

**Garrett Byrne, Oral History Interview—9/28/1967**  
Administrative Information

**Creator:** Garrett Byrne  
**Interviewer:** John Stewart  
**Date of Interview:** September 28, 1967  
**Location:** Boston, Massachusetts  
**Length:** 46 pages

**Biographical Note**

Byrne, a Massachusetts political figure and District Attorney, Suffolk County (1952-1978), discusses John F. Kennedy's (JFK) campaigns for the House of Representatives, Senate, and presidency; JFK's relationships with other Massachusetts Democrats, including Foster Furcolo and John William McCormack; and JFK's influence on Massachusetts political races, among other issues.

**Access**

Open.

**Usage Restrictions**

According to the deed of gift signed on April 6, 1970, copyright of these materials has been assigned to the United States Government. Users of these materials are advised to determine the copyright status of any document from which they wish to publish.

**Copyright**

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excesses of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law. The copyright law extends its protection to unpublished works from the moment of creation in a tangible form. Direct your questions concerning copyright to the reference staff.

**Transcript of Oral History Interview**

These electronic documents were created from transcripts available in the research room of the John F. Kennedy Library. The transcripts were scanned using optical character recognition and the resulting text files were proofread against the original transcripts. Some formatting changes were made. Page numbers are noted where they would have occurred at the bottoms of the pages of the original transcripts. If researchers have any concerns about accuracy, they are encouraged to visit the Library and consult the transcripts and the interview recordings.

**Suggested Citation**

Garrett Byrne, recorded interview by John Stewart, September 28, 1967, (page number),  
John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION  
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE

Gift of Personal Statement

By Garrett Byrne

to the

John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library

In accordance with Sec. 507 of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended (44 U.S.C. 397) and regulations issued thereunder (41 CFR 101-10), I, Garrett Byrne, hereinafter referred to as the donor, hereby give, donate, and convey to the United States of America for deposit in the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library, and for administration therein by the authorities thereof, the tape(s) and transcript of a personal statement approved by me and prepared for the purpose of deposit in the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library. The gift of this material is made subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. Title to the material transferred hereunder, and all literary property rights, will pass to the United States as of the date of the delivery of this material into the physical custody of the Archivist of the United States.

2. It is the donor's wish to make the material donated to the United States of America by terms of this instrument available for research as soon as it has been deposited in the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library.

3. A revision of this stipulation governing access to the material for research may be entered into between the donor and the Archivist of the United States, or his designee, if it appears desirable.

4. The material donated to the United States pursuant to the foregoing shall be kept intact permanently in the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library.

Signed

Garrett H. Byrne

Date

March 5, 1970

Accepted

James B. Rhoads  
Archivist of the United States

Date

April 6, 1970

Garrett Byrne

Table of Contents

<u>Page</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1	John F. Kennedy (JFK) as a college student
2	Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr.
3	1946 race for U.S. House of Representatives seat
5, 19	Relationship between JFK and John William McCormack
7, 9	JFK's 1952 Senate race
8	1952 Democratic National Convention
12	Tension between JFK and Foster Furcolo
15	JFK's role in Massachusetts politics and the Massachusetts Democratic Party
21	1956 Massachusetts Democratic State Committee
24	Convincing Pennsylvania Democratic leaders to support JFK in 1960
29	1959 Boston mayoral race
31	1960 Democratic National Convention
33	1960 elections for public offices in Massachusetts
35	Accusations of corruption in the Massachusetts Democratic Party
38	Discussions of who should succeed JFK as senator
40	Democratic National Committeemen
42	Contact with JFK as president
44	Closeness of the Kennedy family

Oral History Interview

with

Garrett Byrne

September 28, 1967  
Boston, Massachusetts

By John Stewart

For the John F. Kennedy Library

STEWART: Mr. Byrne, why don't we just start by asking you first when, if you recall, you first met John Kennedy [John F. Kennedy], and the circumstances of the meeting?

BYRNE: Well, I can't resolve in my own mind exactly the first time that I met Jack Kennedy, but I know that when he was attending Harvard University, around that time, that he was very well acquainted with a friend of mine by the name of Jacobsen [Benny Jacobsen], who at that time was running some sort of a clothing cleansing establishment over in Cambridge. Through Mr. Jacobsen, I have a very good recollection of meeting Jack Kennedy for the first time over there, and I met him several times in Boston during his early career at Harvard University.

STEWART: What kind of a person do you recall he was? This was during the time he was a student.

BYRNE: This was the time that he was a student, and my memory is that he was a sane, nice, courteous, quiet, well-met

individual, that he assumed.... From the time that he went to the lower branch of Congress, to the Senate, and on to the presidency, I don't think that Jack Kennedy, at least in my opinion, changed in any way. He was easy to meet, nice to talk to, and you always went away with a general feeling of close friendship.

STEWART: Had you been at, by any chance, the 1940 Democratic National Convention? Were you there?

BYRNE: Can you....

STEWART: They had somewhat of a squabble within the Massachusetts delegation over whether to support Roosevelt [Franklin Delano Roosevelt] for a third term. Ambassador Kennedy's [Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr.]...

BYRNE: I was a delegate to the Convention, but I was unable to attend, and my alternate did attend, so I know nothing more than those people know that watched television.

STEWART: How would you describe Ambassador Kennedy's role in Massachusetts politics, say in the early forties, when he broke with Franklin Roosevelt? Of course, in 1942, Mayor Fitzgerald [John F. "Honey Fitz" Fitzgerald] ran against Joseph Casey [Joseph Edward Casey] for the nomination for the Senate. Do you recall that at all?

BYRNE: Yes, I have a recollection. Frankly, I have no recollection of Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Joseph Kennedy, playing any serious part in that contest. By that, I mean I have no memory of him coming around and putting himself into a suite in a hotel and starting to direct it in any way whatsoever. Undoubtedly, he did help him, but

[-2-]

if he helped him, it wasn't in an active way such as a campaign manager or assistant campaign manager. Perhaps it might have been as an advisor, but if it was, I think was on a limited level.

STEWART: How, if at all, were you involved in the 1946 congressional primary? Of course, John Kennedy ran.

BYRNE: Well, only to the extent that I would meet him once in a while and talk with him. Then, of course, Patsy Mulkern [Patrick J. Mulkern], who at that time was taking him around, with Billy Sutton [William J. Sutton] and Kane [Joseph Kane], I knew all of those fellows and constantly was very close and aware of what was going on and would just meet him once in a while. But as for taking him by the

hand and traveling around with him, quite frankly, I didn't know him that well, at that time, to perform that sort of a function.

STEWART: Just for a little biographical background, are you from that district?

BYRNE: No, I'm not from that district, I was from the Roxbury district at the time.

STEWART: I see. So you wouldn't have been involved with any other candidate one way or another.

BYRNE: No, I wouldn't be involved with any of the other candidates, although I knew all of them. My sympathies, my inclinations, whatever help I could give—I think at that time I was

[-3-]

assistant district attorney and was fairly active in politics and did help in a general way.

STEWART: Was it generally felt that this was a very bold move by a fellow twenty-nine years old, to start out running for Congress? Was there much resentment in political circles?

