John Douglas Oral History Interview – RFK #1, 06/16/1969
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Biographical Note
John W. Douglas (1921-2010) worked for the Kennedy Administration on the release of Cuban exiles involved in the Bay of Pigs and then, in 1963, led the Civil Division of the Justice Department as Assistant Attorney General. In 1966 he left the Justice Department to work on his father's, Paul H. Douglas, campaign for the Illinois seat to the U.S. Senate and then later worked on Robert F. Kennedy's 1968 campaign for the U.S. presidency. In this interview Douglas discusses his work at the Justice Department, his subsequent relationship with Robert Kennedy, his work with RFK on his father's campaign, and RFK's political campaigns for senate and later the presidency.

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of JOHN W. DOUGLAS

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John Douglas – RFK #1

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Addendum

Oral History Interview

with

JOHN DOUGLAS

June 16, 1969
Washington, D. C.

By Larry J. Hackman

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

HACKMAN: Okay, if you want to just take off then. Had you known Robert Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy] before you came to the Department of Justice in ’63?

DOUGLAS: Only briefly. I met him for the first time in 1960 when I went down to see Bob Wallace [Robert Ash Wallace], who was then working for John Kennedy [John F. Kennedy]. Bob Wallace had worked for my Father [Paul H. Douglas].

HACKMAN: Just a brief conversation, or anything at all on the political…

DOUGLAS: No. It was really very brief. Then I saw him a few times thereafter before I came to the Justice Department, but not at any great length.

HACKMAN: How did you come to the job as assistasnt attorney general then ?

DOUGLAS: Well, I’m not entirely sure, but I think that it probably came about through some of my friends in the Justice Department who were working there at the time. Nick Katzenbach [Nicholas deB. Katzenbach] had been an old time friend of mine at Princeton, Yale, and Oxford. We’d known each other for a long time. And of course, Burke Marshall [Burke Marshall] and I had been friends at Covington &

Burling. We've known each other for some time. And I'd known and worked woth Lou Oberdorfer [Louis F. Oberdorfer] and had seen a little of Byron White [Byron R. White]. I'm sure that my father's being a senator helped.

[-1-]

In 1961 and again in 1962, several people at the Justice Department had asked me whether I was interested in certain positions, and I had said that I was not. But the Civil Division job was attractive to me.

As I understand it, Nick had given Bob Kennedy a list of names and Bob suggested that he talk with me, which he did. The job had been open for quite a while at the time that Nick called and asked me to come down to the department. I went down and Nick asked me if I'd like to take the Civil Division job. Some time thereafter, Bob Kennedy called me and asked if I'd join up. Actually that was a formality because I had told Nick that I would do so. But the official laying on of hands came in a telephone call towards the end of December, 1962.

HACKMAN: Can you remember anything in the conversation you had with him, or the interview or whatever you want to call it – what he was interested in?

DOUGLAS: Well, it was just a brief telephone call. He called me at home. He merely asked me if I would come to the Justice Department, and I said yes. Of course he knew that anyhow.

HACKMAN: Yes. I mean earlier when you'd gone in to talk to him.

DOUGLAS: Well, I hadn't talked to him during that time. I just talked to Nick. I didn't know what the purpose of Nick's call was when he asked me to come down and talk to him. But when I came down to Nick's office, Nick told me what it was all about, and I said that I would like to take the Civil Division job.

Shortly after I had my talk with Nick, Lou Oberdorfer and John Nolan [John E. Nolan] asked if I'd help in the Cuban prisoner exchange. So I worked on that in December – spent quite a bit of time on it, at home, in my office, a few days on the road, and down at the department doing some calling. But I saw very little of Bob Kennedy during that period.

However, when he called at the end of December, he mentioned that it had been a worthwhile effort. He was obviously feeling very good at the time. I remember his voice sounded quite exhilarated. He was just about to go off on a vacation, as I recall.

HACKMAN: The definite offer came after you worked on the Cuban prisoners exchange thing?

DOUGLAS: The formal offer came after that, but I think, in all practical consequence, it had been nailed down before that.

HACKMAN: It wasn't really a trial.

DOUGLAS: No, not really. I don't believe so.

HACKMAN: Can you remember then after you arrived, or after you were appointed at the Justice Department, ever sitting down and talking with him about what he was looking for in that job? Or as most people, were you just thrown into it?

DOUGLAS: No, I just started right in. We didn't have any discussions about what he wanted in the job. I think it became fairly apparent that he wanted people not merely to work on their time on other larger problems as well. Nick had indicated as much to me. Bob Kennedy had people from various divisions working on civil rights problems. And he used that kind of pinch hitting, if you will, from time to time.

HACKMAN: Did that create any problems for you? Or was he or other people in the department pulling people out of your division without telling you, or was this ever a problem?

DOUGLAS: No. It would work something like this. Civil Rights, or the deputy attorney general's office would say that they'd like to have two or three people for this project or that project. And we'd go out and draft individuals from Civil Division. That didn't happen too often, but it happened on occasion. In connection with the March on Washington in 1963, Bob, through Nick, asked me to be responsible for coordinating the efforts of all of the government agencies in preparing for the March. He and President Kennedy were anxious for the March to come off smoothly and not hurt the administration's legislative proposals for civil rights laws. So I worked on that with a number of people inside and outside the department for a matter of weeks. I spent, I suppose, half to three-quarters of my time during August and much of July on the March.

HACKMAN: How much problem did you have in getting cooperation around the government on this particular problem?

DOUGLAS: There was very little trouble at all. The reason was that when the department asked for something, I think everyone felt that the department was speaking in the name of the president. And, in addition, I think most people wanted to see to it that the government's response was systematic, organized, and a decent kind of response.

HACKMAN: In the talks you'd had with your friends in Justice before you took the job, what kinds of reports were you getting on how Robert Kennedy was to work for? And then how did it work out during that period?

DOUGLAS: I don't know that I ever had any specific questions and

answers on that precise subject. But when I ran into Burke or Lou or Nick at one occasion it was obvious that they were very happy with the setup there. They liked the work and the direction of the department. They were very fond of Bob and liked the resposibility he gave them. These were all the traits which I soon came to recognize and admire after I came to the department.

So it was obvious from what they said and didn't say that Justice was a happy ship and a challenging undertaking. But I never went into it in specific detail with any of them.

HACKMAN: What were some of the other things then at the Justice Deparrtment outside of the normal function of the Civil Bureau that you got involved in? Can you remember others like March on Washington and the Cuban thing?

DOUGLAS: Yes. I attended at least one or two of the conferences at which there was consideration of the bringing of the jury-tampering case , in Nashville, against Hoffa [Jimmy Hoffa]. Those were large meetings I attended.

HACKMAN: Is that a…

DOUGLAS: Yes. I'm not sure how they were arranged. I either got a call from Nick or Nick's secretary or from Bob's secretary, or from somebody in the Criminal Division, saying there would be a meeting in the attorney general's office on the Hoffa matter, and asking me to attend.

HACKMAN: Was Robert Kennedy at those meetings?

DOUGLAS: Yes, he was.

HACKMAN: Clearly in charge, or was he following it that closely? Was he leaving it up to other people?

DOUGLAS: No. He was clearly in charge. There must have been twenty people at one meeting. There were views pro and con against proceeding, but Bob ran the meeting. Most of the people there, including myself and Burke Marshall, favored bringing the jury-tampering case. My own feeling was that the government just could not sit back in the light of what appeared to be a clear attempt to subvert the whole judicial process. Bill Hundley [William G. Hundley], who was chief of the Organized Crime Section of the Civil Division, had some doubts about bringing the case because he wasn't sure whether the testimony for the prosecution would be strong enough. Ramsey Clark [Ramsey Clark] was also opposed to prosecution. They were the only ones who I recall opposed bringing the jury-tampering case.

HACKMAN: Other things then during that period?

DOUGLAS: Well, those are some of the main ones that come to mind.

HACKMAN: How much of an interest did he show in the day-to-day workings of the Civil Division? Was he on top of this as much as others?

DOUGLAS: No, I couldn't say that. He was not as interested in the work of the Civil Division, the Civil Rights Division or the Antitrust Division. That was to be expected. I'm sure that's true of other attorneys general as well. Our division handled the general run of litigation for the government that wasn't taken up by some of the specialized divisions. We had things like admiralty and shipping. We had torts. We had suits in the Court of Claims. We had many of the injuction suits under the Taft-Hartley Act. We had a lot of labor cases. But they were not matters that attracted a great deal of national attention. And if an attorney general's time was limited, as his was, then it was only natural that he would get involved in Civil Division matters only to a very limited extent.

I sent up to him a periodic report of the major things that were happening in the division. Bill Orrick [William H. Orrick] had started this practice. I continued it on a daily basis for a time. After a while, it skipped a day here or there. But we tried to keep him informed of what cases were that were of some importance and things of interest in the division itself. And occasionally they would bounce back to me with some comments from Bob of one kind or another. The comments were usually very perceptive and interesting. He was interested in whether the positions we were taking were merely defensible positions, but also whether they were the right, and in a sense humanintarian, things to do. And, frankly, that wasn't always the easiest thing to sort out because the Civil Division's role had been to act as an attorney for the government agencies.

There is a question what should be done where the Justice Department may have some reservations about a position of a government agency in court. Is it going to confess error at the lower court level, or is it going to give the agencies the usual kind of representation which a pure advocate is acustomed to provide? In other words, does the government attorney try to act as an effective advocate for the agency and leave it to the court to decide the merits of the matter, or does the Department of Justice try to examine the wisdom of each agency decision and reach an independent judgement on the point before it represents the agency position in court? Quite frankly, in most cases we took the former position. The most important reason for this was that we just didn't have enough time to examine the wisdom of agency decisions. And, in addition, we, and I certainly

include myself in that group, intend to follow the traditional lawyer's role of acting as an advocate for the person or agency which he represents. Bob Kennedy was much less inclined that way. He was ahead of his time in this respect. And, in retrospect, I wish that I had followed his general inclination to a much greater extent. But, as I have already said, Bob did not get heavily involved in Civil Division matters because of the press of other duties.

HACKMAN: Do you recall cases where he would have gotten ivolved in the back and forth between Civil Division and one of the other departments, perhaps a Cabinet member or an agency head?

