

**Daniel Patrick Moynihan Oral History Interview – JFK #1, 5/3/1972**  
Administrative Information

**Creator:** Daniel Patrick Moynihan  
**Interviewer:** William W. Moss  
**Date of Interview:** May 3, 1972  
**Place of Interview:** Cambridge, Massachusetts  
**Length:** 26 pp.

**Biographical Note**

Moynihan, United State Senator, New York, 1977 - 2000; Assistant to the Secretary, United States Department of Labor, 1961 to 1965, discusses his role in the Department of Labor, his work on various political campaigns, Unions, the Federal pay policy, and the creation of a civil honor system and the Presidential Medal of Freedom, among other issues.

**Access Restrictions**

No restrictions.

**Usage Restrictions**

According to the deed of gift signed February 24, 1998, 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 The copyright law extends its protection to unpublished works from the moment of creation in a tangible form.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**

Daniel Patrick Moynihan, recorded interview by William W. Moss, May 3, 1972, (page number), John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION  
JOHN F. KENNEDY LIBRARY

Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of  
DANIEL P. MOYNIHAN

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, Daniel P. Moynihan of Washington, DC, 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 a personal interview conducted on May 3, 1972 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and prepared for deposit in the John F. Kennedy Library. This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

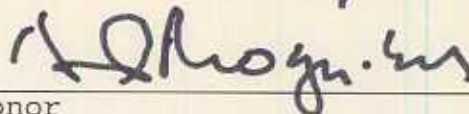
(1) The transcript shall be made available for use by researchers as soon as it has been deposited in the John F. Kennedy Library.

(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.

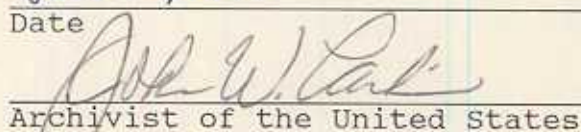
(5) Copies of the transcript and tape recording may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the John F. Kennedy Library.



Donor

JULY 14, 1997

Date

  
Archivist of the United States

2-24-98  
Date

# DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN

## Table of Contents

<u>Page</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1	Moynihan's work with the Democratic State Committee in 1960
2	1960 presidential campaign
5, 8	Moynihan's role as Assistant to the Secretary, United States Department of Labor
6	Executive Order 10988; Employee-Management Cooperation in the Federal Service, 1/17/1962
8	Federal pay policy
9	Metropolitan Opera strike
10	President's Advisory Commission on Presidential Office Space & Pennsylvania Avenue
13	Civil honor system and the Presidential Medal of Freedom
16	Working on the Robert M. Morgenthau campaign
17	Moynihan's position as Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Labor Statistics
19	Office of Economic Opportunity antecedents
20	President's Committee on Manpower
22	Staff turnover after the assassination
23	Nelson Rockefeller's potential candidacy

Oral History Interview

with

DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN

May 3, 1972  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

By William W. Moss

For the John F. Kennedy Library

MOSS: Let me start out by asking you.... I guess the place to start is how you got into the '60 election business. What were you doing in '60 and what brought you to the attention of Goldberg [Arthur J. Goldberg] and Kennedy [John F. Kennedy], and so on, so that you eventually, what was it, in July of '61, I think, wound up as a special assistant to Goldberg?

MOYNIHAN: Yeah. I was an alternate delegate on the New York delegation to Los Angeles, appointed by Mike Prendergast [Michael H. Prendergast].

MOSS: Yes.

MOYNIHAN: I was chairman of a kind of a policy committee, Democratic State Committee, that tried to keep alive after the governor's term and was sort of.... Well, I was at Syracuse University and was working with Harriman's [W. Averell Harriman] papers, things like that. So I was in the party system, and I wanted to go. I was very much a Kennedy man. I thought he had a.... My sort of interest at that time was.... [Interruption] I was working with Glazer [Nathan Glazer] on our book, *Beyond the Melting Pot*, and had had an interest in these things as sort of an Irish Catholic with a college education, if you will. And sort of being theoretically a reform Democrat, but feeling the reform Democrats were not at all sensitive to the legitimate interests and so forth of the regular Democrats' thinking....

Mike Prendergast and Carmine De Sapio were pretty successful people--they nominated Averell Harriman, saw the reformers destroy Averell Harriman and the party never had another since the 1958 election when they couldn't get a man--apparently Finletter [Thomas K. Finletter] turned out not even to be enrolled as a Democrat, I've heard. What was really bad was the Air Force, foreign policy, Cold War.... And we had to get rid of Frank Hogan, who only knew about cities, which wouldn't do. And Kennedy seemed to me to be a bridge here, a very valuable one, because whilst all the liberals of the reform type were agin' him--the Finletters, Lehmans [Herbert Lehman] and so forth--nonetheless, here you have a guy who could get Peter Crotty from Buffalo, and Charles Buckley from the Bronx, and, oh, Dan O'Connell from Albany and get them once on the side of the party, of Schlessinger [Arthur M. Schlessinger] and Kenneth Galbraith [John K. Galbraith], and that seemed to me pretty good. Anyway, I went out there....

MOSS: Let me back up just a minute and ask you how you saw the Kennedys operating to get the De Sapios, the Crottys, and so on, and to woo the Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson] supporters in the other camp.

MOYNIHAN: Well, they didn't. The old man, as best as I can tell--the ambassador [Joseph P. Kennedy]--did it mostly. It was still the last moment in history where Irish political leaders had that much power; they had a great deal of power, and it was all crumbling and they didn't know it. But when we caucused in Albany--in June, I think--there were 102½ votes for Kennedy and two and a half or three and a half for Stevenson; I think it was three and a half, virtually. And I had ridden up on a plane with Finletter and we were talking about it at the time. But the thing is that Kennedy just moved into New York State and took it. The organization was theirs. When Peter Crotty's....

Now, De Sapio was still playing a rather complex song and dance on behalf of Senator Symington [Stuart Symington], who had Harriman. Harriman was not for Kennedy. Harriman used to go around saying, "Do you know what his father was like, what his father did about Hitler [Adolf Hitler]?" and so forth, and I kept saying, "Well, yeah, but...." And I remember Harriman once telling Gene Keogh [Eugene J. Keogh] at Los Angeles that I was the one that persuaded him, although I don't think it was necessarily so. But I went out there. The Kennedys could count, and 102½ votes out of 106 is all you need.

They made no effort to win the rest of them, or if they did I didn't know about it. Robert Kennedy was regarded as a nasty little man who could not be trusted. Alexander Bickel knew he should not be attorney general. Everyone knew that John Kennedy was in the pay, in some vague way, of Cardinal Spellman [Francis J. Spellman]. And these were still days when the Catholic issue was very serious, the anti-Catholicism was the anti-Semitism of the liberals. It was very real, and part of the quality of a man like Arthur Schlessinger to have seen that, gotten involved, and to have taken his stand with it, as against the Stevenson thing. I remember going to a breakfast where Schlessinger came through and, talking to the professoriate of central New York, said, "Well, Stevenson is Greek, Kennedy's a Roman." Well, as I recall, that was a sufficiently classicalist reference to satisfy us, or either....

But I wrote that. That's how I got involved. I had known Robert Kennedy during the labor investigations. Kenny O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell] had once called me from the

governor's office to see if I could do some things. I did then. I had met Teddy [Edward M. Kennedy] in the old man's [Joseph P. Kennedy's] apartment in New York. Things like that. Not much. But when Robert Kennedy came up to speak.... We had a dinner at which, I guess, John Kennedy was supposed to speak--Democratic state dinner in the spring of '57, I suspect, in Albany. Robert Kennedy came instead--it was one of those things--and I met him at the airport and escorted his wife [Ethel Kennedy]. And so I knew some people. In Los Angeles, I wrote Harriman's seconding speech and did a lot of running back and forth.

There was always a question of whether somehow New York wasn't really sewed up, whether De Sapio had enough strength to move them out. And a couple of times I had to rush in to see Robert Kennedy, and say that there was no truth, that everything was in fine shape. And everything was. De Sapio might have been able to do something about it if it wasn't. And I remember once Robert Kennedy saying to me, "They're going to sell us out." And I said, "They don't have anything to sell." But at that time, you know, he was quite persuaded that De Sapio might try to get him to sell out. You know, he lived very much in the world of conspiracy.

