

John E. Nolan Oral History Interview – RFK#4, 05/11/1971
Administrative Information

Creator: John E. Nolan
Interviewer: Roberta W. Greene
Date of Interview: May 11, 1971
Place of Interview: Washington, D.C.
Length: 51 pages

Biographical Note

Nolan was the administrative assistant to the Attorney General, Robert F. Kennedy [RFK], from 1963 to 1964. In this interview Nolan discusses various visits to different states for RFK's 1968 presidential campaign, including the University of Indiana Medical School; issues with the scheduling for the Michigan trip; planning for delays and limitations in the campaign schedule; scheduling visits to West Virginia and Nebraska; troubles with the Oregon campaign; running into Eugene McCarthy at the Portland zoo; and George S. McGovern and the South Dakota primary, among other issues.

Access
Open.

Usage Restrictions

According to the deed of gift signed January 8, 1991, copyright of these materials has been assigned to the United States Government. Users of these materials are advised to determine the copyright status of any document from which they wish to publish.

Copyright

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 The copyright law extends its protection to unpublished works from the moment of creation in a tangible form.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

Transcript of Oral History Interview

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

concerns about accuracy, they are encouraged to visit the Library and consult the transcripts and the interview recordings.

Suggested Citation

John E. Nolan, recorded interview by Roberta W. Greene, May 11, 1971, (page number), Robert F. Kennedy Oral History Program of the John F. Kennedy Library.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
JOHN F. KENNEDY LIBRARY

Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interviews of
John Nolan

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, John Nolan, do hereby give, donate, and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title, and interest in the tape recording and transcript of personal interviews conducted on July 14, 1970, July 24, 1970, August 2, 1970, May 11, 1971, November 11, 1971 and January 18, 1972 at Washington, DC and prepared for deposit in the John F. Kennedy Library. This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

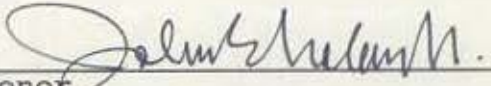
(1) The transcript shall be made available for use by researchers as soon as it has been deposited in the John F. Kennedy Library.

(2) The tape recording shall be made available to those researchers who have access to the transcript.

(3) I hereby assign to the United States Government all copyright I may have in the interview transcript and tape.

(4) Copies of the transcript and the tape recording may be provided by the Library to researchers upon request.


(5) Copies of the transcript and tape recording may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the John F. Kennedy Library.



Donor

11-26-90

Date



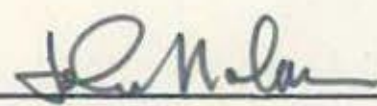
Archivist of the United States

Jan. 8, 1991

Date

Understanding Regarding the Use of the
Oral History Interview Conducted by the
John F. Kennedy Library
with John Nolan

1. The interview transcript may be made available, on an unrestricted basis, to anyone applying to use the resources of the John F. Kennedy Library. (This includes journalists and students as well as professional historians, political scientists and other scholars.)
2. Copies of the interview transcript (or portions thereof) may be made and given, upon request, to all researchers.
3. Copies of the interview transcript may not be deposited for research use in other institutions, such as university libraries, public libraries and other presidential libraries, without my written permission.
4. The interview transcript may not be published (i.e. reproduced or printed for sale to the general public) in whole or in substantial part without my written permission until 25 years from the date of the interview.
5. Researchers may publish brief quotations from the interview transcript (but not the tape) and may paraphrase or cite the text without my permission.

Signed: 

John Nolan

Date: April 7, 1971

John E. Nolan – RFK #4
Table of Contents

<u>Page</u>	<u>Topic</u>
109	Robert F. Kennedy's [RFK] visit to the University of Indiana Medical School
114	Issues with scheduling visit to Michigan
119	Criticisms of some of Nolan's campaign scheduling
121	Planning for delays, limitations in the campaign schedule
124	Scheduling visit to West Virginia
127	Campaign visit to Nebraska
133	Troubles with the Oregon campaign
141	Running into Eugene McCarthy at the Portland [Oregon] zoo
145	1968 Oregon presidential primary results
149	George S. McGovern and the South Dakota presidential primary
153	California and New York campaign scheduling
155	Dropped plans for RFK's visit to Europe in 1968

Fourth Oral History Interview

with

JOHN E. NOLAN

May 11, 1971
Washington, D.C.

By Roberta W. Greene

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

GREENE: Well, is there anything special about that day in Indianapolis that you just mentioned[^] with the medical students[^] that hasn't been written about?

NOLAN: Yes. I went out to Indianapolis that day for a meeting with Senator Robert F. Kennedy and Frederick G. Dutton ^[Frederick G. Dutton] Frederick G. Fred Dutton. I don't remember specifically what it had to do with ^{it} it had something to do with scheduling, a series of decisions with regard to the schedule for the

next couple weeks or something like that. I

met them at a television studio where the

[Richard N.] Dick Goodwin-^[Richard N. Goodwin] ~~(John M.)~~ Frankenheimer ^[John M. Frankenheimer]

colored TV, traveling truck wash. Everytime

you wanted to do something else Goodwin would

say, "Well it's all right but remember it's

costing five thousand dollars an hour or some-

thing to keep this truck here." ^{AA} And I went

with them in a motorcade--Lee Fentress I think

was the advance man--to the University of

Indiana Medical School. ^{Bob} ~~(Robert F.)~~ Kennedy

was (Interruption) tired, maybe sick or some-

thing like that, really physically under the

weather--hands shaking, eyes lined--and that

thing lasted, with the students, ^{about} two hours.

It was ^{AA} very, very dangerous appearance. At a couple

of occasions, it looked like it was just going

to dissolve, you know, lose the crowd. Boy,

it just could have been a shambles ^S It worked

out all right, ^{AA} very high dramatic, ^{point} one of the

most dramatic appearances I think I've ever spent.

All of the newspapers were there and they all wrote about it. The accounts make interesting reading because they're very, very different.