DOUGLAS: There were occasions like that but they werer very infrequent. There was a so-called discrimination-in-reverse case in Texas involving the Post Office Department. I don't remember whether this was before or after the assasination of President Kennedy, but it was a case in which there were allegations that Negroes in the Dallas post office had been promoted to a competitive position in an effort to make a good showing for the Post Office Department rather than on the basis of ability. I remember that Postmaster General Gronouski [John A. Gronouski, Jr.] came over and discussed the matter woth Bob Kennedy. I was present at the discussion, although frankly, I can't remember how it finally came out.

In an airline crash case involving suits by relatives of individuals who were killed in a plane accident over Staten Island – a crash between TWA [Trans World Airlines] and United Airlines – the government was a defendant because of the role of the Federal Aviation Agency in the routing of the Planes into the New York area. This involved litigation against TWA, against United, and against the United States under the Tort Claim Act. Out trial attorney recommended a settlement in which the government would pay a certain percentage of the settlement, TWA would pay a percentage, and United would pay the largest percentage. The section chief and his superiors in the division had recommended to me that we accept the proposed settlement. These individuals, together with the trial attorneys, had a number of conversations with the FAA [Federal Aviation Agency] The FAA was reluctant to settle and was initially opposed to settlement. Finally, Nick Katzenback and I had a conference with Jeeb Halaby [Najeeb Elias Halaby], FAA general counsel, Nate Goodrich [Nathaniel H. Goodrich] and, I think, Dave Thomas [David D. Thomas]. The conclusion of that meeting was that the FAA would abide by whatever the Justice Department finally decided should be done. We went back to the Justice, thought about it some more and decided that the Justice Department ought to accept the settlement proposal. Then Jeeb Halaby changed his mind and decided that he would like to speak to the attorney general about the settlement proposal, as was his right. So he had a conference with the attorney general at which I was present. I'm not sure whether Nick was there or not. This time he [Halaby] took the position that while it was all right to settle, in his view we ought to try and get a lower peercentage settlement figure. Well, it was really too late

to undo the settlement. We felt that the negotiations had proceeded so far that if we tried to reopen the negotiations, we'd either have no settlement or a settlement at the original figures. So we turned down the suggestion to reopen negotiations and the case was settled on the basis that the trial attorney had worked out. But it wasn't often that Bob Kennedy got involved in Civil Division matters on a direct basis like this.

HACKMAN: At meetings like this, the Gronouski meeting or the meeting with the FAA people, any problem in getting him to read the briefing papers or whatever ahead of time and come in prepared, or did he usually come prepared?

DOUGLAS: I was trying to think whether we had sent him up the briefing papers ahead of time. I'm not sure exactly what the answer is. I think we sent him a briefing paper, but I couldn't be sure about it. I'd usually try to talk to him for a few minutes before we had a meeting. And he was always very much with it in the discussion which followed. He reacted particularly well and quickly in oral discussions. I'm sure that people like Gronouski or Halaby thought he was up on the subject at the time because not only did he know what it was all about, but he had the gift of picking things up as the conversation moved along and staying on top of them. Bob had an extremly quick mind. He got to the point rapidly, could separate the essentials from the non-essentials. As a matter of fact, he had an extremely incisive mind. He moved into a subject directly and forcefully.

HACKMAN: When you say he was a good listener, do you ever get any feeling of why this was so, of why he listened rather than…. Was it personality, or was it time, or…

DOUGLAS: Yes. I think that he was an intensely personal kind of man. I think that the contact with the individual making the report to him was extremely important to him. I think it was the combination of the subject matter with the impact of the other person that made a conference a more congenial vehicle for understanding and comprehension than the mere reading of cold print would have been. In addition, he liked to question. This was another thing that added to the effectiveness of a conference with him.

HACKMAN: You didn't get the feeling it was really due to a shyness in his personality?

DOUGLAS: No, I'm not saying that he wasn't shy in some respects. But I would say that, to the extent he was shy, this would have argued for burying himself in the papers. What I am saying points in the opposite direction. He liked to talk things

out with somebody. And it seemed to me that he was more at home dealing with a paper in the context of a meeting with someone else than he would have been in just sitting back and reading cold print.

HACKMAN: Are there any people that you saw in Justice or people outside who were coming in to meetings that he readily had a great deal of difficulty in dealing with, or just personality reactions, or just wouldn't work together.

DOUGLAS: Well, I guess there were people like that but I rarely saw him in that context. But there were some people who fitted into that category. And to generalize about it – if he had little respect for somebody, it seemed to me that in the early years that I knew him it was difficult for him to be easy with them. He was always polite but nevertheless could be somewhat distant. In a sense, this trait was a political liabitlity, because the other person at times must have sensed his reserve and this created an initial gap between them. Sometimes I wondered if he regarded a display of congeniality or ease with someone whom he didn't respect as a reflection on his own integrity. I think that by 1968 he had submerged that trait in that he could be, and was, courteous to and patient with just about everybody.

HACKMAN: A number of people have said that he didn't really say that much and, you know, the stories that he couldn't communicate well with Burke Marshall who also didn't say much. Did you ever have a problem in understanding really what he expected of you or was trying to get across to you?

DOUGLAS: No. I thought he was easy to understand. He was very direct, for one thing. He didn't say a great deal and he didn't get into a lot of detail. But I thought he was direct and terse. You didn't come away from meeting with him as you might from some others and say, "I wonder what he was driving at." This was one of the things which made him an attractive personality as far as I was concerned because I felt I always knew where I stood and what he wanted. He was an extraordinarily reliable person. He didn't say one thing in private and another in public. He didn't dissemble. He didn't knock his subordinates. He encouraged people, brought out the best in them, and stood by them. He was the most fastidious man in public life I ever met in his personal relationships.

HACKMAN: You said it was natural that he didn't pay as much attention to particular cases in your division as to civil rights or whatever. What about when budget time came around or personnel slots? How much problem did you have in this area of getting support from him for what was needed?

DOUGLAS: I didn't really have anything to do with him in that regard. All of that was done with Nick Katzenbach and Sal Andretta [Salvador A. Andretta]. I think one reason for this was that the

budget for fiscal 1964 had been fixed by the time I arrived. That meant that in the months before the assasination of President Kennedy there was very little of that kind of thing to do. We were constantly scrapping with Sal Andretta about promotions and so forth. But it was pretty well understood that those matters would be taken up with Nick Katzenbach. That's what I did.

HACKMAN: How much, if any, did you see of Robert Kennedy on the social side during the period? Was it strictly Justice Department, or were there things at Hickory Hill or elsewhere that were going on?

DOUGLAS: It was almost exclusively Justice Department. The times when I saw him outside of the office were Justice Department get-togethers of one kind or another. Later on I got to see more of him. But before the assasination of President Kennedy, I saw relatively little of him socially.

HACKMAN: Bill Orrick was in the job before…

DOUGLAS: Yes.

HACKMAN: Then he went to State.

DOUGLAS: Then he went to State. The assistant attorney general's job in the Civil Division was vacant for quite a while – oh, maybe seven, eight, nine months, something like that. Well, Orrick came back in about June of 1963 and went to the Antitrust Division.

HACKMAN: Any problem at all in the relationship with Orrick after he came back?

DOUGLAS: None at all. Just the opposite. When I was appointed to the job in 1963 I went to Bill and spent some time with him to find out about Civil Division, the people in it, the way things were done, and to get his suggestions. He was very helpful. And he remained extremely helpful thereafter when he came back to the Justice Department. I was very fortunate.

HACKMAN: What can you recall then about the post-assassination period in terms of trying to get Robert Kennedy back to the Justice Department or to take charge? What kind of problems did this represent to you and other people, or did it really?

DOUGLASS: Let me go back to just before the assassination. There was a birthday party in Bob's office. I think all of the top people in the Justice Department were there. There must have been forty or fifty people in all. Ethel Kennedy [Ethel Skakel Kennedy] had come. Later

on we went over to the White House for a presidential reception for the judiciary. I think that the Judicial Conference ws being held at about that time. And I guess President Kennedy went to Texas shortly after that.

But anyway, at the Justice Department party for Bob, he struck me as being depressed. He seemed glum. He made a short speech, the substance of which I can't recall

now, but it was not bouncy. As I was leaving the reception and going down to my office, I ran into Jack Rosenthal [Jacob "Jack" Rosenthal] of the Public Information Office. I said to him, "Bob certainly sounded down in the dumps." And I wondered to myself at that time whether Bob might be getting ready to move on to someplace else, away from Justice.

Shortly after that the assassination came. We continued pretty much as before in terms of sending things up to him. For a while there were naturally somewhat less frequent responses.

In January 1964, Bob asked me to go down and run the start of integration at Auburn Alabama, where some Negroes were being admitted to Auburn University for the first time. Burke Marshall told me that John Doar [John M. Doar] would come with me. The two of us went down there and it worked out.

HACKMAN: Why do you think he pulled you in on something like this?

DOUGLAS: I think that it was just a matter of gradually getting to know you and feeling that you could handle a job of that kind. The March on Washington had gone reasonably well. And also at that time there was just too much for Burke Marshall to do, and they wanted somebody down there who was an assistant attorney general. Sometime later, Bob asked Burke and me to go to Kentucky to talk with Governor Breathitt [Edward T. Breathitt, Jr.] about civil rights problems that the governor was concerned about and a prospective march on the state capitol.

HACKMAN: That would have been the time he was in the Senate.

DOUGLAS: No, that was in about March of 1964. My contacts with him continued to be rather sparse in that period. He was naturally concerned about other things.

HACKMAN: On the Auburn thing or in Kentucky, did he ever make any phone calls on these that you know of, or ever try to shake anything loose?

DOUGLAS: Certainly not on the Kentucky visit which was just a conference with Breathitt as to what the state might do to ease the civil rights problems there; how they should respond to

Any marches and so forth. In the Auburn integration matter, I don't know whether he talked to anybody or not. Burke would know.

This reminds me of the 1963 March on Washington. When it was all over I was still down at the police headquarters where I'd been all day. The day had gone well. Everybody was pleased. And Bob called up from the White House; he had put in a busy day but he thanked me. And his first question was, "Well, who should I call to thank?" I said I'd get back to him a list, which I did shortly thereafter. Or rather I got it back to Angie [Angella M. Novello]. And I think he called everyone of the people I had listed because several people

thereafter said that they had been called, which was very nice. Bob wasn't a person given to elabirate praise. In fact I think he regarded that as not an appropriate thing to do. But when something went well, he was generous, extremely generous. He was a most thoughtful individual, considerate and understanding.

HACKMAN: Did you ever discuss with him – or were you close enough at that point – his own personal future before he went into the New York Senate thing or the vice presidency in '64 or any of these things?

