

**Sander Vanocur Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 8/9/1973**  
Administrative Information

**Creator:** Sander Vanocur  
**Interviewer:** Larry J. Hackman  
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**Biographical Note**

(1928 - 2019), Reporter, New York Times (1956 - 1957); National Broadcasting Company (NBC-TV), Washington, D.C., reporter (1957 - 1971), White House correspondent (1961 - 1963.) In this interview, Vanocur discusses meeting John F. Kennedy (JFK), the 1960 presidential campaign, JFK's handling of the press, and the differences between covering the Nixon and Kennedy campaigns, among other things.

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## Sander Vanocur – JFK#1

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Oral History Interview

with

SANDER VANOCUR

August 9, 1973

By Larry Hackman

For the John F. Kennedy Library

HACKMAN: In the interview that you did with Bobbie Greene [Roberta W. Greene], you talked about the first time you came across JFK being at, I believe, the western governors' conference back in Las Vegas. Anything that strikes you about that first pick-up with him and then the subsequent trip to California, or Oregon or whatever, that I think you took with him.

VANOCUR: That's not quite the first time I came in contact with him, I suddenly start to remember, I was in Chicago and I went to Midway Airport where Kennedy and Nixon [Richard M. Nixon] were on the same plane. It was a United Airlines plane and one was going to Denver--I can't remember which one was--and the other was going somewhere else. They posed together, shook hands, and I can't recall, but I have the instinct that *Profiles in Courage* was out at that time--I can't be sure--but somebody posed with the other guy, whether it was Nixon with Kennedy or Kennedy with Nixon with a book, and I can't think of Nixon's book at the time, because I didn't know there was one, or some book that Kennedy had been reading. And I can't remember whether it was '58 or '59. My instinct was it was '59.

But the first time I met Kennedy was not the western governors' conference. I filmed in there in February, I believe, of 1960. But I took the film back to Los Angeles and originated it that weekend, my guess is for a Sunday show. And Sunday night and/or Monday--I can't

remember which one it was--I went to Vegas [Las Vegas, Nevada] where Kennedy had gone for a couple of days en route to Oregon. It was after the western governors' conference at Westward Ho Hotel in Albuquerque, and he was there. I think it was the Sands [Sands Hotel] or the Dunes [Dunes Hotel]--I can't remember which. I think it was the Sands because the "Rat Pack" was playing--Sinatra [Frank Sinatra], Lawford [Peter Lawford], Sammy Davis, Jr., and Dean Martin. And I remember the occasion because--I think it was a Monday or a Tuesday night--Joey Bishop put his arm around Sammy Davis and said, "Whatever happens, senator, you've got the Jewish vote." And then he also said -- Bishop that is, said, "Senator, if you get elected president, I've got one thing to ask from you. Don't draft me." And that night--whether it was Monday night or Sunday night, I can't remember--it was the first time I met Kennedy because he was wandering around the craps tables. We came just face to face, and I introduced myself, and I thought--I could be wrong--that he wanted to shoot dice. He looked longingly at the tables, I thought. Also that night Hy Raskin [Hyman B. Raskin] was playing, perhaps with Salinger [Pierre E. Salinger], and I think, under Raskin's great expertise, Salinger rolled a hell of a hand. That's the first time I met Kennedy.

HACKMAN: How did he react to or interact with the "Rat Pack?" How well did he know some of those people at that point? Or how did he relate to them?

VANOCUR: I don't really know. He reacted like any kind of electric personality would react to that. Roosevelt [Franklin D. Roosevelt], I remember as a child, used to have all the stars in to the White House for Christmas. Kennedy in a sense, like Roosevelt, was a star in his own right. But I had no inside information one way or the other.

HACKMAN: But the comment, for example, by Bishop, was while Kennedy was in an audience or while....

VANOCUR: Kennedy was sitting right down front with six reporters. There was Mary McGrory, Blair Clark, I think Bob Healey [Robert Healey], a guy from *U.S. News and World Report* named Bob Ruth [Robert W. Ruth], I think, me, and that's about it. Maybe one or two others, but it was a very small contingent. Kennedy was sitting and laughed because he loved that kind of ironic humor.

HACKMAN: Let me ask you, just before we move on, what kind of relationship, if any, he really had with Blair Clark. It's a name I heard mentioned as an old classmate or whatever.

VANOCUR: Was a Midwesterner, born in Cleveland, went to Peoria and then Northwestern, I don't know about this Harvard University b.s. about class marshall and all the rest of that stuff. I never could understand his relationship with Langdon Marvin, for example, except Langdon was the marshall of the class and a nephew or a god-child of FDR. I take it because Blair was either in the same class or was in Harvard, he had a fine relationship with JFK. My information was that JFK offered him Morocco

or Tunisia or Algeria, I can't remember which it was. So I think it was pretty good. Based on something else, Bill [William M. Blair] was very close to the Shrivvers [R. Sargent Shriver] in Chicago, so if and when he went to Chicago, I would assume--I can't prove--that he would see Bill and the Shrivvers because the first time I ever met Bobby Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy] was out on Bill Blair's father's estate out on the lake shore of Chicago.

HACKMAN: You're talking about Bill Blair, and I had mentioned Blair Clark.

VANOCUR: Sorry. I screwed them up. But Blair Clark, I imagine, was of the same social milieu. The point still obtains on a social milieu.

HACKMAN: What about Lawford? Anything about Kennedy's relationship with Peter Lawford that comes out at that point?

VANOCUR: I think he liked Peter very much, and I liked Peter. Peter never pretended to be anything that he wasn't, an amusing, bright, and attractive fellow who provided sort of entree. Because Kennedy liked that. He liked the "show-biz" world.

HACKMAN: What about the governors' conference at Albuquerque? Anything that comes to mind about that in terms of his performance in comparison with the other candidates at that point? And particularly his organization if an organization is obvious compared to other people.

VANOCUR: Well, the only thing that I knew, and I was very, very much influenced by Raskin, who I think is very low on bullshit, was that they were going to grab off more on the last than anybody thought they were. And, indeed, soon after or soon before--I can't recall the dates--Raskin and Udall [Stewart L. Udall] grabbed off a large chunk of the Arizona delegation. Kennedy came on a Friday or Saturday. I think it was probably a Friday. And I remember him standing.... No, that was Lyndon Johnson the next day. Kennedy moved in and made a nice impression. But when Johnson came in he was standing with a--I get confused here whether it was Johnson or Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey], I think it was Johnson--with Dennis Chavez and a donkey, burro, it looked like, and the Stetson ten gallon. This looked like...

HACKMAN: A postcard.

VANOCUR: ...Johnson territory. But, you see, the prevailing wisdom at the time was that was near neighboring Texas. This was Johnson country. But if I told you I formed a vivid impression one way or the other I'd be lying because there doesn't seem like there was anything.

HACKMAN: Where does the tie with Raskin come from, Chicago? You'd known him in Chicago or what?

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VANOCUR: My roommate in college, for one summer, was Newt Minow [Newton N. Minow], and Newt and I had kept up a relationship throughout the years. When I came out to Chicago to be the NBC [National Broadcasting Company] Midwest correspondent I, of course, looked up Newt whom I'd seen from time to time. Newt was very much for getting Adlai Stevenson to come out for Kennedy. He thought Stevenson didn't have a prayer. Blair thought so too--Bill Blair--but I don't think to the degree that Newt did. Newt's was based on hard, practical politics; I think Bill's was based on social relationships. But I don't want to do him an injustice. I still think he thought that Kennedy was the guy and that Stevenson didn't have a chance. Newt told me one time, "You ought to get to know a guy named Hy Raskin." I called up Raskin, whom I'd met on the night of the primaries in '58 in Chicago. Maybe it was the general election in '58. We didn't have election coverage. Maybe it was before the general election coverage.

HACKMAN: I don't remember '58 at all.

VANOCUR: No, I think it was election night. And I said to him.... In '59 I finally called him up, and I said, "Do you want to go out and see the World Series?" We went to Comiskey Park. Hy and I were sitting in the press box, and that day Kennedy had flown up from Indianapolis, I believe, and sat with Dick Daley [Richard J. Daley], which Raskin thought was the appropriate thing to do. And Hy and I were pretty good friends by then, after this World Series which was the first time I had ever met him. And Hy kept saying to me, "Watch the western states. We can do better than the people think." So Hy was, I guess, one of their western guys along with Stewart Udall. Teddy [Edward M. Kennedy] had not come in the picture in my mind, but later they assigned him that. And I think, with the exception of Minnesota and Missouri and Hawaii or Alaska, they didn't win a goddamn thing west of the Mississippi. But that's how I got to know Raskin.

HACKMAN: Anything then in traveling around with him after that governors' conference that stands out? Did you go with him to California and Oregon?

VANOCUR: Well, we went up to Oregon first, and we had him tell the reporters.... Eunice Shriver, who was gangbusters on politicking and a woman named Gloria Cahn, then married to the songwriter Sammy Cahn, she was a friend of Eunice's. I'm sorry, it was Pat Lawford [Patricia Kennedy Lawford]. It was Pat, not Eunice, Pat Lawford. She later divorced Sammy and married somebody else. And we went up to Oregon. The crowds were respectable, and I think I split off with McGrory and Blair Clark who was then working for CBS [Columbia Broadcasting System] after Oregon. We picked up Humphrey in Disneyland or Santa Barbara, I can't remember which. We all kind of formed ranks again together in terms of Kennedy and Humphrey at the CDC convention--the California Democratic Council convention--in Fresno the following week, Saturday. I think if



you had to rank the sentiment of the CDC, the sentiment of the CDC in Fresno that Saturday night, it was Stevenson, one; Chester Bowles, two; Humphrey, three; Kennedy, four; about that way. Now, at that conference, when Kennedy was speaking, the lights went out. In my judgment Dick Tuck [Richard G. Tuck] did that probably on the orders of Fred Dutton [Frederick G. Dutton],

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but I've never asked Fred one way or the other.

