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Shepherd, Bob oral history interview

Andrea L'Hommedieu

Interview with Bob Shepherd by Marisa Burnham-Bestor

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee
Shepherd, Bob

Interviewer
L'Hommedieu, Andrea

Date
March 19, 1999

Place
Brunswick, Maine

ID Number
MOH 073

Biographical Note

Robert C. Shepherd was born in Newton, Massachusetts on February 23, 1935 to Anna and Thomas Shepherd. He graduated from the Newton Public Schools, and then went on to Bowdoin College. He graduated in 1957, and went to work for the Portland newspapers, covering local politics. He left to work for Roger Williams for two years doing public relations. He served as Senator Muskie's press secretary from 1964 to 1971, then decided to return to Maine where he worked for Ken Curtis' administration, and then began a career in real estate. At the time of interview, he was still involved in real estate in the Brunswick, Maine area. His political service includes twelve years on the Brunswick Town Council, some of those years serving as chairman.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: family history; Newton, Massachusetts; family influence on political beliefs; Bowdoin College in the 1950s; work for the Portland papers; work for Roger Williams; becoming Muskie's press secretary; Muskie's use of speeches; Washington people; Muskie's issues; his personal relationship with Ed Muskie; Muskie's campaigning; Muskie's Vietnam speeches; Muskie's relationship with Hubert Humphrey; letting the Vietnam protestor speak story; traveling in 1968; leaving Muskie's staff; Nixon's dirty tricks; his career after

returning to Maine; the evolution of Maine politics; his service on the Brunswick Town Council; his real estate career; Muskie's refusal to give a *Playboy* interview; Bill Clinton's problems; and Muskie's temper.

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Transcript

Marisa Burnham-Bestor: Could you state your full name and spell it?

Robert Shepherd: Yup. Robert, C, as in Choate, Shepherd, S-H-E-P-H-E-R-D.

MB: We're here in Brunswick with Robert Shepherd and Marisa Burnham-Bestor. It is March 19th, 1999. Where and when were you born and raised?

RS: I was born on February 23rd, 1935, Newton, Massachusetts, Newton-Wellesley Hospital.

MB: Were you raised in Newton as well?

RS: I lived there essentially until I was eighteen.

MB: And then where did you live?

RS: We moved to Bowdoin, to Brunswick, Maine and went to Bowdoin. And I've been involved with Maine ever since.

MB: What were your parents' names and occupations?

RS: My mother and father were Thomas, mother and father, were Anna and Thomas. She was a homemaker. He was a regional manager for Citgo in Boston.

MB: Did you have any brothers and sisters?

RS: Yup: older brother, older sister.

MB: What were their names?

RS: My sister's name is Jean Alice, and she's eleven years older than I. And my brother's name is Thomas, Jr., and he is nine years older.

MB: How were your parents and your family involved in the community?

RS: Well, that's a tough question. My mother died when I was seven so that, at a time in her life when she would have had the opportunity to really be involved, she, of course, died. She was very musical and loved the Doily Cart (*sounds like*) Players. And I remember her entertaining them when they came to Boston to do, to do Gilbert and Sullivan. And I think she was active enough in the Congregational Church in Newtonville, Massachusetts. My father really worked very hard. This was, you know, coming out of the Depression into the war years, and I think his primary focus was on making a living and raising his family.

MB: What was his . . .?

RS: He was active in the Masons; I remember that. But that sort of ended when my mother died.

MB: What was Masons?

RS: It was a Masonic, sort of a Masonic Lodge; many communities have them. I'm not sure I know what it is. It's sort of a quasi-religious, quasi-fraternal . . .

MB: It's one of the mens' groups?

RS: It's a mens' group, yeah. They have a womens' auxiliary, but it's primarily a mens' organization. I think it's still, I think there's one here in Brunswick, for instance. But it's very low-key here; I mean, there's very little written about it. It's not a high-profile organization today.

MB: What was the community of Newton like at that time, socially and ethnically?

RS: Well, I think Newton probably then wasn't much different than it is now. It's a wonderful suburban community. Very, it's an old suburban community and it's large. The population of Newton is substantially larger than Portland, Maine. But it is about ninety-nine percent

residential; has some wonderful, wonderful neighborhoods that were built a hundred years ago, a hundred and twenty years ago, so that the architecture is very interesting. There are a lot of big old clapboard and shingled houses, good schools, lots of community playgrounds; it's a great town to grow up in. And it's close to Boston. The subway, the street metro, whatever you call the system, goes right through Newton. So I remember taking a trolley into Kenmore Square and watching the Red Sox play when I was ten or eleven, twelve years old; it was, you know, it was, it took fifteen minutes to get in town, right into the city. I, it was really a magical place to grow up in. Bobby Doerr, played second base to the Red Sox, lived nearby. You know, we were really, I was really into baseball, and so there was a strong tie to Newton A number of the players lived there.

MB: Was the community particularly ethnically or politically or religious diverse?

RS: I think it was. I think a hundred years ago it would have been very WASPy. I think by the fifties, when I was growing up, forties and fifties, it was very diverse. Strong Italian, strong Jewish segments, and a mix of everybody else. You know, I, it was, I never, I had so many friends of different ethnic backgrounds that I was about as color and ethnic blind as probably anybody my age could be.

MB: Was your father or your mother before she died politically involved or politically active?

RS: No, no, no. My father, I think they were very Republican. My father later, when I was working for the senator, was proud of what I was doing, and he admired Senator Muskie, but I think he always wished he was a Republican. He never said that, and he was very supportive of me. But I always had the feeling that he probably would just as soon have been Republican. Not a matter of issues, just a matter of tradition.

MB: How did your family affect you as you grew up? I mean, your mother dying must have been a very . . .?

RS: Traumatic, very hard.

MB: Who took care of you?

RS: Well, my father, working as hard as he was, was really a very involved parent when he was home. And he remarried, sadly, soon after my mother died, and that was ten years of instability and conflict. But that first step-mother was a very caring person; I mean, she tried very hard with me. She was a, she had lim-, you know, psychological limitations, and, which my father discovered after he was married. But given her limitations, emotional limitations, she really tried very hard. I mean, I did not look abused; I was well fed and cared for. And she tried as hard as she could to be a full time mother.

MB: Do you feel that many of your father's or your mother's or your stepmother's beliefs impacted you as an adult?

RS: Oh, no question. My father's.

MB: In what way?

RS: I just, how his, how he viewed the world, how he viewed life. He's been a terrific role model. He was a very courageous in doing, in living a life of quiet desperation. I mean, he lost his, you know, his wife, the mother of his children when he was forty-two, after twenty years of marriage. And then he had ten years of a very difficult marriage and he had a career to build. He was not a particularly socially gregarious guy, very hard-working and very bright, but not very socially bright and sparkly. So he, he just, you know, plunged ahead. He just kept working hard, going to the office every day.

When my first stepmother became so ill, the costs were enormous. The, you know, the mental doctors, psychological professionals, were very expensive. My mother had been sick for five years before she died and he, it took him about twenty years to pay off her medical bills. This was in the time before health insurance. So he had an unhappy second marriage, a lot of extra financial stress because of that. He was still paying for my mother's sickness. And somehow he managed to get up every day, go to work, and smile. I mean, he was a very pleasant person, and he never seemed to lose his optimism. And he just plunged ahead; he just, you know, faced the, into the trenches every day. I have a very high regard for that, I mean, of, you know, making the best of a situation and going forward. That's a real lesson, that's a tremendous, in terms of how you view life and how you respond to it.