^[David S. Broder]
[David] Dave Broder, and, I don't know, New York Times then, I think or something.

GREENE: Did you discuss the appearance with the Senator?

NOLAN: Yeah, yeah.

GREENE: How did he feel about it?

NOLAN: He thought he was lucky. It ended well, you know.

It really had ended almost ^{COCA} good ending with a basically hostile crowd starting out very cool-- a lot of signs in the back, you know, unfriendly signs--and then from there it went downhill. ^{And} ^{At} about the midpoint or two-thirds of the way through I thought it really was going to get out of control, ^{you know,} I thought everybody was going to stand up and boo their heads off or something like that. They were asking questions on what he was going to do about this or that sort of doctor interests ^{and} ^{he} was telling them that theirs was a narrow, self-serving,

parochial--if you're in an economics sense of point of view--and they really weren't buying that very well. And then a couple of times he summed up as if ~~he was~~ ² it was going to be ~~at~~ the end of the thing ⁹ and then there would be more questions and it would go on. So it went down and almost ^{tl} hit bottom, and then it started coming back and then went blam down and almost hit bottom again ⁹ and then he summed up the second time and then it sort of went on up. It was a really exciting meeting.

GREENE: On occasions like this, were there ever people on the staff or advisors that thought he shouldn't be quite so honest because of political reasons?

NOLAN: No, I don't think so. There wasn't anybody who knew him well who would say that. I mean he was pretty much ^{on} his own in this kind of thing. It's awfully hard to influence, I suppose, anybody on things like that. That's a matter of style and approach. He was very candid and

very direct, but he was also very cautious, you know. He was very sensible. He would
mixture of him. He had a sense about everything ^{and} in some cases he thought he should be candid and in other cases he ^{be} would be very cautious and very vague. ^{one opaque} He wasn't candid about everything at all times.

GREENE: But with student groups like this, was it his tendency to always be kind of ^{blunt?} boring because ^{hear of him.} it seems that way from stories you've written. . .

NOLAN: I thought this was the toughest student group that I ever saw him with, hardest to get at. ~~I mean~~ ^{he'd} he'd do much better with a group of ~~communists~~ students, you know, where it was a direct sort of a conflict situation. This wasn't quite that. You know, it wasn't, so it was tougher. It was very, very difficult.

GREENE: Well, was there anything that came up in that period about scheduling, major changes that would be of interest ^{or} that you remember?

NOLAN: No. I just don't remember.

GREENE: Well, my next thing--and I'm not at all sure that it's in good chronological order--was Michigan. You told me you went into Michigan? Now you may have just scheduled it ^{the} trip on April 11th, Lansing, Grand Rapids, and Kalamazoo.

NOLAN: Yeah. No, I didn't go in. I scheduled it.

GREENE: Yeah. Anything about that? Maybe that's too vague.

NOLAN: No, no. ^{There} ~~is~~ is. After I scheduled it--I think that was early; I think that was shortly after I took over the scheduling, like maybe a week after or something like that--I came in there and we had the possibility of going into Michigan, ^{and} we just decided to go ahead and do it. So we sent out advance men, worked up a schedule very fast and just pulled it all in and it was ready to go. After we got it ~~all~~ ^{filled in,} (Kenneth P.) Ken O'Donnell ^[Kenneth P. O'Donnell] came to me and said, "Who in the hell scheduled that

Michigan trip?" I said, "I did." He said,
 "Who did you talk to?" "[Mildred] ⁶⁶Mill^Y Jeffrey."
 And he said, "It's all wrong." He said, "It's
 going to be a disaster. It's the wrong place,
^{are the} the wrong people. It's not with the right
 people. It's the wrong time to go ^{and} the
 first thing you should have done, you should
 have talked to Jack ^[Jack T. Conway] Conway, and he would have
 straightened you out."

GREENE:

How soon before the visit was this?

NOLAN:

Well, it was so close that it couldn't be
 changed, three or four days, something like that.
 And ^{all} all the guys were out there, and all the
 reports are coming in announcing what we're
 doing. ^{IN} Lansing, they got this set up there,
 is it okay? So we went ahead with it, but I
 had great--we went ahead with it because we
 had to--doubt, reservations about it after
 having this very, very strong, solid person ⁰⁰⁰⁰
 Kenny ^O O'Donnell is a great friend of mine and
 I have great respect for his judgement. If I

had known his attitude was going to be this
~~I would never have, you know,~~ I certainly would
have talked to him before. [Interruption]

I certainly would have talked to him and I
certainly would have taken his views into
account. And it disturbed me to be embarked
on a course of action from which we could not
turn and find him in such strong disagreement.

And I don't really, I don't think I knew at the
time, and I certainly don't remember what the
factions were, but it involved Mildred Jeffrey,
it involved the UAW [United Automobile, Aircraft,
and Agricultural Implement Workers of America],

and the Michigan Democratic party, and
[G. Mennen] Williams, and you know, all
that. But then, we went on into Michigan, or
they went on into Michigan, and it was a smash.

[Zolton A. Ferency]
Zolton Ferency
[G. Mennen Williams]

God, it was great.

GREENE: Yeah. Who would you have consulted in advance
of a trip like that as far as who to set him up
with and who to get in touch with?

nolan: Well generally everybody, you know, that we thought of ~~you know~~. Start with an outlined schedule, ^{like} ~~you know~~, the eleventh is Michigan ~~or whatever it is~~ and see where he's going to be before and where he's going after that, and when he can get in and when he can get out ~~and~~ then talk to somebody there, a state chairman or Conway or Milly or somebody. And then on the basis of that ~~you know~~ put it together.

GREENE: But you wouldn't normally consult someone like Kenny O'Donnell or ~~(Stephen E.)~~ Steve Smith. ^[Stephen E. Smith]

NOLAN: Well, no, I would not normally consult Steve Smith. I would consult Kenny. I forget what Kenny's slot was at that time.

GREENE: Well, there's been some debate, actually, about what it was.