HACKMAN: Did you draw that conclusion at the time or was that a subsequent conclusion? Were the Kennedy people saying it then?

VANOCUR: I drew it at the time because I was standing with Raskin, and I met Dutton at, I think, the western governors' conference. It wasn't western governors, western Democrats. I just had an instinct on the Tuck thing. I checked out a couple of things, and I thought that was it.

I had to leave on Saturday, and I wanted to get back to Chicago. I got a ride on the *Caroline*, and they dumped me off in Tulsa for refueling, I guess it was--Tulsa or Oklahoma City--and I took a flight to Chicago. As I recall, Kennedy and I had a discussion about what I thought he'd do in California. It was the first time I encountered a JFK tactic which is to ask a reporter information which he already knows, which was (1) based on the fact that he genuinely liked to kibbitz with reporters, (2) he wanted to see how smart you were. I remember on the flight that night, we went down, I believe, to Los Angeles and let off Pat Lawford and Gloria Cahn, and they flew off to Tulsa or Oklahoma City, and I said to him that it looks like from what I heard, that if you go into California you get Pat Brown [Edmund G. Brown] upset. If you don't go in, you're still going to get about a third of the delegation anyhow. Then it was a question of whether he runs in California as a 'favorite son'. But it was just my instinct that Dutton, and this comes later--Fred plays, I think, a very important role, and I think from his point of view an understandable role. He's in the state that's heavily committed to Stevenson, and maybe lightning will strike, and Pat Brown will get it. So I think they were preserving, as they later came to say, all options. But the lights went out and I suspect that Tuck did it on the advice of Dutton.

HACKMAN: Did the Kennedy people, Raskin particularly, I suppose, cite any instances of that sort of thing earlier in California? Or do you remember its happening later?

VANOCUR: Not on that occasion, but from the start Raskin never liked Dutton. Later on I'll tell you the reasons why. But, what the hell did I know? I hadn't started covering politics nationally until that moment. But it was typical of Kennedy, that he'd say to a young reporter, "What do you think?" And, hell, I didn't know. It was my gut that told me. After about six hours of Fresno I'm an expert on California politics.

HACKMAN: As you covered Kennedy more then during those next several months, and

from what I understand you were skipping around a lot among the various candidates at that point, how do you evaluate what a lot of people explain as obviously the much superior Kennedy organization with much more grassroots effort over the previous couple of years? Does that come out to someone like yourself at that point? Is that obvious in anyway?

VANOCUR: At that point I couldn't judge the Kennedy organization or the Humphrey organization one way or the other. I didn't have any feeling about that until Wisconsin because I hadn't been in Washington. It wasn't until years later that

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I learned about card catalogs that Sorensen [Theodore A. Sorensen] was keeping which was based on the earlier campaigns in Massachusetts. The ruthless, efficient Kennedy organization, I didn't know anything about that.

HACKMAN: And it wasn't talked about commonly among the press, then, at that point?

VANOCUR: No. Because, remember, in February of that year, '60, the biggest story was the sit-ins in the south, and I was covering that story. It really wasn't until Wisconsin. I never covered New Hampshire.

HACKMAN: I was looking at a Ph.D. dissertation the other day on the press in the '60 campaign. No, it wasn't a Ph.D. dissertation, it was a senior thesis at Harvard or Princeton. And the guy had come to talk to you--I forget what his name was--and one of the things he quotes you as saying is that you felt that the press very much disliked Lyndon Johnson throughout this whole period, disliked him in covering him. Does that ring a bell and what is the significance?

VANOCUR: No, I don't think that's the way I put it. I was not a Washington reporter at that time. I covered Lyndon Johnson once in my life. It was after Sputnik, and Lyndon Johnson called a bunch of reporters to one of those many offices he had in the senate. He was eating candy then--he wasn't smoking--and I remember vividly, he threw a piece of one of those hard candies to Doris Fleeson. And he got up at one point, and he threw a forward pass like a football player or a quarterback and pointed to FDR and said, "He was just like a Daddy to me." No, the guys from Washington kind of were great celestial beings to me. They didn't like Lyndon Johnson very much because of the senate where they'd covered him. But I didn't know one way or the other about Lyndon Johnson. If I told the guy that it is not the intention I meant to create; it was just that Lyndon Johnson was a guy who was sticking very much to Washington and his reputation was based on Washington.

HACKMAN: Do you remember anything at all that stands out before Wisconsin about contacts with either Symington [Stuart Symington] people or Humphrey people or them personally?

VANOCUR: No, except for Humphrey, who I must say had been, since 1948, one of my heroes, because, at Northwestern, I had a former professor of his who was down at LSU [Louisiana State University] with Charlie Hyneman [Charles S. Hyneman]. And, I remember once on a *Town Meeting of the Air*, I heard a guy named Hubert Humphrey, mayor of Minneapolis, debating Owen Brewster. I came into the office the next day and said, "I've got my political hero, Hubert Humphrey." And he said, "He used to be a student of mine." Out in the west, where Blair and Mary and I were with Hubert, Hubert was just a joy to cover. As personalities go, I thought Hubert was a much more attractive person, and I was a very idealistic young liberal, I suppose, and I thought Hubert was just marvelous.

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HACKMAN: What is there about Wisconsin? I mean, I read the *Reporter* article, and that's obviously available to people, but what stands out about Wisconsin that you can recall that you didn't write there? Particularly just the development of your relationship with Kennedy and with the people around Kennedy and how they were to deal with as opposed to Humphrey there.

VANOCUR: The most important thing for me, as a reporter in Wisconsin was my getting to know Kenny O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell], who struck me as being unique among anybody I ever met then or afterward. He was as free of bullshit as any guy I ever met, and I think I got to talk to him one night in Oshkosh, Wisconsin in the middle of February--February 17th strikes me as being the date. It was the beginning of Jack Kennedy's campaign in Wisconsin which began outside the Oscar Mayer meat packing plant. I must have remembered Salinger from the early Oregon days because I remember Kennedy landing very early in the morning, Pierre coming out schlepping a big cardboard box filled with press releases or something. Early in the morning, you go outside the Oscar Mayer meat packing plant and there's Kennedy standing out in that Chesterfield overcoat of his. In Oshkosh, JFK had put Jackie [Jacqueline B. Kennedy] to bed, and Jackie was kind of an interesting phenomenon on this trip because apparently everybody in Wisconsin in the rural areas goes to the local bar. I remember mostly postmen in the middle of the afternoon and Jackie was in the back room talking to the ladies, and--this shows how much life has changed--offended them by smoking a cigarette. That was just my impression of this tea in the afternoon. I think she was drinking a drink, if I'm not mistaken.

And, Kennedy, talking about subjects near and dear to his heart like milk prices and things like that. And that night in Oshkosh, he put her to bed, and I was talking to Kenny O'Donnell, whom I'd kind of met on the bus. We had been having a nice, long talk about pinball machines. Kennedy came down to the bar, and he sat down next to Austin Wehrwein, who was then the Midwest correspondent for the *New York Times*, based in Chicago. Austin was telling him about what a candidate has to do in the Midwest, and I remember Kennedy's saying to him, "Look, Austin, guys like me and Ed Muskie [Edmund S. Muskie] are different from the candidates out here, quiet and reserved," or words to that effect. And there was a polka dance going on in the next room--I think I wrote this in the reporter article--and if Humphrey had been there, he would have been in there bobbing for apples. It was that night that I began to, to use a word that's fashionable now, perceive that

Kennedy was a rather unusual candidate who wasn't going to do this sort of thing. It was at that particular moment that I personally began to think that this guy could wear the mantle of the presidency.

But, in terms of Wisconsin in the early stages of the campaign, I thought the most important thing for me as a reporter was meeting a guy named Kenny O'Donnell. Now, as the campaign went on a story was being passed out by a guy named Jim Doyle [James E. Doyle], who was, I think, very active in trying to get Stevenson the nomination, that Kennedy would win all the districts.

HACKMAN: You hook that with Doyle rather than with Ed Bayley [Edwin R. Bayley]?

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VANOCUR: Doyle and Bailey. I take it that Gaylord Nelson, who was the governor and Bailey's boss, was being as neutral as he could be, when what he should have been was for Humphrey, because Humphrey had done yeoman work for the Democratic party in Wisconsin, and by rights Gaylord Nelson should have been all out for Humphrey, but he wasn't. Doyle was, I think, the mastermind for this story that Kennedy should win. I remember up in Eau Claire, where I'd gone up to start filming a story--this was later--I looked up Chuck Spalding [Charles A. Spalding], who was running that district and went out to a taping that covered Robert Kennedy. I just broached the subject with Kennedy and he said we'd win nine or ten of the districts. And Bobby Kennedy got really very p.o.'d at that because he recognized it, obviously, as being.... I didn't know at the time, but I put two-and-two together later that Doyle's line was that at the time. But in terms of organization, whatever I knew was mostly what a guy named Jerry Bruno [Gerald J. Bruno] had told me, Jerry Bruno having worked for Bill Proxmire [William W. Proxmire]. But you know what reporting's like. You see organization; you see diligence; you see some efficiency on the Kennedy side, and Humphrey is going around, typically a one-man operation with a very mediocre staff. And it was kind of pathetic because it was basically Hubert Humphrey and Muriel [Muriel Humphrey] themselves. And I thought about this in California against McGovern [George S. McGovern], where Humphrey's campaign there, whatever one might think of what he charged McGovern with, in terms of personal endeavor, it was a rather heroic campaign, because there was nothing out there in California in 1972. It was literally Hubert Humphrey, which is exactly what it was, I think, except fueled by the fact that he was the third senator from Wisconsin, which wasn't cutting that much mustard.