And I got to know Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorenson] there and Mike Feldman [Myer "Mike" Feldman]. But I had not finished my doctoral thesis and so I wasn't going to get involved in campaigning more than I had to, and I went back and my wife organized Citizens for Kennedy in Syracuse.

MOSS: This was in cooperation with Tony Akers's [Anthony G. Akers] thing out of New York City?

MOYNIHAN: That's right. That very considerable invention which the Kennedys had made--of sending people from outside of the state into the area, to be their coordinator for the time being.

MOSS: Yes.

MOYNIHAN: And Robert Kennedy sent in a guy--must be one of the worst manner of men in American politics, utterly cynical and full of energy and absolutely sort of infuriating in various ways. But....

MOSS: This was Paul Corbin?

MOYNIHAN: Yeah. Incredible guy, a genuine, veritable original from Wisconsin. I did what I could do, given that I was intent on doing, and made a lot of speeches up and down New York state where--I was talking to my son-in-law on elasticity in politics yesterday--there was only one message, just one thing we said up and down, and we said it was time for a Catholic to be president. That's what we said.

MOSS: You simply pushed this message one way. It was time for a Catholic. [Alfred E. Smith]--still great for his memory of more than just a verbal political memory.

MOYNIHAN: I wrote things for Mike Feldman, some statements for Kennedy, some of which were rather good. I wrote his statements on the interstate highway program. I was then writing for the *Reporter* and knew about such things, and knew an awful lot about traffic safety, which was my sort of thing we developed in New York. And I wrote about the interstate highway program. I wrote his.... Kennedy had to make a statement to the American Automobile Association. And it was the first time--no one quite noticed at the time but I ployed and used the ploy the best I could--he said that the single largest, single most serious public health problem in the country today was automobile accidents and it has to be approached in the manner of public health problems, which was profoundly different, I mean it was a profoundly different judgment of what type of problem it was.

It had to do with logic problems with some things and with other things it's not a regulatory process, it's a medical process. But well, think about that. And yet I guess almost the first call.... We never really knew with Corbin whether he was selling--how much bullshit, how much truth. And yet, five minutes after nine on the election night the phone rings and it's Paul Corbin from Hyannis Port and he says, "Hot Syracuse line." We never could quite get the realization that we were in fact right in the center and knew somebody very close to that throne. My wife did a wonderful job in the area of Syracuse as chairman.

MOSS: What were some of the things that Paul Corbin did up there? What was his modus operandi, as it were, if you can identify one with him?

MOYNIHAN: I can't. I don't know if he ever did anything. He meddled. He didn't have any money. The tabloid--he would always talk about that damn tabloid which was somehow going to win us all kinds of votes in the week before the election, and I don't think we ever did see the tabloid. Who was in charge of that? Dave Hackett [David L. Hackett].

MOSS: Okay.

MOYNIHAN: And mostly Corbin went around threatening that Bobby was going to be pretty mad about this, you know, and that kind of thing. We got Kennedy to.... Kennedy came to Syracuse once, and he had a good piece on Nixon [Richard M. Nixon].

I have left out one of the most important things. I would never have been known to any Kennedy person excepting for my very, very good friend, Sandy Vanocur [Sander Vanocur]. Sandy was at this point the President's TV man. He was enthusiastic about Kennedy and he gave himself to Kennedy. And he knew them all very well, the way those fellows do. It was the first campaign, I think, where TV made this kind of \_\_\_\_\_, you know. And Sandy and I were very close friends from \_\_\_\_\_ time, and he just kept seeing that I would meet people \_\_\_\_\_, the people you'd expect. The mere fact of having been \_\_\_\_\_ member of the....

Harriman was not the kind of fellow who'd do anything for a man. He'd just sort of leave you. Harriman's a wonderful man, but he's like many really rich men, he's not meticulous in worrying about people who fall behind; as you know, that's just the way life is.



And Mike Prendergast, before the campaign was over, was in trouble with that \_\_\_\_\_ Kneedman leaving business, and so forth. And I would never have gotten to Washington except for Sandy Vanocur who was working in Washington-- unpolitical, mature Sandy. All I ever really wanted to do actually was to get on the traffic safety advisory committee [President's Committee for Traffic Safety], and I was....

Dick Donahue [Richard K. Donahue] called me up one day--just by new people like Dick Donahue--said, "Jesus, Pat, we can't give it to you. The FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] has got this drunk driving rap on you." And I said, "What do you mean, drunk driving rap?" And he said, "Well, something in 1953." I said, "Look, in 1953 I was living in England, not in America, and I'd never in my life driven an automobile, drunk or sober." And that made Donahue's day, that the FBI had fucked up again. He called up and said, "Well, here's another beauty. There's a good friend of the President's and you're calling him a drunk driver when he's a serious student over on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean." But I--matter of fact kind of talk.

But one day at a breakfast--it was a Sunday brunch--Goldberg was saying to Sandy that he just needed another assistant. He had Steve Shulman [Stephen N. Shulman] and he wanted me--no, he wanted somebody who was very much like me; he wanted someone who could write, who had some experience in government and so forth. And Adam Yarmolinsky called me to say come down. I had gone down once before, but I felt Paul Corbin was kind of screwing me, I don't know. But also Kenny O'Donnell had asked Harriman did he think I would be interested in the job. Harriman had volunteered, no, I wouldn't--because I hadn't written his biography. When he saw what I had written, I think he was so terrified of what he thought that he was very cordial. I have a story on that, but....

MOSS: I understand that Elie Abel's onto his biography now.

MOYNIHAN: Yes. This was the governorship. But.... So I went down and I saw-- it's taking a long time to tell a very brief story-- Adam Yarmolinsky. Then the next morning I had breakfast with Wirtz [W. Willard Wirtz]; that afternoon saw Goldberg. Goldberg offered me a job. I said, "Yes, I'll take the job, be happy to have it." I think it was in the middle or the beginning of May, and I said, "I think I could come the first of July," something on that order, I don't know. I had to teach.

MOSS: I have the ninth of July appointment date here, at least that's when it was announced. Okay. Let me ask you now, when you talked to Goldberg about it and as you came out of the job, how did the job shape up? What was it that Goldberg wanted you to do, what were your understandings, what were the limitations on the thing, how did you and Steve Shulman divide up the pie, this kind of thing?

MOYNIHAN: Well, Goldberg hadn't any great notion. He hadn't been in government before excepting for the OSS [Office of Strategic Services]. There's no training.... Well, sometimes later in the Administration, people take over jobs. They've watched people in close to them. First time I took over a good job.... There would be things that would have to be done and they would come along somehow, and we'd

think up some. It was clear that Steve was the first in rank of the assistants in a row of two, and this couldn't have been more agreeable to me. He and I just had.... You know, these things are not always happy relationships, but ours was perfectly happy, thoroughly pleasant.

The first thing I got on almost the second day there was, he set up the President's [Advisory] Committee on Labor-Management Relations in the federal government. What other more important committee might be found? O'Donnell had sent the postal workers a letter from Kennedy saying that he promised, "We're going to work out some kind of union recognition."

MOSS: Right. This was the thing that culminated in Executive Order 10988 [Employee-Management Cooperation in the Federal Service, 1/17/62] the last of January.

MOYNIHAN: That's right. And almost the first week, I was-- well, very early-- the committee was set up and Goldberg made me the executive secretary. And he said, in that marvelous way Arthur Goldberg had, "Moynihan has experience in government." I hadn't had experience in government-- actually, I had experience in government, now that I think about it. I had four years of working with Averell Harriman--that's a good experience, I'll tell you. Anyway, I had zero experience working with federal government or with trade unions as such. My doctoral thesis was in trade union history, things like that. It was the only thing in the labor movement I knew anything about; NLRB [National Labor Relations Board] or.... This at the time was, there was still.... Hard for people to remember, but the labor movement was still socially approved in those days.

The labor movement elected presidents, the labor movement devoted itself to poverty, the labor movement made the Democratic Party what it was, and many people, well, people were filled with love of the labor movement. There were discussions about who was on the NLRB and how they behaved and what their tendencies would be--kind of stuff that hadn't been heard in ten years in Washington. You know, imagine speculating on how the NLRB will shift. The what? You know, there is no NLRB in fashion at the time.

