

**Walter Sheridan Oral History Interview—RFK#1, 8/5/1969**  
Administrative Information

**Creator:** Walter Sheridan  
**Interviewer:** Roberta Greene  
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**Biographical Note**

Sheridan, a Robert F. Kennedy (RFK) campaign coordinator in 1968, and a government investigator, discusses RFK's 1968 presidential primary campaign in Indianapolis, Indiana, including RFK's speech to a black audience on the night of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination, outreach to Indianapolis' black community, young people's involvement in the campaign, and "get out the vote" efforts, among other issues.

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Walter Sheridan—RFK #1

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First of Six Oral History Interviews

with

Walter Sheridan

August 5, 1969  
Washington D.C.

By Roberta Greene

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

GREENE: Why don't you begin by telling how often and on what kinds of occasions you usually saw Robert Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy] between late '67 and the decision in 1968?

SHERIDAN: Well, I was working for NBC [National Broadcasting Corporation], and I would just stop in his office fairly infrequently, maybe once every two weeks or something like that. There was no pattern to it at all. I had discussions with Adam Walinsky and Peter Edelman [Peter B. Edelman] more so than with him, as to his personal or potential involvement. But the first time I really discussed it with him was sometime in late 1967, December, I think. He called me at home, which he would do occasionally, and in the course of the conversation, he asked me whether I thought he ought to run. And I said that six months earlier I would have said definitely not, but now I wasn't sure that he shouldn't. That was about the extent of it. It turns out in retrospect that this was about the time he was talking to a lot of people.

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GREENE: When you would go up to see the Senator in this period, did you ever discuss politics or his feelings about the Administration and the situation in the country in general?

SHERIDAN: Oh, yes. It was mostly kind of in a joking way. When we talked he'd say, "Have you found anybody that likes Lyndon Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson]?" I remember going over to the State Department with him for a reception one day—this was about that same period of time in '67, a little earlier—and he went off and had a side discussion with Dean Rusk. And then on our way back he just couldn't believe that Dean Rusk's whole conversation had been about how good things were going in the world. We would discuss in general terms just how bad things were going, but I was really not one of his political decision-making counselors, except, I think, when he called me that one time. I think it was when he was asking a lot of people. I think he wanted my judgment, but that's all; he wanted to know what I thought, and I told him, and that was the end of it.

And that's really the last specific conversation I had with him until he decided to run. I was up in my hometown because my wife's father died at the time, and heard the announcement up there. I knew it was coming because I had talked to somebody in his office a couple of days before, and they told me it was coming. Then two days later I went down to his office and he asked me to help, and I said I would.

GREENE: How did you get the Indiana, Indianapolis coordinator position?

SHERIDAN: That day in his office he asked me if I would handle a state, which is what I had done in 1960. And I said, "Sure," and he asked me if I could get a leave of absence, and I said I thought I could—at that point I was going to leave whether I could or not. I went to NBC and asked them, and they said, "Fine." So I went over to the headquarters on L Street, which was just opening—first they had one over in some little hotel over by the Union Station—and there were meetings going on as to who was going where, and every time they decided I should go to a particular state, they'd decide that I couldn't go there because of Jimmy Hoffa. So I

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couldn't go to Michigan and I couldn't go to Pennsylvania; it was one after another. And so finally Teddy Kennedy [Edward M. Kennedy] asked me if there wasn't some state I could go to. So they finally decided I'd go to Missouri. So I went out to Missouri, and I was out there about a week, and then the Senator went into Indianapolis and declared himself. Then there was a meeting scheduled, kind of a kick-off meeting at the hotel out there. Where did we all stay?

GREENE: The Marriott.

SHERIDAN: The Marriott Hotel. Then I went to that meeting, and Teddy was there, mostly Teddy's people, and they decided.... They started dividing up the state as to who would handle what area, and they did it by congressional districts. So Teddy suggested that I and Frank Quirk, who was one of his people from

Boston, handle the two congressional districts that covered Indianapolis and the adjoining counties, and that's how it started. Where do we go from there?

GREENE: Do you know anything about the decision to get into the Indiana primary?

SHERIDAN: No.

GREENE: No, you came in after that?

SHERIDAN: Yes. It happened while I was in Missouri, or while I was en route to Missouri, but those kind of decisions were made by the Senator and Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen] and O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell] and Dutton [Frederick G. Dutton].

GREENE: What did you consider the major job when you first got to Indianapolis? What was your first step?

SHERIDAN: I basically believe in playing your strength, and so I thought that in Indianapolis, as elsewhere, he was going to be strongest with the black people. So I decided to concentrate on the black areas, and did, and spent a great deal of my time on that. And it turned out we did very well in the black areas, and I think it was helpful in winning that primary.

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GREENE: Whom were you working with on this, especially in the black community?

SHERIDAN: Well, Frank Quirk and I were handling or coordinating, as they call it, that area. And towards the end, Teddy sent some of his people in, and we just kept beefing up. But our overall strategy was to play the strength; in other words, to put most of our effort in areas where he was likely to get the most vote if we could get the vote out. It was really "get the vote out," which was our approach. And we were guided to some extent by what Henry Wallace had done in Indianapolis—not Henry Wallace, George Wallace [George C. Wallace]—had done in Indianapolis. In the areas where he had been strongest, we felt that Robert Kennedy would not do well. Surprisingly, it turned out in the blue-collar areas that he did do well, in spite of the fact that we really didn't put a lot of effort in there because there wasn't much time, and we had to devote our time to those areas where we thought he would do the best. Really, the whole thrust of our effort was to get the vote out in those areas where we thought he would do well and to minimize our effort in the other areas.

GREENE: Were you working in the black community at all with people like Earl Graves [Earl G. Graves] and Franklin Holgate [Franklin W. Holgate] and John Lewis [John R. Lewis]?

SHERIDAN: Frank Holgate—no, Earl Graves came out first. See, now you're getting into a question of how candid you want to be.

GREENE: Well, I think it would be most helpful if you would be very candid.

SHERIDAN: Really?

GREENE: Yes.

SHERIDAN: I thought Earl Graves was extremely ineffective and antagonistic. He kind of took over, as he's inclined to do, and antagonized a lot of the black leaders, and then left and left me kind of with the mess. And

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then Frank Holgate came in, and Frank got along much better with the black leaders. But Frank, again is a Boston politician-type operator. But Frank and I got along much better. I finally settled on a fellow named John Brown, who is a moderate black school teacher, but who had a good rapport with the militants and the moderates. And he became kind of our liaison man. And his brother was Timmy Brown [Timothy Brown], the professional football player, so that helped and gave him some stature.

On one occasion, when Bob came out, we got the militants together with him in his hotel room, and they just had this kind of freewheeling discussion that he was so good at with the black militants and satisfied them to the extent where they agreed to back him fully in the campaign. And I think they did with one exception. I think one of the militants kind of played games with both sides.