BYRNE: No, there really wasn't much resentment because the Kennedy name was so well known and well liked that there wouldn't be what you would call resentment. But there was a little wondering on the part of politicians what a young kid like this, coming out of Harvard, who hadn't been around Boston very much, even though the roots of his family were here, starting right out to run for Congress.... It was a little unusual. Of course, Jack Kennedy was never in the true type of what you'd call a politician. He'd stop a person on the street; you'd feel as though it was a student. He was very meek, very shy, but at the same time wanted to meet as many people as he could and would do anything to accomplish that purpose. You'd go away with the feeling that people liked him even though they didn't think he was much of a politician, in the early days. And of course the vote proved it. It wasn't—the Kennedy name helped and it helped a lot, but it was Jack himself, in my opinion, who really put the thing; over and won it by making people really like him.

[-4-]

STEWART: During the time that he was in the Congress, from 1948 to '52, he had some problems with Speaker McCormack [John William McCormack] regarding, well, one in particular regarding the petition that Speaker McCormack was getting up to give to the President to get Mayor Curley [James Michael Curley] out of jail. Do you remember that at all?

BYRNE: Yes, I remember to the extent that I recall it. Of course, I knew Mayor Curley, Governor Curley. As a matter of fact, I was born in the same district that they lived in, and in order for me to go to the legislature, I had to fight Tammany Hall at that time. So I knew him very well. I don't think that Jack disliked Curley at that particular time, but I think that they were so farsighted that they were anticipating what effect it might have on them fifteen, twenty years afterwards. I talked to Speaker McCormack regarding that, and he understood it. There wasn't any hard feelings between the two men at all. Jack just didn't feel as though he ought to do it, and I can understand from a political standpoint why he didn't. I don't think he disliked him or that he did it merely because he disliked him.

STEWART: There was also a problem—and again according to some of Kennedy's biographers—regarding the distribution of patronage between he and Speaker McCormack. He apparently

[-5-]

didn't feel he was getting enough, so he went down to the White House to complain about it.

BYRNE: This was when the Kennedys were....

STEWART: When he was in the House of Representatives.

BYRNE: And at that time, I think that Speaker McCormack was then the head of the majority party in the House. Well, there was some talk about that, but I talked to Speaker McCormack on that particular point, and he indicated to me that there was never any real disagreement. He naturally wanted his share of patronage; at that time, he was a senior man in congress, he was the head of the majority party in Congress; and he did get some of it. But he was under the impression that stories at that time were grossly exaggerated and that they really had never had any difficulties.

STEWART: What, generally, do you recall were the impressions of political people regarding the operations of Kennedy's Boston office, namely Judge Morrissey [Francis X. Morrissey] and one or two other people who ran his office here in Boston?

BYRNE: Well, at that time, I had very little to do with it and knew less. I never heard any criticism of it at all. I was always under the impression that they conducted it very properly and efficiently.

STEWART: Going on, in 1952, of course, there was a question as to whether Kennedy would run for governor or for the

[-6-]



Senate. Paul Dever [Paul A. Dever] apparently...

BYRNE: I was right close to that situation and probably could fill you in as close as anyone that you might have an occasion to talk to. Paul Dever couldn't seem to make up his mind what he wanted to run for. Jack Kennedy, at that time, didn't care what he'd run for; he was going to run for something. Dever, at the beginning, had a desire to go to the United States Senate. He kept it very much up in the air until the time was rapidly approaching when someone had to make up their minds. So Jack Kennedy went, I believe he went down the Cape at that time—Paul Dever was living down the Cape—and laid it right on the line to him. He stated, "Now, Paul, you'll have to make up your mind. It doesn't make any difference to me. If you want to run for the United States Senate, I'll run for governor. If you want to run for governor, then I'll run for the United States Senate. Will you please make up your mind and let me know?" Shortly after that, Paul Dever informed both me and his dad that he was going to run for governor, and Jack announced for the United States Senate. That's the story.

STEWART: There was never any question that Kennedy would oppose Dever in the primary. I've heard that said.

BYRNE: None whatsoever. No, none whatsoever.

[-7-]

STEWART: Do you recall anything about the 1952 Democratic National Convention? I believe the Massachusetts delegation voted for Paul Dever as a favorite son at that Convention. He was the keynote speaker, if you recall, and then I think they gave him, well, he got about forty votes or so on the first and second ballots.

BYRNE: I was at that Convention. As a matter of fact, I spent a lot of time with Paul Dever at the Convention, but I have only a faint recollection of just how many votes he received as a favorite son. Of course, he was all wrapped up in the fact that he was to be the keynote speaker, and it was a terrible letdown to one who, in my mind, was one of the great orators of the country at that time, to be stricken with that throat ailment that distorted it completely. Of course, he was all for Adlai Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson], I believe, at that particular Convention. My boss at that time, Bill Foley [William J. Foley, Jr.], was for someone else. I forget who else they had the vote for.

STEWART: Averell Harriman [William Averell Harriman] or Kefauver [Estes Kefauver]? There were quite a few people.

BYRNE: I think a couple of them voted for Smith [Alfred E. Smith].

STEWART: Really?

BYRNE: I know that Mike Ward [Michael J. Ward] and Bill Foley at that time cast their votes for someone other than the three that you have just mentioned, and just who it was,

[-8-]

I don't know.

STEWART: But you don't recall any major rift within the Massachusetts delegation?

BYRNE: Only on the part of two or three delegates that refused to go along with Adlai Stevenson. And I'm sure, if my memory serves me right, that they voted for someone else.

STEWART: There was some talk at that Convention of nominating Kennedy for the vice presidency. I assume mainly to get some publicity for his senatorial race. Do you recall that at all?

BYRNE: If there was, it was very limited because it certainly didn't gain any proportion that would warrant any great attention. As a matter of fact, I really don't even remember any talk about that.

STEWART: As far as his campaign against Henry Cabot Lodge, what generally was your part in this, and also what was your part in Dever's campaign?

BYRNE: At that particular time, I was very, very close to Paul Dever and spent most of my time with Paul Dever. We'd have an occasion to meet Jack as we were going throughout the commonwealth. It wasn't long before Paul Dever realized that he had a tough fight, but that Kennedy was going to win, because even when I didn't happen to be with him and he would come back and we'd be some place else talking things over, I can remember Dever saying to me, "Jack Kennedy is going to win."

[-9-]

He said, "I've got a tough fight, but I'm positive that Jack Kennedy is going to win," because Jack Kennedy himself had gone into every town and hamlet, working eighteen hours a day, and they were running these tremendous teas, and the whole Kennedy family was in here. The sisters and the mother [Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy] and the father played a very prominent part. So it was very evident at that time that Jack was going to win. Of course, Lodge was all tied up with Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] at that time, if I remember rightly, and

didn't spend too much time in the commonwealth and lost the fight. If my memory serves me right, I think that's the year that Dever got licked.

STEWART: Right, by Christian Herter [Christian A. Herter]. To go back just a little, what was Paul Dever's chief reason for not running for the Senate? Was it because he felt he couldn't win or.... Do you recall?

BYRNE: Frankly, my guess would be that he thought it was a very, very tough fight against Lodge at that time, as did everybody else but Jack Kennedy. I mean, Lodge looked unbeatable. He had been back from the war and then had defeated David I. Walsh and was very well thought of in Democratic circles, as well as Republican circles and Independent circles. At that time, frankly, he did look unbeatable, and I don't think there's any man alive could have beaten him but Jack Kennedy.