DOUGLAS: I certainly didn't discuss the New York Senate race until after he decided on it. I'm not sure about the vice presidency. A few times when he was about to make speeches, I gave him some suggestions. I think that on those occasions I took the initiative and went to his office.

HACKMAN: Did you ever discuss with him, or did he ever bring to you any viewpoint on people staying on with the Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson] administration when he left?

DOUGLAS: No. He didn't say anything about that. I suppose if someone had asked him specifically, he would have said something. When he ran for the Senate in 1964, he asked me to help him to put together an issue group. He wanted to get some idea of the issues which he should stress. He had help in that respect from a number of others. But anyway, I did some of that pulling together.

Then he asked me to go up to New York and spend some time looking at the research and writing side of the campaign. It was obvious to me that he needed more people ans needed them in a hurry. Peter Edelman [Peter B. Edelman], who'd worked for me as a special assistant for a year from '63-'64, he wanted to participate in the campaign, and I was able to persuade the people in New York that he should be taken on. Adam Walinsky [Adam Walinsky], who was also in the department and whom I didn't really know well, but who wanted to participate in the campaign and who was regarded as a person of ability and drive, had come to me also. In any event, I was able to get them hired by the New York campaign staff. David Hackett [David L. Hackett] helped sell Steve Smith [Stephen E. Smith] on the idea.

HACKMAN: Smith is the primary person you had to talk to on something like this?

DOUGLAS: Yes. He was the person who was in charge of finances and he has the last word on such matters. Bill vanden Heuvel [William J. vanden Heuvel] and Milt Gwirtzman [Milton S.Gwirtzman] were working on writing and research and they were overworked, absolutely swamped.

HACKMAN: How were these things handled by Justice? Were these leaves of absence, or did Edelman and Walinsky resign, or what? What was going to happen?

DOUGLAS: They resigned.

HACKMAN: Why did Robert Kennedy look to you in this capacity for advice on the issues of aide?

DOUGLAS: I guess he'd gotten more confidence in me as time went on. Of course, I disagreed with him on the early course of his campaign there. He started off campaigning in a general way, basically on a personal leadership basis. This seemed to me to be a mistake. I thought that he ought to stress some of the differences on the issues between himself and Keating [Kenneth B. Keating]. Bob was reluctant to do so because he felt that this would sharpen an attack against him which was already underway – an attack based on his being a "ruthless carpetbagger" and on his challenging a candidate who had served in the Senate for a long time and was a decent kind of man. The researchers in New York had put together a list of votes and positions that enabled Bob to point out that Keating wasn't really as progressive as many people thought he had been.

HACKMAN: "The Myth of Keating's Liberalism" thing.

DOUGLAS: Yes. It was, I thought, a complete research job. There were a couple of minor errors that cropped up in it. But it was basically a fair approach. In any event, Bob wouldn't take that approach for a long time. He felt it would seem like a personal vendetta against Keating, and this wasn't a posture in which he wanted to find himslef. So nothing happened at all for quite a while. I was upset by it. I talked to his brother Ted [Edward M. Kennedy] who was then in the hospital in Boston. I talked to a number of other people. And I finally wrote Bob a strong letter saying he was making a mistake in doing this and that he should stress the differences between his own positions and some of Keating's votes. Sometime thereafter when I saw him, he referred to the letter as "that snotty letter." But for one reason or another, he eventually decided that he could go after Keating on the latter's votes and on the differences between them on the issues.

To my mind this episode reflected one weakness which Bob had as a political figure – at times he tended to personalize issues too much. In other words, he thought that if he went after Keating on a perfectly valid basis, that somehow people would view it as a personal attack.

HACKMAN: In the gutter with…

DOUGLAS: Not really in the gutter. But that it would subject him to the charge of ruthlessness that was being made from time to time. I think this was one of the reaons why he made the mistake of not getting into the 1968 campaign sooner than he did. Looking back on it, it seems to me that his hesitation on going after Keating on the issues tied in with his hesitation in seeking the presidential nomination.

Of course, this same concern about personal relationships was also one of his great strengths, both as an individual and as a political leader. He was always interested in the other person, both as a member of a larger group and on a face-to-face basis.

This intense interest in others was, I think, responsible in large part for his continuing growth, for the stability of that growth, and for his passionate views on poverty and war and race and injustice. He saw what those things did to individuals, how they distorted character, how they led to frustration, rage and rebelliousness. So while it led him into some political mistakes on occasion, his intensely personal nature was a very large plus overall. And, of course, this was one reason why he was such a magnificent friend. He treated people decently. He was honest, direct, and forthright. He was sympathetic without being maudlin. He didn't duck or try to shift blame. He didn't say one thing in private and another in public. He never left his subordinates down. He stood up for them, followed their careers and interests, tried to help them, looked for the best in them, and usually found it. A man like this, whose public and private characters were so at peace with each other and who was so interested in others as individuals, was bound to be concerned about the horrors of racism, Vietnam, and poverty, because he sensed what they meant to the victims and to their lives and the lives of their families.

HACKMAN: Had the vote study on Keating's record been done before you went to take…

DOUGLAS: I can't remember the timing of it. I had nothing to do with the way it was compiled; Peter and several others did it. I frankly can't remember whether I suggested that it be done or not. It seems to me that it was the obvious thing that anybody would do if he had the time.

HACKMAN: Were there other things in the campaign that you got involved in? You remember the General Aniline, that ruling, the whole dispute about that?

DOUGLAS: I remember the dispute, but I wasn't involved in it.

HACKMAN: Was there anything you did at Justice to back…

DOUGLAS: No, I didn't do anything on that. As a matter of fact I was disqualified from doing anything on that case because when I'd been at Covington & Burling in 1950 I'd spent about twenty-five hours or so on a related matter. When I went to the Justice, I checked back at Covington & Burling and found out that I had spent some time on it at the earlier time; so I never had anything to do with that matter at Justice.

HACKMAN: Do you know if ther were other people at Justice who got

Involved, to any extent, in his campaign in the way you did or something along that line?

DOUGLAS: Let's see. Lou Oberdorfer did some work on issues. Burke helped, I'm sure. Also, from time to time there were requests from New York for information on certain things which had happened in the Justice Department while Bob was attorney genereal. We tried to be helpful, naturally.

HACKMAN: Any feeling of resentment from the [Democratic] National Committee or from the White House of from anybody else in the administration at all?

DOUGLAS: I understand there was. But I never paid any attention to it. I'd heard there was some list which the White House had of Justice Department personnel who helped out on the campaign, but I don't know for sure about it.

HACKMAN: Were you close enough during that campaign to get any feeling for the thing with President Johnson's people in New York, Ed Weisl [Edwin L. Weisl, Jr.], or any of the problems that existed between them?

DOUGLAS: Well, I knew there was friction but I didn't know the details. I saw Bob once or twice at his place out on Long Island and three or four times in New York City. At times, he was a lively, absorbed and comabative candidate.
But, on occasion, he struck me as quite abstracted for a candidate.

HACKMAN: What do you know about his efforts to geet Mr. Katzenbach nominated as his successor? Do you know anything about the go-between here?

DOUGLAS: No, I know nothing about that.

HACKMAN: What kind of contacts then developed over the next couple of years while you remained at Justice?

DOUGLAS: Well, from then on, I spoke with him on the phone about once every two months and saw him in his office about three times a year. Usually, I'd have lunch with him. I sent him an occasional memo. And I started to see more of him socially. I made up my mind to leave Justice in 1966. When I got ready to send in my resignation in the summer of 1966, I told him that I was resigning. But I'd say that as time went on after Bob left the department the relationship became more personal.

HACKMAN: I don't know your reasons for resigning, but is this

Anything you discussed with him, views about the administration, the direction things were going? Did he come back with comments?

DOUGLAS: Well, there were a variety of things…. I'd been there three years and I was unhappy with the drift of things in the administration. I told Nick in early 1966 that I was getting ready to leave. He asked if I'd stay on for a while and I said I would for a few more months. But I was not happy with the way the department and the administration were going, so it was just a combination of those things. I thought it was time to get out. I had lunch with Bob sometime in June or July and told him that my resignation was on its way.

HACKMAN: Do you have any feelings for the way he felt about Mr. Katzenbach as his successor and the job he was doing?

DOUGLAS: Well, I think he became dissapointed, how much I don't know. He felt that Nick could have done more to defend him in the bugging controversy. I think he also felt that Nick had not been sufficiently independent of the administration. But I remember he said, even when the bugging controversy was at its height, that Nick was a decent, honorable person. They maintained a cordial relationship, but I think it was never again a close one.

HACKMAN: Can you remember specific comments that Robert Kennedy made about the bugging controversy, and how he would have handled it, or anything like this – exactly what should have been done.

DOUGLAS: When I saw Bob on this matter, he was involved in the dispute as to whether he had authorized the bugging. He was convinced – and I believe that he was correct in this – that he had not authorized any bugging. So he felt that Nick should have said so. Of course, Nick didn't say that Bob has authoried any bugging. He just didn't affirmatively say that Bob had not authorized it.

No document was ever produced ehere the attorney general, that is Bob Kennedy, had ever signed an authorization for the bugging of any person or any place in organized crime, or of any person for that matter.

National security matters were wholly outside anything I knew about. To my knowledge, the bugging controversy was involved exclusively in the organized crime area. I got to know something about this because Nick had asked me to comment on the papers that were being drafted by Justice to be submitted to the Supreme Court in the

Black [Fred B. Black, Jr.] Case. That was when the controversy began to erupt. I thought that the comments which somebody in the department had drafted were not fair to Bob. And at least one of the drafts was not fair, I thought, to Bill Bittman [William O. Bittman]and the attorneys who were working on the Baker case. That draft made it seem as though they had

known about the bugging and had kept silent about it – which I couldn't believe and which turned out to be incorrect.

When I saw the department's draft paper for the Supreme Court, I called Bob and told him that I felt he should talk to Nick about it and put his side of the story before him. I had no direct knowledge based on what had happened because the Civil Division was never involved directly on indirectly in those activities. But I did call Bob, and I'm not sure what transpired between him and Nick except that, I guess, there were some hot words. And I know that the resolution was not satisfactory so far as Bob was concerned although, as I recall, the paper that was filed was an improvement over this original draft. I myself had sent a memo to Nick saying that the draft memo for the Supreme Court reflected unfairly on Bob and should be changed. I think it was changed to some extent.

HACKMAN: I'm going to have to turn this over. Wait just a minute. We can continue on the other side. We were talking about the phone call to Robert Kennedy and then the back and forth between Robert Kennedy and Nick Katzenbach.

