secretary of the Navy, over

there in the Pentagon, and no sooner are we in office and you're the close friend of the President of the United States is the first one to have a black man assassinated.' I said, "Well," and he said, "I'll tell you what. This is not my problem. This is Bobby's [Robert F. Kennedy] problem. You work it out with Bobby, but just work it out so this man doesn't die."

So I went over and I saw Bobby, and I had a long discussion with him and I said, "Bob, all I want from you is an assurance that this man will never go free. I don't want his life, I just don't want to have my

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daughter or son or your daughters or one of your sons or a friend or a wife or something killed because this man is turned loose – or somebody's daughter, son or friend or whatever it might be." So that was the decision that Bob came to. "All right," he said, "I'll give you my word that that's the way it'll be, and then you can take your position accordingly." So then that was the decision I made. But I loved the President's approach on it, that – I mean you know, he was thinking as a politician and also that there was also that – you know, he was tough, but also felt there are other ways of solving problems without killing people.

We discussed the question since de Gaulle [Charles de Gaulle] died yesterday. In fact I loved the comment of Pompidou [George J. Pompidou] describing – you know, he said six words, "de Gaulle is dead. France is a widow." Which I think really expressed the feelings of so many people. And what a figure that man was during John Kennedy's funeral proceedings – I mean just....

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OESTERLE: On television last night, on "Sixty Minutes," they had a portion of the program devoted to the General's death, and one of the commentators repeated a story that was overheard by a messenger that was sent from the American embassy, I believe, to de Gaulle's residence very early on in his career. He was ushered into the house, and even as he was standing in the front lobby and the General was summoned to come downstairs, there were words going back and forth between Madame de Gaulle [Yvonne Vendroux de Gaulle] and the General. And repeated by this messenger later, and again last night on television, Madame de Gaulle supposedly said to the General, "Charles, you are not France yet." And at that, that I guess ended that discussion and the General came downstairs. Do you recall any comments that the President may have made after his trip to France?

FAY: All I know is that he felt – I think he felt the same way with Khrushchev [Nikita S. Khrushchev], that they were both looking on him as a young man and

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somebody that they could possibly upstage. If you can remember the President, he had two comments that made front page all over the world, and in both cases it was so typical of the President to say something that really expressed humor but really established him in the minds of the people who read about him as a very warm but understanding person. I can remember when he was in France when he said, "I'm the man that came to Paris with Jackie Kennedy." You know, it couldn't have been a nicer touch.

And then when he was with Khrushchev, and Khrushchev had tried to treat him as a young boy – and I can remember the President saying that.... When they were seated down and the interpreter was there, why Khrushchev was sitting there and he had this peace medal on – he had this medal on – and John Kennedy leaned over to the interpreter and asked the interpreter what the medals were on the – what was his title? Khrushchev was the head of the...

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OESTERLE: Premier Khrushchev.

FAY: Premier Khrushchev – wanted to know what those medals were on Premier Khrushchev. And the interpreter came back and said that the big medal was the peace medal, and the President leaned back and said, "Would you tell the Premier that I hope he doesn't lose it." He said this was really the first time he really kind of broke through Khrushchev with that touch. And I think that the same thing happened with de Gaulle. He was able to break through de Gaulle with this touch.

OESTERLE: I guess just because we're talking about these meetings with other heads of state, how about the President's trip to Berlin? And again, a few words, "Ich bin ein Berliner."

FAY: Oh yes. You know he – as another – and I might have mentioned this in my book, but there was another – he just really loved that trip. I mean, I saw the movies with him a couple of times, of that trip. The enthusiasm in Berlin, and you know, as he said, to be there and to

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see this – literally as far as the eye could see – to see these people and this cheering, this just wild cheering, he could see the power that Hitler [Adolf Hitler] had had, because these people would just commit themselves to a leader. As he said, that crowd was totally committed to him that day. He could do no wrong; whatever he said, there were going to be cheers and because he had started out this comment – what was it?

OESTERLE: "I am a Berliner. Ich bin ein Berliner."

FAY: Yes. Then he went to Ireland after that, and Matt McCloskey [Matthew H. McCloskey] was the ambassador. He had a second cousin – I think her name

was Mary McCarthy [Mary Ryan] or something like that – and she was a woman of very humble means, and she had a typical Irish little thatched house with a dirt yard and chickens and the pigs and the goats and everything running around in. But the President wanted to go down and see her. Well he knew enough about Irish landscape and Irish homes and things that – when he went in to the place, why there, you know, it was all concrete on the

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yard. He really was kind of surprised to see it, and he said, “Mary, I didn’t expect to see this all concreted. Is it something special?”, or some way tried to get out of her why she was concreted, did she feel this was better? And she in a rather eyebrowed lift tone, as if she’d been somewhat imposed upon, said, “Well the American ambassador thought it would be nicer for your visit if my yard was concrete rather than dirt.” And the President was livid – I mean, really upset about it. As he said, “To think that that big blockhead could insult this wonderful woman by thinking that her yard wasn’t good enough to receive me. I’ll tell you what, McClosky will pay for that concrete going in and he’ll pay for that concrete coming out, out of his own pocket.” It just irritated the daylight out of him, the fact that this happened.

