

Hubert H. Humphrey, Oral History Interview—JFK, 12/14/1964
Administrative Information

Creator: Hubert H. Humphrey
Interviewer: Max Kampelman
Date of Interview: December 14, 1964
Location: Washington D.C.
Length: 150 pages

Biographical Note

Humphrey was a senator from Minnesota (1949-1964), a presidential candidate (1960, 1968), and vice president of the United States (1965-1969). In this interview, he discusses his impressions of John F. Kennedy (JFK) as a U.S. representative and senator, including their shared service on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, political wrangling over the Democratic vice presidential candidacy in 1956, 1960 Democratic primaries in Wisconsin and West Virginia, and the 1960 Democratic National Convention, among other issues.

Access

Open.

Usage Restrictions

According to the deed of gift signed September 30, 1981, 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 The copyright law extends its protection to unpublished works from the moment of creation in a tangible form.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

Hubert H. Humphrey, recorded interview by Max Kampelman, December 14, 1964, (page number), John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE

JOHN F. KENNEDY LIBRARY

Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview
of Hubert H. Humphrey

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, Muriel Humphrey Brown do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title, and interest in the tape recording and transcript of personal interviews conducted with Hubert H. Humphrey on December 14, 1964 and March 30, 1970 at Washington, D.C. 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 available for use by researchers as soon as it has been deposited in the John F. Kennedy Library.
2. The tape recording shall be available to those researchers who have access to the transcript; however, access to the tape recording shall be for background use only, and researchers may not cite, paraphrase, or quote therefrom.
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.
6. Copies of the transcripts will be provided to:
 - (a) the undersigned donor,
 - (b) Minnesota Historical Society,
 - (c) Humphrey Institute at the University of Minnesota.

Donor

Date

Archivist of the United States

Date

Muriel Humphrey Brown

August 25, 1981

[Signature]

September 30, 1981

Hubert H. Humphrey—JFK

Table of Contents

<u>Page</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1	John F. Kennedy (JFK) in the U.S. House of Representatives
12	JFK's 1952 Senate campaign
14, 39	Humphrey and JFK on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
22	JFK in the U.S. Senate
28	1953 tax bill
33	Cosponsoring legislation with JFK
40	1956 Democratic ticket vice presidential candidacy
65	Agriculture issues
70	JFK's relationship with labor leaders
72	Presumptive 1960 Democratic presidential candidates in the late 1950s
80	JFK and Humphrey's preparation for the 1960 campaign
86	Humphrey's 1960 announcement of his presidential candidacy
89	1960 Wisconsin Democratic primary
106	1960 West Virginia Democratic primary
113, 117	Humphrey's discussions with labor leaders during the primaries
116	Debate with JFK in West Virginia
119, 133	Campaigning for JFK
121	1960 Democratic National Convention
137	Impact of the 1960 primaries on JFK
143	Appointments to the Kennedy administration

Oral History Interview

with

Hubert H. Humphrey

December 14, 1964
Washington D.C.

By Max Kampelman

For the John F. Kennedy Library

KAMPELMAN: Senator Humphrey, in connection with the Oral History Project for the John F. Kennedy Library, it occurred to me that it would be useful if you could remember exactly when you first met President Kennedy and what those circumstances were.

HUMPHREY: Well, I have some difficulty recalling the exact time and situation. But I recall meeting President Kennedy when he was a congressman,

[-1-]

and I recall that it was in the House of Representatives. I don't recall too much about any association that I had with him. As a matter of fact, it was primarily that I knew of him and not that I worked with him or had any close contact with him. I also recall that Senator Smathers [George A. Smathers] of Florida would be seen with him. And I, on occasion, had come across these two men in the Senate or over on the House side or at social functions. But my first recollections are primarily in the Senate.

KAMPELMAN: So that one couldn't say that you became friends until he appeared in the Senate as a member of the United States Senate.

[-2 -]

HUMPHREY: Yes. I only knew of President Kennedy as a member of the Congress in his earlier days with recognition of part of his record because I would hear about him. I would read about him.

KAMPELMAN: What was your general impression of him at that time, before you actually met the man and had an opportunity to get to know the man?

HUMPHREY: Well, I recognized him as a man that was taken note of by the press. As a fellow politician, I felt that he had a certain amount of attractiveness and political gift. I also remember that he was active in matters that dealt with the labor movement, for example...

KAMPELMAN: You mean, as a member of the House.

[-3 -]

HUMPHREY: As a member of the House. Minimum wage legislation, housing.... But I also recall that he didn't vote with us on farm programs.

KAMPELMAN: On agriculture.

HUMPHREY: On agriculture.

KAMPELMAN: That was a matter of great importance to you.

HUMPHREY: I was a member of the Senate with a large rural constituency; and I would watch to see how members of the other body voted, or anybody voted on agriculture.

KAMPELMAN: You just assumed, then, that coming from Massachusetts, he just didn't have much of an exposure to agriculture.

HUMPHREY: That's correct. I didn't feel that we should really expect

[-4 -]

very much support. I looked at Kennedy, then, as very much a representative of the New England states.

KAMPELMAN: On the other hand, if I recall that period, didn't some of the city congressmen feel that, as a matter of politics, they would side with some of the agricultural Democrats on farm policy programs?

HUMPHREY: Yes, I think so. But I believe that it's fair to say that Congressman Kennedy was more or less of the Harvard and Yale school. They took a rather theoretical, economic, academic look at agricultural problems and really didn't have the same feeling about farmers and farm homes and land and prices as some of us did from the rural areas. This is not to be critical; it's

[-5 -]

just a matter of how certain members of Congress reacted. For example, I didn't have the same reaction about fishing or about some of the problems of the ports that he seemed to have. I recall that he was sometimes associated with legislative policy that related to ports and development of shipping.

KAMPELMAN: During the period when he was a member of the House, you just mentioned that you thought that he was a man who had some political gifts. Did you ever think of him as having a career that might extend beyond the Senate, or was it a matter of a man who would probably end up in the Senate at some point?

HUMPHREY: Well, actually, I thought of him only as being a member of the

[-6 -]

Congress and possibly of the Senate, but not as a figure on the national scene, even though his family was well known. His father [Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr.] was well known and he obviously came from a highly respected and prominent American family. But I just didn't think of him as being the political man who was going to move out into the national scene. Now, I'm speaking of the 1948, '49, '50 period.

KAMPELMAN: Yes. When was it that he actually came to the Senate?

HUMPHREY: I believe it was the election of '52.

KAMPELMAN: And I think he was a member of the House beginning with about '48 or thereabouts. Something like that.

HUMPHREY: I can't recall, but it was in that period of the '40s. But he was

[-7 -]

elected, I remember, in 1952. He defeated Cabot Lodge [Henry Cabot Lodge].

KAMPELMAN: Now, during that time, when he was a member of the House, one of

his close friends, I remember, was a close friend of yours. I'm thinking of Gardner Jackson.

HUMPHREY: Oh, yes, yes.

KAMPELMAN: Did Pat Jackson at that time ever talk to you about him?

HUMPHREY: Yes, in general. Again, there were certain members of the Congress, Max, that were known as—well, you might call them enlightened progressives. They were the members of the new school, so to speak. The people you could depend upon to take a more—for lack of a better word—enlightened attitude on

[-8 -]

foreign policy and on defense and national economic policy. Let's put it this way: at that time, Jack Kennedy was considered to be intelligent, young, bright, good looking, attractive, and one of the new group. He was with the group of Johnny Blatnik [John A. Blatnik] and Dick Bolling [Richard W. Bolling]. There were a number. Names slip my...

KAMPELMAN: Yes, yes.

HUMPHREY: Actually, Frank Roosevelt, Jr. [Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr.] was in the House at that time.

KAMPELMAN: Yes, yes.

HUMPHREY: There was a number who were of the post-war group and came to the Congress. And I would say that Jack Kennedy, then, was looked upon as being one of the more able members.

[-9 -]

KAMPELMAN: You don't have that vivid a recollection.

HUMPHREY: No.

KAMPELMAN: No. He was elected to the Senate in the campaign of 1952.

HUMPHREY: Now, I remember that period very well. I remember starting about '51 when he indicated he was going to run for the Senate. I recall reading about the tremendous door-to-door, house-to-house, town-to-town campaign that the whole family put on.

KAMPELMAN: What was your reaction to that?

HUMPHREY: I thought it was tremendous. I mean, it was the kind of campaign in depth that was—I won't say unusual because some of us tried it before—but it received national attention. The one thing

[-10-]

I remember about him: everything he did seemed to get attention. And I think this is maybe part of the secret of his success in getting the nomination. He knew how to gain attention. And just keep in mind that he was good looking, intelligent, with a good war record; he came from an illustrious family, he had no worries in terms of resources, he was a fairly good speaker, a good writer, and had good connections. Now, if you just keep all this in mind. It was all plus, you see.

I never heard anything disparaging. I maybe heard, for example, that he didn't work as hard as he could. But you never

[-11-]

heard that he didn't have it or that he was a phony or that he didn't have the ability or the capacity.

But in about the latter part of '51, I knew Cabot Lodge well as a member of the Senate and, as a matter of fact, respected him. I thought he was a good senator. But he is a Republican, and I am a Democrat. And I remember this young man, Jack Kennedy, was challenging him. And I recall reading about how Kennedy's mother [Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy] was out campaigning, and his sisters were out campaigning, and how they held all these house parties. They literally covered the state as a family. It was a truly family operation with John

[-12-]

Kennedy as the center. It made a tremendous impact in the press. There were favorable articles in the press. And it was quite obvious that there was something new developing in terms of the Kennedy technique in politics.

KAMPELMAN: Did you, by any chance, ever talk with Cabot Lodge about that election, before that election?

HUMPHREY: Not that I recall. But I knew that Kennedy was going to win. I remember that.

KAMPELMAN: You felt that.

HUMPHREY: I just felt it. I mean, all the press reports indicated so.

KAMPELMAN: Even though it was a Republican year.

HUMPHREY: Even though it was a Republican

[-13-]

year. It just seemed that the techniques that he'd used had been developed in terms of TV (it was then new), radio, but primarily this town-to-town, city-to-city, block-to-block type of intimate campaigning was doing the job.

KAMPELMAN: Now, he was elected in November, and came to the Senate in January of 1953. Do you recall that period when he first came to the Senate?

HUMPHREY: I surely do.

KAMPELMAN: You recall your meeting him at that point?

HUMPHREY: Yes.

KAMPELMAN: Could you describe that for us?

HUMPHREY: I recall, if I'm not mistaken, he went on the Foreign Relations Committee about that time. And

[-14-]

the two things I recall there were first of all, there was...

KAMPELMAN: If I can correct you, if I recall that period correctly...

HUMPHREY: It was a couple of years later he went on...

KAMPELMAN: He didn't get on Foreign Relations in '53. But you remember there was an effort.... He applied for that committee, isn't that right?

HUMPHREY: I'll have to check that, but...

KAMPELMAN: Because that was the year, Senator, when you and Senator Mansfield [Mike Mansfield] were appointed to the committee.

HUMPHREY: Yes.

KAMPELMAN: There were two vacancies in January, '53.

