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Interview with John McEvoy by Don Nicoll

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee
McEvoy, John

Interviewer
Nicoll, Don

Date
May 1, 2002

Place
Washington, D.C.

ID Number
MOH 350

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Biographical Note

John Thomas McEvoy was born in Council Bluffs, Iowa on April 9, 1937 and grew up in Omaha, Nebraska. His mother was a schoolteacher and later a homemaker. His father worked for the Federal Home Loan Bank System.

He studied at and graduated from Creighton Preparatory School, Creighton College of Arts, and Creighton Law School in Omaha. He obtained a Master of Laws Degree from Georgetown University in 1964.

He served three years as an officer in the Army Judge Advocate General's Corps in the Office of the Army General Counsel and the Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense.

He served Senator Tom Dodd as a legislative assistant in 1965 and Senator Joseph Tydings as a legislative assistant from 1966 to 1968. He was Staff Director of the District of Columbia Committee in 1969 and 1970. He was Senator Muskie's Administrative Assistant from 1971 until the presidential election of 1972. After practicing law for two years in Washington, he returned to Muskie's staff as counsel to the Budget Committee in 1974. He became Staff Director of that Committee in 1977. He left at the end of 1980 to resume the practice of law until 1989, when he became Executive Director of the National Council of State Housing Agencies until his retirement in 2001.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: coming to Ed Muskie's office in February, 1971; McEvoy's role as Administrative Assistant; reorganization of the Senate office; the secretaries in Muskie's office; problems with a concurrent Senate office and downtown Washington office; foreign policy staff problems and Les Gelb; Muskie's demands on his closest staff; Muskie's schedule; successful and unsuccessful speeches written for Muskie; Muskie's 1972 presidential primary race; McEvoy's work on the Hart campaign; returning to Muskie's office as counsel to the Budget Committee; earliest Budget Committee meetings; becoming "designated fighter" to debate with Muskie over budget issues; Muskie's approach to issues and positions on the budget; Civil Rights in the Senate; Muskie's ability to use his temper to influence debate; Muskie's rebuttal speech to Ford's 1976 State of the Union address; and the Vietnam Veterans march and Brownie Carson story.

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Transcript

This interview has been revised at the request of the interviewee.

Don Nicoll: It is the 1st of May, 2002. We are in Washington, D.C. in the offices of the Edmund S. Muskie Foundation. Don Nicoll is interviewing John McEvoy; this is the second interview with Mr. McEvoy and we will be starting with Mr. McEvoy's move to Senator Muskie's office early in 1971. John, when was it that you joined the staff and what were your tasks?

John McEvoy: It was February 1st, 1971. And I remember it because it was the day after my daughter was born, my last daughter. And it continued until August of 1972. I was his administrative assistant during that period of time.

There was a second period I worked for the senator which was from mid August of 1974, until the end of, the time he became secretary of state in May or June of 1980. And during that period I was first counsel to the Senate Budget Committee, of which he had become chairman, having had a lot to do with the creation of the committee itself. And then from about February 1977 on, I was his staff director after his first staff director, a good friend of mine and yours perhaps, Doug Bennett, had moved from the job as staff director of the budget committee to be the Assistant Secretary for legislation.

The reason I want to distinguish these periods is that I believe that my service to the senator and my experience with the senator was extraordinarily different between those two periods. Even my feeling of allegiance to him was different between those two periods. And certainly my relationship with him was different between those two periods. And not because the second time I was across the street in another office and doing things that only took me into occasional contact with him. Whereas as his administrative assistant, (Don, you know as his long time administrative assistant), I was in charge of everything from his laundry to his schedule to calling his wife when he started home, and everything in between that people associate with the high politics, if there are any, of such a job.

I came into the office because, mainly because you, who had been I think the spine of that office for as many years as you'd been there. I don't know how many that was. You had left to run the national campaign. And a fellow named Jack Whitelaw had been put in charge. Jack was a nice fellow. He used to do the casework but was judged, I don't know whether by the senator, by you, or by others like Berl Bernhard who was advising the senator, not to have adequate presence, shall we say, for the role into which he'd been thrust. That is to say, people were, as I understood it, were complaining about their reception in the office. You were downtown, of

course, when they came to visit and so on. And there was a general sense that the office wasn't running as it used to when you were there.

And so there was a need for someone to come in not to fill the role you had, I don't think that was ever intended because, first of all, you were carrying on a good part of the substantive reality of that role downtown. And second, I never aspired nor was I asked to play the substantive role I believe you played when you were AA.

My job was more running the railroad. And it was explicitly to please the senator, take the pressure off him with regard to whether his Senate office operation was collapsing, and to assure that guests would be treated correctly, that internal schedule with the Senate, would be correlated with his external schedule as a candidate, and so on. And so my job was, as I say, more a combination of, I suppose, at the lowest level valet, and second level a conductor, and maybe at the highest level a coordinator of the politics and personnel in that office to make sure that what it did was consistent both with the campaign, his Senate obligations, and his obligations to the state.

And I took that job, as I apparently said in the earlier tape of this interview really as a default. I had intended to leave the Hill after having been up there for about six years, for two senators, and go into private practice. And that just had collapsed at the last minute. And I walked in December from the office of Arnold & Porter where that opportunity had collapsed over internal difficulties in that firm, down to see you about a block from here, in the middle of the evening, eight o'clock or so, and said, “If that job is still there I'll take it.” And you said, “It is.” So I did. I'd never met the senator except for a fifteen minute interview, I believe, before you accepted me as the candidate for the job, because I don't remember seeing him afterward. I think your word sealed the deal.

So I showed up there on February 1st. And I would say that the criticism that had been made of the office after you had left it was, I saw in some degree justified. That is to say, I thought that the front office, that is to say the people on the reception desk, fulfilled the claim that had been made of them that they were a little cold. Not kind of warm and caring people that you might wish to have dealing with visitors and politicians who might stop by. And Jack's operation was a little top heavy. That is to say, he had a secretary and I believe she had an assistant. And the legislative operation, because you had been such a key part of it, was now pretty junior, except with regard to the Subcommittee on the Environment where Leon had been there for some period of time. But I also I believe, without ever having talked to Leon about it, that you had a profound influence in that relationship, too.

So there was a big vacuum there after you left. And my job was to restore the office to a smoothly running entity in light of the demands of the campaign, and to the satisfaction of the campaign, and to the satisfaction of the senator. Candidly, I had no idea how difficult it would be to maintain that office to the satisfaction of the senator, because as you know he could be very demanding in a very bizarre way. I was very fortunate that you had hired, I believe, a lovely young woman whose name was, what was her name, his secretary at the time. God, she was from Maine, she was a tall blonde lady, and I'm embarrassed I can't remember her name now. Well, it'll come to me.

DN: Was this Joanne Amnott?

JM: No, Joyce.

DN: Joyce.

JM: Joyce [E. Hallock], whatever Joyce's last name was. She'd only been there a few months, but she really was committed and she was bright. And she really did a terrific job and took a great burden off me. And another person who was enormously helpful in those days was, was doing the casework, she was the woman I moved to the front desk. I'm so embarrassed, Don, it's thirty years but I should remember these names. I solved the front desk problem by taking the person, and you'll recognize her when I say she married one of the senator's Secret Service men, who was the most effervescent and attractive. And I moved her out to the front desk, over her protests because -

DN: Susie Nicholas.

JM: Susie Nicholas. Susie had a lot of competence, and I believe she was doing case project stuff. And she knew she was better than, she had more competence than to run the front desk, but she was also extremely loyal to the senator. And the way I got her to do it was to point out to her that we had a problem with the front desk and needed people manning it mature enough on the one hand and happy enough on the other to draw the visitor in and make them feel like they'd really had a first class experience while they were there.

Dick Stewart, who was the campaign press secretary, once said of an assistant that he hired who couldn't type, but, you may remember her, was a very attractive Hispanic woman, as I recall. I said, "Dick, why on earth, how on earth can you get by with a woman who can't even type?" And he said, "Well you don't understand what her job is." And I said, "What's that?" And he said, "To go down the aisle in the press section on the plane and have every press guy think he's just been laid, when he hadn't."

Now, my notion for Susie that as crass. But people who did have the experience of walking with Susie from the front office to the senator's Capitol office for an appointment had a wonderful experience, because she was so effervescent and charming. And so they would come to see the senator in a good mood. And I always considered one of the significant sacrifices anybody made on the Senate staff was to take that job, and one of the most significant contributions that Susie made to do it.

The legislative operation at that time, which you'll recall, was a woman named Jane Fenderson and another young woman whose last name is now Lockwood, I mean married a lawyer here, I'm blanking on her name, too.

DN: It was Lee Enfield [Lockwood].

JM: Lee Enfield, exactly. And then there was a subcommittee, the International Government

Relations [IGR] subcommittee which had a fellow running it who, again, I suspect flowered under your, or at least produced usefully to the senator under your direction, but he wasn't having that direction any more. And there also another fellow who worked, I think, really for Senator [Lee Warren] Metcalf on the subcommittee. And then the rest of the subcommittee staff of the staff was quite small. So those were the resources that I understood I was to deploy.

DN: Just a note here, I believe the director of the subcommittee on intergovernmental relations was Ike Webber, Edwin ["Ike"] Webber.

JM: Then there were, probably about twenty people in the Senate office, and then those couple, three, up in the subcommittee I believe that were on the Democratic staff. And I made up a list of thirteen, I believe, of those twenty that I suggested that the senator let go, or that he empower me to let go. I felt that, however the machine ran when you ran it, that without you, having taken that key cog out of the machine, it wasn't operating. And we needed to bring in a higher level of competence than most of the people on the list of thirteen represented. Some of them were secretaries, but most of them were substantive people. And there's no point in my going through the names unless you wanted me to.

But I had gone to work with the senator with that little fifteen minute interview. And I had, since I'd never been an AA, asked a good friend of mine, Ken Gray, who you recall used to be legislative assistant to Paul Douglass from Illinois, later was Joe Tydings' administrative assistant. I called him up when I realized I was going to have that interview. And I said, "Ken, how do you be an AA? What do you ask for?" And he said, "You need to control the schedule; you need to control the budget and you need to control the personnel. And if you lack any of those three you're not in charge."

So I went to Senator Muskie, and I think Berl was in the room at the time, you were downtown. He said, "Do you want the job?" Basically, I'd already been vetted to him. And I said, "Well, I need three conditions." And he said. "What are they?" And I told him, "I need control of your schedule in the office. I need to have control of the personnel in your office, which means I need to be able to terminate those that I think need to be terminated. I need to be able to hire, with your understanding, people who are necessary to replace them. And I need to control your office budget with regard to pay increases to people. They have to understand who is in charge of that operation." And he said, "It's a deal." And so it became the deal except, as I told him, I was not going to act without his knowing it in key matters, by for example, changing a bunch of people who had been there for a good deal of time.