DOUGLAS: Yes. Nick talked with Bob and Burke about it. I don't know what Burke and Nick talked about in their conversations.

Later in Bob called me up and asked me to come to his office. He said that Courtney Evans [Courtney A. Evans] had been in to talk to him. Apparently Courtney had confirmed what had been Bob's understanding – namely that Bob had never authorized any kind of bugging in organized crime. I said to Bob, "Well, you'd better get a letter to the effect from Courtney as quickly as possible." So Joe Dolan [Joseph F. Dolan] asked Courtney to write a letter to Bob. Courtney wrote it to me. I'm not sure whether Bob had called me about it or not. I told Joe that I didn't think Courtney's draft was satisfactory. It was too long; I thought it could be made shorter and more explicit and I suggested some revisions to Joe. Joe took the letter back to Courtney and as I understand it Courtney agreed to the proposed changes. This was the letter that was eventually released by Bob's office as a result of the correspondence between Hoover [J. Edgar Hoover] and Congressman Gross [Harold Royce Gross].

Inside the department before I left it, there was a considerable discussion about the whole procedure towards bugging in the organized

crime area. It has become apparent that a lot of bugging by the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] had been going on in the organized crime area without prior approval or knowledge by the Justice Department personnel, certainly not by the higher-ups in the department. I attended one or two meetings in Nick Katzenbach's office on the subject. I was in favor of stopping it at once and removing the bugs. Bill Hundley agreed with me. Ramsey Clark stressed that bugging should be subject of some uniform overall control by the federal government. Finally, at the time that Nick was due to appear as a Long Committee hearing on bugging, I said to him, "Well, you really can't go up there and testify if the FBI has got any bugs still installed on organized crime matters. You really have to stop this." At the time

there were no federal statutes of any kind barring this kind of activity. As I understand it, Nick then called Hoover and it was agreed that it should be stopped.

Incidentally, at some time after I left the department. I gave Joe a couple of signed letters from me to Bob Kennedy, backing up Bob's position on his lack of authorization for FBI bugging. I told Joe that if Bob wanted to use them at any time, to go ahead and do so.

HACKMAN: What kind of feeling did you have, when Robert Kennedy was still attorney general, for his realtionship woth Hoover? Was there anything that you saw about that relationship then?

DOUGLAS: Hoover rarely, if ever, came to our luncheons or meetings while I was there. Courtney Evans was there from time to time as were other people from the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] like Al McGrath [Al McGrath]. It was commonly accepted around the department that the relationship between Bob and Hoover was cool, to say the least, but I never knew more that that until after Bob left the department.

HACKMAN: Other people have talked about the Martin Luther King [Martin Luther King, Jr.] thing which came up then in '68. Did you have any feeling for this whole situation at the time in '68?

DOUGLAS: None at the time.

HACKMAN: Was there a lot of talk going around the Justice Department, or how many people were…

DOUGLAS: About Dr. King or about the bugging?

HACKMAN: About the bugging.

DOUGLAS: There was no talk about the bugging. I can't really reacall any. I wasn't even aware, frankly, that the practice was carried

out, and there'd been no reason for me to know. Certainly nobody asked me about it or told me about it, and I don't recall it having come up in any incidental discussions at the time.

The only time the Dr. King matter came up in any specific way was in a discussion I had with Bob in Portland, Oregon in 1968, just before the primary election there.

HACKMAN: Do you want to skip and talk about that now?

DOUGLAS: Yes. I spent two weekends in Portland in 1968. And on the last weekend when I was returning to Washington Bob asked me to try to pull together the facts about the

bugging and Dr. King. He said, "We'll see if you can pull together all the facts on it, so that I'll know what to do." Pierre Salinger [Pierre E.G. Salinger] was urging that there be a complete disclosure of what had happened. Pierre had talked about this to me earlier in that weekend. He apparently had gotten into an argument with Bob about what should be done. I told Bob that it was my understanding that what had happened was that a wiretap had been authorized on the basis of national security on some associate or friend of Dr. King's, and that, as a result, a conversation of Dr. King had been picked up incidentally. Bob indicated that this was his understanfing as well. I said, " Well frankly, if that's what's happened, it seems to me you ought to make that disclosure." I didn't know what individuals were involved. I left then and never saw Bob again.

But when I got back to Washington, the first thing I did was to call Burke, who was about to go out to Claifornia, and told him what my and Bob's understanding of the matter had been. Burke said that this was not his understanding, that he felt that the disclosure at this time would be impossible to explain away, and that it could do nothing but hurt Bob. So that's really the way it was left. In any event, I more or less handed the problem over to Burke at that time since he was going back to California and since he apparently had some more direct knowledge of what had happened.

HACKMAN: When you say that Burke Marshall said that this was not his understanding, do you mean his understanding of the facts of the case or his understanding…

DOUGLAS: I think you ought to talk to Burke about just exactly what his understanding of the facts was.

HACKMAN: What was the extent of Salinger's knowledge?

DOUGLAS: I think Pierre was arguing primarily from a public relations kind of viewpoint. I don't think he had a complete understanding of the facts, but I honestly don't know.

HACKMAN: We were talking about the period when Robert Kennedy was in the Senate. You had had lunch with him a couple of times a year. What kinds of things would you generally talk about in that context?

DOUGLAS: Well, we'd generally talk about how things were going and about domestic matters. The one that sticks out most vividly in my mind was in December 1967. I hadn't had lunch with him since the summer of 1967. I'd been troubled by a bad back since the summer and had it operated on in October. We had lunch in his office for about an hour alone.

It was just before he took off on a skiing vacation, I don't know whether it was before or after he had that meeting, that's referred to in the chronology, in New York about the

possibility of his running for the presidency. Certainly I wasn't aware of that meeting at the time and didn't become aware of it until months afterwards.

We started off talking about Secretary McNamara's [Robert S. McNamara] resignation from the Pentagon. He was very surprised at the was it had turned out. He said, "Who would have tought that Johnson could have gotten away with this so easily?" And I said something like, "Well, I guess Secretary McNamara's differences with the preisdent and the Joint Chiefs of Staff weren't so large as some of the newspapers suggested." He let that one pass with no comment. He just gazed out the window and said, "Well, Johnson really knew his man." He also said that for twenty-four hours after the story first broke about McNamara's impending move to the World Bank [International Bank for Reconstruction and Development], McNamara and the White House had not communicated with each other at all. McNamara had then gone to the White House and had told the President that he would be willing to stay on. I'm not sure whether Bob said that McNamara would prefer to stay on for a while, but in any event he was aggreable to staying on. I gathered that McNamara would have preferred to stay on for a while. According to Bob, Johnson had thanked McNamara for the offer and said he'd consider it. The next thing that happened, according to Bob, was that word leaked from the White House that McNamara would be leaving in February. That had ended the matter. So Bob Kennedy said that he was really surprised at the way it had all turned out, that the World Bank job didn't seem challenging, that it was in some ways a bond salesman's job, and that so far as the devlopmental aspects of the job were concerned, he thought that McNamara could have done quite a bit by making speeches or writing a book.

I then came to the real purpose of my visit which was to urge him to run for the presidency. And he said, "Why do you think that?" And I replied that I thought he had a good chance of winning, that even if he didn't win he would feel happy having done it, that it was the only way that Vietnam policy would get turned around,

and that we could then get on with some of our major domestic problems.

Bob expressed concern about the impact that his running would have on the issues and on the party. He thought that it would develop into a personalized kind of struggle, that if he didn't win the party might be so split that it would lose and he'd get blamed for it. I told him that those things tended to be forgotten after a short period of time and that, anyhow, a party split wasn't that important… and I said, "Maybe the thing to do is to think about the kind of a campaign that you could wage and to what extent you'd feel comfortable with it." He said, "Well, I've already got that figured out." He said it would be on the question of presidential leadership in whichVietnam would play a very important role, but not the only role. He said that if President Johnson were going to pull out he supposed that he'd be in better shape to get the nomination if he weren't running at the time. The thought hadn't occured to me; it struck me as highly unlikely that Johnson might pull out.

HACKMAN: Did he say where he was getting that idea? Was it his own or…

DOUGLAS: No. He was just speculating. He didn't seem particularly specific. He thought that if he ran, he'd do well in the primaries. But he wasn't persuaded that this would mean the nomination at all. In fact, it seemed to me he was skeptical that if he ran he could get the nomination. He asked me if I'd spoken to others about it and I said no, I really hadn't. In retrospect, this had been a bad mistake on my part. I'm doubtful that it would have made any difference, but I should have done it.

HACKMAN: Did he cite any conversations with people like Mayor Daley [Richard J. Daley] or Unruh [Jesse M. Unruh] or any other people in the party that would make a difference?

DOUGLAS: Yes. He talked about Hughes [Harold E. Hughes] and Hearnes [Warren E. Hearnes] and somebody else. But he didn't mention any others. The only person he mentioned was Dick Goodwin [Richard N. Goodwin], whom he quoted as saying that " asking you to run for the presidency is like asking you to jump out of a window without knowing whether there was a safety net down below."

HACKMAN: Did he talk about Edward Kennedy or Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen], or…

DOUGLAS: No, he didn't mention them.

HACKMAN: Did he talk at all about the McCarthy [Eugene J. McCarthy] campaign?

DOUGLAS: A little bit. He said that he just didn't know how the McCarthy campaign would work out. He thought that if he got into the race fairly early that McCarthy would come over to his side. I didn't say that Bob had an obligation to run – Bob could say all he wanted to in support of his policies on Vietnam without running. But it seemed to me that it was much more likely that he could bring those policies into effect if he did run.

HACKMAN: Had this been a meeting that you asked for?

DOUGLAS: Yes it was. I felt that I must tell him my thoughts on his running. Because of a back operation, I hadn't seen him in quite a while.

HACKMAN: Had you talked during this period with other people who'd been with you at Justice? Do you know what their views were, and if they were urging him along…

DOUGLAS: No, not really. I know that Joe Dolan, later on, was against his announcing immediately. He wanted Bob to start in about May.

HACKMAN: Seigenthaler [John Siegenthaler] or Burke Marshall…

DOUGLAS: No, I hadn't talked to them. Looking back, it was a great mistake that I didn't do so.

HACKMAN: In what respect?

DOUGLAS: After our December luncheon… I felt that he was under pressure to have registered his own views with him and let it go at that. But in retrospect, I was wrong. It was a mistake. We should have talked with one another and then gone back to Bob. Maybe we wouldn't have reached any agreements among oursleves. But maybe we would have and, who knows, perhaps a solid delegation of some of Bob's friends would have made a difference. It was a mistake not to have explored it.

