

**John T. Galvin Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 5/15/1964**  
Administrative Information

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**Biographical Note**

Galvin, (1914 - 1994), Massachusetts political figure; advertising and publicity volunteer for John F. Kennedy (1946-1958), discusses working with JFK on veterans' housing, JFK as a young congressman, and Lodge's campaign team, among other issues.

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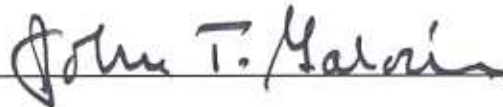
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John T. Galvin – JFK #1

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Oral History Interview

with

John T. Galvin

May 15, 1964  
Boston, Massachusetts

By Ed Martin

For the John F. Kennedy Library

MARTIN: John, you had a long association with the late President Kennedy [John F. Kennedy]. Can you tell us when that association first began and the circumstances surrounding your first contact with him?

GALVIN: I was working for John C. Dowd in the advertising business, right after the war in 1946. One day Mr. Dowd came in to me and asked me was I going to be in that afternoon and I told him I was. He said a young man named John Kennedy was coming in and was going

[-1-]

to make an announcement for either lieutenant governor or congressman in the primary elections which would take place that year. He asked me would I stand by and when Jack Kennedy came in, would I write his announcement for the newspapers with a statement from him, and also would I help on a radio broadcast which was going to take place early that particular evening. That was the beginning of my association with him.

Later, I worked with him in Washington on a volunteer basis. I used to go down a couple a days a week. I lived with him, at the time, when I did go down and one of the first and most important things that we worked on was the Taft-Ellender-Wagner [Robert A. Taft, Allen J. Ellender, Robert Ferdinand Wagner] housing bill. Veterans' housing was a great

issue, at the time, and it was an issue with which John Kennedy became one of the country's outstanding experts.

[-2-]

Ted Reardon [Timothy J. Reardon, Jr.] and I set up a committee for this particular legislation and the purpose of the committee was to rally support of veterans' organizations all across the country. It was climaxed with a gigantic veterans' rally in the auditorium of the Department of Commerce at which Jack presided for the first part of the conference and Senator Javits [Jacob K. Javits], then Congressman Javits, presided at the second part of it.

We had set up a nonpartisan committee consisting of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., representing one of the veterans' organizations, the American Veterans Committee I think it was. The representative of the Catholic War Veterans, was the present Mayor of New York, Mayor Robert Wagner [Robert Ferdinand Wagner, Jr.]; Congressman Javits, as I say, was another member; and Jack Kennedy was chairman. Ted Reardon and I worked on this committee and we would up at this rally and

[-3-]

we consistently worked on veterans' housing legislation with Jack Kennedy for that period. We went around the state and spoke to veterans groups and tried to rally as much support as we could get the best possible housing bill that we could get.

That was the early part of his Congressional career. From then until 1958, I guess, I handled the great bulk of his publicity that came out of his Washington office, either in Washington or here in Boston.

I wrote his announcement for the Senate in 1952. I wrote the statement and we prepared the biographical material that went out to the newspapers at that time. We did that out of the 122 Bowdoin Street office after Jack came from a late Sunday afternoon meeting with the then Governor Dever [Paul A. Dever] to find out what Governor Dever's plans were for his upcoming election.

[-4-]

I might say that I recommend Mark Dalton to be manager of the campaign in '46. He became manager of the campaign and did a wonderful job. Mark was just back out of the service. He had good experience. He was a former newspaper man with the Boston and graduated from law school, lived in Cambridge and came from a family very well thought of in that particular area.

In 1952, Mark, again was, at the beginning of the campaign at least was campaign manager. I was the second one to come into the office. Kenny O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell], as I recall, was the third. Later on, Larry O'Brien came down from Springfield. He and Dave Powers [David F. Powers] and several others worked on the political end of the campaign; I worked, primarily, on publicity, promotion, advertising and the main thing that I did that particular year was get out the

[-5-]

tabloid newspaper which I worked on for a long time – which eventually was used in, President Kennedy told me, which was eventually used in Wisconsin and West Virginia and I don't know how many other places! Shut it off for a minute.

Present at the first meeting, I forgot to say, where we built the announcement in Mr. Dowd's office that Jack was going to be a candidate was Red Fay [Paul B. Fay, Jr.] who later on became Under Secretary of the Navy and with whom I still correspond in Washington. I've seen him once or twice or three times since then. I suppose the most recent time I saw him was at the christening of the ship, Bethlehem. I have a great deal of admiration for Red Fay.

Red and I were with Jack and the then Jacqueline Bouvier [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy] when, the day down at Newport, the day they took their test and went to City Hall to get their marriage license.

[-6-]

I attended President Kennedy's wedding and the reception, as I did Bobby's [Robert F. Kennedy] wedding and Eunice's [Eunice Kennedy Shriver] wedding.

In the campaign of '52, I worked, in one particular problem of the campaign, I worked with Sarge Shriver [R. Sargent Shriver, Jr.]. This was a problem that was bothering the President, or the Congressman at that time, the relationship to the Jewish vote with Henry Cabot Lodge and we got an awful lot of the Jewish leaders together at the Boston Club and put it right on the line to them about what Jack Kennedy had done as a Congressman, to vote for them and their particular problems in Israel. He made a trip, of course, to Israel with Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr. and we used a lot of that material in the campaign.

MARTIN: Well, John, going back to the beginnings in '46. What type of person was he gathering around him, the young veteran? Was there anybody in that early group that you

[-7-]

can honestly say had come political experience?

GALVIN: The politically experienced people were with, I think, his opponents in the campaign. There were many of them who approached us individually to – to either go with Mike Neville [Michael J. Neville], who I might say was a real wonderful guy, one of Jack's opponents, there was a lot of pressure on us to do this or that in the campaign but we had at that time, I don't know whether you remember it, the Kennedy Post of which Jack was the first Commanding Officer, and in that, I think, he had built an organization of young people, young fellows just back out of the service, who I think really and truly had a great desire to bring about some changes in American political life. They had lived in the shadows of the Curleys [James Michael Curley] and others during that period and I think that all of us wanted to meet

somebody like Jack Kennedy and to work to push him along as much as we could. There were other young men too who did eventually

[-8-]

could. And other young men who did, eventually come out of that group.