He loved this cousin of his, because he went over there – Anita was there – and the first time we were up there it was a Friday night. The next night David Harlech and

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Sissy Harlech [Sylvia Lloyd Thomas Harlech], the British ambassador came over. And that first night when we saw them, we got to Mary McCarthy [Mary Ryan] or whatever her name – I don’t think it was McCarthy, it was something like that – when we got there in the film, why he had it stopped and he said, “Look at that wonderful face. Don’t you see the Fitzgerald in that face?” Maybe it was Mary Fitzgerald. And the next night, here’s the British ambassador, you know, obviously he’s not an Irish-phile. So he’s there, and he’s sitting there and the President said, “David, look at that face.” And then he says, “Run that back. I know the ambassador wants to see that fine Irish face.” [Laughter]

Well, we were talking about the... Because General de Gaulle died yesterday, why, you can’t help but to go back to the time when General de Gaulle as a military figure and I guess also political figure, was discussed by General Douglas MacArthur. President Kennedy had a tremendous admiration for General MacArthur,

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and really wanted to get to know him, so he sent his plane. First he found out whether the general would consider coming down to Washington for a luncheon, and that the President would like to send his plane to pick him up if he would consent to come down. When this message got through to the general, naturally he was delighted to accept, so an agreeable date was set and then they had a luncheon over in the White House, upstairs. I guess there were about sixteen men there. I was not one of them, but the President told me about it after it was

all over. He said it really was – it happened to be a beautiful day, as I remember him saying. They were seated upstairs, and after the luncheon had settled down and the eating had finished and the discussion started to go on, why then the President and Bobby on different occasions were asking questions of General MacArthur. As Jack said, for a while there he really wondered who really – he said there’s no question in his mind as to who was the

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dominant personality in the room. He said MacArthur just stood out. I mean, he was just fascinating to listen to. He was so articulate, his ability to express himself, he could build so much pathos and also such anticipation and suspense into what he had to say that you really hung on to everything he had to say.

He brought up the relationship between MacArthur and Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower]. MacArthur said – he admitted I guess under questioning that during all the time that Eisenhower was President, that he had really – he had never come to the White House, and he had really never been issued a personal invitation to come to the White House. He had received different invitations like a lot of people would receive: “The President and Mrs. Eisenhower request your pleasure at dinner or a luncheon on such-and-such an occasion honoring so-and-so,” but never a kind of a personal note or a personal phone call ahead of time saying, “We’d love to have you down,” or that, “We’d like to send the plane,” or anything like that. So

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that was never done.

So then that followed in, and I think the President asked General MacArthur that how would he evaluate President Eisenhower – or General Eisenhower – as a military man. He put it this way, he said, “Well, you want to remember that I had him as a staff officer, and he was my Chief of Staff. So I knew this man very well and I knew his thinking. As a military man I would say he was an excellent staff officer. As a commanding general, if I was in combat and I commanded an army, I would hope that somebody like General Eisenhower was commanding the opposing army.” So there was no admiration and obviously no real affection between the two gentlemen.

And then the question of de Gaulle came up, and he said, “Yes, I can remember Charles de Gaulle in World War I. Here was this tall, gaunt young lieutenant or major or whatever his title was, saying, ‘The era of the horse is finished. We’ve got to go to armored cannon.’ And everybody was treating

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him as if he was some sort of radical, and he kept saying, ‘The era of the horse is finished and we’ve got to go to armor.’” And he said something to the effect that, “Yes, General de Gaulle was a truly great military man.” And that is really the total of the story.

OESTERLE: We were talking earlier about the President’s remarks to you about leaving the

White House, whenever this would....

FAY: Oh yes, well I guess there were really a couple of different occasions that it came up. And I think the occasion we discussed it at most length was one day really actually up at – it was kind of a gray, foggy rainy day up at the Cape [Cape Cod, Massachusetts]. We were up at Squaw Island, and the President and I had gone over to the former Ambassador Kennedy's [Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr.] home where he had a big swimming pool, and we were over there just really floating in the swimming pool, chatting. It was a heated pool, and I guess we spent an hour or so in there. Well I said, "What are you going to do when it's all over, I mean when you're

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finished with the presidency?" And he said, "Well you know, I wouldn't mind running for the Senate again. One of the Adams ran for Congress and because of his position earlier as president, why he had really a lot more influence in the Congress. I feel that because of my background, having been president and being really young, that I could bring more prestige to the congressional side of the house as a United States Senator, just because I had been president." And he said, "Of course, when old Bob gets to be president, why then I think I could best serve him as Secretary of State." Then he kind of smiled and said, "I don't know whether I'd enjoy taking orders from lovable old Bob." And that was really the extent of it.

And then when Steve Ailes, who was Under Secretary of the Army at the same time I was Under Secretary of the Navy, and then he was passed over once so to speak when they had a new Secretary of the Army, and the next time they had a Secretary of the Army appointment, why he was made

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Secretary of the Army. Well, I was twice passed over. As Steve Ailes said, he said, "You're the only twice passed over Under Secretary that I know." But at the time when Paul Nitze was appointed Secretary of the Navy when Fred Korth submitted his resignation, why I was really hurt. I mean, I really thought I could do the job and I thought that – you know, my position was that I should be – I felt I could handle the job as Secretary of the Navy. But I realized that the big hang up was because of my lack of rapport with Bob McNamara on this whole question of the TFX.