HACKMAN: In getting him in earlier you mean?

DOUGLAS: Getting him in earlier, which we should have done. It's now apparent that he was getting a great deal of advice from a great many source. I'm sure he he was soliciting some of it. So, in a sense, it was his decision as to whom he wished to consult. On the other hand, the issue was sufficiently important that I think it was a mistake just to register your view and leave it.

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When I left him in December, he said simply, "Well, you've given me something to think about." My own reaction at the time was one of surprise because I assumed that he'd probably been thinking about it a great deal. Looking back at it, I guess Bob was just being thoughtful and generous in letting the other person know that he appreciated the suggestion. Actually, it later developed that he'd been talking about running with a lot of people. But at the time I thought that, judging from his reaction, this was not a point of view that was being urged on him.

I would have to say also that I don't think he had a great deal of confidence in my political judgement. I had never worked with him on a national campaign; we had known each other only since 1963, and while I was a friend, I was not an intimate friend. So on the strength of all that, I never felt that he was going to be greatly imipressed by my views on 1968 and, in fact, it was apparent that he wasn't impressed. Still, I didn't press him. I just told him my thoughts. I should have done more.

HACKMAN: You talked about the McNamara resignation. Did you come away from the meeting feeling that he was primarily upset because of the way McNamara had been treated, or that he was primarily upset because of the direction the Vietnam thing would go in, that the Vietnam policy would not change? Or was it really both of those things together?

DOUGLAS: Well, I think it was all that. Also, it seemed to me that he felt that McNamara had made a mistake in not resigning. He felt that McNamara was now effectively muzzled and that McNamara had a great deal he could have contributed as a private citizen to the discussions on Vietnam.

HACKMAN: Did he talk at all about how, other than running against President Johnson, he might change the course of the war, or how it could be changed in some way?

DOUGLAS: No. After we got through talking about McNamara, I came out with my suggestion which really was the purpose of my coming to his office. There wasn't really any time left for him to deal with your question. He was in a pensive mood that day, but after we left off talking about McNamara we talked only about a presidential campaign.

HACKMAN: Had you talked to him in the earlier years while he was in the Senate? Can you remember that he ever commented on his own political future beyond the Senate, his thoughts about the presidency as an eventuality? Or would he talk about something like that?

DOUGLAS: No. He'd never talked about it specifically. I just always assumed that he would wish to run for the presidency some day and the sooner the better in terms of his own outlook.

HACKMAN: Can you remember his commenting about the direction the administration was taking at particular times, earlier comments on Vietnam, or other things, or particularly President Johnson as an individual, as a personality, as a leader?

DOUGLAS: In 1965, at his house at dinner, at the time of President Johnson's John Hopkins speech, he stated that he thought the bombing pause then should have been much longer. On the occasions I saw him thereafter, he was increasingly critical of the administration and of the way things were drifting. Quite aside from Vietnam, he seemed to think there was too much razzmatazz and not enough attention to fundamentals. He was moderately guarded in his talks with me about Johnson. Bob didn't praise him, but he didn't go out of his way to criticize him either. Obviously he didn't like Johnson as a man. He thought that he was someone who played one person off against another. He talked about how Larry O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien] and Ken O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell] had been put at each other's throats in part because of Johnson's machinations… He thought that the President had gotten himself pretty well isolated from the people. That was one of the things Bob talked about in December 1967, that President Johnson was too much under the thumb of the Joint Chiefs, and that he had no sense of basic trends and moods in the country. Bob thought that Johnson was a shrewd

politician infighter, that Johnson had been quite successful in dealing with himiself – that is, with Senator Kennedy – in the way he (Johnson) had been able to personalize their differences.

The next luncheon we had was the day of the New Hampshire primary. In contrast to December, Bob was very keyed up. He was restless and moved around the room. It was apparent that he would now run regardless of how the primary came out. He did think that McCarthy would do quite well in the primary. He said that he was going to have to speak to McCarthy, and didn't look forward to it one bit. He also told me about his conversations with Hearnes and with Hughes and with somebody else.

HACKMAN: Docking [Robert Blackwell Docking]? He was a Kansas governor who was there. I don't know whether…

DOUGLAS: I'm not sure whether he mentioned him or not, but Hughes had promised him the support of Iowa delegation. Both Hearnes and Hughes had said they thought that President Johnson was unreliable, if not unstable.

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HACKMAN: I want ot skip back to that December lunch for just a second. You said you'd made a comment that perhaps McNamara had been closer to the Joint Chiefs' point of view than the newspapers had reported, and he let that pass. Can you remember him making comments at that time or at other times about people like Secretary McNamara or Maxwell Taylor [Maxwell D. Taylor], or some of the people who were very different to him on Vietnam?

DOUGLAS: No. They were personally much closer to Bob than I was. So I think that if he had agreed with what I said he wouldn't comment about my reamarks.

HACKMAN: Let me skip then back to '66, at the time of your father's Senate race. And what can you remember about your conversations with him then, both on Vietnam – since there was probably some difference there – and his whole involvement in your father's campaign?

DOUGLAS: He came in for one or two days, as I recall. Dad had asked me to try to arrange it. And, in turn, I had spokenwith Bob and Joe Dolan about it. I didn't see Bob until the end of the day. I drove out with him to the airport from the hotel with Mayor Daley. They exchanged a few pleasantries, but were gererally quiet.

Bob was, I thoought, dissappointed with the way the day had gone. Later on I heard from Joe Dolan that it had been one of the worst days of his campaign tour that fall. The crowds were lethargic; it had not been a lively day for him. But looking at it from the viewpoint of the Illinois campaign, the reports I got were that, comparatively speaking, the day had been a lively one. The difficulty was that the 1966 Illinois campaign had been listless for a number of reasons. The horrible killling of Senator Percy's daughter had shut

the campaign down for several weeks. There was a deep sense of disquietude with the Johnson administration. Both things hurt Dad's campaign. My father and I disagreed on Vietnam so I avoided making public speeches and spent my time trying to organize the mechanics of the campaign. In any event, on the way out to the airport Bob didn't talk about issues.

HACKMAN: Any problems in working out the arrangements to get him in?

DOUGLAS: Yes, there were problems. The small group that was working directly for my father just didn't have the resources or know-how to do a proper job with scheduling and advance work. This was turned over to the Mayor's office which was a mistake. It led to a great deal of indecision as to where Bob should be scheduled. He was not scheduled as advantageously as he should have been. Some of the northwest leaders in the Chicago democratic organization did not want him to come into their territory. The fact is he

was not scheduled into the Polish-American districts on the Northwest side. There was a great deal of hesitation on then part of the party organization as to where and when he should be scheduled. It was annoying.

HACKMAN: What was your father's attitude toward Robert Kennedy in that campaign, at that time, and over the years?

DOUGLAS: In 1966, Dad was anxious to get as much help as he could from Bob. But they never had a close relationship that I'm aware of.

In 1968 my father was for Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey], because of their long friendship and the basic harmony of their views on Vietnam and other issues. But because I was working openly for Bob Kennedy, Dad did not publicly endorse Humphrey until after the assasination. From my own point of view, Dad's keeping quiet about his preference was a generous, nice thing to have done given his long association with the vice president. Dad liked Bob, but he was closer to Ted, perhaps because Ted had been in the Senate longer and because they had worked together on several things together.

Dad had had a few differences with the Justice Department on patronage matters which took a bit of the bloom off the rose. He was unhappy with the department's wanting to appoint Republican judges in Chicago shortly after the Kennedy administration came in. Dad and Bob had a fairly good relationship, however, and each respected the other. It just wasn't a personal relationship.

HACKMAN: Is there anything else you can remember about the period between your December lunch with him and the March lunch, particularly on conversations with other people around him – the change in people's viewpoints towards whether he should run or not run or any of this?

DOUGLAS: Well, I can't remember anything specific. I got the impression that there was a gradual change at the end of February, more in favor of his running and less opposition to running, but I couldn't put my finger on it. remember speaking with Joe Dolan and asking why on earth Bob had made the statement that under no circumstances would he be a candidate. Joe said, "Well, it was given off the cuff."

HACKMAN: Were you at all involved in that telethon in February, D.C. Village thing?

DOUGLAS: No.

HACKMAN: You said he felt McCarthy would do well in New Hampshire.

Did he cite any polls or anything like this as evidence …

DOUGLAS: No. He had been talking to people in New England and he sensed that the attacks on McCarthy's patriotism and on the loyalty of his supporters had backfired.

HACKMAN: Anything else that you talked about? Anything else that you coul detect in this whole period about differences either within the Senate office or the Senate office versus the old John Kennedy people like Sorensen and O'Donnell?

DOUGLAS: Well, there were differences. I knew that Peter felt that Ted Sorensen was a conservative influence which he regretted. He thought Dick Goodwin was a much more helpful influence. But I didn't know any details of the tugging and pulling.

HACKMAN: Were members of the press coming to you in this period to try to find out if you knew what was going on?

DOUGLAS: No. I think I ran into Joe Kraft [Joseph Kraft] once or twice. But I wouldn't have been able to tell him anything even if I wanted to because I didn't know.

HACKMAN: Did he ever discuss the feelings of senator Edward Kennedy or Mrs. [Ethel S.] Kennedy or the rest of his family?

DOUGLAS: He never said anything about his wife's attitude. At the March 1968 luncheon he's mentioned that Ted Kennedy's opposition had receded. But I don't recall exactly what words Bob had used.

HACKMAN: Okay. What happens then over the next few days after the New Hampshire primary? When do you come back into the picture? Any meetings in these days?

DOUGLAS: I didn't go to any of the other meetings. After Bob announced, Steve Smith asked me if I'd help set up a speaker's bureau and I said I would. So I got it started, and then turned it over to somebody else.

Then Ted Kennedy asked me if I'd go out to Indiana and scout around about issues. So I went out, spent a weekend in Indianapolis, came back and went out again. It was at this point that Joe Dolan wrote a letter to Senator Kennedy saying it was the worst run campaign he'd ever been associated with.

HACKMAN: This is how far into the campaign?

DOUGLAS: I'm not sure. Joe told me in general what it said. Joe said that the organization was too diffuse, that there were a whole lot of different things going on, and that they weren't being pulled together. So Joe asked me when I returned to Washington to hand deliver the letter to Senator Kennedy who was spending a Sunday at Hickory Hill. I did that.

