Charles Spalding Oral History Interview—RFK #1, 3/22/1969
Administrative Information

Creator: Charles Spalding
Interviewer: Larry J. Hackman
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Biographical Note
Charles Spalding (1918 - 1999) was a personal friend of the Kennedys who worked on the campaigns for both John F. Kennedy (JFK) and Robert F. Kennedy (RFK). This interview focuses on RFK's complete dedication to his family, the public's misconceptions of RFK, and the formative events of RFK's political career, among other issues.

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   Robert Kennedy interview: p.35 (line 7) - end of page
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of **Charles Spalding**

Interviewed by: Larry J. Hackman

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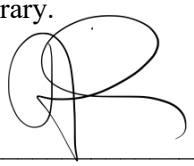

Florence C. Spalding
Donor

5/2/2026
Dated

Charles Spalding—RFK #1
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Oral History Interview

with

CHARLES SPALDING

March 22, 1969
New York, New York

By Larry J. Hackman

For the Robert Kennedy Oral History Program of the Kennedy Library

HACKMAN: Can you remember when you first met Robert Kennedy?

SPALDING: I was thinking that the first time that I did see him he was still just a boy. It was down in Florida, and it was at the very early part of the war. In fact it was about the time that President Kennedy was getting back from his accident overseas. I only saw Bobby for fleeting periods at that time. I just remember him coming in and out of the scene and his part in the family, and I remember his slightness and his engagingness.

HACKMAN: How did he get along with the other members of the family? Did he fit in easily or was he looked upon as special in any sense that you can recall from that period?

SPALDING: Well, I think the thing that marks Bobby for me always is his intensity. It was the quality that he used to overcome his own handicaps — or what he felt were his handicaps. It was the thing that propelled him. That was his great force, I think. So that stuck out because he had that in an inordinate degree.

HACKMAN: When you say his own handicaps, do you mean primarily size?

SPALDING: Well, I think that's — first, it's a big, sprawling family. He was placed well down in the middle of it. He had, as he grew up, even by that time, fairly overwhelming people up above him. Joe [Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr.] was beginning to draw attention, just not on a local basis. That's probably what he had to contend with first, all the little competitive things that happened around the house constantly. And then, as I say, Joe was beginning to draw attention and even when he was relatively young. So that must have been oppressive.

And then along came, below Joe, his very remarkable brother Jack. He was starting to write articles for periodicals and people were beginning to notice him. So then Bobby was faced with that right above him, on top of the handicap of size. Both Joe and Jack were physically bigger than Bobby. So it would seem to me — then on top of the whole pack let's say was Mr. [Joseph P.] Kennedy — so there's a lot of pressure by the time you got down to him. And he was very slight. So it seems to me that perhaps the only way he found at that time to fight his way to the top was just through sheer drive; I mean that's the only way you could get through. That was such a characteristic of his that finally he got so that he could just go really through a wall.

HACKMAN: Can you recall any examples of something like that in the very early days?

SPALDING: Not distinct. I can't give you an anecdote. Later on I could, when he became older and became more involved and had a responsible part in things. But just in the games, which were incessant, the games that everybody has referred to. It was there, it was apparent, in the sailing, in the touch [football], in the baseball, in anything we did — in tennis, anything! Just fierce!

HACKMAN: Can you remember anything about his ability in these games other than his competitiveness?

SPALDING: Yes, quite a bit. His ability at football was good, was better than average. He played in college and won a letter there. But I didn't see him there; I saw him more around the house, playing games there. In golf, in anything, he just was very intense about it and determined to do the very best, and in some games — he played them all — like tennis, which wasn't a game that was exactly suited to his nature, he didn't play that as well as other games because he didn't give it much time. There is a marvelous picture of Bobby playing tennis, and you'd think he was engaged in a Heidelberg duel. He's got a tennis racket and white shorts and a shirt and a clean white ball, and then there's an expression on his face as if he was tearing into Willy Pep or something. It just didn't fit. It was just natural for him to compete at that level.

HACKMAN: Can you remember him ever making comments about his brothers' ability in that period — how things came easier to them, maybe?

SPALDING: Well, no, because that was, I think, the way the code of the family would be. It would just be natural for him, first, to accept them as his other brothers and to accept a subordinate position to them because they were older. Then, of course, he had this marvelous quality of love for his brothers, love for his family particularly. But he was the sort of fellow who could subordinate himself completely and still have this tremendous affection and devotion and sense of duty beyond…. All these emotions with Bobby were far, far greater, far more enlarged than they were with either of the other two. He was devoted to Joe, and he just adored Jack. So that it's odd that…. That's a side, of course, that was never expressed in this family. While they are very emotional — everybody has remarked about the President's cool in this area — you didn't express your emotions in front of anybody. It expressed itself, perhaps, in terms of humor or affection, at the outside, but you never allowed these emotions to manifest.

I think that is probably one of the reasons for the confusion about the public's image of Bobby. It's pretty easy to see somebody compete fiercely and see a grimace on his face or see what looks like a snarl as he really is competing, just trying as hard as he can make it, and trying harder than he thinks he can to achieve his goal; you can see that and then you translate that into terms of ruthlessness. But what you don't see is the softness because it's been disciplined in him not to show. I think people who knew him well always were astounded at the dichotomy in his public appearance or the public's conception of him. It wasn't consistent at all — well, it never is, perhaps, but in his case it was at greater variance than either of the others, any of the others.

HACKMAN: Can you remember in that early period other members of the family making sort of compensations for difficulties he had in competing, either the father or the mother or maybe the sisters?

SPALDING: Oh, I don't think that was ever in the cards. There was never that kind of consideration around there. It was almost tougher the other way. You just got pushed down and pushed down and stuffed under the sofa and into the closet and under the water and off the court until you finally figured out how you could win yourself.

HACKMAN: Were there any members of the family that he was particularly close to other than the adoration of the brothers?

SPALDING: Oh, yes, it went right straight through the entire family. It was more obvious for him to look to his brothers above him because they were older and he followed them than to look behind and see who was following after you. He had — they all had — this marvelous feeling of each other. They were all quite alike, I think, in this. There was total affection, one for the other, without any differentiation. If he had any favorites, you never would know it, and I'm sure that he wouldn't have thought he had any favorites.

HACKMAN: Can you remember anything about Robert Kennedy's particular interests in that period other than the games and sports?

SPALDING: Well, I think that they developed in the wake of the interests that Mr. Kennedy stimulated in all of them together but which was more developed in the older ones, naturally, because they were further along. So Bobby was just beginning to take shape, I suppose, when Joe was killed. And then, perhaps, the first evidence of his own sense of career may be when he served on the destroyer that was named after Joe — maybe at that time. But up until that point, I think he was just growing up in the family. And then being hit early with the tragedy of Joe's death and Kathleen's [Kathleen Kenendy] death; those things came early in his life to him. Then, of course, shortly after the war the President ran for office in Boston, and Bobby was fully occupied from then on. Originally, at a very practical level, too, because

whereas the others were more out in front, Bobby was left with the job of organizing in both cases.

HACKMAN: Do you have any conception of his mind in that period, interest in reading or ability to grasp things?

SPALDING: No. In that first period, he was very quiet. I mean, for years, at that point, I think he felt subdued both because he was under the pressure and under the shadow of the others above him, as we've said, and things, of course, were circulating around the family at a great rate even then. His father was totally involved. So he probably was trying to figure out a place for himself or how he fitted in or what would happen to him or how he could compete or could he compete at all. And he was extremely quiet, maybe shy, but very quiet in that period. Not quiet because he was running to his room with a copy of Schopenhauer, he was just quiet within himself. He wasn't an intellectually minded boy at that time, as I knew him.

HACKMAN: In the conversations around the table at Hyannis Port or the other Kennedy family places, can you remember him engaging in any of this political discussion back and forth in that early period, or was this more or less Joe and John?

SPALDING: No, just lots of gleams of enjoyment. The other two and Mr. Kennedy were able to give and take at that time. But just as, at a much later date, I used to see him try to revive the same thing at his own table and kids down the line weren't able to contribute just because the older ones could get on and they had some knowledge of what was going on. But at that point, he wasn't.… But this would be just before the war, 1941, 1940, 1939. So my impressions were that he was, again, very subdued during the whole period.

HACKMAN: After Joseph Kennedy, Jr. was killed in the war and there were just the two, Robert and John Kennedy, can you remember that the dialogue then was between the elder Kennedy and these two? Did it continue in the same way, say, after the President had done to Congress?

SPALDING: Well, I think right at that point, you see, when the President ran in Boston, in Massachusetts, rather, Bobby ran the campaign, yet he was still being brought along. I mean, the President brought him into it and he managed the campaign and he behaved as the manager of the campaign and learned how to manage a campaign. Even at that early period, that was a rookie year for him. And it's at that point, it seems to me, that he began to emerge.

HACKMAN: Can you remember President Kennedy ever making comments about Robert Kennedy's personality in that early period, his quietness or his competitiveness or anything like this, or did he ever play on Robert Kennedy's devotion to him?

SPALDING: Oh, it then just became such a natural fact. I mean it wasn't anything he ever teased about; it wasn't anything he ever related to, except of course there were such differences in nature between the two of them that sometimes when something would come up which would draw obviously different reactions from the two, those were causes — as so many things were with the President — those were causes for merriment, or amusement rather, not merriment, but amusement. You knew it would be that Bobby's reaction would be so totally inflexible, and he might say — you know, something would come up…. I can only improvise, but Bobby's reaction would be to execute the fellow, whereas the President might want to give him, if not a pardon, a mild sentence. But Bobby's total dedication and his intentness and his intensity were so much on the surface that he couldn't help but be amused by it at times.

HACKMAN: How long did this difference in the two of them continue. Do you get this feeling all the way through or is this only true in the…

SPALDING: Oh, I think that is the difference between the two. The President had a quality of looking around a subject, all the way around it, who was involved on the other side of it, what kind of people. That's really what interested him, the way he'd see it. What was their point of view? What would he be like if he was over there? Actually, was their position better than his when you got down to the…. Finally, it was all the same thing; they all played according to the same rules, which were when you became convinced of your opinion, the thing to do was to go out and prove it and to win, basically. But he spent a lot more time ruminating. Whereas Bobby was physically active and

physically involved in games, the President was unable to do that, so his outlet, I guess was in rumination.

HACKMAN: Can you recall any of the specific circumstances about Robert Kennedy's enlistment when he wound up serving on the destroyer?

SPALDING: No, there's a gap in there where I didn't see him. I saw him when he was going to the law school. He used to come down here to the city once in a while, and I'd see him, and we'd go for dinner or go out. And he'd always have these colossal dogs all around him. He used to have, you know, Brumus…

HACKMAN: He'd bring them with him?

[-8-]

SPALDING: Well, God, everywhere. He'd come into town…. I remember he had a couple of fierce Doberman pinschers that we had a terrible time with. They really spoiled everything for a while, but they…. I just happen to remember that, they were piling them into the car, driving back to Virginia. But there's a period in there I didn't see him after the war. I didn't see him during the war, and I didn't see him, except incidentally, after the war until the presidential campaign. I'd see him just occasionally, but he was busy in other areas. We just didn't run into each other as often. On weekends, I'd see him in the light of things I've described on the Cape weekends or down in Washington if I'd go down to see Jack, but I didn't see him a great deal.

HACKMAN: Any recollections at all of his reaction to the war or his attitude when he came out of the war?

SPALDING: No, I really don't. I think that it was typical, you know, of his wanting to…. Did he drop from college for one year to get into it?

HACKMAN: Yes.

SPALDING: And then went back. Well, I think that's typical of Bobby.

HACKMAN: What about his attitude toward law school in that period? Do you remember his ever talking about that, what he thought of the law then?

[-9-]

SPALDING: It was so obviously a formative period. It wasn't a period when he and I would have talked as closely as perhaps I talked with his brother because we were more contemporary, I guess, and because my first contact in the family was with him. It was more natural for us to talk about those things. Those are the sort of things we did talk about, whereas at that time, I didn't talk to Bobby about those things. He must

have talked about them to somebody, but I think perhaps he was even more reticent about them than, perhaps, the President was. And he was going through law school and he was studying; it was hard. It was like everything he had done, it was like trying to make the football team at Harvard all over again. I don't think it was easy for him. I was conscious that he was spending long hours studying, that it was tough going, and he was going to be anxious when it was over so that he could go back to get into an active life where he thought he would be more at ease.

HACKMAN: You never got the feeling in this period that he enjoyed reading at all, like the President did?

SPALDING: I remember the point where he began to really enjoy it. I mean I know the point, it might not be an accurate point, but I know when I think he really started to interest himself tremendously in that aspect, and that was after the President's death really. I think at that point he really became far more intellectually interested in things than he had been. He'd been sort of involved with mechanics — that's not quite apt because obviously he was involved and concerned and knowledgeable and was reading. But right at that time, it seems to me, maybe, as if to find some answer to this terrible pain he felt about his brother's death; I'm sure he turned to other people writing about similar things. Bobby's whole life is such a fury, you know, that when he started to have groups together and people would…. And then he began to really get interested in what the leading figures thought about astrology. And then he'd

get a scientist out and he'd talk about that and somebody in city planning and then books in the wake of all that. Then at that time, I'd say that he was thoroughly awakened at that point and every faculty was turned on right there.

HACKMAN: Back in the University of Virginia, the law school period, can you remember ever talking to him about what his future might be, what he planned to do?

SPALDING: Yes, oh yes, we all talked about that a lot, and I don't think he really knew. He just thought you really couldn't tell, you know, until the longest…. I think he felt that all along. I mean, that keeps coming up all the time. Events occurred that I think may have tipped him over too far in this belief that there really wasn't any judgement, you just did things at the moment because you couldn't tell what tomorrow's moment was going to be. There became such a fatalism about things and such, maybe even a hint of disaster that….

HACKMAN: Back in that law school period again, when you were talking about what he might do, can you remember some of the options he was considering?

SPALDING: Plainly. It was quite clear it was going to be government. You know, how you broke away from the pack, how you detached yourself from the army

of people, all of whom were trying to do what you were trying to do, which was to get out in front one way or the other. It wasn't really clear with him and, I don't think he knew what was going to occur at the Army hearings. You couldn't have figured it, at any rate he couldn't. Some people were apt to say "I'll run for this and I'll run for that and I'll go for that." But that path was sort of blocked off because he had his brother in front of him, and it wasn't really clear to him how he was going to do it. So he just threw himself into the center just to see where he would come out.

