



## EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

### INTERVIEW WITH DAVID BURKE

June 19, 2007  
Eastham, Massachusetts

#### **Interviewer**

James Sterling Young

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To cite an interview, please use the following general format: [name of interviewee] Interview, [date of interview], Edward M. Kennedy Oral History Project, Miller Center, University of Virginia.

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TRANSCRIPT

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**Young:** This is an interview with David Burke, June 19, 2007, in Eastham. We're sitting on the porch, listening to the birds. And now we'll listen to David Burke. Why don't you start talking about how you and Edward Kennedy came together, with a view to giving a picture of the two novices, so to speak, in Washington? And how you got started and how he got started on his long Senate career.

**Burke:** Well, I'll try to. To me it's just a good example of how often in your lifetime serendipitous things occur and you either take advantage of them or you don't. I was in President John Kennedy's government, his administration, and another fellow who I met in his government was Herbert Schmertz, who worked for the Secretary of Labor in the Department of Conciliation for labor disputes. He left after the assassination of President Kennedy and he opened a law firm with Milton Gwirtzman. Milton Gwirtzman had not been in John Kennedy's government, but he had been a classmate of Senator Ted Kennedy and he did many things for him. From time to time he would write a speech or he would give advice on things, or he would arrange a meeting, or whatever. My understanding of the events that led up to it was, after the Senator was involved in the plane crash—I don't know if you're familiar with the crash—

**Young:** That was '64.

**Burke:** Yes, 1964, when his back was severely injured and he was in the hospital for a good long time, eight months to a year, and in something I had never heard of before, a Stryker frame, where you lie and they turn you over like a piece of meat on a grill. I can't imagine how that was. He had been in the Senate since the end of 1962, when he got elected. So he had been there all of '63. The crash occurred in '64 as he and Birch Bayh were on a trip to the Democratic state convention in Massachusetts. He went through that ordeal and he was coming back to the United States Senate. Folks around him who cared for him looked at his situation in the first couple of years in the Senate and looked at the help he would need going forward and apparently determined that they had to have some kind of shake-up in the staffing of Edward Kennedy if he was to get some traction on the ground in the area of public policy.

It's important to note, just historically speaking, that once upon a time in the United States Senate, as in the House of Representatives, Senators didn't really have their own staff. They did have their own staff who were on their payroll, but these were people they sort of inherited when they came to Washington. Joe Jones would have worked for Senator X before Senator Y met him. They were like a permanent Civil Service. That's my reading of it. So, here you have a very young Senator in '62 who came in and his staff had no special interest in him, that I saw. As a

matter of fact, some of them were really kind of old and he's just a kid. Not that they were disrespectful, but it was—so, the decision apparently was made, maybe by his family, Bobby [Kennedy] was in that perhaps, Steve Smith, that in effect, you don't have a staff that is good enough. Milton Gwirtzman was given the task of finding a new legislative assistant. The prior legislative assistant had been a dear friend of the Senator's, and is today, Senator [John] Culver. But Culver was—I think one thing John Culver would say is that he's not a staff guy. And he certainly wasn't. He was, indeed, a public figure himself. He was always a candidate. And he was wonderful when he was in the Senate.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** Now his son is the Governor of the home state. I think the idea was that Ted needs a brand new kind of staff to bring—look at, for example, Bobby. When Bobby was a Senator, he's going to bring people back from New York who belonged to him and him only, and will work for him and him only, and so on. And Ted needed the same thing.

**Young:** Right. So Bobby was entering the Senate for his first term at the time you came in.

**Burke:** Yes, that's right.

**Young:** OK. So—

**Burke:** And Bobby had a wonderful couple of guys around him who were his staff. Teddy needed to have a staff. But also, and I think it's not unique to the Kennedys, but if Ted Kennedy was going to make a major hire, that is, a new staff person, and sort of break up the old gang of mine that was hanging around him and so on and so forth, he would have to do it in a way that was politically sensitive because clearly there were many people in Massachusetts whose fathers had at least given money, or there were people in Massachusetts who cared about him a great deal, and everyone wanted to be considered to work on Teddy's staff. It was a wonderful thing.

So he had to get the right combination of assets to hold this new staff person to little criticism early on so he could get going. And that was Milton's assignment, as I had known, to decide—now, Milton may not remember it that way, but that's the way I remember it.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** And as luck and God would have it, I filled the bill. I was born and raised in Massachusetts. I was Irish. I was a Catholic. I went to parochial school, parochial high school. I went to Tufts University. I did graduate work at the University of Chicago. All of which meant that I could read without moving my lips, so I must have had a brain. Milton, I guess, had heard some good things from the folks in the Labor Department and the Commerce Department about the work I had done, so I was brought in for an interview. And the Senator went into his office, and I remember him—I can see him now. He was sitting behind his desk and he was as white as a ghost. He was frail. And he was—this person had been hurt over the past year, trying to mend his back and so on. So I knew I wasn't going to be in for a 40-minute conversation. Everything seemed to be tiring, but he was trying to get back. I think he just wanted to take a look at this new kid and see if he had.... Apparently I passed muster because Milton called me later and asked when I could start. So that was the unceremonious hiring.

**Young:** But in the time when you were being looked over, how did he take your measure? I mean, did he ask you questions? Did he have an idea about what he wanted, or it was just getting a good person?

**Burke:** Right. I don't remember it specifically. And I don't want to be too far off the mark, but he wouldn't even today ask questions about what do you think the policy issues of the day are that we should be—he's not like that. It was more, that's interesting. St. Mary's High School in Brookline. They had a football team, didn't they? It was like that. It was about—you come from a family of five; that was a big thing. Your dad was a cop. That's even bigger. I mean, no bullet could hit me. I had every credential out of old Boston mythology that you could have. And yet I had never been associated in politics with anybody.