NOLAN: Yeah. Well it was wild because everybody was over at 2000 L Street ^{There were} a bunch of offices ^{and} our office ^{was} in the middle ^{had} so you've got ~~(Theodore C.)~~ ^[Theodore C. Sorensen] Sorensen, O'Donnell, ~~(Lawrence F.)~~ ^[Lawrence F. O'Brien] O'Brien ~~you~~ ^{know} and people moving into and out of offices,

and people away on trips and setting up. But among the political types ⁰⁰⁰⁰ and as I recall, Ken was working on Michigan and Chicago, Illinois, New York and, you know, some bunch of states like that.

GREENE: But that didn't necessarily mean that he would be asked his opinions ~~for~~ as far as who the senator should be seeing and who he should be avoiding.

NOLAN: Well, I don't remember why I didn't talk to him, but I think it probably was because he was away, or we did it in a hurry or something like that. I wasn't trying to get past him or go around him or anything ⁹ but in every state they've got factions, and in every campaign you have people within the campaign who have some interest in those factions ² for them or against them and who have some decided ideas about who you ought to be with and who you ought not to be with there. And my theory of it, I guess, is that you do better if you listen to all that ⁰

and then you still may have to make some hard decisions ~~on~~ you probably ~~do~~ but you don't want to make them on the basis of lack of information. You want to look at both sides.

GREENE: Were there any other instances like this ~~where~~ ^{which} somebody working for the senator didn't approve of?

NOLAN: Oh yeah, ~~A~~ lot of them. But usually not Kenny O'Donnell. ~~Kenny~~ was not in the '68 campaign what he was in the '60 campaign. In the '60 campaign, [✓] this really was his bag. And in the '60 campaign if Ken said, you know, "don't go into Michigan," or, "go into Michigan, but only go to Lansing and spend the whole day there with the governor's party," ^{or something} like that, that was what you did. And what his role was in the '68 campaign was never really defined. ~~you know,~~ the thing never really shook down to the point where anybody knew with any certainty what anybody else was doing, ~~you~~ ~~know~~ and it all changed. It was a very fluid

campaign structure.

GREENE: Who would be the people that normally would criticize the way you would schedule it, and of how much importance was their disapproval?

NOLAN: Everybody. Everybody. Well, everybody ~~beyond~~,⁹ above a certain point, not everybody literally but all of the people[^], ~~all of the~~ [Pierre E.]
[Pierre E. G. Salinger]
Salinger, O'Donnell, Sorensen, Dutton, certainly
[Edward M. Kennedy]
[Edward M.] Ted Kennedy, certainly the candidate himself. ~~And~~ then within states or local areas, you know, whoever was ^{from} ~~up~~ there.

Now, not very much was ever changed, but your mistakes were never--and there were allot of them of course--hidden for very long. You always heard about them.

GREENE: Was there any set way of resolving these things, or was it just a question of putting everything into the hopper and just making some kind of a decision on it?

NOLAN: Well, the latter was as good a shorthand description of it. I mean, just take everything into

consideration and then you have to decide ^o so you go and decide [^] either ~~you're~~ go to Lansing or you're not ~~going~~ going to go to Lansing. You're going to go there and only go to one of the two functions that's there, and then you're going to try to handle the other some other way.

GREENE:

I think it's Lansing ^o I hope I'm remembering this correctly [^] There was one place in Michigan, at any rate, where there was a long motorcade ^o and ^g there was a lot of pressure, I think, by Kenny O'Donnell on the senator to make sure that he got there on time; that these were politicians and they were not happily pre-
anyway,
disposed to him and that he should be certain not to insult them by coming late ^o and ^u he arrived very late because he ran into a terrific crowd and made no real effort to get around it. You know, how would this kind of thing be reflected in the schedule [?] ^o do you have him in the schedule arriving on time, or was it planned that he should take as long as he did to get there?

NOLAN: Oh no, we never planned any delays. No, we never did anything like that deliberately. But there were always ^{100%} ~~if~~ ^{OK} if you're going to be in a state for ten hours, there were always twenty-four hours worth of things to do. ~~And~~ some of those, if they're fairly obvious--it's an appearance two hundred miles away from the closest point in your schedule otherwise that you're going to be-- you decide not to do it and say no ~~instead of~~ ^{you have to say} ~~just saying~~ I'm sorry to somebody. Interruption

On the other hand, if it's doable in a physical sense and there seems to be a real interest in it or it seems to be important, then you try to do it. ~~Now~~ ⁹ what would frequently happen in those situations if we have then hours in a state and twenty-four hours worth of things to do in the state, we'll cut down the scheduled time. We'll make ten hours look like it's really eight and pack in four more and call it two more and schedule it for ten, not deliberately but by a

series of adjustments. And so then you say that if you move fast and everything works, you can do more than just the ten hours. So, you know, you try to do it and it doesn't work out exactly.

GREENE: I hope we didn't talk about this so I don't ask you to repeat it, but when you did this kind of thing, didn't the senator just get so exhausted that that became a problem?

NOLAN: Well it did, well, it didn't in the '68 campaign. The senator and I have a great history of those kinds of things in '64.

GREENE: In '64. I know that.

NOLAN: And that was part of the balance, too. You couldn't, there were limits beyond which you could not overschedule, but there were also very definite limits beyond which you couldn't underschedule. You know, you just had to keep working at it and balancing ^{it}. But, he didn't want to go out and take it easy; he didn't want to waste any time.

GREENE: Being overtired then was not as much of a problem in '68?

NOLAN: It wasn't a problem in '68.

GREENE: Okay, then, is there anything else on Michigan?

NOLAN: No.

GREENE: West Virginia, April 12th and 13th. Beckley, Princeton, Appalachia. Ring a bell?

NOLAN: Well, we scheduled it. n Donald L. Dell advanced it and ~~we~~ got in a flap with some aide to the governor down there ~~and~~ they wrote a bad story on it in the New York Times. They said he threatened somebody ^{from the} state governor's office or something.

GREENE: Over what?

NOLAN: It's something having to do with scheduling. He wanted more police help or less, or something like that. Anyway, these things always get exaggerated.