So I had to go around pretty fast and learn what I could, but it worked out pretty well. I think I was one of our successes. I got onto it, figured out what was needed, I figured out a rationale, which I think was what I have been able to do well in government from time to time, which is a good time of history. We said: "These organizations were formed in the late nineteenth century-- middle to late nineteenth century, and they have maintained themselves as stable and responsible organizations for almost a century, and after a century of such performance, it is not too much to expect right now that they should be recognized by the federal government. These are not some crowd that came along last week. They've been there since 1884. That's quite a record and that suggests that you are serious and you must have something in mind."

It was a negotiation and the details aren't particularly very interesting but we got some nice.... We were able to work out a system of exclusive recognition for bargaining agents. It was the biggest concession to the rights of organized labor since 1935, practically, in its results. And I'll never-- when we took it in, to.... I took it over to Sorensen with a buddy who was working with me on it and who knew much more about it than I did and....

MOSS: Who was this?

MOYNIHAN: God, Terry-- this is an awful thing. I've lost his name. I haven't seen him in ten years. His mother had been a big person in labor-management relations and in the unions on the side. And he just came in to work with me, and he just knew an awful lot about this kind of thing, NLRB kind of thing. And I went over and Sorensen sort of grilled me a little on the subject and it seemed to be okay to him, and then it was arranged for the President to receive our report. Arthur Goldberg, I remember, opened up with a remark of Lord Clive of England and asked--Clive of India, rather, who after the mutiny--1754, was it?--was asked....

The view was expressed that he had been excessive in his repression and he said, "To the contrary, I am amazed by my moderation"-- Kennedy took it okay, intended it okay. And it all seemed fine to him. Then one rather poignant event; he got up, left the Cabinet Room and went out. And there had just been that occasion when Ted Dealey [Edward M. Dealey] of *The Dallas [Morning] News* had sent a man, people looking for a man on horseback and who were riding Caroline's [Caroline Kennedy]....

MOSS: Macaroni?

MOYNIHAN: Teddy-car, truck cart, whatever.

MOSS: Pony cart.

MOYNIHAN: Pony cart. And the door of the Cabinet Room suddenly opens up and the President came back in. And someone had just sent him an early edition of *The Dallas Morning News* in which a poem had been run on the editorial page the way in the old edition journalists contributed, and the first letters of each line put together said, "Shit on Ted." And Kennedy thought this was as funny as could be. And he looked up to me, he showed it to them, and he said, "You know it's a"--and I have to this day mourned for that particular kind of alphabetization. I can't, to this moment.

MOSS: Acrostic, I think that's it.

MOYNIHAN: The President asked me.... A chance to really make an impression came and went. I said, "Yeah." And he'll never.... We did other things at that time that I guess I was involved with, which were also....

MOSS: Well, before we get off that, I've got a list of the appointments that are in the President's appointment book. And here we have a December '61 meeting at the White House and it looks like it might be on that task force.

MOYNIHAN: Yes, that's it.

MOSS: And this one is the signing in the manual....

MOYNIHAN: Yes. That's it. That's right. This is just exactly the sequence. [Richard J.] Dick Murphy was Assistant Postmaster General.

MOSS: Right. Do you remember anything of the contribution of the other people there, Carl Runge [Carlisle P. Runge] particularly in [Department of] Defense? He had the manpower side of it and had a lot of civilian employees and so on.

MOYNIHAN: Yeah. The thing was so simple. I mean, it was done, nobody was fighting it. Everybody wanted it to work and everyone seemed to think it reasonable. Remember, this was not a time when anybody would be apprehensive on the basis of the experience of municipal unions. It was still too new, and what you can do to the budget of New York City was not yet clear.

And we wrote a no-strike provision in very clearly. Goldberg was very sensitive on that. I finished up the report to him and he looked it over and said, "That's fine. Nope. You want to have one chapter, right in the middle of it, there's one chapter, one sentence, it's in chapter nine: 'There is no right to strike against the federal government in any circumstances', referring to me too," and I agreed. "Yeah, it goes with that." The number of blue-collar employees of the Defense Department astounded everybody who hadn't realized what it was.

MOSS: All right. Let's go back to your division of effort with Steve Shulman now, on a day-to-day basis. You talk about this task force as a kind of special project thing. What other special projects, what kinds of things would fall your way, what kinds of things would fall Steve's way?

MOYNIHAN: Well, that's easy. Steve managed the Secretary's day, which I didn't do at all, under any circumstances. I did things that had to be done over a period of a couple of weeks or a couple of months. I did a lot of writing; that was part of the routine for me.

We got involved right away with the question of federal pay policy. John Macy wanted to establish the principle of comparability, and I became Goldberg's man on that. This involved enormous issues, getting federal, very sharp-rise raise in some federal salaries. A big question with the Pentagon, with McNamara [Robert S. McNamara], was of federal salaries for the troops, who are federal employees. And always thinking that right there early on in those meetings McNamara very much resisting giving anything like comparable salaries to drafted enlisted men. At this point I think Dutch soldiers were making more money than American soldiers and that kind of thing.

MOSS: Did you get any indication why he was resisting this?

MOYNIHAN: Yeah. This is the point.

MOSS: Oh, okay.

MOYNIHAN: This money had to be used for social purposes. And the draft was a good device to get an army in less than it cost you, and then you had money you could do a few good things with—and little realizing what that would do before the end of the decade for social policy in American society. Well, we went in there.... The annals of my meetings with the President are brief, but there was a meeting I remember on that pay business which isn't here.

MOSS: Yeah. Well, these would only be ones that had been formally scheduled for his time.

MOYNIHAN: Oh. Well, this was not formally scheduled. But this was my one, this was what revived me from my failure over the acronym or whatever it is. We were sitting around and we brought in the pay proposal. And it was at that point Kennedy, I think, he looked at it and said, "Fine." But to get comparability, so-called--that's the term--the people at the very bottom of the scales, the GS-1's, 2's, they were comparable. They were scheduled a \$17 dollar raise or something like that, and Kennedy said, "Can't we make that at least a hundred dollars for everybody?" And he said, "After all, it's only \$150 million dollars." And I knew the numbers well enough at this point not to get overwhelmed at any fight by the President, and I made the calculation and prayed a little bit and said, "Fifteen million dollars, Mr. President, isn't it?"

He said, "That's right. Just \$15 million." And so that made my day, such things a young man comes home and tells your wife about you. He looked at it and he was going to say, "These are my votes. A hundred dollars, well, what the hell." At that time \$150 million dollars was a lot of money.

MOSS: What other kinds of things were you getting into? What were the balls that Goldberg was tossing you to handle?

MOYNIHAN: Well, we were the center for the arts in the Kennedy period, although nobody quite fully noticed it or approved it, I think. Actually, there was no other place, or rather there was another place, but the other people who might have been involved were just a little too artsy, if you know what I mean, at a day and time when the subject was still surrounded by suggestions of sexual inadequacy or other such matters, not entirely kidding. The Metropolitan Opera had a strike, and Arthur Goldberg was asked to arbitrate, and he made a decision. He could have had to make the right decision.

MOSS: Who asked him to do it?

MOYNIHAN: I don't know. The union fellows did, maybe.

MOSS: I was wondering if the impetus came from the White House.

MOYNIHAN: I should doubt that. Oh no. Goldberg was very much liked, and in that kind of sort of Jewish world of, well, of the kind of man who plays in the Metropolitan orchestra and teaches on the side. I think Dorothy's father was such a person in Chicago, you know. Anyway, this came to him and he took it, came to him in the atmosphere that, "We want you to settle it." And they weren't getting him in gear. And I think we remarked at the time that we couldn't give them any money so he gave them some hope; I mean there wasn't any money.

MOSS: I seem to recall an attempt was made to try and get some money out of State Department on a cultural exchange thing to send them abroad, this kind of thing.