I think one of the reasons the office had been depleted a little was that you had taken key people, or they'd migrated downtown to the campaign. People like Eliot Cutler, who had played a role in the office that wasn't then being fulfilled. I had the impression that you and Eliot were the legislative operation in that office, with Jane's and Lee's assistance. Well in any case, I offered the senator this list of thirteen, I think it was thirteen, it may have been eleven but I think it was thirteen, names. And he looked it over and he said, "I'd like to take this home and think about it." So, that alarmed me a little bit but not a lot, because I figured we'd make some kind of a deal.

He came back the next day and he said, you know, he said, “You go ahead and do what you think you must, but there is this one person that I'd like to retain. I'd like you to try to figure out something for that person because they're very loyal.”. And so I said, “Sure.” I mean, that wasn't hard, because he was basically authorizing me to do twelve out of thirteen. Which I then did, Don, on one Friday afternoon. And honest to God, I've told people since that I'm really glad I was as young and ruthless as I was then, because I could never have done it again.

One of those thirteen people, or twelve people as it happened, was in tears because he had significant obligations and he was dependant on that job, and he was pleading for more time than I was willing to give him. I was willing to give him a very short time, two weeks as a matter of fact, to give you some notion of how ruthless I was. But I felt I needed the payroll to be free to hire the people that were necessary to support the operation and the senator.

Now, I will confess to you, and I think you know this from the time, that I was very skeptical of one particular aspect of the Muskie operation at that time. And that was, that in the campaign there were a number of new recruits, Supreme Court clerks and other foreign policy guys, who were advising on the policy which the senator was ultimately going to follow at its Senate aspect. So the legislative operation, if you will, was being run a little by remote control from downtown. And I didn't think it was going to work for a bunch of reasons. But especially because there were too many little things that happened every day --- he'd just become chairman of the disarmament subcommittee --- and things that needed attention that I thought were never going to get dealt with adequately if it was a matter of going downtown to get the answer.

And though I set out to not replace those people, I came to my own view that that wasn't the most efficient way to use campaign resources. I thought it important, in any case, to supplement them by having a level of competence in the office competent to execute in the Senate legislative and political strategy to the extent it needed to be expressed in the Senate, whether it came from Jim Campbell and one of these former clerks or somebody else. And to do that I hired a guy named Dan Lewis who had worked for me. He was a bright young lawyer over at Senator Tydings’ office, and he'd worked over there for about three or four years. I knew him well and I trusted him. And I basically put him in charge of the legislative operation on the domestic side.

And on the foreign policy side hired a fellow named Maynard Toll, whom I had also known. He was just out of graduate school, I think. And it was his job to interpolate through, with, under Dan's supervision, the needs of the campaign and the senator's needs with regard to executing the foreign policy direction the senator wanted to take, whether it came from downtown or out of his own head or whatever. And there came a crisis right away in that aspect of the operation, because the foreign policy guys downtown, whose names happily [escape me]. Well one of them doesn't, Les Gelb, whether he was on the staff or just around the staff I don't know.

DN: Les was just around the staff.

JM: But for a long time it was hard for me to read Les Gelb's columns in the *New York Times*, even though he's a distinguished and insightful journalist, because of something that happened. Gelb and whoever it was, I believe -

DN: Tony Lake.

JM: Well, Tony I would say was the least responsible for this. There was a third guy who came from the Mondale staff, or went to Mondale's staff afterward, who worked for Tony. There were three of them. But whoever the three were, Tony was, I always thought, kind of a passive participant in what I thought was an unfortunate situation.

The other two, one of whom I'm blanking on, I think his name started with an 'M', and Gelb went to Senator Symington who, of course, was as you know, Senator Muskie's not only good friend but virtual office mate. His office was next door. And they suggested to Senator Symington that this new guy, Dan Lewis, was screwing up Muskie's operations and his foreign policy and it was a formula for disaster and Muskie had to get rid of him. And Symington carried that message, and not necessarily as anything more than a message, to Senator Muskie without my knowing it, and Senator Muskie asked me about it.

And I suggested that Dan had, was, first of all, totally competent to do what he had been brought in to do, and, second, I didn't think was exceeding the responsibility that I had given him, and third, wasn't, in doing that, interfering at all with what was going on downtown. He might question "how does this relate to that" but he wasn't trying to put himself in the place of those who were being paid downtown to do that kind of thinking. I suppose tension was inevitable in the circumstance. I really thought that the way pursued was not the way to deal with that situation. I mean, if there was a problem it should have gone to you, and you and I should have talked and whatever. But they went up the back stairs and I found that unforgivable.

And I suppose it was on that day that I decided that that operation downtown should be exterminated, not because I thought it was inherently unworkable, although I was skeptical as I said, about how and whether you could do it from that distance with some people operating at this level and some excuses and needing to be at a much lower level. I thought that if these guys tried to decapitate my key guy that I wasn't going to turn my back on them and so the same guy who was able to fire those twelve people in an afternoon decided that these foreign policy guys downtown weren't going to run the office either. I didn't play a major role in the termination of that part of the operation, but I certainly didn't advise against it.

And that actually gets back to the very curious aspect of my relationship with the senator, which is how I never developed what Lee White, who warned me before I went to work there, I needed to have to be truly fully effective with him, and that was "propinquity." But I'll come back to that. I should finish describing the changes I made in the office.

You had downtown with you at the time, Charlie Micoleau, but Micoleau wasn't going to stay downtown. He was either going to come back to the office or go back to Maine. And I'm not sure what Charlie's job had been in the office when he was there before he went downtown, but you or someone said, "Can you talk to Charlie and see what he can do in the office?" Well, I had also decided Jack Whitelaw should be replaced, and his infrastructure as well. Susie was part of his infrastructure, so I had pulled a big piece out of it. And that in fact, the job that somebody was going to have with regard to Maine required somebody from Maine to do it, and I wasn't from Maine. I'd never been to Maine in my life up until that time and I couldn't, I didn't know

about Eastport or any of the rest of that. I didn't even know where Eastport was.

And so I thought Charlie looked like a guy who was savvy enough and willing enough to take on the job which I described to him, was to make sure the senator got in no trouble in Maine while he was running for president. And to, the extent it was possible, that people in Maine, with regard to state and constituent service, would not know the difference between his running and not running. And that was Charlie's charter, and I gave him a couple of people to do it I think Charlie was also the press secretary, but that's because we virtually had no press operation anyway, I mean that was mainly the campaign’s responsibility, other than to gin out the release about the latest grant or something from Maine, which the campaign wasn't interested in but had to get done. There wasn't any reason why the Senate office ought to be issuing press releases in the name of or about anything that affected the campaign.

So it kind of worked out well. We were able to devote more resources to the filling of the void you'd left in the legislative world that way. And that's kind of the way the office ran, a stripped down case and project section, a beefed up legislative operation, compared to when I got there, and then a small administrative unit which was me my secretary, the Senator’s secretary – and who was the woman -?

DN: Gayle Cory?

JM: Gayle Cory, that saint, that woman of incredible inefficiency who we would have collapsed without Gayle was the glue, and when everything else was coming apart around Senator Muskie, she and Joyce would get together on a solution that was sometimes elegant, sometimes pretty awkward, but always somehow worked.

I mean, crises like I encountered my first week – “Where is my blue suit?” The senator was going to take a plane up to Pennsylvania to give a speech on dairy supports, something he was exquisitely excited about doing. I think dairy supports were not a big issue in Maine but they sure as hell were a big issue for the National Association of Cow Milkers, or whatever it was he was going to talk to.

And I had nothing to do with the speech, I don't think I in those days was necessarily charged with making sure he had the speech, but I sure was charged that day with finding his blue suit. And so I went out, he called me into his office and I thought maybe we'd talk some high policy, but the real issue was, this was three days after I went to work I think, “Where's my blue suit?” “Well, Senator, can you describe your blue suit?” “It's blue.” So he decided that was enough and I went out and I told Joyce what the problem was. She said, “Well, it's at the cleaners.” So I went back in to the senator, thinking this was a simple issue. I said, “Well senator, your suit is at the cleaners. Suppose we call at your house and we'll send somebody out to the house,” we had a couple of hours, “and get whatever other suit you want and we'll have it brought to you at the plane.”

And he said, he looked, you know, his office was always very dark, at least it was in those days, even before it was on the basement level, which I made him move to later, over his protests, so he could get more space. One of the bizarre things about the senator was he was such an

imposing and profoundly dominating man in so many environments, including with his staff when he chose to be, well, actually, all the time, I guess. And yet, if you put something to him, something he had to do for the greater good of his candidacy or his staff or something else, he would invariably, grumbling do it.

He might remind you, as he reminded me any number of times after I made him move out of his favorite suite on the second floor of the old Senate office building, which looked out at the park next door, into that basement suite that Senator [Lloyd] Bentsen had abandoned as soon as he could, but was about fifty percent larger than that suite upstairs. We needed [it] for the increased staff and to give the existing staff enough room, because they were really crowded in the old suite. He just fought that tooth and nail.

In fact, he held out against it for so long that the Rules Committee, which was responsible for assigning Senate offices, waited I believe it was thirteen weeks for the senator to make up his mind, and he was fairly high on the seniority list in the Senate, and so he was blocking any body else's moving decisions. When there's an election or a senator dies, then the space that that senator vacates becomes available to any senator who wants it, and they proceed from top down the seniority list. Well, Senator Bentsen had chosen another suite and he'd gone to it, leaving this rather large suite, Texas size, available.

And Muskie was the next one down on the list and so I wanted him to take that suite, but he wouldn't commit to do it. For thirteen weeks. I think it was thirteen; maybe it was seven. Anyway, I would have a call from Tom Cochran at the Rules Committee every couple of days, "Has your boss decided?" And Muskie had such stature and seniority that they were fairly gentle about it, but they were getting very insistent. And after he did make a choice, right then, but certainly after they finished that round that year of office assignments, the Rules Committee created a forty-eight hour "yes or no" period, which may still be the standing rule. You might call that the Muskie rule.

Well, my relationship with the senator lacked propinquity, which is what Lee White, who was special counsel to the president under President Johnson, told me I would need if I was ever going to be close to him. And I guess propinquity implies closeness, though I didn't know what it meant when Lee used it. I was seeing Lee White because I'd asked someone, perhaps it was you, perhaps it was Berl Bernhard, who I should see to know what, as best I could before I got there, what might be expected of me. And they said, 'Well, Lee White's a very old friend of the senator and you ought to go talk to him."