HUMPHREY: Yes, I can recall that very well because the now President Lyndon

[-15-]

Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson] was then the minority leader. Actually, it was questionable who was the majority leader and minority leader because it was so close. But it was right after the Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] election. Taft [Robert A. Taft] was the majority leader. And I recall Lyndon Johnson calling me on the phone and telling me that he'd had a talk with President Truman [Harry S. Truman] before Truman went out of office, and also a talk with Sam Rayburn. They had decided they needed to get some new blood on the Foreign Relations Committee; and they wanted to sign Mike Mansfield, who had just been elected, and they needed another one. They asked me if I would be

[-16-]

willing to give up two of my committees—namely Labor and Public Welfare and Government Operations (they wanted me to give up Agriculture, too, but I wouldn't do it). They said, "If you give up two of them," they would put me on Foreign Relations. I talked to you about that.

KAMPELMAN: You did. I remember that very well.

HUMPHREY: We made the decision that I would go on Foreign Relations. It was in 1954, I believe, that President Kennedy went on Foreign Relations. The reason that I recall this is that his father had called Lyndon Johnson.

KAMPELMAN: That was in '53? Or was that in '55?

[-17-]

HUMPHREY: I can't remember which year it was.

KAMPELMAN: I thought the first effort was made in '53; and then it was repeated in '55.

HUMPHREY: Well, it could have been. But I remember I thought it was unusual. I'm being very candid. I thought, "Well, now, why in the world would that happen? I didn't have anybody call for me." [Laughter]

KAMPELMAN: Yes, but I also remember at that period that then Minority Leader Johnson raised a question as to the appropriateness of a telephone call from the Senator's father to try to get him on the Foreign Relations Committee.

HUMPHREY: I remember the incident. But I also remember that he was looked

[-18-]

upon as a good candidate for Foreign Relations because of background and his books. He'd been a writer, you know. He'd written *Why England Slept*. It was a little later, I think, that he finished, of course, his famous book, *Profiles in Courage*.

KAMPELMAN: If I could go back a moment to 1952, even though it, perhaps, doesn't directly relate to the John F. Kennedy history, it is an interesting part of American history that's never been told. And it might have some indirect relationship. That is, the invitation to you and Senator Mansfield to join the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

HUMPHREY: It was the breakthrough.

[-19-]

KAMPELMAN: It was, in reality, also, a response to Taft's effort to capture the Senate from Eisenhower.

HUMPHREY: That's right.

KAMPELMAN: And it was at that point that Senator Johnson, President Truman, Mr. Harriman [William Averell Harriman] and others were trying to save President Eisenhower and the bipartisan foreign policy.

HUMPHREY: Foreign aid, in particular.

KAMPELMAN: Right. And some of the Democrats who wanted to get on that Senate committee were people who were sympathetic toward Taft's foreign policy, if I remember correctly.

HUMPHREY: That's right.

KAMPELMAN: And so the seniority rule was broken for Senator Mansfield...

[-20-]

HUMPHREY: First time.

KAMPELMAN: And then you got on. First time.

HUMPHREY: And then President Johnson, then the Minority Leader, established his

Democratic policy that every new senator would be given one major committee. Prior to that, the policy was that the new senators were assigned to a couple of less than major committees. Let's put it that way.

KAMPELMAN: Now, if I recall, at that point Senator Kennedy was assigned to the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee.

HUMPHREY: Yes, sir; he was on Government Operations, too. And, I think, one other. But Labor and Public Welfare was his major committee. And it was

[-21-]

on this committee that, of course, he made a very important record. A little later, as I have indicated here, he was assigned to the Foreign Relations Committee. And he had Labor and Public Welfare and Foreign Relations, giving up Government Operations. I know because I served on Government Operations with him, later on Foreign Relations with him. And I had left Labor and Public Welfare, and he went on to take my place.

KAMPELMAN: That's where the relationship comes in with the committee work.

HUMPHREY: That's correct. I remember it very well.

KAMPELMAN: Yes. Now, he came to the Senate in January of 1953.

[-22-]

HUMPHREY: Right.

KAMPELMAN: Did you begin to know him at that point?

HUMPHREY: Yes. I remember very well listening to him make his speeches on the New England area and the development of the Connecticut River and the development of New England as an economic region. I sat there in the Senate to listen to him make those speeches. He made a series of them. They were very good speeches. He'd make them late in the day. I was one of the so-called unofficial deputy whips at that time. Lyndon Johnson had two or three of us around: George Smathers and myself, plus, at that time, Mike Mansfield. I recall

[-23-]

Jack Kennedy making these speeches late in the afternoon. And I thought they were very good. They were very well documented. They would be on the textile industry, the shipping industry, the ship building, upon the need of power, the effect of taxes upon industry in the area. There were a series of very well developed, thought out speeches. I believe that Mike

Feldman [Myer Feldman] was one of the men who might have been working with him at that time.

KAMPELMAN: I think, actually, Ted Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen]...

HUMPHREY: Ted Sorensen...

KAMPELMAN: Mike didn't get there until a little later.

[-24-]

HUMPHREY: But they were excellent speeches. I can recall getting up and complimenting him. He was friendly. You know, he was not one to stick around the Senate to become folksy, so to speak. There are some senators who spend a good deal of time in the cloak room. There are some that also spend time back in Secretary of the Senate's office, Skeeter Johnston's [Felton M. Johnston] office. There are senators who spend time in the dining room or over in the baths with their colleagues. They're friendly, sociable, and their life is in the Senate. John Kennedy never made his life in the Senate, as such. He worked in the Senate. He took

[-25-]

care of his committee work. He made his speeches. But he had many other activities and, in a very real sense, was not a member of the inner circle of the Senate.

KAMPELMAN: Did he sit anywhere near you during that early period? Or did that come later?

HUMPHREY: I'm just thinking. I think he did. Yes. I was sitting in the back row in that early period. And, as I recall, he sat just over to my left a little bit. But, mainly, I remember him standing up there in the back row or the second to the back row making his speeches. And I would be sitting alongside of him listening to those speeches. They were good speeches. And I

[-26-]

knew that he was laying down a program for his area—the sort of thing that a man ought to do who is going to be a good senator. His interest in the development of his region impressed me. He really worked at that part of it. They were good, well-thought-out speeches. They weren't speeches, necessarily, that provoked argument. But they were speeches for the printed record. They were speeches that would be discussed back home, speeches for the Chamber of Commerce, speeches that the labor movement could not take offense to...

KAMPELMAN: ...and speeches for history.

[-27-]

HUMPHREY: And speeches for history. I think that all the time he sensed that. I noticed that more and more as we went along, that he didn't speak too often in the Senate. He did when there were debates on the bills that he was handling. But, basically, his speeches were all designed to be statements of public policy, not necessarily something that was current in the deliberations of the Senate.

KAMPELMAN: Do you recall at all, Senator, his role in connection with the early tax bill involving the hundred dollar exemption? Or is that not fresh in your mind?

HUMPHREY: It is not.

[-28-]

KAMPELMAN: It's not fresh in your mind.

HUMPHREY: I think we voted differently, as I recall.

KAMPELMAN: Well, if I may refresh your memory since I was somewhat involved in it and it might be relevant to this inquiry, it was you and Senator Douglas [Paul H. Douglas] who had originated the idea of coming in earlier with closing tax loopholes.

HUMPHREY: Yes, we had fought the first good fight in 1950 on the Korean War taxes.

KAMPELMAN: Right. Then, in 1953...

HUMPHREY: Yes, we went all over it again.

KAMPELMAN: You went all over it again and...

HUMPHREY: That was when the Eisenhower Administration came in with the revision of the Tax Code.

[-29-]

KAMPELMAN: And then, when that bill came before the Senate, if I recall that correctly, you and Senator Douglas and a few others decided that what you would try to do is come in with a hundred-dollar exemption increase.

HUMPHREY: That's right. Raise it from 600 to 700...

KAMPELMAN: ...to 700 dollars, as a way of providing some tax relief for the low income groups and, thus, stimulating the economy. You started by working out an arrangement with some of the liberal groups to develop a liberal caucus on it.

HUMPHREY: That's right.

KAMPELMAN: And some of the staff people began working with some of the staff people of other senators...

[-30-]

HUMPHREY: I remember it very well.

KAMPELMAN: ...including Ted Sorensen who was with Senator Kennedy.

HUMPHREY: Yes.

KAMPELMAN: Of course, Ted Sorensen was then new to Senator Kennedy and it was interesting that Ted Sorensen at that time said that he could not predict how Senator Kennedy would vote on that bill because of the fact that the Senator was anxious not to follow programs because other people, philosophically so oriented, might have that program. He was going to take each issue on its own. And his vote was never quite clear until Mr. Johnson decided to make this a party issue, if you remember, and got Walter George [Walter F. George] to go along.

[-31-]

HUMPHREY: That's right. Yes, I remember that. I remember we voted differently, too, on the oil depletion. But it seems to me that what Kennedy did was to be very selective on the issues in which he involved himself. A little later, on immigration—I want to mention that because we worked together on immigration. He then took a much more vigorous interest in the immigration policy. He didn't take too much interest in tax policy, as such. And, again, being very objective and fair, I think he looked to history and to the future. He was possibly a little more wise than I about it as he felt that the tax question would be a very controversial area to get involved

[-32-]

in. Yes, very controversial, as it was. I remember it distinctly.

KAMPELMAN: It didn't actually become respectable until Senator George decided he was going to move for the hundred dollars.

HUMPHREY: That's right.

KAMPELMAN: Then, of course, the party line was developed on that. If I recall correctly, when was it that Senator Kennedy became ill with that back injury? It was about that period?

HUMPHREY: Wasn't it about '53? Late '53?

KAMPELMAN: That's right. It was during his first term and during the first two years. So that he was really away from things for much of '53 and '54, wasn't he?

HUMPHREY: Yes, that's right. During that time, we had two bills that we were

[-33-]

cosponsoring together one of them was a bill that later on became law when he was president, and that was on the matter of workers displaced by tariff.

KAMPELMAN: That was with Harrison Williams [Harrison A. Williams, Jr.], as I recall.

HUMPHREY: Yes. And this was the result of the Randall Commission [Randall Commission on Foreign Economic Policy] report. I believe this was a little later when he got into this. But he was the main sponsor of that bill. I was his cosponsor. I was the main sponsor in the immigration bill. And he was the cosponsor.

KAMPELMAN: Actually, you were the main sponsor on the tariff one, too, the first time.

[-34-]

HUMPHREY: No, no. He was, the first time. Then when he became ill, he asked me if I would take it. And I did take it and sponsor it. Then a little bit later, when he came back, I was going to sponsor it again; but Ted Sorensen asked if we could revert back to where it was.

KAMPELMAN: I see.

HUMPHREY: And he became, then, the main sponsor, and I was his cosponsor. The opposite was true in reference to the immigration bill. I was the main sponsor for what we call the short Immigration Bill: family reunion, technical people, skilled people, elderly. It was the brief or short immigration bill.

[-35-]

KAMPELMAN: And the cutting out of the quotas.

HUMPHREY: Yes. But...

KAMPELMAN: It's still an issue...

HUMPHREY: Yes, and one that President Kennedy picked up when he was president. I was his cosponsor with that legislation. Those were the two most important bills with which we were associated. Now, I want to say that it was during this period that, when I ran for reelection in 1954, President Kennedy gave me a thousand dollar contribution.

KAMPELMAN: Oh, really.

HUMPHREY: Yes, sir.

KAMPELMAN: I did not know that.

HUMPHREY: Oh, yes. He gave me a contribution. I remember very well.

[-36-]

KAMPELMAN: He was, by then, I think recuperated.