MOYNIHAN: Basically, the opera didn't have any money is what it ended up. So I wrote a long pronouncement about the arts, and we had lunch with John D. Rockefeller [John D. Rockefeller III], who I was on the phone with today. And this was very well received. It was one of those first things where the sort of--the Kennedy style of this sort was recognized. *The New York Times* had printed the full text, and their music critic called it the "State of the Union message on arts." Arthur Goldberg just loved that; I mean he really did love it. It was a very gay moment. The morning it appeared, he was going off to some new African country to--with a shipment of some cheap little pendants from the President and we all went out to the airport, and it was all really very happy times for them. And Pennsylvania Avenue, which is my passion to this day-- I got my last testimony on Pennsylvania Avenue two weeks ago.

MOSS: Yes, we have a microfilm of your files from '63, I guess it is, on that whole thing.

MOYNIHAN: Have you? I have a lot more that you probably should have. I looked at this the other day. I have all the original stuff. When Mrs. Kennedy [Jacqueline B. Kennedy] left the White House--now, I understand this, I don't know this--she gave to President Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson] a list of five or six things that she thought that President Kennedy would want finished, and Pennsylvania Avenue was one of them. And I sort of kept at it actually very much for that reason, I think, with these two, Johnson and now Nixon, and Nixon's very supportive of this. I think we might we--get a book. I changed notes with Jacqueline and with Rockport. That came up in a very simple way in the summer of '69--again, just about the time I got there. The President.... A Cabinet committee was set up on office space [President's Advisory Commission on Presidential Office Space]. They were all short of office space.

MOSS: You said 1969 a moment ago. You've got your administrations....

MOYNIHAN: I'm sorry, '61. There had been an enormous expansion of the federal government, and it hadn't been properly....

MOSS: The question of whether to build or to lease and that kind of thing.

MOYNIHAN: Well, they had a kind of curious style of government which is, somehow they don't notice you're expanding if you don't build maybe, and they had a general disinclination to think of those things. The Labor Department, I think, was in twenty-eight buildings in the city of Washington with only seven thousand people and only half of them in Washington; it's that kind of silliness. So this ad hoc committee on federal office space was set up, and it was Arthur Goldberg and me and Richard Russell and Luther Hodges and the head of GSA [General Services Administration]....

MOSS: Bernie Boutin [Bernard L. Boutin]?

MOYNIHAN: I think it changed overnight. I think originally it was that man from Pennsylvania that resigned in the first committee meeting.

MOSS: Yes. I'm bad on names.

MOYNIHAN: Anyway, Arthur Goldberg was the Department of Labor, had priority, and he was made chairman. And on the way over, or the way back--I don't know--to the meeting in Ted--whose office? Help me.... California, Fred Dutton [Frederick G. Dutton].

MOSS: Yes.

MOYNIHAN: Fred was secretary to the Cabinet then, wasn't he?

MOSS: Right.

MOYNIHAN: He convened the meeting, and Arthur Goldberg said, "You know, this Pennsylvania Avenue areas is just a disaster," and so forth. It surely was Arthur Goldberg's idea, not mine, but it was the kind of thing I had fun with, so I simply said, "Let's take this little project on office space and do something large with it." And we did. I'd know from the story how it was to be done. But I wrote--again, the kind of thing, you were asking me what I do--I wrote the report. And I wrote a federal architectural policy--the first time in the history of the republic we had a policy--and it was a nice one-page policy. I think over the years it really didn't have many consequences. It was in the manner of the time. I invoked Pericles on the subject of we do not imitate the examples of others. It was a sensible policy.

It said: Look, you know, the federal government should not be avant garde in its architecture; it just should, at any given moment, use the best architecture available. We mean to be around here a long time and it should look the best. At that point it had been fifty years since a contemporary building had been built by the federal government in Washington--although these funny Republicans can fool you. They had gone out to Dulles International [Airport] and built the most spectacular building of the twentieth century.

MOSS: [Eero] Saarinen Airport.

MOYNIHAN: Yeah. So, in the report of the ad hoc committee--although Dutton and the White House--we mentioned \_\_\_\_\_ committee \_\_\_\_\_ in place of all this. But it was a nice atmosphere in Washington because if you were doing the other things you were supposed to do you could fool around with things like this and milk them dry. And the labor movement was not mad at the President, so he had no complaints from the Secretary of Labor--sometimes it comes to that. So we proposed the reconstruction of Pennsylvania Avenue as well as this federal policy, and we got good men and various things going.

But there was a movement at the time--I probably should turn these papers in; I just went through them. I have an enormous file on when I was doing some testimony for the House [of Representatives]. The White House was going through one of those characteristic White House things: "It looks like we're appointing too many committees. We're not giving an impression of executive vigor"--or whatever. That kind of thing happens. So they wouldn't appoint a committee for Pennsylvania Avenue. So it was left to us in the Department of Labor just to fake it.

So we drew up a list of people, consulted--Arthur Goldberg always providing everything, loving that kind of thing, very helpful, not knowing a lot about it, not needing to know; knowing what he needed to know, which was to invite people to come to a Cabinet meeting in the secretary's room and so forth. And we put together the President's Council on Pennsylvania Avenue--a nonexistent body, but we got Nat Owens to chair it. We went to work on it, and before long we had a plan, which was Ada Louise Huxtable's that was worthy of Rome and \_\_\_\_\_. It was mostly drawn up in bar rooms and on street corners. And we never had a telephone extension, we used the National Capitol Planning Commission's offices when we had meetings; Lobby Row was very generous to us.

Kennedy at first didn't know about it; why would he know about it? And then little by little Walton [William Walton] would tell him and he apparently was getting interested. We created the notion of Kennedy riding in the inaugural parade, looking around and, "My God, what's happened to my city?" But when he did hear more about it, when we had a plan really well advanced, he said, "Well, I'd like to see that." And actually, one of the last bits of instruction he apparently made before he left for Dallas was that he wanted to have a plan ready to show to a coffee hour with the congressional leaders when he came back. And Bill Walton and I and Charlie Horsky [Charles A. Horsky] were having lunch at Walton's to talk about this coffee hour when the phone rang, the White House phone to Walton that the President had been shot and to get back to the White House. That, and one other thing of its kind, and equally stretched out, I'm entirely happy to say, is the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

MOSS: Okay. Let me hold you there for a minute before we get on to that and ask you about the White House end of it. Who was handling it? Ted Reardon [Timothy J. Reardon Jr.]?

MOYNIHAN: No.



MOSS: Dutton?

MOYNIHAN: No. Dutton wouldn't go near it, and by this time he was at [the Department of] State.

MOSS: He was at State?

MOYNIHAN: Without exception, from beginning to end, Fred--oh, God, help me— Holborn [Frederick Holborn], who became rather a close friend of mine. Again, a kind of strange connection. He was a friend of one of the young men who came up to be a Kennedy coordinator in Syracuse--Pell, actually a nephew of Claiborne Pell. And Fred Holborn was from beginning to end our man in the White House. And I know that that's not like saying you have Sorensen or anybody else there; you didn't. But we had the man who would care and did care. We never had to get anything from the White House. There would have come a time when we would have had to, but....

MOSS: So it was just a matter of keeping them informed?

MOYNIHAN: Well, it wasn't even a matter of anyone gave a shit. Walton would tell the President, and we were doing this, we were not bothering anybody--not asking for any money, you know. Matter of fact, some nice sounds were being made and this thing was very cultural.

The Medal of Freedom is a rather quick story of the kinds of things the Labor Department did. We did all these things, you know, and led an interesting life. The President one day had said to Goldberg that he would like to have a--wanted a system of civil honors, and Goldberg said all right. And it would be typical of --you were asking, what did I do? I was the guy that he would say, "You know, the President said this, and do you want to do something about it?" So at this time I sort of took this on, and it was something that involved something I've always wanted to do. I'm not sure it is a good idea, but anyway, we won't go into that.

And the--let's see, I very shortly thereafter got involved in the cotton textile negotiation, long-term cotton textile negotiation, and so was flying back and forth to Europe regularly, and learned what I could about--the Legion of Honor, then learned what I could about--stopped in London at the treasury, talked about their honor system; found out some fascinating things. Found out that like most of the ancient institutions of the British government, the honor system was a late Victorian invention. Ninety-five percent of the--I had the Labor Department library, that wonderful library, the librarian Margaret what's-her-name, she's a wonderful gal, they would do faithfully.

