

**Harris Wofford Oral History Interview—JFK#2, 5/22/1968**  
Administrative Information

**Creator:** Harris Wofford

**Interviewer:** Larry J. Hackman

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**Biographical Note**

Wofford was an assistant to Senator John F. Kennedy (JFK) (1960); Special Assistant to the President for Civil Rights (1961-1962); and Peace Corps Special Representative for Africa (1962-1964). In this interview, he discusses the civil rights section of the 1960 Kennedy for President campaign, the civil rights platform at the 1960 Democratic National Convention, civil rights leaders' access to JFK, the "talent search" after JFK's election, and Wofford's work with R. Sargent Shriver, Jr. in creating the Peace Corps, among other issues.

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By Harris Wofford

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Harris Wofford  
Harris Wofford

June 25, 1972  
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page six, lines thirteen through seventeen of the second Wofford answer.

page seventy-three, lines nine and ten.

page ninety-eight, lines seven through thirty.

page one hundred thirty-two, the last two lines on the page.

page one hundred thirty-three, the first two lines.

page one hundred thirty-nine, lines twenty-two through thirty-one.

page sixty-eight, line twenty-three through page seventy, line twenty-seven.

Harris Wofford  
Harris Wofford

October 15, 1972  
Date

Harris Wofford—JFK#2

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Second of Three Oral History Interviews

With

Harris Wofford

May 22, 1968  
Old Westbury, New York

By Larry Hackman

For the John F. Kennedy Library

HACKMAN: What exactly was your role at the Convention as you saw it at the time?

WOFFORD: I had, I guess, a dual role because I was by then coordinator or something like that, the organizing man, under Shriver [R. Sargent Shriver, Jr.], of the Kennedy [John F. Kennedy] civil rights operation, and I had for a long time before the Convention been one of the men around Chester Bowles [Chester B. Bowles], who was chairman of the platform committee. I had done a number of platform drafts for him and as a longtime aide of his, I was one of his three or four men that he was working with on the platform.

HACKMAN: How did the civil rights operation as a separate operation work at the Convention?

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WOFFORD: We had a suite and we had breakfasts offered at the suite every morning—Shriver would be there, occasionally other people from the family or from the campaign—to which people interested in civil rights, which by definition included the Negro delegates. I can't remember how many there were; my recollection is it was something over a hundred, and then there were alternates, of course. The Negro delegates were invited. And then there were whole state delegations that considered themselves part of the civil

rights section, such as Michigan. Governor Williams [G. Mennen Williams] and Millie Jeffrey [Mildred Jeffrey] and others were quite often there. We would talk at breakfast about the platform, about the candidates. By then we had two-thirds of the Negro delegates in the Kennedy camp so it was mainly a matter of conspiring as to what we were going to do that day. People were coming in with ideas. Out of that morning meeting we would run with some of them.

HACKMAN: Were people assigned to specific geographical areas?

WOFFORD: Our real aim was to get—I mean, our aim in terms of votes at the Convention was to get every Negro delegate for Kennedy, we came very close to that. I'm not sure, we may have slipped on a few. Senator Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson] had a few Negro delegates from Texas I think, but we had just about every other delegate in the country.

HACKMAN: Were there any changes after you got to the Convention or were most of these people....

[-40-]

WOFFORD: Oh a lot happened at the Convention, yes. The Kennedy support for the stronger civil rights plank was a very significant factor. Secondly, Bob Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy] had been a question mark for a number of Negro delegates. They just hadn't seen him on the civil rights scene at all. He talked to a lot of people, said a lot of things, including the things we talked about before in the earlier interview with Berl Bernhard [Berl I. Bernhard], his saying go ahead on the full Bowles platform. But I think Bob reassured a number of people, both black and white, who were concerned about civil rights, that he intended to go far on that front.

HACKMAN: Can you remember any of the specific shifts of delegates?

WOFFORD: No.

HACKMAN: Were there any difficulties at this point, at Convention time, among the various people who were working in civil rights, Mrs. Lawson [Marjorie M. Lawson] particularly and Frank Reeves [Frank D. Reeves] and some of the other people who had also been working in this area?

WOFFORD: I don't remember the Convention particularly as a time of difficulty. The original situation was that Belford Lawson [Belford V. Lawson] and Marjorie Lawson were Kennedy's two Negro advisors—by original I mean a year or two before the Convention, I would guess. Whenever it was in the spring that Bob Kennedy called me down to his office to talk about the Negro situation, which was shortly after I had arranged for several of the Negro leaders to come in to see Kennedy; then I was really working on Asia and Africa and I wasn't on the civil rights scene at all except the Negro civil rights leaders were very upset that he wasn't in touch with Negro leaders who were considered civil rights people. So several came in, and I'm not sure whether King [Martin Luther King, Jr.] was

one of those then. But I remember arranging for several meetings with leaders in his office just because these people wanted to tell Kennedy he was in trouble on this front. A few days after that, out of the blue, Bob Kennedy called and asked me to come down to his office.

[-41-]

HACKMAN: This was all before the Convention.

WOFFORD: Yes, oh yes. At least a month before. I would say two months before. Bob then, without my having to say anything, said that we'd been dealing outside the whole field of the Negro leadership and that we'd just have to act as if we were starting from scratch. But of course they weren't starting from scratch because Mrs. Lawson was working with them professionally. I don't remember how Frank Reeves got into the picture, whether I brought him....

HACKMAN: I just wondered if you could remember at the Convention their...

WOFFORD: From the time Frank got in the picture, Frank and Marjorie, I guess, were in a kind of competition as to who was Kennedy's key Negro advisor. Frank was close to the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] and to civil rights people. Then really outside of both of them was, of course, the Ray Jones-Adam Powell group [J. Raymond Jones; Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.]. And Ray Jones and Adam Powell were not of one piece; they were even then in some kind of a feud, although they were working together in terms of the election. Then away from both of those was the whole King-Southern Christian Leadership movement which had their connections with any of the people I just named. We began developing very close ties with them. I guess I was the chief contact to them.

Then about this time we were interested in getting Louis Martin [Louis E. Martin] to join us. He had just come back from Africa and was at the Convention, I think, piloting some African leaders around. He wasn't doing anything. He had a line about "I've been in Africa," that took him off the hook as to who he was supporting at the Convention. But shortly after the Convention he joined us and he, in effect, became the key Negro campaigner—although the title was divided between Frank and Mrs. Marjorie Lawson. Louis Martin became in fact the Negro who was at the heart of organizing and directing the whole operation. He's an extraordinarily capable fellow and wise. He's a great politician, a good man. I've left out Congressman Dawson [William L. Dawson] who was nominally the head of the minority section of the Democratic National Committee.

[-42-]

Right after the Convention, people were impressed with the potentiality of this whole front so they decided that what we'd done in the pre-Convention campaign we would carry over into the presidential campaign, that is that we would not have a minorities, a Negro section—this had been the case before—in which money was given and passed out both to political leaders for organizing and to Negro newspapers for ads, but that we would have a thing called a civil rights section.

Out of this idea came the idea that that could be done in several other areas of the campaign, most of which Shriver organized with Bob Kennedy's backing. He organized an urban affairs section. I brought Adam Yarmolinsky in to meet Shriver and he got a commission to work under Shriver setting up an urban affairs section. These sections would develop issues and in developing issues involve key people in these areas in working on a policy position on the issues. Out of this a lot of actions could be taken that would be of interest to particular groups of voters but it would be in the context of policy and ideas. I think it really worked very well in the civil rights field.

HACKMAN: Wasn't there a businessman's group?

WOFFORD: Yes, but the thing is, when you get to businessman's groups and farmers' groups, it's more like the traditional thing—although Shriver was in charge of both of those and they were all treated as issue sections and the idea approach, I think, pervaded it more than it had before. But urban affairs was more the equivalent of civil rights as a generic approach to an area.

[-43-]

HACKMAN: How much of a...

WOFFORD: Oh, excuse me. I was just telling you about Congressman Dawson. He was essential to get in this act. It was natural for him to be involved in this since he was head of the Democratic National Committee's thing called the minorities section or the minorities committee. He had traditionally led the campaign for Negro votes in each of many presidential campaigns, I guess. Shriver got most of a floor in a Washington office building on K Street. Shriver believes in open space anyway, in the Merchandise Mart. He told us all how open space was so much better and to just have desks all around the floor, which is what we all did—except that Congressman Dawson said that he had never worked in open space and he needed a closed office. There was minor resistance on this and a dispute. Finally Shriver said, "The Congressman's going to get his closed office." So they built a little wooden closed office in the middle of this open space. It really looked like a little shack right in the middle. It was a very, very funny thing. Right in the middle of a huge open floor was a little wooden office.

HACKMAN: How much time did Dawson spend up there? Not much, did he?

WOFFORD: Hardly at all. He's a very old man now.

HACKMAN: How much of a problem was it to...

WOFFORD: He didn't favor the term "civil rights," for instance. He said that he had spent a lot of time getting along with his friends from the South in Congress and using words like that just hurt them. He didn't like to hurt people. They didn't mind talking about minorities, but civil rights, it was just like a red flag, and he didn't like that. He advised, "Don't have any relations with these wild young men like Martin Luther King. That

will just get Kennedy into trouble.” He was a major moderating, to put it mildly, conservative force on the whole thing.

[-44-]

HACKMAN: Did he continue to be a problem since he didn’t spend much time there?

WOFFORD: No problem, no.

HACKMAN: Was it much of a problem to keep the civil rights operation in this idea-oriented direction or did people like Mrs. Lawson who had contacts around the country tend to bring it back in the other direction, the traditional?

WOFFORD: Well, I don’t want to be misleading. As you approach an election day, in some sense everybody is concerned with the votes and organizing, so we were all tending in that direction. But at that moment, in civil rights, there was a big head of steam from a lot of people. I had felt it in me. Berl Bernhard, a whole group of people, white and black, were very, very concerned about actions that were to be taken and about Kennedy’s stand on them. The whole Michigan group, white and black, were for Kennedy, but they were unsure what he was going to do. The next two years suggested that in some sense there was cause for getting strong commitments and the campaign was the time to do that. So there was then, as there was later in the administration, a great commitment to action on the ideas among the people involved in it. They did not think this was in any conflict with their support of Kennedy, or later of the President, because they thought what was good for civil rights was good for the President or for the candidate. We were very anxious to get very strong statements taken by Kennedy in the Nixon [Richard M. Nixon]-Kennedy debates, which he did. That’s when he said, “the stroke of the pen,” I believe. I’m not sure if it’s the first time he used that phrase. That referred to the executive order on housing.

[-45-]

HACKMAN: Do you know where the idea for making that statement originated? Did it come out of the civil rights operation, or was it just something that occurred to him, or what?

WOFFORD: Well, I’m accused of being the draftsman of whichever the first speech was that used “the stroke of the pan.” I had used it in talks of my own for a year. I was in charge of the Civil Rights Commission study on discrimination in housing that in its report to the President in '59 called for an executive order on housing. I drafted the first such executive order. Out at Notre Dame when I first was dealing with Kennedy, I remember the thing I was pushing most was the executive order on housing. We were trying to get Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] to do it. But later, when Kennedy didn’t sign it, both the President and people in the White House remembered that I had advanced that phrase. There was a campaign in which pens were sent to the President with a little slogan on it, “one stroke of the pen.” I don’t know whether a thousand or ten thousand pens came, but the President said they could all be sent to Mr. Wofford’s office, so they piled up in my office.

You see, after the Convention there was a special session of Congress. Not a special session, but there was a session of Congress in August, what the Republicans did was to advance a civil rights bill. They claimed, “Well, here’s the Democratic platform and now we’ll introduce it.” The Democrats knew that to get half of what was in that platform through Congress would be a major fight and a filibuster and all sorts of things. It seemed to everybody impossible to get anything through that August session, but it was exceedingly embarrassing because here was the Democratic platform introduced into Congress with a lot of Republicans supporting a milder version, a voting rights bill or something like that. But both bills were there and they were saying, “Well, if you don’t do your own platform, at least do something.” So there was never any question but that the Democrats were not going to go

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ahead with an attempt to get civil rights legislation that August. I wasn’t a part of any discussions on that. It was just a closed question. The question was how do you dispose of it. I mean, how do you vote it down, how do you table it without seeming to undermine your whole platform? The President—I mean Senator Kennedy—I talked with him quite a bit on this during this period. It was during this period that he picked me up on the street one morning. Was that in the previous thing?

HACKMAN: Yes.

WOFFORD: We took off, and he said, “Well, get me out of this goddamn mess in the Senate.” In a running way, all through this month he was trying to figure out what he was going to do and say on this whole issue. It was during this month that most strongly the theme of executive action came out. Millie Jeffrey, down at King’s funeral, in embracing me—she’s the National Committeewoman from Michigan—she teased me about the executive action idea as if then I had seen it as sufficient, and how I was proved wrong on that, and that we did need legislation and that we got it. That was a fair sort of recollection of hers, though that wasn’t the way I saw it then. The way I saw it then was it was really just a fact. There wasn’t going to be any legislation that August. What do you do to show that you really intend to go ahead in civil rights? One of the things clearest to me during the whole Civil Rights Commission, when Eisenhower was president, was that there’s an enormous power in the presidency to do things that hasn’t been used, and that if you could get a president who really would use that power, it could make a major change and could open the way to legislation. I don’t think I ever saw it as a substitute for legislation.