GREENE: Was there any difficulty in scheduling . . . ?

NOLAN: ~~He~~ Donald's a very good fellow and he's a very good advance man. But, you know, you don't

get a bunch of cream puffs to go out and advance. You get people who are strong and are aggressive. They don't always get on perfectly with the people they're dealing with. If they do, they are probably not getting as much out of the situation as they should be. So there was some flap involving Donald which got some stories in the newspapers.

GREENE: ^{never knew that} I ~~didn't read about it.~~ Was there any difficulty in scheduling him in two such widely distant parts of the country as Michigan and West Virginia for three days running, you know, ~~eleventh~~ ^{11th} in Michigan and ~~twelfth and thirteenth~~ ^{12th and 13th} in West Virginia?

No?

NOLAN: ~~oh~~ no. We go all over the country, fly from coast to coast. ~~And~~ ^{and} we'd wind up in New York at night, get on ^a jet plane, fly to the coast, and open in [Los Angeles] LA in the morning.

GREENE: Was there anyone that sticks out in your mind as having been especially helpful on that trip to West Virginia?

NOLAN: West Virginia. Well, Donald, And I think Lee Fentress was down there, too. It's a tough state, of course, very impoverished, very corrupt politically, a lot of poverty. ^{There's} All of the history of the '60 campaign in West Virginia Bob had been in all those towns ^{with} on the president, ~~you know~~ ^{for} in campaigning West Virginia ^{two} months or something ~~or three~~ ^{very intensively} constantly in the primaries in '60. So there's a lot of lore, a lot of family friends. The 1960 Kennedy organization ^{which} was put together in West Virginia ^{was} comprised of amateurs and schoolteachers, wives, girls, students. No West Virginia pol ^g would touch the Kennedy campaign in the early days in '60. A typical remark would be, ~~you know~~ almost behind the hand, "I really think you're okay and I'd like to help you and I'll do everything I can on the quiet. But you have to understand that I'm running for office myself this year." So there was all of that background going on, but I don't remember anything particular

about it. ^g I know we arrived at a schedule fairly easily and we advanced it, and I think it ran fairly well.

GREENE: Did you arrange for the meeting with John Davison, IV ^[John D. Rockefeller, IV] Jay Rockefeller, the appearance of Jay Rockefeller?

NOLAN: I don't remember. I'm sure I knew about it, but I don't have any, . . .

GREENE: You don't know anything about how it came off?

NOLAN: No. He's a trustee of the ^[the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial] Memorial. I would gather from that that it came off fairly well. You know, since Bob's death, he's been helpful, friendly, identifying with the Kennedy family.

GREENE: I didn't realize he was a trustee one of the original ones?

NOLAN: Yeah.

GREENE: Is there anything else before Nebraska that you can think of, anything in between?

NOLAN: When was Nebraska?

GREENE: Well, the primary was the ^{fourteenth} 14th of May. I think his first appearance wasn't much before that.

NOLAN: Well, Nebraska involved a train trip. Get on a train in Cheyenne or someplace, and go from west to east across the state of Nebraska, winding up in Omaha in the evening. It was advanced for a long time. [Philip C. Sorensen] Phil Sorensen, John. . . .

GREENE: I know who you mean.

NOLAN: Yeah. A fellow from Boston; he was on the school board there for a while.

GREENE: What name is it?

NOLAN: ^{There was} ~~A~~ town named Wahoo, Nebraska; ^{also} ~~A~~ little place in Colorado, just before you come into the state of Nebraska, which is Fred Dutton's birthplace; we stopped ~~in~~ there. I think we were on the train. It was a good trip, I think, ^a good appearance Omaha at the end of the day.

GREENE: Did he enjoy that kind of campaigning?

NOLAN: Yeah. Yeah. Train trips are always fun. They're hard to set up and they involve a lot of work, but they're easy once you get the train rolling. You know, everybody just sits there and it goes on, a Wabash ^b cannonball type thing. There aren't

a lot of places you can do it. We did it that once in Indiana. We always do it in California, coming out of Redwood city or someplace up in northern California on down. Nebraska.

GREENE: Indiana was the big one in this campaign.

NOLAN: Yeah. Indiana was the Wabash Cannonball thing which got a lot of attention.

GREENE: Do you remember anything specific about [James F.] Jim Green, or [Patrick J.] Pat Lucey, and did you have much to do with them directly?

NOLAN: Well, I don't remember anything about Jim Green at all. I never heard of him.

GREENE: He was a state coordinator.

NOLAN: I never went out there, you see.

GREENE: Oh.

NOLAN: Pat Lucey was out there, wasn't he, ⁱⁿ Nebraska?

GREENE: Right. He was ^{head of the} ~~out in~~ Nebraska ^{party} for them.

NOLAN: Yeah. ^g No I used to talk with Pat on the telephone and no, I don't remember much about it.

GREENE: The other names I have, I don't know if any of them will ring a bell. Marvin Werve, he's the

state committ^{ee}man.

NOLAN: No bell.

GREENE: ~~(Maurine)~~ [Isid] [Maurine Biegert] Maurice Biegert, who's supposed to be a woman.

Maurice?

NOLAN: I think we relied primarily on Phil Sorensen as far as Nebraska was concerned. ~~And somebody~~ ~~and~~ they had an office in Omaha, and it was their day and their train. And so, what we did really was just time it and run it and set up the individual stops on it. But as far as ~~the~~ scheduling was concerned--the questions about where we'd go or something like that--I think that we dealt through Phil Sorensen or Pat Lucey. ~~And~~ it seems to me that they were together in an office in Omaha; we used to talk to them on the telephones.

GREENE: That's right. And Frank Morrison, ^[Frank B. Morrison] the ex-governor.

NOLAN: No, well, I know who he is, but I don't remember dealing with him.

GREENE: Okay. Were there any particular problems you had to be careful of in Nebraska, in scheduling?