We had a three-way race, really, where they had Branigin [Roger D. Branigin], who was the Governor and was against us, and McCarthy [Eugene J. McCarthy] and the Senator. And I think there was a lot of overtures to the black militants by both McCarthy people and the Governor's people, which I'm sure involved money offers. So I think one or maybe two of them played it both ways, but my experience with him had been that even if the leaders try to play it both ways, the people would go for him anyway. And they knew this, so it was just really how hard they worked to get the vote out. But there were a couple of wards—one in particular, I think the third ward—where the turnout wasn't as good as we expected it to be, which meant to me that the militant leader in that ward didn't really go all out.

GREENE: Who was this? I know it was Snooky Hendricks [Charles Hendricks] and...

SHERIDAN: No, it wasn't Snooky, but I...

GREENE: Bell?

SHERIDAN: It was Bell, Ben Bell. Snooky, I think, played around a little with the other side, but his ward did pretty well.



GREENE: Was there any question of money raised by them at all?

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SHERIDAN: Oh, sure, always, continually.

GREENE: How did you handle that?

SHERIDAN: Through John Brown. I think Frank Holgate was inclined to figure, "Well, this is the way you deal with the blacks." But John Brown just wouldn't do it, and so he was kind of our buffer that way. It was just better for him to tell them no than for us to tell them no, and he controlled that. And any money we did dispense, which was just for opening neighborhood headquarters and for expenses, went through John Brown. And he accounted for every penny of it and insisted that it be that way and insisted that he get receipts and did get receipts for everything that was spent. So it was a happy solution on both sides, and that worked.

GREENE: What about this April fourth thing? I think that's the meeting you meant, the night of Martin Luther King's [Martin Luther King, Jr.] assassination.

SHERIDAN: Yes, that was his first trip into Indianapolis since he came in the first time to express his intentions to run. And we decided to put him not only into the black community, but into the worst section of the black community. It was in Ben Bell's area, and the Mayor [Richard G. Lugar] raised all kinds of objections in the press that we couldn't go in there, insisted on cordoning off the area "to protect the people," as he said. We had no real fears that there was going to be any problem.

I was out at the rally site when I got a call out there from Pierre Salinger [Pierre E.G. Salinger], who told me that Martin Luther King had been shot—he was in New York, I think—and that the Senator was en route and that he didn't think he should appear at the rally. Then I went out into the crowd and tried to get a feeling of the crowd; it seemed pretty good. And then I called—there were about six or seven of the militant leaders there, and we had agreed they'd be on the stage with the Senator. And so I called them all into a room in a school nearby and told them about Martin Luther King, which they did not know, and asked them what I should do. And they unanimously said that he should come and there would be no trouble, which I agreed with. I thought he had to come. Then

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I went back out in the crowd again, and by this time the word was getting around because they had transistor radios out there.

Then I got another call from Pierre in which he said that Martin Luther King had died, the Senator was getting ready to land, and that he didn't think he should come out there. So I had arrangements, as we always did just for planning purposes, for the advance man at the airport to call me when he arrived. So I called him and told—that was Jim Tolan [James

E. Tolan], I think—and told him what the situation was, what I had done. I told him that I strongly recommended that he come.

Jim later told me that when the Senator got off the plane, he was with John Treanor, or John Treanor was there. It's tough to think of names. The guy that used to be with HEW [Department of Health, Education and Welfare]... I don't know who else was there. But Tolan told the Senator what I recommended and that he agreed with it, and I think the Senator probably had decided anyway that he was going to come and did. And of course, there were no problems, and he gave probably one of the greatest speeches he ever gave. I remember when he arrived, Adam Walinsky came running up on to the platform and said, "I've got to write a fast speech." Of course, the Senator already knew what he was going to say and said it so beautifully. Ethel [Ethel Skakel Kennedy] did not come up; apparently they dropped her off or sent her to the hotel.

And then afterwards at the hotel, he decided to cancel the rest of the week's activities anyway and to go to the funeral, which was a problem because the next day he was supposed to go to New Orleans. And Louisiana at that time was takeable and Governor McKeithen [John J. McKeithen] was woable. And he didn't go, and I think if he had gone the situation in Louisiana would have been different. Of course, in the long run it didn't matter. But Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey] went down that same week and was a huge success, and Senator Kennedy hadn't come; so politically, it was a real problem, and he knew it. But there was no question what he was going to do, and he cancelled it.

GREENE: Was there anybody who thought he ought to go on?

SHERIDAN: I don't know because I saw him late that night and he had made the decision. So I don't know what advice he had prior to that.

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GREENE: Now, the meeting with the black leaders was the same night, am I correct?

SHERIDAN: Yes, you are. That's right because that had been part of the agreement that they would get to meet him that night. So they came down to the hotel, and he agreed to meet with them.

GREENE: Was this decision made only after you knew that Doctor King had been shot, or was this a long range plan?

SHERIDAN: It wasn't too long-range. I can't answer that, but I think it was made before. I think it was made a day or two before when we had been dealing with them. We agreed they'd be on the stage, and that they could have a meeting with the Senator. I think it was before Martin Luther King was shot.

GREENE: Was there anyone opposed to this meeting or to the people involved, particularly?

SHERIDAN: Oh, yes. I think most people around the Senator were usually opposed to these meetings. That might not be fair, that most people were, but I think.... I don't think there were many people who urged him to have these kind of meetings. I think there were some, but I don't think there were many. I think they were all nervous about these meetings, as they were later in Los Angeles.

GREENE: How about Graves and Holgate? How did they come down on something like this?

SHERIDAN: I don't remember whether Graves was there that night. I don't think he ever came back to Indiana. Now maybe he did.

GREENE: As I understand it, they deliberately wanted him kept out of this meeting.

SHERIDAN: Who, Graves?

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GREENE: Yes, do you remember anything like that?

SHERIDAN: Yes. Well, you're right. You're right. Jim Tolan and I had brought him up to the meeting and Gerry Doherty [Gerald F. Doherty] was there, and the Senator asked—Gerry Doherty was really in charge of Indiana, and he was Teddy's guy—and the Senator ended up asking them to pick a guy who would be their future permanent contact. And they picked Gerry Doherty. I think Frank Quirk was in favor of the meeting; I was in favor of the meeting; and I think probably Gerry Doherty was. But I think you're right, there was a feeling among us that Graves should not be at the meeting.

GREENE: Do you know why they objected to him?

SHERIDAN: There was his manner for one thing, he tends to be.... I just think his manner is antagonistic and that he has this idea that he was Senator Kennedy's black staff guy, and he never let anybody forget it. There was something specific they objected to that he did, and I don't remember what it was, but I know that he made them mad by something he did.

GREENE: Do you know how Robert Kennedy viewed Graves?