So I did one night in his law office, which incidentally was dark like the senator's office. I don't know whether that's something they had in common. And he didn't have much advice except he said, "The people around Senator Muskie have one of two relations with him. They're either the staff or they have propinquity. And if you want to be more than the staff, you've got to obtain propinquity." Well, I believe that what he meant was, there are a certain number of people, and I don't know whether you were one of them or not, Leon was, who had a relationship with Muskie that transcended the staff. These folks took all the beatings the senator was capable of imposing on the staff, but could make light with him, have fun with him, and enjoy a relationship with him that was beyond that of a normal staff person.

And ironically, one of the people who achieved it is this fellow Dan Lewis. Not to the degree Leon ever did, to be sure, Dan wasn't there that long and didn't have that heritage. But Dan, you may recall, looked a little bit more like Groucho Marx than anybody else, and he carried himself a little bit that way and was very flip. And one time when we were over in the senator's basement Capitol office, which I used to call the Muskie bunker – maybe I didn't invent that term, maybe it was somebody else's, because it was below ground, as you know, behind the Senate kitchen in the Capitol. It was the best of the in-Capitol offices available when he was offered one. when he got the chance he moved out and went to Senator [Samuel James] Ervin's upstairs which had a magnificent view of the Mall all the way down to the Lincoln Memorial and across to Arlington. Fantastic. That was the only well lit office he ever had that I was in. Now, where -?

DN: You were talking about Dan Lewis.

JM: Oh yeah, so Lewis and I are coming out of the Muskie bunker with Muskie one time, and he was complaining about his favorite subject, the schedule that was being imposed on him by the staff. “You people that don't understand that you shouldn't use up all the white space, I have no white space left.” That complaint had to do with how much space there was on his schedule between meetings, because we were cramming something into every minute of the day, either a Senate obligation or opportunity or something the campaign needed. And he would object violently to that, really violently. But this particular day he said, “What am I going to do? How can I even play golf? I can't play golf and maintain this schedule.” And Dan said, “Well, I guess you'll just have to give up golf.” Now, Muskie didn't turn around and knock him out. In fact he didn't do anything. He soldiered on, but he got the message, I think. I wasn't capable of being flip with him like that. And so to the extent that was propinquity, I never did have it at the end of eight years, although my relationship with him got pretty close and pretty intense in that second segment of time.

I think it's only fair to say, if I didn't already say it, that in that first period of time I was a mercenary, as were most of the people who were not out of the Senate office in the first place, like you and Leon and Eliot. And while it didn't dilute my loyalty to him at all – I would suggest that maybe my loyalty was greater than a great number of other people in the campaign, and I'll illustrate it in a moment – I think there were two fundamental problems with the 1972 campaign; one of them was the senator himself, and the other one was his staff. I had formulated a theory before I ever got there that a bad staff can subvert a good senator in his reelection efforts, but a good staff can’t save a bad one.

In any case, I think a fundamental problem with regard to the '72 is that almost everybody who joined it from the outside hated Nixon and didn't love Muskie. Muskie was their vehicle to get rid of Nixon and reinstate a Democratic establishment. And with the exception of George Mitchell and Berl Bernhard and myself, I hope, although I don't exclude myself entirely from it, and Harry McPherson who wasn't really part of the campaign, most of the rest of the people I knew were more mercenary than I was. In fact, many of them were just political mercenaries without question. They went from campaign to campaign, and this so happened to be their campaign.

Well, not to excuse myself, when I had the opportunity to go to work for Senator Muskie, I'd observed him in action and knew his reputation, I mean observed him in action as a senator, and was profoundly impressed. I considered it an honor to be considered for the job. But when I took the job, I never wanted to be an AA, I took the job partly because I needed a job, as I described to you before, but also because I'm from Nebraska and Ted Sorenson's from Nebraska. And Muskie, at the time I went to work for him, was the clear odds-on Democratic nominee without question, it seemed. It was his for the reaching and taking, and was a potential threat to president Nixon. Inflation was a problem, we were having a little recession, the budget was a little out of balance.

I remember when I decided the election was over was on August 15th, I think, of 1971, a year before the election, when I took a vacation with my family and went down to Myrtle Beach. I'd been with the senator for about six months and needed a vacation. And we drove down there in a heavy rain on a Saturday night. And I got up to go out and get a newspaper the next day, and Myrtle Beach being a resort community, they had row after row of newspaper boxes at the place where you go to pick one up. And there, every one – I thought it was some kind of a joke – had this banner headline, "Nixon freezes wages and prices". And, that was the time Nixon was quoted as saying, "At times like this we're all Keynesians." And I figured, the sonofabitch has stolen the election. Not stolen, but, it's a master stroke, nobody's going to get around him on that. And I don't know whether that was an accurate statement of the issues, it was an accurate statement of the outcome.

But my sense, when I went to work for the senator, was that he had a very strong opportunity to beat Nixon. I didn't like Nixon. I didn't trust Nixon any more than any other Democrat did, but my principal motivation wasn't a hatred of Nixon, it was actually a need for a job and feeling honored to have this one. And, being from the state of Ted Sorenson, seeing an opportunity to take a shortcut into the White House. I mean, Sorenson had been working for Kennedy for ten years or something. And here, if I work for Muskie for eighteen months, surely they'd find something for me to do down there. And I had come out of a background, as I may have described, in the Defense Department where I'd had an opportunity to go to the White House once before with Joe Califano, which I'd turned down. So this was like, thus, a recycling of opportunity. But frankly, all of that was known to me before I took the job, and I took the job for the very crass reason I suggested, that I needed a job. I hope I did the job as best as I could, under whatever circumstances I took it. I know I tried.

And I do think that during those years that the Senate operation, while it never had the role that it did when you were there, did have the role it was supposed to have at the time, which was to keep the senator out of major trouble in Maine and, or any trouble in Maine to the extent we could. In some of those things, like Machiasport, were hard to be out of trouble because you had to be with the environmentalists or with the locals. But, I think the Senate office functioned well during that period and after the dissolution of that outside operation which was the center for such thought as existed in the campaign.

But I really think that the campaign failed, as I said, both because of the campaign staff and of the senator. And I'll include myself in that because my job clearly wasn't just to run the Senate

office, it was the liaison between the campaign and the Senate office to the extent that speeches needed to be coordinated, or schedules needed to be meshed, or things had to be executed on the Hill that related to the campaign. So I was clearly part of the campaign. But I, and I exclude you from this, Don, in terms of the failure of the campaign because you stopped being the campaign manager well short of the clarity that people came to that that campaign was in deep trouble. And you didn't hire the people that I call the mercenaries. And I don't say that necessarily with disapprobation, that's how they got to the campaign and most of them were not without competence.

But as an example of what I'm talking about, that I hope my loyalty to the senator was greater than theirs, by the end of that campaign I had been moved down to down to the campaign headquarters, and I was by then really operating the Senate then as you had , by remote control. It made not too much difference by then because the senator was on the road a great deal. The reason I'd been moved downtown is partly because the senator was out of town, but partly because Bob Shrum, the speech writer, who was committed to the senator also, had a hell of a time getting the speech done in time. And so I was put in an office next to his. And my job was not only to coordinate the speech in the sense that it got into the senator's folder, but to make sure it got done so we could it in to the senator's folder. I didn't say what was to be in it; I just cajoled Bob to do it, and put as much unbearable pressure on as I could.

I came to recognize, as I later wrote things, that one of Bob's problems was he was considered, and I think probably in some cases qualified, as a virtuoso speech writer. He wrote some brilliant things for John Lindsay, and I think he wrote one or two for Senator Muskie. Also one or two really tragic ones like the Attica speech, that just weren't consistent, I think, with what the senator really would have said at the time. But also, they were just so far out liberal they offended a great population and didn't need to be said, but if they needed to be said, needed to be said differently than they were put in the senator's mouth.

And one of the senator's great failings I believe, which I'll illustrate with a much later anecdote, was a lack of self confidence. I don't know, you would know better than I whether it's self knowledge, but he certainly did not have the confidence to say, “this is crap”. Now, he would say sometimes “this is crap” over the rhetoric in it, or “this is crap” because that's not the position I want to take. But when it was on kind of the cutting edge and he was out there on the national scene that he'd only had that very significant but brief, exposure in 1968, I think he was very subject to having people say, “Ed, this is a great speech, you need to give it,” which a lot of people in those days would do, whatever the subject was. I think that happened in the Attica speech.

Well, there I was downtown, with the campaign collapsing rather rapidly. You know that it infuriated Muskie when anybody would suggest that he'd lost the New Hampshire primary, but he was judged to have lost it, it was too close, and then he clearly got stomped in Florida. He won Illinois, but the only other candidate on the ballot was Gene McCarthy, and Muskie won it overwhelmingly, I think it was seventy-three to seventeen or something. But then it went on to Wisconsin. Remember Mike Casey, the advance guy who as far as I know was a pretty competent guy.

DN: He was a very able advance man.

JM: He called me one time, I think we'd talk every day because during those days he was the conduit of what it was the senator wanted or needed, and then I had to make sure that it went back out there from the Senate operation. And I said, “Mike, how's it going?” There was just a week between the two primaries, Illinois and Wisconsin. I believe Wisconsin was only two weeks after Florida; maybe it was three. It was the first week of April. And Mike says, “Not so good.” And I said, “What do you mean?” He said, “Well, like we were out at the plant gate this morning passing out literature with the senator. When the plant gates closed we went on to the next plant, but the McGovern people who were out there at the same time went in to work.” And sure enough, the Wisconsin primary turned out badly, and I think a number of us believed the campaign was effectively over.

In fact, I pleaded with the senator not to go through with Pennsylvania and Ohio because I thought the outcome was inevitable and it would be a more statesman like thing, it would be better for his reputation in retrospect to pull out then. But he felt committed to Governor [Milton] Shapp and to others to go ahead. And so he did and with the result that, on the after Pennsylvania the senator called me. I think he was at home. Maybe I was at home, but I think he was at home and I was in the office. Oh, I know, I was downtown, that's why I didn't think of myself as being in the office. He said, “John, I want you to call the senior advisors and tell them that this morning I'll be withdrawing from the race.”

Well, you remember senior advisors were Jim Rowe and Clark Clifford. There was a third one I don't remember. One time they counted up that they had a hundred and thirty-five [135] years experience advising presidents, and in a way I think that was one of the things that was wrong. I mean, we were up against the phenomenon of the McGovern campaign, an insurrection within the party and in a time when the old rules didn't hold: Kent State and bra burning, women's liberation and anti-war protests, and we were losing a war, a big one. And it was, I mean it was, as everybody knows who lived then, a the kind of unmooring of traditional principles, with the culture wars, the external pressures of things like the actual events of the war and the politics of the time, cities burning and the rest. It was very hard to get your bearings. But I don't think the place to look for them necessarily was back to the guys who started out advising Roosevelt or Truman. although their advice was not without worth or value. it was probably somewhat irrelevant. And the senator, I think, tended to take it more seriously because that was his school. I mean he felt comfortable with those guys.