NOLAN: I don't think so. States like that are easy, you know. I mean, you can't go wrong with a Kennedy in, ~~you know,~~ Grand Island. It's just like. . . . Well, ^{it's} the small town versus the big city. You're always going to do well in the small town.

GREENE: And he liked that kind of campaigning in the small towns?

NOLAN: Well, yeah.

GREENE: I understand the president [John F. Kennedy] didn't.

NOLAN: Well, it's just so successful. I mean you just ~~can't go,~~ ^{you} really can't go wrong. In Krakow or Mendoza or Grand Island, ~~you know,~~ all you have to do is let the word get out, ~~and~~ ^{and} you know, there aren't that many big things that happen in Grand Island. People come into town to watch haircuts. They have a Kennedy or something, ~~it's~~ ^{you know,} it's going to go well. It's not Portland, Oregon.

GREENE: Do you know anything about the meeting, or the almost meeting with Hubert Humprey^h ^[Hubert H. Humphrey] at the Jefferson-
X

Jackson Day dinner? Did you schedule that appearance?

NOLAN: Where was that, Omaha?

GREENE: ~~Yeah.~~ Yes.

NOLAN: Well, I know ~~it was a thing, I mean,~~ how it would be handled was a thing. But I don't remember how it was.

GREENE: You don't remember whether he deliberately avoided Humphrey?

NOLAN: No.

GREENE: Okay. Do you remember any reaction to the results? Were they about what you'd hoped for or . . . ?

NOLAN: Nebraska?

GREENE: ~~Yeah,~~ ^{Yes,} or more or less?

NOLAN: They were much better than I had hoped for. ~~They~~ were . . . I think Ted Sorensen had always told Bob that he would win in Nebraska, and I never really knew enough about it to be sure. So I was favorably impressed with the results there.

GREENE: This, I guess I'm getting kind of draggy because it's a lot of loose ends, but . . .

NOLAN: Well, also, I'm sorry, but I just don't remember the people that you're listing. . .

GREENE: I know. It's funny . . .

NOLAN: . . . three years ago . . .

GREENE: ^{""} Six more months.

NOLAN: . . . and you do these things under an environment where, you know, 413 things happen in a day. ~~And~~ if it's a serious problem you only spend ten or fifteen minutes thinking about it, you know.

GREENE: ^{Yes,} ~~Yeah,~~ And then ~~is~~ another six months have elapsed since we last talked about it, too.

NOLAN: Yeah. Yeah.

GREENE: Okay, you went out to Oregon during the last week of the Oregon campaign, or you were called out there. At least that's where the books put you.

NOLAN: Yeah. Yeah.

GREENE: Well, Steve Smith ~~went~~ out there.

NOLAN: Steve went out.

GREENE: I'm trying to think of who the other person you're thinking of would be.

NOLAN: As I recall, there were four of us. Maybe it was John Douglas or something ~~one of~~.

GREENE: ~~Yeah.~~ ^{Yes.} John Douglas.

NOLAN: John Douglas, Pat Lucey, someone else, and I went out at the same time in response to this call. ~~And~~ so I took over the scheduling for Oregon ~~and~~ ~~we~~ worked all night one night and set up a schedule, and he was out of the state the following day. We got in there in the evening ~~raining~~ ^{in the} ~~and~~ ~~he~~ was going to be gone, ^{to} California or something, the next day, and the following day back in Oregon ~~with~~ ~~no~~ schedule. ~~And~~ ~~we~~ set up a statewide schedule, you know, all over, running around, a lot of stops and everything. ~~And~~ we worked ~~in~~ ^{maybe} we didn't work all night; we worked most of the night--a couple of girls and a couple of guys, advance type.

[Joseph Gargan] from
[Joseph] Joe Gargan, came up ^{from} California or
~~wherever~~ wherever he was. And we got it in to
place ^{and} it was a nifty schedule, and it
covered the whole state. ^{and} when they ran it
off, two days later, ^{it} worked, you know, with
good crowds and good placing, ^{and} so I figured,
and I guess maybe somebody else figured, that's
all we need on scheduling, you know. Now we're
back on the ball and it's going to go. And we
did all right on scheduling in the state, outside
of Portland. But the first time we had a day'
in Portland--and Portland was awfully important--
we found out that it wasn't just a scheduling
problem. ^{It was the same} ~~you know, seeing~~ people who had been able
to do all right scheduling in other places and
elsewhere in the state. But we were just bombing
every stop we made in Portland. People were
disinterested, apathetic. You could bombard
them with leaflets, telephone calls, stickers,
you know, handouts, everything ^{at} on high noon on the
biggest, busiest intersection in downtown Portland

and you'd have three hundred people or something like that. Go out to a shopping center and you could do all your shopping, you know? So it was very, very difficult to figure it was very difficult to get a hold of. We worked at it for two weeks, still ^{on} ~~all the~~ scheduling. It did not run particularly well.

GREENE: What was wrong in the early period? Could you tell by the time you got out there what the mistakes were?

NOLAN: No, I really don't know. That's the only election I guess that any Kennedy's ever lost. ^{There's} ~~and~~ a great willingness on the part of a lot of people to assign blame to certain persons or ^{say,} "you know, if you'd sent in A instead of B in the beginning, it'd be different."

Was it ~~was it~~ a lack of knowledge of the type of state Oregon was or . . .

NOLAN: Perhaps. Oregon was a setup for [Eugene J.] ^[Eugene J. McCarthy] Gene McCarthy. There were certain people who were

made to run in Oregon, and McCarthy is that type.

For many years, ^{....} you know, ~~and~~ ^g Senator Wayne Morse was that type. ~~And~~ ^z then other people who have gone out there, (Nelson A.) Rockefeller ^[Nelson A. Rockefeller] or

whoever, and surprised the nation in presidential primaries, I think not so much because of the kind of campaign they ran but more because of the type of candidate they were. Oregon is to a greater degree than most other states white, Christian, well-educated, non black, sort of literate, you know. It's like a northwest suburbia type place. So I think that there was a lack of recognition of that early on, a lack of recognition of how well Gene McCarthy as a candidate fitted the electorate in Oregon. And that was a mistake, not anyone's in particular.