MB: Do you feel as though you're similar in that way?

RS: Thank God, I've never been tested the way he was, but I certainly hope I would be.

MB: What were some of the other influences that you had outside of your family while you were growing up? Clubs and activities that you might have done?

RS: I was busy in high school; I was a member of everything. Not particularly interested in studies. Loved baseball, knew everybody in a big school. Newton had two thousand students, I think probably when I was there, close to two thousand, and I knew virtually everybody in school.

MB: What were your interests at that time, as far as, I mean, as far as what you wanted to do with your life in high school?

RS: You're looking at a blank slate. If it had, the only thing that I would have jumped at would have been a big league baseball career. But for some reason, the Red Sox never called. And so, I think it was, it was in Bowdoin that I began to really focus on what I was going to do.

MB: How did you decide to go to Bowdoin?

RS: I'm not sure. Our next door neighbor had gone to Bowdoin, in Newton, and I liked him a lot. He was, he had been a camp counselor, summer camp counselor, and I respected him a great deal. And I may just have picked it up, you know, the interest, from him. But I remember

always having wanted to go to Bowdoin. Nobody in my family had ever gone to Bowdoin. They'd all gone to MIT; they were very smart. I tease them that I had the good looks and they had the smarts.

MB: When you say everyone in your family, do you mean your older brother and sister?

RS: My brother and my father and my grandfather. My sister went to Carnegie Mellon in Pittsburgh. I was something of a surprise; no math interests, no chemistry interest, no science interests.

MB: What did your siblings end up doing?

RS: My brother, who retired just three years ago, was head of buildings and grounds at MIT, interestingly enough. He'd been a consulting engineer with Jackson & Morland in Boston. He'd gone all over the world, really, doing stuff he had for them. And then about twenty-five, thirty years ago he had an opportunity to go to MIT as their buildings and grounds staff and he became head of it. And my sister married, never really used her training, I mean, education. She has a granddaughter now, she had a granddaughter, and she's mostly been a homemaker, in the old fashioned.

MB: Tell me a bit about your experiences at Bowdoin.

RS: I think in terms of Senator Muskie, the most interesting experience was an English class on 20th century literature by Herbert Ross Brown, who was a renown professor at that point. And I remember becoming very interested and excited by journalism while we were studying Hemingway, and that really got me started in the real world. I became, went on to become an English major, and I had read virtually no books at all growing up. I mean, I could have given you the statistics on batting averages, you know, and all the sports stuff until I'd put you to sleep, but in terms of reading a book, I didn't want to damage my eyes. Anyway, when I got to Bowdoin, I really got excited about reading and I became an English major and took journalism to heart. Got summer jobs at WGAN in Portland, and worked there for two or three summers. And then when I left, graduated from Bowdoin, I joined the Portland newspapers as a reporter and worked there for seven years, until I went to work really for, to, with Senator Muskie.

MB: What were some of your experiences as a newsman in Portland?

RS: I, my focus was twofold. I was a political municipal reporter, I covered Westbrook, interestingly enough. And it was there that I became interested I think in Democratic politics first. There was a mayor of Westbrook by the name of Frank Rocheleau . . .

MB: How do you spell that?

RS: Rocheleau, R-O-C-H-E-L-E-A-U, and, it was Francis Rocheleau. And he was a very bright, interesting guy, and I really was quite taken in by him. And he decided he was going to run for Congress and he asked me to be his campaign manager. So while I was writing, you know, days primarily with the Portland paper, at nights we set off to win the First District

Democratic nomination to run for the House. And it only lasted a couple of weeks because every place we went, we found that Ken Curtis had been there about three weeks before. It was really interesting, because later when I left Senator Muskie, I went to work for Ken Curtis and I grew to appreciate why people had been so taken by him early on, because he was really a sweet man. But anyway, Frank and I set off from, to, and it, as I, it lasted about two weeks. And he had announced he was going to run, and then two weeks later he announced he wasn't going to run. So, and I was relieved because I could see that he was a very uncomfortable candidate, once he got into it, and that made me uncomfortable, so, anyway, that's how it started.

MB: Who were some of the people that you knew in, while you were working as a newsman, other than you mentioned Frank? Who were some of the other political people that you were involved with as a newsperson?

RS: Oh, gee, I, God, it seems so long ago, I don't, I had met or, you know, peripherally been exposed to or covered at a distance virtually every politician in Maine at that point. But I had, I didn't, had not had an opportunity to get close to any of them. I really didn't know any of them at all.

MB: Had you covered Muskie at that point?

RS: Not really.

(*Tape turned off.*)

MB: We were talking about some of the people that you knew and some of the stories that you covered when you were working down in Portland.

RS: And I think I was not giving you much help because I don't have strong memories. I mean, I knew, knew of, covered occasionally virtually every politician, every public figure in Maine over a period of seven years. But I, there were no, I mean, of course I knew who Governor Muskie was at that point and I knew his reputation. And interestingly enough, he got an honorary degree from Bowdoin the year I graduated, in 1957.

MB: Were you familiar with his political career at all?

RS: Yeah, yeah, I was.

MB: What, you said you knew about him, what did you know about him?

RS: Well, just that he was governor, that he had broad bipartisan support (he clearly was a man of integrity and intelligence) that he had a lot of natural charm and appeal, and that he really represented Maine. He was the b-, he represented the finest qualities of Maine, those qualities we like to think of ourselves as possessing, you know, independence, right thinking, clear thinking, sensibility.

MB: Who were some of the other newsmen that you were working with?

RS: Oh, God, this is very hard because it was so many years ago. Well, there was Nick Panagakis (*sounds like*) was probably my best friend on the paper. There was an Elliot Porter who went on to become head of the DEP in Missouri, St. Louis. He worked for the *Post, St. Louis Post Dispatch* for a while, and then went into the public issue side. John K. Murphy was very active at that point. The managing editor, city editor, Ernie Chard was the managing editor, Bill Chapin was a city editor. Roland Worths was a sports editor. Gordon, there was a Gordon who I thought was terrific, and I can't remember his last name right now. He was head of the AP, but they shared offices with us. So, anyway.

MB: Was the newspaper that you were working for . . .?

RS: Dwight Sargent had been writing editorials for us; Ed Penley was active writing editorials. Well, Don Hanson became a political writer and editor for the paper, went on to write a book on Muskie after the '68 campaign.

MB: What did you think of some of these people that you were working with? You mentioned that Nick and you were very close.

RS: Yeah, I liked them all; they were very bright, interesting people. I think there was a, journalists in Maine at least, and I think in many cities, many states, during the thirties and forties and before were kind of a rowdy crowd, very colorful, drank a lot. Very often didn't have much in the way of training, professional training, except what they had learned on the job. Full of humor, roguish, not terribly dependable as humans. A lot of celebrity or potential celebrity status, you know, on a paper in a city and community. And by the fifties and sixties it had become much, certainly in Portland, much more responsible. These guys by and large were all college graduates; many of them had had a lot of training before they got to the Portland papers. I think a list of the colleges that these people had attended would be very impressive. You know, a lot of Harvard guys, a lot of Bowdoin guys, a lot of Bates people, I remember University of Maine people, very bright, focused group. Very, they took their work very seriously. They certainly carried a great sense of responsibility to the public.