STEWART: We hear a lot of stories about the problems that existed, especially in Boston, between the Dever and the Kennedy

[-10-]

campaigns. Were you at all involved in any of...

BYRNE: They were—what you'd hear, I'm sure, are grossly exaggerated. I mean, there might have been some bickering as to throwing some campaign funds into a joint account, or having the headquarters with all kinds of signs of both Dever and Kennedy, and in isolated incidents. That's been grossly exaggerated, because throughout the commonwealth they were pretty well combined. If there was any dissension, it was merely between personalities rather than the actual conduct of their respective campaigns. That's always true in Massachusetts. It's only lately that they've been running as a team, and then sometimes it's questionable in my mind as to whether it is a team. I'd say there wasn't any bickering that would be worthy of any consideration or any talk.

STEWART: Was it assumed by most people that Ambassador Kennedy was pretty much in charge of the whole Kennedy campaign?

BYRNE: No, no it wasn't. Jack was a rather.... Jack, even in those days, was a rather independent young man. By that time, he had matured. Then he brought Bobby [Robert F. Kennedy] over, and Bobby did a great job as campaign manager. As you know, Bobby has got a very strong mind, and, of course, nobody, not even his dad, could tell him what to do all the time. Between the two of them—although the father was a great help to them in the background—I'd have to say that Jack and Bobby ran

[-11-]

the campaign.

STEWART: Would you say there was any problem as far as raising funds, as far as conflicts or cooperation in raising funds between the Dever people and the Kennedy people?

BYRNE: No, I never noticed any conflict. Of course, there wasn't much of a problem in raising funds. Dever never had any trouble raising funds, and some of those campaigns used to run into a million dollars. And I'm sure the Kennedys never had any trouble raising funds. So there was never any problem along that line.

STEWART: Shortly after John Kennedy went to the Senate, namely two years later, there was quite a squabble over his non-support of Foster Furcolo in his race against Senator Saltonstall [Leverett Saltonstall]. Again, do you recall?

BYRNE: Yes, I do recall that. If you remember rightly, at that time Jack was in terrible trouble with his back. Foster Furcolo had called upon him to make a speech in his behalf. I remember very clearly Jack writing the speech and having it all ready, and he appeared at the studio at that time, at that particular time when he should have appeared. He was in great pain.

I don't think there was any great love lost between John Kennedy and Foster Furcolo. I don't think there was any close relationship at all, but for the sake of the Party, he felt that he had to get on there, or intended to get on and make a speech in Foster Furcolo's

[-12-]

behalf. Five or ten minutes before they actually were to go on the air, Foster Furcolo came dashing in and wanted to take a peek at the speech for the first time and then insisted upon him changing it. Having in mind that Jack was in great pain anyway, and that he had thought that he had written a speech that would help the Democratic Party, being forced to wait until the last minute and then having someone insist upon changing it, I'd say that it did upset him. For that reason, he might have deleted something that he had in there. There was a sort of an angry exchange at that time. Jack was disappointed at his lateness in arrival and his insistence upon changing the speech, and then there was a little bit of a squabble. That's about the extent of it.

STEWART: Ted Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen] in his book states that, one, that he actually did some work for Saltonstall in that campaign on the orders of Senator Kennedy and...

BYRNE: That he did some work for Saltonstall?

STEWART: Right. And two, that President Kennedy actually liked the arrangement of having a Republican colleague. My question is: was this commonly known in Massachusetts and did it cause any real problems?

BYRNE: Well, it was commonly known to the extent that I believe that after this misunderstanding took place at the television studio, the following day, the newspapers had some headlines along the line that he wasn't too happy with Foster Furcolo. Of course, that thing engendered con-

[-13-]

siderable talk throughout the commonwealth that he wasn't wholeheartedly behind him. And, of course, there a friendship between the Saltonstall family and the Kennedy family. But irrespective of that, I know that he did intend to make a speech for the Democratic Party that particular night. If it was disrupted to any great extent, it was caused by the failure of Foster Furcolo to show up at that time, not to be there on time, and then to insist upon a change.

STEWART: Many people also have criticized President Kennedy for not taking a more active part in Massachusetts Democratic affairs, more specifically in trying to do something about "reforming" the Party in the state. Do you consider this a just criticism?

BYRNE: No, I don't consider it a just criticism. I feel that Jack Kennedy always felt as though he represented all the people of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and he didn't think that his function should become the leader of the Democratic Party. There's a million independent voters this commonwealth, along with the division that exists between the Democratic and the Republican Party, and he didn't want to get into any internal squabbles because I think in the back of his head he had higher ambitions and stayed away from it. He would make a couple of speeches for the Democratic Party.

I remember David I. Walsh telling me at one time, when he

[-14-]

was in the United States Senate that the one thing he didn't want to do was set himself up as a leader of the Democratic Party, that his idealism led him to the belief back in those he represented the entire people of the commonwealth. He was willing to help members that were striving to gain office and belonged to the Democratic Party, that was the extent to which he would go. I think that Jack adopted the same philosophy. Frankly, in those days, I think it was a good philosophy.

STEWART: Again, for biographical purposes, when did you become District Attorney in Suffolk County?

BYRNE: I became—Paul Dever appointed me District Attorney of Suffolk

County back in 1952, and I ran for election in 1954 and was successful. I haven't had a fight for the last fourteen years. I have practically received the endorsement of all parties.

STEWART: During this whole period, have you had any role or any official capacity as far as the state committee or the Jefferson-Jackson Day Committee is concerned?

BYRNE: No, I haven't. I haven't played a prominent part in either the activities of the state committee or the Jefferson-Jackson Dinner, except to buy my share of tickets and appear there and once in a while make a speech. I wouldn't say that I've been active because I've got a busy office here, and I just can't give up the time to be running up and down the commonwealth in behalf of

[-15-]

various candidates, although they have always had my sympathies.

STEWART: During this period when you were the District Attorney and President Kennedy was in the Senate, could you generally describe the type of relationship you had with his office, either here in Boston or in Washington?

BYRNE: Well, as I say, I don't ever remember visiting Senator Kennedy's office in Boston. I know I never did. As a matter of fact, until you brought it to my attention, I hardly remember there ever was such an office. I had a very close relationship with Senator Kennedy in his Washington office, but it was more of a personal nature than a political one. When Jack would come on to Boston, why, on many, many occasions I'd spend time with him alone, and we'd talk to each other and perhaps go out and have a bite to eat together. As far as being actively interested in the political situation while he was in the Senate, there was never much time spent in that regard.

STEWART: To what extent would you say he was concerned with keeping contact with all of the details of Massachusetts Democratic affairs during this period? Was he always questioning people about who was going to run for what, why, and so forth?

BYRNE: To a great extent. He was always interested. He always had his finger on the pie, so to speak, on even the smallest situations that were taking place in Massachusetts.

[-16-]

Whenever there'd be any change or prospective change or expected change in the state committee, he was always vitally interested. I know that because I talked it over with him

many times, various things that might happen. He kept close touch with the people in Massachusetts, and when he had time, he'd always come here and visit, go up and down the commonwealth. He never lost contact.

STEWART: Do you recall any problems regarding appointments that he was trying to push, or someone else trying to push that he was opposed to?