HUMPHREY: Yes, he was back, as I recall. And he gave me a check for a thousand dollars. And I thought that was really something.

KAMPELMAN: Yes.

HUMPHREY: I mean, a fellow member of the Senate. Actually, at the same time, Dick Russell [Richard B. Russell, Jr.] was running for reelection, and he let me have his share of the Senate campaign funds.

KAMPELMAN: You mean Dick Russell did.

HUMPHREY: Dick Russell did, yes. You see, Senator Kennedy was only two years in the Senate, but he came up and gave me a check for a thousand dollars for the campaign in 1954. And, believe me, I needed it.

[-37-]

KAMPELMAN: So that, by '54, a relationship had developed between you.

HUMPHREY: That's right. Through '53 and through '54.

KAMPELMAN: But you're saying it wasn't necessarily, as yet, close.

HUMPHREY: What I'm trying to say is, it was a friendly relationship, but it wasn't an intimate relationship, even though I looked upon him as a fellow senator and a colleague and a friend. But I wouldn't say that he felt that I was any close friend at all.

KAMPELMAN: Now, we move from there, I guess, into the '55-'56 period.

HUMPHREY: Yes.

KAMPELMAN: And there, of course, there would probably be nothing very much new

[-38-]

to say on the legislative area, would there? Except that he had joined, by then, the Foreign Relations Committee.

HUMPHREY: That's correct. And he was a good member, an active member of the Foreign Relations Committee, and started to make some speeches in the Senate in that area.

KAMPELMAN: Do you recall what areas of interest?

HUMPHREY: I think the Algerian speeches were later, in '56. I don't recall. NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization], I remember. And I'm inclined to think, there were some speeches—I'll have to check that record—but it seems to me he made some speeches on Asia.

KAMPELMAN: During that period.

[-39-]

HUMPHREY: Yes.

KAMPELMAN: I seem to recall the same thing.

HUMPHREY: I think, India because I was so interested in India. The first speeches I ever made on foreign policy were in reference to US policy directed toward helping India. And I recall that he was one of those that came in on that. Now, the most vivid recollection I have is in '56, at the Chicago convention. Prior to the 1956 convention, I'd read in the paper that he was a possibility for vice president with

Adlai Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson]. But there were many others that were possibilities. Practically everybody was being mentioned. And you recall...

[-40-]

KAMPELMAN: Including Hubert Humphrey.

HUMPHREY: Yes. You recall our meeting with Adlai Stevenson.

KAMPELMAN: I recall that very well.

HUMPHREY: At the Mayflower Hotel.

KAMPELMAN: It was after the congressional fundraising dinner.

HUMPHREY: Fundraising dinner for the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.

KAMPELMAN: That's right. And you were, then, speaker that night.

HUMPHREY: I was the speaker. And Walter George was there, and Lyndon Johnson was there, and we had quite an evening.

KAMPELMAN: Yes. Well, after the dinner, if I remember, we went up to Adlai Stevenson's suite...

[-41-]

HUMPHREY: Prior to that dinner, Adlai Stevenson called me on the telephone and said he needed to talk to me.

KAMPELMAN: Right.

HUMPHREY: He said, "I've just got to talk to you about this vice presidency thing." And I said, "Well, Adlai, when are you coming in?" He told me, "I'm coming in for your dinner, and I would like to see you after the dinner." And I said, "Fine." And, then, he talked to me on the phone. He said, "Hubert, I think you ought to give some serious consideration to this vice presidency." Now, I didn't know then whether he meant that I ought to give serious consideration for me or for others. He talked to me

[-42-]

about Bob Wagner [Robert Ferdinand Wagner, Jr.], I remember. And Estes Kefauver. And, frankly, he didn't want Estes at that stage.

KAMPELMAN: This was before the meeting that you were talking?

HUMPHREY: Before. On the telephone.

KAMPELMAN: On the telephone,

HUMPHREY: In the Senate cloak room.

KAMPELMAN: Right.

HUMPHREY: And I mentioned this to you.

KAMPELMAN: Yes.

HUMPHREY: And I told him that we'd meet him after the dinner..

KAMPELMAN: That's right.

HUMPHREY: So, after the dinner, we went to his room. You were there.

KAMPELMAN: You and I were there. And Bill Blair [William McCormack Blair, Jr.].
And Finnegan [James A. Finnegan] of Philadelphia

[-43-]

and Stevenson. And that was it.

HUMPHREY: So, we went up to his room and talked. And it was at that time Adlai said to me, if I recall correctly, "Well, Hubert, why don't you take some interest in this matter?"

KAMPELMAN: "For yourself."

HUMPHREY: "For yourself." I don't want to be unfair with him. He never, ever said, "Now, look. I'm just one thousand percent for you." But he didn't say he wasn't, either.

KAMPELMAN: Well, if I recall, Senator, if I may correct, I think he went a little closer than you're describing it.

HUMPHREY: Well, he went quite close, I might add, because you and I talked about

[-44-]

it. And we talked about it afterward.

KAMPELMAN: Afterwards, he said, in fact, if I recall correctly, “Now, I’m tired. We’ve finished our discussion. We know where we’re going. Now, Bill and Finnegan, you sit down and work things out.”

HUMPHREY: He also told me to get around to see what kind of support I had.

KAMPELMAN: Do you remember at that, there was a frank discussion of every potential vice presidential candidate.

HUMPHREY: That’s correct.

KAMPELMAN: Did Senator Kennedy’s name come up then?

HUMPHREY: Not particularly. Only as a mention. The main people he was concerned about were Bob Wagner and

[-45-]

Kefauver. Let me see, Gore [Albert Gore, Sr.] was mentioned; Williams [G. Mennen Williams] and Kennedy were mentioned. Not at length. The main concern was over Wagner and Kefauver and there was one other.

KAMPELMAN: Symington [Stuart Symington, II].

HUMPHREY: Symington. You’re right. Symington, that’s it.

KAMPELMAN: For the record, let’s say that Miss McInnis came up with Symington’s name.

HUMPHREY: That’s right. But Kennedy’s name was discussed, but not much.

KAMPELMAN: As I remember it, it came up, really, in connection with a little discussion of the Catholic vote, too. There had been a little memorandum about it that seemed to impress him.

[-46-]

HUMPHREY: That’s right. That’s correct. I remember that. There was a memorandum that had been...

KAMPELMAN: ...that Mr. Bailey [John Moran Bailey] distributed that Ted Sorensen had prepared on the importance of the Catholic vote.

HUMPHREY: That's correct. And we had some discussion about it. Now, we went to Chicago. I won't go into the intervening period.

KAMPELMAN: Right.

HUMPHREY: And Muriel [Muriel Fay Buck Humphrey] and I were there, and we went from caucus to caucus. In the meantime, President Johnson, then the majority leader, was being helpful to me. And you may recall that Bill Fulbright [J. William Fulbright] nominated me, and Stuart Symington seconded me, and so did

[-47-]

Gene McCarthy [Eugene J. McCarthy]. And I don't recall who else. Was it Orville [Orville L. Freeman]?

KAMPELMAN: No, I think Gene did it for the state.

HUMPHREY: Yes. Well, anyway, those three. We thought we had Arkansas. We were supposed to have had all of Arkansas. There was some move on for Jack Kennedy, early. This was the first day.

KAMPELMAN: Yes. Up until that point, there had been constant discussions with Stevenson's staff.

HUMPHREY: Right. And Jack Kennedy told me, he said, "Hubert, I'm for you." Openly.

KAMPELMAN: The first day?

HUMPHREY: Yes, sir. Muriel and I together. We saw him, and he said, "I just

[-48-]

think you're the right man. I'm for you." And George Smathers was with him and said, "Look, we're just for you. That's all there is to it. We're for you." And, frankly, I was very friendly with him. As you know, if it hadn't been that Minnesota had carried for Kefauver...

KAMPELMAN: Yes. That comes two, three days later.

HUMPHREY: Yes. I would have cast our vote.

KAMPELMAN: That's right, that's right. I want to go back to that period. But I didn't know about that first day...

HUMPHREY: Yes, sir. He talked to us. And Muriel and I remember it very well. And after it was all over, I talked

[-49-]

to him on the telephone. He was surprised how many votes he got. He said, "Hubert, I still want you to know that as far as I was personally concerned, I think you were the right man. I think we should have gone for you." And we were very friendly all during this period. I had a very difficult time with myself because of the votes in Minnesota going for Kefauver in the presidential primary instead of for Stevenson. I felt an obligation as a senator from Minnesota and as a delegate to back up the will of the people in Minnesota. And, yet, my personal feelings at the time...

KAMPELMAN: ...were for Kennedy.

[-50-]

HUMPHREY: ...were for Kennedy.

KAMPELMAN: Before we get to that, may I just fill in history for a moment by saying that your whole interest in the vice presidency was based on Mr. Stevenson's selection of a vice presidential candidate.

HUMPHREY: Well, of course. I didn't think for a minute he was going to throw the Convention open.

KAMPELMAN: Right. And when he threw the Convention open, at that point it was clear that we knew we were out.

HUMPHREY: That's correct.

KAMPELMAN: You then had a decision to make as to whether to permit your name to be submitted or not.

HUMPHREY: That's correct.

[-51-]

KAMPELMAN: And you were persuaded that, even though you knew there was no chance, you were persuaded to permit this as a way of bargaining, if I remember correctly.

HUMPHREY: That is correct.

KAMPELMAN: The liberal group.

HUMPHREY: That's right. We had about 130 some votes, as I recall.

KAMPELMAN: On the first ballot.

HUMPHREY: On the first ballot.

KAMPELMAN: Then, the decision had to be made, "Will it be Kefauver, or will it be Kennedy for the second spot?"

HUMPHREY: That's right. And you may recall that Governor Williams came over and...

KAMPELMAN: Well, you and I were sitting in the back in Mr. Rayburn's office. You

[-52-]

were sweating this one out very carefully, when Governor Williams came in with Orville Freeman.

HUMPHREY: And pleaded for Kefauver because of the farm vote.

KAMPELMAN: And you remember, then Estes came in...

HUMPHREY: He said that Kennedy did not have a farm record and that we just had to do something about getting Kefauver on that ticket. Otherwise, it would be disastrous up in Minnesota.

KAMPELMAN: Well, Orville was running for governor.

HUMPHREY: That's right.

KAMPELMAN: And the state people were saying to you that if it turns out that Kennedy is on the ticket with his

[-53-]

agricultural record, that Orville would lose.

HUMPHREY: That's right.

KAMPELMAN: And they pleaded with you. And they showed how...

HUMPHREY: I think you'll recall that I wasn't a bit happy about it.

KAMPELMAN: You were terribly unhappy about it.

HUMPHREY: I was quite bitter. I thought, first of all, that the Kefauver people had been treating us very badly in Minnesota. And, at the same time, Kennedy had been very kind and pleasant. Then, Estes came on in.

KAMPELMAN: And he came in with tears in his eyes.

HUMPHREY: Crying.

KAMPELMAN: And Jiggs Donahue was crying.

[-54-]

HUMPHREY: That's right. Begging us, because our votes were to be decisive at that point.

KAMPELMAN: Well, that switched it because half of Arkansas, then, went and...