[-47-]

It was during that month, faced with this problem, that Kennedy really articulated the theory of executive action, and in it came the promise of a housing order by “one stroke of the pen.” I think it’s very possible that the “one stroke of the pen” promise is in—in fact I think it’s likely now that I think of it—is in a statement I drafted that month. We had a statement that Kennedy issued, Kennedy and a number of other Democratic senators, promising action afterwards, including legislation afterwards. But it also promised executive action, including “one stroke of the pen.” It attacked Eisenhower and said if the Republicans were really honest

about this, instead of proposing legislation which they know has no chance whatsoever, get Eisenhower to sign the executive order on housing proposed by the Civil Rights Commission which will take only one stroke of a presidential pen.

We had a draft and then redrafted that statement about ten times. My brother, who is now at the Kennedy institute, nearly went mad because he happened to be helping me for about a week or so down in Washington. We'd get it drafted. Kennedy'd go over it, change it, approve it, sign it. I'd get sixteen senators to sign the draft, we'd get it mimeographed, and Kennedy would call and say, "I just talked to Senator Sparkman [John J. Sparkman]. He says to please wait three more days." And in those three more days he'd talk to Senator Russell [Richard B. Russell, Jr.] and we'd have to change it again. So we'd go back in and change this. Then it got watered-down pretty badly at one point and we had to have kind of a confrontation with him with some of the other civil rights people who were saying, "You can't make it this soft." We had two weeks of almost issuing it and not issuing it and then finally issuing it in good shape in the end. But we'd gone up and down like a seismograph.

HACKMAN: You did most of the work on...

[-48-]

WOFFORD: I did all that, in and out. I think that was the worst two weeks of the campaign for me because of the damn statement. I think three or four times we actually had it all mimeographed before Kennedy called and said, "We've got to make some changes," or "We've got to wait three days." I saw in that the degree to which he was terribly responsive to the Southern leaders in Congress.

Now, in another sense, he had good reason to be. They were very powerful, and the campaign he was in was a very difficult one in those areas and these were people that really wanted him to carry their states. So he was not weighing nothing. I had a feeling then, which continued, that he perhaps overreacted to the Senate. That is, that never having been a full member of the club, in a way there was a touch of insecurity about the way he dealt with the Senate that I found—of course it came again even more vividly on the question of the executive order on housing. For over a year and a half he went in and out on that one. And this is where Millie Jeffrey had a fair point: that the same forces that opposed legislation are going to do the best they can to oppose the executive action.

HACKMAN: Did he ever enunciate this feeling about the Senate or the power of these people in the Senate, particularly the Southerners and so on?

WOFFORD: During this period he was under such pressure that he was telling me things rather than talking about it. That is, he would already have made an agreement with Russell to wait or to see somebody else, and all he would do would be to tell me that he had, and he didn't really give me a chance to argue. He then seemed very clearly to know what he wanted to do. As we made about the fifth change, I began to wonder whether he did and thought that maybe we should have been arguing more, and then we argued. It came out fine in the end. It was just sort of a rhythm of reaction that I would put as the weakest area in terms of tactics and strategy that I saw

in Jack Kennedy. It was a sort of in and out rhythm that didn't give a sense of strength and clarity and continuity.

Now, I had a feeling as I watched him in action and then from a distance that this is what got less and less as he got stronger and stronger, so whereas I think I am conveying something that was there then, I think that very little of this was still there by the time he was killed, including in the field of civil rights. I wasn't there firsthand, but I have people in whom I trust completely who say that in the last year in civil rights he was not only seeing it straight but he was putting it as central—or beginning to put it as really central—to our body politic, the soul of the country and things like that, whereas the articulation on the executive order on housing that he gave was very much like Roosevelt's [Franklin D. Roosevelt] when he saw some civil rights people back in 1943 or sometime in the war when he said, "Yes. That's right. There's nothing more important than civil rights, except that I've got these boys fighting here and Hitler's [Adolf Hitler] about to win there, and I have to look at all of these things and then see what I can do." I guess that's when they were trying to march on Washington—Philip Randolph [A. Philip Randolph]. Kennedy had the Berlin crisis. That was one of his reasons.

He had two major reasons for delaying on civil rights, and particularly the executive order on housing: One was the Berlin crisis; he felt he just had to keep support, keep things holding together. And secondly, his domestic economic legislation; he felt that it was crucial that the progressive southern leaders not be undermined. So he delayed the executive order. In one case he said he was delaying it for six months in response to a very ardent plea from—would it be Congressman Rains [Albert Rains]? I don't remember which congressman, but three or four Southern congressmen who were up for election who said, "If you issue this now...." whenever it was. This was October '61, I would guess, or the summer of '61. It was summer because it had something to do with Hyannis Port. People were going to Hyannis Port. So in the summer or fall of '61 he promised not to issue it until after the election. He named the congressman who'd be defeated if he didn't delay and his reasons. He took pains to try to

explain that to me on that occasion and to assure me that he was going to do it, but it was just a matter of time.

By the way, let me add two things in here. One is Whizzer White, Byron White [Byron R. White]. He and Congressman Dawson were the two people really opposing the civil rights approach in the campaign. I think he and Dawson both believed that most Negroes were most concerned with bread-and-butter issues and that the stuff on civil rights legislation and all was irrelevant and sort of cluttering the campaign. I don't know to what extent White pushed that within the top command of the campaign, but each time I saw him, he was arguing it pretty strongly.

Secondly, during the summer period when I was trying to line up the senators to join us in this statement promising legislation after the election, I don't think McCarthy [Eugene J. McCarthy] signed it at all in the end. I won't swear to that. I'm sure the statement is in the campaign documents, that green book with all the speeches. The names of the senators are in it. I had a very sharp encounter with McCarthy then, whom I like, have always liked. It's an interesting light right now. He said he wasn't going to lift a finger for the Kennedys and he

wasn't going to sign any promise because he didn't know what they'd do. He wasn't going to help that campaign at all. He may have sometime, but he didn't with me on civil rights. In talking to him, I had a feeling that it was a joint thing; that he wasn't terribly concerned about civil rights and he certainly was not concerned about the Kennedys.

HACKMAN: Other than Whizzer White's opposition to the ideas you were presenting, what other type of contact did you have with his citizen's operation in that period? Were there many? Did they work any for you?

[-51-]

WOFFORD: No. We were our own citizens' organization basically in the civil rights field. The campaign came to a head. I was going to say the main things in the campaign in terms of ideas were, one, the promise to get the executive order on housing, and with it the whole theme of executive action which Kennedy ran with very strongly throughout the rest of his campaign. He talked through this with me, and he was very interested in it. It appealed to his ideas about the executive generally. That was one thing. Then the symbolic association with civil rights leaders, including King, and finally the call to Mrs. King [Coretta Scott King]. And then third, the Constitutional Rights Conference in October. A lot of people opposed our calling that. It was risky, but it came off all right. We invited several hundred national leaders of civil rights, Democrat or Republican—although there are not many civil rights people that are Republican, but there were a few.

HACKMAN: Probably more then.

WOFFORD: Yes. But irregardless of politics, we invited civil rights leaders from all over the country to the conference that Senator Kennedy called on constitutional rights. Lyndon Johnson had asked that—he had joined Congressman Dawson in pleading—that we use the term constitutional rights instead of civil rights. And Lyndon, by the way, was very much involved in this issuing of the statement—I mean, on the not issuing of it, in August. “Please negotiate with Russell on this,” something like that, he was saying strongly.

HACKMAN: Was he opposed to the idea completely or did he just want to smooth it out?

[-52-]

WOFFORD: I don't know. I don't recall anyone saying he was opposed to the idea completely. Nor do I recall any opposition during the campaign by him on this particular thing. The Constitutional Rights Conference was called to design a policy, to propose a policy for a new administration, to advise Senator Kennedy on what that policy should be, and to appraise the Democratic platform and to what extent it was adequate and to propose specific ways of fulfilling it. So it divided into half a dozen or a dozen big working groups, we had co-leaders of each of these groups and they all came in with reports. It was really a hard working session and the reports were very good. It was a time when everyone was ready to sort of roll into one ball what they'd been saying for five years on civil rights. We had quite a

ball by the time it was all rolled together. Then people were really scared, you know, of what would happen. Kennedy came and somebody gave a speech summing up the proposals. Then Kennedy responded, but he asked that the report of the conference not be issued immediately. He said we'd issue it the last week of the campaign when it would have more weight.

HACKMAN: Any particular reason for holding off at that point?

WOFFORD: Well, it was quite a bombshell. Really, it just rolled everything you could think of together, people stayed up all night and it was well written and it was not long, it just was very succinct. It was sticking it to everybody straight. Kennedy responded with a very strong speech which carried the room completely. That group went out all over the country saying, "This man's got it. He's with us." And Kennedy stayed and circulated with them, and it just came off beautifully. People tried to keep him from coming to the conference right to the end, to send Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey] or to—I don't know who the people were. But I know we had periods when we doubted he would come.

[-53-]

HACKMAN: Immediate advisors or....

WOFFORD: I don't know. I think a lot of his immediate advisors overreacted to this whole idea based on what they sensed to be the Irish opposition and similar white opposition. They felt the white people in the cities and suburbs were getting fed up with black people—Negroes, then. They felt what Kennedy lost any time he said anything on civil rights was greater than anything he gained. So for political reasons, there were quite a few people that were very wary, especially those that came out of Irish Catholic communities and backgrounds. They were saying what they heard all around them.

HACKMAN: Was there a fairly clear split among the advisors that was apparent to you at the time?

WOFFORD: No, not clear. It's just that this estimate of the white backlash either would come up openly or I sensed that often it was there under the surface. For instance, I think this would be true of Ken O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell], although on every single issue I can remember he came down in favor of action. I don't ever remember Ken in fact being in opposition at the end. I can remember that he did most of it with sort of a great resistance inside himself and very great wariness and concern as to what these things were going to do. But if I had to appraise him in terms of action, I'd have to say that Ken, despite this, wanted action. I would not put him up in any sense as an enemy or opposition. But Dick Donahue [Richard K. Donahue] and Larry O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien] and Kenny O'Donnell, those three, they were always joking with Louis Martin and with me on the subject, but behind the joke, I think, was a real concern that we might be throwing the election by driving people over to Nixon. In fact, a lot of the people they were talking about were people that had voted Republican for the first time with Eisenhower and part of the Kennedy strategy was to bring back former Democrats who with Eisenhower found it

respectable to be Republican and that this wouldn't help bring them back. I don't know how you prove what happened. It was certainly a factor there. Then after the Constitutional Rights Conference—I think that was something like October 12—we kept, about once a week, getting ready to issue the report of the conference. I don't think the report of the conference has ever been issued. It didn't get issued during the election, and I tried to get it issued after the election. There were a lot of us circulating copies of it, but I don't think it was ever issued. I may be wrong. They may have finally just let me mimeograph it and send it out but there was never any press release or anything else on it.

HACKMAN: Who were you taking this case to?

WOFFORD: Now let's see. The co-chairmen of it were Senator Clark [Joseph S. Clark] and Celler [Emanuel Celler]. Celler, he was awful. Clark, I know, was one of the co-chairmen who was issuing the report. We got pressure on the White House from Clark to get the report issued after the election so maybe it finally got issued, but I have a feeling it might never have gotten issued.

HACKMAN: Let me go back and pick up on something.

WOFFORD: Let me tell you one last thing. I was just about to enter something. After the Constitutional Rights Conference, which everybody had thought was the craziest thing to do in the middle of a campaign but which turned out to be, I think everybody felt, a major success; then the King thing all broke, the call which I'm sure we have covered.

HACKMAN: Yes.

WOFFORD: I guess probably we've covered the point I was going to make. It was after all this that Ray Jones—"Ray the Fox," they call him in Harlem. Do you know him?

HACKMAN: Yes, but I don't think you mentioned him.

WOFFORD: Anyway, Ray Jones called me up the day before the election and he said, "Well, just take it easy now. It's over. We've done our part. I want you to know that this thing that you and Louis and others were doing, you've done down there, it was a symphony, man, it was a symphony." Is that in?

HACKMAN: Yes.

WOFFORD: You have to know Ray to....

HACKMAN: Appreciate that, huh?

WOFFORD: He almost got me in jail, he and Adam Powell. They had gotten a copy of Nixon's lease—is that in there, Nixon's lease, where he signed a racial covenant?

HACKMAN: Yes, I think it is.