HACKMAN: How did people in that period, like Chuck Spalding, Lem Billings [K. LeMoyne Billings], basically political amateurs, family friends, who were out there having some sort of responsibilities, how do those kinds of people then, and maybe you can carry it over to later, strike someone like yourself or others in the press? Is that indicative of good organization or are they laughable characters at that point?

VANOCUR: Well, I never saw Lem Billings, so I wouldn't know who the hell Lem Billings was at that time. A guy like Chuck Spalding is up in a room in Eau

Clair, walking around in khakis with his shirt hanging out, and all you know is the guy's got smarts. Now, his opposite number up there was smarter. I think it was Geri Joseph [Geraldine R. Joseph], who later became the national committeewoman. On a level of political smartness I'd have to give it to Geri, except that Chuck had something else. He cut through a lot of lines of communication because he was Joe's roommate and an old pal. But as a human being I was impressed with Chuck Spalding, but that's all, just a surface expression. Who the hell knows?

HACKMAN: Yeah, at that point anyway.

VANOCUR: You've got Eunice the next day going around and holding a tea at an undertaker's house for a morning kaffee klatsch. Now that's impressive because that's the Kennedy family organization at full speed. But how do I know at the time whether

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that's effective or not, whether all the Kennedy family and all the money, that's background. I don't know.

HACKMAN: Why do you say O'Donnell's so different? I mean, is it strictly the lack of bullshit, or is it something else that comes across?

VANOCUR: Well, I suppose it's little of me. He was a quintessential Irish pol. I'm sure he was jobbing me, but he wasn't taxing my intelligence, and I think that's the difference. That's why he was impressive to me. I was nobody, and maybe that's part of the operation. The Kennedys are very good at courting reporters. It is not without interest. On the other hand, they genuinely like reporters, because if the Kennedy family has one characteristic, it dislikes stupidity, and if you're a dumb reporter they won't give you any time. If you're a smart reporter they'll court you. And, sure, you're on your guard. If a guy like Kenny O'Donnell comes around with the smarts, it ain't the same level. It's just very nice talking to the guy.

HACKMAN: Yeah. What do you find out about John Kennedy himself as that campaign goes on in terms of his ability to handle the press? Again, as compared to Humphrey, or if there are other people you're covering at that point.

VANOCUR: Nothing very much in terms of comparing Humphrey. Humphrey is just a delight. One night, leaving from the Knickerbocker Hotel Humphrey had to be on the phone for a long time about whether he should go back and vote the next day--I think he was on some committee that McClellan [John L. McClellan] was the chairman of--so by the time we finally take off for Madison where he's got to go outside the Oscar Mayer meat packing plant at five o'clock, there's me, Bill Lawrence [William H. Lawrence] and Teddy White [Theodore H. White] on the bus. It's partially described in Teddy White's book, *Making of the President 1960*, when Humphrey's gone past the

supermarket. Teddy's always said he wished he had a tape recorder at that scene. Bill Lawrence is fast asleep, Humphrey gets on before we leave the Knickerbocker, and I said, "For Christ's sake, senator, for keeping us waiting all this time you should at least give us a drink." He reaches in his coat pocket and throws me a bottle of Christian Brothers brandy, and I said, "Un-uh, it's got to be something better than that. I'm not going to drink Christian Brothers brandy." He said, "It's not Christian Brothers; it's just Canadian Club which we put in that bottle." I said, "No, it's Christian Brothers and I'm not going to drink it." He said, "Okay, the next time I see Jack, I'll tell him what an anti-papist you are." So in terms of covering the press there was very little to choose from because both men liked the press.

HACKMAN: Any feedback in terms of any of your reports at that point from the Kennedy people? Dissatisfaction with anything you were putting out? Any feedback on the *Reporter* article?

VANOCUR: No. That was after, I think.

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HACKMAN: Yeah, I know, but I'm skipping ahead to that one.

VANOCUR: I don't think they liked it very much. I can't remember quite why, but they didn't like it because I was being very blunt about it. But that didn't bother me so much. The only occasion I have which really got me teed off.... Don't forget, you didn't have the kind of press surveillance that you have now, and they were traveling all the time. They couldn't see the TV news shows, and I wasn't doing that much. Finally, when I did do a special for Chet Huntley's [Chester R. Huntley] Sunday night show, we did a show where there was no narrative at all, a couple of lines, almost all from the horse's mouth, the Kennedy family against Humphrey, and Humphrey's great line, "I feel like an independent running against a chain." Bobby was going to be interviewed somewhere, some Milwaukee station, *Meet the Press*, or.... No, JFK was, and Bobby was there, and he said, "It made us all look kind of foolish, didn't it?" And I said, "Yes."

But the night before the election over at Karl Ratzsch's Restaurant I had gone in with somebody and Bobby was sitting having dinner with Jackie and, I guess, the senator. I'm not sure, but he was gone to make a phone call or something. I said, "Well, I understand the Catholic vote is pretty well wrapped up," and Bobby started to really let me have it, and I got furious at him because he was saying that we were raising the Catholic issue, and I said if anybody has raised the Catholic issue you've raised the Catholic issue because you're dependent on it here. And I was livid, really livid, because I hardly knew him from Adam. And leaving the restaurant I come out and there's JFK standing there. I sensed he was looking for a cab, and he said, "What's wrong?" because my face was really still contorted by the experience. And I said, "Your goddamn brother." And I said, "What is all this shit about us raising the Catholic issue? Now come on, senator, you know what you're after in this state." He said, "Let's walk back to the hotel." So we walked back to the Pfister [Pfister Hotel], and I said, "You know, it's just a cheap shot." He said, "Well, it's the last night. Forgive Bobby. He's a very blunt fellow," and everything. "Well," I said, "It still isn't true."

But that was the only kind of feedback I ever had, and Bobby was overly sensitive about the thing. I wasn't. I was absolutely right because they had been using the Catholic vote, and they were going to be heavily dependent on the damn thing.

HACKMAN: Anyone in the state of Wisconsin that was particularly helpful to you in sort of backgrounding the thing on Wisconsin politics at that point? Anyone stand out, Lucey [Patrick J. Lucey] or Nestingen [Ivan A. Nestingen]?

VANOCUR: Lucey and Nestingen? Christ, they were really low-level guys. No, the guys who helped me were Paul Ringler and John Redman from the *Milwaukee Journal*, and a young fellow who later died...

HACKMAN: Ira Kapenstein.

VANOCUR: ...Ira Kapenstein. Ira was just a brilliant reporter. But the guys at the *Milwaukee Journal* were very helpful to me, and Gaylord Nelson was very helpful to me, too.

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HACKMAN: Anything else on Wisconsin that comes to mind?

VANOCUR: Well, the night when Kennedy won six as against four and some of the guys in the Kennedy camp were moaning about not spending the last day up in the ninth and the tenth--I can't remember which it is, next...

HACKMAN: I've forgotten what the number of that...

VANOCUR: ...to the twin cities. The one more day, I don't know who was up there, whether it was Lem Billings or whether it was Bill Walton [William Walton] or somebody. He would have spent another day there, they said. They could have taken that. And I think Dane County, Madison, was a mistake. One more day there might have helped. But it was no great victory. At least I said it wasn't, and the Kennedy people were quite furious, because they said, God, we won by, what, 200,000 votes, though we didn't win all the districts. They said Doyle said we're going to win them all. So it's my judgment that what we said on election night was a major force in West Virginia. I think they were all set to go in there anyhow, but I think that made it more imperative that they win it because we were saying Wisconsin was not a great, smashing victory. In retrospect, I think that wasn't quite fair. It was a hell of a victory for Kennedy, but I think that looking back on it as objectively as I can, we were kind of gun shy because we didn't want to be had by the Kennedys. I must say for myself, I was a great Hubert Humphrey fan.

HACKMAN: Who were they, in that period, of the people that were covering them in Wisconsin in the press, who were they getting along with particularly well,

and who did they look upon, if you can remember, as particularly tough on them? Or does that come across at all?

VANOCUR: I don't remember.

HACKMAN: What are you doing then? I sort of have a blank. I know from what you told Bobbie, I don't think you spent anytime in West Virginia and you were moving around a lot in that period. What are you.... [Interruption] ...going on during the West Virginia period, sort of leading up toward the convention in terms of your activities, and I don't know whether you went to Oregon at all or not.

VANOCUR: No. I went to Oregon, but in that period between Wisconsin and West Virginia my wife had an operation, and I didn't want to leave at the time, so I didn't cover West Virginia. It's very dim in my mind because I had a lot of other stories. There wasn't any question in my mind that Kennedy wasn't going to get the nomination because I just didn't think Lyndon Johnson could mount it, Symington didn't have it, and Stevenson just thought it would fall in his lap, and I knew it wouldn't.

HACKMAN: You don't remember any contacts with Clark Clifford...

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VANOCUR: I didn't know Clark Clifford then.

HACKMAN: ...on behalf of Stevenson at all? I just ask because I'm getting ready to interview him. I just thought there might be something.

VANOCUR: I never met Clark Clifford until Hyannis Port, I think, in the fall. I never saw his tracks or anything else. If I met anybody for Lyndon Johnson it would be Jim Rows [James H. Rows].

