EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

FINAL EDITED TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEW 2 WITH JOSEPH F. GARGAN

October 31, 2005
Charlottesville, Virginia

Interviewer

University of Virginia
Stephen Knott

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Stephen Knott: Thank you again, Mr. Gargan, for coming down here. It's a beautiful day so I know you had a pleasant ride, other than the fact that there were a few mishaps early on in your trip— nothing attributable to us.

Joseph F. Gargan: Just don't take Route 17 this week.

Knott: It's great to see you again. Last time we had gotten up to about 1962, when Edward Kennedy was about to run for the United States Senate. I'm wondering if you have any recollections of that 1962 race. You served at least as an advance man, and certainly more than that, on that '62 campaign. Can you tell us a little bit about that experience?

Gargan: Actually, Ted had been preparing—I should say, since he is now Senator Kennedy—Senator Kennedy had been working in the direction of perhaps running in politics. He was interested in it. He had taken a job with the district attorney's office under Gary Byrne, and he was trying some cases. Joan [Bennett Kennedy] and he had taken a residence on Beacon Hill and he was kind of positioning himself to run for a political office. Then, after consulting with President [John F.] Kennedy and others, he decided to run for the United States Senate.

I was in the United States Attorney's office at the time, I was first assistant to Arthur Garrity, the U.S. Attorney. After talking with Ted Kennedy, I agreed to leave the United States Attorney's office around June because there was going to be a big fight for delegates at the state convention. He asked me to handle the delegates in Boston and to be the campaign manager for the city of Boston, because the Boston delegates would be very important at the convention. There were some delegates that you were just not going to get, wards 6 and 7, for instance, because that was South Boston. The candidate in the primary was going to be Eddie McCormack. Eddie McCormack came from South Boston, his father lived there. And of course, his uncle, John McCormack, was the Speaker of the House at that time.

Knott: He was, yes.

Gargan: So it was a real challenge. But the fact is, there was a chance to get the other delegates, for instance, ward 8, which was known as the black ward. Ward 14 was well known at that time, the population was heavily Jewish so it was known as the Jewish ward. Then there was ward 21, the Brighton ward, there was a good opportunity to get Brighton. The Jewish ward, ward 14, was going to be difficult because both state representatives were supporting Eddie McCormack since they were close to the Speaker, John McCormack. But there were a lot of other wards that we

had opportunities to win. I had worked in the Presidential campaign in 1960 and I had grown up with the Senator, and people knew that. He felt that it was important to have more or less a member of the family working and communicating with the people in those wards, the delegates, and running the campaign in Boston. So my responsibility was for the city of Boston.

Knott: Good, glad to have that clarified.

Gargan: I did resign from the U.S. Attorney's office on the first of June and I took over that responsibility.

Knott: Do you remember helping to prepare the Senator for his highly publicized debate with Eddie McCormack?

Gargan: I did work with him to a certain extent in preparing for the debate, but he had several other people such as [Milton] Gwirtzman and the fellow who later ran for the Senate in Iowa, John Culver, who were working on issues all day long, the important issues in Massachusetts at that time, and I think were better prepared to work with him in preparation for those debates.

I did, however, spend a lot of time with the Senator, because I was not only in charge of Boston, but I did a lot of work on the advance and scheduling—which I had done with President Kennedy in the 1960 campaign—so I was getting volunteers to be advance men and setting up the various trips he was making around the Commonwealth, including trips in Boston. But I was with him from time to time when he wasn't campaigning and wanted a couple of hours of relaxation. On weekends he would often come out to my house in Milton and we would go for a horseback ride in the Blue Hills. We would discuss the issues and some of the things that would come up in those debates, so in that regard, I was helpful in the preparation to a certain degree. But I'd say John Culver and Mr. Gwirtzman were really the issue men for the debate.

Knott: Do you think McCormack—I mean, was this a close race, in your view? Or was it pretty much in the bag for Senator Kennedy?

Gargan: No. We expected it to be a very close race and we were working very hard, expecting it to come down to the wire because McCormack did have a lot of support in the city of Boston. His uncle, the Speaker John McCormack, was very strong in the city of Boston and around the state. He had done—no exaggeration—I would say that he had done a million favors, so there were literally a million people in Massachusetts who felt obligated to John McCormack. State reps would tell you, "I'd really want to help Senator Kennedy, but you know, John McCormack did me this favor." Or, "He put a veteran in my district in a veteran's hospital, when nobody else could." So John McCormack was a very strong factor. Eddie McCormack had a good name in Massachusetts, a good political name. So we were preparing basically for the fight of our lives, as it turned out.

Knott: Do you recall, there was a story that broke about the Senator and the cheating scandal at Harvard or whatever. Do you recall either having to deal with that or picking up any reaction from the public as to whether that hurt his candidacy?

Gargan: I don't think it really did hurt his candidacy. I remember when the press story came out. The story was well covered in the papers, but I think most people considered that a boyhood

situation—a young man was a freshman in college and he made a mistake. He admitted to that mistake, he took full responsibility for the mistake. He went into the service immediately, at the suggestion of those at Harvard. They suggested that if he did that that they would give him due consideration for a return to Harvard after he came back from the military service.

So people were willing, I think, to forgive him for that. They all loved the Kennedy family, there was no question about that. There was a strong affection for the Kennedy family, for his mother, for his father, and for the boy, Joe [Kennedy, Jr.], who had died in the war. The fact that his brother Jack [John F. Kennedy] had served honorably in the war, and his brother Bobby [Kennedy] also had served in the war and had a good reputation as a politician was very helpful to Ted Kennedy, because people were willing to give him a chance, give him an opportunity. They did not want to hold this mistake made by a young man against his record permanently.

Knott: Was his youth an issue, the fact that he was 30 years old? Did that come up at all?

Gargan: That was a very big issue. It was an issue that Eddie McCormack was using in the campaign, even before the debates—and it's true, he was just 30 years old! Experience was a serious question. Eddie McCormack had had experience as a lawyer for some time, he had been Attorney General, and he was an experienced politician. He was arguing, "Let's put a man of experience in Washington." Ted's campaign slogan, that he could do more for Massachusetts, was indirectly making reference to, *My brother happens to be President of the United States, so I think I can be very effective in getting the kind of programs to Massachusetts that we need—healthcare, education, jobs, federal loans, and all of those things that a President would be able to do*. So his argument would be, *Yes, I may be young, but I have power in Washington and I intend to use that power when I get there*.

Knott: President Kennedy stayed out of the campaign, at least directly. Is that an accurate statement?

Gargan: I would say yes, that is accurate. He did come to vote. He came about 24 to 48 hours before Election Day. I believe he stayed in the Statler Hotel with the Presidential party and then he voted in his usual voting place on Beacon Hill, right near his old home on Beacon Hill at 122 Bowdoin Street. So I think that was effective. He did definitely, in the background, ask some of his supporters, his campaign workers from the past—after all, he had run for the United States Senate on two different occasions, he had a very active following in Massachusetts, and he asked those people to be helpful to his brother Ted. But he himself did not campaign in the state and indicated that he would not come into the state.

Knott: Can I take you beyond the '62 election now? Did you go back to the U.S. Attorney's office after the campaign was over?

Gargan: I did for several years, yes. I went back in January of '63 and I stayed until June of '64 when Senator Kennedy had the plane crash outside of Springfield, at the Bradley Airport. He was seriously injured; he had a very serious back injury. When the prediction for his post-medical care indicated he was going to be tied up for anywhere from six to ten months, it was clear he was not going to be able to campaign for himself. Once again I was asked to take over

the campaign in Boston and assist Joan Kennedy in campaigning for her husband around the state.

Knott: Can I take you back to something, and I know some of these memories are very painful, when President Kennedy was killed, in November of '63, can you tell us a little bit about what you saw of Ted Kennedy during this period and any memories that you may have of the Senator? I apologize, I know some of these are difficult questions.

Gargan: I recall that very clearly. When President Kennedy was killed, I was at the Harvard Club with the head of my law firm, Judge John J. Sullivan, and another young man, an attorney about my age. I was 33 years old at that time. I was in the U.S. Attorney's office but I was eating lunch at the Harvard Club with John Sullivan, who had graduated from Boston College and Harvard Law School, and a fellow named Tom O'Brien, who was in Badger, Pratt, Doyle & Badger, my old law firm. We were having lunch. One of the waitresses came up to the table and said she had heard that somebody had shot into the Presidential crowd in Dallas.

We finished our lunch and exited quickly because we wanted to get to the radio in the car that I was driving at the time—it turned out to be Senator Kennedy's automobile. I don't remember why I happened to have his convertible at the time, but I did—we turned on the radio immediately in the car and we heard the news reports from Dallas. It did not sound good at all. By the time we got to the office of Badger, Pratt, Doyle & Badger, they had said on the radio that President Kennedy had died at the hospital. I then went into the office and I got a phone call almost immediately from Senator Kennedy, who was in Washington. He asked me to go immediately to Cape Cod, where his mother was by herself, because he and Eunice [Kennedy Shriver] were not going to be able to get there until that evening. He said it would be very good and helpful if I could go immediately to be with her until Eunice and he arrived from Washington.

I did that. I left immediately, I went to Cape Cod, and I stayed with Mrs. [Rose Fitzgerald] Kennedy, I talked to her. We went out on the lawn, which is known as the touch-football lawn, and we walked for several hours back and forth on the lawn while she discussed the happening. She was very strong. She was saying her rosary, I remember well, she had her rosary in her right hand. She was talking about the fact that they were considering whether to bring the body back to bury in Boston with his father and with his siblings who had passed away, or whether he would be buried at Arlington National Cemetery. They were trying to decide which would be the best to do. We walked for quite a while. Then she did get a call indicating that he would be buried at Arlington and that Ted and Eunice would be arriving that evening.

Ted and Eunice did arrive that evening and, of course, it was a very difficult family reunion under extremely difficult circumstances. The death was so sudden and so terrible that it was a shock, to say the least, but very difficult for everybody to take. I still remember, however, that Mrs. Kennedy was very strong, the Senator was very strong and helpful to his mother, as was Eunice. Eunice is very spiritual and has a great devotion to the rosary and to the Catholic Church as did the mother. Senator Kennedy does as well. But they all talked for a period of time.

As I recall, they kept the television away from Mr. Kennedy Senior, Joseph P. Kennedy, by indicating there had been some electrical failure and they couldn't get the television that evening,

in order to keep the news away from him. The Senator wanted to wait until the next morning to discuss with his father the fact that Jack had been killed. They felt that it would be better to discuss it with him in the morning after they had completed plans and knew what was going to happen. Senator Kennedy and Eunice, as I recall, flew back to Washington that next morning after he discussed the matter with his father. The Senator was always very strong about it, very disciplined, very courageous, and did return to Washington.

My wife came down to the Cape and joined me at this point. The plans were for my wife Betty [Gargan], Mrs. Rose Kennedy, and me to fly to Washington for the funeral. I don't remember whether it was that day or the next day that we went. Betty and I flew down with Mrs. Rose Kennedy to Washington. Mrs. Kennedy went directly to the White House. I can't recall where Betty and I stayed. I do recall that the Senator was going to need a dress suit for the funeral. For some reason, although his shape at that time was somewhat larger than mine, we could always fit into the same clothing. So I went to a rental place that they had indicated, rented a dress suit, a mourning suit for myself and also for the Senator. I fitted his suit to my shape, and as a matter of fact, it fit him perfectly.

I then went to the White House, it was my first visit to the White House since the President had died. I went to the White House because I was expecting to meet Senator Kennedy there with the suits. Also I joined then with Sarge Shriver, who was doing just an incredible job preparing for the funeral. He was totally in charge.

Knott: He was handling the arrangements?