WOFFORD: And they distributed it all around the country, and I saw some copies of this, and I sent them out to our list. It had no political mailing address on it. It was against the Hatch Act to—or whatever the act is—it's against the law to send out political literature without listing the committee, the officers, and the address. And I sent five hundred of these out to our people around the country. Adam and Ray, they'd gotten somebody to circle it where it says the house is not going to be used, rented, enjoyed et cetera, by Caucasians, Assyrians, Gypies, Jews, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, Mongolians, Alaskans....

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It applied to all different groups, including Jews and Negroes. They had circled the phrase in red and wrote "Shame" in red. But suddenly I just happened to be looking at this lease flyer one morning, and I saw there was no identification on it, and I knew this part of the law. I called Ray Jones on the phone and said, "Ray, we have been distributing something we shouldn't have been distributing." He said, "You're a little late today. The FBI [Federal Bureau of investigation] has just been seeing me this morning." Later when Bob Kennedy became Attorney General they were joking about how, as the file investigating these documents mounted, my name had been featured frequently because they had picked them up in different parts of the country. "How did you get them?" and stuff. But I suppose they couldn't ever have shown any criminal intent.

HACKMAN: You made the statement a while ago about the people that you trusted who said that the President had changed on civil rights by '63. Would you want to go into who these people were?

WOFFORD: Burke Marshall on the white side and Martin Luther King and Roy Wilkins, particularly, on the black side. I think King and his colleagues, Abernathy [Ralph D. Abernathy] and others, attributed a good part of the change to Bob Kennedy, who they felt really did develop a very strong fire on this issue. I was on the Selma-Montgomery march and talked to King some and to Abernathy and to Mrs. King and others, and I know they felt very much better about Kennedy then. Of course, he'd been killed, so that throws a different light on anyone, but King was fairly low on John Kennedy when I left for Africa in '62. He was not against him. What King said—is that in there? Do you have that?

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HACKMAN: No.

WOFFORD: I had King to the White House to see the President sometime in the year after

he came into office because one of the problems in my job there was what the President.... The President really wanted me to do two things, which was to use all executive power that we had to get federal agencies doing everything they could to end discrimination in all their operations and employment, housing and facilities, and anything we could think of, Route 40, anything we had power to do he wanted me to do, and I had a full green light to do. He didn't particularly want to hear about it because he was busy, but I didn't have any doubt but that I had a mandate to do anything that I could get away with as a special assistant to the President.

Fred Dutton came up with the idea of the sub-Cabinet group on civil rights that would give more weight than me just going around as special assistant to the President. The President opened that or attended one of the sessions of the sub-Cabinet group on civil rights. I think he did. I'm not absolutely sure that he did. That was one of the questions, his coming to the sub-Cabinet group on civil rights. Fred Dutton [Frederick G. Dutton] might remember. That's interesting, what memory does. I said he came. I think he did come one day, but I'm not absolutely sure of that now.

HACKMAN: We've probably got that on another interview.

WOFFORD: Fred started it and attended one meeting and turned it over to me, saying I was going to be running it. It was really Fred's idea and it was a good one. It required every federal agency to appoint somebody at the sub-Cabinet level in charge of civil rights work. Two-thirds of the people who came were people, as in our civil rights section, who were committed to doing something on civil rights. So an

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unfriendly observer would be able to listen to our meetings and say, "My God, they're not loyal to the President. They're plotting how to make the President do things." As I said before, I think everybody there felt that making the President—persuading the President to do some things in this area was one of the ways you were loyal to the President, because he was concerned with a lot of other things and he depended on us to get to him the best views we had on what he ought to do in civil rights. But certainly we were actively seeking to get the executive order on housing issued and we were actively seeking to get a very much stronger executive order on employment issued. As we went along it became clear we needed some legislation in some areas. These are people like Adam Yarmolinsky, I think Moynihan [Daniel Patrick Moynihan] came from the Labor Department. No, he didn't. The fellow.... I know who came.

HACKMAN: Not Wolfbein [Seymour L. Wolfbein]? Stanley Ruttenberg [Stanley H. Ruttenberg], John F. Henning?

WOFFORD: No....

HACKMAN: Weaver, George L-P. Weaver?

WOFFORD: George Weaver occasionally was there. No.

HACKMAN: Chapin [Arthur A. Chapin]?

WOFFORD: He was there periodically. No, I'm thinking of the UAW [United Auto Workers] man who became Assistant Secretary of Labor I think. Jack Conway [Jack T. Conway]. Well, it was a very good group.

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HACKMAN: Was anybody dragging their heels?

WOFFORD: Oh yes, here and there. McNamara [Robert S. McNamara] now says he was, and he was in my opinion. In that sense, representing him, Adam Yarmolinsky did, though he didn't want to. Adam was not dragging his heels as to any other agency doing anything. Everybody was a strong force for other agencies doing things so that the group as a whole always was ready for action. But then when it got to the individual agency on a number of things—offbase housing desegregation and other things—McNamara was somewhat dragging his heels. He did many, many things in this area so I'm not being unduly or very critical of him. But I noticed he said in his [*Life* magazine] interview one of the things that he regretted doing and one of the mistakes he made was that he waited three years or something to do anything on offbase housing, and in retrospect he now knows he didn't have to have waited that way. What I was saying was that the first part of my mandate from the President was fine, which was to do anything we could. Some people would occasionally be alarmed when they discovered the President himself was not drafting every statement that went out in his name or following step by step everything we were doing, which would have been absurd if he had.

HACKMAN: Members of the group?

WOFFORD: Well, Angie Biddle Duke [Angier Biddle Duke], for instance, at the State Department. I think the funniest occasion in this whole thing was after a year of working on integration of Route 40—and we really worked at it; a lot of us went up and down the damn road. You know, the African ambassadors would be insulted if they drove from New York to Washington. And Angie Biddle Duke, to whom all this did not initially come naturally, who was made head of protocol in the State Department (which was the most unnatural place for civil rights to be advanced anywhere in the government), he becomes head of protocol and it's suggested to him that that ought to be the place in the State Department that really works to help African

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ambassadors by integrating housing, roads, everything. Pedro Sanjuan [Pedro A. Sanjuan], a real fiery guy—have you interviewed him?

HACKMAN: He was Duke's deputy who was involved in it over there?

WOFFORD: Yes, for civil rights. He'd be worth interviewing.

HACKMAN: Yes.

WOFFORD: He's a very valiant, peppery fellow. He took on this Route 40 and he really piloted that, but he did it in the name of the President—well, he did it in my name in the President's name with Angie Biddle Duke. He got Duke going out and speaking to restaurant owners and issuing statements, and he got me going out. He really pushed it. So one day the newspaper tells about an African ambassador who got turned down for a drink of water or something on 40, at about quarter of eight in the morning, and it quoted Angie Biddle Duke saying something about what we're doing. Angie gets a call from the President. The President said, "I just read that hell of a story about that ambassador not being able to drink on Route 40." Angie says, "Yes, Mr. President, we're working very actively. I've made six speeches up on Route 40. We know we haven't succeeded yet, but we think we're really making headway." Duke was talking about all the progress he had made, and Kennedy said, "Well, that's not what I'm calling you about. I'm calling you to tell you to tell these African ambassadors to fly." He said, "You tell them I wouldn't think of driving from New York to Washington. It's a hell of a road, Route 40. I used to drive that years ago. Why the hell would anyone want to drive down on Route 40 when you can fly today? Tell them to wake up to the world and fly." And he hung up. Duke called me and said, "Are you sure the President is fully behind our efforts?" I said, "Oh yes." And I conveyed to him the President's deep concern that we proceed with the program, but an ironic laugh still comes over me when I think of this.

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HACKMAN: Did you get involved with—Tawes [J. Millard Tawes] was governor at that point—at all up there?

WOFFORD: Pedro, I'm sure, would know what Tawes' role was and—yes, I'm sure he did. But I didn't. I was saying that this was half my mandate from the President, which is the half I liked and was quite worthwhile I think. The other half, which I disliked intensely, was to be a buffer so that all the Negro leaders would see me and think they were getting something through to the President. It was a farce because—though I could do some things and seeing me *per se* is not necessarily a farce, in terms of getting pressure on the President and getting their views to the President, it was a farce because he knew my views on civil rights and I think more or less agreed with them or respected them. It wasn't that he disliked my views, he just knew them and he wasn't going to hear them ten times a week. Once a month would be about what he could take. So my coming in and telling him what somebody else had said when it's the same thing I'd been saying myself just had no effect at all.

I tried to tell King this. I kept telling them, "You've got to keep asking to see the President." So some did, and this occasion with King—I think it was the second time he saw the President in the White House—he'd had a pretty good talk with him. The President had very candidly gone into why he had delayed the executive order on housing, why he was delaying legislation, what the number of votes were he had in Congress, what his bills were he wanted to get through, and the promise he was going to act on these various things. It was a good talk. But King said to me—and if it's in there it's fresher the first time than it is now.

HACKMAN: There's almost nothing on the Administration.

WOFFORD: Distance, distance diminishes memory I'm sure. The substance of what he said I know vividly, but the exact words I can't swear to. He came out for dinner that night and he sort of sadly said, "You know," he said, "In the election when I gave my testimony really for Kennedy"—as he did in the last week, a statement that we used very, very strongly—"my impression then was that he had the intelligence and the skill and the moral fervor to give the leadership we've been waiting for. By intelligence you know he sees the problem and he knows what to do and he has the moral passion to do it. And he has the strategic and political skill to bring it about." I think those were the three categories. He said, "I'm afraid that the fact is he's got the understanding and he's got the political skill and he'll probably bring it about, but the moral passion is missing on this issue." I asked King about that when I saw him on the march in '65 and he said he felt that, after the girls were killed in Birmingham and other things that happened, that he began to feel the moral passion was there, too, but that it was hard to tell because he mainly dealt with Bob Kennedy, in whom it became very clear to most of these people (or they felt was clear) that the moral passion was there.

HACKMAN: Was that apparent to you in the case of Robert Kennedy back in the campaign? You talked about O'Donnell and O'Brien.

WOFFORD: No, it wasn't apparent in the campaign. What was apparent in the campaign and in other dealings with him—mainly in the campaign—I would say that moral passion was apparent mixed with political instincts and ambition and readiness to use power and various other things. I don't mean it's a single feature. But when Bob Kennedy would get angry there would be a moral basis for it very often. Kennedy, John Kennedy, let that be seen, to the extent it was in him, he let it be seen very, very rarely. I never really did see it. He was much cooler, I think, not just on the surface but I think internally much cooler.

I think it comes from a different view of the world. John Kennedy had an ironic, deeply ironic, and existential view of the world. He saw ultimately kind of a void, and believed people create meaning in it by acting courageously and boldly in it. Bob Kennedy, I think, comes with much more passionate Christianity, Catholicism, moral judgments. In earlier years in the '50's when I had seen Bob Kennedy on a couple of matters, I was bothered because, for him, everything was black and white, and he had these moral judgments, but I didn't have great confidence in his wisdom about them. I have developed a lot of confidence on balance in his wisdom.

But I think the greatest difference between the two that I saw was that Bob Kennedy, among other things, would ask in a very moral way, "Is this right or wrong?" You know, "Should we morally be doing it or should we not?" And then he would figure out whether he can do it. But I don't think Kennedy would let himself say, "Morally, I ought to do this but politically I can't so I'm going to have to wait." I think he takes it all as one ball and says, "This is a very complex matter and there's Berlin and there's this, and I'm going to do what I can."

This is a hard thing to either give concrete evidence for or to articulate well, but I felt that in some ways they were polar opposites on this.

[BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 1]

HACKMAN: You were talking about the civil rights leaders wanting to get in to see the President. Was this always the President's decision not to see them, or how much was the hang-up with O'Donnell's office or elsewhere?

WOFFORD: Well, actually, I think I was saying something else. Namely, that I was urging them to try to get in to see him. I don't think they tried enough.

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HACKMAN: Oh, I see.

WOFFORD: There would always be a hang-up with O'Donnell, but it was generally just, "Save the President as much as you can. He's terribly pressed. If you can delay this a little bit, delay it a little bit."

HACKMAN: But they probably could have if they had tried.

WOFFORD: Well, they did. I don't think there were any long gaps when they couldn't. If Louis Martin and I said to O'Donnell, "Look, you've got to let the President see this man now. The brothers have been waiting too long," Kenny would make a date. I'm sure all sorts of people were asking for interviews—like I'm sure Whitney Young [Whitney M. Young, Jr.] must have regularly asked to see him to present the program of the Urban League, and Roy Wilkins the same thing. I don't think King did as much of that, but I would think any head of a Negro organization must have been trying to see the president to get him to speak to their convention—I mean, there'd be hundreds of requests from Negroes. But in terms of really saying, "We must see the President," on a matter of issues, not on, "Will you come to speak to our convention or not?" they didn't try as hard as I think they could.