[-11-]

HACKMAN: When you would talk about something like this would he say, "Well, much depends on what my older brother is going to do?"

SPALDING: No, he didn't. I think he felt that…. None of things that developed, of course, were at all clear until the vice presidential nomination occurred in Chicago, and then after that everything fell into line. But up until that point, everything was up for grabs. And I think he just went where he could, was appointed to those various committees and was making his mark. It wasn't exactly clear what he was going to do. It certainly wasn't clear that he was going to be a candidate, to him or to anybody else. He just followed his way rather aimlessly, I think — not aimless because there was always something that was to be done for the older brother, the one that was ahead of you, and everybody fell into line that way.

HACKMAN: While he was at law school he got married to Ethel [Skakel Kennedy]. Can you remember anything about this coming about and what impact it had on him?

SPALDING: Oh yeah, I do remember it. You know, just his tremendous love and affection for her which he showed easily and again the kind of rough and tumble life that they always lived. I remember the house in Greenwich where the Skakels lived, a big rambling place with lots of kids and lots of animals and Bobby coming out — we'd go up and play golf or go swimming — followed the same course of the things that interested him all his life. It just wasn't so frequent — it is in vague detail that I remember.

HACKMAN: Do you remember anything at all about his relationship with girls before he got married?

[-12-]

SPALDING: No, you see, I didn't know him during that period. That's all the period that Dave Hackett and Lem [K. LeMoyne Billings] know better than I because he went to Milton at that time. They were all together. I don't — I remember his being with Ethel, and I remember their marriage and the early days of it. And I remember one particular incident which I think is maybe worth mentioning. I was staying with

them; they had just been married, and I went to Washington and I stayed with them. We were driving back from the airport at night to go to Bobby's house, and we ran into a dog and killed the dog. It upset him so that…. It was unavoidable; the dog raced across in front of the car and there was no way of stopping. We damn near went off into the woods, anyway. But we must have spent three hours going up and down the road to try to find the person who…. It was so typical of him to involve himself, even then. There was no thought of placing the dog on the side — the dog was dead — and leaving it and going on. We went into every single house for ten miles, I suppose, until we finally found the person who was the owner. And Bobby explained what had happened and said how terribly sorry he was and asked about the dog — could he replace it or was there anything possible that could be done. It was so typical of him — and Ethel feeling the same way.

HACKMAN: Can you ever remember him commenting about yourself and the President at that point being bachelors? Is this something he found difficult to understand? Can you remember anything there at all?

[-13-]

SPALDING: Oh, no, no, he never did. Of course — let's see, I wasn't a bachelor. No, he didn't comment on it at all. The thing was, I'm sure that the President in his turn in the family had been forced to compete with Joe. Now Joe had been killed in the war and Jack was the front of the family, and he had this brilliance and incredible attraction, warmth, appeal — charisma, as the final word. I think everybody was delighted that they were so dedicated to moving ahead. So there were never any comments about it other than just ones of approval or amusement or that it was typical of Jack. Didn't he do that well, or he's going to speak here, let's go and hear him. Just that; nothing studiously reflective at all about it. He just enjoyed his brother.

HACKMAN: Can you remember the President ever commenting on Robert Kennedy's performance in that first trial run in '46, but then particularly in the '52 Senate… [Interruption]

SPALDING: … to know Bobby particularly well is in the primary in Wisconsin. That really is….

HACKMAN: Yes, but no. I'm talking about — he's investigating [James R.] Hoffa and [David] Beck when he's working with [John L.] McClellan in '56, '57, '58.

SPALDING: Right, in the labor…. It was so on the front pages and so, in this time, it appeared, I think, in everybody's eyes. Lots of people questioned the association around [Joseph R.] McCarthy even then, not even with the advantages of hindsight. But I'm sure that caused divisive talk among his friends in those days, but this didn't. It was all on the front pages, and the case was pretty obvious and the difficulty was just in prosecuting so that we might have talked just about things that everybody else already knew, things that were

reported on. I think what I am really saying is that as a result of all this, that all through this period, I wasn't a terribly close friend.

[-14-]

HACKMAN: Okay, let's pick it up in '60, then, in the Wisconsin thing. You talked briefly about this in your first interview, about some of the things that you were doing. What contacts with Robert Kennedy stand out in that period?

SPALDING: Well, he is the figure for me during that whole period because when you figure out what just a handful of people he started with, people with no experience, it really was an incredible way to start it out. To go to Wisconsin where there wasn't any political organization at all, with what amounted to a handful of friends, originally nine people to run nine districts out there…. Now, how many districts are there in Wisconsin, thirteen?

HACKMAN: There are more than nine.

SPALDING: Yeah, right. I was saying nine because I was in the ninth, but there were, perhaps, I think, thirteen. I believe there are thirteen districts in Wisconsin, maybe more. However, as many as there were, there was a friend for every district, and that was about all. Hardly any of them had any experience at all, as I recall. And I remember Bobby was in the city, and I was determined that I wanted to go out and do whatever I could. I knew he was in the city, and I suspected where he was for dinner. I think it's kind of typical of the way he operated, the way the whole thing began. I found him over at the Pavillon restaurant, he and Ethel and a couple of other members of the family, eating together as usual, and eating in this elaborate restaurant and having a kind of eggs and bacon dinner, which was also typical, you know, in this very snappy French restaurant. And I walked in and somehow managed to get by Mr. [Henrì] Soule and went to see Bobby. I sat down and had dinner with him and said, "Listen, I'd like to do what I can for the rest of the way. I can get away, and I'd like to throw in." So he said, "I'm going to Wisconsin on Wednesday so get on the plane, and I'll meet you in Milwaukee." As suddenly as that, I went to Wisconsin with him, and as suddenly as that, I ended up in the ninth district at the Eau Claire Hotel and stayed there for three months. That's where I became a friend of Bobby's.

[-15-]

HACKMAN: Let me skip to something. You were making the remark about the bacon and eggs thing. Why do you say that's typical, can you comment then a a little bit on his tastes?

SPALDING: Well, I think that the only people at the Pavillon restaurant that ever looked to me as though they had an appetite were the Kennedys. Everybody else in the whole restaurant looked as though they had been face-fed, you know. They looked like people that had just wallowed in good food and heady

wines and paté de foie gras until they couldn't move. But for some reason the Kennedys liked the restaurant but were dedicated to a Cape Cod diet, you see. We'd go up there and Mr. Soule would come out and explain all the number of things he had under glass, and somebody'd say, "Well, do you have green beans?" So sure he had green beans. And "Do you have cold chicken?" or something? And yet, we'd go back into this place every night where we might just as well have gone down to some Hot Shoppe across the street. But it was always amusing to go in there and have that kind of a dinner and always finish it off — instead of having, you know, some grape that had been treated for ten years by Mr. Soule, Bobby would end up having vanilla ice cream and chocolate sauce. And he always asked the fellow for that as if he was asking for the…. "Do you, by any chance, have any vanilla ice cream and chocolate sauce?" "Oh, yes, yes, we have that."

HACKMAN: To stick with that a little bit, can you remember when he'd come up to see you socially in the fifties or even during the University of Virginia period, other favorite things that he had around town that he liked to do?

[-16-]

SPALDING: I didn't do them with him, so I really don't know. I didn't go to the theater with him at that time. Later on I do because then what he liked to do, say from '60 on, was to come up and three or four of us have dinner and talk and usually end up by going out at some awkward hour for dinner, about 9:30, 10:30 or 11:30. Usually there was something he was working on, one of the books or some people or something like that, and then we'd just go and sit and talk and go home. That's really — he rarely came up to go to a show or anything. He came up to do something, to talk to somebody and go out and have dinner. He enjoyed doing that, and he was great company.

HACKMAN: Going back to the Eau Claire Hotel, did he then brief you or orient you or anything, or did he just turn you loose, more or less, on your own?

SPALDING: No. You just had a vague idea of the fact that there was a district out there and the district had so many votes and there was no organization. So you had to start from somewhere. And then, really, that was the marvelous part of the whole thing. In the first place, the attractiveness of both the candidate, John Kennedy, and of Bobby, of the organizer who was in there constantly, just drew people from all kinds of places, every position. It was interesting the way people came to follow and the way the organizations were built up and the way those people stayed on. You know, thousands of workers that came after a handful of original people came out there. So what you did was to organize in all the little towns in your district and get somebody to run a Kennedy organization in each of those towns. I just think that it was Bobby's — obviously, it couldn't have been done, one without the other — but Bobby's tremendous energy was perhaps best used in something like that. I think that really in those days we just ran the other people to death. I can remember nights when you almost went back and forth across the state a couple of times. Other people would have put down — everybody

was young and everybody was energetic and everybody was driven by him. And he just really accomplished a miracle out there.

HACKMAN: This is one of the periods when the tough guy image starts to develop, the managerial image. Can you recall anything about how he got along with local people, did he have trouble getting on with Midwesterners. Here's a guy from the East Coast, who's very wealthy, coming into a rural area.

SPALDING: In the first place, I can't really — you know, I think perhaps that was the easy thing because it goes back again to having eggs and bacon dinners in Pavillon. I mean the Kennedys and Bobby particularly — Bobby more than any, maybe — wore his riches well. Bobby was the least ostentatious. He wasn't interested in the trappings of wealth. He was interested in being able to hire a plane that would take him from Madison to Eau Claire in the middle of the night, but he wasn't interested at all in any of the irritating aspects of his wealth. He was almost Midwestern in his point of view; it was an absolute cinch for him to relate to those people. He knew enough people like that in Massachusetts, and he was brought up like that, really, in spite…. It was just that back in the bank somewhere there was a lot more money, but he wasn't concerned with it. He was terribly touched and moved by people who were willing to come out and help and people who were willing to work as hard as he was.

And I think the business of — you mentioned that this was the early time of the tough guy image — but I think at that point he probably was still very young and running a lot of people. And of course, it has to get done and you have to raise your voice, and again the problem of size must have come up, and he probably made up for what, you know, people might have thought or he might have thought…. If you come into this room and you're a relatively slight figure and, "They're going to push me around," well, you just made perfectly…. He probably overreacted a little when you get right down to it, but he undoubtedly felt he had to. But I never found — you know, there aren't ever any memories of Bobby…. I remember him mad; I remember him irritated when things didn't work out, but they seemed to be so normal a part of the day. You don't ever remember wild bursts of temper or anything of that sort, just frustrations when a car overturned in the snow or something like that. But he just was fantastically dedicated, and everybody admired it. And I don't think it was a question of admiring him reluctantly; everybody just went along.

But I think probably, the thing that I was always so conscious of, the softer side of Bobby because, perhaps, I had the advantage of seeing him years ago when he was much younger and knew really how he did feel. Other people might have felt the sting of his leadership more. I mean people who didn't know him that well but who only knew him suddenly and quickly in Wisconsin and elsewhere in places like that. Then as the campaign mounted, then all those problems doubled and tripled and quadrupled and he found himself finally one day in Los Angeles, I remember, before the Convention, addressing everybody. Then I think at that time you

notice it; he had to harden to maintain his position of leadership. Many of the people he was superseding were people who were of, at that time, greater position and better known nationally and had, one might have thought, more influence than he did.

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HACKMAN: What can you recall about his relationship with the other people around the President, particularly his staff, [Theodore C.] Sorensen, [Kenneth P.] O'Donnell, [Lawrence F.] O'Brien. Did he work easily with them? Was there obvious competition with them?

SPALDING: There was always an element of competition thrown into this thing. It seemed to be against the President's nature to have hard and fast lines of authority, so that as a result there was a certain amount of movement always, particularly in the people who had political ambitions. Those of us who just went because we suspected that it was a once in lifetime opportunity — and the fact that everybody that went on that basis had known the President and were terribly influenced by him and anxious to do everything they could for him — those people, like myself, were ready to go right back to what we were doing before or some version of it and didn't think of this as a career. So among the politicians there was bound to be some jockeying. Bobby, of course, was free from that for different reasons. He was free from it because he was the closest person to the President and always would be, so that I think he wasn't really involved in that except incidentally because there weren't any marked lines of authority. And undoubtedly, there were differences. I think that, like everything else his opinion…. Of course, for Kenny — he and Kenny were close friends all through college. I'm sure he had differences in and out in those days with one and another but they all got resolved.

HACKMAN: From your own point of view, did Robert Kennedy always try to deal with the people who were basically the friends himself? How was it for someone like you to deal with Sorensen and O'Donnell and some of these people? How do you think they looked at you?

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SPALDING: At one point, one can remember coming into conflict with them because you had an idea that would intrude into an area where they were working before, and then the mild friction might develop. But it was awfully easy for me to resolve it because I really didn't care and there was — is this what you're asking me?

HACKMAN: Yes.

SPALDING. So there was always so much to do in those things that it's not too hard to look around and find something else to do. I was just thinking that my answers about Bobby in relation to various people aren't anywhere near as

accurate as I know they could be. I could give much better answers about that, but it seems so gossipy. I'm not so sure that I want to . Perhaps it adds something to the history, maybe I should.

HACKMAN: You know you can close this thing as long as you want. It's probably better to…

SPALDING: I'll just be more candid about it then because it's more interesting. I remember that Bobby and Ted, for example…

HACKMAN: This is Ted Sorensen?

SPALDING: Yes. In the early days they had differences, and they stemmed again from the closeness that each was developing with the President. Ted's relationship with the President was just remarkable. He had, in my opinion, related himself so he almost modeled himself — his gestures, his language, his thoughts, bore a marked resemblance to the President's, either unconsciously or by design, however it happened. He also, because he was able to write so very well, was so bright, and knew the President's thoughts, was beginning to occupy a very close role there. So I think that he and Bobby during those early days came into conflict, and they just resolved it as they went along. But there was a conflict between them at that time.

The differences between Kenny and Bobby, they developed first the other way around. Kenny and Bobby were terribly close and very much alike in nature, very much alike. They were almost as alike as, say, Sorensen and the President were. They were fast friends in college and had differences only later on. And then those became resolved, probably when Bobby was a candidate. But I think those are the things that happen as life goes on and people grow and change. Close friends at one point, you can't imagine yourself being in conflict later on, but things happen to throw each other against each other.