Gargan: Yes, he was handling the arrangements and doing just a magnificent job. To this day, I find it a miracle that he was able to do it with such ability and such composure, because the phone was ringing constantly from people with requests. He was constantly talking to Jackie [Kennedy Onassis], who was saying, "I'd like to do this, Sarge, I'd like to do that." And he was saying, "All right, Jackie, we can arrange that, we'll arrange this." Jackie was putting her wishes into effect through the ability and the marvelous composure and courage and character of Sarge Shriver.

I stayed there with him. I was doing nothing effective at that time except being supportive. However, he did ask me during the course of that period of time to take over St. Matthew's Cathedral, to be the advance man on St. Matthew's Cathedral in Washington and to take control of the family, make sure that the family members were seated in their proper place in the first 10 to 15 rows of the church on the left-hand side. The dignitaries were going to be on the right side. We had, of course, four Presidents of the United States there at the time—the sitting President and three previous Presidents, including, as I recall, and this is a long time ago, [Dwight] Eisenhower, [Harry] Truman, and my memory escapes me—

Knott: It might have been [Herbert] Hoover, he was still alive.

Gargan: No, it wasn't Hoover, it will probably come back to me, I believe there was one other President. So I was in charge also of making sure that the arrangements on that side were correct. The dignitaries from around the world were going to be in the next aisle in the front. I can

remember seating Haile Selassie and other prominent people from around the world in the pews in the front of the church.

I was somewhat agitated, I remember, working with Sarge Shriver at the time, because I wanted very badly to go up to the rotunda and have an opportunity to go through the line and give my respects to the body of President Kennedy, and that just wasn't working out. It became midnight, and then all of a sudden about one o'clock in the morning Senator Kennedy arrived and he said to me, "Joey, we're going to go up to the rotunda right now." They had a special car for him and me. I don't know who else was with us. I have a feeling that Eddie—I can't think of Eddie's last name right now, who was killed in a plane crash—

Knott: Eddie Moss?

Gargan: Eddie Moss, I have a feeling Eddie Moss was with us.

Knott: Press reports said it was you, Milton Gwirtzman, Ed Moss, and Senator Kennedy.

Gargan: Milton Gwirtzman I can't really remember offhand, but I do have a memory of Eddie Moss. I was very relieved and very grateful that Senator Ted Kennedy had made a deliberate trip to the White House to pick me up and make sure that I did have the opportunity to go through the rotunda, and that I would go with him. I was very pleased that he had gone out of his way to do that.

Knott: Let's move ahead now to the '64 campaign, which is where you started to go. You mentioned Joan sort of picking up the slack and having to campaign for the Senator after the airplane accident. Could you talk about working with her and what kind of a campaigner she turned out to be?

Gargan: I did work with her. I didn't run her schedule directly, but I had something to do with the schedule because we wanted her to visit the same areas that Senator Kennedy would have visited if he had been able to do so. Actually Senator Kennedy, though he was on the Stryker frame in the hospital and basically totally disabled—able to move and turn only with the benefit of the Stryker frame, which flipped him over like a pancake—was running the campaign himself to a certain degree. He suggested places that she should go campaign, such as the fish pier, and doing plant gates, and visiting at teas, and things of that nature. She was a good campaigner, she worked hard, she definitely had a certain charm that people found attractive. They were very supportive. The people in the Commonwealth understood very well that this was very difficult, that her husband was disabled and in a hospital. They were very sympathetic and warm and inviting to her when she would travel around and campaign. I think she responded to that very well.

Knott: How did Senator Kennedy—he has this terrible tragedy following in the wake of his brother's death where he himself is almost killed in this airplane accident, what was his mood? Do you remember his attitude during this time, during the 1964 period?

Gargan: Yes, it was very positive, it was uplifting, he showed a lot of courage and patience. They had two naval fellows who were experts with the Stryker frame assisting him and working with him. That was going well. Joan and I had visited several hospitals in the area to decide

which hospital would be best, and we picked the New England Baptist Hospital as the place we thought he should go—not because of its medical superiority, I mean, all of the hospitals are superior in Boston, we know. New England Baptist, Mass General, St. Elizabeth's—there are any number of the other great hospitals in the Boston area. We were looking for a place where he would be happy, as happy as possible under the circumstances.

When we got to New England Baptist Hospital, Joan and I decided immediately that this was it, because they had doorways going out onto porches and he could have a room right next to the entranceway to the porch. They could wheel him out on the Stryker frame and then gently wheel him—and I say "gently" because both naval sailors, the medical technicians for the Stryker frame, were not really pleased that he would go out through the doorway to the porch. They did have to be very careful lifting the Stryker frame over the doorway so that he wouldn't bump in any way, and they had to keep him very still on the Stryker frame—but he was delighted because he was out on the porch every day, winter or summer, no matter what the weather was. During the summer months it was just wonderful, and the fall was gorgeous, but he was on the porch even in December as it got cold and rainy, prior to going south to Palm Beach for the rest of the winter. So the choice that Joan made, that we made together, was very successful. He wouldn't have been happier under any other circumstances.

Once he got to the New England Baptist Hospital, he did, to a certain extent, direct the campaign. He was in good humor. Every Saturday night I would rent a movie from a downtown movie place. It wasn't the video kind of thing we have now, but there were places that rented old movies. So we had a projector up there in the room and we would rent these movies and then we would present them. I would try to make every movie entertaining and exciting. I made a mistake once, however, I remember. It was a movie called *Ambush*, with John Hodiak and Robert Taylor in it, I forget who the young lady was in the movie. But it was an Indian type movie, John Hodiak was a scout for the Army and Robert Taylor was a military person. There was a scene where the Indians had set a trap for the military. They had buried themselves under the ground on either side of this roadway through which this military column was going to ride on their horses. I had forgotten this scene in the movie myself.

The Senator is sitting up as much as he could on the Stryker frame and we've got the screen propped up high so he can see it without having to rise. They could set the Stryker frame in such a way that he could have enough eye room to see what was going on. When these Indians popped out of the ground, he jumped in the Stryker frame. He went, "Oh, God!" He said, "Joey, for God sakes, at least you could have warned me about that." I said, "Senator, I forgot all about it, to tell you the truth." But anyway, I'd have to say, under all the difficult circumstances during that period of time, that he composed himself as well as anybody could have been expected to.

Knott: Sure.

Gargan: He was, of course, concerned about whether his back was going to heal. There was no guarantee of that. He was getting the best treatment in the world from people who knew what they were doing, and they were assuring him that he would be able to walk again, he would be able to play with his children, go swimming, campaign, continue his political career. But until he was able to actually stand on his feet—and I remember clearly, when he was leaving the hospital to go to Palm Beach, it was a tremendous moment when he realized, for the first time, that he

really was going to be able to function again. He needed a back supporter and took it gingerly when he first reached Palm Beach, lying out in the hot sun and soaking in all of those wonderful gifts that Palm Beach can give you in the sunny Florida winter, but it was a wonderful moment. Under all that pressure and all those circumstances and all those concerns, he couldn't possibly have composed himself in a better way.

Knott: Could I ask you to talk a little bit now about Robert Kennedy as he enters the Senate in 1964, the first time in a long time that you had two brothers in the Senate at the same time. Slowly, as 1968 approaches, he gradually comes to the decision to challenge President [Lyndon] Johnson for the nomination. Could you tell us about your involvement in that '68 campaign and also, again this is a big question, but Senator Edward Kennedy's involvement in that campaign?

Gargan: That's easy to—

Knott: Did you know Bobby well?

Gargan: Very well. I grew up in the Kennedy household, basically, from 1942. In 1940 I had visited there, in 1942 I started staying there for the summers. So I did know Bobby well. I had a close relationship with President Kennedy when he was a young man and then went into the war. I also was very much aware of Joe Kennedy, who was killed in the war. I knew Joe Kennedy, Jr., very well because when I was about five or six years old, before my mother died—she died in September of 1936—when young Joe Kennedy was attending Harvard, he used to come to the house on Sundays and have Sunday dinner with my father and my mother and myself. I had a younger sister, Mary Jo [Gargan Clasby], who in 1936 would have been four; and a youngest sister, Ann [Gargan], who would have been only two. So Joe Kennedy would come. I remember him well because I was only five or six years old, and he was the big college student to me, and a football player and an athlete. He would pick me up and hold me in his arms and wrestle with me, I can remember that very well.

Bobby was five years older than me, but was around the house more as a result of that, so I did see Bobby quite a bit—although Bobby volunteered for the Navy when he was 17 years old. People are often critical of Mr. Kennedy Senior and that's so unfair, considering the fact that all three of his boys served in the Navy. Mr. Kennedy was a very powerful man and he could have easily kept President Kennedy, Joe Kennedy, Jr., and Robert Kennedy out of the service. Certainly he could have asked Bobby not to go into the service since he was only 17, the youngest son available for service. He could have asked him to wait until he was 18 before going in. But Bobby was insistent that he wanted to do his duty and he did go into the Navy. He eventually served on the USS Joseph P. Kennedy, which was named after his brother Joe after he was killed in a special airplane operation in Europe, when he was attempting, with a plane full of high explosives, to blow out the V2 rocket bases on the coast of France.

After the war, Bobby was very much interested in politics as well, particularly after young Joe was killed. I remember one thing about Bobby very clearly—I was thinking of it this morning on the drive down here—though he was five years older than I was, I remember that Bobby was always looking for the Sunday *New York Times* around the house. I was more interested in the sports section and the funny papers, and it made an impression on me that Bobby was always looking for the political news and the national news, both in the *New York Times* and the Boston

papers of that time—the *Boston Post*, the *Boston Globe*, and the *Boston Herald*. He was interested in politics, interested in the political things.

In 1968, there was some question, of course, about what Lyndon Johnson was going to do. Bobby was very supportive, as a United States Senator, of the boys in the service in Vietnam, but he was disturbed about the way the war was going. He had very strong feelings that we should get out of the war, as respectfully and honorably as we could, protecting our men in the service, of course, but get out of the war. And he was interested in challenging Lyndon Johnson on these issues.

When Eugene McCarthy ran in New Hampshire and did very well—I think Eugene McCarthy, who was a Senator at that time, got about 42 percent of the vote in New Hampshire—it encouraged others to want to run against Lyndon Johnson because it showed Johnson was vulnerable on this issue. Bobby, I think, wanted—I should call him Senator Robert Kennedy—wanted to be a voice heard, maybe a voice crying from the wilderness, but indicating that it was time to do what we had to do, to withdraw from Vietnam and allow the South Vietnamese to take over the battle.

Ted Kennedy called me a couple of days before Bobby announced for President and indicated that he thought Bobby should come to Boston and march in the St. Patrick's Day parade on March 17 after he made his announcement in New York regarding his intention to run for the Presidency of the United States. I said, "Fine, Senator Ted, I'll be available. I think that's a good idea, too. A march in the St. Patrick's Day parade would be basically his first campaign stop. It will get a lot of good publicity. There should be a good crowd of the Irish in South Boston in the St. Patrick's Day parade. They'll be friendly, they'll be helpful, and they'll want to support him. Let's do it." So Bobby did fly into Boston and we did march in the parade. Ted and I marched directly behind Bobby. Our cousin, Bobby Fitzgerald, was a little further back. A wonderful fellow named Frank O'Connor, I remember, who often marched with Senator Edward Kennedy when he would march in the St. Patrick's Day parade, was also marching.