The people liked Kennedy. It's been such a difference in the world down there now under Nixon and Johnson; maybe it would be if Kennedy were still there, but they don't like the President any more. But people had no hesitation about--Margaret Brickett--you know, working all night on little things, the President might want this. And I had them go through the whole honors list of July 1951, the birthday list, I guess they called it, and count what

year was that particular order established. And ninety-five of them had been established since 1919--that great sequence. You're historians, I guess.

MOSS: More or less.

MOYNIHAN: Well, you know, the British K.M.G. [Knights of St. Michael and St. George], and so forth, and the Order of St. Michael and St. George, "Don't call me God. God calls me God." That was an order struck for the occasion of the annexation of the Ionian Islands in 1918, and it was given out to a couple of admirals and that was it. And then Disraeli [Benjamin Disraeli], looking around for something to do with his new civil servants, found them in a drawer somewhere, and started pinning them on Oxford [University] graduates and that sort of system began. I've established that much.

Well, what to do. I would meet with Leonard Carmichael. President Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] had set up a commission, and Spellman had worked very hard and had almost got this thing going and the last minute Wayne Morse had killed it on the floor with an article of \_\_\_\_\_ or something. And we got the proposal again, working for Holborn, and in this case, the President's military aide, who was also very interested. I did a memo from Goldberg to the President, which I have always been very pleased with.

It said, "You asked how could you set up a system of civil honors, how can you get a system of civil honors in this country, and we've looked into it and we've come to the conclusion that you can't; men at least as good as you have tried and they never get anywhere; it doesn't work. If you want a system of civil honors, the thing to do is to say you've got one, and start doing it." And we found this Medal of Freedom which had--there were two forms of it, but one form was basically for spies: people who had done things in World War II but who weren't military and there were no honors for them.

MOSS: Like the Freedman [William F. Freedman] chap who worked on the Japanese code and things of this sort.

MOYNIHAN: Well, that was a somewhat different thing. There was in fact a government thing for them, you know, which worked out fine--I think. All I know is that the day that we were announcing this thing we announced the people who had it, and at the last moment a white-faced courier from the CIA arrived and took two names off the list and grabbed a hotel in Rome, and they never got announced as having received the medal of freedom. But what we said is we'll take the medal and list....

A few of these had been given out, although somehow in Europe a lot of them had been a somewhat different incarnation of it than that. When that French nurse from Dien Phu came through, Eisenhower gave it to her; when Dulles [John F. Dulles] was dying he sent his son John Eisenhower over to give it to him from Eisenhower. We said, "Let's say the Medal of Freedom's what we'll give out," and we said, "Let's call it the Presidential Medal of Freedom."

And then, one bit of government lore I had was that the whole thrust of the thing that we'd been worried about on these medals was that they would be given out so often that they would degenerate. And I think I knew enough about government to know, as a matter of

fact, the opposite is the tendency. They wither out; they don't get given out. So we worked out a scheme that on Washington's Birthday in 1963 we announced, while the President was in Florida, that the Presidential Medal of Freedom--we drew up the statement--which is the highest civil honor conferred by the president for services in peace time, will henceforth only be given out once a year, and it will be given out for service to the arts and things like that as well as other civil services, and it will be announced on the Fourth of July.

And Kennedy liked that fine. And we set up this commission to propose the award to the President, and George Ball was made chairman, and Mary McGrory was on it, and Henry Cabot Lodge was on it and took it very seriously and did a very good job of it. We got very enthusiastic about this and we drew up our first list, a very distinguished list, and it all went through very nicely. The announcements were made, *The New York Times* ran all the pictures and biographies of everybody involved. Everybody was really very excited and pleased by it.

The arrangement was that the announcement would be made the Fourth of July, and the President would actually confer them when he got around to it, because actually you never could tell when the President would get around to something. [Interruption] And then the sort of poignant thing about it was that the schedule for the presentation was to be made about ten days after the President was assassinated. And there was a great deal of fuss at this point.

As we heard the story, President Johnson said he didn't have time for that, and Sorensen said, "Well, if you don't have time for that, you don't have time to be president," that kind of thing. The presentations were made. Mrs. Kennedy was behind the screen in the East Room listening to him. And on the last day they worked out things to give them posthumously to Pope John and to President Kennedy. And I wrote Johnson's statement at that time, and actually I wrote the last words in the--I think of a very young sub-Cabinet officer who involves himself in this, makes note of it--I think the last words in the last volume of the Kennedy presidential papers are the little statement by Johnson which I wrote.

MOSS: Yes, that's so. That's right.

MOYNIHAN: I was by this time fairly close to people in the White House, not enormously close, but I was in and out of there all the time. Kenny O'Donnell got me a White House pass. I was about as familiar as an Assistant Secretary of Labor is, you know, not very familiar but, I mean, there was nobody in the White House's name I didn't know. And then, the next year we got a second list out, but then it aborted as Johnson became very unhappy about things that were Kennedy, you know. Johnson stunted the beautification program because Pennsylvania Avenue, although he would do something for it, was Kennedy. It was that just inevitable world; there was no way to avoid it. President Nixon has been giving the Presidential Medal of Freedom--gave it to the astronauts, the first astronauts. But that Fourth of July thing sort of was satisfactory with my theory where the thing tends to attrition rather than to fruition.

So that's the kind of thing that, there was a lot of that in the Labor Department, and mainly because we didn't have any more serious things to do. But Arthur Goldberg's Labor Department was very creative about such things and responsive to them, you know.

MOSS: All right. We have Goldberg leaving and Wirtz taking over. Now, as I recall it, you left the [Labor] Department for a time, or what? How did it work out? September 1962?

MOYNIHAN: Yes. Right. Robert Kennedy called and asked that I be sent to New York to do for Mr. Morgenthau [Robert M. Morgenthau].

MOSS: For the Morgenthau campaign, right?

MOYNIHAN: Goldberg had proposed, when that--geez, my memory is so awful--Assistant Secretary of Labor from Texas...

MOSS: Jerry Holleman.

MOYNIHAN: ...Jerry Holleman, and he got involved in the first random disaster of Washington with...

MOSS: Billie Sol Estes.

MOYNIHAN: ...Billie Sol Estes.

MOSS: Quite innocently, I understand, on his part.

MOYNIHAN: That's no suggestion otherwise, it's just you can't tolerate that sort of thing, and it just doesn't see cease. You know, when something like that happens, you have to go. And so Arthur Goldberg said to me a couple of days later, "Listen, I think you should be the next Assistant Secretary," which astounded me. I mean I certainly had no thought that I would ever rise to such magisterial levels. And he said, "Do you have any support you can get up?" And I said, "Well, no." He said, "We'll work on it." And it sort of was being worked on, and I was sort of bumping into the AFL-CIO [American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations] fellows. But I didn't know how to do this exactly. And then the campaign--and then Goldberg went off, as you know. And Willard Wirtz and I were very close at that time, and he couldn't have been happier if there was anything he could do to continue it. And Kennedy asked me to--asked that I go up to work for Morgenthau.

MOSS: This was Robert Kennedy who asked you. Do you recall the conversation? Phone call or what?

MOYNIHAN: It wasn't to me, it was to Wirtz. I'm pretty sure it was to Wirtz. I was thought to be someone who knew something about New York, which I did. I knew a lot more about New York than they did. And so I, on an hour's notice, up and went off to New York. When I came back after the campaign, Wirtz just put through the assistant secretaryship. I was not President Kennedy's choice. I don't think President Kennedy knew my name.

MOSS: Let me come back to that Morgenthau campaign and ask you if you remember that letter. I xeroxed it and taped the signature at the bottom, but there is a Pat Moynihan at the bottom.

MOYNIHAN: Yeah. That's right. Yes. There's the great remark, Billy McKeon [William H. McKeon], who was our state chairman, came back to the Commodore [Hotel] headquarters one night after this Christian association thing came out, and Rockefeller [Nelson A. Rockefeller] had rushed up to Wagner [Robert F. Wagner] at the Columbus Day Parade and said, "Hey Bob, guess what I just heard? Did you know that Bob Morgenthau was head of the Christian society at Amherst College?" The Christian Association. The point being that there--you know, I don't need to tell you all that. And I came back and there was Billy McKeon saying—who also at this point had found out that there was not going to be any money coming from the Morgenthaus --and saying, "Here I thought I nominated a rich Jew and he turns out to be a poor Christian." And the Catholic business, I remember that struggle endlessly. We did cut the margin. We didn't cut it by much.