HACKMAN: For Humphrey.

VANOCUR: Yeah, sorry. For Humphrey.

HACKMAN: Well, you know, there's....

VANOCUR: That's an interesting slip on my part.

HACKMAN: Yeah, that's....

VANOCUR: That's interesting.

HACKMAN: Yeah.



VANOCUR: A wonderful congressman from Missouri named Charlie Brown [Charles H. Brown]...

HACKMAN: Oh, yeah.

VANOCUR: ...a fine guy for Stu Symington.

HACKMAN: A radio broadcaster in Springfield or something.

VANOCUR: Yeah, but I can't ever remember, because, don't forget, I was just nothing out there in the Midwest. I was mostly.... My reputation was based on covering civil rights. So I don't recall anything really about the West Virginia thing except I thought that it was a stunning victory in terms of the Catholic issue. I heard a story at the time, I don't know whether it's true or not, that Joe Alsop [Joseph W. Alsop] so incensed Jim Rows, his lawyer, by his reporting from West Virginia that Rows sent him back his files to get himself another lawyer. That's just what I heard.

Or another story which was very funny at the time was that Alsop was so biased in favor of Kennedy in West Virginia, the story went around that he would go with some pollster, I think it was Lou Harris [Louis Harris] or Ollie Quayle [Oliver A. Quayle, III], knock at the door and say, "Good afternoon, madam, are you going to vote for Jack Kennedy or are you a bigot?" I was literally quite out of it

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after Wisconsin until Oregon.

HACKMAN: What do you remember about Oregon?

VANOCUR: Nothing to remember except that Wayne Morse was running against him, and that Kennedy lost his voice up there, the squad would stay at the Benson Hotel, that Edith Green packed a lot of clout, and that on Thursday night, because I believe the election was on Friday that year for some reason, Kennedy either left Thursday night or Friday morning and flew to Salt Lake City or Boise--I think Salt Lake City--with Raskin, and then they flew overnight Friday to O'Hare [O'Hare Field, Chicago], and they were met at the airport by Bill Blair and Newt Minow to go see Stevenson out wherever Stevenson.... Libertyville [Illinois].

HACKMAN: Libertyville.

VANOCUR: Yeah. Now, I've got to backtrack because at some luncheon in the spring of 1960 Bill Blair was trying something out on me. What reason he was trying it, I don't know because I just didn't have that experience to know. He asked me, what if--it's kind of the "what if" side of politics--Adlai Stevenson were to nominate Jack Kennedy? I would like to say, to show how appreciative I was or appreciative that Bill Blair thought I was, that then Adlai would be secretary of state. I can't remember that. But as it

later transpired talking to Newt, Bill Blair and Raskin, Kennedy had gone to Libertyville that day after the Oregon primary to say, as best I could understand it, Adlai, I've got the nomination, if you nominate me--which means he didn't think he really had it locked up, or he may have thought he had it locked up and was looking forward to the campaign and getting Mrs. Roosevelt [Eleanor R. Roosevelt] aboard--you nominate me, you can be secretary of state.

Now I don't think Kennedy ever put it that way, but I'll bet he put it damn near closer than he ever did to anybody else about an appointment, because I don't think later on when he was talking to all these vice-presidential guys like Herschel Loveless and George Docking and so forth, he ever told them explicitly. But I think it was a pretty damn near close deal. Adlai, I want you to nominate me for president. I think it was as implicit as it could be. You do that and you'll be secretary of state. But apparently Stevenson didn't do it at that meeting. I don't know whether that was corroborated by other information, but that's the way I got it...

HACKMAN: Right.

VANOCUR: ...from those guys. That was, in effect, for me at least the end of the campaign because Kennedy had it in my judgment.

HACKMAN: Yeah. Anything of interest from your point of view in terms of your relationship with the network, with NBC people and how you're covering things? How you're covering Kennedy or anything through this whole period?

VANOCUR: No. That's a new phenomenon. Let's do....

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HACKMAN: What about the governors' conference in Glacier National Park? Did you cover that, do you remember?

VANOCUR: Oh, sure. I got out there early. The key thing that I was after out there was how Leroy Collins would rule on a certain question. I can't remember what the question was, but it was an important procedural question. I think it had something to do with, if at the end of the first ballot...

HACKMAN: Favorites, yeah.

VANOCUR: ...do you stop and take a new ballot or do you go back and review. And Roy, who was a friend of mine, was very much under pressure. He said he had a terrible phone call--this was later in Los Angeles--with Joe Alsop, who called him up and told him how he should do it. But it was a very important decision, and Roy was not about to tell me what he was going to do because he hadn't decided yet. But I wanted to keep kind of track of Roy. The conference for me was very interesting because I formed the acquaintanceship of Abe Ribicoff [Abraham A. Ribicoff], whom I'd never known, and Fritz Hollings [Ernest F. Hollings], who was the governor of South Carolina, who was a secret, I

think, Kennedy supporter. I formed the impression there that the southern governors were whistling Dixie, so to speak, and that Kennedy pretty much had this damn thing locked up there.

HACKMAN: You know, in your coverage of civil rights I don't know how much you might have gotten into relationships with the southern governors at all through that, but how do you...? Do you recall having a reading of that at the time? How do you explain people like Patterson [John M. Patterson] and Hollings and...?

VANOCUR: Terry Sanford.

HACKMAN: Well, Sanford. Even people like Carl Sanders, who wasn't governor at that point, but a number of people in the South who seemed to be very attracted to Kennedy at that point.

VANOCUR: I thought they just thought he was a bright, attractive fellow.

HACKMAN: Yeah, simple as that.

VANOCUR: Whether they thought he was as conservative on civil rights as he later turned out to be, I don't know.

HACKMAN: Yeah.

VANOCUR: But you see, any force for change in the country that they could identify with, being young men, I think they were attracted to.

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HACKMAN: You said you made Ribicoff's acquaintance. Anything come across particularly about his activities on behalf of Kennedy at that governors' conference?

VANOCUR: Not that I'm aware of, except he was a respected fellow.

HACKMAN: Any conversations with any of the favorite sons, potential vice-presidents, at that point? Loveless....

VANOCUR: Yeah. They all had their tongues hanging out. What I thought Kennedy had done was spread a little verbal fertilizer to provide the soil in which their ambitions could grow to whatever heights they wanted to. Orville Freeman was very, very important, I'm learning, because later on at the convention he had to make a very important decision which cost him very dearly, I think, among his own people. But that was just surfacing at Glacier.

HACKMAN: What about Soapy Williams [G. Mennen Williams], anything there?

VANOCUR: You know, Soapy's Soapy, wandering around.

HACKMAN: How was your relationship with O'Donnell or other people around Kennedy developing? I mean, did it develop to the extent that you thought you had any sort of inside as the convention was coming up, in terms of their plans and support they had unannounced?

VANOCUR: Well, I got to the convention very early. I took a train with Roy Collins and Larry Spivak [Lawrence E. Spivak] from Whitefish [Montana]--I guess that's where the train stops--overnight to Portland and got off the train in Portland and flew to San Francisco, had dinner with a lady named Libby Smith [Elizabeth Smith], now Libby Smith Gatov, because unlike Roger Kent, who was very close to her politically, I thought Libby was leaning toward Kennedy and that Roger was still holding out for Stevenson, and I wanted to find out what California was likely to do. I had formed no impression other than Pat Brown had lost control of his delegation.

Now, I must tell you, during this period, Raskin had gone out to Sacramento to literally stand guard over Pat Brown, and as Hy would tell you, there was a dinner one night in Sacramento which Joe Kennedy [Joseph P. Kennedy] had flown in from Tahoe to attend. Raskin was there and Fred Dutton was there. And Pat Brown, according to whoever you talk to either said he'd support Kennedy or he was the head of a great state, he'd reserve judgment, etc., etc. But since I wasn't at the dinner all I know from Raskin is that Joe Kennedy was furious about the whole thing.

But then I proceeded--again, I'm getting back to my trip from Glacier to Los Angeles--and got there on the weekend not prior to the convention, but the weekend prior to the weekend prior to the convention. The first person I looked up was Bobby Kennedy, whom I'd really not seen since Wisconsin. It was interesting because I remember he said come up to his room--he was just

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changing--and he got a call from his father, and he talked at length with his father. Now, whatever anybody says, the old man was very involved in the campaign. Not just with the guys like Kenny [John V. Kenny] in New Jersey, Bill Green [William J. Green] or people like that. He was very involved, to the extent that Jack Kennedy would not take directions from his father and would ward off a lot of bad advice. But whether it was filial or political I don't know. I think mostly filial. They kept their father informed a great deal.

I didn't form any impression that Bobby was worried. I kind of thought it was smart that he was out there, from his point of view, very early. But I didn't have any real insights coming away from the conversation, except I thought they had an awful lot of second ballot strength among southern delegations. When I say an awful lot, I mean twos and threes and fours, which when you get to the crunch is an awful lot.

HACKMAN: Throughout everything up to this point, what kind of relationship do you have

with Salinger, and how important is he to Kennedy's relationship with the press? What kind of job was he doing?

VANOCUR: I don't have any benchmark except Jim Hagerty [James C. Hagerty], whom I met briefly when I was here for six months in '57, '58--covered Ike [Dwight D. Eisenhower] at Gettysburg--and who I've always thought was the best presidential press secretary I ever ran into. Pierre might even agree with that, but Pierre was fine. He kept you happy, you couldn't stay mad at him, he never b.s.'d you without a twinkle in his eye, but I can't say he was a major policy advisor. But I can't say he was just a functionary, either.