BYRNE: No. I can remember where—of course, I think he made Lynch [John M. Lynch] the head of some authority around there, Director of the Port Authority. And I know that when Foster Furcolo was Governor of the Commonwealth, there became a vacancy of the District Attorney over in Middlesex County. And I was out of town at the time. I think I was in Miami, and I got a call from him at that time to see what I could do to make sure that John Droney [John J. Droney] was appointed District Attorney in Middlesex County. I don't know whether Foster really wanted to do it at the beginning, but he ultimately ended up by appointing John Droney District Attorney.

And then there were sundry other appointments that I knew about that are not clear in my mind at the present time. Of course, when he got in that fight to remove Bill Burke [William H. Burke, Jr.], somehow or other they built

[-17-]

that up as a fight between John McCormack and Jack Kennedy. To a certain extent it probably was. I don't think that John McCormack went so far as Jack did to determine who would be the victor of that fight. Now it well might have been that John McCormack, being as shrewd as he is, realized that he would be fighting a losing fight. I sometimes think that that was so because, if he wanted to fight Jack Kennedy for the head of the state committee, John McCormack could have well chosen someone else that would be in a far better position to lick Lynch than Burke. Jack Kennedy went all out on that. He really went to work to make sure that Burke was licked and that Lynch was elected.

STEWART: Why did he? Did he ever discuss it with you? Or what was your understanding as to why he got into that originally?

BYRNE: Well, I think that he had the impression that Burke wasn't his man and, as I say, he was looking into the future. He wanted to control the Democratic state committee because they had a lot to do with Conventions and would be going to future Conventions for presidential candidates and vice presidential candidates. And down in his heart, he felt that Burke not only wasn't with him but he couldn't depend upon him and he might well be against him, that he was someone else's man.

STEWART: Well, Burke was quite anti-Stevenson.

BYRNE: Yes, and that probably entered into it, too. There were several

elements that he felt that he just had

[-18-]

to get him out and get his own man in. But when they start to say that there was a great fight between John McCormack and—I don't think that's quite so because John McCormack would have been smart enough to pick up someone else that could have made a much better fight than Burke, because Burke at that time wasn't too strong.

STEWART: Again, it is frequently said that this whole fight, and perhaps some of the things that had gone on before, in many respects split up a number of people in the state into McCormack people and Kennedy people. Do you think this is true? Do you think the feeling, as a result of the '56 fight, lasted for some years?

BYRNE: When you say the '56 fight, you mean between whom?

STEWART: Burke and Lynch.

BYRNE: Oh, no, I think that really wasn't a major aspect to any great disagreement between John McCormack and Jack Kennedy at all, because it didn't mean enough to McCormack. I know it didn't mean enough to him because if it did, if he really wanted to have a showdown with Jack Kennedy at that time over the chairman of the state committee, then he could have selected someone that would have made it a real fight. He didn't do it.

STEWART: Do you think he could have won if he had gone all out for it?

BYRNE: Not with Burke. No.

STEWART: No, I mean with someone else.

[-19-]

BYRNE: Oh, it would have been a real fight.

STEWART: What was, if you recall, the main leverage that the Kennedy people had or used in getting the support for Lynch?

BYRNE: For Lynch?

STEWART: Yes.

BYRNE: Personal contact. He went out and pulled the doorbell of every delegate that was on the National Committee. He really made it a



personal matter. Of course, John McCormack didn't do that. I don't think John McCormack made any telephone calls. I think the reason for that was that John McCormack didn't think it was important enough to have any kind of a showdown because in the last analysis, the head of the Democratic state committee doesn't amount to an awful lot. This isn't an organizational state. Everyone is on their own. There's no organization in the city. I don't recall any politicians ever asking me to appoint an Assistant District Attorney. Whether it was because they were afraid to ask me on.... I don't know. I know them all personally and I like them, but you're absolutely on your own, both in this city and in the commonwealth. There's no organization at all. It was Jack Kennedy's organization that made him successful and in a minor sense it's an individual situation. We're not like Chicago and New York and St. Louis and what used to be in Newark and places like that. It's every man for himself. So it really wasn't important at

[-20-]

all except from the standpoint of Convention delegates.

STEWART: Do you recall anything, again, relating to Kennedy's part in the 1956 state Convention in what was quite a sizable battle between Joe Ward [Joseph D. Ward], Eddie McCormack [Edward J. McCormack, Jr], and Chub Peabody [Endicott Peabody] for the Attorney General nomination?

BYRNE: Yes. That was a rather bitter situation. I have no recollection of the Kennedys entering into it in any way. They might have, but I have no recollection of it. That was just strictly a Peabody-Ward-Eddie McCormack situation. Of course, Speaker McCormack was naturally interested in his nephew and did what he could from Washington, but I have no recollection of him coming up here to Boston and trying to put any pressure on anyone.

STEWART: I've heard from various sources that there was a certain amount of friction because Senator Kennedy didn't support Endicott Peabody either in that fight or in the one he had two years later when Peabody did become Governor, that this did cause some problems. Do you know anything about that? And then, again, he didn't support him for the Middlesex County District Attorney job.

BYRNE: He didn't support him, and neither did John McCormack support him. I'm only talking from memory, but I remember that after Eddie McCormack licked Chub Peabody for the Convention endorsement, that John McCormack at a banquet one night asked Chub Peabody if he'd have a picture taken

[-21-]

with Eddie McCormack, and he refused him, he declined to do it. So that made a strained relationship existing there immediately. And whether it was ever healed or not, I don't know. But I have no recollection of Jack Kennedy getting mixed up in that at all.

STEWART: You were, I assume, at the 1956 Democratic National Convention in Chicago when the President made a race for the vice presidential nomination?

BYRNE: Yes, I was there. I was there but—as you know, he made up his mind at about the last minute, even though they might have made some minor preparations. I have no recollections at all of the details. I saw him and talked to him, but I have no recollection, except I know he lost. As a matter of fact, it was a good thing he did lose. My memory at that time was that his father didn't think it would do him any good—this was prior to them going out to the Convention, when there was some talk about it—and advised against it, and then went off to Europe. It was while he was in Europe that Jack sent him a wire to the effect that "I'm running for the vice presidency." But it was all over before he could even be called, I guess. I don't know what the conversation was.

STEWART: Governor Dever, of course, was quite active in this whole drive, even before the Convention and during the Convention....

BYRNE: Well, Governor Dever would be. He liked President Kennedy

[-22-]

personally very much. Of course, Dever never had any great hates. I don't remember any individual who Dever really disliked to the extent that you could say that he hated him. So he would always go along with the Democratic Party or Jack Kennedy or anyone else, as long as he thought it was in the best interests of the Party. There would never be any dispute along that line.

STEWART: He passed away when? In '57, '58, or '59?

BYRNE: What was that?

STEWART: Paul Dever passed away in '58, was it, or '59?

BYRNE: I don't know the year. Of course, he was out of office at that time.

STEWART: When, do you recall, did it become quite apparent that Kennedy was going to make the run in 1960? Do you recall discussing it with him at all, say, in '57 or early '58?

BYRNE: You're talking about now the year that he was successful in becoming

the President?

STEWART: Right.

BYRNE: I knew it a long time before that because of my friendship with the father, probably more so than with Jack. I knew a long time ago because I know that Mr. Kennedy was planning it and doing the work and lining up the key figures in the country. At that time I was the President of the National Association of District Attorneys, and long before the election I was working throughout the country on the various district attorneys—and they

[-23-]

knew it—selling Kennedy every opportunity I had, even to the extent of bringing him out to Milwaukee and having him as the chief speaker at the National Convention of District Attorneys. I was pretty well wrapped up in that campaign, kept pretty busy.