MOSS: Did you win your bet with Teddy White [Theodore H. White]?

MOYNIHAN: I won my bet with Teddy.

MOSS: Okay. I had another item here that might be of some interest to you.

MOYNIHAN: Oh, can I interrupt and say one thing before, with President Kennedy, on the day that we finally got together in the Fish Room with our commission on the Medal of Freedom, he came in and went around and shook hands with us all, and it was very nice, and I think at this point he really did know me. I introduced myself and he said, "Sure, Pat." But he opened up with that lovely kind of remark he could open up with when he said, "As Napoleon remarked, 'If I had enough ribbon, I could conquer the world.'"

MOSS: Here's the nomination that Wirtz sent forward to the President on your assistant secretaryship. Let me turn this tape over just a moment.

[BEGIN SIDE II, TAPE I]

MOSS: Right. Now he proposed you for Assistant Secretary, and this was a new post in effect, Policy Planning and Research. And they did a little reorganizing and put the Bureau of Labor Statistics--not [Bureau of] Labor Standards; that's another one--Bureau of Labor Statistics under you. What was the rationale behind this? What was the purpose, and so on? What was your job as Wirtz put it to you?

MOYNIHAN: Well, it was.... I don't think this was Willard Wirtz's idea as much as much as it was Leo Werts who had been thinking about this for a long time, and who was a very distinguished sort of career man, had seen the Department of Labor was becoming a much more activist organization dealing in areas of social policy. We got the manpower to.... We were able to follow these things very closely. In the President's first State of the Union message in January-- or maybe it was the second, I don't know, we did one in 1961-- anyway in '62, all the first thing we talked about was for Labor Department bills, you know. And this was a recession, and etcetera. And we got the Manpower Development and Training Act passed in the second session of the Congress, and the first manpower message to Congress went through the President. I remember writing Kennedy's.... I did the kind of work when the President had a message, transmitting it; I would write that kind of thing.

MOSS: How would the call for something like that come? Would it be initiated at Labor, or from the White House, or how would the pieces get put together? Would it simply be dumped in your lap or what?

MOYNIHAN: I don't know. We just assumed that we had to put together something the President assigned, and we put it all together and sent it up.

MOSS: Okay. I was wondering how much it got changed by other people in Labor, how much it got changed by Sorensen or Lee White or Feldman, or somebody over there.

MOYNIHAN: Very little. This was not something they were familiar with, there was no bureaucracy to do it. This was the first time we did it. The fifth time you do it there's a system, the first time you do it you just pick it up. A lot of events were happening around Labor: issues of employment, black issues were beginning to emerge, things like that. And the notion of some kind of policy planning function began to seem like a reasonable, even a necessary thing. And I was a logical person for that kind of thing. I had been sort of doing it in certain ways. Anyway, Leo Werts thought it was a good idea, and I obviously was attracted to it. And also, he wasn't that important. You weren't giving somebody something so important that if he fucked up you were in trouble--I mean, it was an experimental bureau, see.

MOSS: It was like the Office of Labor-Management Relations or something of that sort?

MOYNIHAN: Yeah. And the Bureau of Labor Statistics ran itself, and all you had to do was be sensitive enough to run at a wide plane.

MOSS: What was the purpose of putting that bureau under you?

MOYNIHAN: Oh, that's an appointment issue, that's the.... In our U.S. government, I mean, you've got [the Bureau of the] Census, the Division of Commerce....

MOSS: Standards.

MOYNIHAN: In the Department of Commerce.... There are three places in the U.S. government you can get information: B.L.S. [Bureau of Labor Statistics], the Census, and that equivalent in Commerce. I'm not a political scientist, Ph.D. Although I found out Goldberg didn't know I was a Ph.D., I don't think. I was awarded one of those outstanding- young-men-in-the-federal-government things for the poverty program draft. I was the one that drew up the draft for the OEO [Office of Economic Opportunity] legislation. And Arthur Goldberg came down and gave the awards, and he said at the time he never knew I was a Ph.D. But I was.

And as I say, if you're going to have a policy planning you link it up with some data collection and analysis, but that's the logical thing. It was not an adventurous undertaking. I mean I had a very small staff and it was bootlegged a bit. But it seemed a good idea and we got going fairly quickly, reasonably quickly. We got a little bit distracted into things like the Alliance for Progress and those trips. But, by and large, when the time came, if I can say it, for the poverty program to be planned, the only basic data available was this report, "One Third of the Nation," which was the outgrowth of our policy planning studies.

MOSS: This is one of the areas that we are not well documented on, either in commentary or in papers and so on--that's the whole OEO antecedents in the Kennedy administration. I wonder if you could sort of sketch out what you now see, with hindsight, was developing at that point. Where were the ideas coming from, what were the ideas, how were they beginning to emerge, that kind of thing? You have things like the National Service Corps idea sort of kicking around, that kind of thing.

MOYNIHAN: Yeah. That kind of thing, and I would be involved in those meetings. It would be very normal for me, from Labor, to go to those meetings, the kind of things that Dave Hackett and Youth were involved with. I knew a fair amount of the juvenile delinquency lore from the Harriman administration, and federal government was not a bad place to learn these things. The actual genesis of that poverty thing I don't know. There was talk in the White House about whether the suburbs should be made the issue of 1964, or poverty, in some vague way.

MOSS: How did you sense this?

MOYNIHAN: Well, I hung around the White House.

MOSS: Who was talking in this way? Who were the people saying this?

MOYNIHAN: Oh, Feldman, White, Sorensen. I had done one thing, which I can leave to the counsel to those who follow in my undistinguished footsteps. I got myself a White House pass--one of those [U.S.] Secret Service passes--and

that meant you could come and go as you pleased. Otherwise, you had to have an appointment at the White House. And that's a big difference. And so I did what an enterprising young man does, I'd hang around, and see people in the corridors and say hello. And so I knew about this. But also I knew about it because of this "One Third of the Nation" thing I'll tell you about. I was policy planning man of the Labor Department, and you were available for meetings, and they held them in the office of the Bureau of the Budget.

The "One Third of a Nation" is a very quick story. I was sitting in my office one day in July of '63 and wondering what to do with the day, and there was a little squib of one inch in *The Washington Post* that said the director of the Selective Service commission [Selective Service System] had again submitted a report to the President, and once again, one-half the persons called up were rejected for mental or physical reasons, or both. And this suddenly flashed for me. Our principal legislation after the Manpower Training Act which we had inherited from the 1950s--as Jim Sundquist [James L. Sundquist] made clear--was passed, then our next move was the Youth Employment Act.

I was getting nervous because as the economy picked up and the GNP [gross national product] began to rise, and et cetera, interest in unemployment began to recede. It had really been a kind of shorthand for this other something that could really be the economy itself, and as it was receding we were left with very high levels of unemployment in various places, mostly urban, black, kinds of levels.

And we had a Youth Employment Act, which was S1, Hubert Humphrey's bill, which we then bent into the YCC [Youth Conservation Corps]. And this became Title I of the poverty, of the OEO legislation. That's what Title I is today with Youth Corps and with Job Corps. But I had to get a case for it, and suddenly I had this idea that, Aha! If half the people called up for Selective Service are rejected, then we're in trouble--matter of fact, we still are. The rates of rejection for medical and mental reasons are really astonishing, and they are not reassuring. There aren't too many people who are not sick. They are rather inverse relationships: the higher your social class, the more likely you are to be rejected for medical reasons, and vice versa for mental.

But anyway, the idea would be: here, at this point, the only legislation of any consequence was past the Congress--Kennedy's second Congress--with a four year extension of the draft, which had been debated ten minutes in the Senate. The spring confrontation on steel prices had just.... I mean, was dead in the water, and legislation was going nowhere. So I had this idea and guess I talked to Willard Wirtz about it: "Let's investigate, let's find out what is going on here. Let's get a report using this Selective Service data." It was a screen for which theoretically half the population passed. Its potential to be used as a way to identify people who need training, make a case for training, and so forth, was all there. As a matter of fact, we came to find out, for example, that the Army was routinely rejecting people who had symptoms of cancer, and telling them they had symptoms--not of cancer, because it wasn't public health. If they had a drug problem or venereal disease, they would say, "Come here, you've got a drug problem." But it's not public health--that kind of craziness.