SHERIDAN: No, I really don't. I never talked to him about Graves because, you know, the thing was going fast enough and tight enough and tough enough as it was that there wasn't any point in bringing up personal antagonisms. Gerry Doherty and I and Quirk agreed that Graves was a detriment rather than a help. I don't remember what, if anything, we did to try and keep him out of there, but I know at the meeting we did particularly. In fact, I think he was asked to leave the meeting. I think he might have been in the room or outside the room and was kind of pushed out. But I know

when Senator Kennedy went to the King funeral, Graves went with him; so I don't know the answer to that question.

GREENE: Was there anybody who objected to the emphasis that was being put on wooing the black vote? It seems to me I recall something about Gerry Doherty

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particularly feeling that that vote was assured anyway and that they should concentrate their efforts elsewhere.

SHERIDAN: I don't think so, but if Gerry really felt that way he might not have told me that because, you see, I was in the peculiar position of being the only real Bob Kennedy guy there. And for a while I'm sure they didn't trust me because they thought I was a spy and that I would run and tell Bob everything that was happening. I think Teddy was even a little afraid of that. But after a while, I think we got along very well together and developed a mutuality of respect for each other. So it could be that Gerry might have thought that and wouldn't tell me because he might think I'd go back and tell Bob that he didn't care about the blacks. [Laughter]

GREENE: Do you know of any difficulty in getting responsibilities for some of the black volunteers? This is another thing that I've heard, that there were a number of people—professional particularly—who were really interested in working for the Senator, and they somehow couldn't find responsibilities for...

SHERIDAN: I think this is always a problem. I'm sure it happened, and I'm sure that I was as much at fault as anybody else. But again, the thing goes so fast. There's so much to do every day. There's always something you don't get done, and there's always people you don't contact that you should, and there's always people that feel left out.

I will say that there was one fellow who came out by the name of Fraser Barron, who was an emissary of Dave Hackett's [David L. Hackett]. And this is kind of the old Kennedy approach where they have people checking up on each other. And I happened to see a report that Fraser Barron wrote about what was going on... [Interruption] But Fraser Barron came out there and apparently wrote a report on what he saw about the black situation in Indianapolis for Dave Hackett. I happened to see a copy of the report, and there was absolutely no correspondence to the truth in what he had in the report. He even described a woman who had a storefront operation and how good it was, and it was completely nonexistent. And this woman he was talking about—I finally ran into her in the campaign—she was absolutely ineffective and not doing a thing, and yet to read Barron's

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report, she was the Negro militant leader in Indianapolis, and I just couldn't understand it. I finally told Dave Hackett about it. I've met Fraser Barron since and haven't changed my opinion of him. [Laughter] In fact, I was with him last week in Plymouth. This kind of thing doesn't make any sense to me. I can understand if Hackett wants to send out his people to see what we're doing, and whether we're doing it right, but if he does, he ought to at least send reliable people who are going to tell him the truth, because what Barron was reporting back was absolute fiction.

GREENE: Why do you think he was doing that?

SHERIDAN: I think Hackett was sincere in wanting somebody to go out and check on things—I think that's a good idea—but I don't think Fraser Barron should have done it because all he did was phony the thing up and make it look like he knew what was going on. He didn't know anything that was going on.

But to get back to your original question, well, for instance, there was a group of black professional people we got together at one point. They were a good caliber of black people, and they wanted to do something, and that group particularly I don't think we ever utilized to the extent we could have. But again, it's a time thing, what you're really interested in is finding out what's going on in each of the wards, getting headquarters opened in the key wards, getting the key people in, trying to get volunteers, and you never do as much as you could do or should do or wish you could do. So I'm sure that's true that there were people that weren't given enough to do, but it's always true.

GREENE: What political contacts did you make outside of the black community, especially in your initial days in Indianapolis?

SHERIDAN: Well, the county chairman was kind of the key. I can't even remember his name. Do you know it?

GREENE: Yes, you mean—oh, the county chairman.

SHERIDAN: The county chairman.

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GREENE: Yes, that's James Beatty [James W. Beatty].

SHERIDAN: Beatty. He, like everybody else that was key, was neutral on the outside and supposedly with us on the inside. Congressman Jacobs [Andrew Jacobs, Jr.] was the same way; Senator Hartke [Vance Hartke] was the same way; Senator Bayh [Birch Bayh] was the same way—they were all helpful. Like Beatty was very helpful.... We had a meeting at his house with him, and he broke down the whole political community for us. He had a computerized run-down of the breakdown in voting in previous years. This is extremely helpful, but it turns out in the end he gave the same thing to McCarthy. Of course, I'm kind of a "you're with us or you're not" type person. And I

understand the realities of politics and why this has to be to a certain extent, but I'm always a little frustrated and dissatisfied with it. And it's hard for me to see why Birch Bayh, Teddy Kennedy's closest friend in the Senate, does not come out for Robert Kennedy, and the same with Congressman Jacobs. The reason they don't do it is because they're concerned about their next election, and they know where their votes got to come from, and they don't want to antagonize their own people. Now, the Branigin forces were, I thought, dirty, I guess you'd call it, in their approach to the whole thing. I think they were corrupt. The State Chairman's name...

GREENE: St. Angelo [Gordon St. Angelo].

SHERIDAN: St. Angelo. There are indications that he was a corrupt fellow. Hartke at the end was willing to come out for him, finally did, I think, in Gary. But there were some reservations on our side about having him associated with us, whereas the others we would have been glad to have them associated with us.

GREENE: Why is that?

SHERIDAN: I just think there were some people who thought Hartke didn't have as good an image as say Birch Bayh did or Andy Jacobs did and that maybe it wasn't that much of an asset to have him out front, where the others would have been a real asset.

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GREENE: What about Congressmen Brademas [John Brademas] and Hamilton [Lee H. Hamilton], did you have any contact with them?

SHERIDAN: Not enough, not really. I suppose there would be people who would criticize this kind of an approach to it. I can't remember meeting with either of them, but Gerry Doherty may have. I don't think Frank Quirk did. I think if any contact was had with them it would be with Gerry Doherty, but I didn't myself.

GREENE: Did this change over time? Were some of these people a little bit more interested, especially once Johnson dropped out?

SHERIDAN: What kind of people? Do you mean like the congressmen?

GREENE: Yes, the congressmen or...

SHERIDAN: Well, I remember the night Johnson dropped out. We were up half the night with Teddy calling people all over the country, and the Senator was wherever he was calling people all over the country. And the reaction at that point was kind of a holding action. Nobody wanted to commit themselves because

nobody really knew what it meant. Afterwards I don't recall it. I think Hartke was the real example of it, that he finally did come out front. But the others didn't seem to make any meaningful changes in their open attitudes anyway.

GREENE: Were you asking these people to stay neutral, at least, rather than asking them to come out for Senator....

SHERIDAN: Yes, the whole approach was to stay neutral rather than come out. There could have been things that happened to express that neutrality that I didn't know about, but if they did, I didn't know about them.