So anyway, I was home for dinner and we'd just finished the main course and were about ready for dessert, when the President called from the White House, and he said, "Why don't you come down for dinner?" I said, "Well, I'm just about finished my dinner." He said, "Well come on down anyway. I'd like to talk to you." So I came down, and Countess Crespi [Carla Colleoni Bergamo Crespi], Vivi Crespi, who had spent Sunday night with us – or

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Saturday night with is – it was a party. I forget what the party was, but anyway she was down for a party. And then the next night she went over and had dinner with the President. So she

was there, so it was just the President and Vivi and myself. He said, "Listen Redhead, I know you're upset about the fact that you weren't appointed Secretary of the Navy. But I want to tell you something. I really am not in a position to do the things that I'd like to do. I did not get a plebiscite from the people, and I have to really kind of balance things and not rock the boat and do a lot of the things that I'd like to do. But come '64, I'm going to win and we're going to win big, and all the things that I've been unable to do, like getting rid of J. Edgar Hoover, and..." – I forget, he named two or three other things – "why, I'm going to do. And I want you to know, you're going to be my Secretary of the Navy." I said "Well, I'm really pleased that you say this, but I don't think I'll be around here after '64,

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because I've got an obligation to go back to San Francisco, go back in the family business." And of course if he'd lived, it would have been awful hard for me to leave the Washington scene if in fact that he had.... And I told him that night, I said, "Well, I really don't think that it would be a wise thing to do. Now Paul Nitze's been a – I've known him well enough, and I think he's a very capable guy. I really think that as long as Bob McNamara is Secretary of Defense, that it would be better to have somebody that works well with him, and I don't think that I would ever be able to work well with him because I think he's got a preconceived idea that I'm in the bag, so to speak, of the admirals." So this was really his total kind of discussing about his future after.

One thing we were going to do after the presidency – which is something that I must say leaves a real regret in my mind and in my life really – because we were going to go down to the South Pacific, our two wives and ourselves. We were going to

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fly down to Australia and then fly up to Noumea, New Caledonia, and then take a small plane and fly up to Guadalcanal or Tulagi, or wherever the airstrip was. And we were going to have a sailboat meet us up there, and then we were going to sail through all the area where we had fought during the war, and go to Russell Island and go to Rendova and up where he had been, you know, Kolombangara and Gizo and Vella Lavella and Treasury and Bougainville and Green Island – all these areas where we had all been and served together, you know, really just see it again. It would have been really a memorable occasion to do it.

And of course I'm sure now I'd really have no reason to go back there now, because there was nobody that I really related with about the Pacific the way I did with Jack Kennedy. I mean with the two of us – there was a certain charisma that we both saw in the Pacific that I never could really.... I mean, Jim Reed was the closest, but Jim Reed [James A. Reed] was never really in PT's in the sense that he fought PT's,

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where Jack and I did. So therefore we had the whole – you know, the war and the crew and the relationship, and we actually operated as a two boat division. So I saw an awful lot of him when I was out in the Pacific. We knew the same people and knew the same circumstances,

and so therefore it would have been great for us to go back together, but without him I don't know of anybody that I'd want to go back down there again with.

OESTERLE: I'd like to get into this a little further, but there's one other question that I want to ask right now, and that is, do you have any other observations about being passed over in regard to McNamara and the TFX and so forth?

FAY: Well, it was interesting about the TFX, and this is rather a sensitive thing, because when the issue of the TFX came up, you know this was the biggest major contract that had been let out of the Pentagon. The navy fought this thing all the way down the line. And I told the President my feelings. I told him I thought McNamara was

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making an error, and the reasons why I thought he was making an error. But I said, "I'll accept his evaluation because he knows a lot more about it. As long as he knows what at least I'm thinking and what other people are thinking and has taken that into consideration, I have so much admiration for this man I'll go along with him."

But the other thing was as to who the contract was to go to. The navy has, I guess you'd call it an evaluation, contract evaluation board. This is made up of people who are naval officers and civilians, who are in a position to evaluate the contracts, evaluate the proposal, evaluate the system, evaluate the capabilities and how close they meet what the military has asked, and also bring in the factor of time and supplies and training, and you know, every possible bit of a program. So this was done, as you can well imagine, as far as the TFX to the greatest extent. Well then when it finally got down to the final decision as to who was going to get it, it was between Boeing and

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General Dynamics.

I can remember when Fred Korth was given the sack because of his improprieties about writing letters relative to people who did business with his bank where he had worked and still had an interest. Why he used – you know, his Secretary of the Navy stationary and of course used the yacht to entertain these people – I'm sure in my own mind, with never a sense that he was doing anything wrong because his possible effect was so small on what he could gain out of it.... Pardon me, do you have something?

OESTERLE: No, it's all right.

FAY: The possible gain that he could get out of entertaining these people was so infinitesimal that I'm sure he just – you know, being a very honest, hardworking man, he just said, "I'll do this. I'll have these fellows up, and that's it." But anyway, McClellan [John L. McClellan] got hold of it, and McClellan made it hot for him so Fred Korth had to resign.