The third one was Sol Linowitz. Anyway, I made the call to Jim and he said, “It's a good thing. We probably should have done it sooner.” Then I called Clark Clifford. I had developed a better relationship with Clifford than I had with Muskie, in terms of being able to sit down and talk to him. I would spend some time with him from time to time, just on the senator's behalf or the senator's direction to get what Clifford was saying and taking it back to the senator when the senator was on the road or something. So I called Clifford and I said, “Mr. Clifford, the senator's asked me to call you. You know why he can't call you himself this morning, he's going to withdraw . . . . “

End of Side A, Tape One

Side B, Tape One

DN: This is the second side of the first tape, the interview with John McEvoy on May 1st, 2002. John, you were just starting the conversation with Clark Clifford.

JM: Clifford said, "John, my dear friend, this is such tragic news. And the terrible thing is, as my grandmother used to say, I think it was my grandmother, it may have been somebody else, but I think it was as my grandmother used to say, the terrible thing is we just that we just peed it away" And I think that kind of summed it up.

I later said if I were going to write a history of the campaign as a personal memoir, it would be called The Children's Crusade Must Have Had Professional Management. That came to me during this post campaign period when, as soon as the senator made his announcement, people began bailing out.

One unexalted exit was somebody who worked for Senator Kennedy, who had been intruded into the campaign staff late in the game, and even traveled with the senator. He was supposed to be a good speech writer and thought man. And he took the briefing book that we'd laboriously put together over the months for the senator, and took it straight to the McGovern campaign where he enlisted, virtually on that day, or within hours. And, of course, others were scrambling to get out of our campaign. Nobody was getting paid. In fact some people maybe hadn't been paid for a while, so you can hardly expect them not to do something else. And those who wanted to stay in politics, at least for a while, you can understand their going to McGovern, although I thought the haste with which some went to McGovern was a little unseemly.

Mike Barnicle, who had been, I believe, brought in by then as assistant press secretary, or was playing some other role that was intimate in the campaign, I don't remember but it was an intimate role, was among the first to go over the side. Didn't even say goodbye. You'd just hear about these people, they're just gone. I mean, you knew they were going to be gone but now all of a sudden they show up in L.A. with McGovern.

In fact, a very funny story that goes with the McGovern campaign involves Tony Podesta who was one of the Muskie political operatives. I think he may have run on the ground in New Hampshire.

DN: Yes, he was.

JM: And then he was on the ground in one or two other states. And when the thing ended, Tony was a very good friend of a guy named Eli Segal who was running California for McGovern. And Segal had as his guardian angel, Miles Rubin. Miles was the bankroller and treasurer of the McGovern campaign, later was the bankroller and treasurer of the Hart campaign when he and Eli told me this story. So Eli goes to Miles, who's dolling out the money in small as possible amounts because they're broke, too, and says, I've got this great guy from Muskie's operation that can really help us out in L.A. And Miles said said, "No, I said I'm not going to enlarge the payroll. No way Jose, we're not going to do that." Well, "Jose" turned out to be appropriate, because a few days later Eli came back to Miles and said, "I've got a guy. I know

what you said the other day, but I got a guy now who can really do us great good in the, among the Hispanics in L.A., he'll really turn them out." And so Miles says, "Okay, I'll interview him." So Eli brings in this guy wearing a sombrero and a serape who spoke a little Spanish, and on Eli's say-so he got hired. It was Tony. They dressed him up. This Italian was dressed as a Mexican to get him into the McGovern campaign. That was probably the least obvious of the people who went over the side when the Muskie campaign cratered.

And another time, although I'm not trying so much to prove my loyalty so much by telling these stories, although I hope it does, as to tell you what the condition of the campaign was in those last hours. I was still down there in the campaign headquarters after the campaign had essentially been dissolved. I was still on the payroll because I was still getting paid by the Senate. I was probably the only person in that building getting paid. Most everybody else had left except some loyalists.

But I was told that there were some people, at least, who were writing their own memoirs of the campaign. And the people who were identified to me as doing that, were among people who I didn't think had made a contribution to the campaign in the first place, and were clearly these kind of first level mercenaries. I thought had no right to be writing about a campaign in which I considered we were all participant in having failed. I was there later than everybody else most of the time and I started going around looking in desks. I considered that we owned the desks, or the campaign did, and therefore we had a right to see what was in them. And I don't have to tell you, and I remember two of the people in question, that there were three who had outlines or considerable manuscripts already done, who or came to clean up one day and found they were gone.

And that was one the jobs I considered to protect the senator from having those quick analyses of what went wrong with the campaign that surely were not going to implicate the people who were writing them. Because everybody, you may remember, would have an interview with [R.W.] AJohnny" Apple or something on the way out, and blame everybody else for everything that happened.

Which actually gets back to the propinquity matter, because that blaming that went on the front page of the *New York Times* for campaign failures of the Muskie operation came to a head, as far as the senator was concerned, after the New Hampshire primary when everybody was blaming Bob Squire for his bad ads. And surely the ads were nothing to be proud of. I don't know whether Bob ever submitted them for an American Political Science Association award, but they were hardly the only reason that we lost that campaign – (well, the senator just rolled over in his grave) – that McGovern came as close as he did in New Hampshire. But if you had read *The Times*, everybody else was innocent: Jack English was innocent, and Mark Shields was innocent, and nobody had anything to do with it except Bob Squire who sank it personally. And I don't know whether Berl went to the Senator and said, "You've got to put a stop to this," or whatever, but the senator had a meeting. I don't remember whether you were there, you may have been off doing something else by then. This would have been, well, it would have been the week after New Hampshire.

DN: I was in New Hampshire around that time.

JM: Okay, well then that was why you weren't there. But it was all the other principals in the campaign. I had briefed the Senator. I told him what Berl thought he needed to say and what I thought he needed to say. And basically that was: "You're either in this campaign and you keep your mouth shut, except to the extent you say something to the press that advances the campaign. But if you want to badmouth somebody else in the campaign or any part of it, you leave first." That was to be the message, and he in his own way delivered it very clearly. Of course, delivering it and enforcing it is something else. Everybody was very humble and listened to him, and he was at his most overpowering best. I mean, I never experienced Lyndon Johnson firsthand, except to shake his hand once, and I remember being profoundly impressed by his towering over me. And the senator, as you know, even sitting down could be that way with people, and he was that way that day.

Then the Senator asked: "Does anybody have anything to add?" I had told him before, that I thought one of the basic problems in the campaign was that maybe to the extent there was any excuse for grousing out loud, it was that decisions were made downtown in one quarter that weren't understood by another quarter or at least they hadn't been explained to key people, so that they later ran from responsibility for them if they went bad. Conversely, of course, they claimed success when things worked. It's like Kennedy said, "Success has a thousand fathers. Failure's an orphan." In our campaign failure was an orphan, and always got attributed in the pages of the *New York Times* to the person who had sired that particular failure in the view of the informant. Anyway, when he says, "Anybody have anything to add?" Nobody did. So I said, "Well senator, I think one of the things that we can all do better about is our responsibility among ourselves. When a decision is being made in the campaign, the people that are affected by it and have to implement it need to understand it in advance and be able to ask questions about it and not just have to plow through it without understanding even what it's about." And he acknowledged that made sense, and nobody contradicted it. And so everybody got up and left and, but he asked George Mitchell, who by that time was deputy campaign manager, and Berl to stay behind.

Now the other pressing campaign issue was campaign finance disclosure. It was before the Campaign Finance Disclosure Act. You did not have to disclose your contributors publicly, and there was no limit on their contributions. And, I won't say who it was, but at least one, you know who it was, former National Republican Committee chairman had given Muskie at least ten thousand, and maybe had given it to him twice, under the express understanding that his authorship of that contribution would never be made known. And others like [Thomas J.] Watson from IBM had given money to Muskie who, given the well known retributive attitude of the Nixon White House, could not afford to have it known that he'd given a check for twenty-five grand to Senator Muskie. And Muskie knew that.

Well, McGovern, who didn't have anybody like that to give him money was showing all his twenty-five dollar contributors, and predisclosing before the act and claiming the mantle of campaign finance reform, was daring Muskie to disclose and accusing him of having something to hide. And it had come to a head, because the FEC law was not going to require retrospective accounting, only going forward. And here McGovern was really making points on Muskie. And The Wisconsin primary, that great reform state, was in the offing, so it was a concern.

Well I was not among those – Berl and George being the only one – that Muskie held back to talk about this. I went out to my desk, and the phone rang in a minute and Joyce, the secretary, said, “The senator would like to see you.” And I thought, well, you know, what I just said in there had an effect. The senator knows I'd been associated with two other senators who had campaign finance problems. Tom Dodd and Joe Tydings each had , and he wants to get my view on what he needs to do. And I thought that what I'd said about how, you ought to ask everybody that needs to be involved that might have something to contribute, so there'd be less misunderstanding in the staff. That he was taking advantage of that in a way I'd not expected of him, given my relation with him. He was going to call in my expertise. Well he did, in a very strange way.

I went into his office, you remember he had two doors into his office from mine in the old basement suite. One at each end of the long office where I sat with Joyce and Gayle and my secretary. One was at the end by the outside door, the one he would tend to use most of the time. Well I went in, using the door which was furthest away from his desk when you used it to go into his office, and it was a long office. And I went in there, into his office, expecting to be called upon, and there were Berl and George earnestly huddled around him. And the senator looks up at me and he did call upon me. He said, “The sofa's broken.” And I looked at him, I guess incredulously. Not that it wasn't my job if the sofa was broken, but that really wasn't what I thought I was called in there for. And he said to me, “I don't know what's wrong, but the board under the sofa's broken. Can you call Bob Dunphey,” that was the sergeant at arms, “and see if he can get it fixed?” So here are Berl and George talking to him about a subject I thought I knew something about, and I'm down on the floor next to the sofa looking underneath. And I got up and I said, “Well, the board is broken. I'll take care of it.” And that was my involvement in that important decision in the campaign.

So I never did develop propinquity with the senator. I think there were a couple of reasons for that. One of them is I wasn't around long enough, and he wasn't in the office much of that time. We weren't involved in a day to day relationship, as you must have been when you started out, because he was gone a good deal. And the pressure of the environment, and the number of people dealing with them, many of whom, like you, had much greater seniority with him, didn't lend itself to that development. But I ought to also tell you that I recognize in retrospect, and in one particular illuminating episode I think about him, that I always had a kind of conflict with him as a father figure. I feared and despised my father when I was growing up, for what I think was very good reason. And for that reason I think, when I was in a situation where there was somebody who was a predominant father figure, and he was, I would tend to transfer not my hostility to my father, but rather my alienation from him into that relationship. And so I never attempted to get too close to him; it was always dangerous for me to be too close to a powerful man.