But in the early days, the campaigners....Dave Powers, of course, was over in Charlestown. I used to go around and make the circuit in the campaign and visit Dave at his headquarters. Paul Reddam and Tom Broderick [Thomas Broderick] were out in Brighton; Mark was in Cambridge. Bobby Kennedy, of course, campaigned some during that particular period. He was a sailor on the "USS Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr.," which happened to be in Boston. There were several others – Frank Morrissey [Francis X. Morrissey] – several others who were involved in that first campaign, many of whose names I forget. There was a fellow named Emmet Kelly over in East Boston.

And I've seen Dave [Dave Powers] many, many times since and think he's done a wonderful job. He was a wonderful companion and a friend to President Kennedy. That goes without saying.

[-9-]

MARTIN: Well, John, was there any departure from the strategy of campaigning that was typical of the Boston political type of campaigning that existed before the war? Was there any new type of procedure that Jack Kennedy followed? Was -? Did your agency work up any kind of a....

GALVIN: No. As far as the – there were no gimmicks in the campaign that I recall, at that time, such as we later had in the '52 campaign with – I think gimmick isn't the word – with the teas, the first of which took place in Worcester. There was nothing like that at that particular period.

It just seemed that this enthusiastic young group of people just outworked everybody else, outworked the opponents, got into the houses, and in themselves, got an

[-10-]

awful lot of other people.

This is very unfair, really, in a way, of me to even think of singling out, but you have to single out guys like Dave Powers and some of the others I mentioned. But there were so many other young people, both young men and young women, involved in this campaign that it is almost impossible to single out, because that was the first campaign that I had been involved in. I had been born and brought up around there, Egleston Square in Roxbury, and had seen a lot of politics and liked politics.

It was the first one that – we had just great enthusiasm which was to mark almost every one of President Kennedy's campaigns after that. It was the enthusiasm of the young people, the kind of enthusiasm that you couldn't buy, that you hadn't seen before. It was quite different from the regular pols, if you want to call them that. While they were hanging



around the street corners

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and discussing the strategy, or in the back room, or someplace else, the Kennedy gang were out working! Now this was true again, and even on a much larger scale, in '52.

I went up to Worcester with them. And out of a borrowed typewriter, out of the Worcester Telegram Gazette, I wrote my first story about a Worcester tea which had about four thousand people. That thing, as a matter of fact, just magnified what went on in the smaller campaign in the Eleventh Congressional District.

MARTIN: Well, John, the slogan he picked for his first entry into politics was, I believe, "A New Generation Picks a Lender."

GALVIN: Yes. That was a slogan from old Joe Kane [Joseph Kane] who was around Boston for years, and who I think is still alive. I haven't seen him for a while but, well, it was one of the last

[-12-]

times that I was with him was when I went down with Congressman Kennedy, down to Congressman Bates' [George J. Bates] funeral. Joe Kane and he and I went down together, down with the present Bill Bates [William H. Bates]. When his father got killed in that airplane crash in Washington, Jack was an honorary pall-bearer and the two of us went down to see him.

I used to meet Joe once in a while on the street. He was the one that coined that. He was a very resourceful gentleman. He was, I think, a distant relative of Mr. Kennedy's [Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr.].

MARTIN: They certainly took advantage of the fact that he was a veteran and did they gear the early beginnings of that campaign towards the veterans?

GALVIN: I think all the issues at that particular time involved veterans. Every issue. Housing, at that time, was the great pressuring problem and everybody was discussing an adequate veterans' housing

[-13-]

program.

The young people were eager. Married before, now, or after service, young families, and that was the big issue of the day. It was an issue that involved everybody because young people were doubling up with in-laws and starting out life in a way that might, which was causing, friction and so this was the big issue. There was no question that employment or unemployment wasn't an issue because there were plenty of jobs around during that period.

Money seemed to be plentiful, but housing was the big thing.

MARTIN: John, after his election, in that first fight, you say you went down to Washington from time to time.

GALVIN: Yes. The first call was just around Christmas. He was down at Palm Beach and he called Norman McDonald, my boss at the Massachusetts Federation of Taxpayers, a really great friend of mine, Norman, and great friend of JFK's, as it were.

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And he asked Norm could I go down and work with him for three months?

Well, Norman told him I'd call him back and he came out to see me at the office and said, "Congressman Kennedy wants you to work with him for three months, live with him," he said, "also." He will pay you," he said, "and so forth." "What I would like you to do," he said, "is see if you can work out something. Don't take any money from him. But you can go down and help him a couple of days a week."

He said, "The legislature will just be starting in fresh session in January and I would like to have you around part of that time."

So I called Jack back in Florida and I worked out a deal where I flew down and flew back and stayed with him a couple of days a week, many times bringing work

[-15-]

home and then working on it here and shooting it down to Ted Reardon who was doing other things, but who would follow up on mail and letters and other phases of this campaign we were going through, the ultimate climax of which, as I told you, was this great rally that we had in Washington.

MARTIN: Rally?

GALVIN: Great rally. That great veterans housing rally for support of the Taft-Ellender-Wagner bill which was held at big auditorium in the U.S. Department of Commerce Building.

MARTIN: Where did you stay, John, when you were in Washington?

GALVIN: I lived – I always stayed with Jack Kennedy. I stayed with him off and on, no matter when I went down or for what business, I stayed with him off and on down there for a period of ten years.

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MARTIN: He had bachelor quarters in those days, didn't he?

GALVIN: No – he had a house. Margaret Ambrose was his cook. I lived with him in three different houses down there; one of which was very close to the house he was in when he was elected President.