STEWART: Do you recall any other particular states where you had contacts that were especially influential as far as the delegation was concerned at the 1960 Convention?

BYRNE: Well, I knew someone in every delegation at the 1960 Convention because of the fact that I had been the national president of the District Attorneys and was able to talk to someone. I can recall definitely that I had gone to Philadelphia, and Vic Blanc [Victor H. Blanc] at that time was District Attorney in Philadelphia. Jack was coming in to make a major speech, and Vic was able to get me close to where he was to make his speech. It was an open air speech he intended to make at that time, and I was probably about twenty-five feet away from the mike. Jack was coming along, and he noticed me, and he stopped the whole motorcade to get out of the car and ask me what I was doing in Philadelphia. And then Vic Blanc, at that time, he said, “Well, if he ever wins, I know who to get the tickets from for the Inaugural Ball.” And then I spent most of the night with him, talking to the leaders of the Philadelphia situation. When he left to go out to some other part of the country, I left to go back to Boston.

[-24-]

I remember I saw Governor Lawrence [David Leo Lawrence] at that time. At that time, he wasn't inclined to be with Jack Kennedy, only because he didn't think that a Catholic could become President of the country. I was with Governor Lawrence in his office in Pennsylvania because I wanted to report back just exactly what he was saying, and I told him so. And he said, “Well, I cannot come out for Jack Kennedy.” He said, “Quite frankly—I'm telling you the truth—I don't think the time is right for a Catholic to be President of this country.” And he was a Catholic, as you know. So I reported that back to them.

But then Vic Blanc introduced me to Bill Green [William J. Green, Jr.]. Bill Green at that time was the Democratic leader of the city of Philadelphia. And there was another Green there that was just as powerful. He was the head of some sort of a trucking concern. I came back and reported to Mr. Kennedy, and he knew Bill Green. As a matter of fact, I think he was already in touch with Bill Green before I told him.

STEWART: This is Ambassador Kennedy?

BYRNE: Yes, Ambassador Kennedy. Then I told him about this other Green whom Vic Blanc in Philadelphia said was partly responsible for Governor Lawrence's election, because he carried Philadelphia by over two hundred thousand, and he only won by about eighty thousand. They were all with Jack Kennedy even at that early date. That was long before

[-25-]

there was any announcement or anything else.

Then I went back to see Governor Lawrence again, and I couldn't shake him. I had no particular influence with him except I knew him because the Brink's Robbery had just been concluded. Philadelphia was trying to extradite "Specs" O'Keefe [Joseph J. O'Keefe], who was my principal witness in the Brink's Robbery, and I was trying to get Lawrence to agree not to extradite him. So I had become very friendly with him. And then the next time I met Lawrence was outside the San Francisco hotel or was it Los Angeles?

STEWART: Los Angeles.

BYRNE: Los Angeles, outside the hotel. He called me over, and he said, "We're going into caucus in about an hour and there's no problem." He didn't have to tell me that because we had been in close touch with the leaders of the Philadelphia crowd, and they had already informed us that Governor Lawrence would be all right—since the last time I'd seen him.

STEWART: What really caused Billy Green to support John Kennedy, do you know? I've heard it said, and this may be an exaggeration, that there are only three or maybe four people who really understand the situation in Pennsylvania and Philadelphia in 1960. Of course, Billy Green is dead now, and I was trying to figure out who the others are.

[-26-]

BYRNE: Billy Green died two weeks after I had dinner with him after Jack Kennedy's funeral in Washington.

[BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 1]

He really liked Jack Kennedy. He thought that Jack Kennedy could win and, of course, as you know, they want winners. He felt that Jack Kennedy could win and got on the bandwagon very, very early, as did Mayor Daley [Richard J. Daley] in Chicago.

STEWART: Was Ambassador Kennedy the primary man who Billy was dealing with?

BYRNE: I wouldn't know that, but I'd say Bill Green was dealing with him, talking with Mr. Kennedy constantly, as was Crotty [Peter J. Crotty] up in New York. Now they might have been talking with Jack also, but I know that Mr. Kennedy was in constant touch with these people and doing whatever he could to line them up for his son.

STEWART: And how, in turn, did Green finally get Lawrence to come over? Was this just a matter of getting to a certain number of delegates in the Pennsylvania delegation and then showing Lawrence that he had these people?

BYRNE: That, along with the fact that, as time went on, he started to carry the primaries in some of the other states, convinced Governor Lawrence himself that he could win. But there was a lot of pressure put on him prior to that, pressure to the extent that some of his close personal friends who were in high political positions to help him were constantly asking him to recede

[-27-]

from his prior position and get on the bandwagon. That, coupled with the fact that Jack was winning these primaries, I think convinced Lawrence that he could win.

STEWART: Someone once told me that Lawrence had a commitment well before the Convention that Lyndon Johnson [Lyndon Baines Johnson] would be the vice presidential nominee, and this caused him to go over.

BYRNE: I don't think that's so. I'd say that is not so because I don't think the Kennedys had any idea, when the fight was going on, that Lyndon Johnson would be the vice presidential candidate. As you know, there were bitter remarks made by Johnson, and the Kennedys aren't in the habit of not fighting back. So, I'm sure that wasn't so.

STEWART: Were you at all involved in the New York situation? Were you friendly with any....

BYRNE: Well, of course, I was friendly with all the district attorneys, Frank Hogan [Frank S. Hogan] and Eddie Silver [Edward S. Silver]. Of

course, Frank doesn't belong to any organization. There's no one running his office or telling him who to appoint and who not to appoint. He was a distinct separate entity, and I was in close touch with him all the time. Then, of course, I knew Frank O'Connor, and Frank was very active.

STEWART: For Kennedy or...

BYRNE: For Kennedy. Yes.

[-28-]

STEWART: Are there any other states that you feel there's anything you can shed any light on as to why they went or didn't go for Kennedy?

BYRNE: No, I couldn't because my only association would be with district attorneys, and I don't know of any district attorney that you can term a "boss." There was no difficulty in lining them up for Kennedy. They were delighted to do it and they did do it.

STEWART: In what way, if at all, were you involved in the 1959 Boston mayoralty race?

BYRNE: Between....

STEWART: Between Powers [John E. Powers] and Collins [John F. Collins].

BYRNE: I was very active for Powers. As a matter of fact, in that contest, as you know, Jack Kennedy came out for Powers.

STEWART: Were you at all involved in the discussion as to whether Kennedy should or should not come out for Powers?

BYRNE: No, I was not.

STEWART: That was going to be my next question. Were there many people advising Powers not to request it or Kennedy not to do anything, for fear of what eventually happened?

BYRNE: I don't know. The first I know is when the news came out that he had endorsed John Powers for mayor. I know that he didn't seek my advice at that time.

STEWART: To go back a bit, as far as the 1958 campaign, of course, Senator Kennedy ran for re-election and got no problem at all with Vincent

Celeste [Vincent J. Celeste]. Is there anything about that campaign that you recall?