MB: You mentioned that you worked on the campaign for a Democratic candidate. What were your political beliefs?

RS: Pretty nebulous at that point. Although I clearly was, my instincts were liberal. And my nuts and bolts knowledge dealt far more with municipal level than it did state or federal, because that's what I'd been writing about.

MB: Were you affiliated with either party?

RS: No, no. I just, politically, probably apolitical; instinctively, liberal.

MB: So were you registered to vote as an independent?

RS: No, I think I was registered to vote as a Democrat, actually, when I was at the paper.

MB: What caused you to end up leaving the newspaper and working for Roger Williams?

RS: I had sort of felt that I had gotten to the end of the line. That I, there, unless I was prepared to stay there for the rest of my career and take a chance of becoming managing editor, there really wasn't, or chief editorial writer or something, there really wasn't much else there that I wanted to do. I mean, you know, and so it was a very, a very steep-sided pyramid with very few people on top and a lot on the bottom. And it just, I just felt that I was too impatient, too much else to do in life. I mean, I loved working for the newspaper. And if they had paid really well and I could see more promise, I would have probably been there today. But, you know, that, it just, it was, it grew confining. And Roger had been the managing editor of the Portland papers, not managing editor; he'd been publisher of the local Portland papers. And I just sensed that that would open a lot of doors, you know, a lot of possibilities for me. Didn't have any particular focus or, in mind, just that there'd be a lot to see, be able to see inside a lot of doors that had been closed to me, or that I was unaware of. And that's exactly what happened.

MB: And what was public relations work like?

RS: I, it was interesting to me for a year or two, and then it became kind of routine and boring. But basically it was a news-telling occupation or profession. You certainly had a message that you wanted to get across. You know, there was a perspective, but it was, the skills involved were similar to what I'd been doing at the newspapers. I was writing press releases and, you know, setting up press conferences, and all of the common nuts and bolts of the communication, the media business is, that's what it is.

MB: You said that it did open doors for you. What were you referring to?

RS: Well, clients. You know, we had clients who were presidents of banks, presidents from insurance companies, presidents of electronics manufacturing companies, presidents or managers of S. D. Warren Paper Company, and of course Senator Muskie, ultimately.

MB: And how did you get involved with Senator Muskie?

RS: Well I suggested to Chuck Williams that the Senator was running for reelection, this was is first reelection campaign to the Senate, and that, you know, we had a pretty good grab or grasp of what was going on in Portland and that maybe we could help him. And he said, "ell, write a letter and go see somebody." And so I wrote a letter and, I think, I don't remember whether I sought out Don or wrote a letter to whoever, and Don Nicoll got back to us as I recall. And we became, we did a number of chores for the Muskie campaign in the Portland area primarily.

MB: What did that involve, what sorts of things were you doing?

RS: Oh, setting up press conferences, setting up events, appearances, drafting up press releases on, you know, speeches he was making. I don't remember doing much speech writing at that point, but, it was just sort of a mixed bag of public relations, you know. Releases, events, alerting reporters to appearances, just the appearance or alerting them to an issue that was

coming up, or a speech that he was going to give, or break some new ground, you know, on, in terms of issues.

MB: How close did you become to Senator Muskie during this time?

RS: Personally, not terribly close. He, he had a, really a very small group I think of close, close friends. And certainly I was, you know, on the fringe at that point of his staff; I wasn't on the staff. Oh, he'd recognize me or something but, I mean, it just, we just hadn't had the opportunity; he didn't know me from a hole in the wall. And he is so impressive, you know, that, he had such presence that you don't easily, you know, you don't easily just bust in and say, "Hi Ed." Just didn't do it. You knew better if you had any sensitivity at all. Let me just, lovey, this is Marisa.

(*Tape stopped.*)

MB: When did the opportunity arise for you to become Muskie's press secretary?

RS: Election night, the senator won big and Don Nicoll found me. I think we were in the old Eastland Hotel, I think, in Portland at that point. And he told me that George Mitchell was leaving the staff to come back to Maine and that, would have an opening. And would I like to join the staff in Washington. And I said "Yes. Yes."

MB: Did you have any reservations?

RS: No, no. I was thrilled. I was thrilled.

MB: Did you have to quit your job at the PR firm?

RS: Yes.

MB: What year was that?

RS: That was in 1964, November of '64. It was the election of November '64. So it was that night and I came, actually started working in January '65.

MB: What were your expectations of what it would be like to work as a press secretary?

RS: I just remember being thrilled; you know, with the opportunity, and the fact of going to the nation's capitol, and working for a man that was held in, you know, sort of universally high esteem. I felt good about it, I felt; I felt very good.

MB: What were some of your experiences as his press secretary?

RS: Oh, how do I love you, let me count the ways. I mean, it was just, it's very hard to give a lot of specifics because there were just so many of them. He certainly was challenging; he certainly expected the best. He was very bright, so it was challenging from that point of view,

you know, to, if you were writing something for him you were challenged to do something really good because he was the best writer on the staff. He was so quick and facile with words. And, you know, I might labor with a statement, or a press release, or weekly radio report to Maine which I would write. And he might get it five minutes before recording studio time and in just a few strokes of the pen, adding a few words here, scratching out one or two here, he would just make this thing sing. I mean, he could just, it just seemed so natural and normal, right for him to say. He just, he was very clever. He was a very, very skillful writer. Very intuitively smart politically on issues and on personalities, terribly bright man.

MB: Did he usually write his own stuff, speeches and so forth, or did you do that?

RS: No. I think when, if he were leaving the city to give a speech out of town someplace, or if he were making a major address to an organization in Washington, he was almost always scripted, you know, something to be prepared. But, he very often, and some of his very best speeches were given off the cuff. He would stand up, and he had great instincts. You know, a lot of good, good politicians, or a few good politicians, have that instinct. They can just stand up and kind of take a deep breath in front of an audience and just sense where they are, what they're interested in, what they want to hear or don't want to hear, or what kind of people they are. And Muskie had that in spades. And, you know, some of his very best talks were given absolutely extemporaneously. You know, as he held a twenty-page speech in his hands, he'd never even look at it, just, you know, he'd just take off.

MB: Who were some of the people that you met while working for him?

RS: Non-staff folks you mean?

MB: Either, or.

RS: Well, you know those that, of course, come to mind quickest and certainly those that I knew the best when I was there were Don, Chip Stockford who was the, have you talked? Someone's probably will have reached him some place. He's living in South Portland. But he was the executive assistant, a Legislative Assistant I guess they called him. At that time, George Mitchell swore me in when I went to work for the Senator. He was still aboard and just leaving and he actually swore me in, which is sort of a highlight of my career. All the people who became so crucial to the Senator within that six-year period, or between '64 and '68, the four-year period, who gravitated more and more to him, Harry McPherson, Paul Warnke, Clark Clifford, you know, really giants in the. . . . I one time or another had a chance to get to know all of them a little, certainly on a, you know, a name basis, speak to them. Journalists: David Broder, he used to call, when I came back to Maine after I'd left. He used to call once in a while just to see what was going on, and how do things look, you know, from up there. I haven't heard, talked to him in years. But, all of those, the Alsops brothers, Mark Childs, God, Mary McGrory, the, Frank Chancellor was very, you know, spent a lot of time . . .