After it was over, Senator Edward Kennedy and Senator Robert Kennedy flew to Washington and started the campaign. Within a couple of days, I got a call from Senator Kennedy asking that I fly to Washington to see him. I had to try to convince my wife that I was not going to go into another political campaign. She said, "Oh, yes, you will. Every time the fire bell rings, you go." So anyway, I flew to Washington, I went to Senator Edward Kennedy's office. He asked if I would wait for him for a little while, he wanted to speak to me. Finally he tore himself away from his current business and we walked out of the building and across the street behind Senator Robert Taft's memorial. We walked up and down the grass for a while and he said to me, "Joey, this campaign has got to be pulled together. There are people going in all directions. You can be very helpful in doing that because you've campaigned for President Kennedy, you've campaigned for me, and you have campaigned for Bobby. So you would be a unified person in there, a person who can bring this thing and these people together. They're all fighting with each other, they're all saying, 'I'm a John Kennedy man,' or, 'I'm a Robert Kennedy man.' Other people are saying, 'I'm loyal to Ted Kennedy.' We've got to pull that together, that's got to stop."

Knott: So there were these factions within the Kennedy—

Gargan: I wouldn't call them factions, but a lot of people had different ideas of how Bobby should run his campaign, and the Robert Kennedy group, so to speak, had their ideas as to how Robert Kennedy should run a Presidential campaign. I think some of them felt that having President John F. Kennedy's crowd in there trying to tell Bobby how to run a campaign, or Senator Edward Kennedy's crowd trying to tell them how to run a campaign, was not going to be helpful.

So I agreed to fly home, get clothing, and come immediately back. Then we were going to hold a group meeting, kind of a campaign meeting, of all of the John Kennedy people, the Robert Kennedy people, and the Ted Kennedy people. It was in a small hotel ballroom where we had hors d'ouvres and cheese and crackers, sandwiches and drinks, and everybody kind of got together. This was a unity meeting, so to speak, and it did work pretty well. I had been asked to join a young lady named Polly Bissell, who had been a secretary in Robert Kennedy's Senate office; and also to work with John Nolan, who was running the campaign scheduling for Senator Robert Kennedy. I joined them to do the advance—get the advance men, get in touch with them, get them to go out on these various schedules that John Nolan was setting up.

Here's a funny story from that time. I didn't know Polly Bissell very well. She was a very pretty girl, a very attractive girl, had a very attractive figure, I remember—I say that because it sets up what happened to me—I had to stay late in the office because I had advance men in the field, and Polly, who was a secretary for John Nolan and me, also stayed. On this particular night I had people in California so I had to stay an extra couple of hours because of the time factor in California. I was waiting for them to call in. So finally, around ten o'clock, Polly said, "We'd better go to this rally, Joe, you're expected to be there, you're the one who is supposed to be there." So I said, "Yes, yes, okay, we can go." She said, "Do you have a ride?" I said no. She said, "I'll give you a ride." So I said, "Okay."

"Let me just go to the ladies' room first." She went to the ladies' room. When she came out of the ladies' room she had this tight pair of pants on and a leather jacket and her hair was tucked at the back of her neck down inside her shirt. It never dawned on me, but we got on the elevator and we went down to the bottom floor and we got off the elevator, and there was a Bonneville 650 motorcycle chained to a post. I said to myself, *Oh, my God, are we going to ride on that motorcycle?* She said, "Jump on the back." So she pulled the thing out, turned it around. I jumped on the back. This particular garage had a circular driveway going out, you went around in circles. She started up that circular driveway—and we were in the basement—we started up that circular driveway, she came zooming out of the door of the garage. We looked down to the right where we were going, I had no idea where this party was, and I see three or four green lights in front of me. I said, "Uh-oh, here we go." So she's shifting, vroom, vroom, vroom, shifting it all the way down the road until now we're going about 85 towards these lights. Of course, I'm praying, "Don't let us get hit, please don't let us get hit."

Of course, we did get safely to the meeting. We had a very nice meeting, everybody was very cooperative, very friendly, agreeing that we were all going to cooperate and work together. I remember that Ted Kennedy's press fellow, whose name escapes me at the moment, came up to me about halfway through the meeting while I was having a drink and eating a sandwich. He asked me, "Are you staying out at Robert Kennedy's house night?" I said yes. The background of that is that when Ethel [Skakel Kennedy] and Senator Robert Kennedy were campaigning I

would go out and stay at the house with the small children, because there was no man out there, it was just the nursemaids and the cook and the kitchen maid and there was no man at the house. So they asked me, after the campaign day was over, to go out and stay in McLean with the children.

He asked, "Are you going out to McLean tonight?" I said, "Yes, I am. Why?" He said, "Well, of course, you know that you're going to have to ride on that motorcycle out the George Washington Expressway." I said, "What do you mean? I am not." He said, "Of course you are. Polly will be very upset if you turn down a ride out there to McLean. She'll be hurt, you've got to go on the motorcycle." So now I'm saying, "Oh, no." Suddenly the drink and the sandwich weren't that tasty at all. Anyway, the end all was, she had changed into very nice dressy clothes for the party but just before we were to leave, back into the bathroom she went. When she came out with her hair down inside her shirt, I knew this was it, we were going out on the George Washington Expressway. I've never forgotten it to this day, because when you're sitting in the back and you look down and a motorcycle is going 85 to 90, that pavement is going underneath your feet so fast it's unbelievable. Anyway, that was just a humorous digression.

So I did work on the campaign, I was in the office, I was sending people around the country for a period of time. Then sometime late in the campaign, probably the first week in May, things weren't going well in Oregon. They decided that John Nolan and I should go to Oregon to help Herb Schmertz, who was running the campaign in Oregon, because Gene McCarthy was running very strong there. We were asked to go out there, so John Nolan and I flew to Oregon. We stayed at the hotel in Portland and we were there about three weeks. I began to bring advance men in to campaign all over Oregon, run Bobby's—John Nolan was setting up the schedule, I was setting up the advance men out of our headquarters.

We had John Nolan and me, and a young lady from New York came in to volunteer. She was sent to us by Dave Hackett, who was working in the Washington office. There was a young lady already working there who was from Fort Wayne, Indiana—my wife was from South Bend, Indiana, and this young lady was from Fort Wayne, Indiana—her name was Rosie Metrailer. She was one of the two secretaries we had. It was the young lady from New York, Rosie Metrailer, John Nolan, myself, and Herb Schmertz. We ran the Oregon campaign.

There was considerable question as to whether Robert Kennedy should debate Eugene McCarthy in Oregon. The polls were favoring Bobby slightly at that time so there was advice going both ways. If you would debate him, you would do very well in the debate and you would increase the already small lead that you seem to have in the polls. Then there were those who were saying it's a mistake because one of the big issues here in Oregon is gun control. You're pushing gun control and people in Oregon carry guns all the time in the back of their pick-up trucks, it's an ordinary thing for them to do here and gun control is not popular at all. Therefore, if you're in a debate with this fellow and you get into a big discussion about gun control, it's going to hurt you. The other thing is, they don't understand the black issue here, which you're pushing. That's a good issue in Indiana, it may be a great issue in Washington, D.C., California obviously, other states. But it is not an issue that anybody in Oregon understands because they don't have enough blacks here to be interested in that issue; it's just not an issue here.

Of course, we could not do any work at the polls in Oregon; you can't hold signs at the polls in Oregon.

Knott: They don't allow it?

Gargan: No, it was against the law at that time. So I decided, with John Nolan, to take our campaign group and the advance men on a salmon fishing trip. So we went down somewhere in southern Oregon, I forget the name of the particular city we were in, but it was a couple of hours drive out of Portland. We went down and got on a salmon fishing boat that we had rented for the day and went salmon fishing. We returned to the headquarters about five o'clock that night to get the returns. Bobby, or I should say, Senator Robert Kennedy, did not do as well as we expected. He lost Oregon. It was a terrific blow, extremely disappointing.

I saw Robert Kennedy after it was clear that he was going to lose Oregon. He said to me, I remember—and this was the last time I was going to see him alive—he said to me, "Joe, do you think we should have debated him? Do you think that would have helped?" I said, "Bobby, I was always against the debate. My advance men were telling me from the road that people take the issue of gun control very seriously here. They really don't know what you're talking about, they haven't got a clue about this gun control thing. If you had gotten into a big argument with Gene McCarthy, I think he would have used that to sink you. They just don't understand it. They all carry rifles. I know you don't understand it, I don't understand it, but they all carry rifles right behind the front seat of their pick-up trucks, so they have no idea what you're talking about on this issue and they're not interested in it. That will be a very good issue in Los Angeles, but it's not a good issue here."

With that he left and went to campaign in California. I did not go to campaign in California because I was chairman of the Robert Kennedy campaign and had to write all the checks. They wanted me to return to Washington to write out a number of checks to keep the press plane and some of the other planes that were chartered in the air. So I returned to Washington. I was working in the headquarters the night of the victory in California. I was watching the television when the incident took place in which Senator Robert Kennedy was shot by the individual in the kitchen. At the headquarters in Washington we were devastated. Everybody, of course, was hopeful that the wound was not serious. We had no information except to see him lying on the floor and people trying to attend to him and then pick him up to carry him away to the hospital.

It wasn't long after that, no more than 15 to 20 minutes, I would say, before I got a call from Pierre Salinger who said to me, "Ethel wants you to go immediately to the house to take care of the children. We don't know what this is all about, whether this is a conspiracy to kill more Kennedys or whether this is just a single incident. So we want you to go immediately to the house." I said okay, that I would do that immediately. I had a car, in fact, I had Senator Ted Kennedy's car parked in the basement because he had been allowing me to use it as a vehicle for my transportation around Washington. He was on the road most of the time campaigning throughout the states for Bobby and he felt he just didn't need the car. So I took three of the young ladies with me—Melody Miller, Susie Tannenbaum, and I think [Rosemary] Cricket Keough, because they had all worked for Robert Kennedy and I knew, with those small children, that we were going to need some young women out there.

So we went immediately to the basement to get the car. Before we left I called and asked the McLean police to immediately take appropriate precautions to surround the family property. I told them that I had been instructed by Mrs. Robert Kennedy to go immediately to the home at McLean, and that I would touch base with them when I got out there and we'd make whatever arrangements we felt were necessary to protect the children and protect the family in McLean.

Knott: I think we'll stop there for now. Thank you.

[BREAK]

Knott: We had left off talking about Robert Kennedy's 1968 Presidential campaign and you described learning the news that the Senator had been shot in California. You head out to McLean to take care of the children. I think probably the best place to begin would be to ask you to talk a little bit about the aftermath of Robert Kennedy's death. We've seen certain news reports that indicated that you spent quite a bit of time that summer sailing with Senator Edward Kennedy, and I think it would be of great interest to historians to know how he dealt with that incredibly difficult period in his life.

Gargan: We did go sailing. I can't remember exactly how the arrangement was made, but I think Dun Gifford found a boat that could be made available to us that we could sail from Long Island up the coast. We sailed into Mystic, Connecticut, and also to Newport. In Newport we picked up Ethel Kennedy and some of her people. I think we picked up Caroline [Kennedy Schlossberg] and John [F. Kennedy, Jr.] because I remember that Jack Walsh, Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy's secret service man, was with us.

We then sailed from Newport. Ethel had a couple of the dogs on board, which I was never crazy about. I never liked it a great deal when you had dogs running around on the deck, but anyway, they were with us. Brumis, Ethel's dog that was absolutely fierce, was there on the boat. We sailed into Edgartown and we docked there. We stayed in a hotel called—there are two hotels in that area with the same name, in fact, I was in front of one of them recently, I just can't think of the name of it offhand—but we were all staying there, that was the important thing. I remember it had a big pool, and—

Knott: It wasn't the Shiretown Inn?

Gargan: No, it was not. It's a big hotel on the point. It had a pool, we were all staying there, and a lot of the rooms were around the pool. Ethel had Brumis there. A state senator was there and he had his dog with him, I think it was his wife's dog, but it was a poodle, a big, black, tall, gorgeous poodle. Brumis came out and started to attack the poodle. Senator Kennedy was yelling at me, "Do something, Joey, do something!" I picked up one of the chairs around the pool, one of those folding chairs, and I was literally fending Brumis off with the folding chair in order to keep him from attacking this poor poodle that he had taken a couple of bites out of already. I remember the scene was just absolutely incredible.