The exception to that was Joe Tydings who didn't have, he really didn't have that kind of power. He was a freshman senator, but he also just treated you like a brother in a way. He respected the people around him in a way that the senator didn't. Because as Joe used to say, “I'm not the brightest guy in the world, but I gather around me the brightest people I can find and then let them help me with my thinking.” And he treated you with that kind of respect. Well, I don't

whether anybody approached Senator Muskie's intellectual level or his capacity for absorbing incredible amounts of material and recapitulating it in fresh ways. But I never had the opportunity to find that kind of ground with him. So it may have been inevitable that I was not going to develop that propinquity.

But the way it came to a head, ironically, was at the end of the campaign. Everything had collapsed in the Pennsylvania and Ohio primaries.–I think Pennsylvania was the 23rd, Ohio was the next week, and he pulled out between the two. He pulled out the day after Pennsylvania because Ohio was a no-go by then. Clearly a no-go. The campaign disintegrated, I mean such as it was disintegrated. But, someone had resurrected a notion, that I thoroughly disagreed with, that there should be a guerilla effort to maintain the old guard of the party against McGovern at the convention, and Muskie should be the candidate that that movement would put forward. I thought it was hopeless. I thought the senator was discredited as a candidate for president by that time and couldn't be resurrected. And McGovern had picked up sufficient momentum that somebody might head him off, but it wasn't going to be the guy he'd beaten in several primaries.

And so I was very active, including with the senator in a rare interposition in my part in his thinking, on my part. I mean I would argue with him about his schedule and how he had to live with it and things like that, but I never argued policy with him, because I didn't think he was interested, frankly. But on this one I felt the party was at stake. And if McGovern was going to get it, that the graceful thing – it was early June and people were putting Muskie under pressure to give a speech somewhere where that was going to stake out new ground for that convention challenge of McGovern – I suggested that instead he endorse McGovern, and sew it up for McGovern, and that way he would be seen to be the statesman that he was.

But he couldn't do it. I mean, he didn't like McGovern, as you know, and by that time particularly because McGovern and his people had savaged him pretty bad, and he'd been defeated. And he was a proud man and he wasn't about to endorse McGovern at that time. So he basically told me I was barking up the wrong tree. He said it relatively politely, but it was clear he wasn't interested in hearing that any more. So he went out and gave a speech to stake the ground for a convention challenge.

I always think I was the only senior staff person who refused to go to Miami that year, and that was why. I had seen the senator humiliated. I knew he was going to be humiliated again. This time it was by McGovern haters, not Nixon haters, and I just didn't want to, I couldn't stand to see it and I wasn't going to be part of it. So, given the fact that the campaign was bankrupt, they didn't care who didn't go, and I didn't. But that was the reason I didn't go.

What had happened was that after the formal collapse of the campaign when he withdrew, he was under the influence of these people who wanted him to put himself forward as a spoiler against McGovern. I don't know whether Berl was one of them because Berl was extremely demoralized by then, and I think George may have even left to go back to Maine, I don't remember.

DN: George was still there.

JM: Was he?

DN: Yeah. I remember he called me from Miami.

JM: Yeah, you're right about that. There was a guy who was in Clifford's law firm, and I believe he used to work for Senator [Almer Stillwell AMike”] Monroney a little while before, and I don't remember his name but he was this kind of a middle senior Washington lawyer.

DN: Tom, uh, I can see him but I can't remember his name.

JM: Yeah. I don't think I ever met him, but, he was brought into the campaign basically taking over what, I mean, taking over what? I mean, it was like somebody taking over a rubble heap, but he displaced Berl as the campaign spokesman. And whatever remnant of the campaign was left, he was running it. I think I talked with the senator about it, but I can't remember whether I just thought I should talk to him about it, because I thought Berl was being humiliated in a way that wasn't useful or necessary. Berl was probably not the person to run that campaign, but he was loyal to Muskie, never disloyal to him at all. And to have him basically humiliated at the end of this by bringing another guy in to basically preside over a corpse of a campaign was just, to me, unforgivable. Of course, I operated from the notion that the campaign was a corpse that couldn't be revived. Muskie was operating from the notion that maybe there was a chance.

Later, in 1984, during the Hart campaign when we were flying to California for the California primary, which he did win, I was asked by the journalist, Elizabeth Drew, “Why is this campaign going on? Is there any rationale for its going on?” I think maybe reflecting back to that Muskie period of my experience, I said – we were at some God forsaken airport in Kansas on this plane that kept catching fire as it flew through the sky, and we're putting more oil and gas in it to go on to California – I said, “Well, I think campaigns go on until they're out of hope and out of money, and this one's out of money, but it isn't out of hope yet.” Well, that was the Muskie campaign at the time, but it should have been out of hope in my view. Hart had a chance still, but Muskie didn't.

So, hurricane Agnes struck in late June of that year, the worst hurricane I think we've experienced around here in my forty years in this area. Blew out the C&O Canal, flooded the Potomac badly in Washington and stuff. And on that particular day I went to lunch with somebody named Mary Jane Cecchi, who had been a protégé of Joe Tydings in his office. A brilliant young woman and lawyer who I brought in at the end, kind of towards the end of the campaign, to help me with what I found to be increasing responsibilities as the campaign fell apart. And Mary Jane and I went out to lunch.

And coming back there was, coming into the Senate office building after lunch, there was this fellow beating his kid. It was a tourist. And he was hitting the kid around the head and shoulders and then slammed him into the wall for some reason. And it happened to be in that bend in the main floor Senate entrance off First Street. Muskie's was the first office past that. And it called to mind the feelings I had about my father. And I took that guy by the shoulder, and he was pretty well built, but he was shorter than I was. I said, “If you touch, if you put one more hand on this kid, I'm going to have you arrested.” I said, “The cop is right around the corner at the

desk, so you leave your kid alone and get out of here." Well, he wanted to have a fight with me, but he figured I was an insider and that there was a cop around the corner so he left. I have no idea what happened to the kid later.

But that was my mood when I went back into the office. And we were over in Muskie's office, in the Muskie bunker over in the Capitol office later that afternoon, Dick Stewart and the senator and myself. And I don't know how it happened. It was in the late afternoon, the storm had passed, the sun was out, it was very humid. And the senator said something about Berl. Maybe it was just totally innocuous. And I unloaded on him about my feelings about his performance in the campaign and how, Berl deserved better, and the rest of the staff who, some of them did and some didn't deserve what they experienced from him during the campaign or after.

I said the rule – I told him this in another context once before, the only other time I ever spoke up to him really – I said, "The normal rules of performance are suspended in this operation. Normally you punish bad performance with a stick, you incentivize good performance with a carrot or a congratulations. In your operation, everything is shit. Nobody ever does anything well, and you never give anybody any thanks for anything, and you're always blaming them for everything." I said. "So no wonder you're dissatisfied with the outcome, you treat your people so badly." And I went on for half an hour or forty minutes on this theme. And when I was done, Dick Stewart, who had shared with me many of the same frustrations I had just vented, said, very quietly, "Senator, I just want you to know that not all the staff agrees with what John just said."

And the senator just sat there quietly. And I thought, you know, maybe he's telling me I'm fired. I expected him to fight back as you know he could. Even uncornered the senator could be ferocious, and concerned he could approach violence. We'd had a lot of those. But by the end of my soliloquy, I had run out of gas. I had said everything that I had ever thought to say in a year and a half, and I said it, I think, articulately. There used to be a Danny Thomas routine, remember, where he'd come out and say, "If only I'd said…" It was after an argument with his wife or his boss. I thought of that and new I'd said it all.

When I wound down, I just stopped. The Senator looked at me and he said, "John, I know that the power's been out at your house and that you wanted to get home to your wife and family early today. I think probably it's a good idea if you did." And he didn't say it like, "get out of here". He really meant it with sincerity. Well, it was a way to get out of there so I took it, and I said, "Senator, thank you, I will," and I did. But before I did, I went over to his office. I happened to pass through his office before I got to mine, and I picked up the phone and called Berl and explained it and said, "You think I'm fired?" And he said, "No, I don't think Ed is that way."

Well, I got home about six o'clock and the water was out. I lived in a high point in Fairfax County, and the power had killed the water pumps, and the power had come back on, but we were without water. The senator never called me at home, had never in the seven, eight years I worked for him, that first year and a half or the following six, but he called me that night about six-thirty. I was just going out to the theater with my wife. We had bottled water. And he said, "John," he said, and I thought he was going to fire me, he said, "I know you and your wife and your family are without water and maybe power. You know, I'm alone over here this weekend,"

his wife was in Maine or something. And he said, "So if you folks would like to come over and share the house, why don't you." And I told him that I thought the power was coming back on and so we'd get the water, but I was really very grateful. And I was, I was profoundly moved. I mean, what a gesture after I basically told him all that I had told him.

And I always thought that was an evidence of something I saw many times in his case, sometimes to his great harm, of trying to figure out what was fair in a situation and of a loyalty to staff which was extraordinary given the violence that he could express toward the same staff from time to time. Years later when I was Budget Committee staff director, he and I had this combative relationship that maybe dated from that day in June, but I don't think so.

When I went back to the budget committee, what happened was the law firm I went to was not a good place for me to be, and we both quickly concluded that. It was a high level class law firm, by high level I mean they got cases like depreciating the rail bed of the Burlington Northern. It was constructed before the income tax was enacted in 1913 when we didn't have anything to depreciate against. And boy, did that excite those guys in that law firm and it paid very well. But boy, did it not excite me. So that wasn't working out. And when, by mutual decision I was leaving that law firm in the summer of 1974, two years after I'd left Senator Muskie, there was no place to go. I was a little too old to go to another law firm; I was about thirty-five. Big law firms don't hire people at that age. It causes too many problems; they need too much money compared to the people who have been laboring in the vineyard.

And Nixon was in the White House, so there was no administration jobs. The Democrats controlled the Congress, but it was a mid-year every congressional job was filled. And out of the blue Muskie becomes chairman of the budget committee. And, though there is another story that goes with this, he decided to make Doug the staff director and me the counsel. And so we began a collaboration, Doug and I with the senator, that I think helped the senator achieve what he did at the budget committee.

But I got the job, within the budget committee staff, of being the designated fighter. You know how the senator, had a tendency to espouse a proposition with vehemence because he was, he either believed it or he was testing it. I found it exhilarating but at the same time intimidating and distressing, And he would try to get you to take the opposite position, either because he knew it was your position or because you'd defend it. And if he became convinced that you were right in the course of that fairly violent dialogue, he would try to switch positions with you and make you adopt his original position. And it took me a while before I caught on to that, but we had some horrendous loud arguments. I mean, you could hear him through the walls. Because what would happen is, we would take some position into the senator that was required by the budget ties, maybe the deficit (*taping interrupted*).