GREENE: Would you say that Senator Bob and Senator Ted were more understanding of this hesitation on the part of many political people than you might have been?

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SHERIDAN: Oh, sure. Sure they were, because they were just a little more realistic and more wise, politically, and I was a little more impatient.

GREENE: How much of a factor was McCarthy, particularly when you first got out to Indianapolis? Did you find that he'd gotten a big head start on that catch-up campaign you were running?

SHERIDAN: Not really. You know, there was a lot of talk about his thousands of volunteers and all that, and when they finally came, they were good-looking kids for the most part. They kept the non-good looking ones in the back room, but they were nice kids. Overall he might have gotten, because he had them first, some better kids than we had. But on the weekends where we both had volunteers out, I think we did better than he would have expected, and I think he didn't do as well as he would have expected. I personally had a feeling from the beginning that we were going to win there. I worried more about Branigin, really, than McCarthy because Branigin was the one who would take our votes more than he'd take McCarthy's votes. Every one of these is a call on memory thing.

GREENE: Did you help set up citizens' groups, like "Doctors and Businessmen for Kennedy?"

SHERIDAN: Yes.

GREENE: Was this a problem as far as Branigin went, getting these professional people to commit themselves to Robert Kennedy?

SHERIDAN: Yes, it was. They had special people in just to do this. But we were involved.... Of course, this is again one of the problems in any campaign,

you have duplication of effort and people doing in the left hand what the other hand doesn't know. But there was a problem, I know, getting doctors and professional people. There was a problem with anybody, of course, who had anything to do with the state government because Branigin had such control over their livelihoods, and there were occasions when people were

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fired from their jobs because they wouldn't come in and voluntarily work at the polls for Branigin or work in canvassing for Branigin. We got a couple of affidavits about that at the time. But I think there was a problem getting professional-type volunteers. We did pretty well getting school kid volunteers locally, and they were very helpful. Everything was always too slow. There were some areas where we didn't get headquarters open until later than we would have liked to, but everything's always too slow. And then you have the girls. You know, every time you turned around the girls are coming again. Polly Fitzgerald's girls, which is fine. They're a great help, and they are, I think, very effective. But Polly has these girls who are supposed to take care of the girls. Well, it ends up you take care of the girls. And this was really the problem: They have all these people supposedly doing all these things, but when it really comes down to it, Frank Quirk and I ended up doing most everything. So we'd end up scheduling the girls and giving receptions for the girls. And they always seemed to come when you had so much to do you didn't have time to do one other thing, and you had to schedule a girl. And I'm not knocking the girls because they're great, but that is a problem, just time-wise.

GREENE:           When you speak of the girls, do you mean the Senator's sisters as well as...

SHERIDAN:       Yes, that's what I'm talking about is the Senator's sisters. That's who I mean by "the girls," and Ethel—here they come again. [Laughter] And Polly's, you know, one of my favorite people in the whole world. She's so conscientious and so great. But it's just one of those things where—her girls, who she brought in to handle the girls, again, are great—they just never quite got it done and you had to end up doing it.

GREENE:           How effective do you think they were with the voters?

SHERIDAN:       I think that depends where they went. I think in Indianapolis they were very effective. As you get out into the countryside, it's hard to judge. There's some people who might react the wrong way at the well-dressed, short skirted girl. But I think on the whole people

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were fascinated by and impressed by the image of the Kennedys, and they were Kennedys. Even Bob Fitzgerald [Robert Fitzgerald], a cousin, could go to a meeting where somebody else couldn't go and say, "I'm a cousin," and it had its effect. So I think they're a big plus.

GREENE: How about a couple of other political people I think you might have had contact with, Judge John Christ [John C. Christ]?

SHERIDAN: I had no contact with him intentionally. Christ represented the corrupt political machine in Indianapolis, and I just don't like to deal with them. I happened to think that Robert Kennedy could get along without dealing with them, and wherever I had a say, that's the way it was done. In upstate New York we did it that way. But there are others who think that you cover all your bases, and so there were some contacts with Christ, and I think in the end some expression of support by him. How it all came out in the tally, I don't know.

GREENE: Do you know who would have been making these contacts?

SHERIDAN: Gerry Doherty or Frank Quirk, who did not have the scruples I had about it. [Laughter]

GREENE: I guess you need both kinds for a campaign.

SHERIDAN: I don't think so, but most people do.

GREENE: How about the state attorney general, John Dillon [John J. Dillon], was he...

SHERIDAN: I had no contact with him. I don't know if they did.

GREENE: Or Matt Welsh [Matthew E. Welsh], the former Governor?

SHERIDAN: Yes, there was contact with him by Gerry Doherty that I was aware of and was in favor of. I don't know how helpful it is in the long run.

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GREENE: What about Dick Stoner [Richard B. Stoner]? He was a national committeeman. He was for Robert Kennedy, I think, but he wasn't willing to come out and say so publicly.

SHERIDAN: Yes, I remember him. I remember somebody contacting him, and I remember him taking that position, that he was for him, but wouldn't come out. I think you have to contact these people, but I don't think in the long run they make that much difference. I think they can hurt you a little bit if you don't

contact them because all of them have some following, but I don't think they're really the ones that make a difference in how you do.

GREENE: How about Lieutenant Governor Rock [Robert L. Rock]? How helpful was he?

SHERIDAN: Again, I don't know. I think he was somewhat like Stoner, but I don't think he went so far as to make a statement that he was.... Again, I didn't have the contact with him, but I know he didn't come out publicly. But I think his followers tended to be the same followers that would follow Robert Kennedy.

GREENE: You mentioned before this report that Dave Hackett's man wrote about this one particular storefront and the woman that was supposedly operating it. How did these storefronts work out, in general? Were most of them effective? Were many of them just a façade?

SHERIDAN: A good one was effective, and a bad one was just a façade. I think some of them were better than others; I think they're good—even if they're a facade I think they're good because they show activity, and I think the voters tend to respond to a symbol in their neighborhood of Kennedy. To be really effective they've got to be actually a part of the process and the registration drives and the canvassing. There are different ones that are more effective than others. When the kids came in they worked out of these headquarters and did end up going into some of the black areas, in fact all the black areas. We didn't send black kids into the white areas, but we did

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send white kids into the black areas. I think some of them were very effective; some, I think, were worthless except for that presence in the community.

GREENE: Was there any difficulty in getting volunteers in certain communities?

SHERIDAN: Yes.

GREENE: What were the objections—to Robert Kennedy?