[-29-]

BYRNE: Well, that really wasn't a campaign at all. That was just throwing someone in there to be in there. They had to fill the ticket up. They had to find someone to run against him. They knew it was a hopeless cause so they just threw in Celeste. There was really no campaign. Jack Kennedy did some campaigning, but he didn't have to do any if he didn't want to.

STEWART: Again, I've heard that there was a little bit of friction between Kennedy and Edward McCormack. They had a dinner, I believe, in which Harry Truman [Harry S. Truman] came and made an appearance and later told some reporters why he couldn't support John Kennedy for the presidential nomination.

BYRNE: Eddie Kennedy?

STEWART: Why he, Truman, couldn't support Jack Kennedy for the nomination. The story goes that the Kennedy people were somewhat upset because the McCormacks brought in Harry Truman, who they weren't particularly fond of or didn't think Truman had much appeal in Massachusetts.

BYRNE: I remember Truman coming to Massachusetts, but I have no recollection of anything along that line. I know the McCormacks. I know both Eddie and John. They, under no circumstances, would they enter into any conspiracy or any scheme to humiliate Jack Kennedy.

STEWART: No, no, I wasn't suggesting that.

BYRNE: Wasn't Eddie running for something himself at that time?

[-30-]

STEWART: Yes.

BYRNE: Well, they brought Harry Truman in to help Eddie McCormack. I mean, the fact that he might not have been friendly with Jack Kennedy would never enter into their head. They wouldn't bring him in merely because he was unfriendly with Jack Kennedy. They'd bring him in to see if he could help Eddie McCormack.

STEWART: As I say, according to the story I heard, the Kennedy people tried to get them not to do this because they felt it might be embarrassing to

Senator Kennedy to have Harry Truman here when he wasn't a supporter of Kennedy at all.

BYRNE: I never heard of that, but I wouldn't be in a position to know whether that was so or not. I never heard of it from either party.

STEWART: As far as the 1960 Convention was concerned, did you do anything out there as far as trying to poll the delegates that they had or get more of them?

BYRNE: This was the 1960 Convention.

STEWART: In Los Angeles, right.

BYRNE: Oh, I was very active out there running from one delegation to another because, as I say, most district attorneys are delegates and so I knew someone in every delegation and made it my business to talk to them and to get some idea as to just how they were lined up, although I wasn't what you might call one of the co-ordinators that stayed with them all the time. I was a sort of a general co-ordinator

[-31-]

that knew someone in every delegation—which, perhaps, most people weren't in a position to know—and could bring back some information. But they had done such a great job on it themselves that they didn't need much information from me because they practically knew who they had and who they didn't have.

STEWART: It's been said that there was a certain amount of resentment within the Massachusetts delegation that they were all taken for granted and no one was really paying any attention to them as far as....

BYRNE: No, that isn't so. That isn't so. Everyone in the Massachusetts delegation understood where they were and where they had to be. John McCormack nominated him and was standing there all day and all night. Of course, some people try to read men's minds and they're not too successful in reading them properly. There was no dissension in the Massachusetts delegation—everybody was running around doing the best they could to get a native son nominated—none whatsoever, even though we knew the friendship that existed between John McCormack and Johnson at that time. John McCormack told him “cold turkey” that there was no one he could be with but John Kennedy. And if you know McCormack, he's every inch a man; he doesn't try to play petty politics.

STEWART: Do you think there was a serious attempt by the Johnson people to talk to McCormack in the hopes that he wasn't so strong for Kennedy?



[-32-]

BYRNE: Well, I suppose there was, but it couldn't be successful knowing John McCormack. It was a unified effort; it wouldn't have done any good anyway. They could have talked to him from now till doomsday; there was nothing he could do. In the first place, he's not that type of individual, and in the second place, he'd be cutting his own throat.

STEWART: As far as the Massachusetts campaigns in 1960, O'Connor [Thomas J. O'Connor, Jr.] against Saltonstall and Bill Ward running for governor....

BYRNE: Well, the surprise of that was O'Connor licking Foster Furcolo in the Democratic primary. Of course, the moment he did that he didn't have any chance to begin with. He tore the party apart—not that I think Furcolo would have had any chance at that time either. After you hold office around here for any number of years, it's a very difficult thing to remain popular because, as I told you before, we have no organization. There's no political organization, and whether you're the mayor of Boston or the Governor of the Commonwealth, once you go two terms, you've had it! There's no great organization you can call on to help you out. It's an individual effort, and it's very difficult to remain popular if you want to do a halfway decent job. The same with the mayor of Boston, we have the same problem there. I don't know of any mayor that's ever gone out with bands playing and flags waving and people saying, "We wish you could come back." Even John Collins,

[-33-]

who in my opinion was a pretty strong mayor, he lost the city to Chub Peabody in the primary for United States Senate.

STEWART: Was it generally assumed that Kennedy himself and the Kennedy people were supporting Foster Furcolo in the primary against O'Connor?

BYRNE: No, I don't think they played any part in it. I know they didn't take part at all. It wasn't that that elected O'Connor. It could have been Jones or Smith or anybody else. They could have licked Foster Furcolo. It was just anti-Furcolo. It couldn't be anything else because he was an obscure mayor up in Springfield. He didn't have any money. I don't think he was on television four or five times and still he won the Democratic primary.

STEWART: I've heard it said that the Ward people—and maybe you weren't at all

connected with that campaign—but that they made a serious blunder in not doing more to associate themselves with the Kennedy campaign in 1960, which is really what caused them to lose to Volpe [John A. Volpe].

BYRNE: I'm a great believer that men cannot transfer votes where you haven't any organization, as I've explained to you. There's nobody.... The mere fact that—I think Jack Kennedy made a speech for Ward down here at the Garden, but even if he didn't, in my opinion, it would not have made any impression whatsoever. The people of this commonwealth are a rather independent type. There isn't anyone who can tell them who to vote

[-34-]

for, and when someone tries to tell them, it is greatly resented. You cannot—there is no one can transfer whatever strength they might have to someone else. So I don't think Ward's defeat had anything to do with Kennedy whatsoever. I wouldn't care if Jack Kennedy at that time had come out against him, in my opinion it would not have made any difference. People around here vote for whomever they want to vote for, and they're not being told who to vote for. Where they might vote for Kennedy, they cannot transfer that strength to someone else. And sometimes it hurts.

STEWART: I'd like to ask you a couple of general questions about Massachusetts politics. Theodore White [Theodore H. White], of course, wrote a book about the 1960 campaign, primarily concerned with John Kennedy. In his book he made some pretty serious charges against Massachusetts politics in general and the Democratic Party in Massachusetts in particular. For example, he lumped Massachusetts and Texas and West Virginia and Indiana as having, as he says, "the most squalid, corrupt, and despicable politics in all of the states." As a political figure in Massachusetts, what is your reaction to criticism of this type?

BYRNE: Anyone could make that statement and then if you called upon him for some proof, they couldn't produce anything. Massachusetts, in my opinion, is not that type of state at all, and there has never been any evidence to substantiate such a claim. Every state in the union, as you

[-35-]

know, produces at some time or other, if an intensive investigation is made, some evidence of fraud and corruption. Massachusetts probably stands above the great majority of the states in this country in integrity. It's easy to make claims, but then, if you pin them down and say, "Where is it?" they can never produce it.