Well anyway, I was talking about this condition that existed within the budget committee staff that became a ritual with Senator Muskie, where I'd become the designated fighter, knowing that one of these arguments was going to ensue on any controversial point, or any point that he was going to have to put forward as his own that he wanted to validate in debate. The budget Committee by the way was a brand new concept that existed, as you know, only in about twenty-five pages of statute. It had never existed before. And it changed Senate rules and created a

Congressional Budget Office, which was a substantial part of the length of the statute, and all kinds of other rules changes, and a budget process which Congress had never had, and was largely unwritten. I mean it was written down but we had to give it life. And so the first chairman was critical to its outcome.

And whether in this conversation or a subsequent one, I want to talk about his relationship with Senator Belmon, and something that you saw in many other contexts I'm sure: that is the senator's reaching out to the other side of the aisle to put together a true bipartisan coalition for what he did. I learned a great deal from that, and there's a great deal to be learned from it in general. But he was such a master at it that it's part of his story, I think.

Anyway, we had to do a lot of things that other committees didn't want us to do. We were supposed to tell the appropriations committee how much they could spend. And to some extent we influenced the authorizing committees from authorizing too much, though we never tried legally to limit them as the Republicans tried to later when they got control of the budget committees, even though we weren't supposed to. And they didn't have the power to do it when they did it. But a lot of things we would take to the senator were brand new territory for him or anybody else, and so he was inclined to test them.

And one of the things that would make him unhappy is whenever we brought him a budget estimate which seemed to increase the deficit, which laughably in those days was about, I don't know, Gerry Ford's first deficit we all went crazy over it, I think it was estimated to be three [billion dollars]. And then when it doubled to six billion dollars it was an occasion for the president going on television announcing his WIN program, remember, Whip Inflation Now. And so the senator, given the way he tested ideas and the fact that almost all the ideas we brought were either uncomfortable – for example, when, because he was Budget Committee chair, he was going to have to defend a budget increase that didn't come out of any of his committees or because economic circumstances had changed and, say, unemployment costs had gone up so the amounts we'd budgeted were inadequate and we had to raise them, God, did he hate that because that was an uncontrollable circumstance. He didn't have anything to do with that, but he had to defend it. And the Republicans would always pound on him for that, even though it was, in those days tiny dollars compared to what we now think of in deficit terms.

And the budget committee had been created to control deficits, by the way. They didn't create them. I mean the budget deficit had emerged about 1973 under Nixon and people were terrified about eleven billion dollars worth of deficit, I think, in '73, and so the process was a result. So it was a different world. But it was a different world once the budget committee was created for everybody, because of the new procedures and the implicit power of the budget committee, which never would have been realized if Senator Muskie had not been willing to push the implicit authority of that twenty-five page statute and assumed the mantle that he did.

That Senator Ribicoff, of whom Muskie was no fan, once said something very important about him in a context that was critical when we were trying to pass the first budget reconciliation bill that would have forced a new budget procedure created under the Budget Act which could force, by one resolution of the Senate put forward by the budget committee, other committees to go back and change enactments they'd already made to reduce them by specific amounts. Now it's

viewed as *de rigeur*, Congress does it every year, but in those days it had never been done. The budget process was five years old, and everybody thought that was a dead letter, and here we were proposing to do it.

And all of the Senate bulls, like Russell Long, the committee chairs who were going to get gored by this had Senator Byrd, the majority leader, call a meeting of the chairmen and Muskie at lunch, basically to tell Muskie he couldn't do it. Now I don't know whether that was Byrd's position, but that was the position of most of the committee chairs. And Ribicoff, in that lunch, I wasn't there but Charlie Ferris or somebody who was there afterward told me that Ribicoff, this was in 1979, Ribicoff said to the assembled senators after they'd been doing their grousing, Muskie, I don't think, had had to speak yet, Ribicoff said, "I think we all need to understand that Ed has assumed that very rare condition in politics which I would call a secondary identity, where, when he gets up and pronounces on the budget as budget committee chairman, people believe what he says, and believe we should do what he says we should do. And he is viewed with an integrity that transcends his chairmanship or his senatorship, because he has this secondary identity as Mr. Fiscal Integrity." He said, "I think we'll tamper with that at our own, we'll take that on at our own risk." And that effectively ended the argument, and so the business went forward.

Senator Muskie had gotten to that place by virtue of a number of fairly daring maneuvers which, contrary to Bernie Asbell's book, he didn't think up. Somebody else thought them up, but he tested them, violently at times. And so the way this ritual that would go on was that we'd go into his office with whatever it was, for example, a briefing book that buried in its six hundred pages of sloppily put together material that we just slammed in a book on the theory that thicker is better, even though it didn't have an adequate analysis or scheme or anything else. And he would take that book home; this was the constant ritual, whenever we did a budget resolution. We did two a year, one to set the budget and the other one to reconcile to subsequent events, either reduce it or accept the changes. He'd take that big fat briefing book home and he'd come back the next day and we'd go into his office.

And I remember one case in particular when he was in that newer office in the Capitol, which looked down over the Mall and the monument, so beautiful, and the sun was streaming in. And he had this big fat book under his chair, and he was sitting with his back to the sun light when we went in. And this was typical of how it would go. None of us would have read the six hundred and twenty-five pages. We would have read our piece or slammed it in there, but, you know, with thirteen different categories feeding stuff into that book, thirteen different power centers within the budget committee staff who put it together so fast that no one went over it and tried to make sense of it all, in a grand scheme.

So first we'd go in and sit down. Arnie Picker, who was the budget committee economist who Muskie liked a lot, Sid Brown who was the controller and a wonderful person, and Muskie as well as everybody else in the Senate respected Sid as the Encyclopedia, unquestionable on any budget number. Sid was absolutely objective and was absolutely right, and he was encyclopedic. And Doug, the kind of political guy, and me, or later it was me and another cast of characters when Doug had moved on. But this time it was Doug. And everybody would sit there, as they always did when these meetings started, in dead silence, waiting for the senator to say

something.

Now we knew after the first couple of times exactly what was going to happen. But there would be a long silence, as he was capable of maintaining, and then out of his mouth would erupt that very peculiar scatological term of his own, “Shitagoddamn!” And he'd look and he'd pick up that big fat book, maybe six or eight inches thick, and he'd raise it to about his knee level and then he'd let go it and it would slam to the floor. And he'd say, “Do you people really expect me to have read this overnight?” And there would be dead silence again, where someone would be waiting for somebody to say something. And I would usually, I was the designated guy, I mean just by habit because I was used to dealing with Muskie in a way these other guys weren't from my prior experience with him, so I wasn't as afraid of him as they were. I should have been, but I wasn't.

And so I would say something like, “Well, senator, basically, here's what it says.” “You don't think I know what it says?” he’d explode? “In fact, how do you explain this?” and he'd pull out some number out of his head that was on page 535 of the book which he'd studied and read meticulously and compared it to something in the front of the book. He always went in looking for contradictions; it was one of the ways he thought. And it was a good way to, he taught me that. I've done that ever since. What's wrong with this picture? And that was just one of the ways he did it. Well, we'd be off to the races. Whatever the issue was that I would try to, or I was trying to put in context that we might have written down if we'd taken the time or had the time to do it, and so he wouldn't have had to plow through the whole book except to check things, that would be his cue to test the proposition I was putting forward and see whether he could defeat me, partly for fun, but partly to get to the, what the facts of the matter or the strategy ought to be.

And we would go around and around the bush in increasing volume, maybe for five or seven minutes, and then I would know one of two things. Either he would have punctured my argument which when it happened, happened relatively early and we'd stop. I'd say, “Senator, you're right, let's try something else.” And then we might have a fight about that. Or, because it had gone on as long as it did and I didn't feel he'd punctured my argument and he hadn't pounded me into the ground, I knew what was happening. He thought there was something to the argument. Maybe not as I proposed it, but there was something there and he wanted to get at it. And so he would keep arguing with me, each point incrementally trying to turn the compass so that I was taking his original position and he was winding up in the position that he felt comfortable, that was closer to my position than his original one. But that way I'd be the loser in the argument. And that happened every single time. And it would go on, and it was always on whatever the central issue or issues of the matter were, and he and I would have this debate on behalf of everybody else in the room. They wouldn't say a word except once in a while if they'd interject something timidly. Or I might stop and ask one of them to help me out.

And so after a long time, years of this, five years, the senator called me over one day, Doug was gone, I was staff director. And I was much closer to the Senator then than I'd ever been in the sense that, you know, war breeds colleagueship in a certain sense. I mean, we'd thrown everything in the world at one another by then, except personal stuff and I never, except for that one time, I'd never talked to him about any personal matters, certainly never about a family

matter. And he never was unfair in bringing in extraneous matters into our debate.

He could be extremely unfair at debate, extremely intellectually dishonest as he moved through this test where he'd throw out ideas and challenge you. And ultimately intellectually dishonest in my view when he'd try to steal your idea and claim it as his own. But on the other hand, I don't mean by that anything but that that was his technique and that was the outcome. He had too much pride to admit maybe he was wrong and he was going to take your idea. But he, in fact, had more intellectual rigor and greater intellectual honor . . . .

End of Side B, Tape One
Side A, Tape Two

DN: This is the second tape of the interview with John McEvoy on the 1st of May, 2002. John is talking about Senator Muskie's approach to issues and positions in the Senate budget committee.

JM: I was talking about this time he called me over in the last year of our relationship, before he went to the State Department. But I want to advert to one other circumstance where we had a very brief but violent debate where this process was foreshortened. I don't remember now what the issue was. It was a tactical issue, but an important one in the middle of a mark up of a budget resolution, and it had to do with cutting the Gordian knot that he had to get through in order to collect the Republicans on the committee he wanted. He couldn't get some of them, like Senator Hatch was just hopeless and Senator McClure, but he could always pick up, say, five of the seven Republicans when we hit the right note. We had to find that note. And he and I were having an argument in his office about what that note was. And we didn't have time to finish it in our usual fashion, which might take half an hour and I'd wind up dripping with sweat under my arms, and need to go out and take a walk for a while. When we had to stop because it was time to go upstairs to the committee meeting and I had no idea what the outcome of that one was.

And so we went upstairs, and he sat down. And then, in an unaccustomed style for him, he had a quorum but he usually would kind of beat around the bush a little bit to make sure he was comfortable with the terrain and that nobody was hiding in the bushes there before he said whatever he said. But right out of the box, he announces his solution to this problem, which was exactly what I had been arguing for and he'd been arguing against down stairs. And you know, he never breathed a word about that. He knew I knew, and I knew that he knew I knew, but it was just part of our deal, that's the way it was.

This particular day, though, he called me over, and it was May, I believe, of the year before he became Secretary of State. And he said, "John," – the room was dark and something else must have been going on in his life. His family was such a total preoccupation in his life. And I think his family difficulties and relationships I think impaired his capacity to be as much to achieve as much as he might have because it took a lot of his energy and a lot of his time. But having said that, I don't know how anybody could achieve more.