Now with O'Brien, I think the same thing happened there. O'Brien was a great addition and a tremendous help to President Kennedy's campaign. And then, of course, when Mr. O'Brien found himself in Johnson's cabinet and then later on Bobby's staff, I'm sure the relationship went through a great deal of change there and Bobby came to regard him in a different light than he had in 1960 when everybody saw everybody in the best possible light.

HACKMAN: On the O'Donnell thing, when did the differences between Robert Kennedy and Ken O'Donnell develop, over what, can you recall that?

SPALDING: I don't really recall whether it was in the management of — whether it was during the time that O'Donnell was secretary for the President, in charge of all the appointments, or more likely it occurred during the time when Kenny wanted to run for governor of Massachusetts. Teddy [Edward M. Kennedy] was the Senator there, and obviously conflicts could have developed in having a governor there who could have superseded his brother. This probably put him at odds, and perhaps he didn't get the

support from Bobby, Kenny didn't get the support, that he might have thought that he was entitled to.

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HACKMAN: When you came into the 1960 campaign you said you'd gone and talked to Bobby and volunteered. Why would you have done this rather than going to John Kennedy, any specific reasons — just because he was handy?

SPALDING: Yes. I just knew that Bobby was running the campaign, and I didn't want to embarrass the President by just going to him and him saying "Go see Bobby." Actually, I was so close to both of them that it just felt like the natural thing to do.

HACKMAN: Can you remember the President ever commenting that there were certain kinds of things that Robert Kennedy couldn't handle, that he was good for this but that maybe you wouldn't use him in this role?

SPALDING: No, it's odd, I suppose, but there are certain things that one knows about the other person if you're that close. If you and I have really been that close and done that many things, I know what you can do, you know what I can't do, and there's no point in discussing it at any great length. In fact, it doesn't even turn up in those years. It isn't a question of compensating because he had such great gifts in one direction. There's so much to do that you just think where can he best be used.

HACKMAN: You talk about Robert Kennedy later when he was coming up to New York and when he was in the Senate as being very good company. Can you remember him in this early period around 1960 or maybe late fifties as a conversationalist. A lot of people have said that he's shy, that he mostly asked questions, didn't talk. Did he open up with a friend like yourself?

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SPALDING: Well, yeah, right. Well, up until '60, you see, then he and I used to drive for hours over Wisconsin because in addition to organizing the campaign out there, he covered as a speaker himself much of the area and talked in behalf of the candidate. At the same time as he was exercising his gifts as an organizer, he was also slowly developing himself as a candidate. He would speak in front of all the high schools we could possibly line up, make all the luncheon engagements, see all the Rotary clubs, see all the organizations that he possibly could. He made far more political speeches in the ninth district than the President did just because he'd be there more often and there wasn't so many places for him to cover, perhaps. So we would travel day and night through the state together and talk about everything at that time. It was getting to be pretty exciting by then. If we won this, then we would go to West Virginia, and if we won West Virginia, et cetera, et cetera. And Bobby was all over the country organizing campaigns in all the primaries that were to come. By this time, the

shyness was never…. I remember Bobby at this point. He was more fully developed in 1968 than he was in 1960, but he was fully and he was completely on his way in 1960. Let's see, that would be 1959. In 1959, in Wisconsin, he was totally involved and on his way. He was capable of addressing any large group and doing extremely well. I remember those meetings well.

HACKMAN: Any feeling that he disliked this type of thing? Did he dislike speaking…

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SPALDING: Oh, he liked it very much, sure. At that time it must have occurred to him, the discrepancy between the reaction that he would get at that time and his brother's, because his brother was able at that point to turn a whole group of people on to an extent that Bobby couldn't. Bobby wasn't talking about himself; he was talking about this person that was going to come to Wisconsin later and that he hoped was going to come to the Presidency later. So it was always a sort of a second grade reaction that he'd get, but he was doing it very well.

HACKMAN: Maybe you can do something with a comparison of Robert Kenendy's attitudes toward political opponents compared to the President's — Humphrey in that case in Wisconsin and West Virginia, and maybe Nixon later or Johnson later or whoever.

SPALDING: I think the difference, really, if you're talking about the difference in the two attitudes, basically the obvious difference was on the surface. Down deep the President was as totally involved and as totally energetic and as totally committed and as totally determined as Bobby. If you just stripped off the surface presentation you'd find in the two of them the same raging spirit to win in both. There was absolutely no difference. But the surface manner was what all the difference was. The President was able to be completely amusing, almost recklessly unconcerned you might think, his attitude was so totally different. They were poles apart in this way. Bobby's determination showed through, whereas the President's rarely did. It might perhaps in the debate with Nixon or something. But the same rage to win was in both. The great difference was in the surface presentation.

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HACKMAN: Can you remember anything in '60 about Robert Kenendy's feelings about any of the leading political figures on the scene, particularly Humphrey, Johnson, Nixon, I guess?

SPALDING: Well, they were locked at that time in a race with Humphrey. That's what the Wiscosin primary is all about and, of course, Mr. Johnson in the background. What he had to deal with certainly through the Wisconsin primary was that people weren't yet willing to take him seriously. I mean nobody had really thought that it was going to take place, so that there wasn't enough time to think about these

people or to talk about these people and measure them. We all thought we had a better man. Everybody liked Humphrey, but at that time you didn't discuss the fact that you liked Humphrey. You were running as hard as you could because he was trying as hard as he could to beat you. Since none of us had done it before, everybody was working twenty-four hours a day to accomplish this, and nobody spent any time evaluating the character of the man involved. I think maybe that kind of intensity is what pushed his candidacy so far beyond people's expectations. Even a sharp, brilliant politician like Mr. Johnson, I think, totally underestimated the President's ability, was willing that he would go to the Convention and let it go to a point where they couldn't deal with it. It went so far past them that they never really could catch up. That's the thing, that Bobby is responsible for, that great momentum that carried them winging into the Convention and so that they really couldn't catch them.

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HACKMAN: Can you remember anything else coming out of Wisconsin particularly? How people did — for instance, can you remember any local people that Robert Kennedy thought were great to work with or who weren't doing their job?

SPALDING: Oh, sure. [Patrick] Pat Lucey, of course, he became a favorite because he was such help. And there was a fellow there that not so many people would have heard of called Pete Dugal, who was just a fellow in the ninth district who lived in a little, tiny house outside of Eau Claire, and who came to work and like a lot of other people with him — I just happen to remember him because he was in the district that I was in. Being as far out as Eau Claire I wasn't around the people at headquarters in Milwaukee. I'd see [Gerald J.] Jerry Bruno come out there, that's where Jerry started, I think, in Wisconsin. I don't remember other than the people that I've mentioned and the people that went into those various districts like Lem and [Benjamin A.] Ben Smith. I can't remember who was in the others.

HACKMAN: West Virginia then, you went into West Virginia. Can you remember particularly anything about his reaction to the way West Virginia politics worked in contrast to the way Wisconsin politics worked?

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SPALDING: Just to finish off the bit, before I leave Wisconsin. I just remember the people — [Sander] Sandy Vanocur, for instance. My first recollections are of Sandy Vanocur out in Wisconsin, and Bobby bringing in all these people and drawing them into the story and getting them interested in it. Reporters were turning up from the *Manchester Guardian* and quite a few from places abroad and from *Time* magazine. They were coming out and slowly the thing was beginning to get started. [Theodore H.] Teddy White was there for the first time, and I think that was perhaps the first time I saw [Joseph] Joe Alsop out there. Joe was the one who saw Bobby's great thoroughness and became so attracted to his abilities as a manager — the thoroughness and the dedication. A great relationship

developed between those two which was so helpful because Joe became a great supporter. So Bobby was at that time drawing national attention to his movement, and those people I remember. If we had more time I'd remember others who came. It's at that time it took shape, and Bobby molded it all.

HACKMAN: I'd never heard before that he was that good with the press. You know, you always hear that the President had so many contacts in the press, and I'd never heard it said about Robert Kennedy.

SPALDING: Well, I wouldn't attempt to say that Bobby was solely responsible for, but he was drawing people in there, and he'd bring them to see Jack, and Jack would be terribly effective with them.

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HACKMAN: Be he worked easily with the press?

SPALDING: I thought he worked easily with everybody.

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SPALDING: Of course I saw him when he came in… Being as far away from headquarters, which I think were in Milwaukee or Madison, I don't recall which, I wouldn't see him involved in the decisions or with the people that he might have been in conflict with. But out in this outer district, he was perfectly at ease and very effective at that time.

HACKMAN: Anything else on Wisconsin?

SPALDING: That's it.

HACKMAN: West Virginia, the same type of thing. Anything that sticks out in your relationship with him?

SPALDING: I've got to go back to Wisconsin once more because again, when you asked me that and I think back to Wisconsin, the thing that stands out in my mind is Bobby's fantastic energy. I remember the first time that we met and then went out to Eau Claire. We got into a terrific snowstorm, and it stopped the train, we couldn't go any further. We were still about nine miles away from where he was supposed to talk. So we got off the train and walked to where he was going to talk and then all through that winter — the weather was very tough out there and the roads were treacherous and the flying, it was treacherous — I can just remember night after night in the snowstorms driving and flying with him across that place, from city to city. That's the thing that just sticks in my mind. And meeting him at say 6 o'clock in the morning and then leaving him at 2 o'clock the next morning

when we traveled, and he talked, and we were going to see everybody we could, and being ready to do it again the next day.

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I don't think that I could say enough to emphasize that aspect of Bobby — like somebody with a coat turned up, bare-handed and a coat turned up around his neck and just driving from place to place. He might stay three or four days with you, and you knew he was going to go three or four days with somebody else and do exactly the same thing. You can't paint that picture too vividly because to me it's a terribly appealing picture, and I haven't seen it matched by anybody in any thing, in any other field. You hear of people dedicated to business, to their own cause, in chase of a fortune or so on. But he was searching this thing out for his brother, and he literally couldn't rest. That's about it.

HACKMAN: Okay, West Virginia.

SPALDING: Well, by this time in West Virginia, now things at least had changed. We'd won, not as convincingly as we wanted to in Wisconsin, but at least we won. The disappointment was that Mr. [Adlai R.] Stevenson hadn't come out and endorsed him, which he thought would be a great help. There's a great question as whether to go or not to go in West Virginia. Some of the polls indicated that perhaps it'd be wiser not to go in West Virginia, and everybody was pretty tired by the sort of exertion that I've described.

I remember I went to Jamaica with the President for a couple of days, about a week I guess, and on the way back we stopped to see Mr. [Joseph] Kennedy in Palm Beach and gathered there before going to West Virginia. So Bobby and the President were in the pool, and I remember Mr. Kennedy standing at the side and just watching the President, saying, "He's so different," he said, "from me. I couldn't have done what he's done." He was absolutely astounded at what his son achieved. At this point, he knew — he perhaps was more optimistic than others might have been — but he was convinced at this point that Jack was going to get the nomination. But he watched him swimming, and he said, "I don't know how he did it. I don't know how he did it; I never could've done it." In other words, Jack had pacified enough people and gathered

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enough people and left enough people unruffled so that whereas…. Then he turned, and he said, "I'm like Bobby. That's the difference." And he said, "I don't understand that kid," pointing to the President in the pool, "I don't know how he did it."

HACKMAN: You said Mr. Kennedy was more optimistic, can you recall how Robert Kennedy felt at that point?

SPALDING: Well, nobody allowed themselves…. That was the great thing, really the great thing that the campaign perhaps had, was Mr. Kennedy's tremendous

enthusiasm, in addition to his power and his resources. But above that this feeling that he had that — he was always confident and always willing to believe it could be done and it would be done and it was just a question of going and doing it. He was a great help. I think to have some older person in the background was one of those great trump cards. I think of the whole effort without somebody like that — and for Humphrey or for anybody else it must have been a much more lonely affair. There probably will never be another campaign like that. It really was this remarkable old man in the background, way in the background, but really a source of tremendous strength, just plain materially. But more than that, really, the fact was that he was such a…. If he'd just been a material help, I don't think it would've made that much difference. But it was the fact that he was able to encourage all these people into believing that they were on to sort of a worthwhile adventure and gave it an excitement. There wasn't any drudgery involved, and at the same time, where it was terribly enthusiastic, it never reached the sort of "crusade" proportions that maybe Senator [Eugene J.] McCarthy's group…. It didn't need those kind of incentives.

HACKMAN: When Mr. Kennedy would deal with the two brothers at this point would he deal with Robert Kennedy in a different way than he dealt with John Kennedy?

SPALDING: Only because they were different people, but not with any deference, you know. Of course, except that he had the same point of view that everybody had, one was going to be the President, and that was the preeminent figure. The President completely dominated the whole scene. Bobby was managing the campaign and was entitled to a great deal of consideration on his own merits. But obviously, the key figure was the President.

HACKMAN: Anything particular in West Virginia then.

SPALDING: Just the difference in the campaign, of course. West Virginia was much more political than Wisconsin was, and everybody was involved. They had too much organization, I suppose, whereas Wisconsin had none. Here the problem was one of delicacy. You weren't supposed to intrude on already established lines because that really is their national pastime down there, so it was merely a question of covering the state.

Of course, that was remarkably, really, because when we went there — the first night we went to West Virginia we got off at Charleston, I guess and went through the town and stopped. But very few people seemed to even know who President Kennedy was. You could order a hamburger and a glass of milk or a cup of coffee in a joint down in Charleston at that time and people didn't even know that the primary was coming, but there were a lot of people there that didn't know him at that time. The polls showed that he was quite a bit behind and that there was a considerable religious bias there, so it didn't look at all good. But those people responded to Kennedy tremendously and I'm more conscious of his being the key figure here because there

wasn't so much of an opportunity to organize. The organization then must have moved past West Virginia. Obvious things were done, but the things that

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one had learned to do in Wisconsin, one then applied to West Virginia the best you could. But it was his own coverage of the state rather than Bobby's energy.

Of course, one wasn't here so long. Instead of being here three months, you were here sixe weeks, maybe, or four weeks or something like that, maybe less. It was a much lesser time and a smaller area and more concentration of people in this. Instead of now being a few, there were hundreds now. There were people, so the concentration of that enthusiasm that was born in Wisconsin poured into this place. The thing that I remember there was the way the Kennedys attracted the West Virginians — the [A. James] Machins for example, a family down there that came to support him and hundreds of other people like that turned to their cause. You just absolutely inundated West Virginia. So in the early morning returns I remember the great difference being the first night that I went to West Virginia, people not knowing who Kennedy was or what was happening, and then just say — how long did the campaign last down there, four weeks, or so?