Needless to say, this fellow had been very helpful in making the arrangements because he spent his summers on Martha's Vineyard, though he was a state representative from Hyannis, basically, in Cape Cod. Then we sailed from there to Hyannis Port, everybody went. We had dogs on the boat and people on the boat, and cousins on the boat, and we sailed into Hyannis Port. We stayed there for a few days. We then sailed—well, before that, I don't know where Senator Kennedy was, but before that I had invited a group of the "boiler room girls" from the campaign headquarters up to sail, because they were all devastated. I remember Polly Bissell was just, she cried and cried for days. The other girls were very upset and in despair over the assassination of Robert Kennedy.

So I invited them up to take a sail. And Dun Gifford did, too. Dun Gifford had a home, his family home and a home of his own, on Nantucket Island. So they all came up, a group of them. We sailed for Nantucket and we had a lovely time at Dun Gifford's home, his family was very hospitable. We sailed back the next day. My wife, who did not particularly like sailing, especially on big boats with the rocking around, flew over to Nantucket and sailed back with us. Several of the young ladies stayed at my home, and several out on Squaw Island. And Joan Kennedy, the night before the trip to Nantucket, had given a very nice cocktail party for all of these ladies.

A few days later Senator Kennedy arrived from Washington and we started to sail this boat, this big schooner, up the coast of Maine. We were gone for four or five weeks. In the middle of that trip, I went to Chicago to be Senator Kennedy's representative on the delegation to the convention. He kept sailing. I came back later after the convention was over and we continued to sail that summer.

Knott: How was he bearing up? How was he holding up during this time?

Gargan: I think he was bearing up very well. I was impressed by the fact that he had suffered such great difficulties, these tremendous losses. Basically I had in mind—because I was there when the family got the information that young Joe Kennedy had been killed in Europe in August of 1944. I had been there when that took place, so I was familiar with what happened and how people bore up. I was impressed by the courage and the determination of the Senator then, during the course of that summer, to bear up under these great difficulties. And he was able to adjust to Bobby's death, Senator Robert Kennedy's death, as well.

But he had a great power of example in his mother, because his mother bore up very well on these occasions. She attended Mass in the morning. She was a power of example because she walked a great deal, always saying her rosary. She often said, as she did to me the day that we were walking on the lawn after President Kennedy's death, she said, "Frequently, we have to bear up and we have to have courage, Joe. We have to be a power of example for the others, they're going to need us now." I think Senator Kennedy took a page out of his mother's book because he well knew that people in the family as well as others would be watching him during this period, and he was going to be a power of example to the rest of the family. He knew Ethel had all these children and there was no man there to take care of them at the moment. Also he had to bear up for his own children, and also his brother, the President's children, Caroline and John. So he was having all of that in mind.

But sailing was the great salvation, the great cure. His brother had a great devotion to the sea and in times of crisis, in times when he had to get away and compose himself, or think about issues or difficulties, his brother, the President, often went to sea to sail. I saw that particularly when Joe Kennedy, Junior, died in Europe after his plane was blown out of the air. I remember that the family was all gathered in the sunroom and everybody was in tears and everybody was broken up by it and rather desperate. After a half an hour, I'd say, President Kennedy—then basically neither Congressman nor Senator, he was just Jack Kennedy to us at that time, in the summer of '44—he said to everybody, "Joe wouldn't want us here crying and sobbing about his death, he'd want us to go sailing. Let's go sailing." Then he said, "Joey, Teddy, go get the sails. Go to the attic and get the sails." That's just what he did, he took the family sailing. I think Senator Edward Kennedy, at the death of Bobby, was doing exactly the same thing.

Knott: The following summer there's another event for the boiler room girls, the boiler room women. You know that this is an event of which there are millions of rumors and innuendo flying around. Would you like to give us your account of how that party came about and what occurred that night?

Gargan: Actually, it's quite simple. We had been sailing in the Edgartown Regatta, Senator Kennedy and I, since I was probably 13 years old and he was 11. During World War II the men were gone to war, so a lot of the young sailors like ourselves were going to Edgartown to the regatta. We would take the Wianno Senior over there and sail in the regatta. I remember we raced in 1943 and 1944. Later I can remember racing with President Kennedy when he was still a Senator in 1949. Torby McDonald, a Congressman from Lynn who had been a great football player at Harvard, came to race with us. It was Ted Kennedy and I, Congressman Kennedy and Congressman Torby McDonald, we all raced in the 1949 regatta and we actually won that race.

Then in the Victura, which was the name of the Wianno Senior—we hadn't raced for a while, and then in '63, when President Kennedy was President and Senator Kennedy was Senator, we took the old Victura—and I say "old" Victura because the boat was built, I believe, in 1929, and it hadn't been raced in a long time. It still had the old rope backstays. Most backstays had been converted to steel after World War II, but this still had the old rope backstays on it—we raced in the '63 race and we did very well. We finished second to Jack Fallon, who was a tremendously talented Wianno Senior sailor. We kept racing then in the summers after that, Senator Kennedy and I.

In the summer of '68 we did not race because we had been campaigning, but prior to that we had been racing. Then in '69 I was hopeful to have some kind of a reunion with what we referred to as the "boiler room girls." Since Senator Kennedy and I were going to race that summer of '69, we decided—there had been some question whether we'd race at all, frankly, because Bobby had been killed the year before. There was a great deal of sadness about that still. Senator Kennedy wasn't sure whether or not he really should race under the circumstances because of Bobby's death. He felt maybe it was inappropriate. But finally at a very late date, he called me to say, "Let's do it, Joe, let's go to Edgartown and race." So we did that. We planned and we asked Howie Hall, a young man who was a close neighbor to my house in Hyannis Port, to crew for us because he was a talented young sailor. We were going to need a crew.

There were several other people invited to come down. Paul Markham, who had been a former U.S. Attorney and a very close friend of mine, we had gone to high school together. He had gone to a different college than I did—I went to Notre Dame, he went to Villanova—but we had remained great friends after we became practicing lawyers in Boston. There were quite a few people who were invited to come that did not come, but others did. Jack Crimmins, of course, has been talked about. And Ray LaRosa and Charlie Tretter. They were just friends, they were people who had worked hard in previous campaigns. Paul Markham had worked very hard in Senator Kennedy's campaign in '62 and '64, and became a U.S. Attorney when I was in the office. A lot of these other fellows—Charlie Tretter had spent a whole summer working in the campaign of '62. They were all good friends.

I had also been looking for some kind of an occasion where the so-called boiler room girls, Susie Tannenbaum, Cricket Keough, and others, could come and go sailing and watch the Edgartown Regatta and the races. That's exactly what happened. There was, as people describe it, an automobile accident that night. Senator Kennedy was highly criticized for the things that he did, and for the things that people said he did not do. I always thought of it—as I mentioned, I had been with Badger, Pratt, Doyle & Badger since the summer of 1956. I graduated from law school in June of '55 and I joined Badger in June of '56. I was defending insurance companies, defending automobile accidents, all the time. I considered this an automobile accident that grew way out of proportion because of the press depicting this thing in all kinds of ways that were very detrimental and, I felt, unfair to the Senator.

It always has interested me that that summer there was another automobile accident that same weekend. Three nuns and two priests were riding in a car coming to the Cape. I don't know where they were going, I don't remember the whole story. But there was an automobile accident on the Mid-Cape Highway, and I think two of the nuns and one of the priests were killed. That story was on page six or eight of the *Cape Cod Standard Times*, whereas they kept this other story of Senator Kennedy's accident on the front pages for weeks and months.

I think it was unfair, unfair to him. I still look at it from that point of view. I think everybody did the best they could under the circumstances. We did exactly what we would do as young people in Hyannis Port, which is very difficult for anybody to understand unless they grew up in Hyannis Port and grew up in the water. If we had a sailboat in Hyannis Port that turned over—and the smaller sailboats, the Wianno Juniors, would turn over, and young sailors were sailing in those boats, sometimes a child would be in the boat—we wouldn't call the police or the Coast Guard or the United States Navy. You had to get into a speedboat or a fast boat as quickly as you could, get out to the scene, go in the water if you could, and make a rescue.

Actually, that's what Senator Kennedy was hopeful, I'm sure, in his heart, that I could do that evening. He didn't know whether Mary Jo [Kopechne] was in the car or not, because we did go to the scene. Paul Markham and I took all our clothes off. I was the one who suggested that to Paul. Paul Markham was not experienced and had not grown up with boats as I had. I said to Paul, "We may have to get into that car. If we've got clothes on, we can get caught in the car and not get out." So we stripped down. We had no clothes on at all when we entered the water. I was able, at one point—it was very difficult, the tide was enormously fast and powerful—I was able to enter one of the windows of the car, I believe it was in the front seat area—

Knott: The car was upside down?

Gargan: Upside down in the water, totally underwater, with the exception of the wheels, the tops of the tires. I'd say four inches of the tires were still up. By going to the front of the car and slipping down its side, I was able—there was a cable I found of some kind, on the bottom—I could slip down with the cable, reach under, and pull myself. I could pull myself in the window of the car, into what I presume was the front area, and feel around. I couldn't feel anybody. If I'd been able to feel somebody or something, I would have obviously removed Mary Jo Kopechne from the car. As it turned out, I did not know it at that time, but later the skin-diver indicated that she was in the very back of the car, near the back window. So even if I had been able to reach into the back section of the car, I probably would not have been able to realize that she was in the vehicle.

But every effort was made at that time to make a rescue of Mary Jo by people who were very capable. Senator Kennedy was a good swimmer, we'd been swimming together since we were little kids. I was an excellent swimmer and I had made that kind of a rescue in small boats on many occasions when a child's life might be in the balance, when a Wianno Junior tipped over or something. As I say, you didn't suddenly call the Coast Guard or call the police, because by the time they arrived it would have been much too late. It was either make your rescue at that moment or not make it at all.

As a matter of fact, by example, just this summer two good friends of Senator Kennedy's, Dickie Gallagher and Dr. Rodger Currie—who was my dentist for many years in Chelmsford—made a rescue this summer. They were coming back from a trip to Nantucket in their boat and they came upon this boat that was on fire. Rodger Currie and Dickie Gallagher went up to the boat and rescued the people. As I remember, there were a couple of small children on the boat. It was a very dangerous situation because the boat was a gasoline-powered boat and easily could have exploded. So they rescued the people off the boat. They didn't call up on their cell phone and have the harbor police come out or the Coast Guard come out, it would have been much too late.

In addition, the Senator himself experienced a similar rescue just a couple of weeks ago, the middle of October, 2005. When walking on the beach, as I understand it, he observed some fishermen out on the end of the breakwater who were trapped out there because of a storm. With the high waves coming over the breakwater, they were not going to be able to walk back in. He went into Hyannis Port Harbor, got on what I believe was his powerboat with a friend, called rescue at the same time, and went out to the end of the breakwater to rescue these people. This was very typical of what we would do.

Many people criticized the action that we did take, but I would defend Senator Kennedy's action. At that time it was the only and best thing to do. We could have called the United States Navy or the Coast Guard or a police boat, but it would have been much too late. The only thing to do was dive into that car and see if we could remove Mary Jo. Failing in that, there wasn't much else one could do. We did not find a person in the car when I was feeling there—although, as it turns out, she was in the car—but I think that probably left the Senator with a question in his mind about whether she was in the car or whether she had somehow escaped and floated downstream, which is exactly what would have happened. The tide was so fast there that only a very strong

swimmer, which Senator Kennedy was, could have reached the shore, which he did, and he was able to walk back and enlist Paul Markham and me in a rescue effort at that time.