(*Telephone interruption, tape stopped.*)

RS: . . . Roger Mudd, oh, Eric Sevareid, all of, you know, those, Walter Cronkite, Lord, I spent

a lot of time with him, Mike Wallace; it was a lot of interesting people. I met President Johnson at the White House; I had my picture taken with him. There's an (*unintelligible word*), I don't know where it is, but anyway.

MB: Of these people, the ones that stand out in your mind as the ones that you knew the best, what did you think of them, the ones that you worked with . . .?

RS: Oh, clearly, you know, very, very bright, very well-trained, very skillful, experienced. And I see them, you know in retrospect, I can see sort of a natural attraction to Senator Muskie. You know, by and large these people were sensible, prudent, moderate, bright, you know, with well, well-motivated, really wanted, the best public interest at heart.

MB: Attracted to Muskie in what sense?

RS: Well, it, he rep-, he spoke for them, you know? He represented what so many of these people were, and are. Just the way he conducted himself; the way he spoke, the way he thought, the way he wrote, what was important to him, you know, the issues that he chose and developed, his approach to problem solving. He was a thoroughly disciplined guy.

MB: How would you describe his approach to problem solving?

RS: Very disciplined, very intellectual, very academic in the sense that he would pull it apart. He had a, he was very bright, and he was, and he had a strong intelligence, strong in the sense that his mind would do battle with issues and pull them apart and put them together and pull them apart. And he'd look at an issue from so many different, every perspective he could conceive of. This, his approach to the Vietnam War and how he gradually realigned himself on that was fundamental I think, to this, his approach. He started reading, when it became, are we running short on time or something?

MB: You have about five minutes before I'll switch sides.

RS: He, when it became important, when that issue really began to dominate public life in America, he set out to get every book, every briefing paper that had ever been written on Vietnam. He set out to interview, in a sense, everyone who had ever been there. David Halberstram, for instance. I remember him coming out to the office, and Muskie wanted to talk to him, you know. "Tell me what your personal experience has been. You know, don't try to sell me necessarily, but just tell me what your experience has been." And he did this with everybody. And he went to Vietnam with Mike Mansfield and another group during this period. And he just, he was just dogged in his pursuit of answers and of the truth. It was, you could just, it was as though there was a tension: this giant just beating at these walls of misinformation, or disinformation, or inaccuracy, or whatever. He was, he just sought the truth.

MB: I think I will switch . . .

End of Side One, Tape One
Side Two, Tape One

MB: As far as your experiences with, you were saying his, how people were attracted to the issues that Muskie chose. What were some of the ones that you think were most important to the Maine people that Muskie selected?

RS: The issues?

MB: Yes.

RS: Oh, water, air pollution, obviously very important. Planning issues were important; intergovernmental relations, how the federal and state and the municipal governments worked together. I think he was, you know, looking back over the last thirty years, and then you look back over the last twenty years, or ten years, and you see the shift, the beginnings of the shifting of power away from Washington on some issues and back to the states; and how that has accelerated over the last five, six, seven, eight years. Muskie was talking about this stuff in 1970, you know, twenty-five, thirty years ago.

Ronald Reagan, you know, takes all the credit for trying to downsize the federal government. I mean, Muskie had been talking, not from the same quite perspective, but certainly talking about those issues with a whole lot more intelligence and experience ten, fifteen, twenty years earlier. Amazing, amazing guy.

MB: How do you feel that working with Muskie impacted you personally as far as your political beliefs and your, just yourself, your personal experience?

RS: There are two different levels. On a personal level, I view my experience, my time or years with Senator Muskie as a very enriched, a very exciting time of life, and an experience that I knew at the time was special. I mean, sometimes you look back on a period and say, "Gee, that was really terrific." But at the time you were coming through it, you didn't pay much attention to it. I knew at the time that this was going to be one of the richest and most rewarding times in my life. And it was; in terms of my personal growth, in terms of how I grew to see the world around me, and to get a sense of what citizenship is all about. And, I don't know, just a number of, you know, learning how to, to react, interact with the Senator, appreciating his incredible intellect and his incredible integrity, growing to appreciate that. Seeing him as a real mountain among men just, he would have made one hell of a president.

He wasn't much of a campaigner; it was uncomfortable for him. He didn't like, at least on the national level. He was great in Maine. He'd drive around Maine, you know, buy apple cider and chat it up with a local person and be completely comfortable and at home. You can't do that when you run for president. Everyone's after you for something and they're, you know, they're, and then you've always got the money issues. And it's just a, he just, he had too much integrity, too much, you know, sense of who he was and how phony so much of that is. He just, he had a hard time accommodating himself to that. But, boy, if he had ever become president, nobody ever would have beaten him because he was so genuine; he was the real thing and what you saw is what you got. And you knew that what you were looking at was true; it had a deep keel. He couldn't be bought, he couldn't be, you know, he couldn't be traded. He was the genuine article.

MB: Funny that he ran against Nixon.

RS: Well, is it any wonder that he became so popular? In those two months, because he was, he represented such a contrast, Humphrey, too. But running against Nixon and Agnew, and Agnew who was a cipher and corrupt right through his soul. And Nixon, the same way, not a cipher, but certainly corrupted as we finally learned, we all learned. And, you know, Muskie just was so genuine that you could disagree on an issue, but you knew that whatever position he had came right from his soul and right from his intellect. It wasn't, there wasn't any other, you know, there was no room for fudging.

MB: As the years passed, how were your early campaign strategies different from the strategies that you used in later elections?

RS: This is in Muskie's reelection campaigns . . .

MB: For Senate.

RS: . . . for Senate, for instance versus running, when he was running for Vice President? Well, I don't, I'm not really the person to talk to so much about the strategies, because I was not, you know, I was aware of what was going on, but in terms of making them, that would really have been Don and George and Berl Bernhard and some of these other guys. I suppose the fundamental strategy is very much the same; that is, how do you present the candidate as forcefully and honestly as you can? Because in that, in Muskie's case, the more people saw of him, the better off he was, the more they learned about him. Very often with a candidate, he looks great starting out, until you learn something about him. I think George W. Bush is going to have this problem because nobody knows anything about him, and yet it looks like he's got the Republican nomination sewed up. Nobody's seen him. So that's a potential problem for them. Elizabeth Dole, same way; she won't talk issues. And I think that's an issue, a problem if, were she to become involved. And usually as they learn more, their numbers go down. I think the good thing about Senator Muskie was that there was always the chance that things were going to get, you know, the view of him, the public perception was going to improve as they got to know him, because he was so genuine and it was so clear. He was the real thing.

MB: From the perspective of the press secretary, what were his weaknesses in the public eye?

RS: He, he wasn't easily sociable. He didn't make small talk very well or gracefully sometimes. And it wasn't that he was disinterested; he just, he was, there was a lot of shyness in him. He could be, he could address a thousand people in an audience and convince every person in that room that he was talking just to them, but if you put him in a room with one of them, he might fall all over himself, by comparison. He would never fall over, but he just, he was more guarded and just not as comfortable in a small social setting, unless he was with his very, very good friends. But if you, so you set up an interview with him and if, you know, he's apt to be a little standoffish sometimes. Maybe, a little cautious about his answers because he doesn't really know the person he's talking to and doesn't know the perspective that person is trying to put on to things.