HACKMAN: Lots of people seem to think.... Would say that the campaign was his best period and that the pre-convention period was one in which he was very disorganized and very shaky? Does that make any sense to you at all? Or is that at all...? Can you draw out that kind of a sense?

VANOCUR: The last person I'm going to talk to in a convention situation is the candidate's press secretary. What the hell do I want to talk to him for?

HACKMAN: Yeah. More in terms of organizing and information effort, I guess, instead of....

VANOCUR: I don't know. I never.... The last person....

HACKMAN: You wouldn't use that, yeah.

VANOCUR: Les Whitten [Leslie H. Whitten] has always said that one of the reasons why some of my colleagues don't like me is I was always a loner. But the last person in a convention situation that I would talk to would be Pierre. The only time I talked to Pierre was when I wanted JFK for a show on the Saturday night before the election.

HACKMAN: Who other than O'Donnell of the people around Kennedy were particularly helpful

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or particularly difficult? How does Sorensen compare, for example, in terms of giving you information, or being in touch with you?

VANOCUR: I never fooled around with Sorensen. Sorensen had, I think, contempt for the press, unless it was an exalted calmness. He certainly wouldn't give the time of day to a mid-western correspondent for a network, because I don't think he realized what networks were. Larry O'Brien was great to me in the Oregon primary. He made one fatal error which Ben Bradlee [Benjamin C. Bradlee] picked up and wrote, something

like that we could elect a Chinaman. I can't remember exactly how it was, but we were talking to Raskin at the headquarters in Portland. But Kenny and Larry were my best sources, and Sorensen I never asked for anything. I don't even think I knew Sorensen. If I had to pick chief sources of information for Kennedy, or guidance, it'd be his brother, it would be Kenny and Larry, and his father. And how you want to place the father, I don't know.

HACKMAN: Do you remember them talking much in this pre-convention period about cooperation among the other candidates in an effort to stop Kennedy?

VANOCUR: Oh, sure.

HACKMAN: What kinds of evidence would they cite, if you can recall, as to how the people were more or less ganging up on them?

VANOCUR: Well, I think they thought Lyndon couldn't get it, but that'd be a holding operation for Stevenson. But the Lyndon people didn't want Stevenson. They thought that'd be the net effect of it.

HACKMAN: Anything that particularly upset them, though, that they thought was very, very underhanded that you recall?

VANOCUR: Everything upset them.

HACKMAN: It's normal, huh?

VANOCUR: Yeah. By that time they thought anybody who was exercising his constitutional right to oppose Jack Kennedy was not a very good fellow. You know, let's not kid ourselves. They didn't like it at all.

HACKMAN: Anything stand out about J. Leonard Reinsch...

VANOCUR: Reinsch?

HACKMAN: ...Reinsch? Is that the way you say it, Reinsch, rather than Reinsch, at the convention, just in terms of organizing the way television covered that convention,

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or in terms of handling details on that?

VANOCUR: I don't know.

HACKMAN: What do you remember particularly about the convention other than....

VANOCUR: Well, I remember the convention in terms of people they were worried about. They were worried about Paul Ziffren, because they were worried about Paul Ziffren packing the hall.

HACKMAN: Yeah.

VANOCUR: Fake tickets.

HACKMAN: How does that relate to Paul Butler, if you remember at all, Ziffren being Butler's son-in-law?

VANOCUR: Well, my feeling was they always had a very high regard for Paul Butler, because later when he died Kennedy insisted that something be done for his widow. He talked to Ralph Dungan about it. If something hadn't been done, he did something. But I never heard the name of Paul Butler.

HACKMAN: Other people say how meager a role he was given in the campaign, then was given absolutely nothing in the administration and read it as one of the most ruthless of Kennedy.... He might have been some use to them.

VANOCUR: I don't know about that. If it were true it'd be dumb on their part, because it seems to me the guy who did more to make the Democratic party receptive for Jack Kennedy was Paul Butler by the formation of the advisory council [Democratic Advisory Council] in 1956 or '57, which Lyndon Johnson and Sam Rayburn [Samuel T. Rayburn] opposed.

HACKMAN: Okay. Anything else on the convention? You mentioned the packing by Ziffren. How did that concern come out of them? Can you remember conversations?

VANOCUR: No. The most dramatic point of the convention for me was LBJ's [Lyndon B. Johnson] challenge to debate before the Texas delegation. I was literally perched outside the door all the time, and I ran into Fritz Hollings--I guess it was a Tuesday--and I said, "What are you going to do, Fritz?" And he said, "I'm going to tell him he's got to goddamn well go down and debate him." I ran to the phone and told my office to get the cameras hot there because he was going to debate him. And then Kennedy working all the delegations

I remember one thing which is kind of a sidelight which always impressed me very much

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about one of my favorite pols, John Bailey. The young guys in the so-called brain trusters would be upstairs. The dancing professors, as Kenny O'Donnell later called the guys who came down from the Charles River, would be in and out of the suite. But the base work was

done by the small coterie around Kennedy. Downstairs greeting the old pros, who were probably in there having their noses put out of joint by the new young turks, were old Bailey and old Raskin. And they'd sit there and--there's a great Yiddish phrase to describe it -- "schmooze" with these guys who come who just want to be touched mentally.

I remember Bailey went out to the airport to greet Dave Lawrence [David L. Lawrence] or Soapy Williams, I can't remember which, and he ran into a delegate, a half vote from the Panama Canal Zone who was lost, a young lady. John got her transportation, got her a room and everything. And I said to him, "I heard what you did," and he said, "Sandy, every delegate a king." It struck me it was a really first-class operation with Raskin and Bailey working in the Biltmore, this big foyer downstairs, and the other stuff going on upstairs because, don't forget, Kennedy bothered an awful lot of people, even the guys who recognized the inevitable. But pols being such really marvelously reticent guys as some of us, they ain't gonna get up and say, "Jack, I was for you all the time."

HACKMAN: Yeah.

VANOCUR: They just want to be.... [Interruption]

HACKMAN: ... comment about the professors, which is a natural, but what do you see about relationships within the Kennedy camp up to this point? Do people seem to be getting along well, or do there seem to be really debilitating frictions between various key figures?

VANOCUR: Well, less so than in any other campaign I've ever covered. But it's like Dave Powers [David F. Powers] said, "Look, when you got a guy like Kennedy at the front everybody else looks good." And don't forget Vanocur is not a guy who covers the Washington scene, so I haven't got my road map about who's important or not. See, all I know is who tells me...

HACKMAN: What you want. Yeah.

VANOCUR: ...who speaks sooth to me. Who tells me what I think is non b.s. So, I didn't see anything like that at all. Now, at this time I'm very devoted to the DFL [Democrat-Farmer-Labor] people from Minnesota. I like them all. They're great human beings. I don't know McCarthy [Eugene J. McCarthy]. I know Humphrey; I know Orville Freeman; I know Miles Lord, who now is a judge; Geri Joseph; great people. And what really was traumatic, is Orville Freeman is going to nominate Kennedy.

[END SIDE 1, TAPE 1]

[BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 1]

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VANOCUR: ...they meet one night, Monday or Tuesday, I guess Tuesday night, up at the



Statler Hotel [San Francisco Hilton] and that's very traumatic because Orville thinks he may be tapped. I thought, in fact, maybe this is a pitch--two more harems, Catholic, Midwest--but, you know, convention shit. Anybody who tells me who's working for television that they've got a nice kind of set tracing for a convention, I'll show you a lying son-of-a-bitch, because it all happens too fast.

HACKMAN: What about the vice-presidency? Is there anything at all on that that, you know, you think you had at that point, or that you had from subsequent conversations with RFK or Kenny particularly?

VANOCUR: I had zilch, zilch. I thought if they'd go to anybody it would be Freeman, and second would be Symington. I had zilch. I didn't think they'd go because now JFK becomes in my book a conventional pol, and I should have been a schmuck not to have seen it. But he goes the conventional route. I never dreamed.... Now, at some point somebody said to me, don't be surprised if he goes to.... It was Mike DiSalle [Michael V. DiSalle]. I didn't believe him. God, it just shows you how inexperienced I was, because if there's a guy who has another low bullshit quotient, it's Mike. Mike said, "Don't be...." He didn't say it, that he was going to do it, but he said, "Don't be surprised." And he was standing in that hall where Bailey and Raskin were operative from, but I passed it right out of my mind like a gall stone, just passed it.

HACKMAN: Anything else on the convention before we go to the campaign?

VANOCUR: Well, one thing that was funny was, I was coming back from the night of the nomination, well.... They were staying out at Jack Haley's [John J. Haley, Jr.] house. No, they were staying at a building that Jack Haley owned on Rossmore in somebody's apartment. I don't know whose it was. Bill Gargan [William Gargan] had an apartment underneath, the actor. I was planted out there. When word came that he had the nomination, we would all go down. I find myself literally shoved by, as I say, a sea of humanity into that shack. That scene that Teddy White describes is very, very accurate about having an invisible wall between the barons and the kind, that glass curtain that goes down. I often lament the fact that I ran over to broadcast in the NBC booth and didn't stay there and then go back and grab him off, because our cameras were all set out there, and interview him, but that's by-the-by.

But that night I go back to the Biltmore and I meet Raskin, and we're walking up the steps and we run into Pat and Bernice Brown, and Pat says to Hy, "Hy, tell Jack he should never forgive Adlai Stevenson for what he tried here." And Raskin about doubled up like he had an attack of colitis with this kind of two-faced hypocrisy on the part of Pat Brown, who was screwing Kennedy...

HACKMAN: Yeah.