I lived with him and Margaret Ambrose was the cook. She used to make Jack's lunch and send it down to the Capitol with either Billy Sutton [William J. Sutton] or with a valet that he had gotten in the war.

I used to, at least, have breakfast with him there at the house in the morning and then in the evening sometimes I had dinner with him. Sometimes I had dinner at the house alone. Other times I'd pick up some of our Boston pals and eat around town, at Martin's, at the corner of the street on which he lived, or go down around the Mayflower. Maurice Tobin [Maurice J. Tobin] at a later stage at least, Maurice Tobin was down there and a lot of the Boston people were working for

[-17-]

him and we used to get together once in a while; Billy Sutton, Ted Reardon and others.

MARTIN: John, do you recall what type of an association he had as a freshman Congressman down there to House Speaker John McCormack [John William McCormack]?

GALVIN: He was never very friendly to John McCormack.  
As a matter of fact, he led a rump meeting of a group of young Democratic Congressmen when they made a protest to President Truman [Harry S. Truman]. They thought they weren't getting the proper kind of treatment. He felt that he wasn't getting any patronage or any recognition here; John McCormack was getting it all. Of course, Jack, in turn, was being pushed a little bit by a lot of bright young guys who were helping with his campaign and who saw in some of these positions, such as U.S. Attorney General, a chance to really give their

[-18-]

careers in the law a boost.

Later on, as a matter of fact in the '52 campaign, it seems to me that I wrote a speech for John McCormack. But all of the relationship between Paul Dever, between the President and Paul Dever, between Jack Kennedy and John McCormack, and others of that particular political era, all was handled by Mr. Kennedy.

MARTIN: Well, was he drawn in to this complaint by other Massachusetts Congressmen?

GALVIN: I was trying to think while I was saying that, Eddie, if some of the other Massachusetts Congressmen were involved. I think they were. My recollection – I didn't happen to be down there, at the time, but my recollection was that they might have gone to Congressman McCormack. I'm sure that this

could be checked out, but I know that they went to

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President Truman about this particular thing.

MARTIN: John, he became very –

GALVIN: And I think it was – I think, in that case, he led a whole group of young Congressmen to Truman's office or they went together.

Another time that I was with him down there, we asked Secretary of Defense Forrestal [James V. Forrestal], we went down to visit him. There was a great great admiration between Mr. Forrestal and Jack Kennedy; it went both ways. He wanted Mr. Forrestal to key-note this veterans' rally, this veterans' housing rally that I spoke to you about, in Washington; and Secretary Forrestal, in his usual modesty said, "I am the world's worst speaker. I know nothing about veteran's housing. I am extremely busy. But, if you'd still like me to do it, I'd be glad to do it." And we took that hint and bowed out of

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the elegant office of Mr. Forrestal. That was the only time I had met Mr. Forrestal, but Jack used to talk about him a great deal. And with just that one meeting, I could see why he had such an admiration for him.

MARTIN: Did he get any result from the meeting with Truman on his original complaint?

GALVIN: I couldn't say.

I think that things did being to open up for some of the people who had worked in the campaign. I thought that shortly after that, and I might be getting all my times mixed up, Eddie, shortly after that I think that Eddie McLaughlin [Edward F. McLaughlin, Jr.] became Assistant United States Attorney. I think that several of the boys were moved into veterans' housing activities in the state government and I don't know whether any of them were doing it with the federal government, but it seemed that as Congressman Kennedy, I suppose, began to know how these things were done, he became proficient in doing them himself.

[-21-]

I think most of the fellows who did want to get associated or get a job in one of the public agencies, I think most of them did. Dave Powers did. Paul Reddam did. Eddie McLaughlin and Tommy Broderick and several others.

MARTIN: John, can you tell us some more details about this veterans' housing rally, where it was held, how many showed up and what kind of a plus it became?

GALVIN: Well, the thing was we were conducting a publicity campaign in Washington as much as we could. We were trying to get as many endorsements for the Taft-Ellender-Wagner Housing Bill. This was the 80<sup>th</sup> Congress and Senator Taft was a giant in that Congress. This was a good bill. It wasn't the most liberal bill. It wasn't the kind of a bill the American Veterans' Committee, the AVC, wanted, but it was decided that under

[-22-]

the sponsorship of Senator Taft it was probably the only bill that you could get through the House.

And then we enlisted in the forty-eight states, we wrote to the leaders of all the veterans' organization. This was, of course, about the time when JFK, at a housing rally we had in Faneuil Hall, sounded off at the American Legion. And we got from each state, and of course from the Northeast states, busloads came in from New York, particularly from AVC. But we got representation from the commanders, the top men, from each veterans' organization in each state to come to Washington.

The speakers at the rally – as I told you, Jack presided in the morning; Congressman Javits in the afternoon; Joe McCarthy [Joseph R. McCarthy] was one of the speakers, as a matter of fact, the Senator from Wisconsin; but the main speaker of the day was Senator Robert Taft whose name was on the bill.

[-23-]

Then the idea was for us to break up and each group to visit the Congressmen from their state and to report back how they said they were going to vote on this particular bill. This was the beginning of veterans' housing legislation, as such.

MARTIN: And the bill subsequently got passed.

GALVIN: Yes.

MARTIN: You mentioned a rally at Faneuil Hall...

GALVIN: I was there that night, too.

MARTIN: - when he sounded off on the American Legion.

GALVIN: He said they hadn't had a progressive thought. I forget the thing, but we walked out of the – there were a couple of times when he very humorously remarked that he was probably going to be a one-term

Congressman.

[-24-]

He called me that day of the Curley pardon petition. He refused to sign the papers and he said "I guess I'm going to be a one term Congressman." I'll never forget that day!

The other amusing parts about the Kennedy Post after while seemed to become kind of a liability because it was an independent group of young people and I'll never forget one day when anti vivisection legislation was on up at the State House and Dr. Conlin who is now head of the Boston City Hospital was a member of our group and he got up and he made a great, impassioned plea for the cause of vivisection. He said that because of vivisection we had saved a lot of lives during the war, and the experimentation that was done and everything else, and he asked for a vote, and we all voted unanimously to continue vivisection.