I remember when Gloria Steinem, this was after the '68 campaign, it must have been '69 or '70, the Vietnam War issue was very hot and she was a real peacenik, you know. She was very much opposed to the war, and the Senator had trouble. He was cautious about abandoning Lyndon Johnson's support for the war and the party support over the years, although that, it was changed, changing very quickly. But Muskie was a little cautious, and she had asked for an interview with him and we'd set it up at, it was some, maybe fear or trepidation, but we set it up. And she came in and the first question about Vietnam was asked in a manner, "When did you stop beating your wife, you know?" Her whole prop-, whole supposition was inaccurate about where the senator's thinking was. And then she proceeded to ask it in a way that was, you know, very demeaning, and he just let her have it. He just, he really became very, very forceful and very strong and told her that, you know, she was behaving badly basically, and it was an unfair question, and that she hadn't done her homework. And she left in tears, you know, and ran out and ran right up to George McGovern's office and went in and talked to his staff about that brute of a man, Ed Muskie.

Gloria Steinem, I mean, can you imagine that? The reason I know that is that John Stacks, who is now, has been, with *Time Magazine* ever since, was McGovern's press secretary at that, he'd just come on. And John Stacks had covered Muskie during the '68 campaign for *Time Magazin*e and I'd gotten to know him really well. And he called up a few minutes later and he kind of, he was sort of smiling laughing. He said, "What have you done to poor Gloria Steinem?" And I says, "Well, you won't believe, you know." But she didn't take, it didn't take her long to go right up there where she felt comfortable. Because he was the darling, McGovern was the darling of the anti-war people. That's what gave him, that basically won him the nomination in '72.

MB: In terms of the differences between the Vice Presidential election, when he was working kind of as a team with Humphrey, how was that different from his senatorial, his independent senatorial campaign?

RS: Actually, I did not see a lot of difference. And the reason is, you know, other, you have to ask others. But the reason is that, my impression was that Humphrey gave Muskie his head; said "You do whatever you want." You know, they'd get together once in a while, two or three times maybe in the two months and talk about things; they talked on the phone from time to time. But, you know, Humphrey was a delight. He'd just say, "Hey, Ed, you know what you're doing, you've been through this before. Just tell them the truth."

It was a sort of a, same thing that Harry Truman told him when we went to see him in Independence, Missouri. You know, he said, well, they said, "Mr. President, what did you tell Senator Muskie when you met him?" "Oh," he said, "I just told him what I tell everybody, tell the truth." But Humphrey just said, "You know, whatever you're doing is fine. They, people love you; just keep doing it." So I think in that vice presidential race, Muskie felt very comfortable. You know, he wasn't the star attraction. Humphrey was, the guy running for president. And I think he just felt that he could help Humphrey who he liked a lot. Everybody liked Hubert Humphrey as a man, and that, Humphrey had given him his head; "Do whatever you want." And we had a good time. I mean, it was much more relaxed, comfortable. And the

Senator was so good, I mean, he just wowed folks all over the country.

MB: You mentioned that he had more trouble with the whole, dealing with the whole country versus when he was just working in Maine.

RS: Well it was, when he was campaigning for president. That was harder than campaigning in Maine, because people, when you run for president you have to be so much to so many people. And every town you go into, they all want you. And they all want you to raise some money for them and vice versa, and they all want your ear on something. They all want you to meet their wives and their sweethearts or their . . . . You know, it's just, you're just pulled apart. And there's always some special interest that you've got to, and, you know, it's kind of phony. It's a circus, it becomes a carnival. And some men are more comfortable in that setting than others; Muskie was not. I mean, I think, he took what he was doing too seriously to trivialize it with a lot of stuff he felt he had to do. And it sapped his energy and it wore him out, you know. He didn't, you know, he didn't see things as clearly as he would have otherwise.

MB: What were some of the major strengths and weaknesses that he had during that campaign?

RS: Which one, the . . .?

MB: The vice presidential.

RS: Well, he was running very comfortably. He was clear on the issues; he didn't need any training. He didn't need to say anything. He and Humphrey, you know, were very tight in terms of where they stood on issues, so that he didn't feel he had to mince his words. The whole thing was a lark. I mean, he, you know, nobody knew Muskie as a national figure, really. He wasn't a celebrity, you know. He was known among people, serious politicians and up, but he was not a household name. And overnight he became one. And it was fun; it was fun for all of us, it was fun for him. It was fun for all of us. What was the other part of that question?

MB: Some of the weaknesses of the campaign?

RS: God, hard to say there were very many weaknesses. I'm sure there wasn't as much money as we would have liked to have had, but . . .

(*Phone interruption - tape stopped.*)

MB: As far as the weaknesses, you mentioned money. What were some of the incidents that occurred? I know that they discussed the incident in New Hampshire when there was, like, a lot of animosity against him from the, what was it called? The press in that area.

RS: That was in the, that was in '72. I don't think we had any, I don't remember any problems in New Hampshire in '68.

MB: Oh, okay.

RS: The key incident in that whole campaign was in Little Washington, PA. When in, right in the town square there's a platform, and Muskie was to address it and he was introduced. And there was a young man standing right in front of him down in the street who was shouting, you know, in a disruptive way, "We have to listen to you, but you never listen to us." Something like that. And Muskie said, "Okay. " He said, "I want you to come up here and I want you to talk to us and you tell us what you want to say, and I'm going to listen to every word you say. And I'm going to ask you then, when you're through, to listen to what I say." And the kid said "Okay," jumped right up on the platform. And he got, Muskie gave him the mike and this kid railed on about Vietnam and how you're killing all the, all this stuff, all of the rhetoric that was so obvious. And he kind of, the kid was all fired up and he charged into this thing and about five minutes later you could see he was starting to run out steam and he'd run out of ideas and the rhetoric. And everyone's looking at him, and all the national television cameras are on him, and he kind of petered out. And then he sort of, you know, gave the mike back to Senator Muskie. And Muskie said, "Thank you very much, I've listened to everything you said, and here," you know. And then he went on to give his side of things and there was a huge applause, and the network people went crazy.

And I remember going to Dick Dubord, who was one of Muskie's oldest and dearest friends from, he was a lawyer in Waterville. And Dick had come on as maybe an associate or deputy campaign manager, but he was the one that the senator was most comfortable with and traveled with all the time. He was always there with him because he really knew the senator very well, and he knew how he reacted to incidents. So I went to Dick and I said, "Boy." And I said, "These guys, these television people need time to feed this, and they're very," it was a noon time rally, "And they're really anxious to get it back to New York for the six o'clock, we ought to stop the campaign here a while and let them make their feeds." Because they had to take the film out to some, whether they were . . . . I don't think they had direct feed then so they would have had to have the film, you know, processed and then flown to New York. So it was, and then they wanted to continue; they wanted to continue the. Wait a minute, let me just get this . .

(*Telephone interruption - taped stopped.*)

RS: So I talked to Dick and he stopped the campaign right there. We just sort of holed up for a half-hour, an hour, or whatever it took so that the TV correspondents could file their stuff and then get back on the bus and the plane. And, so we, I don't remember how long we waited, but it may be a half-hour, an hour. They fed, and of course all the networks led with that that night and it put Muskie into orbit in one day. I mean, it was, everybody from then on, everybody wanted to know, wanted to see him and who was this marvelous man?