So I went to Wirtz; I guess I must have talked to him. I would have done that once I'd thought about it. And then I called Sorensen and said, "Look, we ought to do something. This is a good thing to do," and Sorensen said fine. So we set up a task force with McNamara, the President's task force on manpower conservation [President's Committee on



Manpower] and you can sort of see the evolution of the [Youth] Conservation Corps. And we went to work with the raw data, which was easy. But then we drew a sample of people who had been rejected--the kind of thing BLS can do; great organization if you know it and like it--and from our sample we got the first look at poverty, in its modern format: who's poor, and what the race and the region and family backgrounds and so forth were. Really very horrendous lesson in what's going on out there. And there was an experience which I knew something.... [Interruption]

The British had had almost their first realization of what was going on in the slums of Liverpool when they began Selective Service in 1917--'16, I guess. They had no idea of what was going on out there, and I knew just as much. We were to be ready the first of January, and we were, but the assassination occurred. And so Wirtz took the thing down to Johnson. But it was really the only data that anybody had on that poverty thing. There was a book by Michael Harrington, but it was outdated. I hate his book about being poor. But this was information of the kind governments will admit. And actually, the OEO legislation, Selective Service rejectees are a category in the OEO, and so forth.

So I would say that to a very considerable degree, to an extent, there was some serious planning on the poverty thing and it was done and the Labor Department was ready when the time came. They knew we knew. I mean, we sponsored them and we were aware of their \_\_\_\_\_ for OEO. \_\_\_\_\_ where they would be. I knew a fair amount about things like the juvenile delinquency program which was a joint HEW [Department of Health, Education and Welfare] and Labor enterprise. So there was no organizational stress. I knew something about it. I wrote a little book about it. Well, that was part of the story.

MOSS:               How did an old bureaucrat like Ewan Clague react to these new developments, and to his bureau being put under you?

MOYNIHAN:       Oh, Ewan and I got along very well, I think, excepting that Willard Wirtz wanted a new director, and it seemed to me a new director was probably in order.

MOSS:               He'd been there since, what, '46?

MOYNIHAN:       Yeah. Been there a fairly long while. And never found a director while I was there. Our relationship was slightly strained by my having to say to him, "Look, we're looking for a new director." But you might get a very different view from him, as it were, of what I was like as Assistant Secretary, but I can tell you, I was as good as the next one, and had a lot of respect for the things they were doing, and knew what they were doing.

MOSS:               Well, the point was that I think that he had been virtually directly under the secretary before as an independent operation and here was another level being squeezed in above him. I think this may have caused a little difficulty. Did you perceive any?

MOYNIHAN: Well, it didn't cause that kind of difficulty, because he hadn't had direct access either to Arthur Goldberg or to Willard Wirtz. It had been a position that in the 1940s and 1950s he had had, but he wasn't going to have it under the other man. I didn't come in and sort of say, "Now, wait a minute. If you want to see the secretary, tell me first." He'd never see the secretary anyway, you know, it was that kind of thing. They'd under-appreciated him, I think. It's very easy to not appreciate what it means when you have people who give you straight counts. That's a role in government....

MOSS: What about some of the other people now, in the Labor Department, as you saw them doing their jobs? Jim Reynolds [James J. Reynolds], for instance, in Labor-Management Relations. What kind of assessment would you make of his tenure as Assistant Secretary? And later as Undersecretary, as a matter of fact, under Johnson?

MOYNIHAN: Well, just an extraordinarily devoted and useful guy. Very elegant, nice combination of sort of Irish Catholic but sort of Ivy League, too, you know? He really was the management side of things, not the labor side, but you had to keep reminding yourself that he was, that they were all very simpatico. Always exhausted in what seemed to me a stupid job, which ought to have three squads of people. All looked like Jim Reynolds; those men are kept in a state of protracted exhaustion--which Willard Wirtz eventually got into also; and which the Johnson government.... Johnson should have gotten rid of all the Kennedy people.

MOSS: Well, this was one thing that I remember, almost the day after the assassination somebody asked me how long I thought the Kennedy people would stay, and I said that if Johnson was wise they'd be all gone within six months. You have to have your own team.

MOYNIHAN: It's not just that. You have to have fresh people. They were exhausted. I think it's a physical exhaustion.

MOSS: You noticed the exhaustion in Wirtz. How about other people? Well, who else is there?

MOYNIHAN: Arthur Goldberg's great capacity, you see, was not....

MOSS: He moved from job to job, too. You have Reynolds and Wirtz, really, as the people who are staying a long time. Esther Peterson is a little different category. She has a different bailiwick to handle.

MOYNIHAN: She had no negotiations.

MOSS: Right. How about a guy like John Henning, who comes in as Undersecretary?

MOYNIHAN: Well, I guess the fact is that he and Wirtz never got along, and Wirtz tried to....

MOSS: My understanding is that Wirtz really wanted Reynolds, but Meany [George Meany] forced Henning on him?

MOYNIHAN: Right, and it just never worked, and John just never.... Jack Henning just really never had much to do.

MOSS: How about a guy like Millard Cass, who's again been there for a long, long time and sort of holds up things when nobody else is watching them?

MOYNIHAN: Yeah. Well, I mean the BLS and the Labor people had a very, not a large organization but, you know, BLS had a hundred members. Millard Cass didn't have anybody working with him but at any given time he'd be doing something with somebody working for him. These men had a very strong professional sense, and Millard Cass had the kind of professional sense that knows that, you know, when the people run for re-election and that right away a new-term president starts, you start collecting things he's done, so when the campaign comes and they start screaming, "Give us our records. What have we done?", you can tell him the things he's done.

One other thing to mention might be, once I got the BLS Policy Planning staff, we got the.... I picked up the traffic safety business and asked young Nader [Ralph Nader] to come down and to work on a sort of general position paper, which we knew pretty much what we wanted to do. That here was a problem which had not been properly defined and therefore we didn't know too much about, and that we would have to move in the direction in which we did move. It was relatively--it was very hard. I mean, even Esther Peterson, who was the most, you know, fervid of consumerists at that time, couldn't quite see why this was a consumer issue, you know. But we were sort of redefining the consumer issue. Like most things, I thought we did it exactly right the way I conceived of it. People involved altogether \_\_\_\_\_ conceived in a slightly different way. There are excesses to anything, I suppose; anything more than what you want done is excessive, I also believe.

MOSS: Okay. Towards the end of the Kennedy administration you were looking towards 1964, and it's my understanding that you were given a task to sort of zero in on Rockefeller find what you could about him, and see what you could do to set him up.

MOYNIHAN: That's right.

MOSS: Do you recall any of this?

MOYNIHAN: God, how did you ever find that out?

MOSS: We talk to a lot of people and we read a lot of papers.

MOYNIHAN: I guess you do. Yeah. I'd forgotten all about it. Sure, I started the Rockefeller files, that's right. And I was getting ready.... That would be, I think, if I were to describe my role--and God knows it's not too exaggerated --but I was the, I think I was seen as.... The fellows in the White House regarded me as a friend, and as someone they could give that kind of a political job to.

MOSS: Here are some things that are sort of indicators of that; three items from the White House central file that touch on it at least. My initial evidence was hearsay. Maybe working with Bill Keel [William A. Keel] at DNC [Democratic National Committee].

MOYNIHAN: A little bit. But this was basically done with, I had Ellen Broderick working on this. Ellen had been with me and Governor Harriman, and so she knew the stakes, you know. And we were just assuming he would be running against Rockefeller. It was a fair assumption that among the two or three or four names that Rockefeller would be one of them.

MOSS: This is one of the things that's interesting, because nobody has quite been able to vector in on just what Kennedy was expecting to do in 1964, who he was expecting to meet. You get one view that he was sort of licking his chops just waiting for Goldwater [Barry M. Goldwater] to be shoved up, served up to him, and another one that maybe Rockefeller would be the candidate. I wondered where this all fit together, and how you remember it.