HUMPHREY: And I always felt badly about that; I really did. And that's why I called up Kennedy before we left Chicago and told him exactly what had happened. And he said, "Well, don't worry about that." He said, "I think it ought to have been you." And I remember calling him from the Conrad Hilton Hotel, just before we left. One other thing I want to mention is that one of the reasons I was interested in that VP spot was because I sensed that it meant a position of influence

[-55-]

in the party. I didn't know that we would, frankly...

KAMPELMAN: You didn't think you'd win.

HUMPHREY: I didn't think that we could win the election—at least I had doubts. The odds were against us. But what I thought was most important and what I spoke to you about was that here was a way that we could have something to say about the party. Stevenson would have been twice up and twice down. And if you were an active, good campaigner as a candidate for vice president, you would have a chance to make an imprint upon the country and to make an impact upon your party. And as I told you, look, you can't lose even losing. I mean, in this

[-56-]

position, if you do it well, you can't lose losing. Now, it is a fact, of course, that President Kennedy's nomination for the presidency started in Chicago in 1956. I don't think that it was

as premeditated as some people think it was. I happen to feel that he got started there; and afterwards, the New England group sensed that here was a man that had real attraction. He really sparkled at that Convention.

KAMPELMAN: I don't know if you remember—he had two or three appearances before that Convention.

HUMPHREY: Yes, and you see....

KAMPELMAN: Whereas, you had none, if you remember.

[-57-]

HUMPHREY: And this is one of the things that bothered me about Stevenson in this. First of all, he had Jack Kennedy nominate him.

KAMPELMAN: That's right.

HUMPHREY: Then, besides that, he spoke on something in the platform or something in the Convention. I've forgotten what it was.

KAMPELMAN: One of the special programs...

HUMPHREY: And I thought that it was a real violation of all the ethics of politics to have an open convention after you'd permitted some of the contestants to participate in the nomination process and the convention program.

KAMPELMAN: And, in fact, if I recall correctly, one of the rationalizations that

[-58-]

was given to you for not appearing at the Convention was that you might very well be the vice presidential nominee.

HUMPHREY: I came within one vote of being selected as the keynote speaker. And Stevenson came to me and said.... You know, I was right unhappy because I said to him, I said, "Adlai, you should have taken a hand in who's going to be the keynote speaker. What kind of a keynote speaker do you want? That keynote speaker's going to set the tone of the whole Convention. Now, if you're going to be the nominee of this party, you'd better start right out in the beginning, having the tone of this

[-59-]

party like you want it, having the words said that fit with your platform and your philosophy and your convictions." Yes, I was quite upset about the fact because he told me he had taken

no hand in it. Well, there were some others that were taking a hand. As you remember, Frank Clement...

KAMPELMAN: Frank Clement got it.

HUMPHREY: Frank Clement had gotten it. Then, I was told afterwards, "Well, one of the reasons you didn't get it was because you were a real possibility for the vice presidency." And that was used against you in the Democratic Committee, saying that you shouldn't have the keynote speaker's spot. I was quite

[-60-]

upset that Adlai let that kind of argument prevail, even though he said he didn't have any hand in it. I guess that's true, but he should have had a hand in it. So, then we got down to the Convention, where Kefauver had his big day in the Convention because his name was placed in nomination for the presidency.

KAMPELMAN: That's right.

HUMPHREY: And everybody knew about him and where Wagner addressed the Convention and nominated Adlai Stevenson, as did Jack Kennedy.

KAMPELMAN: Well, that was one of the reasons why you thought you should not permit your name to be offered for vice president. But then, I

[-61-]

remember, in the early hours of the morning, they finally persuaded you to go ahead.

HUMPHREY: I thought that it was a hell of a way to have the Convention operate, to be frank. But, be that as it may...

KAMPELMAN: Yes. Well, now, did you feel that that experience with Kennedy in any way adversely affected your relationship with him?

HUMPHREY: No, it improved it. It improved. As a matter of fact, that was the first time that I really had a chance to sort of get to know him. That experience was a friendly one. It was a very good one. And it was the kind of experience that got us off to a good start at that

[-62-]

stage. Then, I recall both Jack and Bobby Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy] being called on to travel around the country with Stevenson, making speeches during the campaign here and there—selected, very good selected speeches. I also felt that they were getting the good ones, and that some of us were getting the ragtag ones. You know.

KAMPELMAN: That's right.

HUMPHREY: But I plainly see why. I mean, Stevenson needed to use these men where he thought that he had been injured, I think, on the Catholic issue.

KAMPELMAN: Well, the polls were showing that he was very low with the Catholic vote.

[-63-]

HUMPHREY: Yes. And I think he needed the goodwill and the popularity of Jack Kennedy because he came out of that Convention—I speak now of Kennedy—he came out of that Convention strong and looking very good. And one of the things I noticed was the solidarity of the New England group. And one of the things that the Midwest never found out until much later was that you ought to be united if you want to go someplace:

KAMPELMAN: Yes, yes. Well, now, in this period, beginning with 1957 and '58 in the Senate, did you feel the relationship strengthening between the two of you?

HUMPHREY: Yes.

[-64-]

KAMPELMAN: Can you think of any incidents or indications?

HUMPHREY: Well, when did we bring Kennedy first to Minnesota?

KAMPELMAN: I think we brought him first to Minnesota in 1957, right after the...

HUMPHREY: '57 or '58.

KAMPELMAN: '57 or '58.

HUMPHREY: Well, if I recall correctly, we tried to bring him in 1957. And, if you remember, there was an uproar about it. You wanted to bring him to Minnesota in '57 and all hell broke loose.

HUMPHREY: The Farmers' Union.

KAMPELMAN: The farmers were going to boycott the meeting.

HUMPHREY: Yes. I remember that.

[-65-]

KAMPELMAN: Because of his voting record.

HUMPHREY: And I said, "This is ridiculous. It's outrageous." But I talked to him about that.

KAMPELMAN: And you determined in your own mind you were going to bring him to the state.

HUMPHREY: Yes, and I also determined that I was going to help him get a good agricultural record.

KAMPELMAN: That's right.

HUMPHREY: And we talked about it, about REA [Rural Electrification Administration]. And we talked about soil conservation. We talked about price supports. And I encouraged him to vote in 1958 with us on the agricultural bills. I remember that very well. Following the 1956 convention, in the '57-'58 period, John Kennedy, I think the

[-66-]

record will show, voted with us on REA, voted with us on the Ninety Percent Parity, voted with us on Farm Credit. And I helped bring him around to that. I remember distinctly working with him on certain of the programs. The night of his first good vote was in '56. That's when even Clint Anderson [Clinton P. Anderson] joined with us. We worked out a new formula to assure Ninety Percent Parity. And John Kennedy, from 1956 with that one vote, as I recall, in 1958 and '59, started voting with us on the agricultural front.

KAMPELMAN: He used to, in fact, discuss that with you.

HUMPHREY: He'd come to me. He used to kid

[-67-]

me about it—that I was sort of his agricultural advisor. He'd joke with me, always saying, "Oh, Hubert's always taking care of those dairy farmers, and he's always taking care of those wheat farmers." But it was his foreign policy

speeches that seemed to impress me. I remember his speech on Algeria, where he took the French to task. It provoked a good deal of comment—criticism from Dean Acheson [Dean G. Acheson], for example.

KAMPELMAN: Yes.

HUMPHREY: And criticism from some others, but a great deal of favorable comment from the *Washington Post*, from the *New York Times*. I remember he published a pamphlet on immigration. I've forgotten what the name of the

[-68-]

pamphlet—"No Strangers in These Gates," or something like that. It was like a Public Affairs pamphlet. I think the Anti-Defamation League or some group helped with that. It helped in identifying him more clearly with that issue. Then, he was on the Labor Committee during the period of the health and welfare fund hearings when all the trouble was being exposed in the country—the misuse of health and welfare funds by some of the unions. Do you recall that?

KAMPELMAN: I sure do.

HUMPHREY: And it was being investigated by the McClellan Committee [Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in Labor and Management], where, I think, Bobby Kennedy was the general counsel. Jack Kennedy was on that committee also.

[-69-]

KAMPELMAN: He was on that committee again. The fact is, if you remember, there were many people who thought that he would trip himself on that committee with the labor movement.

HUMPHREY: Yes.

KAMPELMAN: But that didn't happen.

HUMPHREY: No, and I think the reason it didn't happen is that he, at that time, obtained a good alliance with two very eminent labor leaders, above all. One of them was Walter Reuther [Walter P. Reuther], and the other one was David Dubinsky.

KAMPELMAN: And a third one that played a role here was Arthur Goldberg [Arthur J. Goldberg].

HUMPHREY: Arthur Goldberg was with the Steel Workers, yes, and Senator Kennedy was a friend of Dave McDonald [David J. McDonald]. But Arthur was possibly the key figure.

[-70-]

KAMPELMAN: The key because he was also the counsel to the CIO.

HUMPHREY: Yes. He was the general counsel to the Steel Workers and the general counsel to the AFL-CIO. And that brought him in with George Meany. Jack Kennedy was able, on one hand, to be clearly identified with the investigation of corruption on the part of some officials of the union. He was able to identify himself with exposing corruption. But on the other hand, he was able to identify himself as a man of understanding and concern for responsible, key union officials. Under less favorable circumstances, they might have been dragged into the newspapers and accused of some alleged

[-71-]

minor offense. I know of no offenses. I want to make that clear. But I think it's interesting, at this point, to recall the labor leaders that really identified themselves with Kennedy, as compared to those that didn't. Some of the bright, shining lights, socially conscious, more progressive labor leaders were clearly identifying themselves, at that stage, with Kennedy.

KAMPELMAN: How did you feel about this during that time since you had, also, some thoughts about 1960 coming up?

HUMPHREY: Well, my thoughts about 1960 didn't really start until late 1959.

KAMPELMAN: But there were others who were talking to you, beginning with '58.

[-72-]

HUMPHREY: Yes, but not so much.

KAMPELMAN: They may have been talking, but you were less...?

HUMPHREY: No, I wasn't really interested. I became interested in 1960 after the election of '58. I recall very distinctly. In fact, we have it right here in this house—the cover of *Time* magazine. It showed the picture of all the Democratic hopefuls. It was a *montage*. Well, you know, several photographs. And there were still Stevenson, Symington, Williams, Kefauver, Kennedy, and Humphrey. I guess that was about it. There were little panel pictures all around.

KAMPELMAN: Johnson, too, perhaps, although he had said no.

[-73-]

HUMPHREY: Not so much.

KAMPELMAN: Not so much...

HUMPHREY: ...at that time.

KAMPELMAN: He had pulled himself out.

HUMPHREY: We ought to check that cover. The reason I know about it is that Muriel and I boarded the French liner, *Liberte*, the day after the election, in November 1958. We flew to New York the day after the election. We got on board the liner; and when we landed at Le Havre, there was the *Time* cover story. While I hadn't run, I'd been very active in the '58 campaign. All those pictures were there. There was Kennedy and Humphrey.

KAMPELMAN: You were there.

[-74-]

HUMPHREY: There was a very good story about it. All the way over Europe, I'd run into people asking me questions about this. When I got back in January of '59, you talked to me.

KAMPELMAN: If I may remind you a moment that in mid-'58, before the '58 election, we did have dinner with Jim Rowe [James J. Rowe] and Herb Waters [Herbert J. Waters].

HUMPHREY: Oh, yes. That's right. That was in the election period.

KAMPELMAN: So, the process began, really, in '58.

HUMPHREY: You're right. Because the presidential primaries were in the spring of '60. No, you're wrong, Max.