The Hearst [William Randolph Hearst] papers, of course, were very, very strong supporters of Jack Kennedy at the time. George Brady, the chief editorial writer for the Hearst papers, was kind of wild about this vivisection, taking the cue from Mr. Hearst.

So, Conlon called up the newspapers. He told them that the Kennedy Post unanimously came out in favor of vivisection. It made the papers, and about 9:05 that morning when I hit the office I got a call from JFK and he said, "What did you do last night?" I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "I got a call from George Brady about seven o'clock this morning on this particular thing."

At that particular point I think he began to wonder whether the

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Post was going to be a great liability to him. Subsequently, of course, the Post did not have as much steam as it had in the very beginning because an awful lot of the fellows who were associated in the very beginning moved out to the suburbs. They started to move in a lot of different directions. Some moved to other parts of the country and it never, although we, I think, marched on the seventeenth of June parade in Charlestown – we did that for several years – I think the steam began to go out of the Post in three or four years when all of these changes were beginning to take place.

MARTIN: John, you indicate from various comments that Congressman Kennedy wasn't adverse to plunging into controversial issues.

[-27-]

GALVIN: Well, of course, this was the great -. The thing he said about the Legion, first of all, it was true. They boycotted our housing rally in Washington. They were, of course – we always thought they were so tied up and associated with the great real estate lobby which was opposing veterans' housing legislation like mad. These were the kind of things, of course, that – the reason that he, all of us – well, if I could just speak for myself, but I'm sure of a lot of others, this was the reason we liked Jack Kennedy, because he showed a lot of courage.

The first brochure which I did for him which we had to rush up for the tea in Worcester – we subsequently got out a more elaborate one and a more detailed one – but the first one we got out, the name of the little flyer we tapped out that day was KENNEDY on one side and COURAGE on the other, in the same lettering. I still have a copy or

[-28-]

two of the original. I have the original tabloid newspaper which I did up for him in '52 with a lot of scribbled notes and some correspondence back and forth on it with the changes.

He would say to me “I think there’s a good picture of me and General de Lattre de Tassigny [Jean-Marie-Gabriel de Lattre de Tassigny], the French general when we were in Indo-China. We made some movies and I think that if you run the movie through very slowly, you’ll be able to stop the thing down so you will be able to see the picture of the two of us and I’d like to have that included in the tabloid.”

So I would dummy up – I started with a dummy, put in a lot of pictures that I knew we weren’t going to use. That was the time we got Halsman [Philippe Halsman], we did have a good picture of him. And I think that was the greatest picture we ever had taken, the one that Halsman did for the cover.

[-29-]

And for the back cover of course we used them again. Some people again, advised him not to put Adlai Stevenson’s [Adlai E. Stevenson] picture on the back cover and the fact that he was endorsing Stevenson and so forth. This was not a state that was considered red hot Stevenson, at that time.

Went ahead and did it just the same, and put Stevenson on the back cover at the same time. Then we filled in with many of these pictures that were searched out from the Cape, the houses down at the Cape. We got them from Palm Beach; we got them from the office in New York; we got them from various friends and others. And we finally wound up with something that he thought was one of the most important factors in the campaign.

Millions of people have said it better than I, but I think the Kennedys, pictorially, have really always been really red hot. People wanted to look at pictures of the

[-30-]

Kennedys. This was the thing I was very proud of and I was very pleased when he told me. I went over to the Harvard Commencement with him in June, just before the Convention, and he told me that they used it in Wisconsin and – where else – in West Virginia.

And I was very flattered and pleased that they did that. He said, “We used your tabloid.” So I rather liked that.

The last thing I did for him, I got a call from Ted Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen] here, at this office, and went down and he asked me what I thought he should do in the '58 campaign, just for television and so forth. I suggested a half hour film on what a Senator does, what he did as Senator. I came back here and wrote the script for it and sent it down and he did that. Of course that wasn’t important.

The only other thing that I did in that

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particular campaign was I got the endorsements for him of Ernest Handerson and Ralph Binney and several other former Presidents of the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce. You know that was such a landslide, but I did a few little things in that campaign, and that was the last political activity that I had with him.

I saw him at the White House. I had a private session with him last spring, about this time, at the White House and that was the last time I saw him.

MARTIN: John, how would you describe his political leanings as a beginning Congressman? Were they liberal or...

GALVIN: I think they were. I think right from the beginning, I think, I'm trying to think of some of the things outside of housing that were the big issues of the

[-32-]

time. I think that probably – I can't remember – I think there probably were some tax bills and other things with which he voted with the liberal side of the House.

If I had a chance to really think about it, I might think specifically about it.

MARTIN: How did he stand in with labor?

GALVIN: With labor, of course, he was the darling of labor from the first day he announced for Congress, as far as I could see. He was always up here every year to address the AFL and the CIO, I guess later. I don't know that they were merged at that time, but he was always up here once a year for the labor conventions. I used to go with him and they used to go wild over him.

[-33-]

He was great friends with Red Moran, the head of the Longshoremen's Association was a great, great rooter of Jack Kennedy's. So was Bill Belanger. I mean, these are people that I recall. Ken Kelly, of course, was always a very strong Kennedy rooter and there were many others whose names I didn't know.

I've been with him over at Harvard Stadium on a day when Harvard and Princeton were playing down at New Jersey. We would go over and borrow a football and throw it around. This would be a beautiful day in the fall when he could – this was before he was married – could very easily probably have had a date and gone to the Harvard-Princeton game. But that night he was going up to the South End to address a labor group. He could have been doing many other things, but those were the things – this extra.



I think I have traveled – somehow or other every once in a while I used to travel with him on a weekend when he'd come up.