HACKMAN: I think it was five.

SPALDING: Just a short five weeks later, the early returns of the voting the morning that everybody went to the polls — I went out in the area to see how they going, and they'd be 82 to 1, 400 to 3, you know. When you contrast that against those beginnings…. And there was a serious — right up to the very last minute — there was a real thought that he wasn't going to enter that primary.

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And then I remember the final blow was…. The night before, all the candidates were asked to speak at the labor hall for about fifteen minutes. The President wasn't there, but Humphrey was. He had been so exhausted by trying to fight this windmill with less resources and less support and less argument, really, I think. He spoke the fifteen minutes and then another two hours, and he just went on, and he just was flailing. And, at the end, he literally sank from exhaustion. I think that typified the whole thing and his gallantry at the same time. And I think that was the thing. At this point where Bobby, you remember — and here's something, of course, that was so typical of Bobby — when he went over to see the Humphreys, I think his emotions overcame him there. And didn't he meet Mrs. Humphrey and put his arms around her and cry? He was touched by it. Anyway, Bobby — you know, it was one of those things where you won so conclusively. But he admired the way Humphrey struggled and knew what he was up against and perhaps knew how he would have felt had it been the other way around.

HACKMAN: Do you remember Robert Kennedy making any comments about the character of West Virginia politics?

SPALDING: Oh, yes, sure, you see, because that was so compatible. I mean all of us were interested in it — or had originally been interested by the Kennedys — and enjoyed it, starting way back with Mr. Kennedy talking about politics back in the Cape. For most of us, that was the beginning. He was one of the first people, perhaps, that a lot of us knew who was that closely involved in politics, who would take that much time out with you when you were younger. It was so compatible because that's all the West Virginians wanted to talk about. They were having a lot of tough times down there and things aren't that good and weren't that good in West Virginia, and I guess never have been, so one of the great preoccupations is talking about politics back and forth. They're really excited. The idea of going for the Inauguration means something to them, and the've got just a flair for it —

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far more so than Wisconsin, which is apathetic by comparison. But their willingness to get involved made everybody sparkle and Bobby loved it, loved that side of their state. And of course, I think that as much as anything else was one of the great boosts, and that was one of the very great times.

HACKMAN: Can you ever remember him making any comments about the movement of money in West Virginia, how things had to work to get a slate set up in the local….

SPALDING: No, I don't. You mean, the delegate….

HACKMAN: Yes, to get your delegates on the local slate, or however it worked.

SPALDING: Sure I do, but I don't remember it specifically, now, exactly what it was. But I remember the great problem of combatting the — it was down South, in the southern section, border section of West Virginia, where supposedly the votes were all bought or where some of them could be bought. And naturally that aspect of it plays on everybody's mind and the secrecy involved here and will Steve Smith be in with the money and the bag and all of that became sort of a joke. And then all the subterfuge that you mentioned, Larry O'Brien would be involved in that. If you were out in the field working, you didn't see all that and of course lots of it was secret and quiet and you knew it was going on but you weren't involved with it. That would be my case, so I can't comment on it specifically except to remember that it amused everybody and that the group was perfectly capable of adapting itself to West Virginia politics.

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HACKMAN: You talked briefly in that first interview about the 1960 Convention. I think the specific reference to Robert Kennedy you made was when he was talking about the vice presidency and said, "We weren't at our best in choosing Lyndon Johnson." Anything else about the convention?

SPALDING: Oh yes, well sure. By the time you got to the Convention — and it was again a remarkable job of organizing everybody and getting all the cars available for everybody to meet the delegates as they came off the plane and assisting certain people to certain delegates and then the great problem, he thought, was to make sure that he didn't lose what he had, and so he was exercised about seeing that that control didn't fall and that people weren't lax in those last few days. And of course, there was so much being done out there, but a lot of that was done out at the Beverly Hills house. The whole family had set up out there. I remember him in that moment, particularly once the organization on the floor was all put together, all the key spots were covered, all the phoning and all the mechanical apparatus was set up — Bobby on top of all of that. As you recall when he came up the stairs just saying, "We really weren't at our best," that was the only let down, you know. It was only natural that it happened, and it happened suddenly, something that occurred that they weren't really prepared for.

HACKMAN: I think you'd said in that interview that you thought that comment could well have referred to just the fact that they weren't ready for it, not just that Robert Kennedy was dissatisfied with the choice.

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SPALDING: That's what I meant now. Although no plan falls into line directly, they had planned and worked and everybody had worked to his limit to bring off what occurred, namely the nomination of the President and then…. So literally, no thought was ever given — I don't even ever recall anybody ever saying, you know, "Who is going to be the Vice President?" It was almost like letting your guard down. It was like conceding that you were in, and therefore it just was something you didn't talk about. You literally didn't talk about it until Wyoming threw the deciding vote. And then, of course, because nobody had thought about it, nobody was prepared. I think it was probably reasonable for them to think that there'd be a moment of relaxation, and then they'd think about it tomorrow or whenever the time came.

HACKMAN: Up to that time do you ever remember Robert Kennedy commenting on his impressions of Lyndon Johnson?

SPALDING: No, I don't recall, I don't recall anything. What's really more remarkable than that, I don't remember anybody saying, "Who's going to be the running mate?" Most of the time in the paper or in other conversations and in other campaigns that I've watched you think, well, who's going to run with him, and as a bystander you think about it. But as a participant, I don't recall it ever being discussed, ever.

HACKMAN: Okay. After the convention and during the campaign, what involvement did you have with Robert Kennedy in this period?

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SPALDING: Well, he asked if I'd go to Southern California because the ADA [Americans for Democratic Action] — who had been so highly partisan to Stevenson — was….

HACKMAN: That's that CDC [California Democratic Council] group.

SPALDING: Right, the CDC group. They were not cooperating at all, and there was a lot of dissension, and they were really just sitting on their hands. So he asked if I'd go out there and see what I could do to gain their support. Teddy was really given the Western area so I saw more of him.

HACKMAN: You put some of this on the first one so unless there's something specific on Robert Kennedy, I'd probably be wasting your time.

SPALDING: Well, I think that's right.

HACKMAN: Let's skip to the election and after the election, can you remember during that interim period when there was consideration as to whether he'd be made Attorney General or what he would do? Can you remember talking to him about what he might want to do or hoped he would do?

SPALDING: Well, I remember one time, to go back to Wisconsin, we were driving, as I say, from one spot to another, and I said, "Now supposing this works out, what are you going to do?" And he just said, "Oh, I just honestly can't think about it." It wasn't pretense on his part; he just said, "I don't know, something will turn up. If that happens — there's plenty of time to think about it." So he hadn't given it any thought himself. I think that the problems were so immense just as you went day by day that you really…. There is a sense of improvisation about these things that can't be avoided. I mean especially on the problems of Catholicism that at that time were immense and on top of everything else. The problems of each state were difficult,

so Bobby really hadn't given much thought about it at all until that period after the election. And then I think that perhaps he…. I'm sure that it was natural for him not to take the lead in that.

He didn't, I'm sure that he didn't feel, "This is something I should do." It was presented to him, and I know he would have cast about and found something else or waited until something else turned up. But he had to be persuaded, I'm sure, that that was the thing that he should do. I think probably what persuaded him was, the only argument that would have really, I would have thought — for example, he didn't know me well enough or rather I didn't know him well enough or I didn't have this kind of a position for him. He didn't call me up and say, "Here's what I think I should do." But I saw him during the period, and I think the thing that really probably motivated him more than anything else was the fact that his brother needed somebody beside him who he could really talk to and know that he didn't have to worry about what he said. By this time, his involvement in politics had been so total and he'd seen the mechanisms of it and

knew the weaknesses. And he knew that you had to have somebody that you could really trust, and no matter how close you might have been to most people there are circumstances under which they wouldn't hold up or they wouldn't be steadfast or things could move people. So you really couldn't count on too many people. And there was the great advantage of having a capable brother who knew all the people involved, knew all the players, knew all the backgrounds, that couldn't have been lost on him. I think that's what made him decide to do it. Of course, that relationship and that role then developed his own career tremendously and added a new dimension to Bobby's life.

HACKMAN: How frequently would you see him then, during the Administration, only…

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SPALDING: Then I'd see him all the time. From '60 on I'd see him all the time. I'd see him more because I usually stayed with him or he'd ask me to come down for a time and see him. At that time he perhaps was more accessible than the President. Or if I'd see the President for a bit, then I'd usually end up spending much more time with Bobby.

HACKMAN: You said this period changed him a great deal. Can you carry that a little further and say how?

SPALDING: Well, I think that he thought of his role as completely subservient. He served his brother so totally as his manager, and there wasn't anything — he didn't think of anything else other than getting his brother elected, and he just poured himself into that in a selfless way. Now given this important job in the Cabinet, although his point of view wouldn't have changed any, he suddenly found a career for himself forced upon himself; and given his active nature, he made it more of a …. He was, as I understand it, an extremely capable and able Attorney General, in spite of the criticism that people originally brought to bear upon him. He developed a tremendous enthusiasm and loyalty among those people in there and certainly a great number of capable people found their way to Bobby Kennedy at this time, people like Burke Marshall, [Nicholas deB.] Nick Katzenbach, just to mention a couple. So Bobby, apart from his closeness with the President, just as an Attorney General was developing a role, and that was a special part of his life. And of course, then all the civil rights activities that occurred at that time, that threw him into a whole new area.

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HACKMAN: When you talked to him, was he more likely to talk about the things he was involved in than the President was? When you talked to him, you said that the President would — when you were with him — would frequently want to talk about the friends you had in common or the things that frequently were away from what he was doing the rest of the day.

SPALDING: Well, I think that's right. No, I think that's right. He liked the relief — well I think, perhaps, that was more the role that one had to play. You know, I think the President maybe in himself just found relaxation, just as an escape from the pressures of his own work. He spent his whole time with experts in all those fields and he was occupied totally in this area so that when we were to talk, my interest in them would have been just a bystander's curiosity and not an expert's contribution. So rather than spend the whole time going over something that he was hard at work at, we turned to lighter things. Whereas Bobby got his relaxation out of talking about those things, I never felt when I was talking to Bobby about these things that it was any intrusion; in fact, he would often bring it up. What about this, what about that, or what did you think of so and so's article? So he never seemed to need any release from it at all, whereas the President obviously did.

HACKMAN: Did he obviously enjoy the Attorney General's job?

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SPALDING: Oh, sure. I think he enjoyed it tremendously. Again, the prosecutor's role was one he knew how to handle and then, of course, the tremendously important civil rights decisions that were being made there. You know, this really was probably the formation of his liberal instincts here at this point. Right from there to the time he was killed that was the emphasis of his life, when you think about it.

HACKMAN: Can you recall any specific instances in that period when you felt things were pushing him in that direction. Was it chiefly civil rights? Was it the whole…

SPALDING: No, I think it was chiefly civil rights, the explosiveness of that. I think, of course, then that would sometimes big as it was, be pushed into the background by the Cuban missile crisis or any of the other great number of things that the President called upon him.

Bobby was developing his own group of admirers. He and [Robert S.] McNamara got on tremendously well, so that he was a great influence in that area. Bobby's acquaintanceship with the Russians, which was, I think, probably as extensive as anybody else, so that the Ambassador would be frequently at his house and envoys from Russia would be at his house. It was certainly as an expanding a role as it could possibly have been, and I think maybe because it was so tremendous, so inclusive, that it probably laid the groundwork, as much as anything else, for the irritation that he and Johnson felt for each other, because Bobby's role certainly as Attorney General far and away superseded President Johnson's role as Vice President. It was only natural that it might, considering Bobby's background first as manager of the campaign and then as Attorney General and the close relationship he had with his brother.

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HACKMAN: Could you see that the people that Robert Kenendy gathered around him or worked closely with — Katzenbach and Burke Marshall and [John]

Doar and all these people at Justice — was he attracted to any kind of different people than John Kennedy was, or is that a distinction that comes up in your mind?

SPALDING: I think it's awfully hard to say. I think that the President attracted brilliance of every kind and Bobby picked that up from him. I think the President naturally drew people from every field, from [Vaslav] Nijinsky to [Jerome] Wiesner, right down the line. People from every single area, totally dissimilar, from [John Kenneth] Galbraith to somebody else in a comparable field. They all came quickly; they were drawn naturally to him. And I think Bobby learned to observe that and to know who they were. And then on his own he had a way of picking out people that turned out to be terribly good. Burke Marshall is somebody that the President — I'm going to say this with full understanding that it might be completely wrong, and I don't mean it as any disservice to Burke Marshall. Maybe it was the President that originally spotted Burke Marshall, but it strikes me that Bobby's intuition is the kind of intuition that would have spotted Burke Marshall. The President might have quickly picked up Galbraith, but Bobby would have spotted Burke.

HACKMAN: I think your intuition is correct. From what I know of this situation that's the side he comes in on as opposed to the John F. Kennedy side.

SPALDING: Oh, true. Yes. Well, you know, Burke can sit in a room and not say anything for two hours and somehow even without his saying anything Bobby would understand that he was a terribly brilliant guy, and that's a rather rare quality. Bobby had a great, great sensitivity to people of excellence, and he didn't have instinctively the same flair for glitter that President Kennedy did.

HACKMAN: You talked about his relationship with the Russian Ambassador and the other envoys who would gather around. Did you get involved in any of this?

SPALDING: I wouldn't be involved in the meetings that took place between Bobby and the Ambassador.

HACKMAN: But the social…

SPALDING: Yes, I frequently went out there to the house when these people would be there — Burke, particularly, and Nick. Then of course, his house was a remarkable place because General [Maxwell] Taylor would come by — General Taylor and Bobby are a natural pair, and McNamara and Bobby are…. Bobby just developed tremendously during this period. I think by this time he probably overcame whatever doubts he had about his own ability to hold his own with people of this rank, and then certainly after Cuba all doubts had been dispelled as to his ability to hold his rank with those people under pressure. I think probably he had all the confirmation that he needed at that point, after the Cuban missile crisis, and then the rest of it was just a tremendous fruition because Ethel ran the

house for everybody. Even with the nine, ten, twelve, fifteen kids that were around, there were twice that many adults coming in for every meal or coming in and out of the house through the day from Arthur Schlesinger to Galbraith to Mr. [C. Douglas] Dillon — everybody coming up there. Bobby, I think at this point, was growing by leaps and bounds.