And it was funny, it cut both ways. To the people who were opposed to the war and were unforgiving of Humphrey for his support of the President, of Johnson all this time. It looked like Muskie was firm with this kid, and strong, and showed him up. To those who were opposed to the war, those who were opposed to the war saw Muskie as a conciliator and a, as someone who was sympathetic, empathetic to, and who listened to young people. Because there was a, the sixties had been a wild divisive time, not only because of the war but also because of the pill and all the hippie business and the drugs and it. There was this enormous rift developed between traditional American values and the new values, whatever. And Muskie, by this one gesture, had

straddled both camps and, to the extent that both camps saw him as being their man. And so he really became a real celebrity, that one event.

MB: Was that really, you said that you would consider that the major . . .

RS: Yeah, I think that's, because that's what really established him in the public's mind as a fair person, as a person who would listen.

MB: How did you feel about traveling around the country; what were some of your experiences on the road?

RS: It would have been better if Joanie [Shepherd] had been with me. You know, you don't, families don't travel, you know, except for the candidate. But it was a real hoot; it was just a lark. I grew to see America as about the size of Cumberland County, you know, or no more than the State of Maine. I mean, in around six hours you can drive from one end of the state to the other. And then with airplane travel, we had a, you know, your own campaign jet, and the country was six hours long, or wide. And, which, when you got so used to getting on and off the plane and usually flying for an hour and a half, two, two and a half hours to the next, then it just, everything just, the country became so small. You know, you could fly to, I remember one time we were in Los Angeles heading east, and we had a breakfast event in Los Angeles, we stopped in New Mexico or Arizona for an airport rally around you know, kind of mid-morning. We flew on to Grand Ole Opry; where is that, Arkansas, Tennessee?

MB: I'm not sure.

RS: Memphis? I think it's Memphis.

MB: That's Tennessee.

RS: Tennessee, for a late afternoon, or maybe, maybe we had an appearance or, you know, with the Grand Ole Opry. But I remember going into that theater and then doing an event there, and then landing back in Washington, you know, in time for dinner. All in one day! You know, four events, Los Angeles, New Mexico or Arizona, Memphis, Washington, in one day. And it was so easy. Because you get back on the plane, you have a meal, and it was time to land again. You know, you'd try to organize your stuff, you'd answer questions or whatever, have your meal, get out of the plane, you're on your way again; incredible.

MB: What was Muskie like on the road? You said he became tired after much campaigning.

RS: Yeah, not so much in the, in this first campaign. He was, he was strong right through it, and he was having a good time. I mean, that was my impression. It was a very up experience. I think the presidential campaign was very tiresome for him for all the reasons that I've tried to suggest. He just temperamentally wasn't comfortable making a lot of small talk with a lot of small-town pols, and having, you know, having everybody coming at him. And he was expected to, you know, pretend that these were the most important people he'd ever met in his life, and what their pitch, whatever it was, their issue or their, you know, that he was supposed to embrace

this. It's hard; it's very . . . . Now some people kind of do this and roll with it and, but the Senator took what he did very seriously. And he was, he had such a desire to excel, you know, such a desire to make himself proud, to make Maine proud of him, to make his family proud of him, make his friends proud of him. And he, you know, he was a driven guy in that regard. He really wanted to do his best. He didn't want to look mediocre ever, or run-of-the-mill.

MB: Were you still with him for the other campaign?

RS: At the start. I left in April of '71.

MB: And what . . .?

RS: It was before New Hampshire.

MB: What were your reasons for leaving?

RS: I had, we had friends who worked at the White House and we saw, in Johnson's White House. And we saw what the White House did to people and I was absolutely convinced Muskie was going to get elected president. When I decided to leave, he was ahead of Nixon by twelve, fifteen points in the public opinion polls, you know, the Gallup, the Harris polls, about fifteen points ahead. All of the leading Democrats had endorsed him, and I was just sure he was going to get elected president. Inconceivable that, and I decided that I really didn't want to work in the White House. I was doing him a favor. Because if he was going to work, you know, if he was going to be president he needed people who were willing, able, desirous to be there with him, to work seven days a week, twelve, fourteen hours a day, whatever it took. And I just, that was more than I wanted to do. Because, you know, we had two little children at that point, and they were very important to me and it was just, I was torn.

MB: You had described . . .

(*Telephone interruption - tape stopped.*)

MB: . . . in the first, in the vice presidential campaign, that one incident that you felt . . .

RS: Washington, PA, right?

MB: What would you say was the equivalent of that for the second election?

RS: I was not aboard for most of the actual campaign there, and I don't think there was one. Of course the one that everybody remembers was the supposed tears by the Senator in front of the *Manchester Union, Union Leader* in Manchester, New Hampshire.

MB: Do you think that they were tears, or do you think that they weren't?

RS: I don't know, and it doesn't, it never mattered to me. I never understood why anyone . . . . I think the senator was just so frustrated, so frustrated, by the campaign in general, and by these

awful things that William Loeb was saying about him and about Jane. It just was intolerable, and I think it just, he just showed the depth of his feeling. It was too bad, I think, that he ever did that but, it was a terrible thing for Loeb to have done. It was, the dirty tricks in that campaign, you know, we talk about dirty tricks. They really began in modern times in that campaign. The Republicans were terribly clever; Nixon's people were so clever.

You've been told about the Stanley Ulassowiz (*sounds like*) who was a former New York policeman who was head of security for, or head of the spying, really, for the Nixon campaign? This all came out later in hearings in the Senate, or in Congress; I don't know in the Senate or not. But somehow they found out, that is the Nixon people found out where, who, the name of the cab driver that was carrying documents back and forth between the Senate office on the Hill and the campaign office downtown. These were issues, papers, proposed speeches, scheduling, all this information going back and forth. Today it would have all been faxed, but in those days it wasn't, and the campaign hired a cab driver, or a driver, somebody, to drive this material back and forth. And the Nixon people found out about this, bribed the driver so that he would, there was a third stop in between. And everything going one way or the other would be Xeroxed at a neutral point and then sent on. So that they knew, they knew his issues, they knew his travel plans, and they just did some extraordinarily clever things with that information.

It's very sad. But, and there were a number of those espionage stories that came out of that campaign, but those were the, that was the campaign really that established, there had always been dirty tricks in politics, but I don't remember anything like that in '68. And the old timers, people who had done this, you know, long before that never had any memory of that, '64, '58, '60, you know.

MB: How had your feelings about politics or your experience with politics changed you by the time that it was all over?

RS: I don't think I was changed so much, because I think I remained true basically to who I was. I understood who I was a lot better. And that decision to leave Senator Muskie, as hard as that was, represented that part of me that was unwilling to go forward with it. But it certainly opened my eyes to a world out there that I never would have known. And every time I read in the newspaper today, I can read between the lines, you know. And I understand what's going on very often, or at least I have questions about what's going on. You know, there's a perspective, point of view, an understanding of human nature, an understanding of political, political human beings; you know, how they work.

MB: You talked about your family that was at home at this time. When did you meet your wife?

RS: Oh, Lord, I met Joanie in 1956, '55, something like that.

MB: How?

RS: At a party in Portland when I was in college. Just mutual friends.

(*Someone at door - tape turned off.*)

MB: And were you, you were a newsman at that time?

RS: No, I was still in college.