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I took the first step with him out of Boston, which was up to North Adams when he addressed the Eagles which is a big organization.

We came back in a fog that night. It took us hours to get back over the Mohawk Trail.

But it seems to me that I was in Lowell with him, for some reason or other, about twenty different times. Sometimes when I'd ride with him on a weekend it seemed to be Lowell. I have been all over the state with him. I've been to picnics and I've marched with him. Just the two of us, or maybe three of us, out to a Veterans' Day thing, a Memorial Day thing in towns like Millis; then Sunday to communion breakfasts in Fall River and other things all over the state. Many times we used to wind up and go down to the Cape after these things were over to stay a few days, Dave Powers and Jack and I.

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MARTIN: Did you work with him on the Taft-Hartley [Fred Allan Hartley, Jr.] for instance?

GALVIN: No. No. I didn't work on this. I think Joe Healey [Joseph P. Healey], who is now President of the Middlesex Bank, and Mark Dalton worked with him on labor legislation. I think they did. I knew nothing about labor legislation, but I think that by the time he finished with his stint on the Labor Committee, in both the House and the Senate, I would say that Jack was as well informed on labor legislation as anybody in the country, never mind in the House or Senate. He really made a divic -, a real determined effort to be completely well informed on the labor legislation.

MARTIN: There must have been some areas where criticism arose as he moved through Congress and headed into the Senate. Can you tell us any of those and from what sources they were coming?

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GALVIN: Well, the thing – it was the same criticism that I always used to get from all the national writers at one time or another.

I was on a list. Joe McCarthy, of course, who wrote the book.

I went to school with Joe and I spent a couple of weeks – I had told Joe way back. He was a classmate of mine. I told Joe way back to write something about Jack. I said, "This guy is really going places!"

MARTIN: When you say “Joe McCarthy”, John, you mean Joe McCarthy of Boston, don’t you?

GALVIN: Yes. The writer. I used to say to him when I’d see him or write him, “Gee, this guy is going places!”

Well, when Joe did come up, Jack called me and said, “Well, your friend, Joe McCarthy, is going to write this book.”

And I used to tell JFK about Joe McCarthy. At any rate, he didn’t do anything about it, Joe didn’t, until before the campaign or during it. It came out during the campaign, I think, the Presidential campaign. And Jack called me from

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Washington and said, “Your friend, Joe McCarthy, I understand, is getting 40,000 bucks for a series of three articles in Look Magazine which is owned by the Cowles [Gardner A. Cowles, Jr.] family which are Nixon [Richard M. Nixon], and there are three articles going to be written and are have an anti-Kennedy tone to them!”

And I told him that I grew up with Joe McCarthy, and I went to school with him, and we are very close friends, and Joe McCarthy in a million years would never take any money with a predetermined slant of anything. He’s a very decent guy and I said, “I’m sure he’s a great admirer of yours.” Jack, however, left it kind of up in the air.

I got a call another week or two and JFK said to me, “Joe McCarthy has been down to see me and he looks like a nice guy and I told him to see you first when he comes to Boston,” and JFK said, “instead of having

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him see all of the type of people that he’ll meet around the Bellevue or some place else, why don’t you make sure that he sees these people?” And we worked out a list together.

People like John Driscoll who is in the House and some of the young – Bob Cramer [Robert P. Cramer] who was a good friend of ours. Jack and I went to Bob’s wedding up in Springfield. He married Sally King [Sally Ann King Cramer]. And people like that.

And we tried to have him see some maybe of the young businessmen around town, rather than some of the political hacks who would talk on any subject at any time.

But the criticism: I’m coming back to this thing. I guess I’m going the way around Robin Hood’s barn in the answer to this question.

The thing was that in a lot of areas, whether for jealousy or one thing or another, nobody ever took him seriously.

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I used to tell people that he was the best campaigner that ever hit Massachusetts, that he was the hardest working campaigner; that there was no detail in a campaign that was ever too small. And I just couldn’t convince a lot of these writers about how hard working JFK was, how a tough campaigner, and the rest of the family too, for that matter.

This rich kid thing was always, particularly, again, the Bellevue Bar or up on School Street, in front of City Hall and up at the legislature – the pros were inclined not to take him too seriously. They thought he was a rich kid. Those people who were following things and who were working with him knew a hell of a lot different!

MARTIN: Is it possible that the reaction of the pros, could this be the case, that he never took them too seriously?

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GALVIN: He never conferred that I know of, except it was a case of something specific that had to be talked about, he ignored them completely. And, as a result, you had this kind of an attitude on the part of a lot of them, but it didn't bother anybody in the Kennedy camp because in the first campaign we licked all the pros.

And, as I said before, we licked a real good guy when he licked Mike Neville. He turned out to be a good friend, I think, of Jack's and a good friend of mine. I think everybody like Mike Neville. It was just this unfortunate thing. The timing happened that way. In any other day and any other place, Mike Neville would be in Congress for the rest of his life. It was an unfortunate situation.

MARTIN: John, travelling down to Washington in those early days, as you mentioned, and also going to Hyannis Port, there must have been some lighter moments.

GALVIN: Oh great sense of humor! A great sense of humor!

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He just had a great faculty for laughing at himself and various things. You know, he had – he was a good storyteller.

He used to tell some of Alben Barkley's stories better than Barkley did himself! He had great charm. He used to give me a rib about B.C. [Boston College]. He wrote, as a matter of fact, on one of the autographed pictures I had from him, he put down "To B.C. Immortal." And I knew he had his tongue in his cheek when he did that!

But he was a great guy to spend time with.

MARTIN: How about competitive sports? Did you get in the touch football games?

GALVIN: Sure. Sure.

MARTIN: He took the games seriously?

GALVIN: Well, somebody wrote a great set of rules about visiting the Kennedys and whoever did it had a stroke of genius. The rules varied from play to play!

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In the first place, where you lost the game, you lost the game to him – immediately. He would start to pick up sides. He would pick the first three or four or five best players and then say, “Now, you can have your pick!” You’d wind up with a group of Singer’s midgets!