VANOCUR: ...until the end. But that's about all I remember, until the next day. I was in an

elevator and Bobby and Kenny got in--this was about 2:30 in the afternoon-- and Kenny said, "Okay, goddamit. If that's the way he wants it, okay" But he was steaming and now you know, in retrospect, it was Lyndon Johnson. And you know what Kenny has said about him.

HACKMAN: What was your assignment during the campaign?

VANOCUR: Well, I came to Washington. I went home to cover the Republican convention; I didn't go to Hyannis Port. I covered the post-session here which had been set up by Lyndon Johnson and Sam Rayburn, and then I was assigned to cover Kennedy.

HACKMAN: Anything stand out about that special session?

VANOCUR: Nothing, except that Kennedy's got no power in the Senate, and Lyndon Johnson hasn't got any either. It was just a big joke, except for one period one day at the corner of K and 16th or 17th, where 17th and Connecticut come together, Ralph Dungan is talking to Chuck Roche [Charles D. Roche], and he said, "Chuck, I don't care what you do. I don't care even if it's wrong," he said, "but for Christ's sake do something." That's all I remember.

HACKMAN: Do you have anything at all in terms of the comparisons frequently made between how it is to cover Nixon [Richard M. Nixon] and how it is to cover Kennedy?

VANOCUR: Before I get on that, during that period Kennedy flew up one Sunday to Hyde Park. He might talk to Hyman Bookbinder, who I think was organizing a bunch of old Jewish workers who were up there. I was the pool reporter on the *Caroline* that day, and Kennedy was up there to persuade Mrs. Roosevelt [Eleanor Roosevelt], in effect, to come aboard. We're flying from Poughkeepsie, or wherever you fly from up there, to LaGuardia [LaGuardia Airport]. Change of plans, Kennedy had to see a dentist. I figured he was either eating at a fancy restaurant or getting a lay that night, but that was the thing they were saying. So I said, "Was she tough?" He said, "Just brutal, brutal." Before, we had been taken around Hyde Park, and there was a letter [in the FDR Library] from Bobby thanking FDR for a stamp. I must say, I broke Kennedy up by saying I never knew Bobby was that sweet.

But he had a tough time with Mrs. Roosevelt that day, because I must say she was a grand old lady and she was just not having it easy. She was holding out for Stevenson to be secretary of state. He didn't say that to me, but that's my inference, and I'm sure I'm 99 percent right. She never really forgave him for the vote on McCarthy [Joseph R. McCarthy]. More than that she never forgave him for his father. She was holding his feet to the fire, and I know of no other person who could really intimidate Jack Kennedy so much as Eleanor Roosevelt. I thought it was great, because everybody else in the country had to play around his heels, but she didn't.

HACKMAN: Yeah.

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VANOCUR: As to the other question, the difference between covering Kennedy and Nixon, I think it's very well described in Teddy White's book, *The Making of the President 1960*. It would be nice to lay that beside the new book and his attitude about the press...

HACKMAN: Yeah, I haven't read the new one.

VANOCUR: ...but you had a great deal of fun on the Kennedy trips. And look, Democrats basically are always more easy to get along with than Republicans. The Republican campaign plane was saved by Hugh Scott and a couple of old congressional hands like that. Bryce Harlow. I don't know if Bryce Harlow was around, but there were some really good guys. But it was a difference of night and day. You felt like a pariah on the Nixon trip.

HACKMAN: You know, people have talked and maybe Teddy White mentions this, I don't recall if he does or not, that the reporters would come back from the Nixon camp and give the Kennedy camp at least some useful feel for what was going on in the Nixon camp. Does that strike you as very important at all, particularly any insides that you know of that were passed on that meant anything?

VANOCUR: Well, I don't know about that. I once told Kennedy and Bobby, they just asked me what it was like, and I said I just think the Catholic issue cuts deeper in the Midwest than it does in the South. And I always thought that Nixon was much closer than he was said to be. I don't think the Catholic issue was very important. I don't know what other people told him, and I didn't go volunteering anything, so I don't know. All I know is it was very.... There was a much better atmosphere; you had some fun. You had guys like Andy Hatcher [Andrew T. Hatcher] screwing things up, and who's the guy who was the baggage smasher on the campaign?

HACKMAN: Bill Hartigan [William Hartigan].

VANOCUR: No, his deputy.

HACKMAN: McNally [John J. McNally]?

VANOCUR: It was Jack McNally who was always fouling things up, and he would love to complain about him. It was just a funnier campaign to cover.

HACKMAN: Was Hatcher of much help to Salinger, can you tell?

VANOCUR: Andy? Nothing. Useless. But in a thing like that it's very hard to deal with Pierre. You can always get to the candidate.

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HACKMAN: That didn't change much in the campaign? The candidate was still accessible when you really needed him, or accessible at least to compare to Nixon?

VANOCUR: Oh, yeah. Once in the beginning of the campaign before it formally took off.... You know, it took off from Washington, but we then flew to Alaska. I think the Friday before we had gone up to someplace in Maine. I think it was Lewiston, or something. No, I'm sorry, I'm ahead of myself.

HACKMAN: Well, here's a schedule if you want to look at it.

VANOCUR: We left from New York in September. Where does it go before? Oh....

HACKMAN: There's nothing before that.

VANOCUR: Yeah, I'll tell you, there was something before that.

HACKMAN: I mean there is something before that, but it's no on this schedule. This is the official....

VANOCUR: A couple of days before I flew up to Presque Isle [Maine].... Let's see, Portland, Maine. The day before he flew to New York to try and convince Rabbi Hillel Silver, or mollify him in some way--Silver's a big Republican from Ohio--we got back on the *Caroline*, there were about eight of us, and somebody gave Kennedy a story about Bobby getting into a pissing match with Jackie Robinson [Jack R. Robinson]. I remember Kennedy was sitting on a little bench in front of the plane; he put his head in his hands and said, "Get me Pierre." Then he took Pierre aside and said, "Will you, for God's sake, tell Bobby that we're running against Richard Nixon and not Jackie Robinson." You see, at that time even though he later tipped the guys off they were working for him and not for Bobby--Kenny and Pierre--he still, I thought--and this is very much retrospective on my part--felt that they were Bobby's guys and if they told him that he could it, that was as good as coming from him because they were as loyal to Bobby as they were to him and there was no personal problem, but there was a political problem, because they shouldn't have been working for Bobby.

HACKMAN: That wouldn't apply to Sorensen though.

VANOCUR: No, but you know--this is only my judgment--I don't think Sorensen was a great source of political advice. In nitty-gritty politics so much of it is ideological advice after a period, I would say, of a year before.

HACKMAN: What do you recall about the trip to Hyannis? I mean, maybe there was more than one. I have only heard of the one time when you were up there during the campaign.

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VANOCUR: That was after the first debate.

HACKMAN: It was after the first debate? Okay, let's talk about the first debate first then.

VANOCUR: You mean the trip to Hyannisport when he was here?

HACKMAN: The time when you met Clifford [Clark M. Clifford] and....

VANOCUR: That was after the first debate.

HACKMAN: It was after the first debate, okay.

VANOCUR: But Kennedy had asked him to prepare for the transition.

HACKMAN: Right.

VANOCUR: But I didn't have a word with Clifford. I saw him at lunch, but I didn't have any words with him.

HACKMAN: What do you recall about getting ready for the first debate? Any conversations with the Kennedy camp about....

VANOCUR: Nope. I was covering Nixon, and I left the campaign on a Saturday midday in Jackson, Mississippi, where I was struck by the uniformity of all the little drum majorettes in Jackson, Mississippi. I went to the hotel, had a steam bath, made myself a reservation on the Panama Limited, had a swell dinner, and I went to my room and started writing questions. Arrived in Chicago the next morning; was met by me wife and two kids. My littlest boy, who had been born November 5th I had hardly seen except for a short period in the spring, because I had gone out to cover Nelson Rockefeller four days after she went to the hospital, and it was great being home.

I had my questions all written out. I had two days--I can't remember whether it was a Monday or a Tuesday, the first debate was--and of course to celebrate a question I asked, and I looked them up the other day, and I think I asked Kennedy as tough a question as I asked Nixon, though it hasn't go the.... The question to Kennedy was, "How can you promise you're going to get Congress to do things when you haven't done a damn thing in this post-convention session?" But I asked Nixon this question about Eisenhower's statement about Nixon not having any administrative experience.

HACKMAN: Dave and I were looking at that the other day.

VANOCUR: As a matter of fact, I looked it up--I was down at Duke [University] the other day--and he's really invoking executive privilege even then in his comment. But it was a very fair question. Now, in *Six Crises* he says it was a question of no substantive

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importance which plagued him for the rest of the campaign. After the campaign, Paul Niven, who was a very dear friend of mine; now working for CBS--it was after the second or third debate--said that Herb Klein [Herbert G. Klein] told him that that question was planted on me by the Kennedy people. Then, Paul said, Herb turned around and tried to plant a question on him [Niven] for whatever debate he was in. Sorry Paul is dead because I don't like to put the line on dead men, but that's what Paul told me. The fact is that about a week and a half afterward, Newt Minow called me and said, "That's exactly the question that I was going to propose to you." And I said, "Well, Newt, it's a swell thing you didn't, because had you called me I'd have never used the question, and I would have been mad at you for the rest of my life." I had no contact with anybody from the Kennedy camp.

Elie Abel told me that in the press room at WBBM [radio station] in Chicago, when I asked the question the press corps broke into cheers or applause. But I worked goddamn hard on that question, and it was the most glaring question that one could ask. I thought I asked Kennedy a good question, though in comparison it didn't even match. But Nixon would never forgive me for that question.

HACKMAN: Any feedback immediately after from the Kennedy people?