KAMPELMAN: No, and I'll tell you why I'm right...

HUMPHREY: No, sir. No, it was in '59 that we had this. '59.

[-75-]

KAMPELMAN: No.

HUMPHREY: Yessiree, it was in '59.

KAMPELMAN: When did you see Mr. Khrushchev [Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev]?

HUMPHREY: I saw Mr. Khrushchev in December of '58.

KAMPELMAN: And this was before...

HUMPHREY: No, you're wrong. It was after.

KAMPELMAN: Let the record state that we will check this, but, as a matter of fact...

HUMPHREY: No, you're wrong.

KAMPELMAN: ...as a matter of fact...

HUMPHREY: You're definitely wrong because the very first moves that we made in this were in the summer of 1959.

KAMPELMAN: Exactly!

HUMPHREY: That was the first move. We had made two or three speeches in the spring of '59.

[-76-]

KAMPELMAN: The only reason I mention it is that there were people talking to you about the presidency in '58. And that dinner with Jim Rowe took place early in '58. It was at that point when Jim Rowe indicated that certainly nothing was going to be done. And you indicated that your mind was most uncertain about this. The decision was to wait until the end of 1958 before Jim would see how Lyndon Johnson felt about the presidency and you would see how you felt about the presidency.

HUMPHREY: You may be right, but I don't recall it at all.

KAMPELMAN: Well, this is vivid in my mind. And, I suppose, since we're dealing with history, we might as well put it down.

[-77-]

I recall that you came back after this Khrushchev meeting. The fact is, we had met in Europe, you and I. And I joined you and was supposed to go with you to Khrushchev, when my mother became ill; and I flew from Madrid back to the States instead of going on with you to meet you in Finland. And when you came back from Khrushchev's

visit, we met and talked; and you were a little unhappy about having been pushed so far by the publicity from the Khrushchev thing. And you were saying that you would like to make this decision for yourself in a calmer atmosphere, but everybody was pushing you. Do you remember that?

[-78-]

HUMPHREY: Now, really, isn't that funny? I don't recall it. But I recall very well sitting right here talking to you just like we're talking right now. And I can recall that in January and February of '59—the visits. And I can recall when Jim Rowe said that he'd be for us...

KAMPELMAN: He said that in early 1959.

HUMPHREY: ...provided that Lyndon Johnson was not an active candidate. He went to Lyndon Johnson...

KAMPELMAN: He went to the ranch.

HUMPHREY: He went down to see him, and the President said, "I am not a candidate. Go ahead and help Hubert. I don't want to have anything to do with it. I'm not going to be a candidate. Under no circumstances..."
And so on.

[-79-]

KAMPELMAN: In any event, the appearance beginning with '59—it began to look as if there would be both a Kennedy move for the presidency and a Humphrey move for the presidency.

HUMPHREY: Very definitely.

KAMPELMAN: Now, how did that affect your relationships in the Senate?

HUMPHREY: For the early part, I'd say only in a sort of peppery way—I mean, joking. As the '59 period rolled around, there wasn't too much done in '59, if you recall, by us. He was busy, but mainly just getting around the country. The thing that I always used to be amazed at was his unbelievably good publicity. It was just fantastic. Anything he would say, he would always get good

[-80-]

copy, always good copy. I remember I used to say to you, "How in the world does a man do this?" There was never a bad line, never a... I would be interpreted as being brash or talkative or this or that; and he was always interpreted as being intelligent and delightful and

meaningful and so on. And, needless to say, it would bother me. And I was a worker in the Senate. I felt that I really was a Senate worker. And, as I said earlier, John Kennedy made a decision early in his public life that he wasn't going to be a detail man in the Senate. He picked his places and picked his slots, so to speak—what he was going to do.

[-81-]

In '59, it was perfectly obvious that a very carefully laid program of political organization was taking place on the part of John Kennedy. It's equally obvious that we didn't do that. It's obvious that we should have if we were going to compete. A year or two later I learned that if you're going to enter this kind of a contest, you ought to enter with all you have. You always used to argue with me about it. I would say to you, "I don't think I can win. It's very doubtful that I could win." I felt that if I could get the nomination, I could win. But I doubted that I could get the nomination. And I was always worried about missing roll call

[-82-]

votes. And you fellows used to say to me—and Jim Rowe in particular—"Look, you'd better make up your mind. If you're going to run for president, run for president. Quit being a senator. You can't be shuttling back and forth between one speech and another and getting back to the Capitol. Look at John Kennedy. He doesn't worry about that. He's made a commitment. He is going to do this. He's going to do it well. Everything is being designed that way. And with you, you're doing a half-baked job, you know. You're spending a little time at it and not enough time, and the time that you're giving it is not well worked out." Now, isn't

[-83-]

that about the analysis that we went through?

KAMPELMAN: Actually, most of us thought that you weren't even listening to us. But it seems, from what you've just said, you were listening. You just weren't paying attention.

HUMPHREY: I was paying attention, but I just never really felt that I had it, you know?

KAMPELMAN: I felt, actually, that—I think when we look back—that the crucial turning point was that first visit in 1959 to the West Coast, which was going to be our great, opening push. And of all things, while you're in California, the vote came on the Kennedy labor bill. Do you remember that?

[-84-]

HUMPHREY: Yes.

KAMPELMAN: Where the one vote—the Democrats and liberals lost by one vote. And you always felt that was your vote. And you flew back; and from that point on, it was impossible to get you on the road.

HUMPHREY: Yes. Well, I remember that. I'll tell you. There were several things, since we're recording for history, about it. But we ought to do this separately.

KAMPELMAN: Yes, I know.

HUMPHREY: Number one is that I never really was ever consulted about the announcement that was being made, fully. It was made by Rolvaag [Karl F. Rolvaag] and Freeman. They just up and announced it and didn't do it in a very big way—out of St. Paul. You don't

[-85-]

announce much out of St. Paul on a national proposition like the presidential nomination contest. Furthermore, we had no real basic plan of organization when we started. When I found out what was going on in Wisconsin in the fall months—you remember, I came back here and told you that we either had to fish or cut bait now. I knew that it as a disaster in Wisconsin. This is December of '59.

KAMPELMAN: December of '59.

HUMPHREY: The people that we had relied on were just not producing at all. In fact, the telephone had been disconnected at our headquarters. It was unbelievably bad. We sat right here discussing when we would make

[-86-]

the announcement, if we were going to make it at all. It was agreed that we would make it before Kennedy. He had mentioned to me in December of '59 his plans. Jack Kennedy said, "Hubert, I plan on making my announcement around the tenth of January."

KAMPELMAN: He made it, actually, on the second of January.

HUMPHREY: And he said, or, "early January." He just wanted me to know so that we wouldn't make it at the same time. And I made mine before his.

KAMPELMAN: You made it in Christmas week.

HUMPHREY: Yes, which was a stupid thing as well, now that one has got a chance to look back over it. But we thought

[-87-]

that if we didn't, it would look like a sort of afterthought following a Kennedy initiative.

KAMPELMAN: You recall, we lost some people we thought we had, like Gerry Bruno [Gerald J. Bruno] and others, where...

HUMPHREY: Yes, I remember we thought we had some people out in the state of Oregon.

KAMPELMAN: In the state of Oregon we lost...

HUMPHREY: Edith Green [Edith S. Green].

KAMPELMAN: Yes, we suddenly found...

HUMPHREY: ..that she was gone. She was all for me. She had called me on the telephone and said she was a thousand percent for me.

KAMPELMAN: The next report was that she became the chairwoman of the Kennedy group in Oregon.

[-88-]

HUMPHREY: Told me openly, told Muriel that she was for us. Enthusiastic! "You must run, Hubert." Then, I woke up to find out that she was gone. Well, be that as it may, during that period of time, our relationships were still what I would call friendly in the Senate. I had been on a few speaking platforms with Kennedy and always did reasonably well and had a pretty good reception. It was quite obvious that he had the national attention. He had the publicity, he had the attraction, he had the "it." I mean just that.

Then, we started in January more seriously in Wisconsin. I knew what we had. I knew we had

[-89-]

an uphill fight. I remember Bobby saying that he thought that they'd lose Wisconsin, and I knew that was a lot of nonsense. I knew we had a real battle. We went out there. And we got along well in Wisconsin. I was pretty tough on him, though.

KAMPELMAN: You were very tough on him.

HUMPHREY: Yes. Too tough in looking back over it.

KAMPELMAN: Yes.

HUMPHREY: Much more so than I should have been.

KAMPELMAN: But you felt, at the time, genuine about it. I remember.

HUMPHREY: Yes, I felt that my record was the liberal record. And I felt that my labor friends had let me down. I felt that President Kennedy's

[-90-]

basic, personal attraction, attractiveness, and his very excellent public relations had won these people over. And I thought that I had carried all the mail for these people for years in the Senate when the going was really tough and that I deserved better from them. And I did deserve better from them. But be that as it may, this wasn't a matter of paying off old debts, you know. I mean, this was a matter of politics. So, I hit pretty hard on the issues that I considered to be the liberal issues.

KAMPELMAN: Also, we ran into the religious problem in Wisconsin.

HUMPHREY: Yes. I had dedicated my life to complete opposition to any form

[-91-]

of bigotry or discrimination. And I began to feel that, for some reason or other, I was being interpreted as anti-Catholic. And it just broke my heart. I couldn't believe how this could happen to anybody. Do you remember?

KAMPELMAN: Yes, I remember it vividly.

HUMPHREY: I used to say, "How can this happen that anybody would ever even think this?" Well, I just got caught up in the gristmills of politics.

KAMPELMAN: Yes, yes. Now, did you run into him much during the campaign in Wisconsin?

HUMPHREY: Yes. A couple of times. We had our pictures taken together, I remember, up on that farm. We appeared on a cover in *Life* together.

[-92-]

We occasionally would cross paths. He had that nice private airplane and I was flying in on some old commercial job and traveling by bus. It was cold. It was just one of those things. I used the issues of agriculture, primarily, and a number of other liberal

issues. I do think I should say here now that during that period it became obvious to me that we had a heck of a battle, and we'd most likely not get it. You may recall, I told you that, "One thing we'll get out of this. We'll determine the course of direction of the Democratic Party by every candidate. We'll stake out the position, and every candidate will come to that position."

[-93-]

And everyone did. In other words, the platform for the 1960 Convention was written in those primary campaigns. And every single candidate—Lyndon Johnson, Stuart Symington, John Kennedy, all of them—came to our position on every issue: Rule 22, everything that you could think of right down the line, with the exception of Lyndon Johnson on Rule 22. But the rest of them all the way down: civil rights, farm, taxes, everything. We staked out the position on resources and so on. Maybe I was just consoling myself, but I felt that, at least, we'd make an impact on the party. And there isn't any doubt but what we did. In the Wisconsin primary,

[-94-]

we did better than most people had presumed that we would. We carried four of the ten districts and came close to carrying another. While President Kennedy won a big vote, he didn't sweep the state. It was perfectly obvious that for him to be nominated he had to win in other contests.

KAMPELMAN: Was it perfectly obvious to you at that time that, as of then, you could not get the nomination? After Wisconsin? This must have been obvious.

HUMPHREY: I must say that I may have become a little intoxicated with the belief that it was an outside possibility.

KAMPELMAN: Even at that point.