But he – everybody understood what was going on, so it didn’t make an awful lot of difference.

MARTIN: How about the other members of the Kennedy family? Were you familiar with all of them? How about the father?

GALVIN: Yes. But in the ’52 campaign, of course, in the early days, I spent a lot of time with Mr. Kennedy.

MARTIN: What was he like?

GALVIN: Well, he’s tough and practical and a great father. This was his family and he was a great father.

People, again writers, used to come in and say, “You know the old man did this and the old man did that!”

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I said, “Well, what would you do if you were running for office and you had a father like him? Now, what would your father do? Tell me.” Well, they couldn’t answer this! This was his father. His father’s a smart man.

His father had a great feeling for politics, too. He wasn’t completely without experience in this field.

MARTIN: Who made the decisions when Jack first –

GALVIN: Well, decisions were made – the father made a lot of decisions in the campaign. I think he made decisions for Jack because Jack, primarily, was carrying the campaign to the people. He was trying to shake as many hands and meet as many people as he could.

I think that two weeks before the ’52 campaign that he hardly knew where he was.

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At the same time, I got Joe Gannon, a good friend of mine, to head up a fund-raising committee and people would give dough and would want to have a little breakfast.

This thing they've done recently. Lately they've done a lot of this, but would like to have him make an appearance at the breakfast.

Well, these things he probably shouldn't have done but he wanted to do, to thank the people who were contributing and so forth.

MARTIN: What would you say was the biggest obstacle that he had to overcome when he started?

GALVIN: When he started out?

Well, one of the biggest obstacles that the pros used to throw at him, of course, was this question of residence. You know that he's really never lived here, and this question of residence was, of course, taken up by Bob Brickley, of Brickley and Sears, the law firm, to find out what his official residence was.

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I think this was one of the things, that he was a carpet-bagger. I think this was the things that the pros threw at him a great deal.

He almost had a tragedy in the first campaign. It seems to me – and this might have affected his whole life – It seems to me that he had filed papers but he hadn't filed them either as an enrolled member of any party. And I wasn't around at the time, but you can check this story, maybe, with Frank Morrissey.

Patsy Mulkern [Patrick J. Mulkern] was an old hanger-on. [Laughter] Patsy said, "Have you registered as a Democrat," or something. Something involving the paper. And at five minutes to five they ran down together, down to the election commissioner's office and just made it.

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And got enrolled then, in other words, got on the ballot as a Democratic candidate for nomination.

You can check this story, but I'm almost positive that it's true. Patsy, of course, would be glad to give you two or three hours on that one anecdote, any time. And I think that Frank Morrissey might remember it and some of the election commissioners at the time. This is one thing I remember.

MARTIN: Well, going up to the 1952 campaign when he elected to compete with Lodge for the Senate, wasn't that rather a -?

GALVIN: There were only – now, I'm not talking about the family – there were only two people in the group that was close to him at the time, that wanted him to run for the Senate.

I was one and Mark Dalton was the other. We were the only two people that wanted him to run for the Senate.

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MARTIN: Why would you want him to run for the Senate?

GALVIN: Because I thought, because – between you and me – if he had gone up to the State House without knowing anything about legislative procedure – legislative procedure was not I mean handling I mean administrative procedure and – knowing the Massachusetts legislature, I don't think he would have survived the two years!

I had a great feeling that Washington was his arena and this was the place and the national issues, these were the things that he was best fitted to handle and so. I did not want to see him go to the State House because that was a rough, tough place for somebody who does not how it and I have a kind of thesis about it.

The only successful governors that you have are people who have been in the Massachusetts legislature.

Now, just take Furcolo [David Foster Furcolo], not Furcolo, but I'd take Herter [Christian A. Herter] and Dever as an example.

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And I did not want to see him go to the legislature.

An awful lot of the guys wanted to see him go to the legislature. A lot of lawyers wanted to see him to because they pictured judgeships and things like that – the lawyers particularly – an awful lot of patronage. And I did not want to see him.

And the only two that I knew of, and I must say with reservations, I forgot about Joe Healey, and not that we had anything to say in convincing this, but we would have him go to the Senate.

And, when I wrote a statement for the papers that night, I called Mr. Kennedy, read it to him in Palm Beach. I called Arthur Krock in Washington and I called Jim Landis [James M. Landis] at the office in New York, read the statement to him.

MARTIN: Well did he indicate a preference either for Governor or for Senator?

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GALVIN: I don't think he – I have a feeling that he wanted to go to the Senate. Of course, the tough thing, was wanting to go to the Senate and take on Henry Cabot Lodge was something that nobody looked forward to doing because, of course, Lodge could have won that fight had he put half the steam into it that JFK put into it; had he not gotten involved with Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower], and had he not come into the state late and had he not taken – again, he was the old pro. He was acting like a pro.

I won a pool on the election at headquarters. I got the money. I think we all put a buck in and I was selected as I got 65,000 votes and I won the dough.

But this was a, you know, this was a real tough campaign! Why this Lodge had

wonderful Italian support, great Jewish support, great Irish support.

You know, a lot of the mothers and fathers were voting for Lodge and the sons and daughters were – oh, you’ve

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heard this before, and you know this, probably the sons and daughters were voting for Jack?

This was a toughie. This guy had – well, what didn’t he have? He had a good service record; the Lodge name was good here and –

MARTIN: Did he have a good Congressional record, too?

GALVIN: No. No. He had the world’s worst.

Ted Reardon did a masterful job in assembling Lodge’s record. But, I’m saying on the surface, the people – this was a hard thing to hammer home. We had Lodge voting on both sides of every major issue! Bud Reilly who is now – and we had everything documented.

Ted Reardon did a terrific job in Washington and sent it on to us. We used to get it page by page and it finally mounted up to something that looked like a Boston

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telephone directory!