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HACKMAN: How would Mrs. [Ethel] Kennedy get involved with conversations with these people? Would she ever get into the substantive side at all, or was it strictly….

SPALDING: No, obviously she was terribly interested in it, really passionately interested in it. She had that advantage right from the start over Jackie [Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis], for example, who wasn't that interested in all those people that came or in all those subjects and who just had a greater need for privacy than Ethel did. Ethel just had a tremendous enthusiasm for all of these people and for everything that they were doing, but above all, for everything that her husband was doing and how it related to him. That had to be a tremendous asset. One felt from the beginning, right from the minute you opened that door, that there was never any feeling that you were impinging — you know, unless you were dull — that you were impinging on his time. If you brought anything with you at all, you had this total participation on any possible level, on any possible subject. I think it was probably the most interesting house that I've ever been in — and run again in this funny kind of opulent simplicity. It was cluttered, too. It was just done only as Bobby and Ethel could do it, with a lot of dogs all over the place, a lot of children all over the place, and a lot of dignitaries all over the place, in about the same proportion.

HACKMAN: You said that you thought Robert Kennedy and General Taylor and Robert McNamana had sort of a very natural relationship there. Why do you say that, because of their excellence and ability…

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SPALDING: Well, in the first place, I think that Secretary McNamara's personality and Bobby's are quite compatible. They're terribly intense, tremendously dedicated, very selfless in that kind of way; the same conflicts, the same intensities and the same drives would be apparent to both of them. I frequently would see them at that time together, and it always appeared to me that that was so that they were — and I think that they were the closest, closest friends all the way through. I think that those natures were just thoroughly compatible, and I think the same is…. Although Bobby, for example, and Maxwell Taylor disagreed at the end completely about Vietnam, insofar as their character — and I think this applies also to Mr. McNamara — there was a simplicity. Although none of them were simple men at the core, there's a simplicity about all three which is almost like maybe a soldier's simplicity, an acceptance of certain things. They might not have agreed about issues, but from a character point of view, they accepted the same standards and they had the same tastes. They were all active; they were all interested in athletics. They were none of them terribly social in the

"living room" sense of the word. They were active and out of doors and all terribly accomplished. The fact that general Taylor could read and converse in Vietnamese dialects just staggered Bobby. He thought that was marvelous, as it is. But I just think as a man — he named one of his boys after him, of course — I think they were just terribly compatible. And I think all three of them shared the same feeling for the President. I'd like to get exactly the right word that they had, but the fact that they had a person of rare worth, that there was something special about the President that they all understood, and that they were working for him — I think they all shared that.

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HACKMAN: Are there other people that you can recall in the Administration that he felt that way about, maybe Dillon, [W. Averell] Harriman; or some that he obviously didn't feel that way about, maybe [Dean] Rusk or on down the line.

SPALDING: He never commented to me about Rusk. And Mr. Dillon was a great friend, a great friend of his, and David Ormsby-Gore of course, Bobby had a great affection for, all those people. Rusk is the only one I never saw at the house, ever, so I just wasn't aware of any communication between the two of them. But all the others, he had a great affection for, and Mr. Harriman particularly. I think he was perhaps disappointed at the end when Mr. Harriman thought it impossible to support him, but he probably understood that. He didn't require the same kind of devotion to himself that he was able to give to other people. That's probably the most generous thing about him. In that area, there never was anyone more generous than Bobby.

HACKMAN: On religious feelings, was Robert Kennedy a great deal different in the way he carried his religion, his attitude toward it, than the President?

SPALDING: No, I always just feel that, like in everything, he was much more simple at the core than the President was. The President might have speculated on it up to a point, beyond which he couldn't have proved it, but the speculation again would have interested him and concerned him and probably led him to a certain conclusion. Now Bobby wouldn't have bothered with that. That was something he picked up from his family. He thought it very worthwhile, and he accepted it, but it was private. It was a private thing with him. And of course, in that respect, he and Ethel were so completely congenial because her own religion was very much like Mrs. [Rose] Kennedy's. It was that intense. And certainly to that extent she is, and he would have been, old-fashioned. The speculation is growing in that area. You see it

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reflected in popular songs now. It was not anything that he was concerned with. In that respect, when you think about it, Bobby's life at this point had been resolved and was flowing so naturally. He had now, it seems to me, solved all the personal problems he had about himself and

all the personal doubts that you couldn't help but have if you were, as he was, thrust up against the President and bound to compare himself so constantly with the President. But by this time, it was a golden period for him. It had to be because he was functioning well. He was performing brilliantly and he had all the assurance, all the happiness, and all the conviction that he could have, perhaps ever have in his whole life. That period between the time of the Inauguration and the President's assassination must have been a great period for him.

HACKMAN: Can you recall being with him at the time of any of them, the major crises during the Administration, the steel crisis in 1961 or either of the Cuban things?

SPALDING: Well, oddly enough, you see, it would be the other way around. I went down to see the President during those times, and I wouldn't have seen Bobby until after, otherwise. I didn't make the rounds, so to speak. I went down at invitation to see the President those times and came back. But I remember asking him some time before that *Fortune* article came out how the story had developed in which he was accused of having routed people out of their beds. This is one of the astonishing things, again it's as if there was an effort made to really solidify this caricature that people had of Bobby as Raul [Castro] again, as a ruthless kid who was doing the dirty work for this seemingly benevolent brother.

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I suppose nobody's ever going to understand the gentleness of Bobby — perhaps there is a growing awareness of it. I don't know whether things will move at such a clip, whether history is going to take time out to explain, or whether people will — certainly people in California during the primary were coming to realize it, some people were at any rate. I was listening to the radio the other day and there was an interview between a ballplayer who was involved in the Cincinnati sit-down. I've forgotten who it was, I think it was Ruban Amarro or somebody like that. It may not have been. I wish I could remember because he was so gracious in what he had to say. But he was a black ballplayer and he got up and they were asking him about the incident, and he said, "I just don't understand how anybody could've asked me to play baseball on that day. Here was somebody that I revered beyond anybody that I had known." And he said, "I had the greatest respect in the world for him." Those people were perhaps the ones who saw Bobby really the way he was. I was absolutely mystified at the difficulty people had in comprehending Bobby's nature, but I think it's mostly people who were so totally dedicated to the status quo that their feelings were one of fear and hence from fear to anger, and they're the ones…. When anger sets in, you can't see anybody accurately anyway.

HACKMAN: Can you ever remember him in that period when he was Attorney General talking about [J. Edgar] Hoover and the FBI and his relationship…

SPALDING: Oh, yes Hoover particularly. I thought you meant President [Herbert] Hoover rather than…

HACKMAN: If you can remember anything on that…

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SPALDING: … him because he was so impressed by Hoover. And I think he felt Hoover gave him his first start. He worked with him on the Commission, and he had a great respect for him. He liked him enormously. Another great hero of Bobby's was [Douglas] MacArthur. He really enjoyed MacArthur. I think he felt MacArthur had that quality — this is perhaps one thing nobody gets at all — but it was that quality for flair that Jack had and that Bobby had, too (but his own flair was so totally different). That obvious sense of showmanship that both President Kennedy and MacArthur had, Bobby admired, in addition to this great bravery.

HACKMAN: You talked about the President's attraction and admiration for [Winston S.] Churchill. Can you remember any figures standing out like this on Robert Kennedy's side?

SPALDING: Well, I think just necessarily lots of them were the same, so perhaps they don't stand out so clearly. Nor was I, as I've pointed out, so close to Bobby in his formative times, so I wasn't so aware of the things that other people said that influenced him. No, MacArthurs is the one that I remember him speaking about most, his meetings with MacArthur when MacArthur lived over in the Waldorf Towers. You know Bobby, of course, obviously would have made a great soldier. It's not so remarkable that he would have been influenced by General Taylor — that combination of duty and high purpose was the thing that stirred his nature, and MacAthur and General Taylor were the two people that seemed to have caught his eye in the military. I don't remember other figures, but when I say that, I immediately think of his feelings for his father for whom he had just a boundless admiration.

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HACKMAN: Did you ever talk about New York politics at all with him during the Administration, or is that something he would have discussed with you?

SPALDING: You mean when he ran here.

HACKMAN: No, I'm talking about during the Kennedy Administration. He had the '60 involvement, and I wonder if he had any impressions of [Carmine] DeSapio, [Michael H.] Prendergast, these people, during the early sixties?

SPALDING: [William] Bill Walton was the fellow that was the one that was involved here from the Kennedy group, so that other than knowing that it was a wasp's nest and particularly that the liberals, with whom he had no rapport at that time at all, at least that particular group of liberals — I don't mean liberals as a band but with that particular group — he was out of sympathy. It's only hearsay on my part. I heard about

the meetings and I heard about the arguments and I heard about his famous statement, "I don't care, I want to win this state for my brother," which was generally circulated. But outside of that, I have no contact with it. I don't have any personal reminiscences.

HACKMAN: What are the things from that period of the Kennedy Administration that you remember that you think we should talk about? We sort of ran through it quickly.

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SPALDING: No, you see my recollections again when they relate to Bobby in this area are secondary because I see him coming to some luncheon or some event that I had attended with the President maybe; he and I going out and spending time together and talking. But it's all secondary; I wasn't related directly to what he was doing at the time. I wasn't going over to the Department of Justice on some work for him. So I really don't have — I mean I just see him as I described him. The best memories that I have of him are the ones that I've given you out at the house where so much of what was going on was happening. Now I was out there a lot, and I saw what he was doing that way best. I saw the parties that Ethel gave, which were really — after everybody stopped falling in the pool — were great successes. Mrs. [Alice Rosseevelt] Longworth being there and Jack Paar, who became such a friend of Bobby's, and Andy Williams and people from the entertainment world. And then also from the athletic world, people that Bobby had come to like like Frank Giffford and [Roosevelt] Grier and a series of people. And all the politicians, both national and international, and writers, all descending on his house here. It was a broad, broad group of people that I have a pretty clear picture of, that's where it is.

HACKMAN: I've heard some people say that many, many of these people came in through Mrs. Kennedy, through Ethel rather than Robert Kennedy….

SPALDING: I think that's possible. I mean I just think he expected her to add whomever she thought was — Art Buchwald, for example. She was fascinated and amused by Art Buchwald as she should have been, and he became a great friend of Bobby's. And [Yevgeny] Yevtushenko, I remember the evening that Yevtushenko came to the house. This of course, was after the President's death. That was a vivid period.

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HACKMAN: You talked about civil rights having a great impact on him in that period. Why do you think it had an impact only in this period, only in the crisis. Can you recall his earlier attitudes?

SPALDING: Well, I don't think the business of managing the campaign necessarily…. It might draw your attention to minority problems of any kind or to problems of any kind since in the course of the campaign in West Virginia

you observed the fact that miners are having a terrible time of it and that their kids aren't adequately fed or housed or clothed. That becomes a concern, but the other considerations are so overwhelming that your mind isn't concerned generally with a basic problem. You know you're talking about political problems which are power problems and motivations of people and you're just thinking totally in terms of the election of your candidate and not in the alleviation of any particular groups problem.

HACKMAN: Had he ever talked about earlier civil rights problems that you can remember?

SPALDING: Well, civil rights was not an issue during the 1960 campaign that I can recall.

HACKMAN: The Martin Luther King phone call right at the last helped out some.

SPALDING: That's true. That's the first indication of it.

HACKMAN: In the months after the assassination then, were you seeing him frequently in that period?

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SPALDING: Yes, I saw him a great deal then.

HACKMAN: Can you remember talking to him about…

SPALDING: To keep it chronological, I suppose we ought to — how do you want to handle the period of assassination?

BEGIN TAPE II SIDE I

SPALDING: One aspect of my relationship with Bobby that I remember particularly, and that's these trips that we used to take, sailing trips that we always took once a year. He'd collect a group of people, and we'd go sailing up off the coast of Maine for about a week. They were great events. But that was Bobby to me, he was most relaxed. What he'd like to do was take a boat and sail up to the coast of Maine under any kind of circumstances, and under circumstances that always usually produced some crisis of some kind. The ship would either almost sink or storms would come up. They hardly ever passed without some particularly exciting event, but they were great occasions. People like [Rowland] Rowly Evans would come and a great friend of Bobby's from Canada, John Bassett, and friends of Ethel's and myself and we would go and visit some of Bobby's friends in Maine. We'd go to see Mr. Dillon and then stop by the [Thomas] Watsons. They were great occasions. They were natural things for him to have done. They were particularly happy times.

HACKMAN: You were talking about something always seemed to happen. How do you explain this physical daring side of his personality? Some people have commented that even his close friends felt that in certain occasions he was very irrational, as the father of nine children, taking the chance of shooting the rapids, all that stuff.

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SPALDING: Yes, I think that's right. I think also if you do it often enough, you come to realize that it isn't as dangerous — it is dangerous, but danger isn't as dangerous as most people think. You just go out and do it and you do it frequently enough and you don't get hurt. You realize, sure, you could get hurt, but what's the worst that could happen. You could break your leg or something and more could happen. But what it served to do was to engender a certain excitement into things that he required after a point. I suppose he did it in an attempt to prove something to himself a long time ago, and then it got to be a habit and also it became newsworthy. I think if you go and examine a lot of people's lives — for instance, the thing about MacArthur, there's that business standing out in front of the trench convinced that the bullet isn't going to hit you. There are enough indications of that and the people who have done it engender a certain excitement. I think Bobby wanted very much to engender that kind of excitement, and it was one of the ways he could do it. He knew that the President, his brother, did engender that kind of excitement and had to find a way of doing it on his own. I think it was a compensation. It turned out to be just that, to climb the mountains and to shoot the rapid, and it just began to attract a lot of attention.

HACKMAN: Well, as you say, the publicity on things like this came particularly in the later years after the assasination, but does it strike you that the assasination changed him in this way?

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SPALDING: He was always that way, always, always that way. I mean I think that sense of crisis was always around him.

HACKMAN: Why don't you, I don't have that much background, take me through that assasination thing, the trip back?

SPALDING: Well, I suppose that is the period of my closest associations with Bobby. The day that it happened, I got a call from Ethel saying to come to the White House. I was in the city when it happened, and I went to the White House. The group returned with the President's body, Bobby was naturally there. And the casket was placed in — was it the West Room…

HACKMAN: I've never really read about this that much.