[-95-]

HUMPHREY: Yes. And I'd put so much personal effort into it and had had such a good reception, by the way, in the West. I mean, in Idaho and Utah and Colorado and New Mexico and Alaska and Oregon and Washington. You know, I had those delegates even when they went to the Convention.

KAMPELMAN: Yes, yes.

HUMPHREY: Those delegates would have stayed with us. We had about 250 of them right then, according to the last tabulation. And they were mostly the

western delegates. This was happening at the same time that we were campaigning in Wisconsin, you may recall. I had to go out and make those other tours. We went to

[-96-]

Alaska, we went to Oregon, we went into Colorado and New Mexico and all the different states in the Rocky Mountain area. And we were picking up a lot of support out there.

KAMPELMAN: Well, the theory during that period was that, to those who were critical of your candidacy on the grounds that you didn't have a presidential image, the theory was that if you won in Wisconsin against a front-runner like Senator Kennedy, suddenly you would have the image.

HUMPHREY: Well, I had to win there. That was the point. We talked about that. I remember that you and Kirk [Evron Kirkpatrick] and Jim Rowe said, "If you win there, you're on

[-97-]

the go. But if you don't win there, you can't go. And the only way," Jim Rowe said, "that you will ever make this national publicity, Humphrey, is to challenge the head man." In other words, it's a calculated risk, but take it.

KAMPELMAN: Well, in this point, he was really challenging you because Wisconsin was, really, an extension of Minnesota.

HUMPHREY: Supposedly.

KAMPELMAN: Supposedly. Except that we knew that he had the votes there.

HUMPHREY: Except that we knew that only western Wisconsin was an extension of Minnesota.

KAMPELMAN: That's right.

[-98-]

HUMPHREY: And that the Milwaukee area and the Fox River Valley area was not. Actually, President Kennedy, I believe, got as many or more votes in the presidential primary in Wisconsin as he received in the general election. And I want to say, we carried Minnesota for him in the general election. He didn't win in Wisconsin, but we carried Minnesota.

KAMPELMAN: Yes. Is there anything about this Wisconsin primary that you think

might be relevant to this that I have explored or that you haven't mentioned?

HUMPHREY: I think I saw in the Wisconsin primary the great personal attraction of Kennedy to the young people,

[-99-]

and of Jackie Kennedy [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy], his wife. She was very, very popular. I also think that I saw where a man's personality, his demeanor, his sense of being gallant, went over beyond the issues because he was close enough to being right on the issues so that you couldn't really get at him.

KAMPELMAN: The differences between the two of you were subtle.

HUMPHREY: Yes, they were subtle differences. And, actually, the differences were very minor because he had then come to a position where our differences were really negligible. It was only the past that I could refer to.

[-100-]

KAMPELMAN: Yes. You could refer to his House votes, but it was difficult to refer to his Senate votes.

HUMPHREY: That's right. And a man changes, and when he runs for president he obviously has a different perspective. In all fairness, you have to say that. But what I witnessed was this great personal magnetism, which was demonstrated in many ways. Of course, I must say, in all candor, there was tremendous public relations. To this day it astounds me. It was all good. In every magazine there was an article. Remember I used to tell you?

KAMPELMAN: Yes.

[-101-]

HUMPHREY: You could go to the A&P store. You could go to any grocery store. You'd pick up a woman's magazine—there would be a wonderful article, good pictures, nice things, always, everything. From the *Foreign Affairs Quarterly* to the family magazine. It didn't make any difference what it was, it was a good, solid piece. And the accumulative effect of that had its impact, plus the fact he was young, he was attractive, good looking, he was articulate, he was bright. He attracted these columnists that would make it just tremendous. So I don't feel that, in justice, to be defeated by Jack was any insult. Then, we came away from Wisconsin and went into West Virginia.

[-102-]

During this period of time, I had a little talk somewhere between January of '60 and May. I can't recall. But I remember sitting with Senator Kennedy in the Senate. And we sat right in the middle of the Senate, not in our own respective seats, side by side. The columnists could see, and all the reporters were wondering what we were saying. The press gallery was full. We were down in the Senate there talking. We were sitting there, and we were very friendly and talking very candidly. And he said to me, you know, he was twisting my arm a little bit about what had been said in Wisconsin because I remember about

[-103-]

the campaign—"Now, Hubert, you know my record is better than that," or something like this. He said, "Hubert, I just don't think you can get the nomination. I don't see why you're..."

KAMPELMAN: Was this after West Virginia? Might have been.

HUMPHREY: No. Before the election in West Virginia, during the final primary.

KAMPELMAN: Right. During the final primary.

HUMPHREY: He said, "I don't see why you put on this battle." He said, "I just don't think you can get the nomination." And he went down and showed me why. And he said, "You're not going to get the New England states. You are just not going to be able to carry in California." And so on

[-104-]

and so on. He said, "Frankly, I think I'm stronger in getting the nomination than you are." He said, "I think if you won the nomination, you'd be a stronger candidate than I am." And we just sat there and talked about it. He said, "I think I've got some problems. Getting the nomination in this Democratic Party is going to be easier for me. The religious question will hurt me in the general election," he said. "I think you'd be easier in the general election—in the rural areas and the labor movement. I think you'd do better." "But," he said, "you can't get it." And I told him then, I said, "Well, I think you may be right. I don't think maybe I can."

[-105-]

KAMPELMAN: In your own heart...

HUMPHREY: In my own.... I was being very frank with him, very honest. I felt that he was right. And I guess I told him that. I didn't say, "Look, I can

win.” I recall that I did tell him that I thought that maybe he was right. I always did feel that if I could get the nomination that I could beat Nixon [Richard M. Nixon] because I felt that Nixon could be decisively defeated. In fact, I thought that any good Democrat could beat Nixon. So, it was a question of fighting for that nomination. Then, after the Wisconsin primary, the question was of going into West Virginia.

[-106-]

Very frankly, I paid a thousand dollars...

KAMPELMAN: ...filing fee.

HUMPHREY: ...filing fee in that state and decided, by cracky, I couldn't get the thousand dollars back. I'd better go on in and make the race, plus the fact that I felt that West Virginia, because of the poverty and the economic problems, was a place where I could go over pretty well. And I must say that my recollection of West Virginia is as follows: that never in my life do I recall at any time, including this last campaign, receiving a more enthusiastic welcome than I did in West Virginia. My wife and I fell in love with those people.

[-107-]

Every town we went to, it was great. I said one time that I felt like a conquering Caesar returning home. It was just magnificent! Crowds of people. Enthusiasm. Just marvelous, up until about the first of May. And then, whambo! The whole political organization switched in West Virginia. And I learned that this is an organization state. You know, they just slate them, and we weren't on the slate. Frankly, it took organization and money, and they had both. We didn't have it.

KAMPELMAN: In connection with your going into West Virginia and the decision that was involved in this, did the fact that there was a District of Columbia

[-108-]

primary, where many of your friends were involved, have an impact on your decision—that if you pulled out of West Virginia that you'd have to pull out of Washington, D.C.?

HUMPHREY: Yes. I also felt that we had very good solid votes in the West all the time. And I did think that we could maybe come out of West Virginia doing pretty well. I felt we would win or, obviously, I wouldn't have gone in. I thought we could win in West Virginia. I doubted that we could win in Wisconsin. We did better in Wisconsin than I really felt that we were going to do. We were coming fast at the tail end in Wisconsin. There isn't any doubt about that. We were making

[-109-]

real progress the last few days in Wisconsin. And a couple of more meetings...

KAMPELMAN: Well, if I recall correctly, Senator, you once told me of a conference you had, which we'll get to in a moment, with Senator Kennedy after West Virginia...

HUMPHREY: Yes.

KAMPELMAN: ...in which he said to you that in his view, had the Wisconsin primary lasted another week, you would have won. And had the West Virginia primary taken place a week earlier, you might have won.

HUMPHREY: A week or two weeks earlier. He told me, specifically, about the Wisconsin primary. He said, "Look, we felt we were going to

[-110-]

carry eight of the ten districts, Hubert. That was our last public opinion poll—that we were sure that we were going to carry eight of the ten. The Harris [Louis Harris] polls." He said, "What did you feel?" I said, "I felt that we were really making progress because every place I went, I was getting bigger crowds, more enthusiasm. And I could hardly wait to get to the next place because I knew it was rolling." He said, "We knew that too." He said, "I'll tell you quite frankly, we were desperate the last week." And he said, "I knew you were picking up strength, and I just wondered if we were going to be able to hold on." He knew that

[-111-]

they were going to win the Fox River Valley. He wasn't sure of both districts in Milwaukee. But, needless to say, he won by a good popular margin. Then in West Virginia, I felt that we were licked that last week, as I told you. And I told Muriel when we came back to address a dinner or a luncheon in Washington on the noon of May 10, on the election day...

KAMPELMAN: We flew back together. I was with you.

HUMPHREY: I just figured that it was impossible to win.

KAMPELMAN: Well, we knew, then, that the slating had gone against us.

HUMPHREY: Yes. Then, after that, Max, I met with him, you may recall. He came to my office.

[-112-]

KAMPELMAN: That's what I want to get into in that introduction. And I wish you'd report, now, a little bit of the conversations we had during that Wisconsin period and immediately after Wisconsin, before West Virginia, with some of the labor people. Do you recall those with Alex Rose...

HUMPHREY: Yes, they wanted me to withdraw.

KAMPELMAN: ...and Arthur Goldberg?

HUMPHREY: Yes. Arthur Goldberg, Alex Rose, David Dubinsky, Walter Reuther. They all said that it was foolish for me to go into West Virginia. And they said, "Look, withdraw." And very frankly, a couple of them or more said to me, "If you withdraw, I think you'll be the vice presidential nominee."

[-113-]

KAMPELMAN: That's right.

HUMPHREY: But I wasn't thinking very well at the time. And I didn't want to withdraw.

KAMPELMAN: That was clear.

HUMPHREY: Yes.

KAMPELMAN: And when they saw how you felt, they said, "All right. We understand this. But can we get from you a pledge that the campaign will be on a level that would make it possible for a rapprochement to take place after the campaign?" Do you remember that?

HUMPHREY: Yes. That's right.

KAMPELMAN: They played a rather constructive role, I think.

HUMPHREY: And we did. I think I was more responsible and reasoned in the

[-114-]

West Virginia area. I knew then that we had to be very careful.

KAMPELMAN: As an interesting commentary on this, at the meeting that we had with some of these labor leaders in your office, just before you announced that you would really go into West Virginia, in the middle of the conference you received a telephone call from West Virginia, from your representative down

there, saying that Senator Kennedy had just accepted your invitation to debate. And I remember you responding and saying, "I never invited him to debate." Do you remember that?

HUMPHREY: Yes.

[-115-]

KAMPELMAN: Apparently, they had, in your name, issued the invitation to debate. You had been challenging him in Wisconsin, when you were behind. But had not intended to challenge him in West Virginia...

HUMPHREY: ...when I thought I was ahead.

KAMPELMAN: ...when you thought you were ahead.

HUMPHREY: I figured that would have been foolish to do.

KAMPELMAN: And, of course, the staff went ahead and issued the invitation and...

HUMPHREY: Yes, Rein Vander Zee.

KAMPELMAN: And you were stuck immediately because Kennedy, of course, very quickly, knowing he was behind, picked up the challenge immediately and accepted the debate.

HUMPHREY: Absolutely.

[-116-]

KAMPELMAN: And that debate also had an impact on the result.