But I can remember Jack Kennedy saying, “I really feel sorry for poor old Fred,

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that he had to be expendable, because he really went to the mat with me on that TFX.” Because when it got down as to who was going to get the contract, as Jack Kennedy said, he said, “If you think that those Wichita Kansas” – where evidently there was a Boeing plant which would have had a lot to do with it – “who really went for my throat during the election, who gave me absolutely nothing, if you think that we’re going to give them that contract and have that whole area flourish when there’s certain other areas that had supported me during the campaign and had been part of it, they’re going to be the ones who are going to benefit by it.”

Now you say, “Is this using his power improperly?” I say no, because the decision as to which system was the better – I mean which company had the capability to build this plane better than the other – was just really, you’d flip it up in the air and heads you win, tails you lose. Either way you could have gotten the – either one would have been an acceptable contract according to

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the evaluation board. But the final analysis was made on a political basis and made in the White House by the President.

OESTERLE: What does the name Dan Kimball bring to mind?

FAY: Well of course Dan Kimball was a former Secretary of the Navy, a very gregarious, very outgoing fellow. He was the chairman of the board, I believe, of Aerojet General – which at that time, when I was Under Secretary, I think was making more money for General Tire, the parent company, then General Tire was making. Dan Kimball was a real salesman, and his great forte was the fact that he had a great deal of charm, he had a great deal of warmth. In a kind of an offhand way, he did his job as if it really was more fun to be with you, and, “Let’s play golf, let’s chat about old times, but let’s get the job done.” So Dan Kimball made a point of getting to know everybody in the navy – and he must have in the air force too because of his area of responsibility. You knew why Dan was there. Dan wanted to make sure that his company

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was in the forefront and that people would put in a good word. I thought Dan was a entertaining, hard-working nice guy.

OESTERLE: Did he do much to bring defense contracts to the West Coast, do you think?

FAY: I think he had to. I mean, the fact that Dan worked so hard at it, and Dan was there and talking to different military – there’s no question about it. We’re all

social animals, and if you meet somebody, you feel a lot more likely to do business with that man than somebody who you never see who just sends in a proposal and has a dossier that says that he's an outstanding guy. You're going to go with the fellow who you know. And Dan was there. Dan was always in front of you and always around, and so when the issue came up, why I think if an evaluation boards had to make a decision, what they're going to do is, they're going to take the – if all things appear somewhat equal, why they're going to go with the guy they have a gut feeling for.

OESTERLE: I wonder if you might have any other observations

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about politics and defense, for instance the whole question of the missile gap and again the competition for defense contracts, which is really of course big business?

FAY: Yes, well, very big business. Of course the missile gap as you know suddenly became a vacuum after the President got on board. You know, he knew it after he got on. But he didn't know – he was sincere about it during the campaign, and then only when he got – really had the privileged information that he saw what it was.

If you remember, we immediately went into a crash program on the Polaris submarines. In fact I was no sooner on board and John Connally wasn't there when one Saturday morning I had to sign the contract approving the buy of X numbers of Polaris submarines, to go ahead. But before, you know, I had a discussion with the President about it, how serious it was and how important it was to the defense of this country, so that it really was not – this was something that had been talked about a lot so that mine was just

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really the final physical act in something which had really been decided publicly and privately for a long time prior to that.

OESTERLE: Earlier you had mentioned the director of the FBI's name. Do you have any other recollection of Hoover's name and the role that he played out with the Attorney General?

FAY: Well, I think as time drew on, the Attorney General and J. Edgar Hoover really had their differences, because Bob Kennedy expected certain things from J. Edgar Hoover and he didn't get them. J. Edgar Hoover, I don't think, kept Bob informed. I think he did things without – you know, that were contrary to the policy that had been set up by Bob, so therefore there was a lot of kind of giving and struggling, and I think that J. Edgar Hoover maybe was a much more conservative person and was much more willing to find, you might say, the spies in the closet or whatever it might be, than Bob Kennedy was willing to recognize. And he felt that J. Edgar Hoover – I mean I think the general image was that J. Edgar

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Hoover was going to exploit – not exploit, but he was going to achieve his ends by tailoring the thing to fit the means at the time. Now that’s rather a confused statement, but I think that with Bob – I’d have to really kind of go over all the different – if I had a chance to look over the record of the different things that were done, I could specifically pick them out. But this really wasn’t my – all I know is Bob’s strong feeling about him. If he got the second campaign, why he would definitely – if he won and if he won big, he would relieve J. Edgar Hoover.

OESTERLE: Do you recollect Robert Kennedy saying anything about Hoffa [James R. Hoffa], the Teamsters Union?

FAY: Oh, yes, I went all through that.