SHERIDAN: Well, the kids were good, and there was no problem there except it seems to me there was an Easter vacation right in the middle of the campaign. So that was a real problem because the kids you had gotten when you first got there, who had just gotten going, all of a sudden they were gone and all you had was their school number, and there was no way to get them unless they started trickling in. The black volunteers were difficult at first because you had to go through this period of dealing with the militants and who represented the black community, and this takes really a while to shuffle out. So at the end of the campaign you finally got a good picture, but then it's too late, and so you're great for the next time if you go out for the general election. There were blacks who

didn't want to work with the militants; there were militants who didn't want to work with other blacks. In the other neighborhoods—it's tough to remember—it depended a lot on.... Like in the Catholic neighborhoods where you'd ordinarily have great response and great volunteer support, McCarthy had made inroads. And he had one particular monsignor of one of the big churches who was pro-McCarthy and made a speech from the pulpit for him. And this was a big Irish area out in, I think, west Indianapolis And it was a real problem making inroads and getting the kids because he already had them.

GREENE: Did the kids raise objections to the way and the timing of Robert Kennedy's entry? Was that one of their big complaints?

SHERIDAN: You mean McCarthy's candidacy?

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GREENE: No, Kennedy's. The kids that you were trying to get who may have already committed themselves to McCarthy.

SHERIDAN: Oh, sure. That was the whole thing, that they had waited, and he hadn't moved and McCarthy had, New Hampshire and all that. And then ruthless Robert Kennedy came running into the race, and what business did he have, what right did he have. I think this was true right up to the end, but they were coming at the end. I think all of them were potential Kennedy supporters, but they just felt that they had done this, and that he had no business at this point nosing in.

GREENE: What kind of projects would you give these kids besides canvassing the black areas, for instance?

SHERIDAN: Well, canvassing was a big part of it. You had a new factor in this campaign which was not in the previous Kennedy campaign, and that was not the fact of kid volunteers, but the fact of organized kid volunteers—people like Dave Borden [David M. Borden]. They had a whole operation which was just designed for the kids, and most of the people who ran this were young people themselves who ordinarily would have been McCarthy-oriented types, "new politics" types, but were with Kennedy. They had their own approach to politics, which was absorbed, and sometimes very reluctantly, by the Kennedy organization, and their whole thing was canvassing.

We had the Kennedy tradition of the tabloid being kind of one of the key things. The kids couldn't care less, really, about the tabloid. I think that was one of the big, new things about the campaign because the people around Bob and the people who came from the President's campaign were used to doing the things the same way all the time, the old Larry O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien] book. And the kids' approach was canvassing, and they felt that by going to a person as a representative of the candidate and as a good-looking representative of the candidate and as a person with a mind of their own, that they could, one, find out how the person felt and, two, convert them if they got the feeling they were

wavering. I think most of the people from the old school didn't believe this and probably still don't and didn't think that they were that effective. So you had this with

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the tabloid—the tabloid was used, and it was a good one, and I think it was effective. But to the kids, that was secondary, getting the tabloid out; it was primary to convert the masses. I think there was a bit of a cleavage between the old school and the new politics people, and I think there still is. But I think Bob Kennedy appreciated what they were all about more than most of the pols around him anyway, and I think he was very interested in gradually working this thing into his idea of the campaign.

GREENE: How did you feel about it personally?

SHERIDAN: I had mixed feelings. I thought that they could be utilized a lot better than they had been utilized in prior campaigns. I thought they had to be given more recognition and more head. But I thought that they also, somewhat like the liberals and the old Stevensonites [Adlai E. Stevenson], spent too much time convincing each other and too much time theorizing at meetings—they had meetings all the time. I think there's a middle ground between the new politics and the realistic politics where you can combine them without either side compromising, and I think this was what Robert Kennedy would have done ultimately.

GREENE: Did you have any way of gauging their effectiveness? Did you get any feedback from the community?

SHERIDAN: Yes, but it was their figures. Most of the feedback you got back was through them and their analyzers and their.... And so we didn't really have.... Actually, you did in the vote, and I think there was some corollary between what they prophesied and what happened, but I'm not sure we couldn't have prophesied the same thing on prior elections on just the feel of the situation And the canvassing, it's always been part of the Kennedy operation, but it's been a poll-type canvassing to find out how people felt, which I think is very helpful. But it never included the convert type thing, which is really where the two differ, and I think would still differ because I think the kids do think they can convince people to vote for their candidate. There, I guess, I don't really agree with them; I don't think they can.

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GREENE: Was there any problem of white kids going into black neighborhoods?

SHERIDAN: Not much. There were some who just didn't want to and didn't, but I think most of them, the vast majority, were willing to go anyplace and did and

went into the black neighborhoods. Where we could, we sent black and white into the black neighborhoods, but I don't think the blacks resented the whites coming in. I think the whites would have resented blacks coming in, but we didn't do that.

GREENE: Did you work closely at all with Mike Riley, the head of the Young Democrats?

SHERIDAN: Yes. He was probably more help than any one person in the city of Indianapolis. He just—well, he donated his office space, his office equipment, his law firm, his partners, and anything you'd ask him to do, he would do and did. He made speeches. He was just an absolutely, completely willing person. He had been head of the Young Democrats, had a following of his own, his name did mean something among the young people, and I just think he was magnificent.

GREENE: Was he able to bring a lot of his own supporters along? I know there was some objection in the beginning.

SHERIDAN: Well, I think he had first the conflict between the Beatty organization and the regular Democratic Party and the Young Democrats, which you do in most places because the old timers are afraid the young timers are going to come up and take their jobs away. So I think there was a little bit of that kind of antagonism, and I think there was some resentment of Riley because of that and because he appeared to be, and was, quite close to the candidate. This was the jealousy angle in there. But I think, overall, he was dammed effective and helpful. He and Doherty got along very well, and I thought Doherty was very effective. He's low-key, and it was hard in the

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beginning getting used to his low key approach. All the Teddy guys had a little bit different approach to the thing than we did. And Jerry Bruno [Gerald J. Bruno] came in and just antagonized the hell out of everybody, and I thought that was unfortunate, and I thought...

GREENE: How do you explain that?

SHERIDAN: I think Jerry's a good advance man but should not be in the position of—at least shouldn't have been in the position of running things—making political policy-type decisions. Joe Dolan [Joseph F. Dolan] came in, and that's a tough, tough, job scheduling Robert Kennedy. The strain is tremendous, and so you tend to fluff off most of the antagonisms that build up. But Jerry came in with the preconceived idea that Teddy's people didn't know what they were doing, and just raised hell and went far beyond what he should have done. And I think in the clutch I'd join forces a little with the Teddy people against Jerry, and I think that's what finally got over their suspicions of me as.... But there was, I think, fear on the part of Teddy and his people of Bob—not that they weren't doing.... It wasn't a fear; they wanted so badly to do it right, and they were afraid that they'd be criticized for not doing right. But I think Jerry just

unnecessarily antagonized the people in Indiana—he was much better in California—you know, shouting at girls and things like that, which is unnecessary, and turning them into tears.

GREENE: The girls working in the campaign, you mean?

SHERIDAN: Working for him and with him. And again, it is the pressure in that job that is unbelievable. But I think some of it was unnecessary and told him so.