When I left for Africa in the Peace Corps, King called and maybe Wilkins, two or three of the people I was working with most closely, called and said, "You can't leave. You're deserting us." And I told them I didn't feel that way at all, that I had to concede that the sub-Cabinet group had more or less got in action most of the things we could do without any new legislation. Executive action had been successful, a partial success, which makes it a partial failure. Legislation was next, and needed. Secondly, and much more importantly, I really felt that on balance, in terms of convincing the President to get action, I was more of a—liability isn't the word—a buffer, and that was the last thing they needed at this moment. The heat that I felt from all of my friends, which was enormous heat at that time—this was a very low point for civil rights because the

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executive order on housing wasn't signed and it was going on two years now; people were really beginning to believe it was never going to be signed. No significant legislation had been proposed. The heat I was feeling from my civil rights friends, black and white, young and old, the President wasn't feeling at all because there was no way I could convey it. He knew my heat.

We had the Peace Corps National Advisory Council meeting. I was spending almost half my time on Peace Corps matters which were also part of my assignment. So we had the Peace Corps National Advisory Council in the Cabinet Room next to the White House and the President was coming in, and that was the day the freedom riders were riding. Harry Belafonte, Ben Mays [Benjamin E. Mays], Gene Rostow [Eugene V. Rostow], and Morris Abram were all talking with me. They were all sticking it to me very hard. Harry was saying, "The President can't just rest on saying he believes in law and order. He's got to support the moral rights of these riders." And Ben Mays, too. I said, "Fine. The President's coming in. He's going to go around and say something to you all. He's going to make a speech. He'll be in there for thirty minutes or more. Now, don't think that you've done anything by surrounding me this morning. You just haven't." I put it to them just as hard as I could. I said, "He knows what I think. I've been sending in drafts of statements to issue. Put it to him yourself."

Then Kennedy comes in, walks around not very fast, shakes hands with everybody. I can see why they wouldn't break that occasion to do something. In any case they didn't. Kennedy spoke. Afterwards he chatted, walked around the room, and still they didn't say a thing to him. And so as Kennedy went to the door I said, "Mr. President, Harry Belafonte and Gene Rostow and Dr. Mays have been telling me what they feel so strongly about on the freedom riders. Would you have a minute?" He wheeled around and he said, "Sure." We were over by a cabinet.

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I had a wonderful picture of this that got burned, of the President and four or five of us standing there. It's really a great picture; it conveyed so much of those years. And it's a beautiful picture of Belafonte and Ben Mays, pitch black, scowling, Belafonte's looking very angry and at his best. Belafonte said, "Mr. President, I know how much you're doing in civil rights. I deeply respect your leadership in civil rights. I trust you in civil rights. And I know all these other things that are going on. But perhaps you could say something a little more about the freedom riders." He couldn't have been more gentle, you know. One or two others were very moderate like that. I goaded them a little bit. They said—I'm going to exaggerate it now. They conveyed it but in great understatement.

I know why because I had the same tendency. When you go into the President's office and see all the things he's concerned with it diminishes somewhat, puts in a different perspective, you know, the concerns and the urgency of the thing you went in with. I always had that sense of respect when I went in. On the other hand, he needed to hear what they had said to me and they didn't say it to him.

He then walked out, and I was telling them that they hadn't done very much. The guard called me and said, "The President wants you right away." I went back into the President's office and he was livid. He said, "Who the hell is that man with Harry Belafonte?" I said, "That's Gene Rostow. He's Walt Rostow's [Walt Whitman Rostow] brother." Rostow had suggested that the President should say something on the moral issues in addition to calling for law and order. "What in the world does he think I should do? Doesn't he know I've done more for civil rights than any president in American history? How could any man have done more than I've done?"

What does he want me to do?" I said, "Well, he just thought you should say this and that," and I outlined a few points. "Well," he said, "I don't mind saying that." We ended up getting a statement out of it on the freedom riders that went beyond anything he had said before.

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But the thing that struck me was how little direct heat he gets, at least in this area, for him to have felt this heat as heat when I felt that they had failed to deliver anything, that even having done it that respectfully and gently he got it. That was one of the incidents that made me really think that they really had got to get in and see him themselves.

Of course, that was his own principle of organization, the circular principle in which people didn't work through channels. I had no channels. I had nobody I worked under, just the President. And there must have been dozens of people in the White House who were really just working under the President. It had certain inefficiencies.

So that was the strongest thing I said to King and others when I left. I said, "Don't take any intermediary. Get to him yourself with things that are really important. And if they're not really important, you know, you can probably work them out without getting to him. But on the really important things find some way to get to him and to Bob Kennedy." They found Bob Kennedy very accessible. They had enormous confidence in Kennedy on that '65 march by then—I was amazed that he had developed such a constituency.

HACKMAN: Well, I want to skip all the way back to something at the Convention where we started. Can you remember what your own reaction was to the selection of Johnson as vice president, and the other people you were working with in the civil rights thing at that time?

WOFFORD: Oh yes, very vividly. I was staying with Shriver at the hotel. One, two in the morning, whenever it was, maybe 2:30, as we were going to sleep the night John Kennedy had won the nomination, somebody called Shriver and woke us up. Afterwards, Shriver said, "Remind me that first thing in the morning I've got to get to Jack and tell him that if he offers the vice presidency to Johnson, Johnson's going to take it because Johnson would like it, and then we've got to really start fighting to see that doesn't happen."

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So, you know, the next morning we got up very early, seven or eight. I mean early for the morning after when everybody stayed up late to celebrate. It felt very early. We went up to Kennedy's suite. Shriver said, "I'll run with it on this end. You start wheeling all of our civil rights friends into the act to try to stop this—Williams and Bowles and everybody like that." So I started calling people to come up to the suite, that Johnson was a real possibility and we'd better really exercise our civil rights section power to stop this. The more I thought of it, though, as I called people—they came in and tried to see the President and they saw different people. Some saw the President; I'm sure Williams went in to see the President rather, the candidate. I have to confess I became convinced that Johnson for vice president was a good move. The alternatives people were talking about seemed to me at least as bad, Jackson [Henry M. "Scoop" Jackson], Symington [Stuart Symington, II]—the alternatives that I gathered Kennedy might be thinking

about. But I was actively, all during that morning, directing people, calling them to get into the suite and to do various other things.

Whenever it was, two in the afternoon—I can't remember when the decision was made, but it might have been three, whenever it was, sometime in the middle of the day—the Minnesota delegation, which had been within Shriver's domain somehow in the campaign or at the Convention, came in, three top leaders of it, to explain why Governor Freeman [Orville L. Freeman] should be the vice presidential candidate.

Just before this Shriver pulled me off by the window and he said, "What do you really think about this nomination?" I said, "Well, I have to confess that about two hours ago I changed my mind and concluded it was probably the best thing." He said, "You son of a bitch. Here I've been breaking my back all day because I thought the least I could do for all my civil rights friends was to fight this last battle on this. I've fought it all morning long in there. That's what I thought, too, inside me, that on balance this was probably the best thing. But I thought the least I had to do to represent you bastards is to really fight it, so I've been fighting it." He was very amused. We both laughed—you know.

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I don't claim this as foresight. This is not on the side of the ledger that makes me have confidence in myself in politics. But this is interesting in terms of who—the whole question of the Johnson nomination. I don't think I've ever asked Shriver who it was that called him that night. But this is a crucial period in terms of the debate as to whether Johnson wanted it or didn't want it. But somebody called him that night. And he apparently relied on it. For several hours that morning, certainly, the working assumption was that Johnson wanted it.

HACKMAN: Do you know why Shriver felt that way the night before or....

WOFFORD: Why he said that Johnson wanted it?

HACKMAN: Yes.

WOFFORD: Because he got this phone call that said Johnson wanted it and that you'd better let Jack know that if he offers it, Johnson's going to accept because he really wants it. I think there was a lot of talk about a ploy on the grounds that Johnson never would take it, but the point of this conversation was that Johnson really did want it. I mean, it was in the form of—it wasn't just somebody; it was enough so that Shriver felt he had to get to Kennedy and tell him that. Shriver believed this and the whole debate then was, "Now that we assume that Johnson wants it, are we going to offer it to him?" This isn't any heavy evidence because I don't know who the person was who called.

HACKMAN: Were you aware at that time of what the feelings were of the other Kennedy advisors on the selection—Dungan [Ralph A. Dungan] or any of these people?

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WOFFORD: No. I'm trying to separate what I've read in the paper and elsewhere from it. I

don't really know to this day about that. I've obviously read about Bobby's opposition, but I don't think I knew about Bobby's opposition that morning.

HACKMAN: Had you and the people you were working with felt that you had any commitments that he wouldn't be selected up to this time?

WOFFORD: Oh no, no. There was no such discussion that I was ever party to. Interestingly enough Roy Wilkins of the NAACP had said to me when I first went to see him about Kennedy that he couldn't say it politically but the person he thought would do most for civil rights, in fact, would be Lyndon Johnson. He'd talked with him a lot, and he felt Johnson really was anxious to end this because he knew what a terrible thing it was for the south, humanly and in politics, and that Johnson knew how to do it. Wilkins was very strong on it. I don't know if he—I suspect he still thinks so.

HACKMAN: After the selection of Johnson had been made, did you get involved in calming down some of the people about this? Do you remember who they were particularly?

WOFFORD: Everybody. From the time it happened throughout the campaign. That night Shriver and I said, when Johnson was going to get nominated, we said, "Shall we go to the floor or shall we watch it on television?" And we both were so tired and we thought, first, "Let's watch it on television." Then we saw Joe Rauh [Josepj L. Rauh, Jr.] screaming on the floor, we said, "We've got to show the flag," so we went down to the floor and just about everybody, all the Negro delegates, everybody was upset.

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HACKMAN: At the end of the Convention there was a meeting with the Negro delegates. Do you recall that? Bobby Kennedy held it; I believe Bobby held that.

WOFFORD: I don't remember that. I'm surprised.

HACKMAN: I've seen that in a transcript, in one interview. Maybe it really didn't come off, or it wasn't that big.

WOFFORD: Everybody was so exhausted I had sort of the feeling that everybody got off to the beach or something, but there could well have been a meeting

HACKMAN: Did the civil rights operation, as the campaign got started, operate basically the same way it had previously in the convention—well, naturally, it didn't operate in the same way, but the same basic organization? There was no meeting to set things up in any way or anything?

WOFFORD: No, sometime during the period I think after the Convention—yes, it must have been after the Convention—the question of Frank Reeves being made,

given some high campaign title came up and getting him to Hyannis Port for the announcement was involved. I'm sure that was touchy with Mrs. Lawson but she knew what was happening.

HACKMAN: As things worked out, would people come to you with problems to take to Shriver or did they deal directly with Shriver? How did your relationship with Mrs. Lawson and Reeves and the other people who were working, how did you fit in?

WOFFORD: Well, Shriver was as busy as Bob Kennedy. He had I don't know how many areas under his command, so-called, and he had a farmers' section, the urban affairs section, the business and professional man's section, the civil rights section, I would suspect—I've forgotten—the Viva Kennedy section for

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Spanish Americans, all of these to direct and raise money for. Shriver wasn't in the moment-to-moment, day-to-day operation of each of these things. The budgets would have to be approved by him and major things we would check with him. By and large his principle was to let people run with the ball. Louis Martin's principle became a very easy one for the operation of the civil rights section, namely that we've got a lot of race horses and our job is to get them all on the track, Adam Powell—and so far as Mrs. Lawson was a race horse, she wasn't very much of one—Mrs. Lawson, and King and the civil rights people, and advertising in the Negro newspapers, and Congressman Dawson and his people (he had some younger people working with him), in terms of the regular Negro organizations in various places. And I've forgotten four or five other horses on the track—the Michigan people, the labor Negro people, et cetera. I was appointed by Shriver and Bob Kennedy as the coordinator of all this, and Louis Martin was my chief colleague. When there were problems I'd work them out. Occasionally, I suppose, Shriver was called in. I can't remember many times when that had to happen. Shriver gave this sense of initiative to people. I'm sure at various times people went and complained to him about this or that, Congressman Dawson or Mrs. Lawson.

HACKMAN: I had wondered if it was a problem for you to keep people from running to him all the time with their problems.

WOFFORD: No, the problem was there was a good deal of squabbling between, say Frank Reeves and Mrs. Lawson, but meanwhile Louis Martin was doing most of the work.

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This was on the eve of the era of black power but it was still the night before, though I'm sure there were plenty of people wondering why a white man had to be in the middle of the civil rights section, even at that point. Until this election, interestingly enough, the minorities campaign had been an all black affair, Congressman Dawson and his people, and they were given a certain amount of money. I'm sure that they found it somewhat upsetting to have Shriver

and Bob Kennedy very actively in it—Bob, Shriver and me, John Feild [John G. Feild] from Michigan, a number of other white civil rights people in the middle of it.