Knott: Can I get you to comment on some stories that circulated afterwards? Jack Anderson reported that you had been asked to take the blame for the accident, and that story still circulates.

Gargan: Yes, Jack Anderson has written a lot of stories about a lot of things and some of them are just that, stories. The truth of that, as I said at the time, was absolute nonsense. Senator Kennedy would never have asked me, on any occasion, to take the blame. We would not be the close, good friends we are today if he had made even such a suggestion. I would have been appalled by it, and no such conversation ever took place. The general conversation in the car was, *What do we do now, the accident must be reported, must be reported as soon as possible, how are we going to do that*. That was the general conversation. There were no other thoughts going on in the car at that time.

Knott: Do you know why there was a delay in reporting it? I think it took ten hours or so?

Gargan: Well, as Senator Kennedy testified, and as I testified, and I believe Paul Markham testified, too—I haven't seen the transcript in a very long time—but Senator Kennedy indicated in his testimony that after that discussion he said, "Okay, Joe." In other words, he got the point, the thing had to be reported. He indicated that with the words, "I'll take care of it, I'll take care of it." And then he dove into the water. That's how, as I recall, we described it at that time.

There was a definite concern that if the people at the cottage were notified that there had been an accident and Mary Jo might very well be in the car, that they would all have gone down there to the water and attempted some kind of a rescue, which I knew—Paul Markham was less experienced—but I knew and Senator Kennedy knew that if she was in the car, it was much too late. The tide was streaming through that car, for one thing. Number two, if she was in the car, it was totally underwater and a rescue attempt by anybody would have not been worthy of participating in or having take place. So it wasn't going to serve any good purpose to have those young ladies, who were very dear friends of Mary Jo, because Mary Jo was quite a wonderful person—

Knott: Did you know her well?

Gargan: Yes, I did, because I dealt with her almost every day in the headquarters. She was a very nice girl, very nice person. The girls would have perhaps been hysterical. The men, who did not know Mary Jo as well, would have probably been much more controlled under the circumstances. Certainly Jack Crimmins was an older gentleman and not able to attempt any kind of a rescue. Ray LaRosa had worked, as I understand it, in the fire department, perhaps in Lawrence or Haverhill where he came from, and might have been helpful. But without some kind of equipment nobody could have attempted a rescue and it would have been much too late. Even a very gifted person with flippers, a face mask, and a lung in order to breathe, would have not been able to rescue Mary Jo.

The gentleman that did, in fact, go into the car—I saw this in a newspaper report—in broad daylight, the next day, took 25 minutes to get into the car and remove Mary Jo's body. Twenty-five minutes would have been much too long. So even a person with great skin-diving equipment

could not have been helpful. The only real thing to do was to report the accident, which Senator Kennedy was indicating that he was going to do.

I slept by the door that evening at the cottage expecting somebody to come, as I testified to. The next morning when nobody had come, I was interested in whether or not they had gone to the Poucha Pond and found the automobile. So Paul Markham and I took the first ferry with Susie Tannenbaum, and I think Cricket Keough was with us. They went to the cottage that they were staying in at the Shiretown Inn and Paul Markham and I went up to see Senator Kennedy and had a conversation with him, which has been testified to, indicating that this thing has got to be reported—when we discovered that it had not been reported—it had to be reported immediately.

My only explanation for his, at that time—and he did agree with me, he made a call to Dave Burke indicating what had happened and agreed that he was going to the police station with Paul Markham immediately, and that I would go back and see the girls on the island—I would say that the time lapse, more than anything else, was simply because Senator Kennedy had not heard from me. He was waiting, I think, to hear from me, to see whether Mary Jo did arrive back at the cottage and that hopefully everything was all right. He was very much agitated about this whole incident. He had great difficulty believing that it happened and could have happened. He was at that time thinking about all the various disasters, his brother Joe, his brother Jack, his brother Bobby, and thinking that some very dark cloud was hanging over the Kennedy family.

He was having difficulty coming to grips with the whole situation until Markham and I arrived and said, "We've got to report this. I will go and take care of the people at the cottage and bring them back, but you and Paul must go to the police station and indicate what has happened." That's exactly what was done. So that's basically the facts of the story.

Knott: Do you think he was in a state of shock?

Gargan: Yes, shock and disbelief, both—a difficulty in comprehending what had happened. I emphasized to you previously in my discussion that I saw him very clearly when his brother Joe died. It was a very difficult experience but he seemed to come through that experience very well, though he was only 12 years old at the time. Again, when his brother Jack was assassinated, he showed great courage, a great sense of responsibility toward his family, his mother, his father, and the people in Washington. He and Bobby handled that tremendous loss, that desperate, terrible loss, again with great courage. And then when Bobby died, leaving him to be the man of the family with these enormous responsibilities, once again he showed enormous courage, great support for his mother, and great ability to handle the situation.

I think if there was one mistake made on that island that night, it was the mistake I made. If you recall my testimony, I testified that Paul Markham and I, after dropping Senator Kennedy at the landing where the boat was, and he dove into the water, Paul Markham and I got all the way to the cottage and turned around and came back to the boat landing. I said to Paul Markham, "I think I should swim across and make sure that Ted is all right and be helpful to him in going up to see the police and making a report of this accident. He needs to have somebody there supportive of this situation, doing this alone is going to be very difficult." If there was a mistake made that night—and people will say there were a lot of mistakes made that night, it's very easy to criticize looking back—but if there was one mistake made, I'd say it was my mistake in not

diving into the water at that time and going over and joining him and being the support, the brother, so to speak, the friend, the cousin that I had always been with him.

When he was seven years old in 1939, my father took young Ted, then called Teddy, and me to the Notre Dame–Army game. We sat on the bench with Elmer Layden, the coach of the Notre Dame team, and we watched the game from the bench with my father who had been a great athlete, a great football player at Notre Dame, a great friend of Knute Rockne's, and knew Elmer Layden, who was one of the Four Horsemen. So Senator Kennedy always expected me, as sort of the older relative—I was nine years old at the time—to be there; and I was there all those years, and was supportive and ready to help. This particular night if, as I say, I had it to do over again, I would have dived into the water. I think that the picture would have been different in some way, if only from the point of view of those who would like to criticize the situation. Otherwise, I would say that everything that could have been done was done to save Mary Jo Kopechne's life that night. Anything more would have just been too little, too late.

Swerdlow: You didn't get there in time that you could have made a difference, right?

Gargan: No, but we did do—we don't know how long it took him to walk back to the cottage, then for us to get in the car and drive down there. You're right on that, Beatriz. But the fact is, when I got there and realized what a disaster this really was, at that moment we still did the best we could and the most we could under the circumstances. I could not have imagined, nor could anybody else, that—I've been looking for years at pictures of accidents where cars have gone into the water, and I've never seen one in that situation, where the car was actually upside-down and on its roof. When it flipped—I found out later from reports of the damage to the automobile—the roof kind of caved in from hitting the water, which put pressure on the doors. I made lots of attempts to open those doors to get into the car. The reason I could not is they were jammed, and so I couldn't get them open. So I had—it was a summer night, some of the windows were open. Which window I actually got into, I can't tell you, but I believe it was one of the front windows.

In reaching in, which I did—in fact, I got so far in, I got in up to my chest. The next day Dave Burke was down at the house, down at the compound, and he saw these scratches on my chest. He said to me, "God, Joe, what happened to your chest? What happened?" I said, "I kind of got caught for a couple of minutes in the car." It wouldn't have been that long, that's an exaggeration. I could hold my breath then, easily for over a minute. So I would say it was probably 30 to 45 seconds that I was stuck, because my chest cavity was large enough to get stuck. I was trying to push out, I had difficulty pushing out, until it dawned on me to turn sideways and come out, because I'm rather wide from my back to my chest cavity here. So when I turned slightly I was able to slip out again. But that's what, I'm sure, would have led—although we've never discussed it—Senator Kennedy to believe that she may very well have gotten out of the car as he did, the fact that I didn't find anybody. And she was in the front seat and that's where I believe I was.

Swerdlow: It's really a miracle he survived.

Gargan: Oh, yes, he can't explain it himself. Just as he said, he was thrashing around in the car and he felt, he had almost, and we've heard other stories of survival that way, he was basically ready to give up and the next thing he knew he was on the top of the water.

Swerdlow: When he went back to the cottage, all of you must have been in total shock, it must have been horrifying.

Gargan: At what time are we speaking?

Knott: When he first came back to tell you what had happened.

Gargan: Well, nobody knew that, see, basically nobody knew that except I think Ray LaRosa, who was smoking outside, and saw the Senator walk up. I forget what his conversation with Ray was, except that Ray came in and said, "Joe, the Senator is outside. He wants you and Paul Markham to come out." I was the one who had the keys and was driving the small, I think it was a white car. So he said, "There's been an accident," or something to that effect. "There's been an accident, Joe, we've got to get to the bridge." There was only one bridge that I knew of on that island, so I just backed the car out and roared down to where the bridge was. I had taken people down there to go swimming earlier that day. They'd walked across the bridge and gone down to the beach to swim for a couple of hours before the race. He himself, as I recall, had also gone down there. Jack Crimmins had dropped him off and he went down for a swim, too, before the race. I did not, but I remember he did.

Knott: There were some descriptions in the popular media of that party being a sort of rowdy, lots of drinking, orgy kind of affair, would you comment on that?

Gargan: Well it wasn't. As a matter of fact, it was pretty boring, to tell you the truth. We had a music box, so to speak, that wasn't working properly, had no real volume and was rather defective. There was no wind at all, it was dead quiet. It was a very hot night. Everybody was uncomfortable because it was terribly hot with no breeze at all. The charcoal that I was cooking the steaks on were not lighting very well because there wasn't a breeze to really get them going. So I was pouring lighter fluid on the charcoal to get them going, and fanning them and this kind of thing. So really, although the party was nice because people that we really respected and liked and who loved Bobby Kennedy a great deal—and that was the whole reason for the thing, because Senator Kennedy was his brother. They felt honored to be there, and honored that we would have this affair for them. A lot of other people were supposed to be there, I remember, who were not there, who had worked in the campaign and one thing or another.

So the idea that there were six girls and six men is a lot of nonsense, particularly with Jack Crimmins there, because Crimmins wasn't happy at all. There were bugs, there were wild animals in the bushes. The night before he had slept out there in the cottage and I think either a raccoon or a skunk had been scratching at the screen door. Of course he had had the front door open and just the screen door closed, because he was trying to get some breeze. Again, it was a terribly hot night. So he hated it out there. It was not like South Boston at all. They don't have raccoons and skunks running around in the middle of the night in South Boston.

Knott: There are a few skunks in South Boston, but that's a different story.

Gargan: Yes, there still are probably. But at any rate, Jack was not pleased. He wasn't pleased with the party, he was irritating everybody, and he wanted everybody to go home basically, so he could go to bed. It was not a very exciting party at all. So those who would like to believe it was some kind of huge celebration with a lot of drinking going on, it just wasn't happening.

Knott: You attended the funeral with Senator Kennedy and the others?

Gargan: I did.

Knott: Did the media hound you for the next few years about this, or is this something—

Gargan: Well, it's fascinating because—and you're probably going to find this amazing, as other people would, or even the press would—nobody ever asked me a question about Chappaquiddick, ever. Not the media, not the press. They never came to interview me, they never came to talk to me.

There was one member of the press who came to the house one day, I don't think I was there. As a matter of fact, I'm reasonably sure I was not there, but he came up—we have a boxed-in screen porch, about 10 feet by 12 feet, and you go through this screen porch to get to the front door. Some member of the press did come to the front porch screen door and knocked, and my wife answered the door. She told me the story, I didn't see it, but evidently she got really furious with this guy when he introduced himself as a member of the press—from what organization I'm not sure—but she said to him, she had a little thing hanging over the stove, something about the old Indian saying, "Unless you've walked in his moccasins, don't criticize," or something like that. She had that somewhere near the stove. She ran out to the front door, opened the screen door, and handed it to him, and said, in effect, "Now get out of here, beat it." So he left.