[BEGIN SIDE II, TAPE I]

FAY: You know, you discussed this question of Hoffa, and I lived with so much of this with Bobby

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when he wrote *The Enemy Within* and after that, and also when Bobby was on the subcommittee [Permanent Investigations Subcommittee] in which all this took place. And then we’d see him on the different vacations we’d go, so we’d get a feedback on this. So I was convinced in my own mind that Hoffa was involved with the underworld and Hoffa was a crook – I mean, all the sweetheart contracts and the different relationships in places where either his wife or some member of his family had investment in different businesses which the Teamsters should have a contract with, but they wouldn’t have a contract with because it would be more profitable for that business not to have a contract. And then this idea of, where there’d be people close to, lawyers or consultants who would be close to the Teamsters who, if you wanted to settle a contract when it looked like there was a total impasse between employer and the Teamsters Union, why then to have somebody in the Teamsters Union say, “Well maybe if you get in touch with so-and-so, he knows how we operate

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and maybe this thing can be resolved.” So the poor employer has to go to some lawyer or some management consultant or public relations person and pay them a fat fee. Then this fellow, really what he does, he just comes back to the Teamsters Union and says, “All right, here’s your 75 percent and settle the contract.” And that 75 percent went right into the pocket of the principals in the union. I’m convinced of this because of Bob’s research and his strong feelings about it.

I know what Bob suffered as far as attacks on himself. I know the threats against the life of his children, where people that were unknown to him would come up to him or come up to Ethel [Ethel Skakel Kennedy] – particularly up to him – maybe after a session in the subcommittee and say, “What lovely children you have. Wouldn’t it be a crime if something happened to one of them?” And you know, just that constant threat.

In fact, Bill Battle [William C. Battle] – who ended up as ambassador to Australia and who had the misfortune of being the first Democrat to lose in

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a general election for the governor of Virginia, just here last year – and I were out with our wives out at Hickory Hill one evening. This was back during this period. We had a great party that night. Tom Mason [Thomas B. Mason] and a lot of Bob’s friends from the subcommittee were there, and Bob told of a particular situation that happened to him on three different occasions, when he would drive down to the Capitol to do his work for the day, and he’d spot a parking place and he’d go up to back into it and a car would drive in behind him and get into the parking space. Each time when it happened, he get out to tell the fellow, “Listen, I came in and I had that parking space,” there’d be some big thug in the car who was just really waiting for the opportunity to get in a fight with Bob and just to really clean him. And I can remember Bill Battle and myself saying, “Listen, you’re just playing right into their hands if you get into any sort of a fight. Just swallow it and go on and find another place to park. But to

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go in and fight some fellow who has just been hired and trained to beat the daylights out of you doesn’t even make sense.”

So I mean it took an awful lot of courage, and I think Bobby, like Jack, just said, “Well, we have our job to do and this is what we’re cut out to do, and we just can’t worry about that. We use all the normal precautions that somebody can use in our position and then just leave the rest in the hands of the Lord.”

OESTERLE: Did Jack Kennedy or Robert Kennedy ever discuss their older brother Joe Kennedy [Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr.] with you?

FAY: Very little, but it’s amazing. I got kind of an image of Joe without ever; I never knew him. I knew Kathleen [Kathleen Kennedy Cavendish]. I thought she was fantastic. I thought she was far and away the star of the women of the family – just had the sense of fitness of things, had a great sense of humor, was a very physically attractive woman, had the sense of humility that goes with real style, and just really a lovely person.

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But with Joe, who I never knew, I knew enough people that knew Joe – and I'm sure, Jim, that you have a pretty good image of what John Kennedy was like as a man now without ever having known him – well the same thing happened to me with Joe. I began to get a feeling for what sort of person Joe was. I know that Jack and Joe had some horrendous fights on occasion, and there was a certain amount of jealousy, and Jack felt that Joe was kind of his dad's favorite. So that Jack, when he was in the Pacific, really was kind of searching for things that he wanted to do. He wanted to be a writer, he didn't really know what he wanted to do. And it wasn't until after Joe's death that he made the decision that he was going to run for politics. I don't think that he every really felt that he had his father fully behind him initially, but then when his father I think had made the decision his boys were going to go into politics, now Jack was the senior, so Jack was going to go into politics. But I don't think

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that Jack initially felt that his father had the confidence in him to do as well in politics as Joe would have done. And of course my image of the two is, I don't think Joe ever would have gone as far as Jack did. I think Joe had – without ever knowing him, but from all the impression – I think Joe's tongue was maybe a little bit impatient, maybe a little bit intolerant, and his personality came through as one who was very bright, a lot of charm, very attractive, but maybe a little bit intolerant, not having Jack's ability to find out what's behind that individual. If they didn't meet his standard – Joe's standard, so to speak – I got the impression that Joe really didn't have the time for them.

OESTERLE: What's your impression of the influence that the mother [Rose F. Kennedy] and father played on – for instance...

FAY: Well, I don't think there's any question in my mind that far and away the most dramatic influence on the children's lives was Mr. Kennedy. I think that Mrs. Kennedy may be in there, you

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know, when they were infants and up until the time they started to reflect and understand what was around them. And I think once that was established – I mean when they started to be conscious of what was around them and who people were and what they were talking about and what they meant, and what they were accomplishing, there's no question about it, that Mr. Kennedy, Sr. was the dominant force by a wide margin.