SPALDING: Well, he came, and the casket was placed in that particular room downstairs in the White House. And Bobby and Secretary McNamara were there, this was about 3 o'clock in the morning, approximately. I don't really recall the exact time, but I remember seeing Bobby either sometime around midnight or afterwards. There was a question of whether to leave the casket open or not, and then Bobby asked me to go and look, to open the casket and look, and asked for my opinion. And I did and thought it would be better if it weren't open, and McNamara concurred and other people must have concurred. My recollection is that Arthur Schlesinger was there at the same time.

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And then I remember going upstairs with him and Mrs. [Jacqueline] Kennedy was upstairs and Mrs. Kennedy's mother was there. A terrible sense of loss overwhelmed everybody who was present in the room, and Bobby was trying to calm everybody and get them to bed. But it had been a terrible, terrible day, and at that period of time — time seems to be rushing along in moments like that. It was a terrible day, and he had been through the most awful experience, and he was trying to get everybody in their rooms and try to get them to bed, preparing them for the next day. So he asked me to come down to his room.

He went down, and I think he slept in the Lincoln Room that night. So I said, "Listen, you ought to take a sleeping pill," because he was terribly distraught but in control of himself while I was there. So I went to look for a sleeping pill and came back — found one some place and got it — and gave it to him and closed the door as he was…. All this time he had been under control. And then I just heard him sobbing. He was saying, "Why, God? Why, God, why?" And before I closed the door on him he said to me, and he said it in such a calm, quiet voice, "It's such an awful shame, the country was going so well. We really had it going." And then when the door closed I just heard him — he just gave way completely, and he was just racked with sobs and the only person he could address himself to was "Why, God, why? What possible reason could there be in this?" And I think at that terrible moment — and it's a terrible testing of everything, probably all the things he thought — it was so incredibly unjust to him to have that happen at that particular time after everything had been…. I mean just the terrible injustice of it, the senselessness of it all hit him, and he just collapsed, and collapsed in that he sobbed by himself in the night and slept.

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The rest of the week went along as everybody recollects. I don't have anything particular to add to that. I saw him a lot during that period. That was, as everybody knows, a terrible period for him. I remember particularly going out in the White House lawn, and he said, "Well, what do you think now?" And I remember saying to him, "Well, I don't really know." You don't have much time to think under these circumstances. It was just awful for everybody. I said, "Well there're three things that you've got to do. You've got to get a memento out of here and give it to a friend of Jack's," whom I mentioned. Which he did, he got an old coffee spoon off one of the White House services, and he gave it to this particular person. And then I said, "From your own point you've got to separate yourself from Mr. Johnson as far as you possibly can." We were just talking and it didn't seem possible to me that Bobby would continue there for long. And then I

had some other reference to some things I thought he should do in regard to the office in New York, the family office, because now there had been two tremendous losses in a short time, first Mr. Kennedy and now the President. So things were — the picture had just suddenly been smashed, and everything that had been put together over such a period of time was just absolutely obliterated so that there was a need for real change. So we talked along those terms and then the funeral came and then we parted.

I didn't see him again until Christmastime. I was out in Reno, Nevada, and he gave me a call and said he was going to go to Aspen and would I come and spend the week with him. I should have added that I saw him right after the funeral at Hyannis during Thanksgiving. He asked me to come up there then and stay with him. And those were terrible, terrible days. The depths of the loss and the sudden shattering of this period for all of them and this tremendous alteration — first, it would have been bad enough if everybody had just been garage mechanics because everybody was so totally devoted to President Kennedy just as a brother and as a friend and just as a

terribly engaging human being that was a very vital part of everybody's life, forgetting the level at which it was lived. Then on top of that were all these other considerations. It was a position of some importance and the whole life was so intricate and so highly developed that to have that suddenly obliterated while it was not only secondary but of third and fourth and fifth importance.

There was maybe even unconsciously this sense of incredible loss, not knowing what to do or where to go or how to handle himself, and above it all was this awful sense of having lost his brother, now twice, and a sister on top. And then I think the very depressing sickness of his father. That whole feeling, the thing came to such a fantastic fruition so suddenly and seemed to be in such bloom and even the difficulties in the Cuban crisis had been resolved successfully and things had been turned around. So it was just the picture of a boat, if you will, under a such full sail and breezes just perfectly pitched and the sails set right and everything going and suddenly — it sinks. He was just distraught, but distraught mainly on personal lines. I've never seen anybody so shattered.

Jackie, of course, was bereft and feeling it just exactly about the way he did. And Pat [Patricia Kennedy Lawford] was shattered. So holding all those people together, those were the ones who seemed to need the most help…. The other were all in terrible shape, too, but those particular ones he devoted a lot of attention to.

That period, the Thanksgiving down at the Cape, was perfectly awful. Then I didn't see him again until this time I speak of in Aspen. I came down to see him. We skied there for a week, and I think he was trying hard to pull himself out. We'd ski all day and then at night sit. A lot of his friends would come by — Willy Schaeffler who lived out there would come, and we'd sit up talking until late at night trying to overwhelm this despair. It was just a deep, deep melancholy that lasted and lasted and lasted and wouldn't…. I don't know whatever it was that finally — perhaps when he decided to run for office in New York it lifted. But he felt this terrible depression for so long.

HACKMAN: The time you were in Aspen skiing, when these people would talk with him, would they just talk about the normal things you'd talk about, or would he talk about the assassination and the Administration…

SPALDING: No, no, although he was perfectly conscious that it was present all the time. He would talk a lot about it when it came up. For instance, he was writing a foreword to a book. Somebody had asked him to write something about the President, and he had completed the foreword to that out there in Aspen. I remember him showing it to me and writing about it. And he was organizing things or starting to. Even at that point there were things that had to be done in regard to the President. So he was in a familiar role for him; he was doing things for his brother who was now dead. Still, all these things needed to be done. Memorials had to be started and the papers et cetera — all the things that came in the wake of the tragedy. He was beginning to be a bit occupied in this area. Your question — I've lost your question.

HACKMAN: I was just asking about the conversations at Aspen.

SPALDING: Oh, yes. Well they were about anything else except the assassination. I remember one night we stayed up forever, and Willy Schaeffler told us the fascinating experience that he'd had as a German soldier in Russia. He'd been with the army and had gone right to the edge of the cities. I think it was the siege of Leningrad that he was involved in. He told us how he'd gone there and the extreme cold and how the cold had frozen the Germans' mechanical equipment and how the Russians would ski through them at night and machine gun them and what had happened to the remnants — from 20,000 there were something like a handful left. What had happened to himself, he had been wounded several times on the trip, and how he got back. So all of that. Those sort of things came up and were talked about. There were a lot of people in Aspen at that time.

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HACKMAN: You talked about his helping Mrs. Kennedy, Jacqueline Kennedy, so much at this time in her grief. What can you recall about the earlier relationship between Robert Kennedy and her and Ethel. How did they get along generally?

SPALDING: Well, I think there was a separation there in temperament, a great admiration on both sides, but maybe perhaps not the closest relationship at that time. I think that's a relationship that has developed over the years. And then of course, having suffered each of them the same terrible loss, it's become much closer as years have passed. When both were alive, not that there was anything competitive, but they were so different. Both must have felt sense of inadequacy in regard to the other — Jackie because she didn't like to play the games and didn't like to go out and sail with the salt water in her face all day long and didn't like to play touch, whereas, Ethel could do all those things and did them so easily. And then Ethel perhaps because being casual and out of doors and not so

concerned with matters of fashion or details felt that Jackie had an edge in those areas. So there probably was some distance between them at that time, although they were always close friends.

HACKMAN: Anything else, then, in those months after the assassination into the spring of 1964?

SPALDING: Yes, we went down to Antigua. That was the next time that I saw him. But as I said, on top of everything the Thanksgiving was just mired in tragedy, and the Christmas trip was terribly, terribly sad. And then in the spring we went down to Antigua: Jackie and Bobby and Stash [Prince Stanislaus Radziwill] and Lee [Bouvier Radziwill] and myself, we went down to stay with the [Paul] Mellons. They left the house,

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and we had the house there for ourselves. And that was perhaps the worst of all trips. I mean the sadness was so overwhelming — the loss and the fact that Jack wasn't on this trip and everybody missing what he would have brought and all of us trying to fill in the hours and trying to re-establish some new way of going on and yet each of us so terribly aware of what had departed. It's a very beautiful place down there. There's not much to do, and perhaps that's one of the problems. We all swam as much as we could, and there was a lot of water skiing. The only activity was on the water. Perhaps this sense of loss was worse than ever, maybe because we were far from home and down in this island. But that I remember as perhaps the worst of all the trips. You know the prettiness and the beauty of the whole thing contrasted with the loss and everybody's terrible sense of dejection. It seemed to me that mood prevailed right up until the time that finally Bobby just rid himself of it, as everybody else had to sooner or later. It was so paralyzing that unless you were going to forfeit your own — it was something that eventually each of us had to simply say you can't go on like this, you have to move ahead. And then I think that probably time doing what it does it removes these things for you. You simply, as I say, can't exist like that, and you begin to fill in your life with other things and that becomes a memory. What formerly held your attention so completely becomes a memory and fades.

HACKMAN: There's always been such a controversy about the relationship then between Robert Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. Can you remember anything in the post-assassination days and then into that spring until he gets into the New York thing?

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SPALDING: Well, I suppose perhaps what I have to do is just to tell you the incidents that I recall that, perhaps, in my mind, account for it because I wasn't present when Bobby returned from Europe, and I wasn't present when Bobby confronted Johnson. I think what we were saying earlier set the foundation for it. I think the fact that Bobby was so close to the President and was such a strong figure in his own right, so successful as an Attorney General — this is my version — that he set his own standard of excellence, which I think was generally being accepted, allowing for the differences that business

people felt about the steel strike and the civil rights people felt about the way the Attorney General was handling that matter. But by and large, it seems to me, that he was developing a great source of acceptance. And then also I think that his role in the Cuban missile crisis was, if not decisive, certainly outstanding. Perhaps that shocked all the other members of the Cabinet, but it also drew to Bobby a tremendous sense of support that he hadn't had before so that he grew again tremendously in that experience.

I don't think that was the case with Mr. Johnson. I think Mr. Johnson in that particular group may have suffered some during the Cuban missile crisis. But Bobby's whole role was enlarging and perhaps obliterating, at least reducing to secondary proportions Mr. Johnson's. And Mr. Johnson, being in the very uncomfortable role of Vice President and finding that difficult anyway, was probably — it probably wasn't a good time for him from his point of view. And on top of that, even before that because of the Convention, there was a rancor between Bobby and Johnson. I think those two — whereas Bobby at the end of a slug fest with Humphrey could honestly and genuinely put his arms around him with tears in his eyes and say, "I'm glad we won, but I'm terribly sorry we beat you," with Johnson it wasn't that feeling at all. "I'm glad we won, and I'm glad we did beat you."

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I remember one night after a party downstairs in the White House we went up into the President's living quarters very late at night, and President Johnson was nagging Bobby about his feelings, saying that, "I don't understand you. Your father likes me and your brother likes me, but you don't like me." Bobby agreed to the accuracy of all that, and he repeated this again and again, "I don't understand it," he said. This was a discussion that occurred perhaps far too late in the evening, but it went on and on with an almost kind of high school level. And then there were discussions about the Convention in 1960 and the role that he had been played in. It was a role in which Bobby as the Attorney General was enjoying a position well in advance on Mr. Johnson as the conversation all ran to Bobby and the discussion was completely in his favor and in his hand.

So I think to find himself suddenly removed…. I think both men were particularly aware of their relationship to each other during that period, and if Mr. Johnson had ideas of succeeding as Vice President in President Kennedy's next campaign, certainly one of the people that he must have thought he would have to contend with at that time was Robert Kennedy. And so in a sense, his political future or some part of his political future rested in Bobby's hands, and it probably rested uncomfortably in Bobby's hands. He might have had Bobby's support, and on the other hand, it would have been perfectly normal for him to be extremely concerned about it.

So when the matters were suddenly in one afternoon just abruptly reversed, you know, in ten seconds, in one second, so completely reversed and Johnson was suddenly in a position of great power and Bobby relegated to one of nothing, then I think that the attitude of the Cabinet meetings must have shifted just as dramatically. It was just too much — the terrible pressures of the loss of his brother and suddenly to be confronted in a national council of power and to find in his brother's seat this fellow who was basically antagonistic to him and to whom he was antagonistic. It was just a natural situation for antagonism and friction, and neither could adjust. I'm certain there was probably in each mind mistakes made by the other. Undoubtedly, Johnson chafed under Bobby's

handling at one period, now it was Bobby's turn, and he felt terribly uneasy in the new situation. So it could only have gone that way.

And I do remember from his side, I never had any conversations on the other side, but I do remember conversations in which Bobby would relate how he went to see Mr. Johnson. But of course, it was bound to appear so, it was bound to be so galling to Bobby because the role had so suddenly been changed and now Johnson's people were all in power and he was right back probably in the role that he hated — being a little kid. You know, "Who does the Attorney General think he is talking to the President this way."

Well, Bobby had talked to the President that way and had assumed these roles before and he'd conquered all the ground that he had to conquer for himself with his two brothers before him, and his father ahead of that, and everything had been done and suddenly here was this figure standing right in his way again. It was just a natural clash. I think Mr. Johnson did everything he reasonably could publicly to prevent it, but there wasn't any possible way that it could've worked out any other way than it did. In fact, all things considered, it seems to me it was reasonably done. There are some clashes that just can't be avoided; this seems to me to be one of them. And certainly everything I've ever heard about Mr. Johnson indicates that he was as delicate as he could be. He never could have been delicate enough to salve everybody's feelings. There's no way he could have done anything except anger the Kennedy people who suddenly found him where they felt their own leader should have been.

HACKMAN: You've indicated that you thought maybe the New York campaign sort of pulled him out of the doldrums.

SPALDING: Well, I think that, once again, there's nothing like an activity of any sort to drive all those things away. And I don't think they ever left him, they never left him at all. On the subsequent trips that I talked to you about — for example, I remember we were sailing off of Maine in a very heavy weather, about fifty miles an hour gusts of wind and eight or twelve foot waves and the boat listing all over the place, all over the bay. The jacket that the President wore and that Bobby had picked up and wore as a memento was blown overboard in this heavy storm. He dove right over the side of the boat to get the jacket. It was a pretty chancey thing to do. It's not so easy to come around — the water in the first place was icy, icy cold; it must be in the very low fifties if it wasn't colder than that. To maneuver the boat to come around and pick somebody up in that kind of weather was tough. We got him back on board. Those sort of things — or he'd see somebody, a familiar face in his own campaign that he remembered from the President's campaign. I mean, he never for the rest of his life, ever lost that feeling.