I've never received a complaint in the fourteen years that I've been District Attorney, when John Hynes [John B. Hynes] and John Collins have been mayor of this city, I have never received a legitimate complaint of any fraud. And I'm sure if it was prevalent, as they say, that they would have come in here. And anyone that knows me knows that I don't play

politics with this office. That's why I've been elected fourteen years without any opposition. As you know, if you do anything wrong or you're afraid to move, that information gets around very, very easily. In my experience, I'd have to say it was absolutely unfounded.

We've had our investigation from the state level here, and some public officials had been indicted, but that's true of every state in the union and in many states much more intensive. And very few of them have been convicted. As you know, we live in a government of laws and not of men, and if they haven't been convicted, then we have to assume that they're not guilty. So, I can't go along with

[-36-]

that at all.

STEWART: Okay. I think, in addition to this book, there have been numerous articles, again primarily based on John Kennedy and the background that he came from, Massachusetts politics, articles that have been quite critical.

BYRNE: Critical of?

STEWART: Massachusetts politics in general and the way the state has been run and the city has been run.

BYRNE: Well, a lot of it is guesswork; a lot of it is unfair insinuations with absolutely no truth. Of course, most of the investigation was on the state level—they weren't on the city level—and they were conducted by the Attorney General of the commonwealth with the help of a crime commission, for which they spent one million five hundred thousand dollars of the full resources of the commonwealth. Then they came up with about three or four convictions and that's all. I like to judge things on the facts and not on what someone says, and on the city level there's been no evidence of it that I have seen.

STEWART: Were you at all involved in any of the discussions over the success for Senator Kennedy when he became President? There were a number of people mentioned. In fact, maybe even your name was mentioned as a successor—although Ben Smith [Benjamin A. Smith, II] was chosen.

BYRNE: Yes, there was a lot of talk at that time.

STEWART: Was your name mentioned?

[-37-]

BYRNE: Yes, my name was mentioned.

STEWART: Howard Fitzpatrick [Howard W. Fitzpatrick], Torbert Macdonald [Torbert H. Macdonald], a number of people.

BYRNE: No, I... There was never.... Of course, at that time, Ted [Edward Moore Kennedy] was working for me so I had a pretty good idea what was going on. I know that Jack sent for Foster Furcolo, who was Governor at that time, brought him over to Washington, and told him whom he wanted. And he told him it would be all right. So anyone who was on the inside knew that Ben Smith was going to get it. I wouldn't have taken it on a platter. As a matter of fact, Jack Kennedy wanted to support me for Governor at the time that Foster Furcolo was running. Of course, there was no great love lost between Jack Kennedy and Foster Furcolo. There was no intimate friendship there.

STEWART: Was this in '56, do you mean?

BYRNE: Whenever Foster Furcolo first ran for Governor. I had lunch with Jack Kennedy in the Ritz-Carlton Hotel at that time, and he tried to persuade me, or he indicated that he'd like to have me run for Governor at the time. I told him, "Jack, I mean it, I've reached the stage where I can't, or I don't intend to be running around for every parade that's in the commonwealth and kissing babies and going out every night attending rallies." I said, "Frankly, I want to live, if I can, ten or fifteen more years. I don't intend to get up in the State House and be fighting with forty senators and two hundred and forty representatives." I said, "If you were to put a

[-38-]

hundred thousand dollars on a platter that I could stick in my pocket, and assure me that you'd take the stump for me every day and give me all the money that I want, you can keep it. I'm not the least bit interested." He looked at me with amazement and said, "You mean to tell me you wouldn't want to go to the United States Senate?" I said, "Absolutely, I have no desire at my age. I've got a job now that I understand. I have been Assistant District Attorney for twelve years before I became District Attorney, and I've got it so organized that the pressures aren't too great, and I can enjoy myself, and I'm the boss." So I just said, "Nothing doing."

STEWART: You say he did talk to you about the Senate, too?

BYRNE: Oh, yes, but he said, "You mean somebody wouldn't want to go to the Senate—after I became Governor." I said, "You can throw that in the ash can also. I'm not the least bit interested."

STEWART: Did he talk to other people about running for Governor?

BYRNE: I don't think so. No, no, it wasn't any vendetta. He just thought that—I at that time had been through two or three sensational cases that had

propelled me into the limelight, and because of our friendship, he would've liked to have me run for Governor. Not a chance.

STEWART: Did he ever at any other time try to get you to run for anything?

BYRNE: No, no, no. I ended that once and for all.

[-39-]

STEWART: Do you recall, was there any problem over the appointment or election of John Hynes to be national committeeman in 1958?

BYRNE: I was sitting on the beach at Miami, and I got a telephone call one day, and it's Jack Kennedy. He said, trying to make up my mind who to make the national committeeman." And I said, "Who is it between? Who have you got in mind?" So he said, "There's John Hynes, and there's Howard Fitzpatrick." And I thought he named someone else. No, then he asked me. He said, "Who would you take between the two?" I said, "Well, I'm a very close personal friend of John Hynes. But what sort of a national committeeman he'd make, how active he'd become, I don't know. John Hynes is one of those nice, quiet, inoffensive fellows." I said, "If you want someone to get in there and spend a lot of money, then Howard Fitzpatrick would be the guy." At that time Howard was, at least appeared to be, very prosperous and was a great spender. But I said, "Frankly, Jack, I don't know. Leave me out of it. I can't tell you who ought to be national committeeman."

Then there was a great drive on—as I told you once before, once you're mayor of the city you become unpopular. Quite a few of the delegates had come out to him and said, "Look, why don't you give this to Garey Byrne? Then we'd have no problem." He quite frankly told them, he said, "I've

[-40-]

already talked to him, and he's not the least bit interested."

So it ended up with Hynes. Johnny told me afterwards that the job amounted to really nothing. John would say, "I don't know what this job is about. All I do is go to a couple of meetings a year over there and meet some people. You never see the President or anybody else." I know he was happy to get out of it.

STEWART: He left, and Powers [John E. Powers] replaced him?

BYRNE: Yes, Powers replaced him. Well, Powers is a different type of individual. Powers is aggressive and strong. He was the proper man for that job because he would know everybody throughout the country after the first meeting, whereas John Hynes wouldn't bother to know anybody in a year.

STEWART: Do you recall, did he mention, when he was talking about filling this

job, as to whether he wanted someone who could do something for him within the National Committee? Or was he concerned with this?

BYRNE: Yes, I think that he was interested in getting a figure in there that could make a good impression and get around and talk to the other national committeemen. That's probably why he took Hynes, because he was mayor of the city and he probably figured that he knew all the other mayors and a lot of them might be on the Committee.

STEWART: Did you see the President at all after he went to the White House?

[-41-]

BYRNE: Many times, not so much in the White House, but I'd see him when he arrived back here in Massachusetts. Then I used to run into him quite frequently throughout the country because I was traveling extensively at that time because after I ceased to be President of the National Association of District Attorneys, I was appointed President of the National Association of District Attorneys Foundation. And that kept me active. So I'd meet him in various parts of the country.

STEWART: Do you recall any anecdotes or anything at all significant about any of these meetings?

BYRNE: No, there was always, it was always a friendly relationship. At that time when Jack became President, I put Ted in here as an assistant district attorney and my own boy, who was an assistant district attorney, he went over and became the United States District Attorney over in Washington—not at the same time, but shortly after Ted came in. I thought it might be a good place for Gary [Garrett Byrne, Jr.].