I mean, I spent some time up there, as you did, with the giants of the Senate of the modern era.

It was after Johnson, but the other great bulls like Harry Byrd, well Harry Byrd was gone then, too, but Allen [J.] Ellender and Carl [Hayden] from Arizona, chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and Pat MacNamara and Bob Kerr and Paul Douglass, they were still around. And Muskie was head and shoulders above all of those guys with the possible exception of Richard Russell, in terms of his acumen and his being a man of the Senate. But I got to believe that both because civil rights h was crippling Russell and in legislative terms generally, Muskie outdistanced Russell by a long shot.

Lyndon Johnson, back in 1964, once gave a speech for [John] Bennett Johnston when he was running as lieutenant governor for governor of Louisiana before he became a senator. It was after the Civil Rights Bill had been passed, I think it was '64 but it might have been after the Voting Rights Bill in '66, I think it was. I mean the Voting Rights Bill was '65, and I think this campaign was in '66. And Johnson said in that speech, because Bennett Johnston was good on race, (I mean it was not your typical yahoo southern racist race baiter) that the Civil Rights Bill had been an emancipation for black people, but it was an even greater emancipation for white politicians. That he knew of one, he was thinking of one particular senator who was one of the greatest senators of all time, but he was crucified on the cross of, Johnson said this in this speech. he said, “He was crucified on the cross of nigger politics.” And there were so many of the southerners who were great, but never as great as they could be because they, in fact, had to perpetuate such evil. Well, that's an aside, but I think it colored the Senate of those days because, you know, the last Civil Rights Act wasn't passed until '68.

So Muskie is sitting in his office, he's staring out the window this May day, as I sat down. I didn't know what it was about, we didn't have any pending business. And I'd only see him two or three times a week normally. If there was a bill up that we all were concerned about I'd see him a couple of times, or certainly if we had a budget resolution I'd see him a number of times, and if we had a mark up I'd see him every day, but I couldn't think of why I was there. A long moment passed, as it usually did, and I started to gird myself for whatever was going to come, and he said, “John,” he said, “I know that you think that your appointed role here is to fight with me.” And he said, “I respect that, but I'm tired of it.” He said, “I'm just tired of fighting with everybody. I don't want to fight any more.” And he said, “So I don't want to fight with you anymore either, and I don't want you to fight with me.” And I said, “Well senator, I can understand what you're saying,” I said. “It's never been comfortable for me either,” I said. “But you are the boss and I don't know whether, in our relationship, it's possible for us to stop fighting just because of the way we are,” I said. “But you are the boss and if you think I should resign and you want me to, then I will.” He said, “No, I don't want that,” he said, AI just want to stop fighting.”

Well I left, chastened and thoughtful about what he'd said and, well I was…I mean, whatever I say in this tape, I was in greater awe of Senator Muskie than any other man I've ever met. And my respect for him and his integrity and his achievement is greater than any man I ever met. I had the good fortune of spending seventeen years working for politicians and I saw a lot of them, so that's a mouthful for me, but it's my judgment anyway. And I don't want anything I say about this tape by way of anecdote, of funny things, or extraneous things about him to suggest otherwise or to detract from that reality, to rather just pencil in a few touches on the picture.

So I actually thought maybe I should quit anyway, because he was so loyal to people that he wouldn't fire me, at least without giving that a test. And a week passed and I didn't see him again, and had to see him about some issue and I walked into his office. And he had gotten the usual preliminary memo from me to think about and he'd read it, and he exploded, and it was off to the races. It was as if that conversation had never happened. And you know, for the next year, to the day that I left, things never changed. Maybe there were fewer fights, maybe there were a few times when we were on the verge and knew that if either of us threw a match everything was going to go up in flames, but it never happened.

Now, I don't know, Don, what your relationship with him was or what Leon's was, because I obviously never had the benefit of a meeting when you were there. And I was rarely at a meeting when Leon was there. I left Leon alone. But I had the impression that my relationship with him was a little bit unique. I mean it was his way of testing ideas and it happened to fit my mode, because I was homicidal with regard to my father. So if Muskie wanted to give me a fight, I'd give him a fight, too.

DN: I think your experience with him was much closer to Leon's. And partially it's personality, Leon enjoyed the combat, if you will.

JM: I didn't really enjoy it, but I was certainly used to it. And I didn't think it was my job, as he put it to me, to be the fighter, although I probably implied that. I knew that the rest of the staff left it to me. But I just knew that was the way it was going to happen. I just knew that was the way he was going to test those ideas, and I guess I knew that from the first day when he said, “Where's my blue suit?” I mean, it didn't make any difference where his blue suit was. As a matter of fact Joyce [Hallock], being the person she was, she ran to the laundry, wherever it was, somewhere off the Hill, got them to find the blue suit, got it pressed and brought it back. That was Gayle's idea I think, that was typical of Gayle's benevolent interventions in things. And so that's how, that was, I think I knew early it was going to be that way.

Actually, that day I said to Joyce, Hallock her name was. I said, “Joyce, you've worked for the senator how long?” And she said, “About three months.” And I said, “Well, is he always like this?” And she said, “Well, let me put it this way.” By the way, when she was in there before me on that blue suit day I could hear him yelling through the wall at her about his blue suit. And, actually, when I first went in it was with some sense of loyalty to her that I'd go in and intervene in whatever this was about. That's when I got it for the blue suit. Well, she went out and tried to do something about it. Anyway, he said to me, “Well let me put it this way,” she said, “I came up from Oklahoma,” she was from Maine but she'd been in Oklahoma. And she said, “Somebody put me in touch with this job and the senator interviewed me and asked me if I cried easily. And I said, and I said, ‘senator what do you mean?’”“ He said, “Well I mean do you, are you easily moved to tears?” And she said, “Well, I think I've had a difficult life, Senator, to some extent and I cry but I, no, I don't think I'm overly given to tears.” And he said, “Well that's good, because I'm a man of enormous frustration, and there are only three places I can take that frustration out: one of them is my family, another is my colleagues in the Senate, and the third is on my staff.” And, he said, “Frankly the first two aren't available.” Now, I have no reason to believe Joyce made that up.

DN: It's an accurate description of his behavior pattern.

JM: It was extraordinary, extraordinary, because this man that could be so fair, so meticulously and charitably and lean over and just push the scales of justice toward making a judgment on behalf of an accused person or his staff, could also be so violent. And I guess maybe that's what made it acceptable, because you knew that at the end of the day he wasn't really going to pick up his chair and throw it at you or strangle you or fire you. It just came with the territory.

DN: There were really two, in my experience, two kinds of occasions where he either did or appeared to lose his temper. One was out of frustration, and usually that was visited on staff, and occasionally on his wife. And the second was deliberate and for effect, and that was usually in relation to his colleagues.

JM: It was an oratorical device.

DN: That's right.

JM: In fact, I remember one time poor old Senator Harry Byrd, Harry Byrd, Jr., the son of the great senator Byrd, who was chairman of the appropriations committee. Harry Junior had replaced his father in the Senate. His father had reformed Virginia politics and ran the Virginia machine for many years that's still the legacy of government in Virginia. It's honesty and efficiency, to the extent it still exists, is a function of Harry Byrd, Sr. The junior couldn't hold a candle to it. But this one time we were on the floor debating a budget resolution. The debate was winding up, it was late at night, we had an overwhelming number of votes because of the senator's usual patience and persistence in putting together a great bipartisan majority. But Senator Harry Byrd [Jr.] comes to the floor, and we're trying to get done, it was like eleven-thirty, Muskie wanted to go home and he'd been on the floor for three days defending the resolution, beating off every challenge. And Byrd said, "I'd just like to ask you a couple of questions, senator. One of them is, can you tell me what the federal funds deficit is in this budget?"

Well, in truth, federal funds is the portion of the budget that doesn't include trust funds and is the part which, because you didn't include the trust fund, really reflects the deficit. But trust funds generally pay for themselves and produce a surplus. So when, as Johnson did in 1968, you put Social Security, the big trust fund, in with the rest of the budget, unify the budget, you can cover up a lot of excesses of the daily spending you do, which is the federal funds portion of the budget. And the federal funds deficit is the difference between that and the tax revenues you're taking in that don't relate to the trust funds. And that deficit number was always bigger than the unified deficit shows because the trust funds always ran a surplus. Frankly, none of us had ever heard of the federal funds concept, because this was 1978 and Johnson had done away with it, for practical purposes, in 1968.

So, I was sitting next to Muskie on the floor, and he looks over at me because he obviously didn't know what Byrd was talking about. And I turned around and looked at Sid Brown, who was the budget guru who always had the answer, and Sid looks at his shoes. And I looked at Arnie

Picker or whoever was the economist in desperation now, because if Sid didn't know I knew he would know, and he looked down at his shoes. So I said, "Senator, frankly I don't think we know what the federal funds deficit is." And instead of taking time to beat me up right then for not having the answer to the question, he beat Harry Byrd up instead for asking the question. And the poor man, the poor, I mean Byrd just wilted under that fire. "What, how could you ask this question, I mean, what's an issue like in the midst of all the rest of this?" Muskie destroyed him totally on the point without ever even knowing what the question was about – truth.

DN: Do you know whether he ever apologized to him?

JM: To my knowledge he never apologized to anybody. I'm sure he must have from time to time, but I don't think on the tactical ones. I think the oratorical ones that you were talking about, where he lost it with his colleagues, was usually for a purpose, I thought. But I never saw him apologize.

But let me go back, Don, before we're done here today, something that I might forget to put in the same context otherwise. I mentioned earlier my belief that the senator wasn't a good candidate in 1971-72. Obviously he was a great candidate in Maine; he could have been a senator as long as he wanted to be. I don't know whether he ever, after he lost the mayor of Waterville race, I don't know whether he ever lost a race in his home state. But I thought that he didn't know how to run in the rest of the country. While he was a creature of the Senate and certainly knew Maine, and he knew his way around them both, I had the feeling when I worked for him in '71 and '72, and I haven't had a reason to revisit the judgment, haven't had reason to and I've thought about it, that that was like the extent of his experience. And except for the brief exposure in '68 when he ran as Humphrey's vice president in national politics, he didn't know the players and he certainly didn't know the moves, because he'd never been required to be in the national game.

And so he was very much subject, when you'd go to talk about Illinois, having somebody else tell him who was important and how you did it. And frankly, I don't believe we had people in the campaign who were competent in many cases, to do that. I mean, they may have been competent in a number of cases, but there were a number where they weren't. And so mistakes were made, and he didn't have a basis to second guess it, and I think that was enormously frustrating to him and it left him uncertain with regard to a lot of things.