It was a state of judgement generally shared by, as far as I know, all the people in the campaign.

So Oregon was underestimated. ~~And~~ ^g then there was a reliance on Mrs. Green ^[Edith S. Green] in a political sense, because she was so personally popular in Oregon,

very attractive ^{with} ~~and~~ personal political sense,
 a very strong-willed woman, quite confident.
 You know, "if you come in and do it my way, it
 will work out." ~~And~~ we relied generally on that
 and on her. ~~In the last analysis,~~ Oregon, in
 any way ^{you} ~~to~~ approach it ^{you} would have been quite
 difficult to win. In the last analysis, if it
 was important ^{enough} to get the effort, it might have
 been worthwhile to just go on in and just do
 everything from scratch, just be courteous to
 Mrs. Green, but just go an independent way.

When I got out there, there wasn't any ^{OOO} ~~it~~
 just wasn't set up, it wasn't organized. And
 everybody was out there. Larry [was out there,
 [William J. vanden Heuvel]
 [William ~~B~~] Bill vanden Heuvel, was out there.
 the
 Poor old Bill has caught a lot of ¹ flak for it,
 you know, which I think is unfair basically.

GREENE: ~~And~~ Barrett Prettyman, too, ^[H. Barrett Prettyman, Jr.] ^{was} in the books; ~~who~~ he
 says he was out there exactly one weekend.

NOLAN: Yeah. Barrett and Bill ^{et} ~~or~~ Barrett and
 Herb Schmirz ^[Herbert Schmertz] ~~but~~ they went in as

advance men, you know. They went in there to set up a trip ^{and} then they stayed on for a while, or one of them stayed on and the other one went away or something. But that was a long time before ^{around} that was in the middle of March as I recall. Then they went on down into the end of May and a hell of a lot had happened in between. It would be hard to lay all that at Barrett's door or at Bill's.

GREENE: How widely did you consult as far as things you might do that would be good in Oregon? Did you go to anybody? I know ~~that~~ [Wesley A., Jr.] [A. Wesley Barthelmes, Jr.] was Barthelmes, was called at one point. Were there other people that you contacted, to see what, you know, Oregonians or people with an expertise on Oregon, to see what you should do that would be effective?

NOLAN: Oh, yeah. Everybody.

GREENE: Because I've read and I guess heard that there were some, sort of, obvious things that were missed. Like there was a new dam that was the pride and

joy of northwestern Oregon, or some section of the state that nobody every went to, and things like ~~that~~ this they felt were obviously appropriate that were somehow missed. Why would that happen?

NOLAN: I don't know. I never heard of the dam. No. We really--with the only limitation being time--~~did~~ made an extraordinary effort on the scheduling. And we did all right on scheduling outside of Portland, and we never did anything ~~in~~ in Portland that was any good. I mean, we really didn't have a stop in the city of Portland that . . . and ~~after~~ after the first bad day or so I used to go ^{you know,} around and ^{them} look at ~~him~~ before and look at ~~him~~ ^{them} during the appearance and after, and it just never worked. ^{we} Just never had a really satisfactory appearance in Portland.

GREENE: Was there any problem in scheduling away from McCarthy? ~~did~~ did you have access to his . . .

NOLAN: We ran into him one time.

GREENE: I know. Did you have access to his schedules?

NOLAN: I think so. I think so. ~~And~~ ^{we} knew he was going to be at the zoo or the park that day . . .

GREENE: The Portland ~~Zoo~~.

NOLAN: . . . but we didn't know we were going to be there, see. ~~And~~ ^{we} went there as a last minute decision ~~we~~ ^{we} were someplace else and we had to fill in some time or something. ~~And~~ ^{It was} like we had appearance one and appearance three and appearance two bombed--like we got a phone call from the guy who said, "Look, there's nobody here. Don't come by." So, you've got an hour in the middle of the afternoon or something ^{so} a last minute decision ^{was made:} let's go to the zoo. McCarthy's going to be there. Well, that's all right; it's a big zoo. And he's going to get on the train at one end at such-and-such a time, and we'll be on a train at the other and the trains will pass. . . . Well, it didn't happen quite that way. It wasn't good.

GREENE: Were you with the senator when you ran into
McCarthy?

NOLAN: Yeah.

GREENE: Was there any discussion about how it should be
handled?

NOLAN: No, not in the discussion sense. This was the
time when the question of debate or no-debate
was big ^{and} that was primarily the reason for
playing it the way it was played, although
that decision was more instinctive than
rational ^{you} know, thought out. It's just
pretty hard to say that you're not going to have
a debate with McCarthy and then you meet him ^{and}
and then he's, you know, running around all
over saying he wants a debate and so on, and you
meet him ^{and} you say, "Nice to see you, but I
cant stop to talk." So, as I recall, we came
over on the railroad and arrived at the end of
the railroad where the cars were, ^{and} ready to
supposedly
go on to stop three which was ~~supposedly~~ ^{supposedly} waiting
at that time. And up the hill, out of the rock

garden or wherever it was comes Gene McCarthy, in the flesh, looking like he looks. So when we got off the train and we spotted him, it was a question of whether to wait and say hello, stay there, get in the cars and go, or what. At any rate, we got in the cars and went. So the front part of the motorcade pulled on out of the zoo. McCarthy arrives at what was left of the motorcade, including the press bus, gets on the press bus and, you know, all the news guys are filming him. McCarthy says, you know, "Where is Bob Kennedy? I thought we'd ~~be~~ have a chance to talk and meet and everything." ~~you~~ know ~~it~~. All the news guys say, "He went that way." So then we get down at the bottom of the hill and the back of the motorcade, including the press bus and McCarthy is still back in the zoo and so we wait there for, you know, five minutes or so. Finally the rest of the thing comes along ~~the driver~~ and we drive right out.


GREENE:W Was there any regret afterwards that it was
sort of
handled that way, or did the senator, think
thing that
that was the only ~~way~~ ~~it~~ could have been done?