Reilly [John F. Reilly], who was then with WMEX, a very close friend of mine, now with the State Department in Washington, later on went to Africa and did a big private job in Africa programming the African radio network in Libya. He was head of the Speakers’ Bureau and he used to go places.

He used to tell me that he’d come in and take this thing out and put it on the table and people like Henry Glovesky –do you remember Henry Glovesky – would be speaking for Lodge and would say to Reilly, “What’s that?” He’d say, “That’s Lodge’s voting record!” And the speaker of the other side, all he was going to say you know, was to give a little pep talk about voting for Lodge without going into the issues. And the opponent’s representative – they were always friendly at things like this – the opponent’s representative used to almost die when he saw this thing that Bud Reilly used to always pull out

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of his briefcase! He’d say, “That’s Lodge’s voting record!”

MARTIN: John, what type of an organization did Lodge have? Did he have practical men around him, or what?

GALVIN: Well, he had – the guy I always identify with Lodge is the attorney here in Boston, Max Raab [Maxwell J. Raab], who later became Secretary for the Cabinet.

An amusing side light on that. I happened to be in Washington with JFK the day they had the farewell luncheon for Max Raab and who was one of the speakers but JFK! I didn't want to go in and eat in the dining room. It was up at the Press Club. I went around to the regular Press Club where I could get a sandwich and then went back in to hear the talks.

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And we were coming out and going back up to the Capitol. What's the little fellow's name that was driving at that time?

MARTIN: Not Mugsy O'Leary [John J. O'Leary]?

GALVIN: Mugsy! Mugsy had the car downstairs and on the way down Jack said, "Boy, that's quite a switch from '52, isn't it?"

They had the Reporter magazine. There was a guy named Ralph Blagden who used to write for – the chief editorial writer, for the Boston Traveler.

Do you remember him? He later on went to the Reporter and Max Raab used to feed him all kinds of questions that he should ask about Joe Kennedy and this and that and a lot of it came out in the Reporter. Do you remember Blagden?

MARTIN: Sure.

GLAVIN: Then there was another fellow who was involved

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in the writing for just a short time named Coghlan [Ralph Coghlan].

He was a Pulitzer Prize winner, the editorial page editor of one of the St. Louis newspapers. He came on and one of my jobs was to bring him around and introduce him around. He did a little bit of writing for Jack. He had been recommended by Arthur Krock. He did a little bit of writing and went back, back to, I think, to Washington.

A very talented fellow, he was. There were so many, you know, in that '52 campaign.

We used to have the teas and I would get out and before Mass on Sunday, or after Mass on Sunday morning, and flip through the New York Times and find out what the great major

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issues were of the day and type it out, put it in my pocket, and bring it down and we would release it at Taunton or wherever, as what JFK said at this particular tea.

And some of those places. These are kind of things. You were in halls in Hudson and Taunton and Fall River that hadn't been open for three months, you know, hot as blazes and all these people lined up and shaking hands, and Mrs. Kennedy [Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy] doing a wonderful job – and rest of the family, too, wherever they were called



upon.

These were things – and he used to ride home with me at night mostly because in those days I had a convertible and it was just such a pleasure for him to ride back to Boston with the top down and just get cooled off and kind of relax.

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But in those days, needless to say, that particular summer, none of us got very much suntan. I wound up the end of the summer looking like a wreck.

MARTIN: John, what do you remember about his campaign?

GALVIN: Well, I don't remember... I did those two things. I did that half hour television thing and I got the four or five former Presidents. That's all. But I used to drop in to headquarters. I used to see something of Steve Smith [Stephen E. Smith] in those days and Mike Feldman [Myer Feldman] was up, too, and of course Ted [Theodore C. Sorensen], and oh, some other people from the '52 campaign.

And Mr. Kennedy was around and Larry [Lawrence F. O'Brien] and Kenny and Jim Mellen [James J. Mellen] and people like that, but I don't recall anything much about it.

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Nobody took the thing very seriously. Of course he piled up a whopping vote, and that psychologically, was a great thing.

MARTIN: Did he have to convince some of the writers, with the type of candidate he was running against, that he was actually in a contest?

GALVIN: I don't think that he could have convinced anybody. There's no question. He wasn't convincing Connie Dalton [Cornelius Dalton], he wasn't convincing Matt Owens, he wasn't convincing me; he wasn't convincing anybody. It seemed a campaign of going through the paces. And I think that Kenny and Larry had a hard job to do because Jack was still making the calls. They programed him around the state; made sure he was in the right place at the right time.

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The program, the schedule and everything else tied in together. I don't say, believe me, I don't say that the key people and a lot of people didn't do work, but there wasn't the same frenzy that there was in the '52 campaign.

MARTIN: One of the times I was down to the Cape, I was over at the veranda of the house with Morton Downy and Eddie Gallagher. The three of us. And he asked, he said, "Why don't you take the boat?"

He said he was going away for the weekend. He was on crutches and he said he was

going to New York to have his back operated on.

I said, "Well, what about Dr. Jordan [Sarah Jordan] and your other doctors here?" Why don't you have it done in Boston? Because I knew that Dr. Tell and Dr. Sarah Jordan and others were the ones who

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he always used to go to.

He said they had recommended against the operation. They said the best thing to do would be to stay with the crutches and live, rather than take the chance on the operation and die.

He told me then. He said, "I'd rather die than be on crutches the rest of my life." That's one.

I knew that; it would be hard not to know. Then I think, I forget when it was, that he slipped on the USS Joseph P. Kennedy. I think they were having a little party for some youngsters from one of the neighborhood houses and he went over there and I think he slipped on the deck and gave it another bang or something. He was on crutches then.

He was in intense pain towards the end of the '52 campaign. I am convinced that there were times when he was walking around almost unconscious but he never, he never

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complained this guy.

MARTIN: John, as he moved along from Congressman to Senator and to the Presidency did he lose interest in some things, or acquire new interest in others?