In fact, when I met Jack and first really got to know Jack in the presence of his father and mother was in 1944. I really never felt there was any real communication between any of the children and Mrs. Kennedy. I felt she was kind of living in her own world, and I felt she didn't have the sense of humor to stay up with them. You know they were very quick, very bright, and had a – particularly Kathleen and Jack and Eunice [Eunice Kennedy Shriver]. They were the real quick ones that really had it, and the others kind of filled in. But with those and Bob, well not so – Bob was young then – but Jack and Kathleen and Eunice were the ones that really kept the

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ball rolling, and in her own way I guess Pat [Patricia Kennedy Lawford] – you know, she was a good counter puncher when it came to the verbal dialogue, but I don't think she was that bright that she could initiate it herself. And I think Jean [Jean Kennedy Smith] would fall somewhat in the same category.

OESTERLE: Did the President ever speak to you about what he considered his chances in 1964?

FAY: Well, not any more than that one particular occasion when he felt that he was going to win, and he was going to win big. He thought he was going to have it. We did discuss his running mate, and the big question was that he was going to dump Lyndon. I broached this with him on one occasion and he really got irritated about it and said, "What do you mean, dump Lyndon? Lyndon was my man in '60 and Lyndon will be my man in '64, and I think the question is totally unnecessary."

OESTERLE: Do you have any further insight into his relationship with the Vice President? Did it improve over the term of office?

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FAY: Well I didn't think it was really bad, but I didn't think it was every really that good. I think that the President was very considerate of the Vice President. The door was always open on every occasion. But I just don't think there was any real rapport between the two men. No matter how long they had worked together as Vice President and President, I don't think their relationship would have changed. I think they were just two different people. I think John Kennedy was an intellectual by innate ability, and Lyndon Johnson was kind of a shrewd politician. They were worlds apart, and time wasn't going to bring them together.

OESTERLE: What is your impression of the feeling that John Kennedy had toward the creation of the Peace Corps?

FAY: Oh, he thought it was great – because I happened to – and once again I know I dwell too much on it, because I wrote it up in my book, that he had.... At first he was being maligned. He said, "I'm going to be maligned." At least when

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he mentioned it to me – this was about eight or ten days before the election in 1960 – and he was in San Francisco at the Palace Hotel. We were – he was actually in the tub resting his back, and I was sitting on the stool in the bathroom, and he had about thirty or thirty-five minutes and we were just chatting. He was telling me about the Peace Corps and he was

saying how exciting it was, and he said he thought it really was one of the better ideas to come out of the campaign. He said, "I know that a lot of the so-called hardened politicians are going to say, 'Oh, that's just a naïve kid dreaming of something just to try to make a splash in the campaign.'" But he really felt strongly about it. He even discussed the fact that possibly this should be a substitute for military service. But he felt very strongly about the Peace Corps, because he felt not only would it do good for people in the foreign countries, but he thought it was important to the people of our country, I mean to have the young people of this

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country become involved, and not only involved in a monetary basis but involved in making a contribution to your country.

So he – well, I think that history shows what a great success it was when he was alive, and when his brother-in-law Sarge Shriver [R. Sargent Shriver] was in charge of it. And then the Peace Corps today I think is zero. I mean, I don't know but – I mean, it's not zero, but it certainly doesn't have the enthusiasm or the – I never hear of the Peace Corps any more. I don't know what the numbers are. I don't know how many people apply. I don't know where they are. I happen to have a godson who's down in Central America in it. But at least I don't think it has any of the momentum that it had before.

OESTERLE: How about the President's health? Over the long period of time that you knew him was this a concern of yours, and how did you express this to the President?

FAY: Well, when he came back from the Pacific – I mean when he got racked up in the Pacific – why then

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he was out, and I don't know the chronological dates because we were – you know I was operating and he might have been in the hospital. I don't really know what the pattern was; I'm sure that some record will show it. But then he came back and he started to recuperate when he was out in the Pacific in Tulagi, where we – we had caught a torpedo through our boat on a freak accident, so we were down there to be repaired. And during that time I saw an awful lot of him. But he was awfully thin then, and he was really trying to build his back up, and he just really couldn't do that much. And then he came back to the States. Then I really never was conscious of his health being – I mean I was never conscious of or even discussed his health other than the fact that he didn't look well, until 1946 when we went down on Easter weekend – I mean the campaign – I was with him over that period in '46 back in Boston when he was running for – first ran for Congress. And then we went down to the Cape over the weekend,

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Easter weekend, and it was Jack and Torby MacDonald [Torbert H. MacDonald] and his wife and myself, and I forget who else was there. We got there on Holy Thursday afternoon. And then Jack and I stayed in the same room – really didn't stay, because after I started to rustle around in the other bed why then I moved upstairs. But then he had these tablets that he'd have to put under his skin. And that was the only time we ever talked about it.

OESTERLE: What do you mean under his skin?

FAY: Well it sees that he had to – and later on he could take these tablets orally – and evidently they had something to do with this some type of degree of Parkinson's disease, or whatever it might have been. It wasn't really Parkinson disease, but – I'm not a medical man, but I don't know – but all I know is that he said that he had to open up – he used a little knife and he would just cut the surface, or just barely cut the surface of the skin, try not to get blood, and then get underneath and put this

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tablet underneath the skin, and then put a bandage over it. And then hopefully this tablet would dissolve by the heat of the body and be absorbed by the bloodstream. This was his way, in those days, of taking care of this – whatever this deficiency was that he had.