MB: Oh, okay.

RS: She took advantage of me at a very early age.

MB: So when did you get married?

RS: In 1965.

MB: That was when you were involved with . . .

RS: With Senator Muskie, yup.

MB: So, did you move into this house that we're in now?

RS: Oh, no, no. We, see, we were married when I was in Washington, when I was working in Washington. We moved into this house when we moved back from Washington.

MB: Tell me a little bit about your family, your children and . . .?

RS: Well, we have three children now. We had one after we got, moved here to Brunswick. We've got two daughters, both married, both with one child, and both pregnant, so. We have two grandchildren. Each is one and a half roughly, both of them. My daughters are sort of in sync here, doing the same thing. And that's it.

MB: When you returned to Maine after you stopped working with Muskie, what did you do?

RS: I initially worked for Governor Curtis, and I was a Legislative Assistant, a speech writer for him, handled press. And then I worked for him for two years and then left and went into real estate and have been involved in real estate ever since.

MB: That was a lot of the people and the phone calls were people . . .

RS: Yes, yes, inquiring about rentals and all that kind of stuff.

MB: Tell me about your time with Governor Curtis? How was that different from your time with Governor Muskie and so forth?

RS: Well, it was a lot less pressure, being governor of a relatively small state. And this was during Governor Curtis' second term, so he'd already won reelection. So, the focus here was on a legislative program. There was far less politics in it, in the focus, because he couldn't run

again for governor, obviously. So we were really focusing on a very progressive legislative package, and I think we had a lot of success. Ken Curtis was a very different man than Senator Muskie; no less intent about doing a really good job, but he was a much more laid back personality. He was, he was less private, less shy, less reserved, more comfortable out in public, you know, in a small crowd of people. But a very interesting man. Ken Curtis is a wonderful man and I must say, for seven or eight or nine, nine or ten years that I was involved in politics and public, I had probably two of the finest who ever served. And then on a staff level, I was blessed by having wonderful, I mean, you know, Don Nicoll and George Mitchell and men of these, these are lifetime standouts. These are people that you never forget, you never, you always respect, and that you cherish the memories that you've had with them.

MB: You mentioned . . .

RS: I mean, you're proud of that time, you're proud of that time frame in your life because what you were doing was useful and helpful in a pretty big sense, and you were dealing with honorable men and women.

MB: When you found out that Muskie ended up not winning the election, did you regret having left?

RS: No, never regretted it. It was an enormous relief. I think there are temperaments that ought to be working on presidential campaigns, and temperaments that shouldn't be. And I made the right choice.

MB: Who replaced you?

RS: Dick, oh, wonderful guy from *The Boston Globe*. Oh, I can't believe it. His name is eluding me now, but he was a terrific guy, a great sense of humor. The Senator really enjoyed his company, he was the perfect guy. He's retired now but he went on, afterwards went back to the *Globe*, at a very, he may have been managing editor, assistant managing editor, something at the *Globe*. He had a, Dick Stewart, Stewart, Dick Stewart, lovely guy.

MB: How did you perceive Maine politics just, you know, throughout your entire experience and afterward, and how had politics of Maine changed?

RS: I don't know that it changed a whole lot. I think, well, an interesting thing has happened. It had been very Republican obviously, all through much of this century, and the Senator was the guy that turned it all around and made it a two-party state. And then for a while it was very, very Democratic. It has swung back now, I think, to being much more independent, and it's, and a real two party state. Senator Muskie, Governor Muskie made that possible initially. And really, I think in the process of reestablishing the Democrats, it made the Republican Party far more responsible because they suddenly had to be competitive. So, you know, I think by and large, the Republicans have done a better job than they would have if it hadn't been for Senator Muskie.

End of Side Two, Tape One

Side One, Tape Two

MB: Did you remain close to Muskie or to any of the other people that you had met while working for him?

RS: I saw the Senator only occasionally after I left him. And it's just that our paths didn't, didn't cross, you know, and he was, all his time was so scheduled. I mean, he, you know, he didn't win the nomination in '72 but he did, you know, continue on, of course, in the Senate as a very senior and responsible member, then was Secretary of State. And he just, and then got into private practice and, very busy guy. Also, our lives got very busy. We started buying up a lot of these old houses on the street, and I worked very hard, and I still do. So it just wasn't the, you know, with kids growing up and all, little league and, just, it's hard to do all the things. I think one of the spin-offs from this whole experience was a sense of the responsibility as a citizen. And I did serve on, ran, served on the Brunswick town council for twelve years, and tried to, you know, bring the same kind of sensible approach to, that I had sort of absorbed through the Muskie years and Curtis years, to the town council. I was chairman for three years and I found that very interesting work.

MB: What were your responsibilities at that, as a Chairman of the Board of Selectmen?

RS: The town council?

MB: Yes.

RS: Town council. Well, it's sort of a honorary mayorship, you know, you cut ribbons and do that stuff. Basically, you preside at meetings and you're one of nine votes. They don't give you a crown or anything to wear, but it's just a, you are the spokesperson for the town, basically. And you represent its best interests and pursue grants, policies, grants and things that are going to, you know, you have the opportunity to focus attention really, help create the debate.

MB: As far as your real estate endeavors, what's it like to work, to, what's the real estate business like in Maine, and in Brunswick?

RS: Well, for us, I am a broker, and a designated broker. I have my own agency, but I do not sell real estate. I can, but I don't. I manage it. And we have, what we bought, basically, were old antique houses with wonderful histories. And this has proven to be my first love, our first love. We love old houses and we've been in a, since 1973, in the business of restoring old houses. And we'll never get caught up, never get finished, but they're wonderful houses and a lot of history. We own the house that Governor Robert Dunlap built here on Federal Street, 27 Federal Street. We own the house that Henry Wadsworth Longfellow moved to when he moved here to Brunswick to teach at Bowdoin College; he carried his bride over that threshold. It's a true story, true story.

MB: Have I missed anything important from your experience that you want to tell; any stories that . . .?

RS: No. I would, I think the reason I have looked forward so to doing this is that, as I've gotten older and wiser in the world, and as I've, as we've all, you know, gone through the pain of the last Clinton year or two, I appreciate more than ever what Muskie meant to me and to the country as a whole. He was a thoroughly believable human being. He was everything that Richard Nixon wasn't. On the personal level, he was everything that Bill Clinton had trouble bringing himself to be. He was, he had so much integrity. He had, he respected others and he wanted their respect. He told the truth. And it wasn't that he was a, you know, a wimp or a pansy, it was just that it was clear when you were in his presence that virtue was important, that telling the truth, of voting straight, you know, doing what was right for, you know, for the public. This is what really mattered. And how you lived your life. His family was so important to him, his wife and his children. And he was, I like to think of him as being an Old World parent. His father immigrated. His mother I think was born here, but she was first generation, and . . .

(*Telephone interruption - taped turned off.*)

RS: We were talking about Muskie's integrity and his family. I always viewed his relationship with his family as, in a sense, the old European view. Where the father was the breadwinner, the protector of the family, you know, that he was the role model, he was the person that was out in the world. But he was there at night; he was there to protect. He was there to make sure that the kids, you know, had whatever they needed.