On the other hand, on matters that I thought he should have had, if he was going to be a winning candidate, better ground – things like the day that Nixon recognized China and sent George Bush over as a special envoy, he didn't. I mean, I don't think we formally recognized China, but we opened a public relationship with them. And of course the press was clamoring, this was August I believe, or July of 1971, the press was clamoring for Muskie's position. And Tony Lake downtown, had drafted something up and sent it up and Muskie looked at it, and it really wasn't much. There wasn't much to say, I mean, unless it was, "Well done", you know. Or you could do a McCarthy and go to the right, but that wasn't Muskie's style, certainly.

So the hours were passing and I in to the senator and I, "Senator, you're going to miss the press cycle on this, you're not going to have any response to what the president's done even though

people are demanding it." And he basically said, I don't remember his exact words, "Why should I have a position on what Nixon did? I don't have to issue a press release." Well the truth is, he had to say something. And you couldn't say, "I don't have to", because he did have to, and I think that hurt him, too. But I want to tell you this other story, oh, and if we have time, how much time have we got here?

DN: About ten minutes.

JM: All right, we have time for two quick stories. One that relates to his fairness, and the other one that relates to what I'm talking about now. Years later, in what has got to be the most bizarre incident of my entire life in this city, well one of the most bizarre, I'll tell you about the time I was asked to be a spy when I was working for him and what we did about that, on our next tape.

Years after this episode, when he was called upon for the last time to answer a state of the union message, and it probably was Gerry Ford's last one, he had to have a speech to do it. And the long and the short of it is that a number of us had been drafted into writing a draft, including me. (There's another story that goes with that you need to prompt me on next time about how I once wrote a Vietnam speech for Muskie, because it says a world about our relationship.) And Dick Goodwin had been brought down from Maine, the author of the '70 election eve speech, to write this one because if it made Muskie a candidate in '70 maybe it could make resurrect him in '76 or whatever year it was.

Well, it was an abomination, it was six pages that started out, "I speak for the restoration of democracy." And it began with the Federalist Papers, but it ended nowhere after six pages, because Goodwin hadn't gotten the speech done. And so what Muskie had done during the day – and part of the longer story – was to graft everybody else's draft, including one I'd done, on to those six pages. So now we had a speech with two economic sections, two foreign policy sections, and this absolutely incoherent beginning. So I had tried to stay away from it altogether, because I knew what mish-mash speech processes could be with him. And I get a call from his secretary to go over, it was like seven o'clock at night, the speech is to be at nine o'clock, it's being put on the teleprompter, or about to be put on the teleprompter, it has to leave his hands, but he'd just gotten this whole pastiche he'd had glued it together during the afternoon. There's a story that goes with that, but somebody glued it together.

So Charlie Ferris is sitting there, and Pat Cadell. I had never met Pat. I knew Charlie well. And Muskie hands me this crap, I already knew what was in it, but he hands it to me and he says, "What do you think of this?" Now, he had just stepped out of the bathroom and he was in shorts and he's putting on his pants while he's saying this because we're that close to the event, and I knew it had to go to the teleprompter.

And I'm looking at it, and I said, , "Senator . . . ."Oh, and while I'm looking at it Charlie's walking around with a copy with in his hand, slamming it against his hand, and he says, "Ed, this is exactly what you ought to be saying. This is what we need." And Cadell was saying, "Senator, I've done public opinion polls all over the country, this is exactly what the American people want." And they were speaking about Goodwin's speech that began, "I speak for the

restoration of democracy . . . . " Imagine having to restore Gerry Ford's democracy. And Goodwin said Goodwin wasn't in the room. Goodwin is still downstairs writing the speech. But Cadell says " Ed, It's exactly what the American people want to hear."

And I looked up at him, and this is the time I think the only one time I know I disserved the Senator, because I thought it was shit. And I said, "Senator, I don't think I can argue with Charlie and Pat about what the American people want to hear, but I can tell you I'd feel better about what they want to hear if I knew what this said." And I should have said right then, "It's a mistake, drop this first six pages and go on with the rest if you must" and, as he would have to. And Cadell looks at me and he says, "Senator, I can just tell you that is exactly what the American people want to hear." And Charlie seconded it. And I was intimidated and I didn't insist. But I think Muskie was actually looking for me to say it's a piece of crap, because he didn't get it either.

So that night, two hours later, he goes on national television. And one of the cameras in Byrd's office from they were broadcasting it had broken down. So they happened to have one camera focused down this long corridor. And he's sitting in a chair with his legs spread apart, so it really looks like a bowling alley down to his scrotum. I mean, it was really a most awful thing. And he starts, "I speak for the restoration of democracy," and he goes into the first lines. And Bernie Hildebrand, no, that wasn't his name, what's the guy, the big guy from Texas, big insurance guy who was a big financier of Muskie, later owned the Rigg's Bank and owned the *Washington Times*, Joe Albritton, is standing next to me in Muskie's office. We're having a reception to celebrate this great revival. And he says, "John, did you have anything to do with that?" I said, "Well Joe, frankly, a little bit." He said, "It's really crap." And it was indeed.

The other story, though, if we have time for it, is this. It goes back to my first days with Senator Muskie and deals with his fairness and how he dealt with people when they were in great stress. The Vietnam veteran's march on Washington happened the spring that I went to work for the senator. John Kerry was one of its leaders, but there was a Maine contingent and there was a fellow from Maine, you may recall, I can't remember his name, I mean you would have remembered this incident.

DN: Brownie Carson?

JM: I don't know, he was a red haired guy and he really -

DN: Yeah, Brownie Carson.

JM: Probably needed to be institutionalized at the time, I mean he was really looking, you talk about a guy in need of a father figure. So they decided they were going to pick on Muskie. They'd sat in on John Tower the night before, maybe they'd sat in on Goldwater if he was still around, I don't know, but I know they did Tower, and had to be arrested and removed. Tonight this guy, who was one of the ones from the night before, and thirteen others who were all from Maine, show up in Muskie's office about four o'clock. They want to see him. Well, the campaign had made a decision they weren't going to see him. So it was my job to keep them from seeing him.

So I went out and I explained the senator's position and so on, and that wasn't enough, they wanted to see their senator. Now, I had told them that Muskie was gone, which was technically true because he was leaving, he was going over to a reception for Father Hesberg over on the House side. And he had no time to see these guys. So I went back in, though, I excused myself from seeing them, I said I had to do something, and I went in and I told the senator. I said, 'I think these guys are going to be very hard to get rid of.." He said, "Well do the best you can," and he left out the other door so they wouldn't see him.

So I went back out and did my best. And after an hour, an hour and a half, they decided that if the senator wasn't there that they would wait for him overnight and see him when he came in the morning. And now it was like six o'clock. And I tried to explain to them that I had staff, we needed security in the office, had to lock it for the night, had staff that had families, needed to go home, and wouldn't they accommodate us? I'll arrange for them, I decided, to see the senator tomorrow if they could just agree, or I'd do what I could, I didn't commit. But they didn't believe me, not without reason. But they weren't going to leave either.

And finally, when I made this appeal based on family they had a little powwow themselves. And I had an open transom, this was when he was still up on the second floor, so I could hear what they were powwowing about. The majority of them wanted to accede to what they seemed to think was reasonable. The red headed guy was the problem. He said, "I'm going to stay if nobody else does." So five or six decided they'd stay with him, which led the thirteen into saying they were going to stay.

So I went back out, and they said they were staying. I said, "Well I can't let you stay." Because I didn't want – the Tower sit-in had gotten a huge headline, and now they sit-in on one of their friends and draw attention to the fact they don't like his position, and he won't see them. So I had called a guy named Dan Blackburn, who was lieutenant of the Capitol Hill police. I'd known him for a very long time and he was on duty in the Senate wing that night. And I said, "I got this problem Dan, but I'll tell you, and I may need to ask you to help me with it, but it's got to be handled gently. You got to make this as easy as possible."

So I finally said to these guys about six-thirty, I said, "Guys, please, there's nothing you're going to achieve here except make everybody else stay overnight. The senator won't be back until tomorrow, I'll talk to him about this first thing." I said, "Couldn't you just do yourselves and me a favor, and the staff, and leave?" "No, we'll stay here all night." So I said, "Okay, well I tell you, I'm going to have to ask the police to escort you out." "That's all right. If that's what you think you have to do, go do it." So I went in and I called Blackburn and I said, "I got these people want to stay all night. I'd like you to come in and tell them they have to leave, and help them out if you need to."

Next thing I know, it's like jackboots coming down the hall. Blackburn and about eight troopers coming down the hall, pound-pound-pound, come in the door, mishandled the situation entirely. Maybe I had set it up, maybe it was inevitable, but all of a sudden nobody wants to leave and they wind up carrying the red headed guy out and a couple of others. They carried them out, but as soon as they started carrying them out the rest got up and walked, but the red haired guy

resisted and was arrested. So now I have, I've been working for Muskie for sixty days, I have a constituent of his, a Vietnam War veteran, and I have him arrested for trying to see him.

So , I called Berl, talked to Berl about this thing and he told me where Muskie was, so I went over. Maybe I knew where Muskie was from his schedule. Anyway, I ran over to the House side, reception was winding down. Muskie was in good spirits. And I said, "Senator, I think I need to talk to you, I need to talk to you for a minute." So we went and stepped aside and I told him the story. I told him I'd had one of his constituents arrested. And I thought for sure I was done, I was dead meat. And instead he said, "Well, I'm sure you did what you thought was best. See if you can find the young man." There were people being arrested all over town for that kind of thing. "See if you can find the young man and get him out so he doesn't spend the night in jail, then we'll talk about tomorrow." That's all he said.

Well, the sonofabitch, I spent about the next five hours, not Muskie but this kid, I spent about the next five hours just trying to find him because they arrested so many. They didn't even know who they all were, but they were keeping records down at the federal courthouse. So I went down there, and finally they found out that they had him in the precinct over on the House side. Now it's about ten-thirty or eleven o'clock at night. So I went over to the precinct and I told them who I was and that I wanted to bail this guy out, what was the bail? It was twenty-five bucks. And so I reached in my pocket, came up with the twenty-five bucks, and they went back to get the guy out and he refused to come. He refused to be bailed out.

You know, that never made the papers, never made the *Post*, never made the Maine papers until many months later when he wrote the story himself for a green publication up there. And it maybe got picked up as a secondary matter in some of the other papers, but it never amounted to anything. So I guess maybe it came out all right, though, I never really have been able to figure out how I was going to deal with it otherwise without a bigger story. But the point of the story is, that at a time of maximum stress, when it made a huge difference, and here he has a staff guy that's brand new to him and maybe had made a colossal mistake, all he's willing to express is to bolster the staff guy and tell him you're sure he did his best, think of the young man and the political implications of being jailed overnight, and tell the staff guy to get him out of jail. I thought it was magnificent.

DN: Thank you, John, we'll continue.

JM: All right.

End of Interview