VANOCUR: No, because they went on to Ohio, where I'm told Frank Lausche was banging on Kennedy's door the next morning. I thought, Jesus Christ, he must be in good shape if that old weather vane is there. But I went home that night and then flew to Hyannisport where I was to interview Jackie because Huntley and Brinkley [David Brinkley] were coming in to interview JFK at the end of the weekend. There was a funny thing that happened that week. I finished interviewing Jackie, and then he was interviewed by Huntley and Brinkley. I think it was a Friday night. I was standing around waiting to go out with David and Chet. He came out and she was very pregnant at the time, and he was wearing a dress Stetson, which is very unusual for him because he never wore hats, and he had a walking stick which he was kind of swinging around like a golf club. And he looked at her and she looked at him, and what I never really forgot, with all the stories about their marriage, I thought it was the kind of look--and I told my wife afterwards--that only two people who are married could ever pass between each other. I'll never forget it; it was around five o'clock on a Friday afternoon, I believe.

HACKMAN: You mean about the way he looked.

VANOCUR: The way he looked and the way she looked.

HACKMAN: Yeah.

VANOCUR: I never again felt that way about their marriage until he cried when Patrick Bouvier [Patrick Bouvier Kennedy] died. So in all their relationship, I still think, not maybe by your standards or by my standards, they had a reasonably happy marriage.

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HACKMAN: Yeah.

VANOCUR: But he was riding high that week.

HACKMAN: Anything during the campaign that, because of your relationship with people like Raskin, O'Donnell or whatever, by that point, O'Brien, information that you had or that you got directly from JFK or RFK, that you didn't know what to do with? Any tough decisions from your point of view on what to say off the record, on the record, whatever?

VANOCUR: You see, I've never played that route. I've never gone for the background briefing. Maybe in those days if something came and hit me in the face I wouldn't know it, I don't know. But the only time that I had a consideration of what to use was when Larry O'Brien and I--at the Biltmore, I guess it was, or the Roosevelt--went down the states right before the election, and, son-of-a-gun, if it didn't prove to be remarkable prescient on Larry's part. And I told NBC, I said, "This is what O'Brien says, and I'm presenting it as what O'Brien says, and you can factor it in"--that word hadn't been invented then--"but you can read into whatever you're doing and discount whatever you want to." But I said, "I'm covering that campaign, and I was sent out to find out what their reading is and here's their reading." It was awful goddamn close.

HACKMAN: Yeah.

VANOCUR: But I can't think of any.... Now that doesn't mean they didn't do it. But, you know, they had a different way of doing things. It was kind of a tactic of seduction, god knows, but it wasn't the kind of, here you do this sort of thing, in my experience with them.

HACKMAN: Were people talking much in that period, among the press people, about the dangers of being taken in by Kennedy? I mean, was that spoken or unspoken, or even worried about at that point?

VANOCUR: Well, it wasn't for me. I can't tell for other people, but, you see, I became a very close friend of Bill Lawrence [William H. Lawrence]. I'm with the

greatest political reporter of the generation. Bill was a great guy for young reporters. I would sit next to him on the plane. Why, I don't know, because Bill used to scare me to death half the time.

HACKMAN: Everyone, apparently.

VANOCUR: Everyone, and why he picked me I don't know. But Bill ain't talking about it. He told me once Rosemary Woods was furious at him. So, no, I don't think any.... These were guys like Bill Roth of the *Philadelphia Bulletin*; Bill Kent [Carleton V. Kent] of the *Chicago Sun Times*; you're talking about the cream of.... I can hardly

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remember any other young guys around. I guess I must have been, in terms of coverage, the really junior guy on the campaign. Hugh Sidey, who was there, Hugh and I were, I guess, the real juniors on the campaign.

HACKMAN: Do you remember things during the campaign, on television or in the newspapers, that particularly upset either John Kennedy himself or the people around him? Especially anything of your own, but with others too.

VANOCUR: I suspect there were, but I don't remember because I didn't hear about them.

HACKMAN: Any particular recollections on any of the major things during the campaign: Martin Luther King phone call, missile gap as an issue, or what else? Houston ministers?

VANOCUR: Oh, the Houston ministers. Yeah, that was a big night. You know the famous story about the brown shoe.

HACKMAN: Yeah. I've heard it more than once.

VANOCUR: I didn't hear it until way afterwards. I thought that was just a damned important night, maybe as important as any night. But remember what it's like covering a campaign for a television news service. And it isn't as refined as it is now. You didn't have producers with you and guys who would jump in ahead. You had a producer with you: that was the first introduction of it in a sense. But you break off in the campaign around one o'clock and fly to the nearest originating point. Then you'd have to jump back to catch the campaign that night so you miss an awful lot. You're wacked every day. It's just murder. I'd like to tell you I had a minute day-by-day diary of the campaign. I don't.

HACKMAN: Anything, again, in terms of comparison of Nixon and Kennedy that was particularly innovative in terms of the Kennedy campaign in helping reporters,



TV especially, to cover the campaign?

VANOCUR: No, they didn't do anything. Well, they may have directed their stuff so it would get on the evening news, but I was very naïve and young and inexperienced at the time, which is not to put myself down, because there were never any ground rules for covering this kind of a campaign. I think it was the first campaign of this nature which had devoted almost no time to rains, almost all to flying, and my job was just to fit them on the air, and that's all you ever did. They, no doubt, were aiming their stuff for the evening news, which I suspect is much more sophisticated and refined now. But literally, it was a survival course for me, whether you were covering Nixon or whether you were covering Kennedy.

One day, Saturday morning, Nixon took off from Los Angeles. We stopped in Phoenix; we stopped in Tulsa; we stopped in Springfield, Illinois; and wound up in Hartford that night. Now, at the end of a day like that you got no goddamn energy left, and the next day Henry Cabot

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Lodge comes up to explain to Nixon why he's promised in Harlem he's going to put a black man in the cabinet. It's great for guys later to say, Oh, well, I thought this day and that day, and all.... You know, even today, I have to be honest with you and tell you that I don't know how many of us ever said it was just a dumb campaign: Quemoy and Matsu; nonexistent missile gap, we didn't know there wasn't a missile gap; Cuba. I must say, in Cincinnati, I got very mad because I saw the fine hands of George Smathers all over that Cuban speech in Cincinnati late in the campaign. But you count crowds, you get on the plane, you go to another place, you film. You know, it's....

HACKMAN: Let me just jump ahead. Is that something you ever talked to John Kennedy about later? You know, you weren't saying anything in the campaign; you fabricated?

VANOCUR: I hardly saw Jack Kennedy later. I made it a rule to never go back in that office unless I was called, and I was not called except on a couple of occasions. I made it a rule to play the underlings. If I had gone back to see him as a lot of other guys had seen him, to assuage their own egos, I would never have been able to bread the Kennedy-Khrushchev [Nikita S. Khrushchev] summit meeting story. Because I didn't want to get back there. One, the office itself imposes a terrible psychological burden on you. When you walk in the odds are very uneven, and Jack Kennedy was one of the great artist in the world. So I just stayed away from the office. I never discussed the campaign with him.

HACKMAN: Now, back to that meeting in Hyannis. Do you remember anything at all? I think you hinted to Bobbie Greene that you talked with Joe Kennedy at that point? Does that come to mind at all?

VANOCUR: Yeah, he was walking around the lawn.

HACKMAN: Anything particular in his observations at that point or other times you talked with him during the campaign? Anything else there?

VANOCUR: That's the only time I saw him during the campaign that I recollect.

HACKMAN: Unless the schedule prompts other things on the campaign, I don't have any great questions on the campaign. Okay, what do you think?

VANOCUR: The only thing, and this is post-campaign, that confirmed me that Kennedy was going to be a conventional politician was when I got up.... The election was Tuesday night; I slept in New York Wednesday; and I flew up to Hyannisport Thursday. I was really dumbfounded when he named Allen Dulles and J. Edgar Hoover his first two appointees. That really made me pissed off, just as a reporter and a citizen, because that went back to the choosing of Lyndon Johnson, because it really made me realize he was much more conservative than I thought he was.

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HACKMAN: What did you spend most of your time on during that period between the election and the inauguration?

VANOCUR: I was trying to figure out who was going to be appointed to the cabinet.

HACKMAN: How do you cover that?

VANOCUR: By guess and by gum.

HACKMAN: Who's helpful, Shriver?

VANOCUR: No.

HACKMAN: O'Donnell?

VANOCUR: The person who is the most helpful is yourself. They leaked the Luther Hodges appointment to Bill Lawrence. Bill and I, on the Sunday after the campaign, went down to Hollywood where Abe Ribicoff told us at the Diplomat Hotel he wanted to be HEW [Department of Health, Education, and Welfare], so we got that from Abe. Poor Orville Freeman, he kept hanging in there, because I knew he wanted to be Secretary of Agriculture, and they wanted to make him Office of Emergency Preparedness.

HACKMAN: Really, now that's interesting, because that conflicts completely with some other things I'd heard--that Freeman had told Kennedy through someone that

he would like to be considered for almost anything, but the one thing that he absolutely did not want was Secretary of Agriculture. So if you've got....

VANOCUR: Yeah, that may have been. He may have told him that but they weren't considering him for Secretary of Agriculture. They talked to that guy in...

HACKMAN: Fred Hinkel in Missouri.

VANOCUR: ...Hinkel. I think Bobby or Kenny, Kenny said, "I know more about agriculture than this guy." Udall [Stewart L. Udall] had some problem which they cleared with Clint Anderson [Clinton P. Anderson], some land problem. Goldberg [Arthur J. Goldberg], they had to clear with somebody in the labor movement. Justice, they leaked that to Bill Lawrence first.