OESTERLE: And he did this on a leg?

FAY: Yes, that's where I remember him doing it.

OESTERLE: And he would do it on a daily basis?

FAY: I don't know how often he'd do it. I really don't I mean, I never really – I just asked him about it, and he said it was no fun and he had to do it, so then I never pursued it any farther.

OESTERLE: But later he was able to take these tablets orally?

FAY: Then later he was able to take it orally. Because I asked him, I said, "Do you still have to do that?" And he said no, he takes it orally.

OESTERLE: And there's no impression on your part that it was a terminal or very serious thing?

FAY: No. He – actually right here in this room – he

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came in here – this was in '59 – and he wasn't feeling too well. He had some hot soup. He had some bouillon – Anita made some bouillon for him. And he

wasn't feeling too well, and it was I think part of this whatever the sickness that bothered him now and then, and he said, "You know, I'll never be better than 80 to 85 percent full health. But as long as I know that, then I'm all right."

But then as he got involved and became President, then his health really got to be awfully good. I mean he had to watch his weight and he was a great one for, you know, he thought he was gaining weight under the – you know, he'd call his jowls, you know, "I'm getting full jowls." He was constant about my weight. We had a weight bet, and if he'd lived he'd have to pay me a hundred dollars, because he was convinced – we made the bet in 1946, in April of 1946 – by the year 1966 that I'd weight 210 pounds. And he was convinced that I'd just blow up. But I really think the reason he made

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the bet was he wanted to lose the bet because he didn't want me to get fat, because he really didn't like obese people. He just felt something about – he didn't like fat people. But in back of his health, after he became President I think he enjoyed unusually good health except for the time when he strained his back.

OESTERLE: And he had to cut back in sports, including even his golf there for a period.

FAY: Oh yes. I remember one day up in the – and once again this is in my book – when we were – we had gone out and we had planned to play golf, but that back injury that he'd had.... This was maybe a year after the back injury. It caused certain problems, and I guess it compensated. Because of the back, why he – maybe it strained something else – well he strained a muscle in his groin. And he said, "God, I can't play golf today." So anyway Pierre came in and Pierre said, "All the news want to know if you and Red are going to go out and play golf." And he said, "No, I'm not going out and play golf."

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But he told Pierre, he said, "Now listen, I've strained a muscle in my groin. But I don't want you to go start telling them that I strained a muscle in my groin. The next thing they'll figure it's my brain. So I don't want them to think the whole body's falling apart. Just say that we decided not to play golf, and just let it go at that."

OESTERLE: You used to swim in the White House swimming pool on occasion?

FAY: Yes.

OESTERLE: Do you recall the mosaic that was put up on one of the walls...

FAY: Yes, I forget what it was, but I remember there was one.

OESTERLE: ...of a Cape Cod scene. Did the President ever discuss that with you, and the

financing of it?

FAY: No, not the financing. He was very sensitive about the financing – anything that had to do with financing. It was so funny with the house out in Middleburg – Atoka as it was known originally, and then they changed it to Wexford –

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when he built the house out there, why he was so worried that the house was going to cost so much – you know it would cost more than he had contemplated. And I think he got this accountant friend of Bobby's, Carmine Bellino or somebody like that, to just follow the contractor on this to make sure that the thing didn't get out of hand and try to buy everything as cheap as possible and watch to see that it didn't just run wild. And the house really because of this really was not as attractive as it should have been, because they really had skimped.

When we went through the house one weekend before it was constructed – I mean before it was, you know, finally it was just really framed and getting close to being finished, why I walked through with Jackie and with the President and Anita, and I was, knowing how concerned he was about the cost, saying, "Well now listen, Jackie, that window doesn't look big enough. Why don't you put a bigger one – you can take that out. I mean,

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it's just a few dollars more, and you can enlarge the window, maybe shove the ceiling up a little bit." And you know, he was saying, "Are you out of your mind? Can you imagine what's going to happen if I come in with a house that costs over sixty thousand?" He was shooting for sixty thousand dollars, or forty thousand, I forget which one it was. There was no way he could make it, but at least he was trying to kid himself in that he could do it. He said, "Can you see? You were down in West Virginia. You know what the conditions were down there. Can you see what those people down in West Virginia are going to think when here I am up here building myself a house. I've got a White House already. I've got the one on the Cape – my family's house – and we've been down in Florida, and now I'm building this one out here in Middleburg, Virginia." I said, "I don't get you. Here you are President of the United States. There isn't one person – if there is one person out in West Virginia that gives a good Goddamn about how much you

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pay for your house; the person has got to be demented. You're the President of the United States. You're set aside. The rules don't apply to you." But he never would accept that. He was always so conscious of expense in every possible way.