Then I think I called up Bob or perhaps Bob called me shortly thereafter. In any event I went out to Hickory Hill again the same Sunday. Bob asked me if I'd got o Indiana and try to pull it all together. I first said that I didn't quite see how that would work, that it would not make any sense to put somebody new in at the top of an organization that was already split up, and that the only basis on which I'd go would be to work woth Gerry Doherty [Gerard F. Doherty], not over him. So, after I went home for an hour, I called Bob back and said that I would go on that basis. And he said fine.

So that's what happened. I went out there and spent about three to three-and-a-half weeks in Indiana. Bob had told me at Hickory Hill that he was very concerned about Indiana, that he could get beaten for good at the start in the primary contest, and that he had practucally no support from any of the office holders inside Indiana, that his people were having to buid an organization from scratch. He didn't have to tell me that – I knew that from having been out there. He also thought that California was a mess and that Steve Smith was going to have to spend his time there. I asked why he didn't get Larry O'Brien to run Indiana, and he said no he didn't think that was a good idea. So he said that he wanted me to do what I could. So I agreed.

My three-and-a-half weeks there were spent trying to make things work more smoothly. I had no real authority. There were different groups doing different things. One group was the advance men who were essentially from New York. Then there was a district coordinator for each congressional district, which gradually expanded to three or four in each district. Most of these men were from Massachusetts. There was a press group which had been recruited by Pierre Sallinger. Joe Dolan was doing the scheduling for the Kennedy ladies. There were some advertising people there from time to time buying time. There were people working on recruiting college students. And so on.

Gerry Doherty's primary concern was with the district coordinators. They were trying to build local organizations. Gerry did an outstanding job building local organizations from the ground up. Gerry thought that in political organization work , one should start with meetings, get names, and expand on the card file.

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Naturally, there was a friction between the various groups of campaign workers. I tried to get the groups to mesh more smoothly, and by the end of the campaign we'd made some progress.

But it was a campaign which was won by the candidate. The Kennedy ladies were tremendously effective in breaking down the resistance of some people and helping to make Bob into a credible presidential candidate and a more appealing figure. After Mrs. Joseph Kennedy [Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy] or Ethel Kennedy or Bob's sisters has been in a city, the next trip by Bob into that city was better than it would have been without the ladies' visit. Each time Bob went into a city I felt that the crowds were more receptive than they'd been the previous time. Bob built his strength in stages. He built on the basis of exposure, hard work, and his own character, talents, and personality. I doubt if any national candidate in modern times ever worked so hard. He came across as authentic, direct, and straightforward – a person in whom people could have confidence. And that's what, I think, brought Indiana around. He had poor press coverage. He had paractically no support from any local office holders. He had a lot of resentment from people for coming in late, or for coming in at all, and for spending money. He overcame all these handicaps, primarily through the force of his own character. By the end of that Indiana campaign he was an attractive, effective, articulate candidate, entirely capable of Presidential leadership.

He ended up quite fond of Indiana or so he seemed to me. He said that he thought they were tough individuals. He compared them with West Virginians. He thought they had listened. And I think he began to have a good time. The night before primary day, he took a number of us out to dinner. He'd just completed a sensational day. It was a backbreaker, but he had wanted to do it. He started out in Evansville, flew to Fort Wayne, then to South Bend, and then motored along the northwest rim of the state to Gary, Hammond, East Chicago, Whiting, on to Midway Airport and back to Indianapolis after midnight where a good crowd of people had stayed up to meet him.

He was in a good mood. He was satisifed that he'd done all that he could. And, of course, he'd made a tremendous reception in the northwestern rim of the state in both the black areas of Gary and in white areas of Hammond and Whiting and East Chicago.

But he had a lot of interesting vignettes of that day. I thought it was rather typical of the man that he didn't dwell on how many people had come out and seen him. He hadn't said anything about that, although obviously he was buoyed up by the crowds' receptions. But he mentioned some individual things which to me were interesting. First, he mentioned a lady who came up to him in this tremendous crush and had asked him to come and see her mother who had had a stroke like his father and wanted to see him. The older woman had been wrapped in a shawl and had been sitting on her lawn for a ling time. Anyway, Bob had gone up and had a nice chat with her.

And there was a Negro lady in Gary whom he had met on one of his earlier trips.

[BEGIN SIDE II TAPE I]

HACKMAN: You'd been talking about his reminiscenses of that day.

DOUGLAS: Oh, yes. He talked about a youngster in Gary whom he had seen there on a previous trip. I think that at the earlier rally the youngster had been carrying a younger sister or brother on his back. Anyway, he now rejoined the caravan and Bob asked him to ride along for awhile. Bob had enjoyed that very much.

Then he mentioned a man in one of the areas – I don't know if it was Hammond or Whiting – who had been holding up some kind of hostile sign. As the entourage approached, the man had reached out and shaken Bob's hand and, in Bob's opinion, had tried to break it.

But Bob was in a generally nostalgic mood that night. He talked about his family, how much he loved his brothers and sisters and his parents. And he said that he hadn't realized until he became twenty-one or so that this kind of affection was frequently not present in other families. He talked again about something which he apparently referred to quite a bit, about how the faces of many of the black youngsters got older their faces turned into kind of a lifeless mask as a result of the prejudice and hostility and difficulties which they'd encountered. He sounded off agaist the *New York Times*, saying that he'd rather be reported by the *Indianapolis Star*, unfair though it was. At least he knew, and the readers knew, where he stood with the *Star*. He was in his usual outspoken and frank frame of mind.

HACKMAN: Will you let me go back through Indiana first a little bit? On the first trip you took out, sort of a scouting trip, whom did you talk to and what did you bring back, and whom did you talk to when you came back?

DOUGLAS: I talked to several people in Indianapolis, one of whom was George Zazas [George Zazas], a lawyer there. I also talked to Mike Riley [Michael Riley] and Bill Gigerich [William Gigerich] and a few others. I didn't make any startling discoveries or come up with any novel ideas. What I did and what anyone else in the same position would have done was to take the large national issues and see how they could most effectively be made in Indiana. I think that, for example, on Vietnam, the idea was to stress the shortcomings of the Vietnam regime, the disproportionate load that Americans were having to bear, that a bombing pause was a step in the right direction but only a step, that there had to be a broadening of the regime, etc.

Everyone, including myself, felt that it was important to appeal to the white blue collar workers. Bob was in some jeopardy with some of them because of his position on the race question, but I felt Bob could still do well with them. Some of the scheduling was done with that in mind. He was scheduled into certain areas of Gary and Hammond where a

number of peole thought he'd get a hostile reception. The same thing was done in certain areas of Indianapolis. I think that each trip he made there built up his support. There were affirmative things that Bob could stress to the blue collar workers on what ought to be done in the country that they could accept. In part, they felt that they were a bypassed part of society. It wasn't just that they felt hostility to or pressure from members of the Black community; they also felt that government in general had ignored them. Bob had to make an effort to convince tham that he was sympathetic and understanding and that he wasn't interested solely in the welfare of the Black community. He did this in part with the issues, but I think he did it to a greater degree by exposing himself to people in those particular areas and coming across as an authentic, determined, reliable individual who was anxious to do something about all of the neglected segments of society.

HACKMAN: You talked about scheduling. Can you remember how the staff or the people who were working on it in Indiana, how they broke down on this question? Did you usually see eye-to-eye woth Joe Dolan who was hadling it, or who was on the other side of going into some of these areas?

DOUGLAS: Well, Jerty Bruno [Gerald J. Bruno] was a little cautious about going into such areas because he visualized a lot of hostile signs and Wallace [George C. Wallace] sentiment. Advance men tend to be conservative, tend to play to their strengths rather than to their weaknesses. I don't mean their strength, but to the candidate's strength. Advance men worry that if there is a poor or hostile crowd that gets reported in the national press, the news has an adverse effect wholly outside the primary state. An advance man may also take some of the heat from a candidate as to why a particular crowd was poor and so forth. So there's a natural tendency for them to go where candidate's strength lies. But a candidate in a situation like the one Bob was in can't afford to do that.

In any event, Jerry was at times skeptical about putting Bob into the white blue-collar areas. Those areas undoubtedly had Wallace supporters, but there were potential Kennedy supporters there too. As a matter of fact, when the students from Chicago were collecting Kennedy signatures in the Lake County area, in the same neighborhoods they'd come across people who were either for Wallace or for Kennedy and a few for both. The point was that in a particular neighborhood you got a surprising number of people who might be for Kennedy and a number of

people with the same economic background and the same jobs who were for Wallace.

Joe Dolan was sympathetic to my scheduling ideas. I don't know about people like Adam, that is the people who were working directly with the candidate in writing speeches and so forth, whether they had any feeling about the scheduling aspect of the campaign. They felt, I know, that Bob was talking about law enforcement too much; frankly, I agreed with what Bob was saying on that score and, indeed, if anything I encouraged him in this regard. But I don't know that they had any particular quarrels with the scheduling.

HACKMAN: Fred Dutton [Frederick G. Dutton] – did you get any feel for his ideas on this?

DOUGLAS: No, not really. Fred believed in exposure, as I did.

HACKMAN: If you want to go to lunch at quarter after, maybe we'd ought to break this up.

DOUGLAS: No. I have quarter to one.

HACKMAN: I meant a quarter of. We ought to break and talk about a couple of things I thought of. [Interruption]

[END OF INTERVIEW]

Paul Douglas Oral History Transcript – RFK #1
Name List

Speech of John W. Douglas
at Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois
October 31, 1968

ROBERT KENNEDY
AND THE QUALITIES OF PERSONAL LEADERSHIP

Robert Kennedy had so many interests and participated in so many activities, even within the relatively short span of years allotted to him, that it will take a long time to sort them all out and to decide what was his principal contribution to history.

There are a number of possibilities. He was a principal architect in the election of the first Catholic President. He was his brother's strong right arm in a period of transition, progress and hope. He played a wise and effective role in the Cuban missile crisis. As a superb Attorney General, he was more responsible than any one else for launching the Government's concerted effort in the 1960's to dismantle the age-old system of racial discrimination and, by 1968, had become the white political figure most admired by the black community in this century. He instituted an effective campaign against organized crime and was primarily responsible for significant reforms in the federal prison system and for the Government's position in support of the one-man, one-vote principle in reapportionment.

As Senator, he launched the first major viable community development organization in a decaying metropolitan

area, the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn. He was the first public figure to make a comprehensive attack on the destructive impact of the welfare system on the character of its supposed beneficiaries. As a critic of the Viet Nam War and as a candidate for President, he surely played a constructive part in the Johnson Administration's first halting, if inadequate, moves toward peace in Viet Nam and an end to that tragic chapter in our history.