HACKMAN: Who was leaking to Bill Lawrence?

VANOCUR: Kenny told him on the golf course. Listen, in those days if you want to float a balloon you put it in the *New York Times* and accept it in terms of that's a goddamn thing, and nobody is to cast any judgment on Bill now. Scotty Reston [James B. Reston]

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used to all the time. You'd damn well.... The president-elect of the United States leaks that on you you print the goddamn thing. The one I kick myself for missing is Rusk [Dean Rusk], because I had that one cold right down the line, but I didn't have the where-with-all to go with that yet.

In those times, god almighty, the pressure on you on the part of your office to come up with these things all the time is murder. I know we got off a plane from New York, coming out of Washington, and we find out that David Wise paints a background dinner--Bob Healey and he and some others--where Bobby was talking about Bill Dawson [William L. Dawson] as postmaster general. I got that one later with Ed Dale [Edwin E. Dale], only through Libby Gatov and Jesse Unruh. Jesse Unruh gave me that one. I got about a day on that one. But the pressure on the part of your office, my office called me the day that the *Herald Tribune* [*New York Herald-Tribune*] picked it up. The boss didn't think you had been forthright enough or industrious enough. I said, "Son of a bitch, I got about two out of five now." The pressure was enormous about who's going to be whom and so forth. So, at that time you were busting your butt to come up with these things, and it was very, very tough.

HACKMAN: Anything else during the transition period?

VANOCUR: The thing that was striking to me about the transition period was really how little Jack Kennedy knew about foreign policy, in my judgment. He walked over from N Street over to Dean Acheson's house one night, which I thought was not quite seemly considering how Acheson had kicked the shit out of him during the

campaign. But it was typical Kennedy, you know, a questing young man goes to get advice from the elder statesman, etc. How much influence the old man had about Lovett [Robert A. Lovett]--he recommended that Lovett be Secretary of State or Treasury or Defense. When I called the old man he told me that it was his recommendation.

But how badly it struck me at the time, and in retrospect, how badly prepared a president is in that period--designated by the awful name interregnum--how badly prepared he is to make the transition, even with Kennedy preparing.... A future historian would be well advised to read what Clifford and Neustadt [Richard E. Neustadt] wrote about that, which I don't think, with all due respect, the book was very satisfactory.

I thought Kennedy made a mistake because he told me that--we were on the plane going down to Hyannisport; he was taking John Jr. [John F. Kennedy, Jr.] down after he was born--and he was talking to us about the Secretary of State and how Rusk was very impressive to him. I should have put two and two together because Humphrey told me, watch Rusk. He's looking for a new face. But I thought he could never pass over a guy like David Bruce, who was the most distinguished fellow we ever had, in my judgment. But Kennedy didn't know anything about what Rusk's position was on Asia.

Of all the coverage I did of Kennedy, to me the most important period, and the one I have the worst feeling about, is that period after the election, before the inauguration. From their point of view, how badly advised they were, part of it their fault, part of it the fault with just trying to staff a new administration. The other part I blame on offices you work for, which are so goddamn insistent on you to get names, without giving you the time to explain reasons, good and bad, for

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why these choices have been made.

You see, if one could have had some time.... The classic confrontation, which later was very apparent, was between Walter Heller and Doug Dillon [C. Douglas Dillon] and we knew nothing about Walter Heller. I don't think any of us knew that he met Kennedy when he went to Minnesota, to the twin cities on a Saturday night during the campaign and asked him, well, how the Germans would ever have high interest rates and growth and all of the things that flowed from that question. So that's a period I'm very, very down on Kennedy on, because there wasn't the preparation. I'm not sure in my own mind how there can be the preparation, I really am not.

HACKMAN: Any balloons that they floated through you, or tried to float through you, that you felt you were taken on at all?

VANOCUR: No, but you see, in those days you didn't float balloons through TV people. There was one chosen instrument. It was the *New York Times*. I can't imagine that you even would have done it through the *Herald Tribune*, and that was a very embarrassing story about Bill Dawson and somebody else. The *New York Times* was your chosen instrument, and I thought it ill behooved the *New York Times* to later charge Bill with being too close to the Kennedy administration when they were goddamn happy in November to have the *New York Times* being used as the chosen instrument, making one rule

for Bill Lawrence and another one for Scotty Reston. But they never tried, because in those days you wouldn't try that on television.

HACKMAN: Did you ever get any comments from Kennedy, or the group of people closest to him up to that point, about any distinction they made among the various networks?

VANOCUR: No, because in effect ABC [American Broadcasting Company] wasn't really a factor. I can't even remember who was on the first debate for ABC. There was me...

HACKMAN: I've forgotten the guy's name...

VANOCUR: ...Stuart Novins...

HACKMAN: ...I read it the other day.

VANOCUR: ...and I can remember Charles Warren from Mutual [Mutual Broadcasting Company], but I can't remember ABC.

HACKMAN: I didn't even recognize the name when I read it the other day.

VANOCUR: I can't even remember who I was competing against on CBS. It may seem immodest, but I was just cutting a very broad path through that campaign by my work at the convention and the campaign. Now, there was this.... I think.... I can't

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place it. They thought Frank Stanton was on Lyndon Johnson's side. They didn't like that. But I can't remember anything else. They had too many, sort of obvious, what they called.... I don't know what their phrase they would use for it, but people in the writing press.... I've forgotten. You've got to remember that Jack Kennedy thought--this was very much the influence of, I think, his father--that though the *New York Times* was very important for leaking a story, the most important way to influence Americans' minds was through *Time* magazine.

HACKMAN: Once you were assigned to be the NBC White House guy--I mean, this is just sort of for people who are coming to do research on the press as opposed to Kennedy--any particular way you remember trying to get ready for that, in that period? Are there things that you went out and read on things you....

VANOCUR: Shit, no. I came to Washington; I bought a house, a red Studebaker, which turned out to be a lemon--Nixon had used it, one, in South Bend [Indiana] in a

parade--and a number 29 red shag rug for my kids' bedroom from Sears and Roebuck, and my wife and I were broke. Not a nickel. And all I was concerned about was finding a place for them to stay, bought a house, a car and that red rug, and I plunged into the White House. I didn't read anything; I didn't know from nothing. And remember, I am working for a network that's got Huntley and Brinkley. I don't get on the evening news, and I've never really forgiven NBC for the stuff I had in this administration which wasn't given to me. I really covered this administration very well. I moved around the White House and I would spend three nights a week in Paul Young's [Restaurant] and I came out of there every goddamn night with a story which I really couldn't get on the air. But, as for theories of the presidency, stuff like that, no. You're too competitive.

HACKMAN: To stay with that Paul Young's thing a second, when you say you couldn't get them on the air. You couldn't get them on the air, why?

VANOCUR: Well, the stuff I thought was important, which was a lot of gossip, a lot of chitchat and so forth, if you have a situation where you got a co-anchor man as Brinkley and you got Huntley on the other end, it was rare I could get a story on. Like I remember I got on.... The Kennedy-Khrushchev summit meeting story broke on a Sunday. I was in Palm Beach. I might have waited until Monday when I came back to town and got it on. It was too big a story. I had to go with it. Later, when I broke the story of the equalization tax, put on, I guess it was in August of '62 or '63...

HACKMAN: '62, I think.

VANOCUR: Yeah, that was a big story. I got that on the nightly news. I think Brinkley was out of town, but it was very tough for me to get stories on. But if I had had no anchorman in Washington, Christ, I'd have been on the air two or three times a week. The one thing I really blew was the Celebrezze [Anthony J. Celebrezze] story. Nobody had that and O'Brien gave it to me without knowing it. I could've gotten it on or speculated about it,

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but I didn't have the opportunity. But Paul Young's.... I literally spent three nights a week there with my wife. We'd run into everybody down there: O'Donnell, O'Brien, Mike Kirwan [Michael J. Kirwan], Donahue [Richard K. Donahue], Feldman [Myer "Mike" Feldman], everybody was down there. The guys had a few pops and talked lots of stuff. The town was just a wide open town. It was like a sieve. Everybody was dropping, like Fred Dutton, Ralph Dungan.... Christ, it was the easiest town I've ever....

In terms of reading books, I didn't read any books about the theory of the presidency other than what I read at Northwestern when I was studying political science. You tell me what political science textbook or what book's going to tell you anything about covering Jackie in the White House. Don't kid yourself, every newspaper, magazine, and network had their tongue hanging out. It's very interesting to listen about all these networks now, or all these newspapers, accusing that person or the other person of being very, very close to the

Kennedys. Let me tell you something, that's exactly what your offices wanted. They wanted it badly because that sold newspapers and that attracted viewers.

HACKMAN: We talked about not remembering who your competitors were earlier, but once you settled into the White House period, now you've got Lawrence and you got--I can't remember who was before George Herman. Oh, George Herman was right away, that's right.

VANOCUR: Yeah.

HACKMAN: And then you take the rest of the newspaper and magazine press, how do you sort of size up your competition, particularly in terms of the old versus the new? You're one young person.

VANOCUR: Oh, well, the new guys, like Sidey and Ernest Furgurson of the *Baltimore Sun*, Tom Wicker [Thomas G. Wicker]--he came a little later after Bill Lawrence left--we were all looked down upon by the older hands like Merriman Smith, a guy from the *Baltimore Sun*. I can't remember who the other guys were. Garnett Horner was still there in those days. So we had no feelings against each other. We were all in it together because we hadn't been caught up in the days of covering Eisenhower.

[END OF INTERVIEW]