NOLAN: Well, I don't. . . . I think that was the only
thing that could have been done.

GREENE: Because it got a lot of play the next day, didn't
it, in the papers?

NOLAN: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Well, I don't know what
kind of play it got nationally. It got a story
in the [Portland] Oregonian . . .

GREENE: I mean in Oregon.

NOLAN: ~~Yeah.~~ And  you know, ^{as a} near confrontation sort of
thing. The thinking on that point, the reason
for not debating McCarthy, of course, was the
feeling that Kennedy was ahead. If you're ahead
you don't debate.

GREENE: Right. Well, where did that feeling start to
recede? ?

NOLAN: Well, I don't know. I guess it receded for me
on election day.

GREENE: You were fairly confident up until election day.?

NOLAN: Yeah. You know the terrible thing is that you write things down. But I remember we sat in a restaurant someplace one day and wrote out the percent of the vote that we thought that Bob Kennedy would get in the Oregon election. ~~And~~ Joe Gargan said 44 percent, John Ellis said 40 percent, Carmine Parisi--or Bellino, ^[Carmine S. Bellino] I don't remember which

GREENE: Probably Parisi.

NOLAN: . . . said ~~thirty-nine~~³⁹ percent, I said 38 percent. The unstated but underlying assumption of all these percentages is that each of these percentages is a winner, because whatever remains is split between McCarthy and whoever--Humphrey or. . . . So we were all wrong. ~~And~~ I think it came out about 38 percent.

GREENE: I think it was exactly 38 percent.

NOLAN: Yeah. So technically I ^{had the} right answer~~d~~, but it was on the wrong basic premise.

GREENE: Because McCarthy got so much more than you'd expected?

NOLAN: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, we all assumed that whatever this percentage was, that McCarthy's percentage would be lower and the difference would be split off on Humphrey. Now a lot of the press guys disagreed with that going in, but the polls, ~~you know,~~ our polls and the telephone thing, you know, our indicators were coming up favorably.

GREENE: Did you talk to the senator at all in the day or so before the election?

NOLAN: I don't remember.

~~greene/~~

GREENE: Did you see him afterwards?

NOLAN: I saw him the night of the election.

GREENE: After it had become obvious that he was going to lose?

NOLAN: Yeah. Well, he came back to . . . he was in California the day of the election. He ~~came~~ ^{flew} back to Portland that night. They knew on the plane, on the basis of the early results from Portland, so in the city they knew he was

going to lose or that he had lost ~~by the time~~
by the time they landed in Portland. They
got out and just came on into the hotel, had
a statement, went down to the ballroom, read
the statement, went back up to the room. And
I came back ^{to} ~~from~~ Washington that night ~~on~~
~~planes.~~

GREENE: But you couldn't tell whether he ~~was~~ ^{had} ~~he~~
kind of expected it by the last couple days or
not?

NOLAN: ^{did} No, I don't think he ^{did} expected it although it
~~was, you know,~~ ^{it} was close, it was going to be
close. On the other hand, ^{in twenty-six} ~~the~~ ^{elections} ~~you know~~
states, primaries, national, everything ^{on} ~~losing~~
was not an experience that anybody had had before.
So it was a very sharp disappointment. He was
very good. Ethel was very good. Itt was not
a particularly happy moment.

GREENE: I suppose to lose gracefully says something about
you, too.

NOLAN: ~~Umhm~~ Sure it does. How much guts you have, and who you blame, and who you blame privately.

I suppose if you have good manners you don't ever blame anybody publicly. But ^{who you} ~~we~~ blame ^{is the point.} privately ~~for its~~.

GREENE: Would you say that his private placement of blame was the same as his public placement?

NOLAN: Yes. Perfectly consistent.

GREENE: Did you do anything on South Dakota [?] ~~?~~ did you schedule his appearances?

NOLAN: No. Yeah, I scheduled them.

GREENE: Was there anything in particular worth mentioning?

NOLAN: ^{I remember} No. ~~Land~~ing in a place called Chadron, Nebraska,

I think, ^{an} airport [?] closer to Pine Ridge than

Rapid City, ^{and} going over there in a motorcade, ~~a fellow~~

~~in~~ ^{with} a guy from the Indian Affairs ^{Indian Affairs Subcommittee} Committee.

~~and a guy for handling~~ George McGovern ^{George S. McGovern}

was. No, I don't remember much about it.

GREENE: Did you have ^{any} ~~much~~ contact with McGovern ^[George S. McGovern] or his

office as far as what they thought they could do

and what you wanted them to do?

NOLAN: Yeah, ~~But~~ I don't remember it specifically.
You know, I talked to McGovern.

GREENE: Was Senator Kennedy understanding about people like McGovern, about their reluctance to take sides when they were up for reelection themselves?

NOLAN: McGovern? McGovern never flinched.

GREENE: Now this is something that's vague in my mind. Did McGovern actually come out publically for Robert Kennedy, or was it ^{just} . . .

NOLAN: Oh, yeah. No, I don't think . . .

GREENE: Then I'm wrong.

NOLAN: Yeah. I don't think Bob ever appeared in South Dakota that McGovern wasn't with him, nor did President Kennedy in 1960 . . .

GREENE: Yeah, I know that.

NOLAN: . . . when he ran thirty-five thousand votes behind George McGovern.

GREENE: See, now I thought McGovern had done what he could, you know, in making appearances but had always

fallen short of a direct endorsement. That's not so?

NOLAN: No.

GREENE: Well, was there anyone who felt McGovern should have been used more then, that maybe they didn't . . .

NOLAN: Was he up then? Yeah, he was.

GREENE: Yeah, ^{Yes,} he was.

NOLAN: Now, in terms of ^a direct endorsement, I don't remember who else was, ~~who else did Bob run~~ ^{an} against in that South Dakota primary?

GREENE: That's a delicate question. I think McCarthy and Humphrey, was it? Was ~~it~~ Humphrey at that point in South Dakota?

NOLAN: Yeah. Maybe McGovern didn't endorse--I'm just not sure.