GREENE: How did he take that?

SHERIDAN: From me he took it, but he wouldn't take it from most people. Of course, we've worked together in many situations, but he can be difficult.

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GREENE: What about your contacts among labor groups, Dale Sells [Dallas Sells] and Berndt [Raymond H. Berndt] and people like that?

SHERIDAN: We had contacts with them and the UAW [United Auto Workers] ended up kind of going all-out. But in the beginning, when I first went into town, I called Lynville Miles, who is an old friend of mine and an attorney for the union, and he told me that the union was for McCarthy and that he was for McCarthy. So I checked with him a couple of times, but as the thing went on, there were contacts between the Senator and Ray Berndt and other labor leaders. I think most of organized labor was with Branigin for their own political reasons. But I think, as the thing went on, we got excellent UAW support, and I think did quite well among the members, much better than we did among the leaders. But this is, again, with Robert Kennedy the case. It was the same in California.

GREENE: Did you find the Hoffa thing hanging on in Indiana?

SHERIDAN: No, I never saw any indication of it. However, there were references to it that I didn't know about, I didn't know. Of course, I wouldn't go talk to the Teamsters or do something like that. But in Indiana, it wasn't a problem at all. I'm sure in some other places it would have been. You maintain a lot of anonymity, really, in a campaign because people don't tend to associate the campaign worker with something else.

GREENE: You know, the fellows in the black community—Snooky Hendricks and Ben Bell and John Brown—John Brown, is that correct?

SHERIDAN: Yes, but John wasn't a militant like they were, but John was our guy in between.

GREENE: But all of these people, how did you come to them in the first place, or did they seek you out?

SHERIDAN: Most of them seek you out because, I think, frankly, most of them are after a buck in the beginning.

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But then, as it goes on, they're after their self-interest and they're after their position in the black community and what it's going to be afterwards. I think some of them are more sincere than others; some of them are more opportunistic than others; but I'd say there's more of them seeking you out than you seeking them out in the beginning. Then you find that those who came to you representing themselves to be leaders aren't at all and that this fellow over here actually is, and then you end up going over here. But it runs all the way from the sincere militant who really is interested in the black community to the pure opportunist who is out to make a buck and there were both kinds. I think Snooky's a mixture. [Laughter]

GREENE: Were there others in the black community that we haven't talked about?

SHERIDAN: Well, there's the preachers who call and let you know that they represent all the churches and for a contribution to the church they can be helpful. Frank Holgate got together with a lot of these people. I don't think they're really very helpful. I just think—I think you need them all. I think you need the militants, I think you need the young ones. They're the hard ones to get at because they're indifferent. And the preachers, I suppose; help a little, but I don't think very much. But then there's the professional political-type like Doctor—I can't think of his name—who is head of one of the wards, seventh ward I think. A very respected black physician who held back until the last minute on a commitment. And I dealt a lot with his nurse, who was very close to him who was also involved. He finally came around. And I think a guy like him and his particular ward, if you can get a guy like that to push your candidate, then I think it's very helpful. Getting the black vote out is always difficult. There's some who think you need money to do it; I suppose in certain places maybe they're right.

GREENE: I saw a poll in the black book—you know, the black book that was kept in the Boiler Room on Indiana—which indicated that the black community, as you might expect, would go very heavily for Robert Kennedy if you

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could get the vote out. But there was something like two out of three who didn't even realize he was on the ballot.

SHERIDAN: Is this before the election or after it?

GREENE: Yes, before. That would look like a pretty big job. How did you go about organizing this?

SHERIDAN: We opened a storefront in every black ward; we made a special effort at volunteers in every black ward. We used all the normal things, like the black radio stations when Robert Kennedy was coming to town. I think those black radio stations are very effective. And we had a contingent of pro football players come out, Rosey Grier [Roosevelt Grier] and Timmy Brown. And then when he went through the black community, they went with him. And I think these kind of things are the way.... You know, first you've got to get their attention, and these things get their attention, and once they know he's running, then it's the election day thing itself, getting them to the polls. First getting people like that back there to get his workers really to go out for him, and you're never sure with some of the precinct leaders whose side they're on, then it's getting your own people out there on election day with cars, with sound systems, and making them as aware as you can. But of course, if they aren't registered—which is where it all starts—they can't vote anyway. I think we did pretty well on the registration drive. We had practically no time to do it. I don't remember what the figures were, but I think the biggest increase was in the black areas, and to tell you the truth, I never went back and looked, you know, analyzed the figures as to how well we did in each ward compared with what we hoped to do. I was always going to do that.

GREENE: Who worked with you on that? Is that one of the things that Mike Riley was helping on?

SHERIDAN: Well, Mike was more a man of all trades type thing, and Frank Quirk and I were the nuts and bolts thing of actually plotting out these things. But we had Mike's help. And I can't think of some of the names of some of the other young fellows who were friends of Mike's who had

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been in campaigns there and who could pick out who was the leader in this precinct, who do you need in this foray. Then we'd plot all this out literally on maps and charts and just try to keep pushing it where you thought the vote was there but you had to get it out. How long did the whole thing last, four weeks?

GREENE: Indiana you mean?

SHERIDAN: Yes. Five weeks?

GREENE: March 28 to May seventh.

SHERIDAN: It seemed like two weeks. It just goes shooooooooo, and it goes bang!

GREENE: Especially with the King assassination in between.



SHERIDAN: It just seemed like it had just gotten started, and it was election time.

GREENE: What about the funding of this “get out the vote” campaign? Did you have any outside help on that from labor or any other groups?

SHERIDAN: I don’t think so; I don’t think we had anything from labor, but there, again, this was Gerry Doherty’s bailiwick, and he may have gotten help I didn’t know about.

GREENE: What about paying bills in general? How was this taken care, and how well was it taken care of?

SHERIDAN: The ideal is, you know, you try and get volunteers to raise their own money, and they pay for everything. Well, it never works. So you end up paying for whatever expenses there are in opening a storefront and getting a sign and renting tables and chairs. And I think most of these things we paid for, but I think most of them were paid for. I don’t know of any that weren’t. Again, with the blacks, we did it right through John Brown. We would give him the money, he would get the receipt, and he

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would give us back the receipt. I don’t think there was any problem about it overall, about the money. I don’t think we spent that much on that kind of thing; I think most of the money was spent on advertising, TV, and things like that.

GREENE: I was going to ask you about that. Did the Indianapolis papers...

SHERIDAN: Oh, they’re murder, just awful, unbelievably prejudiced and vicious. And every day there’d be a cartoon. Some days there’d be one on the front page and one on the editorial page, and they were all violently anti-Kennedy. And that’s tough when you have only two papers and they’re both controlled by the same person, and he’s so anti-Kennedy and always has been. But I think it reaches a point where it backlashes, and people say this is unfair, and obviously unfair, and I think that happened in Indianapolis.