And I think it was in this role of sort of an Old World father and husband that he became so vulnerable to these dirty tricks that they tried to pull on Jane Muskie, because he was absolutely incensed that anyone could treat another man's wife that way in public life, just incensed. And he was right. It was terrible what they were doing, it was, you know, it was dirty tricks and at a level that should never have been involved. But they, I think maybe they understood that about the senator, that he did have this very responsible attitude towards his family.

He, so, you know, the summing up, that he represented everything that I think Americans really want and like to grow to expect in their public leaders. There were no closets, no skeletons, no, nothing to hide.

And I remember, one little anecdote, how he was so sensitive to how things would appear, not just whether it was right or wrong, or legal or illegal, but what would the appearance be. Right after the '68 campaign, everybody wanted stories about him; everybody wanted to interview him. *Playboy* magazine, which did, then, had begun doing a lot of serious political reporting, had tried and tried and tried to set up an interview. They had hired a writer from New York who had called me probably every other day for six months trying to set this thing up. And we kept putting it off. The Senator wouldn't respond, you know; he'd just sort of groan whenever we brought this thing up, and he just simply didn't want to do it. The reporter finally moved to Washington to be closer by. He thought the reason he wasn't getting this interview was because he was too far away and, you know, it's too awkward to set it up and maybe if he were available on five-minute notice.

And so I finally went to the senator and I said, "You know, this guy has been after us for six

months and he's moved down here to be nearby and he, you know, we ought to give him an up or down, you know, just in fairness." He said, "Oh, Bob, he said, I don't want to do this." He said, "The issue that this appears in is going to be the first issue where they're going to have a male centerfold." And I thought to myself, "God what is he thinking about?" Of course it was two months, three months later when *Cosmo* had Henry Kissinger in the buff, a centerfold. It wasn't Henry Kissinger, it was Reynolds, Burt Reynolds, and everyone was just bowled over by the whole thought of a male centerfold. But the point is, the Senator, Senator Muskie, didn't want to be associated in any way with an instrument like a magazine that was suspect. He just couldn't do it. Even though he knew, he knew that the readership was young and male and was very much involved in the Vietnam issue and he could have maybe, you know, made some points with these people, but he just, just wouldn't do it. I mean, everybody else had had major articles on them, in *Playboy*. He wouldn't do it; he wouldn't do it. (*Aside - What's up, Richard?*)

(*Tape stopped.*)

RS: . . . now having gone through what we've gone through, it just, and how he would have rolled in his grave.

MB: Over the Clinton . . . .? Do you feel that that reflects how the party has changed, how the Democratic Party has changed?

RS: No, no. No, I don't think Bill Clinton's personal life has anything to do with the party. I just, you know, I think he's, he's such a bright guy and he's so talented, and he's such a colossal screw-up. I just can't believe it. I really, you know, it almost gives being really bright a bad name. Someone who is, you know, not as quick or bright, but is a better person maybe is better for that job. I don't think you have to be super bright. You have to have a lot of, sort of common sense, and a lot of integrity and stuff. And I think that, and I don't mean integrity means that you don't drink or smoke or, you know, that your life has been, has been perfect from day one. I'm not, I don't like to get into the morality at all. But there has to be a, you know, it's, ideally it's better that way, because, I mean, it's just, to put the country through that.

And I resent the Republicans. I'm far more conservative now than I was, and I resent the Republicans putting the country through that, too, because they should have known from day one it was never going to wash. The Senate was never going to convict and it really wasn't an impeachable offense. You know, it was, off-time behavior does not, I mean, there's no public. I mean, lying under oath is, but on a private matter, I mean, it's just, if he's lying about espionage, or he's lying about taking a bribe from the Russians, or anybody, you know, that's what we're talking about, impeachable. If you're talking about what Nixon did, you know, those were impeachable and that's really using government power in a, on-the-job sense, you know, to hurt. You know, that's the abuse of power. That is abuse of power. What Clinton did is stupid, you know, it's petty. It's gutter stuff, but it's not impeachable. So the Republicans, I think, really gave themselves a black eye on this. If George W. Bush doesn't come through for them, it's going to be Al Gore or, or Bill Bradley. And one thing, the Democrats have two very strong candidates, in terms of ability. Al Gore I think is a little bit too liberal for me now, ideally, but he's competent, clearly competent. He's boring; that's his biggest problem. Boring.

MB: At least he's not as exciting as Clinton has been lately.

RS: No. And that's the thing, Clinton is so good. There's been never anyone who has been a better public speaker than he. Ad lib, I mean, if you gave Ronald Reagan a good written speech, he'd do a good job on it, but Clinton does a better job than any of them right off the top of his head. He can reach people, he can motivate them, he can move them. Whew. He can come on to their daughters, you know, after the topic.

MB: Shall we end on that note?

RS: Yeah.

MB: Okay, thank you very much.

RS: But you know, the Clinton, I mean, the Clinton thing has put Muskie in my mind so much in focus, that for that period of time that I was involved with him, I'm very proud of what I did. Proud of what I did and I'm proud of, that he represented Maine. He represented the best we have. And he was, he was everything. Not an easy person, you know; he was cantankerous sometimes, but a wonderful flashpoint. I mean, when he blew up it was an act of nature.

MB: Do you remember any incidents in particular?

RS: Oh, you never forget them, no. Throwing things, you know, throwing papers down. "God dammit all, why can't," but it wasn't personal. You know, you'd sit there and listen to it and you'd say, "Oh, I hope it's over soon," you know. And it was always for a reason, and you could understand. I mean, he was frustrated,; he was, you know, he was doing his level best and something wasn't working out the way he hoped or the way he had planned or subordinates may have screwed up and left him vulnerable. And he was very direct. But it was not a personal thing and as soon as it was over, it was over, it was done. Nothing ever . . . . And he was very loyal to his, anyone working for him, very loyal. Never fired anybody, never, you know. If you were working for Ed Muskie, he would make sure you had a job forever. You, know, if you were halfway competent, I mean, I'm not talking, he wouldn't, carrying dead weights, but he was very loyal. He just, no matter how he may have railed at you in private, you know, because of something you did. But it was never a personal thing, it was a big difference between saying "You are the most ignorant sonofabitch that ever worked for me," you know. That's very personal. Rather than, "This speech is not, how am I supposed to get up and, you know." Very different, very different.

He was a driven man. And I, we went down for his eightieth birthday party, flew down, spent a couple nights, and Aaron had that big party. And he walked in to the ballroom just after we'd gotten there and he said, "Hi Bob." I mean, it was as if he had just seen me the day before. Eighty years old, just as spry, gave a little talk that night; he was just as sharp as he ever was. And then the next thing you know he's dead, and I'm thinking "What?" But then it wasn't, he had a clot in his leg, and I thought, "My God, people aren't supposed to die with clots in your leg. What sort of nonsense is that?" I still, I would, I mean I just, I guess once you, at that age,

you're having surgery, anything can happen. He'd had a heart attack. He was such a strong, vital man. I mean, he was never frail, never frail. Even at eighty he was upright.

Lovely guy, lovely man, should have been President. I mean, he was such a great person. There are not very many men that I would say that about, that he should have been President, but he should have been. Because he would have been, he was so bright and he was such a consensus builder. And he would have reached out to the Republicans and he would have, you know, put together programs that people could live with and just. And on big decisions, you know, the bomb decisions, he was so prudent and conscious, which is really what you need. He was terrific. Well, that's all, all I know.

MB: Thank you very much.

End of Interview