But the activity did help, and he did get himself involved in something and again it was very controversial. Was he a carpetbagger, or was he not a carpetbagger? And then I think for a change, also, it was good to be a candidate and not to be running someone else's campaign. Steve was left to do that, and he did it extremely well. Bobby enjoyed being a candidate. I think it

helped more than anything could have to take it out. But all those days were colored by that sense of loss.

HACKMAN: Do you know anything about the decision to come into New York? I've heard people say Harriman was instrumental in this. Can you remember?

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SPALDING: Well I suppose that he was because I remember that we frequently went to Mr. Harriman's house at that time. It might have been. Again I wasn't that close to the people that made decisions about Bobby's political life. I saw him when he would come to the city. We again would go out to dinner, but just who he is — I knew that [Richard] Dick Goodwin was close to him and Dave Hackett and other people were close, and Steve, particularly, and in that area. I would talk and hear what was going on. But I don't know the other people who were responsible for his going in. I suppose when you got right down to it, perhaps Steve and Bobby made the final decisions.

I think in every case, particularly in President Kennedy's case, the idea of running for the vice presidency, there's a certain spur of the moment — this is true about almost all of these decisions as you look back at them. Now in reflection, there are almost as many — there are more reasons perhaps, for thinking that President Kennedy should never had gone for the vice presidency on that ticket on which he would have been defeated. On the other hand, it was the springboard for his eventual success. When he ran against [Henry Cabot] Lodge every poll in the state showed that he shouldn't have gone and his father told him not to go against Lodge. But indeed, he ran against Lodge. And when he ran for the Presidency, there wasn't probably anybody who said that you shouldn't have done it. And I remember in Wisconsin being in the street and many times people would come up and say, "Young man, you're too soon.. It's too quick." But still he ran.

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So I think that there was a similarity there and in that similarity Bobby reacted first in New York and then when he declared himself as a national candidate for the presidency in 1968 in the same way. He was told, perhaps, not to come to New York, but he did anyway, and came and won. And I suppose again every time as we talk, I think about what I think to be the conflict in people's point of view about Robert Kennedy and his actual nature and how vast to me seemed to be the difference. Perhaps the New York campaign did as much as anything to bring all those conflicts to the surface again, the charge of carpetbagger brought up and the out-of-state image and all the things that people chose to hang on him were brought out in that campaign. That probably was a good thing for him personally. It was the thing that put the loss of his brother — it never left him — but it at least put it aside so that he could live and he could work.

HACKMAN: Can you remember talking to him in the early 1964 period about the possibility of going on the ticket with Johnson as vice president. Was this a major disappointment?

SPALDING: No, I don't think so. But it was certainly suggested to him. It was one of the things that MacArthur told him, among other people, that he must do. MacArthur was cheered by the notion that Mr. Johnson wasn't particularly well and said, "Go and do it." He thought that Mr. Johnson wasn't going to be able to serve out his term. MacArthur probably was terribly sick at the same time and sickness was on his mind and in Bobby he saw somebody young and vibrant. I think he was also a great admirer of President Kennedy's and not an admirer of Mr. Johnson. That was the advice that he gave him. It was such a macabre — I think probably what desisted Bobby really was that the considerations were so macabre. I mean to sit and figure out whether Johnson was going to live or not on top of everything else, that was just too morbid. You couldn't really make a decision on that kind of basis.

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I think probably, as opposed to that thought, was the fact that it had to be nettling to Johnson. And I don't think that Bobby was so perfect that he didn't enjoy nettling Johnson a bit. The idea of Johnson and Bobby on the same ticket is almost, in those sick days, almost too much — you couldn't help but consider that with a certain amount of relish, I'm sure, if it was Bobby. It gave him a chance to turn the clock the other way and he would not have been the kind of vice president that we ever had before. I don't know how he would have changed it, but he certainly would have. I can't imagine anybody that would have….

So I suppose he gave it a lot of consideration back and forth: first on a practical basis and then, second, on, as I say, on a somewhat ironical basis. And then it wasn't available anyway. And then the idea of running for it — the rebelliousness was still there. Should we run for it and get it anyway. And then the divisiveness — I mean all things told, it was still the terrible turbulence incited by the assassination, it was still terribly before everybody in 1964. And then I guess, Atlantic City being just such a dreadful place to follow President Kennedy. That nomination appearing so terribly drab by comparison until Bobby appeared before the Convention and those famous four minutes which he stood there in front of the whole country. Again, that pushed him off into another area.

It seems strange to me that those two succeeding Conventions, from my own point of view, were saved, first, by that film of President Kennedy and Bobby's dramatic appearance, and then in 1968 by that film of Bobby, which to me, outside of the disturbances of the Convention, was the most moving part. I think that was a remarkable film, and it was a remarkable moment for the Convention. And then it seems to me at that point that the whole thing faded into the past. Those remarkable ten years, eight years were almost wiped out.

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HACKMAN: Can you remember in the period after the assasination, did he take any more interest in the family's fortune, or was this quickly turned over to Steve Smith?

SPALDING: Well, that is one area where they're all uneasy, except Steve, who didn't suffer from the upbringing that Mr. Kennedy gave the kids, because Mr.

Kennedy really just wouldn't allow them to talk about finance. Bobby and the President could speak about economics from a national point of view, but when they talked about business they really were just naive. I don't mean naive in the sense of naive about people, but naive in the terms and awkward in discussing it and it was almost like — listening to them talk about money was like listening to nuns talk about sex. It was awkward. It was something that they really were totally ill at ease with. So it was something that he couldn't wait to turn over to somebody as long as he felt they had a great deal of money and they weren't interested in making any money and they didn't want to lose what he had. I'm certain it was one of the chores that he disliked, and I don't think he probably did it very well. They made some substantial moves. Mr. André Meyer of Lazard Freres was brought in to help and that was the most constructive thing they could have done. Beyond that, I don't think Bobby wanted to involve himself much.

HACKMAN: After he got the Senate thing can you remember his development of his feelings about being a Senator? Did he enjoy the Senate or not?

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SPALDING: No, I remember the entire campaign and his election was anticlimactic to him. I mean, I think it was good and it involved him and it got him out in front and got him started, but still, it was so far from what he had been accustomed to doing and where he'd found such acceptance and such ease. His role with his brother and that particular position that he enjoyed was so preeminent and so satisfactory to him. And I think he felt he worked so well there that the election as Senator to New York, where it would have capped almost anybody else's career, was something he felt he had to do, but it didn't fill the void.

HACKMAN: Can you remember his talking about the Senate as an institution or his fellow senators?

SPALDING: Yes. He wasn't there long enough to have that sense of being a member of the "Club." All Kennedys had always had a trouble belonging to any club, anyway. Really, the only club they really were totally at ease in was the club of their family. I think perhaps Teddy was the exception there. Teddy has made a career of the Senate and is accepted completely there and is at ease there. I think President Kennedy was perhaps not there that long and was always sort of a loner in the process. Certainly after 1956 the Presidency was on his mind and he really thought that was the only place where there was sufficient power to accomplish anything. Bobby had picked that up. The President understood the power make up of the Senate and just thought it was inadequate. If you were going to be seriously concerned, you couldn't really get enough done there. It bothered him that you didn't have enough power. So undoubtedly Bobby felt the same inadequacy about a Senator's role and was anxious to look ahead.

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HACKMAN: You said during this period you didn't get involved in anything political?

SPALDING: Well, I just couldn't afford to go and help here in New York. I had a job that I just couldn't turn away from and too many other personal problems so that it just made it impossible for me to do any work in his campaign — which was, again, another example of how completely thoughtful he was. By this time, of course, there were so many people willing and anxious to work for a Kennedy that it wasn't the same thing, but because of efforts at an earlier time, there wasn't even a moment's uneasiness. He never felt that I should have done anything else or never allowed me to feel that I should have done anything else, and he just did this naturally. He didn't feel that he was being slighted. I suppose a lesser person might have thought, "You supported my brother, why don't you support me?" But he was so aware of my own situation that it never even occurred. I never felt a moment's uneasiness about it. I wished that I could have. I felt in that sense a loss on my own side, but as far as being with him, it never was a handicap.

HACKMAN: After he's elected to the Senate, then, in 1965 through early 1968 when you get involved in the campaign again, what were the general times when you'd see him?

SPALDING: My relations then are patterned exactly as they were after the days that his brother was elected to the Presidency. I spent a lot of time at his house, and I would see people that he was seeing, but it was totally on that basis. I'd go down to the house and spend a weekend and talk to him and see how he was coming. But the same people and new people were coming to the house, and he was developing now as a national figure on his own.

HACKMAN: You said in this period he started to develop intellectual interests that he probably hadn't…

SPALDING. Yes. I should have mentioned that. Down in Antigua, when we had so much time there and still this terrible sense of loss, as I say, I saw him going to books, to classical books, to poetry, to novels — looking to books for some release from this thing that was not as depressive this feeling that…. And finding that other people had the same terrible sense of loss, that other people had lost, if not brothers, had lost great friends, wives or women or sons — had suffered terrible personal losses. He found that in a series of books and historic episodes and was able to realize that other people had to cope with it too and then worked his way out.

HACKMAN: But he's reading these things, the novels or the poetry rather, as more than tools to use in his own Senate career or national policy, something of this type?

SPALDING: Yes. Then I think what happened, perhaps, was that Jack was always interested in those intellectual avenues and he took Bobby with him on those trips, so that now with him gone Bobby had to generate that interest himself. He couldn't rely on somebody else to do it so that he took it on himself to do what his brother had done before and bring into his own life what his brother had brought into his life for him. So that's why I became more aware that he was more interested than he had been on his own.

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HACKMAN: You don't remember any particular authors having an impact?

SPALDING: I just remember at that time Yevtushenko came to the country and came to Bobby's house and sat and spoke a great deal with him. And of course with [Theodore H.] White, Bobby had always been terribly close. I don't really remember specifically because I wasn't able to be present at all those, but I just knew that they went on all the time. I remember even kidding references that Jackie would make to it, "Bobby can't come and see us tonight because some professor is in the house lecturing about space or something."

HACKMAN: These are the Hickory Hill seminars?

SPALDING: Yes. Right.

HACKMAN: Did you get involved in these?

SPALDING: No, I never did. I never did.

HACKMAN: Unless there's anything else that stands out in the 1965, late 1967 period, we'll go ahead on to 1968 politics?

SPALDING: Let's do that.

HACKMAN: Can you recall in this whole period ever hearing him talk about when he might run for the Presidency or what he regarded as the logical…

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SPALDING: Well, I think that was a constant topic of conversation because I think so many people who had been a part of the earlier effort were anxious to see Bobby recapture the castle, so to speak, and to complete the job that he and the President had started. So that it was just a question of when the opportunity would occur. Everybody thought perhaps that '68 was going to be too soon because everybody at that time expected Johnson to run again. But having thought seriously, not seriously but at least having discussed the possibility of running for the vice presidency against the President's wishes,

certainly a good deal of thought was given to the possibility of running against the President through the primary route or whatever other way occurred in ‘68.

HACKMAN: Do you think he was thinking about this back through ‘66 or ‘67 or is it only…

SPALDING: Well, I think he was. I think, again, it only made sense not to make it an overwhelming topic of conversation, but I’m certain that in his mind that was where he was aimed and certainly he thought about it.

HACKMAN: Did you get at all involved in those late ‘67 early ‘68 discussions among his advisors…

SPALDING: No. None at all. I wasn’t ever consulted.

HACKMAN: Maybe you can say something about his relationship with Edward Kennedy, we haven’t talked much about that, at this point, as a political advisor? Do you think he looked to him as a political expert, or did he look for him as more as a personal…

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SPALDING: I think that their relation was very much like his was to the President, now by circumstance, and that they talked to each other, and they didn’t always agree. Their natures were so totally different again, Teddy’s being so convivial and so easy, whereas Bobby’s was so abrasive that they just saw things differently. And I think that Teddy has never had Bobby’s almost appetite for meeting things just head on in such a way that could only provoke argument, dissent and eruption. And I think Teddy sometimes was impatient with that. He didn’t think it was always necessary and would have wished that Bobby…. That’s really one of the great differences between Bobby’s campaign and his brothers’. Bobby’s campaign was uphill. There was such opposition to him. He had angered so many people on the way that it was just uphill the whole way, just a slugging fight — which he was going to win in my opinion.

Just to clarify that, also, that’s an opinion I came by late. I didn’t think that in the beginning. I didn’t think that he should have run. I remember when I heard he was going to run, I heard the rumor that he was going to announce that morning, and he called me on the phone or perhaps I called him. Anyway, we spoke. So he said, “Well, what do you think.” And I said, “Honestly, I don’t think you should go. If you’re asking me, I wouldn’t do it this time.” I didn’t share the feeling that he had that he was going to run out of time. He seemed to think that — you know, he came at a late time by this bobby-sox enthusiasm which the President had, and which he seemed to think was necessary to….

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Now I can understand it was such a tremendous part of the President's campaign, that tremendous enthusiasm, the first time that any sort of almost movie-like figure had entered politics and the first time that a political candidate had engendered this kind of rapture among the people. So I think he thought that was necessary and that when he saw people begin to respond, young groups begin to respond to him in that way, slightly different but nevertheless he did develop this crowd appeal of his own, he thought that might have been ephemeral, that it might have lifted. The thing that I think he had lost sight of was that he was going to be the most important figure in the Democratic Party for years to come, regardless of that and that he could have matured and perhaps…. I think he was short-sighted in this.

The President had this thing about youth, the attractiveness of it, so that anybody at a later time in life didn't appear so to him. You can argue the other side of this with a great number of young people coming up, but I didn't think myself that Bobby had to worry so much about that. In fact, he might have been a less controversial character if time had been allowed to pass. And it was perfectly obvious that he was an outstanding figure qualified to be a president and that he would get it on those terms. But he was so used to fighting: first, to get by his brothers, to get on the football team, to get through law school, to organize the campaign. Just to fight was so natural, it was only natural for him to get in and fight here. And he fought so well that what I hadn't realized was — early, I mean when he first announced it — what I hadn't realized was that he couldn't have been stopped. He would have fought and won.