GREENE: Were you able to do anything to counteract this type of thing?

SHERIDAN: Just ads. You take your own ads in the paper. You can’t attack the newspaper—I guess you could, we didn’t. The Senator would make funny references to it in some of his speeches, but I think all you can do is counteract it with your own advertising and, mainly, your own candidate. His personal contact was always the best answer to anything, to the ruthless thing to—you name it. I’ve never seen him in a group that he couldn’t befriend or couldn’t leave more friendly than he came to it, and this was over many years and many tough groups.

GREENE: Could you get through to the national press, or at least get beyond the Indianapolis papers through the national press?

SHERIDAN: Yes, and that helped. I think *Life* magazine or one of the major publications did something on the Indianapolis papers and how bad they were. I think to that extent there was quite a bit of backlash nationwide outside of Indiana.

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GREENE: Someone said that they thought the Indianapolis papers campaign had sort of passed the backlash point and was sort of grabbing hold at the time of the election and that perhaps if it had been held a week earlier, the Senator would have done better than he did.

SHERIDAN: It's interesting; it could be.

GREENE: You didn't get such a feeling?

SHERIDAN: I did think he'd do better than he did, a little better. I think he'd passed his peak a couple of days before the election, and McCarthy did better in the last few days. He did the same thing in California, and I can never quite understand why because I thought we'd win a little bigger in California, but not as big as some people did. I know the Senator was out for fifty percent in California. He asked me if he could get it, and I told him no. But I thought he'd do better than he did.

GREENE: In Indiana, do you think the papers might have had something to do with it?

SHERIDAN: I think they're bound to have an effect. I think they had a bad effect against us in the beginning, but I think there was a backlash. I don't know whether there was a swing back at the end, but there sure could have been because something brought McCarthy up a little bit at the end. And I don't think it was what the Senator was doing because I think what he was doing was helping him, and McCarthy wasn't doing that much.

GREENE: Let me turn the tape.

[BEGIN TAPE 1, SIDE 2]

GREENE: What do you remember about the planning of the April fourth visit, and exactly where you would be going in Indianapolis?

SHERIDAN: I just remember that it was that we all agreed that he should go into the

black community. And

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I remember that somebody went with Ben Bell up into the community, and I thought it was Jerry Bruno or Jim Tolan (it could have been Earl Graves; I don't remember Earl Graves being there) and that Ben Bell thought that this was the best area because it was, really, one of the worst ghetto sections. I think Ben also wanted it because it was near Ben's headquarters. [Laughter] We all agreed on it, and as I said before, the Mayor had strenuous objections to it, but I don't remember specifically a meeting where we sat down and said, "We'll do it here."

GREENE: This would be the 10th and Broadway stop in one of his headquarters?

SHERIDAN: Right.

GREENE: What about the police chief? I forget his name, though.

SHERIDAN: Yes, he was very upset.

GREENE: Did you consult him?

SHERIDAN: Yes, he was consulted, I think by Jerry, and was very upset about the whole thing and was going to cordon off the area. And then we sent flyers out there, and Ben Bell was supposed to get them all out, and Ben Bell never did anything he said he was going to do, really. When we got out there late that afternoon, there were some kids out handing out flyers, but there weren't enough. The sound trucks were out, but they didn't.... It was just one of those apprehensive things where you felt they hadn't done enough, and the crowd wasn't going to be as big as you wanted it to. It was a very cold night, the Senator was about two hours late, three hours late, and the crowd wasn't as big as I wanted and expected. But the people for the most part stayed, and it was colder than the dickens, and I don't remember how many people were there when he got there, but it was a pretty good crowd.

GREENE: How were you on materials at this point? Was that a problem?

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SHERIDAN: It's always a problem. First, of course, the posters, which you need for headquarters and everything else. The big ones had that terrible picture of Robert Kennedy on it that nobody liked that Don Wilson [Donald M. Wilson] picked out. It was near the end.... I don't know if they got the new one at the end of that campaign or the beginning of the California campaign. I think at the end of that one. I'm just trying to remember. It's always a problem, but how much of a problem, I don't remember. We moved from one headquarters to the other...

GREENE: What about flyers and things like that?

SHERIDAN: ...but when Steve Smith [Stephen E. Smith] finally came out, we were in a small headquarters with Jerry, and Steve immediately decided it wasn't big enough. Then we moved into the bigger headquarters, and Larry O'Brien finally came out. I remember I had a discussion with Teddy and Gerry Doherty, and I had a feeling at that point that there was something missing, that the thing wasn't really going well enough. He mentioned that Larry O'Brien was coming out, and I thought that was good because it would zing it up a little, more in the eyes of the public than necessarily, actually. I think when you get an O'Brien into the act it impresses the other side and the people that you're really going for broke, and I just thought it needed some kind of zing like that.

GREENE: Was it effective?

SHERIDAN: I think it was. I think him coming out was effective, I think Teddy's coming in and Sorensen came out, and I think when the old Kennedy crowd was again on the scene, that it was effective. Prior to that, you know, it was just Teddy's people.

GREENE: Did you have much serious conflict with Senator Ted's people, or was that...

SHERIDAN: Oh no, I didn't have any except getting used to their low-key type of operation and just feeling a little uneasy that maybe things weren't moving

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fast enough and having nobody, really, other than them, to deal with until Jerry Bruno came out. But then he went so far the other way that I tended to get closer and closer to them. I didn't feel I really ever had any problems with them.

GREENE: Getting back to the Martin Luther King death, had you had much of a discussion with Robert Kennedy then or at any other time on his feelings about Martin Luther King, both as a man and as a black leader?

SHERIDAN: No, never. Except that night, but you know, that was just his decision to go to the funeral and to cut off things. But I can't recall that I ever really did.

GREENE: Did King's death have any real impact in Indianapolis when he came back? Was there any bitterness in the white community towards the Senator as a white politician?

SHERIDAN: For going down to the funeral?

GREENE: No, just in general because of the assassination.

SHERIDAN: Well, there was talk after the assassination there might be trouble in the black community, and here again, I think the militants played with you a little bit, that they were the ones that could stop it. I think there was a bit of currying favor that they would plant the seed first that there was going to be one, and then that they had stopped it, that they could stop it. I don't think there was ever any real chance of that, but it was of great concern that there might be, because I think if there had been, it would have been a major obstacle to the Kennedy campaign, and we were scared to death that there might be. But I don't think there was any real negative effect from the assassination. I think whatever effect there was was more positive than negative because I think most people, I think even some racist-type people, would think that was going too far and would be a little sympathetic to a man being killed, even though they were a racist to some extent. And I think that even those people would understand and not object to Robert Kennedy's reaction to it.

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GREENE: Did you make much of an effort, especially in the black community, to keep the events integrated, or was it more natural for them to be totally black?

SHERIDAN: It was more natural for them being totally black.

GREENE: Was there any disagreement on this that you know of?