MOYNIHAN: No one spoke to me at that level of what the President was thinking. The prospect of Rockefeller being the nominee was just very clear. He had won a very handy victory over Morgenthau, and we had cut the margin by three percent or something. It was still six hundred thousand votes. And yet Rockefeller was the benefactor, at this point, of a great many, of the incompetence of the Democrats in New York--with their falling apart and the money and a certain kind of uncooperative press, I guess, you know, or executive press, certainly.

And when I had gone up with Morgenthau, for example--I remember this was an event of some consequence, at least in some of the thinking-- I had tried to make, you know, the best of the campaign as we could, and I looked at "The Budget in Brief" that had been put out that year; this would be dated in the springtime when the budget was passed. And we looked at it--and I remember my friend Clark Wallberg at Syracuse [University] tipped me to it, that if you looked at his numbers, it was just very clear that he was going to have to raise taxes in 1963. And so I put out a statement for Morgenthau. And knowing that--I mean, looking at this thing, it just was very clear: the fact that--and knowing how I knew that the Division of the Budget in Albany was working on five schemes of raising taxes and that whoever the new governor was, they were going to say, "Well, Governor, good morning. And here's your--you've got to raise taxes, and does any of these proposals appeal to you?"

And I didn't "know" that, excepting that I knew that division, I knew how they would behave. So I put out this statement for Morgenthau that said, "Governor Rockefeller is planning to raise taxes next year, and even now the plans for this tax increase are being

drawn in Albany.” And Rockefeller apparently says he later said it was the biggest mistake he’d ever made in politics; a goof, blooper. He sort of looked to somebody and said, “Find out if that’s so.” And I got this story from someone who was there. And—“Jesus, God, yes it is so.” And he said, “Oh, well.” So he put out a statement: “I will not raise taxes next year. I pledge.”

And then, I had no second day story, so I did what you would do in those circumstances. I said, “The fact that the governor denies that he’s going to raise taxes is proof that he’s going to raise taxes.” What else do you do in a campaign? Not really spurious because, in fact, I knew he was going to raise taxes. Whereupon he came forward with the proposition that he was not going to raise taxes next year, nor would he ever raise taxes again, before the Senate. Well, I mean, he came in and within 90 days he had the biggest tax increase that’s ever.... And this was potentially vulnerable. I mean, we had got him on something. Well, so the question is, you know, can you believe that kind of issue in a campaign? Look what the fellow said, look what he did, \_\_\_\_\_ finger on the button--that kind of crazy politics, but it’s politics. So they.... I started that, and we were making the most of it.

MOSS: As you look back on the Kennedy years now, with all that’s gone since, the war and the failure of the War on Poverty as such, the vast changes that have taken place, I guess, in the national consciousness, and so on, how do you see those days now? As incredibly naïve, or what? As the beginning of something new, or how would you characterize it?

MOYNIHAN: Not very successfully characterize it any way. You had a country that was still surprisingly unambitious for itself at the levels of social policy. You still had very much a Cold War world. I mean, after all, it was the Alianza para el Progreso [Alliance for Progress] that was our big thing, not poverty. We were going to solve poverty in Sao Paulo--only to find out we couldn’t solve it in the District of Columbia. And I think Kennedy began to.... He had people with a lot of energy there, and disposed of active government--as active a government as they could get; and the beginnings of a kind of a much higher level of ambition, if you will, in government, was there.

I mean, we were mumbling around, trying to resuscitate some New Deal programs that had collapsed in 1944, things like that. But I mean, there was a dynamic that would pursue itself. It went right through the Johnson period and through to the Nixon period, too. Richard Nixon has sent forth domestic programs an order of magnitude larger than anything Kennedy ever dreamed of. And it starts there, as the way to behave. You may or may not end up being happy that this happened. You may wish that.... We’ve got a lot more government than we ever had, and I don’t know--there’s a lot more government involved that....

MOSS: I notice one item here, going back to your earlier period when you first came on board, that you were to be Labor Department person for White House mail. Do you recall what that was all about, what the task involved was?

MOYNIHAN: Oh, daily, every so often, the White House would send over letters to draft replies, some of which ought to be answered in the Labor Department, some of which should go back as drafts. Every so often you'd get a serious question, not many; shouldn't take up but an hour a day.

MOSS           Okay. I think I'm going to break off here. It's getting on to five o'clock and I've had you talking for about an hour and a half. I would like to have a chance to go over this, and perhaps come back at you another time, because I think I'm going to have some others.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

Daniel Patrick Moynihan Oral History Transcript  
Name List

**A**

Abel, Elie, 6  
Akers, Anthony G., 4

**B**

Ball, George, 19  
Bickel, Alexander, 3  
Boutin, Bernard L., 14  
Brickett, Margaret, 17  
Broderick, Ellen, 30  
Buckley, Charles A., 2

**C**

Cass, Millard, 29  
Clague, Ewan, 27  
Corbin, Paul, 4- 6  
Crotty, Peter, 2

**D**

De Sapio, Carmine, 2-3  
Dealey, Edward M., 9  
Disraeli, Benjamin, 17  
Donahue, Richard K., 6  
Dutton, Frederick G., 14-16

**E**

Eisenhower, Dwight D., 18  
Eisenhower, John, 18  
Estes, Billie Sol, 20

**F**

Feldman, Myer, 4, 23, 25  
Finletter, Thomas K., 2  
Freedman, William F., 18

**G**

Galbraith, John Kenneth, 2  
Glazer, Nathan, 2  
Goldberg, Arthur J., 1, 6-7, 9-10, 12-15, 17-18, 20-21, 24, 28  
Goldwater, Barry M., 31

**H**

Hackett, David L., 5, 24  
Harriman, W. Averell, 1, 6-7, 24, 30  
Harrington, Michael, 27  
Henning, John, 29  
Hitler, Adolph, 2

Hodges, Luther, 14  
Holborn, Frederick, 16, 18  
Holleman, Jerry, 20  
Horsky, Charles A., 16  
Humphrey, Humphrey, 26

**J**

John XXIII, 19  
Johnson, Lyndon B., 13, 17, 19-20, 27-28

**K**

Keel, William A., 30  
Kennedy, Caroline, 9  
Kennedy, Edward M., 3  
Kennedy, Ethel, 3  
Kennedy, Jacqueline, 13, 19  
Kennedy, John F., 1, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21-24, 26, 28, 31-32  
Kennedy, Joseph P., 2-3  
Kennedy, Robert, 3, 20  
Kennedy, Robert F., 3-5, 21  
Keogh, Eugene J., 3  
Kneedman, Mr., 6

**L**

Lodge, Henry Cabot, 19

**M**

Macy, John, 11  
McGrory, Mary, 19  
McKeon, William H., 21  
McNamara, Robert S., 11, 26  
Meany, George, 29  
Morgenthau, Robert M., 20-21, 31  
Morse, Wayne, 18  
Moynihan, Elizabeth B., 5  
Murphy, RIchard J., 10

**N**

Nader, Ralph, 29  
Nixon, Richard M., 5, 13, 17, 20, 32

**O**

O'Connell, Daniel, 2  
O'Donnell, Kenneth P., 6-7, 19  
Owens, Nat, 15

**P**

Pell, Claiborne, 16  
Pellman, Mr., 18  
Peterson, Esther, 29  
Prendergast, Michael H., 1, 6

**R**

Reardon, Timothy J., Jr., 16  
Reynolds, James J., 28-29  
Rockefeller, John D., III, 12  
Rockefeller, Nelson A., 21, 30-31  
Runge, Carlisle P., 10  
Russell, Richard, 14

**S**

Schlessinger, Arthur M., 2-3  
Shulman, Stephen N., 6-7, 10  
Smith, Alfred E., 4  
Sorensen, Theodore C., 4, 8, 16, 19, 23, 25-26

Spellman, Francis J., 3  
Stevenson, Adlai E., 2-3  
Sundquist, James L., 25  
Symington, Stuart, 2

**V**

Vanocur, Sander, 5-6

**W**

Wagner, Robert F., 21  
Wallberg, Clark, 31  
Walton, William, 15-16  
Werts, Leo, 22-23  
White, Lee, 23, 25  
White, Theodore H., 22  
Wirtz, W. Willard, 7, 20-22, 26-27, 28-29

**Y**

Yarmolinsky, Adam, 6