HACKMAN: Did you ever hear him talk earlier or at that point about [Eugene J.] McCarthy's campaign in New Hampshire and a lot of the kids going to McCarthy or is this something….

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SPALDING: The thing was there that I guess what he had suspected was…. There was a tremendous antagonism to the war that hadn't been apparent. The polls were being issued at that time showing that 68 percent of the people were in favor of the national effort, et cetera. But he had felt from talking about it and taking the opposite stand that there was a tremendous amount of antagonism to the war. This is one of these political arguments that the polls don't reveal accurately enough. In other words, the event takes place and you have to make a judgement ahead of it or ahead of the poll and a lot of times the subtle antagonism runs through the country that can be gauged by poll. Either it hasn't developed to a point so that people express it openly or it's there or it isn't registered. I think what happened was McCarthy took the chance and went out on his own and showed plainly that there was this — what Bobby suspected — and then beyond a shadow of doubt it was clear after New Hampshire that it was there and that kids could be rallied to this thing. Wouldn't you agree that at that point it became apparent that there was a much bigger and greater wave of antagonism building in the country than even he expected?

HACKMAN: And that's how he justified the race to a great degree and his announcement.

SPALDING: Yes. Yes. That's right. That was a charge that he couldn't have ever gotten away from. McCarthy had gone first.

HACKMAN: So how did you then come into the 1968 campaign?

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SPALDING: Well, then when I called him that morning, I said, "If you're going to go this time, I'd like to take the time out, and I'll do anything I can." So I went down there to Washington to hear him make his speech. I met him coming out of the — where did he make it, in the Senate Office, he made it over where President Kennedy did.

HACKMAN: In the same place, in the Caucus Room.

SPALDING: Right. Well, I got there after he made the speech. I couldn't get there before. But as he came out and came down the stairs, I ran into him. He said, "Come on, get on the plane, I'm going to New York." So I went up to New York with him. It was some day up here, there was a march, was it St. Patrick's Day?

HACKMAN: It was St. Patrick's Day.

SPALDING: St. Patrick's Day. So great crowds greeted him up here, and he went in the parade, a tremendous crowd and enthusiasm. And then he went to see Jackie. So he said, "Well," he said, "why don't you go to California." I'd been out there before. So I went and got cleared and went to California. I was the first person to go to California while they made the preliminary rounds of the primaries that was going to culminate in California. So we went out in the plane, a remarkable — again, that terrible sadness would come up again because Bobby and I had made the trip to California, you know, in 1959 together so many times. And this time he was going — Jesse Unruh was on the plane again and the reporters were there again, the whole thing was being repeated, only this time it was Bobby.

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HACKMAN: What exactly was your assignment in California at that time?

SPALDING: Just to get it started at that time. Unruh had urged Bobby to come in and so his machine was in control of it. As always, they always wanted somebody to watch over it and to see what was happening and Unruh had — we had varying degrees of feelings about the competence of his organization. In Southern California it was pretty good; in Northern California it was awful.

So my job was to do what I could to strengthen it up north and to keep it going down south and to organize some of the fundraising events that we had to have and to raise some money, which was hard to find out there. We hoped to get some money from those galas. We had to organize one in Southern California and one in Northern California and bring in as many

people as we could and get the campaign going. The Unruh approach was so different from the Kennedy approach, that was the great problem there from my point of view. Unruh had felt that there was no way Bobby could lose, and he was going to run a quiet professional job in which his people would handle it the way they handled everything else. But it was so subdued, and they kept everybody else out so that none of the enthusiasm that people, particularly the people that worked for Kennedy before, was ever allowed to develop. This was far before the California primary. It seemed that some sort of paralysis was taking place in California, which was to be the most important vote of all. Up in North California particularly it came to just a dead standstill. And of course, Northern California was perhaps less sympathetic to Kennedy anway, very conservative area, and he wasn't very popular there.

[-80-]

Worst of all, from my point of view, it just seemed to me that the Unruh group literally kept it all to themselves. They had a tight group that had been through these things for Jesse, and they had some political ideas for Jesse in the future, anyway, which they certainly were entitled to. But they weren't going to allow anybody else in. So I clashed with Mr. Unruh early in the game.

The contributions that I did make were to start the campaign, start those things that we always had to do like fundraising, get them started in both cities, and then draw attention to the fact that the Northern California office had to be completely rebuilt. And Steve accomplished that by bringing in John Seigenthaler.

There's another typical figure of Bobby's. President Kennedy might have missed Seigenthaler completely, but Seigenthaler is one of the great organizers and he did a fantastic job in Northern California. In spite of all the association I had with the Kennedys, I never had run an office, and I didn't really know how. But Seigenthaler came out to Northern California and put one together that was a model in a short time. I'm sure we would have won by a larger margin if we had been able to institute the same thoroughly professional, inspiring leadership that he provided in Northern California, if we could have done something like that down in Southern California.

One thing that I thought about, and this may be a typical oversight because the Kennedys — although they were tremendously enthusiastic, there was no great attention to detail when you think about it. It's quite simple when you see it done by someone that knows how, the departments that are [BEGIN SIDE II TAPE II] necessary in an office. It should have been almost part of a pamphlet. It wouldn't have been hard to set it up if one had known what to do. But Seigenthaler did it beautifully and just deserves all the credit in the world for what he did there.

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HACKMAN: Before this you were basically on your own in Northern California…

SPALDING: There wasn't anybody there from the Kennedy point of view because, again, it was a shortage of people and quickness of time and such people

as there were in Indiana and then going to Oregon and some effort in South Dakota and finally California.

HACKMAN: Did you report the differences with Unruh back to anyone? Would you make these directly to Robert Kennedy or to Steve Smith?

SPALDING: Well, I mean my personal clashes I wouldn't report. I had one confrontation with him myself which was only personal and I just figured I said what I felt I ought to say, but I didn't bother anybody with that. I spoke repeatedly with [Frank F.] Mankiewicz and also with Steve. But it was so apparent, you know, after a few calls it wasn't necessary to — I mean everyone came quickly to the same conclusion, and the question was what to do about it.

HACKMAN: When you were talking to Manciewicz and Steve Smith, is this before they came out or after…

SPALDING: Well, yes. First, before they came out and then as it drew closer, even though they were occupied in Oregon, they would come down. There were a few preliminary visits, early visits. They would ask, and I indicated what the situation was.

HACKMAN: When they came down, did you feel they quickly agreed with your assessment of the situation?

SPALDING: Oh, yes. There was absolutely no doubt about that. It was just a question of how to go about it. And then, you see, there was this lag before this whole caravan would come from the other areas of its activity and descend on California.

HACKMAN: What kind of change was made then in Unruh's role? Was there something…

SPALDING: I think eventually he agreed that it couldn't be run in…. You see, the great problem was whether to start any Citizens for Kennedy groups and that might have brought an open clash with Jesse. And in the long run, everybody decided that, although they gave it some serious thought or some thought…. There was serious thought given to opening separate organizations and starting a citizen's group, but then it was decided that it was better to stay as one and not risk any break. Jesse, after talking to Steve, agreed that more of an effort should be made in Northern California and a Kennedy man was put in, namely Seigenthaler, to run the entire operation, and that was a great concession on Jesse's part, but necessary.

HACKMAN: In the early period the other names that I have seen mentioned who were out working were Tony Akers and John Nolan. Did you meet with them?

SPALDING: Yes, that's right. Oh sure, I met with both of them. Tony Akers was down in Southern California all the time, and Nolan was there originally. He paved some of the way for Bobby coming in.

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HACKMAN: Did they also feel the Unruh thing was a problem?

SPALDING: Yes, all of us did, and there was nothing that we could have done. Jesse's situation in Southern California was quite elaborate, and really nothing could have been done there until the Kennedy group came and in a sense inundated them, because once you had enough people and you had the candidate there, there wasn't anything that you could do. They couldn't have withstood the added pressures and the added energies that came when they all appeared. California politically just divides itself into two areas; it might for all practical purposes be two different states. So whereas there was some activity in Southern California, there was none up in Northern California.

HACKMAN: In your fundraising activities, in setting up the galas, is this primarily what the fundraising activities consisted of, or was there soltication of…

SPALDING: Both. I canvassed the place originally with names that I developed and names that Steve had given me and some that I'd known from previous visits to see what support we could get. We got a minimum of support, but such as we could get, I got early, and there was not too much made afterwards just because there wasn't that kind of support among the business community for Kennedy, for Robert Kennedy, at that time. Undoubtedly there would have been later, but at that time there wasn't. Then the gala served two purposes: they attracted a great deal of attention and got a lot of publicity and drew people's attention to the event, and they were supposed to raise money at the same time. They both worked out. I wasn't close to it after getting it started. The one in Southern California, they never raise anywhere near as much money as they were supposed to, but because we had a lot of support in the entertainment group, they were both successful events. They were all well attended.

[-84-]

HACKMAN: You just mentioned briefly business support. What was Robert Kennedy's basic attitude toward the business community? Does this bring up any contrast with the President?

SPALDING: Well, I think that he and President Kennedy got a similar reaction there. The business support would have been expedient. It wasn't support that came to him naturally. There wasn't any business group that…. There

were people in there, for example Max Palevsky, a fellow who had started SDS, Scientific Data Systems, which he'd started on his own and had formerly been a teacher at UCLA [University of California at Los Angeles] and was one of the leading authorities on computer usage. He became a great supporter of Kennedy's, but he was a very unusual fellow. He was looking for somebody like — he's a very liberal fellow in his thinking and completely self made and energetic and again, naturally drawn to Bobby Kennedy and would not be the sort of businessman who would traditionally support the people business normally turns to; they would have depressed Palvesky. He and a fellow called Burt Leiner, who runs an investment bank there in Beverly Hills, Kleiner Bell, and Bill Jance, who had been a friend and supporter of the Kennedys before, he was in the real estate business, those people in the south. And up in the north Mr. [Benjamin H.] Swig had already come out for Humphrey, so he couldn't help. But Adolf Schuman who runs a dress factory there called Lillin Ann was a great supporter. Here and there there were individuals like that who contributed substantial amounts of money. But they were only individuals, and they were only a handful.

HACKMAN: I was thinking back to something like the steel crisis in '62-'63 and just wondering whether Robert Kennedy's attitude over time was…. Can you remember it at all at that time?

[-85-]

SPALDING: Oh yes. Oh sure. It had hardened so completely — the opinion in the business community had hardened so totally against him, by and large, that there just wasn't…. I mean you take the traditional sources, they're all Republican up in Northern California anyway, but they are just totally opposed. And people, for instance, who are absolutely antagonistic to Bobby might have been completely friendly to Teddy. There was a tremendous hard antagonism to Robert Kennedy's candidacy. It wasn't soft spots that could have been probed the way Jack found the country. When Bobby got there he found it just a wall of antagonism, and his support had to come from the masses.

The odd thing about it was that in his views he wasn't antagonistic. The best speech that I heard him give in California was directed to a business group in downtown Los Angeles. He was invited there, and he gave a brilliant speech. When he concluded, they gave him a standing ovation. His personality was sufficiently vivid and sufficiently attractive that it overwhelmed those fellows when he was able to confront them. As long as Bobby could come to grips with it in front of them, he would win the issue. But nevertheless, in spite of the grudges, that was momentary support, which eventually might have translated itself into complete support, but during the campaign there was none. I should have mentioned earlier that Dr. [Armand] Hammer at Occidental Petroleum was a great supporter and that Norton Simon at Simon Foods was a great supporter. We got help from all of them, but there weren't so many.

HACKMAN: Can you remember any of your conversations with Robert Kennedy? Was there time to talk to him during this California thing and what his comments were on how the campaign was going, McCarthy…

[-86-]

SPALDING: No, because I didn't see him at all. I'd just see him briefly when he came through as a candidate, I saw him just for a few minutes. But I saw him practically not at all.

HACKMAN: Any thing at all after the Oregon defeat, how he reacted?

SPALDING: No, I didn't see him to talk to him about that. Then everybody came to California, and everybody's efforts were dedicated to winning that, and I didn't see him at all. I saw him at the airport on one of his last campaigning trips, just before he got on the plane. But it was again, just, "Take care of yourself, be well." And then the next time I saw him he was lying in the hospital in Los Angeles. That was it.

HACKMAN: That's all I have unless you can…

SPALDING: Well, I think maybe I can just finish by saying how it happened, where I was. I was looking at the TV in San Francisco when the early evening returns were coming in and feeling a tremendous sense of relief that he'd won this important primary and by a sufficient margin so as to be convincing. It apparently would have overcome the loss of Oregon, and he was well on his way at this point and what we'd come for we'd achieved. I heard there had been a summation of what the computer had figured the percentages were and he was sufficiently ahead for it to have been conceded to him at that point. And one was looking ahead now to the New York meeting and picking up delegates in New York. I turned away from the TV and went to shave in the bathroom. My wife — there was a bang, a snap, not an audible noise, but there was a shriek from her, and she yelled, "He's been shot." Then I watched it on TV, and then it was almost like a record. It so distresses my wife that she couldn't cope with it. It was almost like a dream. You've done the same thing before.

I packed my clothes. I got on a plane and went down to a hospital. Previously, I went to see the casket return, but Bobby at this point was being returned — was in the hospital. I went there. It was the next day that Jackie came to California. I went to meet her, she flew in. I took her to the hospital. And the whole thing had that whole same feeling for everybody just being replayed again, just the business of going through it. I can remember the meetings with Mankiewicz, who was so heroic through the whole thing, and also with other people who were so close to Bobby — everybody overwhelmed by the repetition of the same event. Then the funeral and Teddy's wonderful speech. Then hastening to the ceremony from New York on that hot day, the train trip, the remarkable train. Just the feeling that went through your head, you know, as he was put to rest in Arlington and the lights that night — what an incredible thing had happened. How I had talked to him when his brother was shot, and now there really was nobody to talk to. And that so much had suddenly just been lost.

To me what a marvelous, incredible person Bobby really was. All through his life there was this terrible sense of fighting and struggling, and the thing that I felt, perhaps, I suppose was what he must have felt that day in Dallas. The total senselessness of somebody who struggled so

well cut down like that. I still can't rid myself of that. It's been such a remarkable association and such an unusual set of friends to have had and to have lost under such a circumstance. It just doesn't seem possible that both could have come to such ends. I don't really have much more to say.

HACKMAN: There really isn't much more to say, I guess.

[END OF INTERVIEW]