But there's no one else who has ever asked me a question about Chappaquiddick Island or the incident. No friend of mine has ever asked me a question about it on social occasions, anything of that nature. I don't know why, maybe I could take it as a compliment that people figured, *He's not going to talk about it anyway*. But actually, I wouldn't have talked about it, and I haven't talked about it, and I don't really have any liberty to talk about it, as a lawyer representing Senator Kennedy, which both Paul Markham and I basically were on that occasion. What I've talked about today is basically what is in the transcript and what was testified to at the hearing or before the judge.

Basically, that's my memory of it and how I feel about it. I still think that it was an unfortunate automobile accident that was very overblown. But we know today—what is it, 35, 36 years later—that the press is even more invasive today with people's lives than they were then. So I suppose, looking back, it shouldn't surprise me.

Knott: Is this something you think about often or has it receded in your memory over the years?

Gargan: It never comes into my mind at all. Sometimes when I'm trying a case, or defending somebody in a case, in a situation or an automobile accident, there will be an incident that will remind me once again that it was an automobile accident, and that the people—I have represented fatal cases before the Registry of Motor Vehicles, I have represented liquor fatal cases before the Registry of Motor Vehicles. Most of those accidents are great tragedies, of

course, enormous tragedies, but they basically, except for the liquor fatals, don't really get into the paper, although the Registry of Motor Vehicles and our state laws are very tough on these cases. Often in these cases that I've represented people on since that time, there is no negligence. There is no negligence on the part of the driver, sometimes, even in the liquor fatals.

I was on the Board of Appeal in Massachusetts for a long time and I'm reminded of one case there where a fellow pleaded guilty in court and later came back to the Board of Appeal—I represented the Registry of Motor Vehicles on the Board of Appeal for eight years, that's why I do a lot of Registry of Motor Vehicles work now. People say, "Joe Gargan was on the Board of Appeal for a long time, go talk to him about it." But just to give you an example, our Board of Appeal, if you want to appeal a decision of the Registry of Motor Vehicles, there's a three-man board: one represents the Commissioner of Insurance, one the Attorney General, and one the Registry of Motor Vehicles. They have hearings to see whether or not the Registry made a good decision.

We had a case come before the board, when I was on it, that I often use in examples. This fellow admitted that he had had five to six beers, which would suggest that he was under the influence of alcohol. He was up between Chelmsford and Lowell, on Route 3, going toward New Hampshire. There's a circle there, right by Chelmsford, what we call a rotary in Massachusetts. This fellow was going around the rotary after a heavy snowstorm. The rotary had been plowed and there were big snow banks all around it. There were four exits. He had come in the entrance going toward New Hampshire and had gone around the circle, and there was a boy sitting on a sled on a snow bank. As this automobile went by, the boy slipped off the snow bank, went under the rear wheels of the car, and was killed.

When it reached the Board of Appeal, the Registry was insisting that he lose his license for ten years. That's what a liquor fatal is in Massachusetts, a ten-year loss of license for a first offense. It's a lifetime if you do it twice. I said to the Registry lawyer, "Where is the negligence here? If that driver was sober as a judge, he still would have killed the little boy. There's no way he could have avoided that accident."

Knott: He didn't see him.

Gargan: No. And it was the rear wheels, too, not the front. So there was no opportunity to veer the vehicle or anything else. So I said, "We're going to throw this out." Oh, the Registry was—they went out of their minds. They were going to have me fired and everything else, because I did represent the Registry of Motor Vehicles on the Board. I said, "No way. You can't show us any negligence here." There has to be not only negligence, you also have to be able—and this is the big point—you have to be able to show that the negligence is causally connected with the death of the person. There's no way they could show, number one, that he was negligent. He shouldn't have had five or six beers, but they had no witness that said he was driving unreasonably, or at an unreasonable speed. But even if he had been, there was no way he could have avoided the accident.

So when I see a case like that I'm still convinced that an automobile accident is just that, an accident. There are appropriate remedies, with the courts there's a jail term in a liquor fatal of two-and-a-half years, and also there is a ten-year loss of license. So the punishment is there if

you're negligent and you've caused the death. So again, to me it was an automobile accident, and to carry it on for years—so I've been able to put it behind me.

[BREAK]

Knott: The final question is, did the events at Chappaquiddick strain your relationship with Senator Kennedy?

Gargan: I would say no. A lot of other things, not my relationship directly with him, but I would say that other people were taken aback by the incident, by what happened. A lot of them played the blame game, and blamed me in particular for the incident, blamed me for the fact that he later, rightfully or wrongfully, did not run for President because of Chappaquiddick, and that kind of thing. But Senator Kennedy? No, never. And we have a good relationship today. As a matter of fact, my wife told me he's having a Thanksgiving party, which he has every year, and he's invited us to go.

I think since I'm getting older—it's definitely a day at a time when you get to be, I'll be 76 in February—it's probably more appropriate at this time and age of my life to go to Thanksgiving with my children in the Washington D.C. area and spend Christmas down here as well. As you get older—and I'm hopeful, I don't know whether I've got six hours, six days, six weeks, or six years—

Knott: None of us does.

Gargan: But the point is that as you do get older, I think that it's better to spend time, the holidays in particular, with your children and grandchildren. I don't get to see them during the course of the school year because they're not down on the Cape at Christmas and Thanksgiving. But we're invited guests to the social occasions he has, which basically, because he's in Washington and we live on Cape Cod year round, it's usually just in the summer, or something like this, a Thanksgiving holiday. In the past, on occasion he's even spent Christmas here, but he hasn't done that in recent years.

Knott: Did you get involved at all in his 1980 campaign for President, against Jimmy Carter?

Gargan: No, not really.

Knott: Had you given up politics at that point?

Gargan: I gave it up, really, in 1970—which was the year of his reelection campaign—for a variety of reasons. But basically, been there, done that. My wife, though she was infinitely patient, and I use that word very carefully but correctly, she was right—I told this story earlier—at the time of Bobby's 1968 campaign, when I got the call from the Senator to go to Washington to talk to him, she said to me, "You're going to go and work on that campaign." I was saying,

"No, I'm not." She said, "Yes, you will, every time the fire bell rings, you go." And of course, she was right, I did end up going.

By 1970, as wonderful and patient as she'd been about it, she had basically had enough of my traveling all over the country. I had promised many times never to go into another campaign, as I did after President Kennedy's campaign for President. Then I get called from the barn, where I have my two-year-old daughter riding on a pony. Kenny O'Donnell calls just two weeks after President Kennedy has been elected and asks me to go to Dallas to meet with Lyndon Johnson and President Kennedy-elect and the Secret Service. That did not sit well with her at all.

Knott: With your wife.

Gargan: With my wife. Not that she was disagreeable about it, she never was. But also other people were saying to me, "Joe, you're a lawyer, you ought to be beginning to focus on your law practice and not be running around the country every time there's a political campaign." There was a great deal of truth in that, there's no question about it. In '62—you see, that was 1960 and she wanted me out of it in '62—as we've already discussed, I worked full-time in Senator Kennedy's campaign. I couldn't help it that he had a plane crash in '64, but it forced me to come back and work in the campaign again in '64. So this was happening on a regular basis. Then in '68 I went to Washington for Bobby. People were saying, "Either fish or cut bait." Either practice law or become a circus advance man. I finally did practice law in the end, and still do.

Knott: Did you enjoy the political life?

Gargan: Loved it.

Knott: So it was a difficult decision for you to pull out of that path, is that correct?

Gargan: Yes, for a variety of reasons. One, I had a tremendous loyalty to my Uncle Joe and Rose Kennedy, because at a time in my life when both my mother and father had died—even before my father died, when he was working as Chief Counsel to the Undersecretary of War, Robert Patterson, he was in Washington and rarely had time to see us, though he tried to come home on weekends, to Lowell. I was fortunate, as compared to my two sisters, because I was going to Georgetown Prep. My father was living in Washington and I would go in on weekends and visit with him. He took me to the Navy–Notre Dame and the Army–Notre Dame games every year. So we had a wonderful, loving relationship. But my sisters were in Lowell most of this time and that was difficult for them.

When my father died in May of 1946, we were basically orphaned. I don't say that with any despair or discouragement, because so many people pitched in. We stayed with his brother in Lowell and wonderful Aunt Ann [Gargan], his wife, who was like a mother to us, no question. Then my Uncle Joe and Aunt Rose had us come every summer to the Cape, and we were treated like family. We sailed in the boats, we swam in the swimming races, we played tennis, and did all the things that a child would love to do. So I was very loyal to them.

Secondly, as I grew up I spent a lot of time with President Kennedy, particularly after the war. When he came home we spent a lot of time together, went to the movies together. I remember we went to see *Easter Parade*. I can remember who was in *Easter Parade*, even to this day. It was

Fred Astaire, Judy Garland, Ann Miller, and Peter Lawford. Now, Pat [Kennedy] Lawford was married to Peter Lawford. I was talking about movies several years ago to Pat Lawford and I said that Ann Miller was in that movie. Pat Lawford said to me, "Ann Miller wasn't in that movie, I'm a good friend of Ann Miller's, I know she wasn't in that movie." I said, "I'm sure she was, Pat."

Of course, it turns out I was right, because President Kennedy—then Jack Kennedy, back from the war—and I saw *Easter Parade* four times. In those days you'd go from movie house to movie house. We saw it in Hyannis, we saw it in Osterville, then we went down to Chatham to see it, and some other little village that it was in, because that's the way you went to the movies in those days, they moved the movies around. We saw it, I remember, four times. He got a straw hat, he got a cane for himself, and he was dancing around the house with the straw hat and the cane, imitating Fred Astaire. So I was very close to him at that time.

He wasn't well. He had the bad back and he had the malaria, and he'd often be in his bedroom. He was very close to Teddy and me. He often gave us books on people like Charles James Fox, John Adams, people like that. I can't think of his favorite book that he gave us, but it was about Queen Victoria's Prime Minister—

Knott: It wasn't *Marlborough*, was it?

Gargan: Yes, *Marlborough*, that's what it was. That was his favorite book. He gave me that. As a matter of fact, I may still have a copy of that. I think I do. I think the dog ate some of the cover, but it's probably—

Knott: Hold on to that.

Gargan: At auction, it's probably still worth some money. But anyway, and then of course I grew up with Bobby because he was younger and closer to us. So when these people were going into campaigns, I felt first a loyalty to my Aunt Rose and Uncle Joe because they had been so good to me, then I felt a loyalty to them, as cousins, first cousins, but they were much more than that. We were close, close friends, as close as you could be and not be a brother. So I had a real loyalty for that reason.

In Ted's campaign, the first campaign, people did try to attack him on the basis that he was too young, unqualified, things like that. So that got your fighting Irish vim and vigor up and you wanted to say, "Say that one more time and you'll get a punch in the nose." And then there was the plane accident, in which he broke his back. I spent a lot of time at the hospital with him, campaigning for him that year. So we had an extremely close relationship.

Knott: Did you ever think of running for office yourself in Massachusetts?