STEWART: United States Attorney, you mean?

BYRNE: No, United States Assistant District Attorney in Washington. He went over with Bobby Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy].

STEWART: Oh, I see. I didn't realize that. Were there any—just off the top of my head, they had a real problem with the U.S. Attorney here in Boston, Elliot Richardson, I believe. It was a problem of getting him out. I understand he didn't resign and most people do when there's

[-42-]

a change of administration. Were you involved in that at all?

BYRNE: No, I wasn't involved in that at all. I only know what I read in the

papers.

STEWART: Were you at all involved in any appointments during the Kennedy Administration?

BYRNE: I'd have to say that my advice was sought, but outside of that, I wasn't involved. And I wouldn't want to say just exactly whom I recommended and so forth and so on.

STEWART: He came here to at least two major dinners, the last one in October 1963 at the Armory.

BYRNE: I remember it well, because I remember that I was sitting at a table right in front of where he was seated. I was with a lot of people that—some of them were coordinators at the Convention. We weren't there a half an hour when Jack Kennedy called me up. There's been a lot of speculation as to what that conversation was. At that time, some of the newspapers were writing that John Droney, who was the District Attorney of Middlesex County, was on the outs with Kennedy because he had indicted Howard Fitzpatrick, who was then the sheriff. And they said, "Jack Kennedy talked to Garrett Byrne, and he informed him as such." That wasn't so at all. All that Jack Kennedy asked me about was Ted. "How's Ted getting along? Is he becoming a good lawyer? He said he loves it." And that's what the conversation was all about.

[-43-]

STEWART: Nothing else about either that one or the other dinner? In May of 1961 they had a big birthday dinner that Pat Lynch ran.

BYRNE: I played a very small part in that. I remember it; it was a tremendous dinner. I met him afterwards, but there was nothing of any importance politically that was discussed between the two of us.

STEWART: That's just about all the questions I have, unless there's anything else that you can think of that we haven't gone over?

BYRNE: Of course, when Ted was an assistant district attorney here, there was constant telephone calls from the White House to Ted. Many times I'd get on the phone and talk to—both he and Bobby because, as you know, the Kennedys were close-knit family, and I think they were in constant touch with each other, perhaps every day, and always were, far as I could see. Whether it was an exchange of ideas or what it was, I don't know, but they were a very, very close-knit family and very fond of each other. There used to be a lot of talk around, some criticism in political circles of Bobby Kennedy. I have a high regard for Bobby Kennedy. I think he's a strong character. The best proof I know of the success in political life is men who retain the friends that they have in early life, that they're still friendly with them, and I don't know of anyone

better in that respect than Bobby Kennedy. There was always that communication back and forth be-

[-44-]

tween them.

STEWART: As I understand, there was a certain amount of opposition among the President's political advisors on the desirability of Teddy running in 1962. Were you, was your opinion sought?

BYRNE: Yes, that was my understanding. I was hearing too much of it, so I called Ted in. He was sitting just where you are, and I called up the father and I said, "Look, I have Ted here with me now. Let's settle this once and for all. Just what have you and Jack decided, if Jack gets into it at all—I don't know, but knowing that this is a close-knit family.... Now what is he running for?" And he said, "Look it, get this straight, will you? He's running for the United States Senate. Now put him on the phone." So Ted got on, and I think Mr. Kennedy must have done most of the conversation, and when he hung up, I said, "Now you know what you're running for,"

STEWART: Just like that.

BYRNE: Just like that. He said, "I always knew what I was running for, Gary. You were the one who wondered what I was running for, not me."

STEWART: A lot has been written about how the President and his father disagreed on many political matters, especially in matters of economics and matters of foreign affairs.

BYRNE: Oh, I don't think there's any question about that. I mean, I know enough about both of them, and Mr. Kennedy was quite frank about that. He kept himself out of that fight as much as he could, as you know, publicly.

[-45-]

He did what any father would do for his son privately, but Jack had a strong mind and a strong will; where he would listen to advice from his father, and it was a great loss to them all when his father got sick, but he didn't necessarily follow him at all. Mr. Kennedy would be the first to admit that.

STEWART: Especially on matters of policy or matters of positions he'd take.

BYRNE: Oh, absolutely. There's no question about it. He'd seek his advice, but he wouldn't necessarily follow it. His decisions were his own.



STEWART: Is there anything else?

BYRNE: No, I can't think of anything else right now. Thank you the interview.

BYRNE: Thank you very much.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[-46-]

Garrett Byrne Oral History Transcript  
Name Index

**B**

Blanc, Victor H., 24, 25  
Burke, William H., Jr., 17, 18, 19  
Byrne, Garrett, Jr., 42

**C**

Casey, Joseph Edward, 2  
Celeste, Vincent J., 29, 30  
Collins, John F., 29, 33, 36  
Crotty, Peter J., 27  
Curley, James Michael, 5

**D**

Daley, Richard J., 27  
Dever, Paul A., 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 22, 23  
Droney, John J., 17, 43

**E**

Eisenhower, Dwight D., 10

**F**

Fitzgerald, John F. "Honey Fitz", 2  
Fitzpatrick, Howard W., 38, 40, 43  
Foley, William J., Jr., 8  
Furcolo, Foster, 12, 13, 14, 17, 33, 34, 38

**G**

Green, William J., 25, 26, 27

**H**

Harriman, William Averell, 8  
Herter, Christian A., 10  
Hogan, Frank S., 28  
Hynes, John B., 36, 40, 41

**J**

Jacobsen, Benny, 1  
Johnson, Lyndon Baines, 28, 32

**K**

Kane, Joseph, 3  
Kefauver, Estes, 8  
Kennedy, Edward Moore, 38, 42, 43, 45  
Kennedy, John F., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 37, 38, 40, 41, 43, 45, 46  
Kennedy, Joseph P., Sr., 2, 10, 11, 22, 23, 25, 27, 45, 46  
Kennedy, Robert F., 11, 42, 44  
Kennedy, Rose Fitzgerald, 10

**L**

Lawrence, David Leo, 25, 26, 27, 28  
Lodge, Henry Cabot, 9, 10  
Lynch, John M. "Pat", 17, 18, 19, 20, 44

**M**

Macdonald, Torbert H., 38  
McCormack, Edward J., Jr., 21, 22, 30, 31  
McCormack, John William, 5, 6, 18, 19, 20, 21, 32, 33  
Morrissey, Francis X., 6  
Mulkern, Patrick J., 3

**O**

O'Connor, Thomas J., Jr., 33, 34  
O'Keefe, Joseph J., 26

**P**

Peabody, Endicott "Chub", 21, 34  
Powers, John E., 29, 41

**R**

Richardson, Elliot, 42  
Roosevelt, Franklin Delano, 2

**S**

Saltonstall, Leverett, 12, 13, 33  
Silver, Edward S., 28  
Smith, Alfred E., 8

Smith, Benjamin A., II, 37, 38  
Sorensen, Theodore C., 13  
Stevenson, Adlai E., 8, 9, 18  
Sutton, William J., 3

## **T**

Truman, Harry S., 30, 31

## **V**

Volpe, John A., 34

## **W**

Walsh, David I., 10, 14  
Ward, Bill, 33, 34, 35  
Ward, Joseph D., 21  
Ward, Michael J., 8  
White, Theodore H., 35