But there's never been anyone I have worked with more easily and enjoyed more than Louis Martin. I'm a friend of Frank Reeves, and I like Mrs. Lawson, but Louis's just a fantastic operator and he didn't care whether I was white or black. I don't think either of us ever got in the other's way at all. I'd still love to work with Louis Martin. He did all the advertising in Negro papers. That was a big, big budget. I don't know how many hundreds of thousands or more were involved. He and I together plotted and wrote most of the literature. He'd do some pieces and I'd do others. Frank was on the NAACP circuit more or less. I more or less had the King, SCLC [Southern Christian Leadership Conference] portfolio. Mrs. Lawson, I think she did the most good with the Negro Baptist associations, religious and professional associations, and Negro women's groups.

HACKMAN: How was the decision made to have Reeves travel with the candidate for a while? Was this something he was anxious to do?

WOFFORD: Well, he probably was, but there were a lot of people anxious to get a Negro who was considered a Negro—I mean a civil rights Negro—with Kennedy. I'd even forgotten that, but that was the major thing that Frank Reeves did in the campaign—travel with and talk with the candidate, we would be in touch on occasion on things.

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HACKMAN: Was there much of a problem in communicating with the candidate while he was out campaigning, in getting anything across and getting access to the candidate?

WOFFORD: Yes.

HACKMAN: Who was the problem? Was there any one individual?

WOFFORD: Oh no, just speed, and speeches are generally written on the run. We would be quite often asked to submit parts of a speech draft or a whole speech when he was going to Los Angeles; I think I worked a good bit on the Los Angeles speech. But in most of those cases, including the Los Angeles speech, Ted Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen] or Goodwin [Richard N. Goodwin] would then take whatever came in and redo it, use pieces if they liked, not use them if they didn't like. It was out of your control then. All you could do was get stuff to them. There was no problem in getting stuff to Sorensen or to Goodwin. Once the candidate was in the swing, his course was more or less set except for when special odd things would come up—like the action on King, various things had to be considered for that in response to events. Meanwhile the main work that we were engaged in was not connected with the candidate. It was directly cultivating and organizing Negro voters.

HACKMAN: You talked about Louis Martin and the amount of money necessary for the advertising. Was it much of a problem to get an adequate budget? Can you

remember complaints being made that there wasn't enough money?

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WOFFORD: I think there was enough money. I was involved and Shriver was a source and Steve Smith [Stephen E. Smith]. We raised a little on the side for the civil rights section. I can't remember how many thousands that I raised just to have a little extra kitty.

HACKMAN: Personal contacts and that?

WOFFORD: Yes. Gifford Phillips, I remember, gave a good deal to the civil rights section in California. David Brinkley gave a couple of hundred dollars out of the blue one day. I haven't thought about that, but we had some good contributors just to this special section of the campaign. But for the big advertising budget it was part of the overall huge advertising budget of the Democratic National Committee in a presidential campaign. I think we probably did more advertising proportionally with Negro papers than in previous campaigns. There were times when Steve Smith said, "We're low right now." But also involved was the debt to the Negro papers from previous campaigns, unpaid debts, so that a lot of it had to be for paying off past debts. Well, Louis'd be the one who could tell you this. I remember going with him to Steve Smith on occasion, but in general I think we were adequately funded.

HACKMAN: I had heard that at one point you had a problem getting from Mrs. Lawson a list of her contacts around the country. Can you remember that coming up, a list of names of some type?

WOFFORD: No recollection at all of that. Are you talking about me personally having trouble or other people getting the list?

HACKMAN: No, you going to her and trying to get a list of people around the country, contacts which she had developed.

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WOFFORD: Sounds more like the trouble that Frank Reeves might have or something. I can't particularly remember why I would have wanted her list greatly. For a mailing list, maybe?

HACKMAN: How were the geographical assignments made, how was this supposed to work?

WOFFORD: Let me put another thought in. My impression was that not only Mrs. Lawson but Dawson and other people who had been working did not have great lists but had, you know, a series of friends that they were working with. It had not been a big thing either in the Democratic Committee at large or with what she was doing with

Kennedy. In retrospect now, if there was any trouble about a list, my own guess is that I might have doubted that there really was a list of major contacts. There might have been some effort to say, you know, "Where is the list?" I don't recall anything like, "I have a list but I won't give it to you." But I think we were sort of appalled at how little there was. Maybe there was a list and somebody wouldn't give it to us, but I'm inclined to think that there weren't many good lists.

HACKMAN: I was going to ask you, how did the geographical setup work? I've seen a list of civil rights people in the various states where people had responsibility for.... How did this function? What was your tie-in to this?

WOFFORD: The occasions when it functioned in high gear were, for example, when we had the idea that the Sunday before election this little Martin Luther King pamphlet, blue pamphlet, "The Case of 'No Comment Nixon' Versus the Candidate with a Heart." This quoted the different statements about Kennedy's call to Mrs. King, which turned out to have an enormous impact, this one little pamphlet, just the quotations from Mrs. King and Abernathy and what the father of Martin [Martin Luther King, Sr.] said about the call. We decided we'd try to have that pamphlet distributed in front of every Negro church in the country on

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the Sunday before Tuesday's election, we decided that on the weekend before, as we realized the effect that the pamphlet was having. So we got about a million and a half pamphlets out, and they would be sent to those contacts plus others. You're saying there was a civil rights man for Kansas?

HACKMAN: Right, right, yes.

WOFFORD: So I'd have to think of the man who was civil rights man for Kansas, but there wasn't such a person in New York was there?

HACKMAN: Yes, I've seen a list covering every state, like Oliver Hill [Oliver W. Hill]—you remember Hill—from Richmond, a Richmond lawyer? He had the southern states. And Herbert Tucker [Herbert E. Tucker, Jr.].

WOFFORD: He "had" the southern states?

HACKMAN: Had the southern states in the sense that I've seen a list with addresses and phone numbers of people in these states...

WOFFORD: But Oliver Hill, as I recall, was put on essentially full-time, and so was Herb Tucker. So they were not indigenous people in a sense. They were people on our paid staff.

HACKMAN: That's what I'm saying. And then they were the people who the people in these states were supposed to contact if they had problems, and there were

several names of people in the states who were supposedly the state coordinators, I guess. I just wondered, did you get involved with the people around in the states, or was the contact all done through....

WOFFORD: Well, I was involved on only really two or three main occasions with assembling them and meeting them. The first was the Convention; then it was the Kennedy operation around the states. Herb Tucker was in that; Oliver Hill was not. Oliver Hill came in

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with Reeves and the NAACP people who came in after the Convention. Then there was the Constitutional Rights Conference in New York, with people from all over the country—and finally the national distribution of the King call brochure.

HACKMAN: Hill had a relationship with Dawson. I had wondered if he was brought in as a Dawson man.

WOFFORD: Well, Oliver Hill is a big Virginia leader, so Dawson would have a relationship with him. But Oliver Hill is primarily a NAACP leader and he's a very close friend of Frank Reeves. He was really brought in by Frank. At the Convention we all assembled and were meeting and reporting to each other and things like that every morning at this breakfast, and on other occasions we met. Then at the Civil Rights Conference in October, all these people came to that, and we met on strategy in an organized session there. Those are the only two occasions we ever really got together like that. In some places—Chester Lewis, for instance, in Kansas, he was our man in Kansas and he in effect was in charge of civil rights work in that state. Everything we sent, we sent to him. He would call and suggest things. A place like New York, if there was any such person I don't know who it would be.

HACKMAN: Some states had three or four people listed.

WOFFORD: Yes. Unless it was Ray Jones. The main person I worked with in New York was Ray Jones. In other words, in some places the thing was entirely new, such as Kansas where there was an NAACP attorney that Frank and Marjorie, I think, both knew, Chester Lewis. In other places, such as Illinois or Detroit or New York, you had big Democratic Negro organizations, political organizations, machines. We didn't try to impose—I don't think we tried to impose—anything in places where there was a real Negro organization. We didn't try to put a super organization on top of that. I don't recall any such person being made head of civil rights work in Illinois. I assumed Dawson was. I may be wrong on this. It may be that we did sort of designate people more in this than I recall.

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HACKMAN: I had wondered if there was any disagreement or problem in working out who to deal with at the state level, whether there was much disagreement among

you people working on it.

WOFFORD: Well, you know, the Kennedy operation in general likes to operate with a lot of ambiguity—they're paying for it right now in California—so that the Louis Martin principle of getting all the horses on the track is really their principle. If you needed another organization and another title you form it. I'm sure there were cases, yes, where people were claiming we shouldn't be dealing with X and Y. I remember a few of them but nothing of any significance.

HACKMAN: Somebody had mentioned in an interview that you had a lot of contacts around the country with some of the younger civil rights leaders. I didn't know if anybody was particularly upset about some of the people you were dealing with or not.

WOFFORD: Could be. I brought in Frank Williams [Franklin H. Williams] who was then Assistant Attorney General for civil rights in California and had been head of the NAACP on the West Coast, a fairly fiery guy. I asked Attorney General Mosk [Stanley Mosk] to give him leave and he came, and put out a lot of effort in the Peace Corps organization later. I suppose I helped bring Reeves in. These are not very young people. We got a few young people on the payroll. George Carter, who later was one of the key Peace Corps organizers, our Ghana representative, who is now working for IBM and who used to work for the American Society of African Culture, I got him to join us for the last month of the campaign. I guess I probably hired two or three other young guys. I'm trying to think who they were—somehow I got right out of the movement. We had them circulating with SNCC [Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee]—if SNCC was organized then—but in any case with the young Negro militants. They went on that beat. There really

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Didn't turn out to be much to do because that last month we had the Constitutional Rights Conference and then the King call. By the time those two things had happened the militant young Negroes may still have had some doubts about Kennedy but there was no doubt that's who they were going to vote for. I don't recall any particular opposition to doing things with the young ones. I'm sure I remember some conversations in which Dawson particularly felt that we were paying undue attention to the activists in this. But his main point was that we shouldn't call our section the civil rights section, we should call it the minorities section. He just kept making that point all summer long. And we kept calling it the civil rights section.

HACKMAN: Did you do much traveling yourself during the campaign, get out and go to any hot spots or anything?

WOFFORD: No, I didn't. No. I like that sort of thing, but we discovered there was just too much work always going on.

HACKMAN: This would go for the operation as a whole? Other people, could they have gone out if they wanted to...

WOFFORD: Well, Louis and I didn't get to travel very much. But I think Marjorie traveled a good bit. We had a lot of people traveling. We didn't have a big operation in Washington. And Shriver didn't get to travel much either. Our general day would go on until about 10 o'clock at night at the office. This would be Shriver, Louis Martin, me, Yarmolinsky, a few other people. We'd go out to dinner with Shriver with whoever was there on whatever crisis was up. Sometimes we'd even come back afterwards. Shriver set the pace. But I guess the pressures were such that I would have lived something like that life anyway. About half the nights during this period—not quite that often—I would stay down and Shriver would stay down at a suite he had at the Mayflower. It was just too hard to go to Maryland and I was

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out in Virginia. Maybe a third of the nights we'd go over there about 1 o'clock and he'd read some left Catholic poetry aloud or something or other which he's always reading, which he's very serious about. Hardly a day would end without him reading Henry Rago or something to himself usually, I don't mean aloud, but sometimes aloud. He's a big mass man. I don't happen to be a Catholic, but I went to quite a few masses just along with Shriver in the morning. I didn't think a mass could hurt. He had to bounce out to Illinois quite a bit. He was very centrally involved in the Illinois campaign. I went up to New York quite often, off and on.

HACKMAN: How did the civil rights operation tie in with the voter registration effort that was going on at that point? Burkhardt [Robert J. Burkhardt] from New Jersey and one of the Reuthers was working on it.

WOFFORD: We were in favor of it, of course, but I don't know that we did very much directly.

HACKMAN: Can you remember any discussions?

WOFFORD: Wait a minute, wait a minute. Out of the campaign came the idea of a major Negro voter registration drive.

HACKMAN: Right.

WOFFORD: And the idea of getting a million dollar kitty or more than that from Steve Currier and others came out of it with Louis and me and Burke Marshall, and the idea of doing it in nonpartisan fashion came out of it, that is not doing it as a Democratic party thing. We started some of that during the campaign. I raised some money from Phil Stern. He was to give the money to the Friendship Baptist church of New York City, I believe. It was for nonpartisan voter registration because we concluded that we were going to get 75 percent plus of the Negro vote and, therefore, registering Negroes was helping the cause. I don't know how much money we raised, but we

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raised a good deal of tax-exempt money, appropriately so, for nonpartisan voter registration by Negro churches connected with King.

This was a voter registration drive that would be based on the Negro churches and not for Kennedy or for Nixon, just for the vote. I don't remember the details on this, but we had the idea before the last month of registration in a number of states. I guess that's what Frank Williams came in on. Midway in the campaign we got the idea of nonpartisan voter registration through tax-exempt money through the Negro churches. We got the list of the registration deadlines in all the states. We had missed some. Philadelphia did a real job on this. Something big got going in Philadelphia, something big going in New York. It's interesting I was sort of blank on this. It was one of the major things we were doing. I remember personally raising a good bit of money that was contributed to churches for the campaign.

HACKMAN: Was anything done in the South, or did you lay off the South?