Gargan: I did, and it's one of my regrets. I should have gone out for football at Notre Dame, and I probably would have played my junior and senior year, that's a regret. One of the other regrets is not going into the service, not going into the Korean War. As it turned out, first I was deferred from that because I was in college, and then I worked in Jack Kennedy's campaign the summer of 1952. I was expecting to go into the service and then come back and go to law school, but I worked all that summer on the campaign and the draft board in Lowell never sent me a notice. I

thought that was peculiar, so eventually, about early September, I went to Lowell to see the draft board. The girl said, "What do you want to do?" I said, "I want to go to law school." She said, "You can go ahead to law school." I said, "Really?" She said, "We won't draft you." I said, "Really, why not?" The opposite to being drafted was to volunteer and serve four years, which I didn't want to do. So she explained the reason. Lowell was a very poor, distressed town at that time and the high school graduates, not being able to get a job, were going into the service, so the quota was always full.

Knott: I see.

Gargan: She said, "Go to law school, we'll defer you, we won't bother you." I got out of law school, I got married to my wife in September, I got called in January to go to Judge Advocate School in Newport, Rhode Island. I'm on the train, I'm coming back to Boston—there was a dining car on the train from Chicago to Boston in those days, and they used to throw the papers on. I read the paper, the headline is, "Eisenhower Says, 'Married Citizens, 26-Year-Olds, Are Too Old.'" So I went to the Lowell draft board again and said, "What does this mean?" They said, "You're not going to be drafted, you don't have to go into the service, it's all over for you."

Well, I still tried to go, because I felt an obligation. I called Joe Kennedy, my Uncle Joe, and I said to him, "I feel a real obligation, I really feel I should go." I had in mind that I wanted to run for Congress in Lowell, I had that in my mind. I said to my uncle, Joe Kennedy, "I have an obligation, I'd like to go." He said, "Joey, let me ask you a question. Are you smarter than President Eisenhower?" I said, "No." He said, "He doesn't need you. That's what he says, he doesn't need you. So forget it, go to work, get a job." That would be my Uncle Joe's attitude, "Get a job, you've been fooling around long enough. Get a job." So I went to work and became a lawyer. I lived in Boston at first because it was a Boston law firm. The thing I regret though is that I didn't go back to Lowell. My aunt died in February of 1959, and she left the house to my two sisters and me. I could have bought the house for $10,000. We had the house appraised for $15,000. I could have bought the house for $10,000, paid them $5,000 each, lived in the house and run for Congress. That's the other regret, that I didn't do that.

Knott: Lowell would have been your natural base.

Gargan: Yes, the Gargans were very well liked in Lowell. My Uncle Bill [Gargan] had been building inspector for the city of Lowell. My father was a great athlete, captain of Lowell High School, captain of Kimball Union Academy. He ended up a captain in the Marine Corps, wounded at Belleau Wood, wounded at Soissons. At Verdun, at the time of the armistice, he was a war hero. He walked around Lowell like he was God. He loved his uniform when he came back. Of course, I never saw that, but he loved his uniform. He had a velvet cape. He said when he first came back, he used to walk through Lowell—he was highly decorated, he was decorated 14 times. He got the Marine Corps medal twice. The only medal he didn't get was the Congressional Medal of Honor, and he should have probably gotten that. But he was decorated by the French seven times, decorated by Marshal [Henri-Philippe] Pétain. But anyway, the Gargans were well liked in Lowell. They had a good reputation, so that would have been helpful. So the answer is yes, I wish I had run, but I did not.

Knott: Let me ask you another question that is a little off the path we were just on. We've had some people tell us in this project that they think that Senator Kennedy has changed a bit since his marriage to Vicki [Reggie Kennedy]. Is that something that you've seen as well?

Gargan: Gee, that's a very difficult thing to say. He's older, like myself, for one thing. Have things changed? He's making a terrific effort, obviously, and has been, since the time of that marriage, and I think even before that, to be the senior Senator from Massachusetts. He has an agenda and a program in order to do that. I can remember back in 1970, I believe it was, or '71, that I went to Los Angeles and San Francisco, to set up hearings for him on the health bill. He did hearings for several days in California, both in Los Angeles and San Francisco, on devising a health bill to pass the Congress and the United States Senate. We're still—35, almost 36 years later—without a health bill.

Our own Governor [Mitt] Romney—and he's a Republican, I don't know that as part of this taping anybody wants to hear about a Republican—but the fact is, Romney is now trying to enact a health bill for every man, woman, and child in Massachusetts. So this issue is still going on. Senator Kennedy, before his marriage to Vicki, was already terribly interested in that issue, and he is still terribly interested in the school issues. Now because of the Iraq war and this Republican administration—and I'm not trying to be political today, but it's a fact—we don't have enough money in Massachusetts for the schools. They don't have music courses any more, they're cutting back on women's gymnastics programs and athletics programs, which is a crying shame, all of which he has been very supportive of. He was one of the few Senators in the United States Senate to vote against the Iraq war. He voted and was strongly against the entrance into Desert Storm when [George W.] Bush's father was President. He stood against that war right up until the last minute.

Knott: So there's a real consistency there.

Gargan: I think there's a consistency on the issues that he cares about. Senator Kennedy has matured a great deal, not so much maybe as an individual, but in his political life. What does he want to be, what does he want to be remembered for? I think that Vicki has been very supportive, very helpful, and very productive. She's experienced as a lawyer, maybe even as a legislator, although she has never been one. I think she has been tremendously helpful in drawing his attention to the issues that he finds most important in this country today, on which he is still working very hard. He is called the liberal Senator. He is, I would say, the outstanding liberal Senator—although I don't like the word, I never have been big on names, calling somebody a liberal or a conservative. I'm an independent myself. I'm liberal on many issues and conservative on others. On money policy I would be conservative.

I think President Bush had to have, whether there were—and I don't want to get off the subject—but whether there were weapons of mass destruction, which proved to not be the case, or nuclear bombs, whether Saddam Hussein was attempting to buy nuclear weaponry, or materials with which to make nuclear bombs, from Africa, and we know now that that also wasn't correct—to go into a war where you're going to spend $350 billion of the American people's money, that's a moral issue. Can you afford to do that? Can you afford to do that and not expect maybe you'll have a Katrina that is going to level one of this country's prime cities and cost $200 billion to

recover from? Do you have a right as an individual, or as a President, to risk the financial ruin of your country in a war that may not benefit the American people?

Senator Kennedy has been strong on those issues and I think Vicki has been very helpful to him and supportive in helping him to follow those kinds of programs that he is so much interested in.

Knott: Let me ask you, this is a big question as well, you've probably known him longer than any living person, I would guess, and his reputation in some circles—

Gargan: With the exception of his sisters—

Knott: With the exception of his sisters, right. His reputation in some circles is not great and I'm thinking particularly of what they see, fair or not, in his personal matters, personal lifestyle. What would you say to these people and what would you say to people who might be reading this interview or listening to it a hundred years from now? Who is the Ted Kennedy that you know?

Gargan: In talking about anybody, people tend to tell stories and tend to exaggerate those stories a great deal. The Senator Kennedy I know—I go back to our trip, for example, to Europe in 1950. We traveled throughout Europe. It was the beginning of the Korean War. In June of 1950, Ambassador Joe Kennedy, Ted Kennedy's father, was nervous that the Korean War was going to start World War III. He decided that it would be a good idea if Ted Kennedy and I took a trip to visit the great shrines of Europe, the museums, all those kinds of things, before a third world war might destroy them. So we did take a trip to Europe.

We got a little Fiat convertible car in Rome. A fellow named Count [Enrico] Galeazzi, who was very close to Pope Pius XII, got us the car, I remember, and we were going to take a trip through Europe. We started in Rome, toured all of Rome. We had Count Galeazzi's chauffeur take us through the Vatican gardens and saw all kinds of different things there. We went to Sorrento, we went to Capri, we went to the museums in Florence and saw the statue of David. We went to Venice, we went to Lake Como, and then we went to the South of France and stayed there for a while. We went to Austria, Germany, and France, going to the great cathedrals, museums, and all of those kinds of things. I remember going to the Cologne Cathedral.

I remember this, too. His mother was a great power of example to both of us. During the course of that trip, we went to Mass every morning. Every day we would go to Mass in some little village or whatever town we were in, the Cologne Cathedral, the Vatican, of course, St. Peter's. We saw Maria Goretti canonized by Pius XII. We had front seats, it was fantastic. We went to Paris and we were doing the same thing in Paris. We went out to the nightclubs, we went to the different shows in Paris, as well as the museums. I remember we took the boat out of—and we were drinking champagne, to a certain extent, but not overly drinking at any point at all. It was not a big thing for either one of us. I had basically committed myself not to drink or smoke until I was 21 and Ted had done the same thing.

That was the kind of trip I saw him on. We traveled back on the SS America in 1950, which was fantastic because we had seats—through his father I'm sure—at the captain's table. Most of the people at the captain's table were older, retired people. But the great thing about it was we could go to breakfast in the morning and nobody was there. We were having these big breakfasts of

bacon and eggs and pancakes and sausages and lamb chops, the whole thing. These two young kids chowing down in the morning. It was amazing, the dining room was mostly empty, but we were there chowing down.

Here's an interesting thing about Senator Kennedy. I remember meeting a very attractive young lady, a beautiful girl from New York, I can't think of her name. But I was very much taken by this girl—I was 20 years old at this time and Ted was 18, and there weren't that many young people on the boat, frankly, in 1950, maybe because of the war—but at any rate, every night I was dancing with her or playing the race track game where you pick a horse and bet on it, we were playing those games and everything else. And in the morning I was always looking for this girl to have breakfast—I think it took us six days to cross—while Ted was down serving Mass for the priest who was saying Mass on board about eight o'clock every morning. I'm having breakfast with this lovely girl, he's serving the Mass for the priest.

So that's my memory of that. I remember him being a very devoted Catholic young man, as his brother Joe was. I remember stories about Joe Kennedy at Harvard, and Bobby Kennedy at Harvard. Father [Leonard] Feeney was the famous priest who the Vatican eventually banned because he was arguing with church policy.

Knott: There's no salvation outside the church.

Gargan: Exactly. Bobby was confronting Father Feeney at that time, so that was sort of in the family.

Knott: So his faith, Senator Edward Kennedy's faith is a very important part of who he is.

Gargan: No question about it. He still goes. I see him at the 8:30 Mass at Our Lady of Victory, with Vicki, every Sunday. Sometimes they'll go to a different Mass, but most of the time he goes to the 8:30 Mass, and that's important to him, there's no question about it. I'm sure it's important in terms of the decisions he makes in the Senate and the decisions for the poor—again, people without healthcare, people without proper education, and for black people. I read an article in the book section of the *Washington Post* yesterday about a black fellow—that he had a great education and everything else, and that he became very successful, he's 90 years old. But he wrote this memoir of how prejudice had blocked him time after time when he was coming up through the ranks. He ended up being very successful, went to Harvard successfully, I think got a Master's degree at Harvard, and things of that nature. President Kennedy was always for doing something more for the blacks.

When Eisenhower was President, I remember President Kennedy saying—Eisenhower called out the National Guard for—

Knott: Oh, Little Rock?

Gargan: That's right. I remember Jack Kennedy saying at the time, "Eisenhower should be doing more, we should get a better policy on this." And now we're talking about Rosa Parks. I find the whole thing extremely impressive. I think Ted Kennedy's Irish Catholic background, and Jack Kennedy's, too—history shows that after 1900 and continuing—even in the banks in Boston, I don't think the First National Bank ever hired an Irish Catholic until they had to hire

the blacks. I think this is factual. He came from that kind of a background, so I think he had a sympathy.

Rosa Parks' story is a great story. You say to yourself, how could people, even at the time of Rosa Parks, tell—I mean, I've been thinking about this a lot since Rosa Parks' death—how could somebody say, "You should ride in the back of the bus"? Now I'm not being a big shot here, I wasn't carrying any flag for the blacks, don't get me wrong. But I was chased out of a restaurant in 1958 in the South with another guy who was a—I can't even remember what the incident was about, but I remember we were chased out. I remember, too, I did the advance for Ted Kennedy in 1969—and those who would criticize him for Chappaquiddick ought to look at that part of Senator Kennedy's record—in 1969 we were in Tennessee for the memorial of Martin Luther King's death. Do you remember what town—?