GALVIN: Well, of course, he was starting to move around the country there practically right after he became elected to the Senate and I don't think you saw him as much. I remember one time, this may have been a little bit later, when he spoke in Ohio in the afternoon and then came back and voted, and spoke in Ohio again that night. Even in those days, after he was elected to the Senate, he began moving around the country and of course he then began taking a stand on national issue.

The thing in Algeria with the...the French question in Algeria. He took a very forthright stand on that which I don't know whether it endeared him to General de Gaulle [Charles A. de Gaulle], but

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I think that, let's put it this way, he wasn't around enough to know – he wasn't around as much anyway, whether to know he'd changed a great deal.

I have the feeling that he was thinking more in national terms than he was in Massachusetts things, although he was always available for any of us when we went down.

Some of the times we went down to talk about some of the issues involving the state whether they happened to be the fishing industry or whatever it happened to be. Sometimes we would get involved in committees and go down.

He seemed always to be there, to receive everyone, and everything else. I used to still send things out for him during that period.

I think he began – instead of strictly parochial things – he began to cover the big time and national policy questions and things like that. I think he was meeting and talking with people

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who had a grasp of national and international issues, people in Washington. I think he was meeting and spending a lot of time with them.

MARTIN: John, what would you say was the single quality of character that would have set him apart from many?

GALVIN: Courage.

MARTIN: Courage.

GALVIN: There was no question. This was the thing I thought of giving the Library. I don't know whether anybody else has. I thought of giving the Library, if they are interested at all, some of the stuff that I have, like the tabloid with his notes and other things. The first brochure – it was only used at the Worcester tea just to fill a great need for that day.

That was the thing; I did this brochure. And it was COURAGE – KENNEDY. And as I told you the two, the

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type in the two were the same.

This was the thing, his courage. And of course, the other thing, his great sense of humor.

MARTIN: This leads to another question, John. When in your association did you reach the conclusion that he would go far in political life, or did you?

GALVIN: When I was down working in Congress; the first time after he was elected. It was a big thing. I mean this guy was going to be a big thing – the biggest. That's why – Mary McGrory, for instance, who was an old friend of mine, and I guess I introduced her to Jack. I used to discuss this with her a great deal when I was in Washington. Nights when I'd be in Washington or times when I'd be down there I'd always check in with Mary, you know. Her brother was a

classmate of mine and we lived near each other and so forth. We had mutual friends and so I used to see a lot of her when I went down to Washington.

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I still do.

We went out to the grave when I was last down there. No. I was down to the grave three times. The last time I was there, I went out with the Port group. But the time before that I had lunch with Mary and we went out to meet Ambassador Stevenson out at the grave and Mary and he are great friends. There was a ceremony out there that day.

MARTIN: Did you visit the White House when he was there?

GALVIN: Yes. I did. I did.

MARTIN: What were some of those engagements?

GALVIN: I just visited once. I went down to a – again on the Port thing last spring and Dave Powers came over. We

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always have a reception in the evening and invite a lot of the Boston people and Dave came over and he said to me, “Why don’t you come down and see the President?”

You know, I said, “I really haven’t got anything to see him about. It would be taking up his time for nothing.” He said, “You ought to see him!” I said, “I’d love to, but he’s very busy.” I told him I was coming down the following week for Jimmy Carr [James A. Carr, Sr.].

Meanwhile the President called up, or Dave called up and said, “the President wants you out at Boston College for that out there” and then he said, “He wants to see you next Friday morning at nine-fifteen.”

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Dave knew I was going to be down with Jimmy Carr, my friend. Jim Carr was being sworn in as a member of the Federal Parole Board and a whole bunch of us went down.

So I went in and saw him that morning. And, I think, we talked football as much as we did anything else. It was nothing. I really didn’t know what to say to him. It was nothing. I really didn’t know what to say to him. I had nothing to tell him or ask him, but I was so pleased to see him.

MARTIN: John, what was the last time you saw him?

GALVIN: At all?

MARTIN: At all.

GALVIN: That was it, the spring. Oh, I don't know.

MARTIN: How about B.C.?

GALVIN: Out at B.C. I saw him there, but after that I went to Washington.

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I was in the room with the Board of Regents at B.C.

He was very pleased, I think, with the work I did at B.C. one the seminar program and he mentioned that several times before that.

And he came around the room and shook hands with everyone and just said, "I'll see you next Friday!" Or, you know, "I'll see you in Washington," or something like that. And I did.

MARTIN: Did you attend the funeral, John?

GALVIN: No. No. I was going to go to Washington. I was down at the Harvard-Yale Freshman game. I have a very close friend...My closest friend whose son is a Freshman fullback at Harvard, a great kid.

As a matter of fact, his mother came down to the White House with me that day and she was waiting outside and the

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President said, "Who's with you?"

And I told him, Sally Bauman, the mother of this boy and he said, "Why don't you bring her in and see what it looks like and see us." She was very, very thrilled with that.

I was down at the freshman football game [at New Haven] when I heard the news. I just came back to Boston.

I thought of going down to Washington, but I didn't know what I'd do when I got there. Like everybody else, I just sat at the television for three days. I came back from New Haven.

MARTIN: John, what has happened to some of the men you remember who worked and were close to him in the early days?

GALVIN: Well, Mark is still an attorney around Boston. Dave, of course, was down with him. Paul Reddam is in Texas. I think that Tommy Broderick is still working at the Veterans'

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Hospital, in West Roxbury. I think Ken Newton [Kenneth B. Newton] was somewhat involved in those days, to some extent. He's the Vice President of the Sheraton Corporation. Joe Healey is President of the Middlesex Bank. Those are some whose names I recall.

Jimmy Kelly is in the insurance business. Those are some of the guys. Frank Morrissey, of course, is a judge. Billy Sutton. I like Billy very much. He's working in one of the state agencies I think.

MARTIN: This has been an interview with John T. Galvin, Executive Vice President of the World Trade Center. The interview was conducted by Ed Martin's Boston office. The date was May 15, 1964.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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