WOFFORD: No, no we didn't lay off the South at all. In fact, I'm not even sure now that the money through this New York church was just for New York, or whether that was the conduit generally. It's a perfectly legal thing. As soon as we thought of the idea I hadn't any doubt that it was legal for churches to conduct voter registration drives assuming they weren't promoting any one candidate. I guess I can't throw you much more light on it except that I think it was successful wherever it got underway, but we were too late. It was out of this experience that we knew we had something that was good. Out of this, after the election came the Vernon Jordan [Vernon E. Jordan, Jr.] Atlantic-based drive to register one million Negroes.

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HACKMAN: Did your operation have any contacts with Johnson's campaign group as it was running around the country or as it operated from Washington?

WOFFORD: Not much, except when he went into northern places and he asked us to help on speeches, and secondly, I think we urged him to come to some northern places and successfully so. I think he went to Michigan. I don't remember where he went but I think we helped instigate some northern appearances. I think there was some concern about that, but we said to our friends in the places that were concerned that Johnson would be okay.

HACKMAN: Can you remember getting involved and attempting to get him to address any Negro groups in the South? I'd heard that on a couple...

WOFFORD: I don't remember the details. We did try a number of things and on balance I have a feeling he was all right in the campaign. I think we were disappointed a number of times when we thought of things that would be good that he just thought would hurt him too much with the white South he was trying to carry along, we were concerned for him to break the image of a southern conservative segregationist. He was anxious to break that image *and* to help carry the South, and not to destroy his so called image among

whites. I don't—I'm full of complaints about Johnson now, but not during either this period or his period working as head of the Equal Opportunity Committee. That is, I don't think he gave it distinguished leadership—but it was a messed up situation and I don't particularly blame him for its troubles.

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HACKMAN: What can you recall about the feeling toward the religious issue as a factor in regard to the Negro vote during the campaign? Would you be concerned with this?

WOFFORD: Yes, that was one of Marjorie Lawson's main contributions, I would say, all of her work with Dr. Jackson, who is head of the Negro Baptists. I think in really getting active Baptist Negro leadership outside of the civil rights Baptists with King, with old line Baptists, getting them really out in support of Kennedy, Marjorie helped significantly. And I think that was a very valuable thing in terms of the election. I may be wrong. I didn't have the feeling that Negro Baptists were really very anti-Catholic. I think the color thing really diminishes that as an issue, really diminishes it. Whereas with my wife's [Clare Lindgren Wofford] Lutheran parents the Catholic thing is something that individual members of the church feel, I never got that impression from individual Negro Baptists. The Baptist leaders sort of had the feeling that all they needed to do was for a minister of a church to say he's for Kennedy and the Catholic issue was pretty well washed out among his congregation. You know, we had the phenomenon of whole churches switching to Kennedy. I mean, the ministers getting up now and then; and, after the King call, church after church congregation that morning before the election said now they were marching to the polls for John Kennedy.

HACKMAN: As you look back, can you think of any what you would regard as important mistakes that were made on your side of the operation during the campaign or things that you pushed and other people turned down? Or was it a symphony of operations?

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WOFFORD: Oh no, it wasn't a symphony. It was a pretty inefficient operation. I would not contend that it was a great efficient operation. The King thing became a big break in terms of our goals, made this more of a success than you usually get in politics. We were not otherwise a masterful operation. I think we were probably more or less in tune with the kind of candidate we had. He moved in action and responded in action. Fortunately for our part of the campaign, the ideas that minds were on were in line with events so that Kennedy's responses turned out to be just right. Going from before the Convention, when Kennedy was viewed as probably the least civil rights candidate by most Negroes, to election day, when he really had an enormous amount of support, a very strong change was brought about. It was mainly brought about by what he did in response to various things, part of my strong support of John Kennedy came from the way he would respond and learn in a situation like that. Beginning with not knowing hardly any Negro leaders when he first started having breakfast with them back in February or March, he had very, very little contact with Negroes

before then and he found it very interesting. He liked most of the men, from King to Wilkins, Young....

HACKMAN: Did he have particular problems with any of them?

WOFFORD: I don't know of any.

HACKMAN: Was there anything else during the campaign that you got involved in other than civil rights, as it developed? Can you think of anything we missed on that issue?

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WOFFORD: Not that I recall, except a relatively minor matter of giving money to Tom Mboya [Thomas J. Mboya] of Kenya when the State Department withdrew its support of the airlift of Kenyan students to U.S. colleges, we arranged for Mboya to get the money, and to visit Kennedy at Hyannis Port.

HACKMAN: All right, what did you get involved in immediately after the election then?

WOFFORD: On election day Shriver called and he said, "You thought you were going on a vacation. I need you and Adam and Louis to meet me." No, election day was Tuesday. I mean the day after the election he called, Wednesday. "You thought you were going on a long vacation. You are. It's from now until Sunday. Monday morning I need to meet you at the Mayflower. Jack's asked us to operate a talent search that will comb the universities and the professions and the civil rights movements and everything else, and feed him non-political people that will go alongside of the people that Larry O'Brien will feed from the party patronage. Our job is to have more and better people than the party patronage group."

HACKMAN: So that was the extent of the direction you had.

WOFFORD: If they happened to overlap that's fine, that's even better. No, it wasn't the extent. There had been a study by Brookings [Brookings Institute] on the transition. The Brookings people had given this to Kennedy after the election. In fact, I think they had worked with him some before. A friend of mine in the White House with Eisenhower was involved in that whole study. They had listed the hundred or so—I would say it's somewhere between a hundred and two hundred—key presidential appointments.

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HACKMAN: What's the fellow's name? I'm trying to think. This isn't something that Clark Clifford [Clark M. Clifford] brought over. Did you use his?

WOFFORD: I'm confused. There're three things. There's a Brookings study that was finished, and they gave us the working draft of it, and it later became a book

on presidential transitions. I'd know the name of the man.

HACKMAN: Laurin Henry [Laurin L. Henry]?

WOFFORD: Yes. Secondly, there was a Clifford thing that I don't remember...

HACKMAN: Yes, somebody had put something together for Clifford, a list of the key positions which needed to be filled.

WOFFORD: Yes. Anyway, we had a mimeographed chart, a list, of the key positions within a few days. I think the Government Operations Agency did, too, so we had several documents, we picked one of them as our basic one of jobs to be filled and we decided we would just go down in priority, Cabinet, sub-Cabinet, ambassadors. We divided up the cabinet and we whistled in a few additional people, one who is now a high man in the Department of Defense. Paul Warnke [Paul C. Warnke]. He was a Covington and Burling lawyer that I knew and that Adam knew even better as a friend, we asked him to come over and help on the pentagon. We had two or three other people that helped. I'm now showing you how crazy it was, in a sense, to talk about it this way, and yet this is what happened. Shriver, Adam, Louis and I, talked about how we'd do this and decided we'd get a network of key advisors in whom we had confidence and we would send them the list and call them on the phone, or at least call them on the phone and tell them the several jobs or the several areas we wanted help in, and invite them to call other people and then to feed the ideas into us with biographical data and their recommendations, we got up a list of dozens and dozens of people.

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One of the ones I called most often was Gene Rostow of Yale Law School. We had people in a lot of law firms. We had some foundation people. It was a wild, crazy search. For instance, we were looking for a Secretary of the Treasury. The first thing we focused on was cabinet people. Meanwhile, we were assembling files for any federal appointive jobs. We had sent the word out that we were to get recommendations, so we had a master file under each of these jobs with suggested names and who recommended them.

The office had hundreds of people trying to get in to see us every day. Most of them were interested in jobs themselves or for somebody at a level below the thing we were looking for. So these files filled and the halls filled with people. It was terrible; it was the worst experience of my life in terms of dealing with human beings. One man would hound me in a friendly way; I just couldn't see him because of whatever the crisis was. He sent back word that he was going to sit in my office until the end of the day and see me when I left, and if he couldn't see me then he'd sit there all night and be there in the morning. I remembered the stories about Lincoln [Abraham Lincoln] climbing over office-seekers. It was really the most painful period. It had none of the exhilaration—I mean it had very few of the exhilarations of the campaign except when somebody like McNamara would be appointed.

Well, first the search to get McNamara. His name came up first for Secretary of the Treasury. There was a big search to get a Secretary of the Treasury who would be different. I don't think we succeeded in the end in getting what Kennedy said he wanted.

HACKMAN: What had he said he wanted? What were his....

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WOFFORD: I didn't hear him but the message that we got was that he wanted somebody at that place who preferably could carry the confidence of the business community but who would certainly be a strong enough fellow to break through with really new economic policies. Traditionally, that job is always given to the business community, in effect. And he wanted a different kind of man there, and we ought to find him. I remember a lot of people searched for that. It was a wild campaign.

I called my father's associate at Columbia School of Business, Dean Courtney Brown [Courtney C. Brown], on the phone. I didn't know a damn thing about the whole area, I mean the people in it or policies. So I asked Courtney for his suggestions. I said, "Here are some of the names that have been suggested." One of them was Averell Harriman [William Averell Harriman]. "What do you think about this? And Robert Roosa [Robert V. Roosa], what do you think about him? What do you think about these people?" Then I'd write down what Courtney said. He chuckled and he said, "Well, Averell's sitting right here in my office now. Averell, this is the Kennedy people down in Washington. They're calling to find out what kind of a Secretary of the Treasury you'd be." [Laughter] Apparently he guffawed. But, I mean, it was that wild a sort of thing. I'm sure all over the country people were being, you know, stimulated and offended.

[BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 2]

The other thing was to ask the FBI for security investigations of a whole series of people who had no idea that they were being investigated. We did this because the timing of presidential appointments between November and January was going to be very pressed, and as soon as the President was ready to act, he was going to need to act because then these people had to appoint other people. This had been a terrible jam in previous administrations. If you want security checks on your key people, which the President wanted—it was customary and probably required, I guess, except when waived by the President—it takes several weeks even on a crash program often to get a security check on somebody.

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This was an incredible thing I remember, we weren't officials of the federal government at all, nor was John Kennedy. He was President-elect but he wasn't on any federal payroll. In any case, Shriver's office sent a list over to J. Edgar Hoover for emergency security investigations. We would have to decide which people had reached the level of seriousness, even though we had no idea in most cases what the President was thinking on these appointments. But when they were strongly being pressed by us we put them on the list.

Well, in any case, I don't know how many dozens of people were put on the list who had no idea they were being considered. Often we didn't want anyone to know he was being considered until there was some interest from Kennedy. But this added to the feeling in these circles around the country, that as they learned they were being investigated they thought they were about to be tapped for some major job. It also caused very funny things to happen. Dean

Acheson [Dean G. Acheson] was on the list, what we did is make up a list of people that we said were in the top category of people being considered, being recommended.

HACKMAN: You wouldn't send the FBI a list by position?

WOFFORD: No, it was not by position, definitely not. In the first place, we had no position for Dean Acheson. I don't know why he was on the list. I mean, I wouldn't have put him on the list. But he was on the list and apparently he was livid as these FBI people started coming around the law office and everywhere else. He said, "I told Jack Kennedy I'm not going to take any job, but you know the Kennedys."

Shriver was credited with finding McNamara. He came into our net in terms of an idea for Secretary of the Treasury. And then Shriver flew out and saw him and was so impressed with him that he arranged for him secretly to fly and meet Kennedy. Kennedy was so impressed with him that he said, "Why don't you be Secretary of Defense instead of Treasury?"

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But the only thing that I got in was an emergency call, halfway through this period, to find out whether he was Catholic or not. Somebody suddenly said, "My God, we can't have another Catholic." So we in ten minutes found—whether it was in Who's Who or wherever it was—found that he wasn't Catholic.

On the Attorney Generalship, there were rumors that Bob Kennedy was going to be Attorney General. I thought it was an appalling idea. I couldn't believe they were seriously meaning it. But I then discovered that they did. So we didn't do anything about Attorney General. So then Shriver would read to Kennedy down in Florida his names for jobs and then Kennedy said, "Well, who have you got for Attorney General?" Shriver said, "Well, I understood you planned to have Bobby." He said, "No, Bobby's not going to take it. Why would you sit on your ass just because you hear some stories that it's going to be Bobby? Bob doesn't think it makes sense, and nepotism. Within twenty-four hours give me some Attorney Generals."

So I called Gene Rostow. I'd go to my old law firm and we'd talk. I really worked on the Attorney General thing, getting candidates. We whittled them down to three or four, and we had several hot ones. So then Shriver called Kennedy and said, "Well, here are four people who sound hottest for Attorney General." And Kennedy said, "Attorney General? Bobby's going to be Attorney General. Why are you bothering me with the Attorney Generalship? That's all cleared up. Forget that." A week later, going through everything, Kennedy would say, "Well, who have you got for Attorney General now?" And Shriver would say, "You said Bob had it." "No, Bob's not going to have it." We had about five.... It feels to me now as if there were about five times when we were told he was it and then he wasn't it. I think I spent hours and hours and hours discovering who were the best men to be Attorney General.