Knott: Memphis.

Gargan: I was in Memphis. I was sent as the advance man by Ted Kennedy to advance his appearance in Memphis, Tennessee. He was going to get up on that platform and speak in memory of Martin Luther King, and that was scary. I had to go down—they didn't have a police department at that time in Memphis, they had a sheriff's department, so I had to deal with the sheriff, and security, and putting people on the buildings, and clearing rifle shots on the building. But he was going to speak in a square with thousands of people, most of whom were going to be black.

I can remember going to the hotel there, I can't remember the name of the hotel, which is just as well. But I checked into the hotel and I met with some of the black people there. I think Medgar Evers' brother was one of them, and some of the other big leaders there. If I had kept a diary like Rose Kennedy had told me to—the only time I really followed her advice was when we were on that trip to Europe in 1950. We had to keep a diary and I've still got it. But if I had had a diary with me during the '60 campaign—as a matter of fact, she criticized me after Teddy White wrote his book, *The Making of the President*. That summer, after his book came out, she said to me at the table, sitting right at the head of the table with the whole family there, "Joey, I told you to keep a diary. If you had kept a diary you could have written that book."

Knott: That's right.

Gargan: I should have had a diary because these fellows that I met with were some of the most important blacks in the South. I met with two or three of them in the morning, I'll never forget it, and they said to me, "Okay, we'll get a group of these people together, so-and-so is coming in, and we'll meet." I said, "Good, let's have lunch." They said to me, "Where will we have lunch?" I said, not being right on the ball, I said, "We'll have lunch in my hotel." "In your hotel? What hotel are you staying at?" And I told them. Now, this is after Martin Luther King had been assassinated, a year later.

Knott: They're still segregated.

Gargan: I said, "Yes, we'll meet at my hotel, we'll have lunch in that dining room." So they met me in the lobby and I could see they were nervous wrecks. I wasn't really thinking about it as that big a deal, which wasn't really very smart of me, to tell you the truth. I said to the maitre d',

"We'd like six for lunch, please." He looked at me, he knew who I was, it was clear I was the Senator Kennedy advance man, and everybody was looking at me like I had four heads or something. But anyway, he sat us. Right in the middle of the dining room. These fellows sat down. They came to serve us, a couple of waiters, and they asked them what they wanted and they ordered. After they ordered, I remember the fellow sitting at the head of the table, it might have been Medgar Evers' brother. He said to me, "There's never been a black man eat in this dining room."

That next day, Ted arrived to make his speech and there were people everywhere. Security was all over the place. I can remember, I was standing in front of the platform and I was saying to myself, "Golly, I'm standing right in the front of this platform, what am I doing here?" Like the football story I told you. I said, "What is this about? What am I doing here?" But the end all of the story is that we got through it, and we did it. That's Ted Kennedy's spiritual program, if somebody wants to know it. He was there when other people would not show up, I'm sure.

Knott: I see what you're saying.

Gargan: I don't know anybody who wouldn't, but he was there. And he's always been there. It is incredible that we don't have a health plan for the United States, it's absolutely crazy, and some of these other things. People ask me, I was talking about Katrina the other day, we were talking about George Bush and stuff. It's ridiculous. The United States couldn't get water to the people in New Orleans. Somebody said something to me about Bush, and I said, "For God sakes, Bush couldn't get you a cup of water." This is what the Democrats should be talking about, not the gas prices and some of this other stuff. They should be saying, "This guy can't make it, he's incompetent." And he is.

Jeb Bush is taking the blame for Florida. They only had about six days to get ready for the hurricane in Florida. I think it sat in Cancun for three days. For God sakes, you could have called up Wal-Mart and asked them to deliver water down there. They knew exactly where the hurricane was going to go. You could have delivered all the water to Jacksonville or St. Augustine and had it sitting there. Then when the thing went by, they could have gotten the water down there. But I mean, the incompetence—I mean, I grew up with people that—Joe Kennedy would have—he ended up breaking sticks. Frank Leahy, the coach of Notre Dame, could have told you how to do that. Those people knew how to get things done, but we just don't have people like that around. Ted Kennedy is one of those left and he takes a lot of criticism for it.

One of the great tragedies right now for Ted, but more so for our generation and our children, this is a tear-down world that we're living in now. So the way to go after Ted Kennedy is to say he's a bad person, he has bad morals, he drinks too much—or whatever, I don't know if he even drinks at all any more. I would say very little if he does at all. But the point is, all these talk shows, even *Sixty Minutes*, they don't have any positive solutions on *Sixty Minutes*, they just spend their time telling you what the problem is and how bad people are and how incompetent they are. But do they have a solution? No.

All these radio shows. I listen to Rush Limbaugh once in a while because I'm in the car a lot coming back from court or going to court.

Knott: That's not good for you.

Gargan: We have a couple of talk show host guys—

Knott: You have Howie Carr up there in Boston.

Gargan: Yes, Howie Carr—now there's an example of a great American, holy Toledo. But we have Ed Lambert and Don McKeag up in Hyannis and they talk from seven in the morning until ten. I turn it on once in a while if I'm going to court or something, and it makes me blow my mind. In fact I told—Don McKeag has a post office box in Hyannis Port, and about two months ago I told him to get the hell out of Hyannis Port. He lives in Falmouth. I said "Go down to Falmouth and get a post office box, we don't need your garbage here living in this village." Because that's what it is. It doesn't help our country to have this divided country, the people criticizing people like Ted Kennedy who are trying hard to implement programs that benefit people.

I was listening on my tape coming down here to [Thomas] Tip O'Neill's book, *Man of the House*. I like that book, I was listening to it. He was telling how he grew up as a young boy and he was making 15 cents an hour cutting the lawns at Harvard. And his father had a really big job because he was head of the sewer department. He could put a thousand men to work in the summer, from the time snow went out until the fall, digging sewers. It was pick and shovel in those days, and he could put all those men to work, so he was the biggest guy in town. His father was head of the sewer department. Of course, Tip O'Neill never forgot those days. He never forgot the fact that people needed help. There was no Social Security in those days or the other kinds of things we have today that are helpful to—well, to somebody like me, I've been getting Social Security now for almost 11 years. I don't know what people would do without Social Security. As Tip O'Neill said, in those days they put you into the poorhouse. But I've done a lot of talking, do you have any more questions?

Knott: I think we're done actually, unless there's something you'd like to add that we've missed. We've covered a lot of ground both in this interview and the one we did with you up in the Cape. We're very grateful for all the time you've given us. It's been a real pleasure for us and I hope it's been a pleasure for you.

Gargan: Yes it has, and a good experience. As I say, coming down here to the University of Virginia. I remember when Ted went to law school here.

Knott: We're hoping to have him down here in March. He's probably going to come pay us a visit, and the law school.

Gargan: Great, that's good.

Knott: Well, again, we really appreciate you sharing your recollections with us because, as I said, next to his sisters you've known him longer than any person in the world. So you were a high priority for us.

Gargan: You know, judging people is a very dangerous game because people have to know the whole story. If I was ever going to write a book, and I doubt that I will, I might write a memoir for my children—

Knott: I would encourage you to do that.

Gargan: Before I forget it, I would like to say one more thing, and that is, when I look back, I'm very grateful to Senator Kennedy because—just as I was very grateful to his mother and father, I'm equally grateful to Senator Kennedy—because every opportunity that his father gave to him, to go to Europe, for me to come to Palm Beach, for me to go to Hyannis Port and stay all summer, any other opportunity he had, he always included me. He always said, "I'd like Joey to come, I'd like Joey to participate." So as a result of that, I had enormous opportunities all my life to see all kinds of things and participate in all kinds of things, including the campaigns that I was in. I traveled to places I never would have gone. Santa Clara, California, where another Jesuit College is, I was in Santa Clara. I probably never would have gone to Oakland or San Diego, never would have gone to Los Angeles in my life. I certainly wouldn't have gone to Portland, Oregon, and different places up there.

I could have gone to Alaska, as a matter of fact. That's a regret that I still have, that I didn't go to Alaska during Bobby Kennedy's campaign. Doing this interview is another opportunity for which I'm grateful. This opportunity to come to the University of Virginia, and go and see Monticello, and the Rotunda and these things. My father gave me a lot of things I'm grateful for such as growing up in Washington, D.C., for six years.

Knott: You've had a good life.

Gargan: I've had a lot of opportunities, I've had a lot of fun, and I'm very grateful for that. I think one of the most important things is to be grateful. I think Senator Kennedy is very grateful, and that's why he makes such an effort to support the issues that he does. He has had the experience, he heard his father say many times to the whole family—and his mother said this, too—but the father would put it this way, "You've been given a lot of opportunity, I've been given a lot of opportunity. I was given the opportunity to make a lot of money. Therefore, you people all have an obligation to pay it back, to pay it back." Rose Kennedy always quoted out of the Bible, "From those to whom much is given, much is expected." She would say that all the time. I'm sure that drives him. The people who are grateful, I've found, are the people who are really successful.

I'll finish with one little story. It's an important story for me because it would explain the opportunities I've had and a lot of things that have happened to me that I'm very grateful for. There's an old Italian priest in the North End of Boston—this happened to me probably 15 years ago, maybe longer, but at least 15 years ago—in Boston, in the North End, which used to be all Irish and where Rose Kennedy was born, it's now mostly Italian. There are missionary priests from Italy who run some of those Italian churches in the North End.

This is an aside—I asked this old Italian priest one time, how come they have so many statues and pictures and candles in the Italian churches, because our American churches are pretty bare. I was in St. Stephen's the other day, which Jack Kennedy used to attend, in Middleburg,

Virginia, and it's a rather bare church. You have a statue of the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph and Jesus Christ and all that, but it's rather simple. He said, "The reason for that is that most of the Italians who came here to America—" and I had never thought of it "—they couldn't read or write. So the story of the New Testament and the story of Jesus' life had to be told in paintings and statues and pictures. That's how they got educated because they couldn't read or write."

So they sent these Italian priests over. This one was an Italian priest, he was from Milan and his order was in Milan. It was a missionary order to go travel around the world to different countries. They have them in New York, they have them in a lot of the big cities. He told me the story of taking 75 Boston pilgrims on a trip through Italy to the Vatican, to Florence, to Venice, and the last day they ended up in Milan, the missionary city from which he'd come. I think he's in St. Mark's missionary order. They have a beautiful chapel there, the St. Mark's Chapel in the cathedral in Milan. He had the 75 pilgrims and they were going to take a plane out that day. At 10 o'clock, 11 o'clock in the morning, they were going to fly back to Boston.

He came into the sacristy to dress and put on the priest's clothes to go out and say 7:30 Mass in his St. Mark's Chapel, and who is standing there but the Cardinal Archbishop of Milan, [Giovanni Battista] Montini. Montini is all dressed in his robes. Montini says to him, "Who are you?" in Italian. He says in Italian, "I'm an Italian priest from Boston and I've got 75 pilgrims out there and I was going to say Mass for them." Montini says to him, "You go first. You go first." He takes off the robes and dresses the little priest. Montini puts the white surplice on and goes out and serves the Mass. After the Mass is over the little Italian priest says, "This is the Cardinal Archbishop." Of course the 75 Americans who are always looking for something free, they all come running up to kiss the Cardinal's ring, and they kiss it. Six weeks later he's elected Pope Paul VI.

I never forgot the story because it's just like Tip O'Neill always said, "It's about that vote you can get at home. All politics is local." Montini knew that. He had the humility.

Knott: That's impressive, great story.

Gargan: All right, that's it, the last bit of frosting on the cake.

Knott: Terrific.

[END INTERVIEW]