GREENE: I don't think I'm thinking of McGovern's own interview and I'm fairly certain that he said that he did as much as he could, but that he always fell short of it.

NOLAN: Yeah. I think that everybody recognized that it was as much as he could. ~~And~~ I'm quite sure

that he was at Bob's side in every South Dakota appearance. ^{g+e} It may have been with Humphrey, too.

You know, I don't know. Humphrey is a very close friend; Humphrey lived next ^{door} ~~store~~ to George McGovern for ten years, twelve, ^{of} so.

GREENE: Because Fred Harris ^[Fred R. Harris] sort of had the same dilemma in a lot of ways . . .

NOLAN: No. It was very different.

GREENE: Well, in that he also had a close personal friendship with Humphrey and Kennedy. Yeah, why don't you define the difference because there obviously was one.

NOLAN: George McGovern was not a national cochairman of the Citizens for Humphrey.

GREENE: Was Kennedy mad about that?

NOLAN: Well, I don't think ~~if~~ he liked it.

GREENE: Well, to hear the other side, you know, there was supposedly some kind of understanding. You don't think that was the case?

NOLAN: Well, I think it's pretty hard to get an

understanding that will cover that, you know. That's quite a bit past an endorsement to take over the national chairmanship of something like the citizens committee.

GREENE: Did you ever actually discuss that with him or is this just your own feelings about it?

NOLAN: No. I don't think I ever discussed it with him. But, if McGovern was short of an endorsement, the difference was understandable, and his position in the primaries was very different from Fred Harris. His relationship with the Kennedys, of course, predated Harris's by quite a ways. He was a strong supporter of the president's in the '60 campaign. he was a great friend of Bob's and just very, very good.

GREENE: Is there anything else on South Dakota or should we try to finish up with California ✓?

NOLAN: I can't think of anything else on South Dakota.

greene: Okay. What kind of part did you take in California after the Oregon, and South Dakota . . .
excuse me, after the Oregon?

NOLAN: Almost none. Almost none. I don't think I did anything in California, ~~Because~~ I came back here the night of the Oregon primary, and what was that, the 28th? twenty-eighth?

GREENE: Right, exactly.

NOLAN: And then California was the ^{fourth,} 4th and I was here the night of the election in California. ~~And~~ I'm sure I was here between those two dates and was thinking about the post-California period rather than the campaign in California.

GREENE: Right. You didn't do any of the scheduling then in the last part of California?

NOLAN: No.

GREENE: Is there anything that you could add to what's already been written about the difficulties in California with Jesse M. Unruh's ^[Jesse M. Unruh] organization?

NOLAN: No. No. We talked about that earlier, about the part of it that I ~~wanted to go~~ was involved in, ^{just} ~~that~~ I. . . .

GREENE: Well, as far as the actual campaign, are there any last conversations which should be related

or anything of that sort?

NOLAN: No. I don't think so.

GREENE: You were planning the European trip that was supposed to take place . . .

NOLAN: No. I was planning, well, the trip back east, however that was going to shake out New York.

GREENE: Oh. You were working on that?

NOLAN: Yeah. I forget where Joe was. I think Joe was in California, he was going to shift to New York. And then I had conversations with Wayne Owens, stops on the way back, going into Buffalo and New York City and that sort of thing.

GREENE: Umhmm. Did you have much to do with [John F.] English and [John J.] Burns and some of the other people in New York who were planning the campaign?

NOLAN: I was beginning to. I was beginning to at that time. I'd known them, you know, from before. But I'm quite sure I did not go up there; I talked to them on the telephone and I was just setting up.

I think the idea was to come back to a heavy day in New York, ~~and then~~ [Interruption]

GREENE: I don't know . . . why did I have that European trip? Some book mentioned that you were helping to plan a post-California European trip, or that in fact, 'excuse me, I think it was supposed to be a trip for after the convention or just prior to the convention.

NOLAN: Umhmm, It never ~~got~~^{got} it was discussed, you know, as a possibility, but it never got really ~~very close to, never got~~ beyond the early discussion stage.

GREENE: How did you feel about that? did you think that was a wise thing to be thinking about in those days?

NOLAN: I just don't recall. I just, I suppose that I probably would have been involved in that because I had done the European trip before and done all the foreign trips. And I remember talking about it. But the question then, with a lot of state nominating conventions in June, and so I think

we were thinking about the remaining primaries and then getting some kind of appearances--Bob or Ted or something^{body}--coverage at the state nominating conventions as they came up. That was really the first order of business and then it was a question of--and I don't remember whether it was before or after the convention⁷ but some block of time in there which could be used for a week or so.

GREENE: Why was he interested in something like that? What did he think it would accomplish?

NOLAN: Well I think generally that he liked foreign trips. All of the foreign trips had worked out well in the sense that they had been very well covered ^{and} they had produced exciting and stimulating and interesting experiences for him and Ethel and the family. ^{and} I think he felt that he got a lot out of them personally, and also that, you know, it's a funny thing. You can get better press coverage in the United States from Warsaw, Poland than you can from

Kearney, Nebraska or you know, some other place that you go. If you're in the United States, unless you're saying something that's ethical or something, most of what you do has a local rather than a national thrust. If you go outside the United States, almost everything that you do has a national thrust. ~~And~~ so I think he generally had that feeling about foreign trips and he liked them ~~and you know,~~ we talked about that eastern European trip ~~that~~ which was proposed and planned in the fall of '67, late '67. So I think Bob always had that kind of a bias, you know. ^{If} he had a few days, go to Poland.

GREENE: Is there anything else on that campaign that you can think of. *I know how vague it is, so maybe something will* occur to you later.

NOLAN: What are the books, incidentally? You know, I have the feeling that I've read one or two books, but . . .

GREENE: Oh, there ^{are} so many of them. And you know, for

a while I knew ~~not~~ exactly where everything I
was thinking of came from; I had a file cabinet
in my head. But it's so long ago. [Interruption]

Well, in '68--let me turn this off.