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HACKMAN: Who were some of the hot names you had on your list?

WOFFORD: Well, as I said this, I was even trying to remember who they were. It's funny, we had Gene Rostow on it, I know. I was thinking while I was telling you the

story—it's odd that I can't remember who they were, we had some interesting ones, too. I may think of it later.

Then when a Cabinet man was appointed what would happen is he would either come to see us or call us to see him—McNamara called us—and we'd go through our files for the other top jobs in his department. Of course we'd stay up all night or work hard as soon as somebody was appointed; we'd know that department was coming up. Then we'd really call everybody so we'd have as much as we could as far down in the department as we could. And we had a good bit on the Pentagon because we'd had Paul Warnke working and Adam—that was his portfolio and he's sort of a walking IBM machine when you call to ask him anything. McNamara was fantastic. That early morning, I think, we spent several hours with him going over our names shooting suggestions at him. He had as many names already on his cards as we had. Then, when we didn't have an answer on somebody he was thinking about, when we didn't know anything about him, he would say, "Would you check him out today?" By the time we finished, all of us, including Shriver, had assignments from McNamara, and we had to meet him either late at night or early in the morning with the net results. He did this for about three days with us. He's the only one that worked us like this. He got an enormous amount of work out of us. We got behind on all other departments. Finally Shriver said, "I'm afraid it's your shop now. Nobody else is doing the job you are so we're needed in these other places." He said, "Fine, but

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I need Yarmolinsky as my special assistant." So we lost Yarmolinsky, I mean, he went to McNamara. He may have stayed with us on the talent search a few more weeks, but he was already starting work for McNamara. I guess he just sort of slipped over to his payroll. Shriver said, "Well, you can have Yarmolinsky continue to work on this, but the rest of us have got to go on to other things."

HACKMAN: I've got this list—in case any of these ring a bell if you want to look at it—of the people who were appointed in that early period, if you want to refer to it. Were there problems in working with other Cabinet people, after they were appointed, in your suggestions?

WOFFORD: Well, some didn't work with us at all.

HACKMAN: I had wondered who just didn't, who had their own people and who didn't want...

WOFFORD: Yes, well I'll tell you the ones that—Ribicoff [Abraham A. Ribicoff] came over and spent quite a few hours with us and seemed very anxious for suggestions and tapped us for a while thereafter. The State Department, Bowles became undersecretary as you recall and Soapy Williams became Assistant Secretary for Africa. Well, Williams was sort of out of it but, in any case, Bowles did a major work on new ambassadorships. He did a talent search of the same kind for ambassadorships. We had been doing one, too. So we had one long session with Bowles and then I worked with him quite a bit on that thereafter.

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We had a spy from within the establishment named Robert Schaetzel [J. Robert Schaetzel], who had worked with Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson] and other people. What are the conditions on how this stuff is used?

HACKMAN: I've got a copy of the legal agreement in here. You can put any restrictions on it, close it as long as you want.

WOFFORD: If I don't put anything in is it open as....

HACKMAN: Well, the standard condition is it will be open when the Kennedy Library opens and the way things are going, God knows when that's going to be—sometime in the '70s—but then you can put anything on it as far as that goes.

WOFFORD: I think.... This is just a minor point. I don't think it would hurt him now. But, in any case, he got some kind of an operation going within the State Department, maybe himself, that listed all the really bad people in his opinion.

HACKMAN: I've heard of that, not his name specifically but...

WOFFORD: It was called "Schaetzel's Shit List." I guess he would be on that kind of list for quite a few people. But we had one great evening going over his list.

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Bowles has been rightly credited with doing a remarkably good job of getting a lot of new ambassadors and making good appointments. Things that people don't know about, the ambassador to Togo, Bowles picked out from the junior Foreign Service officers, Leon B. Poullada. He is just getting his Ph.D. at Princeton now. Bowles had met him first in Afghanistan, and seen him in action there, as I had, too. So that was a big operation that kept going, ambassadorships; I kept working with him on that.

HACKMAN: Had the President sent down any lines on ambassadorships as to what type of people he was looking for and what he wanted to get away from in terms of regular State Department people?

WOFFORD: No, but everybody knew the New Frontier types he was looking for, academic, professional, young people, people that are alive. The President was not a very ideological man. He'd expect a wide spectrum of views but he wanted alive people. Freeman got the Agriculture Department in part because he flies a jet airplane around by himself, pilots it. I can remember several conversations that made it clear to me that that was one of the factors weighing in his appointment. Kennedy, Bob Kennedy, used a lot of our suggestions. Burke Marshall was one I can think of. Hodges [Luther H. Hodges], I think, tapped us quite a bit.

HACKMAN: What Cabinet people had President Kennedy already decided on?

WOFFORD: I'm leaving out other people, though I don't think I was in any meeting with Goldberg [Arthur J. Goldberg]. I think Shriver had several meetings at the Labor Department after first meeting with Goldberg. What I'm doing right now is giving the impressions of the meetings I attended based on the departments I was working on, therefore I know comparatively little about some of the other departments.

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What happened is as people got appointed our operation became more and more peripheral. By the time of the inauguration we'd almost faded out of existence. The day of the inauguration we took the files over to the White House and went out of business. That afternoon—no, the next morning, Shriver called me and said, "You thought you were going to have a vacation didn't you? The President just asked me to set up the task force to see whether this Peace Corps idea makes sense, when shall we have our first meeting?" So we decided on meeting in about two days and assembled the first people for the Peace Corps.

HACKMAN: Can you talk about the problems that came up between the Shriver operation and the O'Donnell-O'Brien political side during the...

WOFFORD: Yes, but they were simple and there's not very much to say. Dungan was sort of in the middle. O'Brien, I think, was pretty sore at Shriver for shoveling all these people in that hadn't done anything in the campaign. And he was particularly sore when some egghead who hadn't done anything in the campaign was being treated more respectfully than somebody who had that he was recommending.

Bailey [John Moran Bailey] of the National Committee, he summarized it all to us one day, we were having a meeting and he said, "I know the problems. Your guys generally are better than my guys. I keep telling the people, 'We'll have no trouble competing with Sarge's gang if we can just get people who are as good as his people. Then our people will have an added weight on their side.' We can't come up with these guys."

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Dungan fell sort of in the middle between the two groups. I think in some ways Dungan was the most critical of our operation because he considered himself an intellectual, I guess, and a professional political man. He didn't want to be considered a part of the patronage operation. I think he probably thought it should be one operation, not two. Secondly, Dungan, Donahue, and O'Brien, I think they all—I'm not sure about Donahue on this—the general so-called Irish mafia viewed Shriver as a, well, one of the things I heard them call him was the house communist. They viewed him as unduly idealistic, a boy scout, too liberal—that's what they meant by house communist. The first day I went to work for the Kennedy staff I was advised by one of the top men of the staff—Ted Sorensen, I think—"I advise you to cut your ties with Sargent Shriver." I had by then, as I do now, strong personal ties with Shriver, then based on working on civil rights with him when I didn't at first even know he was connected with the Kennedys and he didn't know I was connected with the Kennedys. Ted said, "I advise you to cut

your ties with him. He doesn't carry weight around here. He didn't do very well in West Virginia." This was before the Convention.

I think some of them were quite bothered that Shriver did so well in the campaign. Then the talent search bothered them more. I don't mean that there was any great antipathy. The sort of drinking companionship was friendly and all, but still there was something. All we were doing was handing names into Kennedy and you never had any idea whether Kennedy was using them or not.

HACKMAN: What positions did he have that he didn't want names on, that he already had his mind made up? Do you remember?

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WOFFORD: I don't remember that, of course, the thing that he went back and forth on the most was the Secretary of Stateship. I was for Bowles for Secretary of State. Ironically, the civil rights forces threw their weight against Fulbright [J. William Fulbright]. In retrospect I think that was very sad. Who knows what Fulbright would have been like? I think Dean Rusk was a catastrophe. Not that he's an evil man. The things that bothered me about Fulbright still do, but on the other hand, I think he's a much wiser man.

HACKMAN: Who were the names submitted on the Secretary of State? Can you remember the top ones, or what you people considered...

WOFFORD: Submitted isn't the word for that. It was a constant debate and the people in it were Fulbright, Bowles, Stevenson, Rusk.

HACKMAN: Lovett, was Lovett [Robert A. Lovett] in here?

WOFFORD: David Bruce [David K.E. Bruce] kept appearing. I don't think Lovett was considered, though he was someone Kennedy admired as an elder statesman.

HACKMAN: Well, you've already explained how you went to the Peace Corps when Mr. Shriver asked you. How was this thing set up starting off in February? How was it organized and what resources or sources did you call on for information?

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WOFFORD: Well, we assembled a task force of people that Shriver and I knew. Gordon Boyce [F. Gordon Boyce] of the Experiment in International Living, Al Simms [Albert G. Simms] of the Institute of International Education, a whole group of people. They're all named somewhere. Frank Williams was still with us during the campaign, and he was in on the first group. George Carter had been in the civil rights campaign with us, this young Negro who had been with the American Society for African Culture and knew a lot about Africa and Asia. Louis Martin, we had him in on the very beginning. He was our first public information officer for three days before the White House tapped him. We had a

lot of professional overseas people in this first meeting, plus Warren Wiggins [Warren W. Wiggins], who turned out to play a very key administrative, organizing role. He was with AID [Agency for International Development]—I guess it was then called the International Cooperation Administration, whatever its name was then—had done a study for them of this crazy idea by the candidate named Kennedy. The conclusion of his study was that if it was done as a small little token thing it was silly, but if in fact people intended to do it on a big scale—he proposed five thousand volunteers in the Philippines, for instance, to raise the level of English in the Philippines. It could make a massive contribution to development in the Philippines. And that if the Peace Corps were seriously thought of as a large-scale thing, it would make sense.

I got his paper the night before the task force meeting to begin at 9 a.m. in the morning, read it, around 2 a.m. finished it, and called Shriver at 7 in the morning to say I'd read this paper by a guy that sounds like he's right on target with the sort of thing you have in mind for this. Shriver said, "Great." I said, "Can I invite him to come to the meeting?" He said, "Fine. Go ahead and invite him. What's his name?" I said, "Warren Wiggins." He said, "You're a little late. I finished reading it around 2 o'clock last night and sent him a telegram saying to be there at 9 a.m. in the morning." This happened time and again with Shriver with me. He was often a few minutes ahead of me or on the same beam. And then they just started running with it. We got our report to the President in four or five weeks recommending how the Peace Corps be organized.

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Then the key issues in the Peace Corps was whether it would become an independent agency or run by AID or the state Department, we strongly felt it should be independent in name and in autonomy and with its own thrust, new wine in a new bottle. It should not get ground down into all the opposition to AID and other things. It ought to be new in terms of its approach to other countries and everything. We were ardent *independentistes*. Ralph Dungan headed a White House committee that Kennedy appointed to see whether it should be independent or part of AID and strongly recommended—he put it another way—he decided that it was going to be part of AID. Shriver then argued with the President and lost, as I understand it.

We went off on a trip around the world; Frank Williams, Ed Bayley [Edwin R. Bayley] and I were accompanying Shriver. He was negotiating with heads of states and offering the Peace Corps to them. I helped put together the India part of it; that was my old stomping ground. George Carter knew Ghana well and arranged for that, and someone else Nigeria. We went to about eight countries. Meanwhile Bill Moyers [William D. Moyers] had come into the Peace Corps world called by Jim Rowe [James H. Rowe], one of Johnson's key people who called me one day and said he was too old to have heroes but he still had one hero left and this was a young fellow named Moyers from Texas who had been running the Vice President's staff throughout the campaign, twenty-eight years old, something like that, who had said when the Peace Corps idea was proposed, "That's what I want to work on if we win." Johnson had said, "Yes, okay. You can." Three times he had heard Moyers say this and each time it flopped—I mean, nothing happened. Then Rowe said, "Nothing's going to happen. I know Johnson. He knows Moyers and he wants Moyers. But if you put him together with Shriver you'd see this guy's got fire in his belly on the Peace Corps."

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I called Moyers and he said, yes he did and would love to see Shriver. I set up a date. The next thing I know Moyers called back and said, "Sorry, I'm a little confused because I had promised to tell the White House if I had any plans of any other work other than staying with Johnson. So I told them I was going to see Shriver and they just called and insisted that I must see the President before I see Shriver." Then I got a call from Kenny O'Donnell who said, "What the hell are you doing trying to screw up our thing? Bill Moyers is the only man around the Vice President who we can deal with that we like and trust and we want to keep him right there." I told Shriver he'd really arrived when the President asked to see somebody in order to try to persuade them not to work with Shriver. Moyers went to see the President and, after Moyers told him why he wanted to go to the Peace Corps, the President said, in effect, "Well, if that's really what you want to do, go do your thing." Moyers was a key man in the Peace Corps from the beginning.