These were not one-time things. They were lasting achievements, and any one of them would have assured him an honored place in history. Nevertheless, I am inclined to believe that he will be remembered, more than anything else, as a model of how a political figure in a democracy can lead effectively and still remain true to his own exemplary canons of conduct. Certainly, in this century there have been few men in high office whose public and private lives have been so at peace with each other and whose fidelity to individual worth so permeated his relationships, programs and actions.

Senator Kennedy's preoccupation with individuals was apparent, I believe, on the day before the 1968 Indiana primary election. On that last Monday he flew north, in perfect weather, from Evansville to Fort Wayne and South Bend, and from there motored along the northwestern rim of the state into Gary, Hammond, East Chicago and Whiting, then on to Midway Airport in Chicago and back by plane to Indianapolis after midnight. The day was a smashing success from start

to finish with large and enthusiastic crowds building up as day turned into night, so much so that one national reporter, who had covered many national campaigns over a number of years, considered it, and particularly the last part of it, the most impressive single day's campaigning he had ever seen. This, despite the facts that, in Lake County, Senator Kennedy was in an area where racial tensions ran high and that by early evening he was running four to five hours behind schedule. Since the news stories on the following days were taken up with the election and its implications, the size and responsiveness of those Monday crowds understandably received little, if any, national attention.

Back in Indianapolis late Monday night Senator Kennedy was pleased with the Indiana campaign in general and the day's efforts in particular. He felt that he had received a fair hearing from Indiana voters. He thought the people were independent and thoughtful. Like most candidates, he was always buoyed by good crowds, but when he started to talk that evening about the preceding day, it was the vignettes on which he dwelled.

He spoke of the middle-aged woman in Whiting who had asked him to speak to her mother who, like his father, had suffered a stroke and who was still waiting on her modest lawn in a rocking chair, with a shawl around her, hours after the motorcade had been scheduled to pass by.

There were the youngsters who had curled up and gone to sleep on mattresses piled on top of their parents' cars waiting for the motorcade.

There was the young Negro lad from Gary who had run into Kennedy on an earlier trip, carrying miraculously somehow a younger brother on his back, and who now briefly rejoined the motorcade for another chat with the candidate.

And there was also the middle-age man whom Kennedy had spotted with a hostile sign some distance ahead of the motorcade, and who, when the Senator's car approached, reached out and shook his hand and, in Kennedy's opinion, tried to break it.

These were the episodes which crowded in on him as he surveyed the end of the Indiana effort, and to me, they reflected Robert Kennedy's preoccupation with the individual, his problems, make-up, promise and reactions.

* * *

Senator Kennedy did not have any set way of dealing with his assistants except to be himself. This meant that he paid little attention to protocol, encouraged and listened to ideas from all sources, while at the same time weighing all advice with a cool appraisal of the capacity and interest of the individual who was doing the talking or the writing This combination of receptivity and personal appraisal came

easily to him. While he was a reasonably good reader and improved as time went on, he was a better listener and was always interested in the person with whom he was conversing.

He was, I think, constantly appraising others, not in any disciplined fashion but as a matter of course. He could see weaknesses as well as strengths, but he instinctively looked for the best in people and, as a result, usually found it. Senator Kennedy was also an extremely loyal person. He did not undercut superiors, colleagues or subordinates. If someone displayed loyalty to him, he did not forget it.

Few, if any, of Senator Kennedy's assistants left in a huff or with a sense of disillusionment. They had a higher regard and deeper affection for him at the end of their association than at the beginning. Indeed, it is doubtful that any modern political leader had so many devoted friends and associates. When he died, I am sure that every individual in those categories felt as though something inside himself had gone too, and that, no matter what might happen in the future, life would be somehow less full.

How did Robert Kennedy do this? How did he create that sense of attachment and devotion? He was certainly not a backslapper. He was not given to flattery; indeed, he

was quite sparing in his praise. And although he was generous in his hospitality, he did not try to make colleagues feel part of his family. On the contrary, he was reserved and, with a few exceptions, kept even his close associates at arm's length. Nor, although he was an extremely gifted and versatile individual, was he so overwhelmingly talented as to bedazzle his co-workers.

The answer, I think, is to be found in his strength of character and the range of his interests. First of all, he was utterly direct and straight-forward. More than one member of the Fourth Estate has commented that he always told the truth. I would say more: that he never dissembled. If Kennedy did not wish to answer a question, he did not answer it. And, by the same token, when he did answer a question, his position was clear cut. There was no mistaking what he had said.

In a sense, it is not particularly significant that he was not given to the evasive response. That is surely one of the relatively innocent by-plays of our modern political life which put such a premium on public appearances and public statements. But it was, nonetheless, an important reason for the support which he received from his subordinates. There was no possibility that they might be misled by something he had said. On the contrary, all of them knew exactly what Kennedy had said and what he had meant.

As a corollary, he never trimmed on his word. He was careful in making a commitment and meticulous about keeping it. He never asked others to do things which he could not have done himself. He never did things in private which he was unwilling to defend in public. He never struck poses in public only to discard them when off-stage. In a sentence, Kennedy let everybody know where he stood. He was, in a word, reliable.

Robert Kennedy paid a price for his directness. Since he was congenitally unable to flatter, some individuals felt that they had been slighted or neglected. Others were disposed to equate his reserve with indifference or, worse, with coolness. Still others felt that his refusal to wear his heart on his sleeve concealed a calculating inner self.

However, the attribution of coldness, like many other hostile characterizations, could not withstand extended exposure to Kennedy in person. It was one of his great virtues as a campaigner that, regardless of the friendliness or lack of friendliness of a particular reception, he came through as an authentic individual who said exactly what he meant. Like him or not, approve of his views or not, fear him not at all or a lot, his audiences left their encounter with him convinced that whatever else he might be he was neither calculating nor cold but was, on the contrary, straightforward, genuine and decisive. This was a basic source of his political strength.

Senator Kennedy was always willing to make tough decisions and to stick by them. He was almost too willing, for he had a strongly combative streak. That is not to say that he took on every worthwhile project that came to his attention and made it a crusade. No one in public life does. But it does mean that he never trimmed on his substantive views and that on all matters of consequence he was willing to stand up and be counted.

Two illustrations during his tenure as Attorney General make the point. He authorized a criminal prosecution of a state court judge who was the brother of Congressman Eugene Keough of New York, one of the earliest supporters of President Kennedy and a powerful member of the House Ways and Means Committee. Similarly, when I recommended that we bring a multimillion dollar civil suit for breach of contract against the McCloskey Construction Company, owned by the family of one of the Democrats' leading money raisers and a former Ambassador to Ireland, Kennedy merely listened and told us to go ahead and file the suit.

As a matter of fact, Kennedy rather enjoyed setting his face against the wind of popular opinion. He respected those who did likewise. Tell him that he shouldn't do this or that because it would be a political mistake was a sure invitation for him to reconsider whether he really shouldn't try it after all.

A small thing, a very small thing, but indicative nonetheless of this stubborn streak was his insistence on taking the little spaniel "Freckles" with him during the 1968 primary campaigns. If Freckles had a single admirer in the Kennedy campaign entourage, it was the candidate himself. Everybody else managed, without difficulty, to restrain any appearance of enthusiasm for the dog; most thought it to be a pest and an abomination. But half of the dog's appeal to Kennedy stemmed, I think, from the very fact that so many people were telling him that it was politically unwise to have that dog along.

The dog itself had a positive genius for trouble. One day, it managed to climb up on the altar of an old Catholic Church in Vincennes, Indiana. A vigilant Fred Dutton managed to rush up and remove the dog before a photographer could memorialize the scene to the undoubted delight of Kennedy's primary opponents.

Then, in San Francisco, the irrepressible Dick Tuck, the major domo of the press buses, scooped up Freckles just as the latter was starting to relieve himself on an expensive rug in the Fairmont Hotel lobby. When a reporter observed that he couldn't understand why Dick was making such a super human effort for a mere dog, Dick replied, in a remark which tickled the candidate no end, that "It may be a mere dog to you, but it may be an embassy to me."

Kennedy was happy to give his subordinates a share of the limelight. In this regard he was the antithesis of a prima donna. He made a point of letting various Assistant Attorneys General attend cabinet meetings either with him or in his place. He saw to it that his assistants in the Senate received plenty of publicity, and he never sought to dampen it down, much less to cut it off. This was not lost on his associates. It helped make them feel a part of important things and gave them a sense of participation and of appreciation which was worth a thousand thanks.

Kennedy maintained a continuing interest in his colleagues and friends without being intrusive or possessive. He did not forget them regardless of their position or status. If they were in the hospital, he would call inevitably, cheerfully and briefly. If they were going out into private life, he expressed concern for their prospects. When he got to the Senate, he did not hesitate to ask friends if they would try to help somebody get located in a decent job. And he followed through on such requests. He would come back at you again; he was never content, where a friend or former colleague was concerned, in merely making a record or going through the motions.

Robert Kennedy developed a fatalistic approach toward death. I have no idea when he developed it. But that it was present could not be doubted. Once, when someone asked

him if he had heard what had happened to a mutual acquaintance, Kennedy assumed, erroneously, that the acquaintance had died; in fact, the man had taken a new job.

But this was no morbid preoccupation. Quite the opposite, he merely accepted the possibility and was reconciled to it. Thus, he told one reporter during the Indiana campaign that if death did come to him it wouldn't bother him. Whether he would have made such a statement before President Kennedy's death I have no way of knowing. I do know that, as his brother was later to say, he loved life and lived it to the fullest, ready to meet what lay ahead without flinching or turning. It was simply that he recognized that death, even violent death, was a continuing hazard and he refused to let it deflect him from what he believed to be a proper course.

All of which brings up a point about Kennedy's campaigning. Many observers believed that his street campaigning in 1968 tended to arouse the emotions of his crowds and in this observation the critics were of course correct. There is also no doubt that the very enthusiasm for him on the part of low-income voters antagonized some more affluent voters. The distaste of some critics for Kennedy's street campaigning reached its height when he brought it to the black ghettoes, the Mexican-American areas or to the East European sections. The idea seemed to

be that such campaigning lacked a degree of integrity and was certainly in bad taste.

This aspect of the campaign was difficult to understand. What was there about going into a by-passed area, seeking support there and expressing concern, that was reprehensible? Senator Kennedy did not tender false promises; he held out no false hopes. He never sought to inflame one group against another. He did not say one thing to one group and another to another. On the contrary, one of his finest moments came when he told off a virtually all-white University of Indiana Medical School audience on the race question and won over many of them in the process.