SHERIDAN: No. It's a good question, but most events like that are in the black community, and 99 percent of the people who are there are going to be black. I think it's kind of a little false to just try and bring in white people so it'll be integrated; it's just not a natural thing.

GREENE: What about reaction to his initial visits to Indianapolis, as opposed to the later ones? Could you see much additional momentum and enthusiasm?

SHERIDAN: Yes. Well, the first one into the black community, I suppose the reaction to that in the white community was more bad than good. You know, "Why'd he have to come there, why'd he go there?" And then the King death—I think more than the assassination, the fact that he came the first time with the black community probably had some adverse effect in the white community. But then he started moving around the state, and when he came back to Indianapolis, it was the one I was very concerned about and ended up passing out flyers myself that morning because it was one of those things where for some reason the advance operation fell down. And it usually didn't.

These advance guys are pretty good. For some reason things just weren't getting done that morning, and so we just got out early, got some people, and I personally drove them and dropped them and just kept supplying them with flyers because I really wanted that one to be big. It was in the square...

GREENE: Yes, Monument Circle.

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SHERIDAN: ...and I think Jerry Bruno was afraid of it. I think he was afraid it wasn't going to work. And boy, it worked; it was a huge crowd. The police had declined to give us permission to speak, and so he couldn't speak. And so it was a mess, but it was a glorious mess, and it worked beautifully. And I think that rally was not only indicative of the heightening of feeling towards him, but I think had a great impact on the people and the other politicians. And it just kept building, particularly in the northern part of the state. The tours were great, the motorcades were great.

GREENE: Did you work at all outside of Indianapolis?

SHERIDAN: No, it's just what I heard, like the last night in...

GREENE: Gary and Hammond?

SHERIDAN: Yes, and the tour just before that where he chipped his tooth. I know it was a huge success. And I ended up getting black dentists lined up for him, and then at the last minute he decided to wait until he got home. I got that dentist through that doctor who I told you about, and I think this was helpful. I suppose it's playing politics a little with dentistry, but I think it helped.

GREENE: Did you see Branigin's hand in this refusal to let him speak at Monument Circle?

SHERIDAN: I don't know, I suppose so. I think the police department was—I suppose there was that—I think the police department itself was a little annoyed with the whole thing. They didn't want traffic stopped, and of course, we had every intention of stopping it, and they knew we would, and we did. [Laughter] I don't know, but I suppose there was.

GREENE: Back to Larry O'Brien on the "get out the vote." Did he offer much guidance as to how you might work things, particularly in the black community?

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SHERIDAN: Not really. Actually, Larry stayed kind of in the background. I think he

had a problem with his role in the thing. When we finally had area meetings, and then we had one big volunteers meeting... That was another thing that was going on during the campaign which was new, and that was this volunteer operation. Who conducted that? You must have heard about it where they did it all by mail, and they mailed out this tremendous mailing to volunteers, and then they'd get a thing back saying, "Yes, I'll volunteer." There was one guy, it was his system...

GREENE: Yes. I know who you mean, I've seen it.

SHERIDAN: ...and nobody knew whether it was going to work or not. Finally, the culmination was a big meeting at the headquarters where everybody that had volunteered was to come together. And Larry was there, and Teddy was there, and we had a hell of a turnout. But I still don't know what effect it had on the actual "get out the vote" because you don't know once those people showed up whether they showed up to see all the celebrities or whether they really went back and worked. So it's the kind of thing you just don't know how effective it was. It was effective in getting people to that meeting. It was a telephone operation, that's it.

GREENE: Oh, you mean that guy down here, Reese, Matt Reese [Matthew Reese]?

SHERIDAN: I guess it was Reese's operation, and it was completely separate, and they had nothing to do with us and we had nothing to do with them. It was just going along, and nobody knew whether it was going to work, and I still don't know whether it worked. All I know is when it came time for them all to come to a meeting, they came; there were about five thousand people there, I think.

GREENE: Could you tell, as far as the kind of help you got in Indianapolis yourself, how effective it had been?

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SHERIDAN: If we'd gone back and analyzed, and if somebody did, I think you could because the people that came in were registered, and we had an elaborate setup so that they registered by precincts. So you knew where you had the most people from, and I suppose you could gauge that against the turnout of the vote as to whether it worked. I don't know, but I hope somebody does. [Laughter] I don't know how much analyzing and filing up was done in the Indiana campaign, but I didn't do it.

GREENE: Was there very much of a difference in organizing the "get out the vote" in the black communities than elsewhere in Indianapolis, or was it the same procedure with different emphasis?

SHERIDAN: It was the same basic procedure, just with more emphasis, more attention paid to it. I think in Indianapolis we paid more attention, maybe, than

somebody like Gerry Doherty would think we should in the black community because, as he said, they'll come out anyway. I think where they are there to come out, I think that's where you spend your time, even though they're going to come out if they come out. I don't agree that they're going to come out anyway, and that's why I think you have to spend that time to get them out. But I think the procedure is basically the same.

GREENE: What about primary day? What were you doing?

SHERIDAN: You mean the day of the election?

GREENE: Yes.

SHERIDAN: I just started early in the morning touring these black areas and seeing if the workers were at the headquarters, if the posters were up in the trees, and if all the things that were supposed to be—if the guys were out in the loudspeaker cars. And I'd just go from one ward to the next, and I just did that all day long and ended up an hour before the polls closed in the southernmost—one of these areas. I didn't restrict it to black areas, but other than black areas, we had other key areas picked out, key wards that we thought would be pro-Kennedy. And I went

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to those too. And at the end of the day I was literally in my car carrying people to the polls and using my loudspeaker thing and ended up getting maybe twenty people there in the last half-hour that wouldn't have got there. I don't know how much that helps, but theoretically, there were thirty people like me doing the same thing all around town. But I was just trying to cover the whole city.

GREENE: Who were some of the other people that were working with you on this?

SHERIDAN: There was a group of about ten to fifteen guys who came in in the last week from Boston, and it looked like the Holy Cross football team, [Laughter] none of whom I'd ever seen before. And they'd come in and Frank Quirk would introduce me to them, and then they'd go out and do one of these areas. And they were all seasoned pols who had worked for Teddy in Boston and knew what to do out in those places, and I'm sure were doing the same thing on primary day and doing the things they were supposed to. I think they were probably very helpful.

GREENE: How satisfied was the Senator with the results?

SHERIDAN: I think he was satisfied. I don't think he ever expressed to me one way or the other because the next time I saw him was in California.

GREENE: Do you have anything else on Indiana?



SHERIDAN: No, not really. But there were some other key people, and I can't think of their names, who were just the Mike-type [Mike Riley] people who were just always so willing. Some of them I saw over at the Mass at Arlington. They came all the way in for that. I don't think so.

GREENE: OK, if you think of something we can put it on another tape.

[END OF INTERVIEW #1]

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