Soon I was on the White House.... After the inauguration nobody had said a word to me about being on the White House staff. But every time there was a civil rights leader or a Negro who was to see the President, Mrs. Lincoln [Evelyn N. Lincoln] would call me and say, "The President wonders if you would talk to them for a while because he's a little late in his schedule." So I kept going over doing that.

Then the day the Civil Rights Commission came to have its first meeting with the President, or at least John Hannah [John A. Hannah] and Father Hesburgh [Theodore M. Hesburgh] and one other, I think, maybe, came, I told them I was going to be working on the Peace Corps and that that half of my life was connected with it. That's how I first went to Kennedy, to be an advisor on Asia and Africa, speechwriter. It seemed to me that that's the thing I ought to do. I had been involved in cooking up a little pilot program of a Peace Corps in the early 1950s which was called International Development Placement Association. We got about half a million dollars for it and sent volunteers overseas. And so I explained to them why I was going to do this.

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So they went to the President and told him how important it was that he have somebody on civil rights in the White House, that Eisenhower hadn't, and that that was one of their main recommendations. Kennedy said to him, "I do. One of my special assistants, Harris Wofford, is working on it full-time." So Hannah called me up afterwards and said, "Well, I don't know whether you were kidding me or the President was kidding me or that there's some failure of communication but he told us that you were his special assistant for civil rights, working full-time on civil rights. And we told him the last we saw you, you had an office in the Peace Corps. And that he said, "Oh, that was just temporarily with Sarge."

So a few minutes later Dungan calls me on the phone and says, "The President wants to see you." And I said, "Well, I can guess what it's about. Ralph, I really sort of committed myself to Shriver here in the Peace Corps." And Ralph says, "Well, come over here and see what the President has to say. So I was over in the outer office of the President, and this man came up behind me, Mr.—what's his name, this man all dressed up and carries the Bible, swears you in—Mr. Hopkins [William J. Hopkins]?"

HACKMAN: Hopkins, yes.

WOFFORD: And Tom Hughes [Thomas L. Hughes] of the State Department was in the room, he still likes to give people descriptions of this. Mr. Hopkins said to me, "Are you Mr. Wofford?" And I turned around. And he said, "Would you please raise your right hand?" And I sort of raised my right hand. And he said, "Take the oath of office after me, please." I said, "What for?" And he said, "Well, I just got word from the President to come up and swear you in this minute as Special Assistant to the President." And I said, "But I haven't seen the President; I don't know what it's all about." You know, minor things like authority, salary, everything else. Mr. Hopkins said, "I don't know about you, but I take my orders from the President, and I was asked to come up and swear you in immediately." You know, he was standing there with the Bible and so I raised

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my hand and was sworn in. That's how I got to be special Assistant to the President on Civil Rights.

So then I went into Kennedy and he said, "Well, look, you can have"—it was just like this—I walked in and he said, "Now look, you can have half your time working with Sarge if you want to, but I need you to get this thing on the tracks here at the White House. They'll fix you up with any office that's left. You ought to have the best office that's left. I'll back you up. We've got to do these things we promised we were going to do. All right?" I mean, it wasn't quite that brief. But more or less that was the pace of it.

Now, back to the Peace Corps. While we were on that first trip overseas, Bill Moyers took the case for the independence of the Peace Corps to the Vice President and the Vice President took it to Kennedy and said, "You're just crazy if you think you're going to put the Peace Corps, which is the first chance you've had to get Congress interested in foreign aid, under the weight of AID. Just believe me." We got a cable from Moyers while we were in New Delhi saying, "The President has reversed himself and you'll be independent." That was the biggest early decision on the Peace Corps.

HACKMAN: How helpful were those reports prepared by Millikan, Max Millikan [Max F. Millikan], and Hayes [Samuel P. Hayes] and the Colorado State report? Did you use those much? Well, the Colorado State didn't come out until about the end of February, I think, the preliminary.

WOFFORD: Yes, we had their early draft. Only moderately helpful. Hays had proposed an internationalized Peace Corps which I think is a damn good idea, but nobody was ready to buy it. We got some of the flavor in it. Sam Hays was on that first task force. I thought his was a very provocative proposal. The Colorado report gave interesting examples of the kind of work that you could do overseas, which they had talked out and negotiated out in several countries. So that was interesting. I don't remember Millikan's report. I know Millikan but I don't remember any report.

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HACKMAN: This was a very short report that the President had asked him to do.

WOFFORD: I don't think it was significant.

HACKMAN: One of the things he recommended was that the Peace Corps didn't do any projects directly, that it all be given out to other agencies.

WOFFORD: There's not much chance of that with Shriver running an agency. I'd favor doing more of that with universities. Shriver and I had a running argument on that for five years. I favored giving more power to universities; Shriver clearly tended toward a fast moving, hard hitting, core, central organization. I think that being that in the beginning was very crucial to its success. If it had been parceled out, granted the habits of higher education, the likelihood is that you would have had little pieces of it run by different departments and they'd cut up the pie. It could have been awful. In the long run we needed to involve the universities more than we did. That became one of the major things I tried to do in the Peace Corps. But I think the Shriver thrust was essential to its initial success.

HACKMAN: Can you recall how the discussion about how to go about setting this up in the first place, in the February '61 report that was sent to the President?

WOFFORD: Yes, I drafted most of that report.

HACKMAN: Where did the idea come for the executive order as opposed to asking Congress for any type of authority?

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WOFFORD: Oh, well, that was part of our whole general theme of executive power, use it wherever it exists. The Peace Corps was a precarious idea and we felt that it would be much less precarious if it were a living body instead of just an idea, if it had been embodied, and we were underway. The risky thing was that Congress might resent this, however. The second risk would be that something bad would happen in the first months that would let Congress say, "It doesn't work." But against that was the gain of momentum and the feeling that in the first hundred days we did have the power to do things like that which made us very strong when we started. Shriver was itching to go as soon as the thing was proposed; he didn't want to sit around talking about it. And he wanted to be able to sell Congress on it in terms of, "We have those volunteers training in Texas and in Puerto Rico, and Ghana has requested that many volunteers. This will work." Secondly, by beginning, you proved that there was a market for it at home and abroad when you went to Congress, which is what happened. I have no doubt that that was one of the good decisions that was made—to get started right away.

HACKMAN: Was anyone, other than yourself, on the White House staff taking any particular interest in this in the early period?

WOFFORD: Goodwin quite a bit.

HACKMAN: Goodwin.

WOFFORD: I almost never saw him doing it, but he was. I don't know why we never overlapped. I think he may have wanted to cultivate the Peace Corps as a regular portfolio, which I'm sure he could have had if he had the time but he got involved with so many other things. He drafted the legislation. He worked with the Peace Corps General Counsel, Bill Josephson [William H. Josephson], on the legislation. For the first six months he was very active in the Peace Corps. Shriver always liked him and respected his work. Later, for a couple of years he did nothing at all as far as I know, except maybe Shriver would call him on some rare occasions to help on something. When he had his

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troubles with the State Department, he then became head of the International Peace Corps Secretariat. I don't remember anybody else. Goodwin was in Sorensen's office so I'm sure that on presidential messages and the legislation Sorensen got into the act.

HACKMAN: Can you remember anything...

WOFFORD: Shriver was always pretty close to, worked easily with, Mike Feldman [Myer Feldman]; but I don't know that he did much.

HACKMAN: That's sort of interesting.

WOFFORD: I just noticed that they seemed to be fairly cordial and he worked with Feldman. He was at Shriver's home quite a bit. I don't think he ever got to doing very much in regard to the Peace Corps.

HACKMAN: Can you remember anything about the problem of finding funds to operate in fiscal '61? I had heard that there was a problem in finding a source.

WOFFORD: There probably was, but I don't know.

HACKMAN: What about the cooperation between people at State and ICA [International Cooperation Administration] in this early period? Were there problems? Could you tell these people were upset about this?

WOFFORD: Rusk was, has been from the beginning, as far as I know. Shriver tells me that Rusk from beginning to end has been a supporter of this. Shriver was for Rusk as Secretary of State, in favor of Rusk. Shriver says Rusk has been steadily behind him on anything he wanted in the Peace Corps. It's my impression that he was, too. Sure, underneath there were all kinds of opposition, but one of the reasons Shriver is Ambassador now, I'm sure, is this good relationship he's had with Rusk from the beginning. Apparently Rusk feels very warmly toward

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Shriver. Labouisse [Henry R. Labouisse], I think, was the head of AID or ICA...

HACKMAN: ICA.

WOFFORD: ...then and he was a fairly cowed fellow. We had a couple of sessions with him, and he seemed intimidated by Shriver. I think he had doubts about the idea, but those first years nobody outside the White House was going to lay a hand on Shriver because of his own power and Kennedy's behind him. That was why Shriver's speed was so important—because that was capital that wasn't going to last forever. He really used it to get our operations overseas largely independent and all sorts of things. I wasn't in any battles with AID or the State Department. I'm sure Warren Wiggins was in all kinds of battles on particular issues. When Shriver had to, he went to Rusk. He very seldom had to go to Kennedy. In fact, I don't know any occasions when he went to Kennedy. He went to Kennedy to add juice to the Peace Corps, to send off the first group. Kennedy did anything Shriver asked him to do like that. The only time I remember going to Kennedy we lost, on independence of the Peace Corps until Johnson went to Kennedy.

HACKMAN: There weren't things that came up from time to time that he would call on you to go to the President with?

WOFFORD: No, definitely not. He would not call on me to go to the President. He would do it himself if he was going to.

HACKMAN: One of the possible methods that was discussed in that early period of setting up the Peace Corps was this idea of the Peace Corps foundation, something on the line of the National Science Foundation. Was that ever given serious consideration?

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WOFFORD: No, I think it's an interesting and, especially now, a promising idea, but I don't think it was given much consideration then.

HACKMAN: Why, at that time, wasn't it? Was it Shriver's approach or were there drawbacks? Do you remember?

WOFFORD: I guess Shriver felt that with Kennedy he had the power to get the freedom the Peace Corps would need. What you get from the other approach is autonomy. But doing it as Kennedy's special agency, without complete autonomy in effect—that is, with the President giving and being able to take away support—we cashed in on Kennedy's great support of the Peace Corps. Secondly, you know, the great semi-autonomous bodies, they may be respectable but they don't—the Red Cross and things like that—they don't have a lot of sex appeal in terms of a very fast moving operation. He put enormous weight on speed and the more he saw of the complaints about the State Department and AID particularly—how long it takes in their pipeline to get anything done; how, in many projects, the time for them has passed by that time the experts and the money arrive—he was determined that in four months

we'd be able to produce volunteers to fill jobs that took fourteen months in the old agencies. He just felt that with Kennedy's backing he could build a corps that would do it.

HACKMAN: On the other hand, some people were promoting the idea of a completely governmental operation with no involvement of universities and foundations. Can you recall who was arguing this or what direction?

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WOFFORD: Well, Wiggins was pretty skeptical of most university contracts from his experience in AID, so he inclined in that direction. By and large Shriver did, too. That is, we had a lot of words in our report, many of them put in by me, that talked about the Peace Corps operating through five channels, one of which would be the universities, we had a Notre Dame contract that really ran a project in Chile, that Father Hesburgh personally sold to Shriver. But Shriver from the beginning, by and large, was opposed to these semi-autonomous tracks. He wanted to use the universities but he really didn't want to give control over to them.

HACKMAN: How did the idea develop for using a National Advisory council? Was it obvious?

WOFFORD: Obvious.

HACKMAN: Was anyone ever considered other than Johnson as head of it?

WOFFORD: Sure. The first head of it, I believe, was Justice Douglas [William O. Douglas].

HACKMAN: Okay, other than those two. I had heard the name of Hoover, Herbert Hoover, mentioned, trying to get him involved at one point.

WOFFORD: Sounds like an interesting idea, but I never heard it.

HACKMAN: How did your role change after March 1st, after the executive order had been written? Did you stay as closely involved?

WOFFORD: After March 1st when?

HACKMAN: '61, when the executive...

WOFFORD: Oh, the Peace Corps?

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HACKMAN: Yes.

WOFFORD: Did I stay as closely involved with the Peace Corps?

HACKMAN: Yes.

WOFFORD: My involvement for the first two years in the Peace Corps was sporadic, really depending on Shriver or somebody else whistling me into the act. That might be whistling me in for a meeting where some people concerned about something thought I could really get Shriver's ear or affect something. I had a warm invitation from Shriver, you know, to be in all his central staff meetings and everything else, so I would be whistled in by people in the organization when they wanted me. I don't think I went on my own very often, but I was whistled in a lot when something was coming up they thought would be of interest. Sometimes Shriver would call me. Then Shriver would ask me to something, such as go on the trip around the world with him. Then later he asked me to go and negotiate a Peace Corps program separately by myself in several countries, the last of which was Ethiopia. I did it. He'd often ask me to go with him on a trip around the country and talk a lot there. He kept me as a kind of talent search man, too, in the Peace Corps. I was on an interview circuit, which I hated, but I interviewed most of the key people he was thinking about.

[END OF INTERVIEW #2]

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