HUMPHREY: That's right. I didn't do well in that debate.

KAMPELMAN: Yes. What about these meetings that you had with Senator Kennedy after the West Virginia primary?

HUMPHREY: Well, let's just pin it down. Arthur Goldberg, who was the key man, came to me and urged me to not go into West Virginia. I explained to him why I was going to go in. I told him that, "Look, no matter what happens in this election, you know that I'll be out for the ticket." They said, "Please, try to conduct yourself so that if things don't go well for you, there can be some rapprochement

[-117-]

after the election.” Then, we went into West Virginia; and I made some statements there that it would have been better off if I hadn’t made, in retrospect—primarily about money—because I sensed that I was being inundated. I never made them about President Kennedy as such. I gave John Bailey a good working-over a couple of times. But after the West Virginia primary, I went over that evening and complimented, congratulated Jack Kennedy. Then, afterwards, I had a visit with him in my office. He came down to see me, and we talked about the future.

KAMPELMAN: If you remember, this was also somewhat arranged by our friend in this connection.

[-118-]

HUMPHREY: Yes, sir. That’s right. I never quite knew just what that visit really meant. I also indicated to him the following things, as I recall. Number one: I said, “I’ll help you get some farm support, and I want you to come to Minnesota. I want right now the people of Minnesota to know that, as far as Hubert Humphrey is concerned, I think you’re tops. We’re going to have other candidates out there, but I want you to come out. I want you to come to my home state.” And I went out with him. You remember, we flew out.

KAMPELMAN: I remember it very well.

[-119-]

HUMPHREY: And I took him into the dinner. I introduced him so that everybody would understand that there were no ill feelings. Then, you may recall that I introduced him to the Farmers’ Union people and got Johnny Baker [John A. Baker] working with him and told him I would help him with the Farmers’ Union people. I also made up my mind that I would not, under any circumstances, get involved in the Convention—I mean, have my name presented as an active candidate. The delegates of Minnesota were insisting that they were going to cast their vote for me, which I didn’t want them to do. But they were committed, and they couldn’t do anything about it.

[-120-]

When I got to the Convention, the pressures were on me terrifically....

Well, let’s talk about pre-convention first. The then Senator Kennedy talked to me about working with him and helping. I thought that he was indicating to me that it could be a Kennedy-Humphrey ticket. But he never said so, and I never believed it.

KAMPELMAN: Except—may I interrupt here a moment to say that our labor friends were pushing for a Kennedy Humphrey ticket.

HUMPHREY: That’s right.

KAMPELMAN: And, if you recall correctly, they said that they had talked to Kennedy about this.

[-121-]

HUMPHREY: But I never thought that it made any sense. I told you.

KAMPELMAN: I know that. I remember that very well. They were pushing it, though. They felt that they had gotten a kind of commitment from Kennedy on it.

HUMPHREY: I never could see why Kennedy, after having defeated me on the issues in which I was involved—and he was running as a liberal by then—why he really needed another northern liberal.

KAMPELMAN: Yes, yes.

HUMPHREY: And I told you that. And I said, “Furthermore, I just don’t think my people would go for this.” And I went home to Minnesota...

KAMPELMAN: Also, you were running for reelection in 1960.

[-122-]

HUMPHREY: And I said, “I’m not going to have any more of these failures.” And I said, “All I’ve got to do is go out to that Convention and let my name be bandied around as a vice presidential candidate with John Kennedy and not get it and I will look like a fool and people will repudiate me.” I said, “Let’s forget it. I’m going to be a good senator, and that’s it—period! And I’m going to try to get reelected.” I went home, and Muriel and I had long talks about it. I was exhausted. I remember; I was so tired!

KAMPELMAN: Well, you hadn’t had any rest during...

[-123-]

HUMPHREY: ...for months. For months.

KAMPELMAN: ...during the whole campaign.

HUMPHREY: George Meany called me. Walter Reuther called me. They all wanted to see me out in...

KAMPELMAN: ...Los Angeles.

HUMPHREY: ...Los Angeles. And one of them wanted to stop by. I said, "Well, I'll see you, but I'm not going to be any candidate for anything." And I was quite sharp with them. I just simply said that I wouldn't have anything to do with it. So, we got out to Los Angeles and I made it clear to our delegation that I was not a candidate. I released all of the pledged delegates we had, and I told them to go any place they wanted to go. Frankly,

[-124-]

I advised some of our friends, as you know, in the Minnesota delegation, I thought that they should go for Kennedy. But we got out there. You may recall the following sequence. One day I had the Kennedy people come and ask me if I would nominate.... No, wait a minute. I had Herbert Lehman [Herbert H. Lehman] and Eleanor Roosevelt [Eleanor R. Roosevelt] and Mike Monroney [Almer Stillwell "Mike" Monroney] come to me and want me to nominate Adlai Stevenson. And I told them, "No. I told people that I was not going to get involved, and I'm not going to. I will not nominate Adlai Stevenson." Then I had feelers as to whether or not I would be willing to give a

[-125-]

seconding speech for John Kennedy, and I said I couldn't do that. I suggested...

KAMPELMAN: Was it a seconding speech for Kennedy or a nominating speech for Kennedy?

HUMPHREY: Well, one of the nominating speeches, yes, for Kennedy. Then, I suggested that they might want to get in touch with Gene McCarthy for Adlai and with Orville Freeman for Kennedy. They contacted Orville, and Orville made one of the nominating speeches, as Gene McCarthy made one of the nomination speeches for Adlai. I felt that I was promoting a speaker for each side from the state. I was very frankly looking at Minnesota. I thought that this was the best thing that could happen insofar as

[-126-]

Minnesota was concerned for our future. Then Orville became convinced that he was going to be the vice president.

KAMPELMAN: That's right. For Kennedy.

HUMPHREY: For Kennedy. And I told Orville, I said, "Now, you'd better be sure what you're doing, Orville, because you're up for governor in 1960. Furthermore, remember that Minnesota is strong for Humphrey, and there's a lot of sympathy out there." And there was, and I knew this.

KAMPELMAN: There was a lot of sympathy for you.

HUMPHREY: The delegation would not vote for anybody but me. I told Orville, "I think you ought to be careful because it'll look like you're

[-127-]

jumping. I could have been in on these things, and I decided I'm going to play it safe." I sat up with him until four or five o'clock in the morning talking to him. I said, "Orv, if you want to go, the delegation will back you all the way. But you ought to think it through. Secondly, I want you to be damned sure they're not playing games with you because," I said, "I know there's about six 'would be' vice presidents running around out here." I don't blame the Kennedy organization for having all those fellows on the line. There was Governor Herschel Loveless [Herschel C. Loveless]; the governor from Kansas, Docking [George Docking]; and Stuart Symington and

[-128-]

"Scoop" Jackson [Henry M. Jackson]. There were all kinds of potential candidates for vice president. And I said, "Orville, you better get a firm commitment." So I called up Bobby.

KAMPELMAN: Oh, did you? I didn't know that.

HUMPHREY: Yes. And said, "Bobby, my friend Orville Freeman says he has a chance to be vice president, and I want you to come over and talk to him." And he came over, and they had a talk. Bobby didn't make any commitment. He told him his chances were very good, but he made no commitment. He said, "I do want you, however, to nominate Jack." And Orv said, "Fine;" he'd do that. I told Orv, "If they're going to let you nominate him, the odds are

[-129-]

that you're not going to be the vice presidential nominee because John Kennedy is not going to do like Adlai Stevenson. He's going to pick his vice president, as any man ought to do. Well, we had quite a to-do about that. Then, Orville made his nominating speech. Then, Gene made his nominating speech for Adlai. That was Gene's greatest day.

KAMPELMAN: His greatest day. One of the best speeches he ever made in his life.

HUMPHREY: Yes. It was a great speech. He was anti-Kennedy; and that's why, I think, he made his great speech. Very frankly, I thought that our people had to ride that one out. I told them, "Look, don't get

[-130-]

involved in this fight.” We were, then, trying to hold what we’d got back home. Well, after the Convention was over...

KAMPELMAN: Did you see Senator Kennedy during the Convention?

HUMPHREY: Yes, I did.

KAMPELMAN: Did you talk to him much?

HUMPHREY: Yes, I talked to him and...

KAMPELMAN: Did he understand your role, or was he unhappy with you?

HUMPHREY: No, he was not unhappy with me. In fact, to the contrary, I think he felt that I was very fair with him because many of the delegates in the West that were our delegates came to me and asked me what to do. And I said, “Well, you make your own choice. And I think that, in

[-131-]

this sense, Kennedy’s going to win. You’d better, maybe, cast your lot with him.” I didn’t think Adlai had a chance. He wouldn’t get in there and make a decision. After the Convention, then, I came back to Washington; and the one thing that I always felt was that Kennedy did feel that I had the power in Minnesota because he talked to me. And he had the power. I mean, he was the nominee. He didn’t need to be too friendly because Orville was with him and others were with him. But he worked with me. I thought that was, maybe, because I was here, in part. But I think it was also out of just the fact that we had learned some things together. After

[-132-]

it was all over, I wanted to work with him and did so, as you may recall. I went down into Iowa...

KAMPELMAN: There was a special session during this period.

HUMPHREY: Yes. And I worked very closely with him during that time and was the principal speaker and, primarily, the organizer of the Des Moines farm meeting. I went up to New York for the big civil rights meetings for him, and into Detroit. This is while I was a Senate candidate in my own right.

KAMPELMAN: Your own right, yes.

HUMPHREY: I started out in the fall of 1960, as you recall, campaigning for him in

North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Michigan,
New York,

[-133-]

and California. And I woke up one day finding out that I might not be senator unless I settled down to business in Minnesota.

KAMPELMAN: As I recall, that day was about two weeks before the election, wasn't it?

HUMPHREY: That's right.

KAMPELMAN: Or three weeks before the election because I remember telephoning...

HUMPHREY: I spent very little money. I figured that I wasn't going to ask anybody to contribute any more money. We had spent less than forty thousand dollars in the Senate reelection campaign.

KAMPELMAN: I remember you called me—I was in Washington on a Saturday night and a Sunday—and said, "What

[-134-]

the hell are you doing in Washington when you should be here working?" I don't know if you remember that. And then you read that poll to me.

HUMPHREY: But I made up my mind and tried to convince other people that we were going to carry Minnesota for Kennedy. I said, "This is the only way that we can really demonstrate, without a shadow of a doubt, that we're good sports and clean fighters and we're going to back him." And we went in there and pitched for him. We really gave him the crowds and the areas in which we worked...

KAMPELMAN: Did you see much of Kennedy during the campaign?

HUMPHREY: Yes, off and on I did. I brought Walter Heller [Walter Wolfgang Heller] to him, by the way, during the campaign.

[-135-]

KAMPELMAN: You did bring Walter Heller?

HUMPHREY: Introduced Walter Heller to him. I was a courier of memos from Walter Heller to John Kennedy. I talked to him on the phone. I saw him in New York. I saw him in Des Moines. I saw him in California.

KAMPELMAN: What did you think of the campaign he was running?

HUMPHREY: It was good. I thought it was primarily good on the basis of his own efforts. Organizationally, I didn't think it was as good as it should have

been at the time because it's just like the last one—they're never good, you know? They're never as good as you plan them to be. What I thought was good was his demeanor

[-136-]

and his conduct. Frankly, I think that the practice I gave him was awfully good for him.