I can't think of them all now, but I know that – oh, up at Squaw Island, he wanted to buy Squaw Island. The price – you know, he had a mind what the price should – he really loved the Squaw Island house. I must say that I loved it too, because it was right out there on

the point. There was no other place beyond, so when they drove down, you knew if a car came down, they had come down to see you. They weren't going to go on to some other place. So he could shut it off and other people couldn't come by. Then it was right on the water, so that you went out at the so called back of the house facing the ocean and you walked out on a quite grassy spot and then it fell down about twenty feet or so into the water. The question came up of the house. They were going to buy a lot

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up a little farther up, because the people had this house, wanted something like a hundred and fifty thousand dollars for the house. And he said, "Can you imagine the way they're trying to hold me up for a hundred and fifty thousand dollars for an acre and a half or two acres?" I said, "What do you mean, an acre and a half or two acres?" In fact, I turned around and gave him the credit in the book, but it really was my idea. I said, "An acre and a half or two acres? You own as far as the eye can see out there. That is all yours and nobody can ever take it away." I said, "When you're buying, you're paying a hundred and fifty thousand dollars for this house, you're buying yourself two hundred thousand acres right out there." You know, he really kind of reflected on it awhile, and I think he might have – you know, if he thought he could have bought it without everybody in the nation knowing he paid a hundred and fifty or two hundred thousand or whatever it was, he would have bought it, because he

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loved it up there, just loved it. The house was a big rambling house with kind of that New England charm, you know, the gray darkened singles. They were wood shingles but by the sea spray and everything they'd become almost gray – really a beautiful old house.

OESTERLE: At that time he was renting it from the people that owned it?

FAY: Right.

OESTERLE: Did he ever mention anything, even in a lighthearted manner, about Mrs. Kennedy's finances, about being concerned about the amount of money that she spent or...

FAY: Well, he did mention the question of the White House, that he really felt that they had taken Eisenhower and they were really trying to take him. He thought that they were being stole blind in the White House, because the bills that came in on a monthly basis for food and liquor and things like that just were out of proportion to what they really should have been. So what he did was that he had them come in from his

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father's office, as I remember. And then when they'd have a state party that was all kept separate, and the accounting for the state parties were all kept separate. And then the food for the number of the people in the White House, which he had to pay for, why that was all – they kept a very tight budget on that. He said that when they put the budget in and they put the controls on, he said the cost of the food and liquor that they used in the White House fell almost 50 percent. So he said that he felt that there must have been people in the White House who were just taking things home, because there was no way that they could live at the standard that the bills were coming in.

But I don't ever remember him complaining about Jackie's.... I mean, there's no question on occasion he got very cross with Jackie. He got cross with Jackie when she went to Italy and didn't come home when she should have come home. And one morning out at Atoka out in Middleburg we were going to mass – we were going to go to

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I think it was 9 o'clock mass, or 8 o'clock – I guess it was 8 o'clock. Everybody was awakened at 7:15 so they'd make sure they were ready, because the President wanted to make sure we weren't late for mass because he knew they were going to hold the mass until we got there. So we were all ready and waiting at quarter of 8 to leave, except for Jackie. And so he sent somebody down to get Jackie and we waited and we waited, and it got to be about three minutes of 8, and it was about a ten minute drive to the church. And he really got irritated. And she came down the hall, and of course the maids were waiting and everybody, to get us going. He said – I forget exactly the words – he said, "Well, I hope the First Lady of the land will enjoy the satisfaction of keeping everybody at mass waiting so she could comb her hair one bit longer or look at herself in the mirror." And then he turned and he took me and he said, "Come on, let's go." And so we walked out together, and then Jackie and Anita walked out behind us.

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You know, it was very tense. Then we got into the limousine, why then.... Then of course when we got to the church we were ten minutes late and the mass didn't start till we got there. So they had the normal husband-wife problems.

OESTERLE: Do you recall the death of little Patrick [Patrick Bouvier Kennedy]?

FAY: Yes, we came up – we were up there the weekend before Patrick's – and this would be, if I could terminate it here, the weekend before Patrick was born. In fact it was very embarrassing to me, because the President and I had planned that we were going to go with John John [John F. Kennedy, Jr.] and Caroline [Caroline Bouvier Kennedy] and Sally [Sally Fay] over to the shopping center or something, say at 2:30 or 3 o'clock, down in Hyannis. So I went upstairs at the time I was supposed to, and I knocked on the door and he said, "Come on in." I walked in, and he and Jackie were in bed together. And I said, "God almighty, why did you tell me to come in? I don't want to walk in here." He said, "Oh, that's

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all right.” I just felt, you know, this wasn’t the time or place that I come in, but there she was. She was lying there with him, and I guess they were chatting. She was about to give birth and I guess felt uncomfortable, but she just wanted to be with him, so they were lying there in each other’s arms and chatting.

So then the following week the baby was lost – and I guess maybe it was two weeks from that time – and then we came back up again. I can remember the President – Patrick had been buried – we got on the subject once, and he said, “It would have been so nice to have had another son, but there’s nothing I can do about it.” And then he never discussed it again. I mean, he really put it out of his mind. Because he’d had so much fun with John John, I just saw him seem that he wanted to continue on this sort of father-son relationship, and he thought that John was going to outgrow that completely uninhibited rapport that he had with his dad. And he really wanted to have Patrick to come on behind. But I remember

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the other thing he said, that, “It’s much harder on Jackie than it is on me.” And that was it.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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