I go into this in some detail only because some of the commentators misconstrued the nature of Kennedy's campaigning among some of the neglected segments of society and, in so doing, missed an important quality of political leadership. If, as is widely believed, two of the most combustible and hostile elements in the country are the blacks and Mexican-Americans on the one hand and some of the white blue-collar workers on the other, the evident appeal of Kennedy to both camps was not only remarkable but needs to be examined.

A number of explanations, many of them quite plausible, have been offered for his ability to keep a foot in both camps. My own belief is that the blacks and Mexican-

Americans regarded him as a champion and that the sympathetic white blue-collar workers respected him for his directness, lack of guile and decisiveness. Each group considered itself to some extent slighted by society in general and government in particular. Each thought that in Kennedy it had a reliable friend.

These qualities, which in 1968 appealed to such diverse groups, were, of course, the very qualities which his own assistants and his personal friends and associates had found to be so compelling. They, of course, had learned from personal experience. They knew that Kennedy would not let them down. But how did the sympathetic blue-collar whites know that, particularly since they knew that the Senator was highly regarded by the blacks for whom a number of blue-collar whites had, in 1968, scant sympathy and less affection? The answer is that they couldn't know. All they could do was to feel and sense and guess, and this they did, correctly in my opinion.

Senator Kennedy was a strong competitor. But, so far as I am aware, he never took an unfair advantage and never cut a corner. And when he lost in Oregon, he did so, without rancor or bitterness, congratulating Senator McCarthy and accepting full responsibility for the defeat. He did not so much as suggest to anyone that any of his supporters had made mistakes or given poor advice which some of us most certainly had.

By this time he was worn to a frazzle. The loss in Oregon must have been a terrible disappointment. It was the first defeat a Kennedy had ever sustained in a political election and it boded ill for California, which was to be the climax of an exhausting 11 weeks campaign. Yet he took it in stride without complaint and went on about the last few days of his campaign as matter-of-factly as anyone could, prepared to accept the outcome of the California campaign.

Senator Kennedy was allergic to the word "liberal." I remember that when he returned to Washington after his 1964 election to the Senate he told several of us at the airport, with evident relish, that he had gotten through the campaign without his having to claim that he was a liberal. He chuckled at this recollection and seemed genuinely pleased. Yet, of course, he supported measures which were generally believed to carry the "liberal" line. Why then did the word tend to put his teeth on edge?

I think his dislike for it stemmed from several things. First, like many he disliked being pigeonholed by others; he wanted to be judged by his works and his statements and not by some label applied by somebody else. Second, he had a genuine distaste for some of those who proclaimed themselves "liberal" yet did not live up to their professions. And he believed that some individuals in this category devoted

too much time to talking about and approaching problems and not enough in doing something about them. He favored solutions and proposals. He was less impressed by discussions and abstract ideas which did not point towards some conclusion. He wanted analysis to lead to suggestions.

When Kennedy had a legislative proposal to make in a Senate speech, he was not content to couch it in general terms. Instead, he wanted it reduced to specific legislation. He was more interested in practice than in theory. And he was more impressed by works of faith than by professions of faith. The here and now intrigued him more than the distant future or the distant past. He delved into the past, he read and he listened, he discussed and pondered. But he believed that all this was a prelude to action, specific action. He did not subscribe to the notion that they also serve who only stand and wait. And above all, he wanted to visualize that action in terms of its prospective impact, not on people in the abstract but on people as individuals.

For these reasons Senator Kennedy could not properly be classed as an intellectual. He did not enjoy ideological concepts in the abstract. He was interested in their application and, in particular, how that application might affect the every day lives of the affected citizens and how it might affect the character of those individuals, as well.

In his approach to policy, therefore, he brought to bear, perhaps unconsciously, the same intensely human or call it personal, outlook which characterized his own conduct and his relationship with others. This sometimes got him into difficulties and occasionally led him astray, as in his failure to get into the Presidential campaign earlier and to denounce our Viet Nam policy at an earlier date, but it was also a source of great strength both as an innovator and expositor of policy and as a leader of people. It was, I believe, responsible more than anything else for his own continuing development and the essential stability of that development.

Robert Kennedy would not have agreed with Justice Frankfurter's observation that administration is 90% personnel. He would have advocated a figure of around 98%. Tables of organization, flow charts, job classifications, budgetary controls, matters of protocol and the like did not intrigue him. Instead, he concentrated on the people who were going to perform the jobs.

Kennedy tended to operate on a person-to-person basis. He sometimes gave the same job to two persons in whom he had confidence. Sometimes, he did this deliberately, either because he wanted to make absolutely sure that the job got done or because he believed that the job was too big for one person to handle. Occasionally, in the rush of events he simply forgot that he had already given the assign-

On the evening of his resignation from the Justice Department in 1964 to run for the Senate, his friends held a reception for him, at which, just before he got up to speak, the band played "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling." Kennedy's opening line, delivered dead-pan, was "Now, doesn't that really grab you!"

Kennedy was, as I have suggested, a model of rectitude in his personal relationships, one of the most fastidious men in this respect I have ever encountered. He was reliable, steadfast, direct and straight-forward at all times. He could not do a mean, petty or underhanded thing. Possessed and displayed in such abundance, these qualities could only have been held by one who was determined to treat his fellow-men well.

The same strain ran through his political outlook. When his exposure to the world and its problems increased, when he rubbed his nose in the terrors of totalitarianism of the left or right, the horrors of apartheit, or the incongruity of searing poverty in our land of wealth and progress, it was inevitable that his concerns would multiply and that his determination to improve life would deepen and intensify. Some who had known him in his late twenties and early thirties, such as Ted Sorenson, have remarked how much more thoughtful and progressive he had become with the passage of time. Given Senator Kennedy's intensely human,

ment to somebody else. But in either event he was quite content to let the individuals themselves work out who would do what.

The well-organized Kennedy operation was often a myth -- there was frequent duplication, occasional missed signals, and often helter-skelter activity. If something was not going well in a particular project, Senator Kennedy's instinctive reaction was to pump more people into the effort. Problems called for people to cope with them. There were generally no tables of organization and no rigid set of responsibilities. But the flurries of confusion tended to be more of form than of substance, for the two essentials of organization were present -- the division of the task into its component parts and the assignment of competent people to deal with each.

With all of his strengths one would have discounted as immaterial if Kennedy had been a trifle self-righteous or standoffish. But there wasn't a trace of either in his make-up. He was, on the contrary, a delightful companion, gay, alert, engaging, modest, considerate, and great fun. He enjoyed bandinage and he was as comfortable being on the receiving end of jests as he was on the transmitting end. He liked to needle and be needled. It tickled him when an upstate leader in New York rejected a request for support and told him bluntly "Who needs you."

indeed passionate, nature, I suggest that this transformation was inevitable. I did not know him in those earlier years, but in retrospect, it seems to me that this seeming evolution must have come about simply because he applied to the realities of the world as they unfolded in front of him the same keen sensitivity to individuals so much in evidence during his later years.

When Robert Kennedy saw misery, he was appalled. When he saw unfairness, he was offended. And he was, as his brother's moving funeral address put it, determined to do something about it. This became, increasingly, the focus of his public efforts. The senseless devastation in Viet Nam, the plight of the Indians, the alienation of the young, the horror of the slums, the depradation of organized crime, the discrimination against black citizens, the threat of nuclear escalation -- these were some of the things which increasingly drew his attention. By the same token, the more abstract problems like the balance of payments, reorganization of government, federal-state relationships seemed to leave him relatively cold.

Senator Kennedy's approach to the problems themselves revealed the same orientation. Thus, the Bedford-Stuyvesant project reflected his belief in the importance of community participation and self-help in the ghettoes. It offered the prospect of a people moving upward in part

through their own efforts and with the increased pride and self-respect that this would entail.

His attack on the welfare systems was the first comprehensive and thoughtful analysis by a prominent public official. But it centered on the destructive impact which the system had on the recipients rather than on the cost of the program, which had theretofore been the primary target of most critics.

Similarly, he appeared to see the ultimate evil of enforced segregation as the distortion of character visited on both those who were its victims and its practitioners. He frequently told how the animated, attractive faces of many young Negroes seemed to turn into lifeless masks under the lash of discrimination as the youngsters passed into their teens.

Senator Kennedy's approach to policy questions often struck me as being the opposite side of the coin presented by the sociologist Oscar Lewis in his "Children of Sanchez" and "La Vida." There, Lewis had described, through the medium of the tape-recorder, and in the words of his subjects, the detailed impact of poverty in Mexico City and San Juan on the actual day-to-day life and character of individual members of a few families. Lewis preferred the concrete to the abstract, shunned generalizations for specifics and avoided inferences.

Kennedy turned that around. Immersing himself in the individual's actual everyday life, he searched for the general changes in laws and institutions which would improve the quality of that individual life and provide the opportunity for self-development and self-improvement. He wanted to help alter the environment so that the individual could engage in meaningful and productive self-determination and not be swept along and possibly crushed by the larger impersonal forces. It was a two-way approach. He started with the everyday life, worked his way back up to the generalizations of policy, converted the generalizations into specific proposals, and then sought to measure the proposals in terms of their impact on the everyday life of the individual.

Senator Kennedy's approach to problems had always seemed a blend of the pragmatic and the idealistic. So far as I was aware, he never developed a systematic, all-embracive philosophy of institutions or of government. But if he had ever brought about extensive changes in our institutions, I am sure they would have reflected his own dedication to individual worth, for this dedication formed the core of his personal code and his political beliefs. It guided his relationships with friends and associates. It shaped his programs, his decisions and his campaigns.

He had a passion to excel, but few could have been less impressed by the trappings of office or the panoply of

power. So far as I could tell, the manipulation of power for its own sake had no appeal to him. He was committed to the politics of service and had he become President, I am convinced that he would have proved the point once and for all, and in the process left his doubters in a state of total disarray. As it was, he left behind him a legacy of friendships, accomplishments, and undertakings, through which is woven a skein of devotion to individual worth.

Here was a vibrant and growing man, compassionate and determined, principled and tolerant, courageous and dedicated, imaginative, wise, broadminded and far-sighted, with a passion both to excel and to improve the lot of others, particularly the less fortunate. He showed that a leader could be all these things and effective too, without trimming on his views or compromising his own high canons of conduct.

Herein, I believe, lies the real teaching of Robert Kennedy's life.