KAMPELMAN: You mean, the running of the primaries.

HUMPHREY: Yes. He was a real seasoned national campaigner by the time he got to it.

KAMPELMAN: Yes. Actually, he also learned a little bit about America during that time.

HUMPHREY: Oh, yes. He was on top of the issues. He was really alive to the issues. And that meant a great deal to him. I don't think that he could have ever been president without the primaries. I doubt he would have done as well if he had the nomination without the primaries. In other words, the primaries made John Kennedy.

[-137-]

KAMPELMAN: Well, he might not have gotten the nomination.

HUMPHREY: That's what I meant. First of all, he would never have received the nomination. No doubt about that. The old pros would have blocked him. They would have said, "He's Catholic, he's too young, he's from the East; you can't have him." But he proved that he had something. You couldn't deny him the nomination by the time he got to the Convention. Also, the fact that he had the experience in the primary against tough competition—and I was really his only competition—prepared him for the main fight. In other words, he was like a fighter in training. He knew how to discuss

[-138-]

the farm issue, the civil rights issue, the conservation issue. He knew how to come to grips with those guts issues that Democrats need to know about.

KAMPELMAN: Can you recall any conversations that the two of you had during the campaign, either on the phone or in person, that might be interesting now? Anything about the work you were doing, any advice he sought from you as to how to proceed?

HUMPHREY: On agriculture. Yes, he talked to me about that; and Herb Waters wrote some stuff for him—not necessarily for him, but for their team. I would discuss with him the approaches that I thought we ought to make in the rural areas; the

[-139-]

civil rights matter we discussed in New York—how far he ought to go. He always looked to me, even afterwards, you know, in these two areas. But primarily in agriculture he looked to me. During that campaign that he became.... Well, let's put it this way—our mutual respect grew.

KAMPELMAN: Your respect for him during that period...

HUMPHREY: Very much.

KAMPELMAN: ...and you sensed that it was reciprocated.

HUMPHREY: Oh, I knew it was. I always found him likeable. And I always liked Jackie; I was and am very fond of Mrs. Kennedy. I'd see her at a dance or at a party, and we'd

[-140-]

dance. She was always jolly and friendly and sweet. I was very fond of her and am to this day. I liked the Senator. I liked him. You know, I never felt uncomfortable with him. I liked him. Even when we were battling because he was never given to snideness. This is one thing that I remember. He never, ever made me feel uncomfortable, or he never said an unkind word to me, personally. He never, in any way, rubbed salt in the wounds. He never, in any way, said or did anything that indicated that I had irritated him. And I've thought about this in retrospect.... Well, he had confidence. He had a feeling that he was, in a sense,

[-141-]

born to it. Once he had won the fight, even during the process of the fight or the struggle for the nomination, he never in any time acted cheap, small, little, picayunish. You know, most people don't live up to that.

KAMPELMAN: So that the campaign ended with his election. Minnesota played a key

role in that because we came in late and decisively.

HUMPHREY: That's right.

KAMPELMAN: Did you have any contact with him at that point?

HUMPHREY: Yes, I was on the phone with him.

KAMPELMAN: You were on the phone with him at that point.

HUMPHREY: Yes. And election night. And,

[-142-]

of course, right after the election, I came down to Washington and had a long talk with him—about November 22 or 23. I was on the phone with him many times after that, on different positions in the government.

KAMPELMAN: Did he seem appreciative with respect to the Minnesota results?

HUMPHREY: Tremendously so! And very friendly towards me. And he consulted, talked, visited, and, frankly, told me that I could have any.... I mean, he said, "Look, the Secretary of Agriculture—you just have it." And he told me he would take care of Herb Waters, and he kept every word.... The Secretary of Agriculture thing

[-143-]

boiled out because, truthfully, the man that Symington and I agreed upon...

KAMPELMAN: ...was not...

HUMPHREY: ...was not the Kennedy type. I think he would have been a good Secretary. I want to say again I think Fred Henkle would have been an excellent secretary. And I ran into a terrible jam over that with Orv, simply because Orv was angry after the election and said he didn't want anything—said he didn't want anything—and went down to South America with some governors. He said, "I don't want any damned job or any kind of position."

[-144-]

KAMPELMAN: I'll remind you of the fact that we had a meeting at the Hotel Nicollet the morning after election when he said to me, in your presence, "There's one thing I don't want; it's the Secretary of Agriculture."

HUMPHREY: Yes. "Under no circumstances."

KAMPELMAN: "Under no circumstances."

HUMPHREY: Right.

KAMPELMAN: Yes.

HUMPHREY: "There may be something in the Defense Department," I said.

KAMPELMAN: Yes. Or he had AID [Agency for International Development] in mind. Well, now, Senator, it's now 11:30, December 14. We're just at the close of the first tape here. It seems to me to be at a very good turning point, where we've completed at least that portion of your

[-145-]

relationships with the then Senator Kennedy, up to the point he becomes president. Anything occur to you that you might want to say as you finish up this period, or shall we just hold that until anything that might later come to your mind?

HUMPHREY: Well, I want to say this. I had a talk with President-elect Kennedy about Secretary of State, about the Secretary of Defense, about Health, Education, and Welfare. He confided to me in his office in the Senate Office Building. Two or three times I was in. He called me a couple of times to come down. He asked me about Secretary of State. And I put it this way to him. I said, "Well, are you giving consideration to Adlai?" He said,

[-146-]

"No, Hubert, I don't think so." He said, "I think not. What do you think of Rusk [Dean Rusk]?" And I said, "Well, I haven't identified Mr. Rusk with much except the Rockefeller Foundation." He says, "I'm giving very serious thought to him." He said, "Very frankly, I think that I'll take a pretty firm hand in State Department policy, myself." And said, "I think this man's pretty good." And I said, "Well, I remember him in the Truman Administration. But all I remember is that he was an Assistant Secretary. I don't think it's a good idea for a new administration to carry over old scars and old battles." Then we went on; and I said, "Well, what

[-147-]

about HEW [Department of Health, Education, and Welfare]?" And I said, "You know, a lot of people want you to appoint Governor Williams." He said, "No, Hubert, I think that's what they would expect. And what we need in there is a man that's more conservative, that cannot be tagged but will carry out our policy. And I'll have the policy." And he said, "I think that

Abe Ribicoff [Abraham A. Ribicoff] would be a good man for that. He's considered a rather conservative governor. He isn't looked upon as one of the ADA [Americans for Democratic Action] type, overly-liberal type. But he'll do the job." And I thought to myself, "How wise. How shrewd." I remember, I think I told you about this visit.

KAMPELMAN: Yes, you did.

[-148-]

HUMPHREY: Because, you see, it would have prejudiced the whole body of legislation in the HEW area, if you'd had an acknowledged, stereotyped, already labeled, super liberal. Then we talked about Adlai. I want to go into that. The President-elect told me that he thought that Adlai would make a fine representative at the UN [United Nations]. And, subsequently, he mentioned that to me; and he said, "You might feel him out on that." Well, I felt Adlai out on it, and Adlai didn't want it. And I told Adlai, "Listen, you asked the American people to elect John Kennedy, didn't you?" I was up in Bill Benton's apartment in New York with him. Ask Bill Benton. This

[-149-]

is a real story. And he said, "Well I don't think I want to."

KAMPELMAN: He wanted to be Secretary of State.

HUMPHREY: Secretary of State. I said, "Well, you're most likely not going to be. And I think you ought to take the UN job. You have no right to tell the President that you are refusing..."

[Transcript ends in the middle of Mr. Humphrey's last statement.]

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[-150-]

Hubert H. Humphrey Oral History Transcript – JFK
Name Index

A

Acheson, Dean G., 68
Anderson, Clinton P., 67

B

Bailey, John Moran, 47, 118
Baker, John A., 120
Benton, William B., 149
Blair, William McCormack, Jr., 43, 45
Blatnik, John A., 9
Bolling, Richard W., 9
Bruno, Gerald J., 88

C

Cabot Lodge, Henry, 8, 12, 13
Clement, Frank, 60

D

Docking, George, 128
Donahue, Jiggs, 54
Douglas, Paul H., 29, 30
Dubinsky, David, 70, 113

E

Eisenhower, Dwight D., 16, 20, 29

F

Feldman, Myer “Mike”, 25
Finnegan, James A., 43, 45
Freeman, Orville L., 48, 53, 54, 85, 126, 127, 128,
129, 130, 132, 144
Fulbright, J. William, 47

G

George, Walter F., 31, 33, 41
Goldberg, Arthur J., 70, 113, 117
Gore, Albert, Sr., 46
Green, Edith S., 88

H

Harriman, William Averell, 20
Harris, Louis, 111
Heller, Walter Wolfgang, 135, 136
Henkle, Fred, 144
Humphrey, Muriel Fay Buck, 47, 48, 49, 74, 89,
107, 112, 123

J

Jackson, Gardner, 8
Jackson, Henry M. “Scoop”, 129
Johnson, Lyndon B., 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 23, 31,
41, 47, 73, 77, 79, 94
Johnston, Felton M. “Skeeter”, 25

K

Kefauver, Estes, 43, 46, 49, 50, 52, 53, 54, 61, 73
Kennedy, Jacqueline Bouvier, 100, 140
Kennedy, John F., 1, 3, 5, 9, 12, 13, 17, 19, 21, 24,
25, 31, 32, 33, 36, 37, 45, 46, 48, 50, 51,
52, 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65,
66, 67, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 80, 81, 82,
83, 84, 87, 88, 89, 90, 94, 95, 97, 99, 102,
103, 110, 115, 116, 117, 118, 121, 122,
123, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131,
132, 135, 136, 137, 141, 144, 146, 149,
150
Kennedy, Joseph P., Sr., 7, 17, 18
Kennedy, Robert F., 63, 69, 90, 129
Kennedy, Rose Fitzgerald, 12
Khrushchev, Nikita Sergeevich, 76, 78
Kirkpatrick, Evron, 97

L

Lehman, Herbert H., 125
Loveless, Herschel C., 128

M

Mansfield, Mike, 15, 16, 19, 20, 23
McCarthy, Eugene J., 48, 126, 120
McDonald, David J., 70
McInnis, Miss, 46
Meany, George, 71, 124
Monroney, Almer Stillwell “Mike”, 125

N

Nixon, Richard M., 106

R

Rayburn, Sam, 16, 52
Reuther, Walter P., 70, 113, 124
Ribicoff, Abraham A., 148
Rolvaag, Karl F., 85
Roosevelt, Eleanor R., 125
Roosevelt, Franklin D., Jr., 9
Rose, Alex, 113
Rowe, James J., 75, 77, 79, 83, 97, 98
Rusk, Dean, 147
Russell, Richard B., Jr., 37

S

Smathers, George A., 2, 23, 49
Sorensen, Theodore C., 24, 31, 35, 47
Stevenson, Adlai E., 40, 41, 42, 44, 48, 50, 51, 56,
59, 61, 63, 73, 125, 126, 130, 132, 147,
149
Symington, Stuart, II, 46, 47, 73, 94, 128, 144

T

Taft, Robert A., 16, 20
Truman, Harry S., 16, 20, 147

V

Vander Zee, Rein, 116

W

Wagner, Robert Ferdinand, Jr., 43, 45, 46, 61
Waters, Hubert J., 75, 139, 143
Williams, G. Mennen, 46, 52, 53, 73, 148
Williams, Harrison A., Jr., 34