When John Kennedy was elected President of the United States, and I desperately wanted to work in that new government, as many other young people in this country did, the person who, against his wishes, tried to find me a job in Washington in the new government was George Shultz at the University of Chicago. I was his research assistant and he knew enough people in the Labor Department to get me a job. So I got a job by the man who turned out to be the Republican Secretary of State, Secretary of the Treasury, Director of the Bureau of the Budget—the guy had everything. And yet I carried around these other wonderful credentials that you just couldn't beat. You can't beat St. Mary's High School and your dad is a cop. So that's got to be it.

I would guess whatever personal conversation we had that day in detail, which wasn't in great detail, but it was about the surroundings of my life, of family, and what I like and don't like in life, and so on. That would be, for a long time, the last personal conversation he and I would ever have. In fact, after I went to work for him, I would sometimes be upset that—well, why doesn't he tell me what he wants? Or, I didn't know there was going to be a hearing on that. Why didn't he tell me? I don't know. I wasn't looking to be spoon-fed, but this fellow, in one way or another, had to understand I'm not a lawyer. I've never been in the Senate before. I don't know how hearings are scheduled. I've never read the *Congressional Record* from the day before in my life. I mean, this is crazy. But he didn't see himself as having a responsibility to tell me what's happening. As a matter of fact, sometimes you'd see a glint in his eye—he'd like to catch me off base because I didn't know if something was happening, which had the strange effect, whether he meant it or not, to sharpen my skills and make me defensively more reliant so that I knew what was happening in life around us all of the time.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** So it was a long time before we had personal conversations. He was just wondering—*I know this guy can walk but I don't know if he can run*. For a long time I was very unhappy and I felt I was over my head and I was not going to succeed at this thing. And the person who miraculously saved me was a woman, a young woman—she was younger than I was, I think. Her name was Anne Strauss and she had been John Culver's secretary. In those days she was a secretary. Today you'd call her an assistant. She knew everything about the Senate. And she was just so goddamn smart and brilliant, but it being 1964/65 and she being a woman, she was a secretary, and that's what she was going to be.

I relied on her; I just leaned on her. We had a wonderful relationship. Even to today, we're friends. We don't see each other anymore, but she was one of the—that and the fact that there was a Catholic Church up the street where I could slip out of the office and go and have a visit, as they say. Sit in the last pew and say, "Why did you do this to me? How did I get into this situation?" And then I said, criticizing him to myself, of course, "Who the hell does he think he is, going off and doing this and that, leaving me with this?" He didn't know. He didn't care. I'm trying to prove myself.

**Young:** When did you—at what moment did you stop feeling, what am I doing here?

**Burke:** It was gradual.

**Young:** But Kennedy was a person of action, wasn't he?

**Burke:** Yes, he was.

**Young:** He was an involved person of action, so it wasn't the work. The work wasn't waiting for you, was it? The work was not waiting for you to get reconciled to your presence there?

**Burke:** No, no.

**Young:** You were moving.

**Burke:** Of course, there were other people in the office as well, but you're right.

**Young:** Who else was there who was—

**Burke:** Well, there was a fellow who was called the administrative assistant, which today is called Chief of Staff. Bill Evans was his name—I don't know much about him. Another legislative fellow was Win Turner, I think it was. He filled the bill as a descriptive person, what I was talking about. Sort of a career worker.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** Finally, if you're not going to be given direction, after a while, in your frustration, you lose your hesitancy and you just do things. I found that very satisfying, to do things. And our relationship just got better all of the time.

**Young:** Right.

**Burke:** But there was no one day. For example, immigration hearings. I'd always sneak in and sit behind him and try to learn what I could. And sometimes the staff that worked for the committee—immigration, for example—would be put off if someone from the Senator's office came down and sat there and listened. But I didn't care. I had to learn what this was. I had to learn how to—how do I even find out what is happening.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** So there was no one moment for me.

**Young:** Yes. So, you were saying you just went ahead and did it. You didn't wait for instruction.

**Burke:** No.

**Young:** And that's what worked with him.

**Burke:** Yes. It worked with him very well.

**Young:** So he didn't say, "What are you doing this for? I didn't tell you to do that."

**Burke:** No. He had a level of expectation.

**Young:** Right.

**Burke:** Whatever other relationships he had with people he worked with or who worked for him, he had a level of expectation. You'll do the right thing. I expect that. The worst crime would be if you didn't do the right thing. He just expected without telling you what the right thing is.

**Young:** Immigration is one of the things that was already on his plate when you came—

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** —OK. But then there were other things you found for him to do or you suggested, like—

**Burke:** Not at that point, no. I don't think he would have relied upon me as someone who was eligible to do that yet.

**Young:** Yes. OK.

**Burke:** Other things had to take place first, and they did, for all sorts of reasons. There was another person in the office, an older man, and he had a heart attack and died. So there was going to be a change in the office staffing. I overheard the Senator one day having a conversation—I think it was with Bobby—"Well, if Dave could do that and Dave can do this and if I'm going to have an AA [administrative assistant], he might as well be the AA, as opposed to me going and looking for something." My first indication that I could stop going to church so much. *[laughter]*

**Young:** This was your first year or first few months there?

**Burke:** Not few months. It was the first year I was there. First year, maybe 10 months or something. I seem to remember—we have to remember this was 42 or 45 years ago, isn't it?

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** I seem to remember at one time he gave me an opening when he—we were talking about staffing and I'd never heard him talk about staffing before. I also had some ideas about how we should staff this thing. It shouldn't be buddies and pals and it should be nothing but the absolute best. People who are smarter than you and me. It's got to be that. Because God knows they're out there. We know that for sure. And I need the help and we have to do something. He said,

“Oh, that’s all right. Bring some people around. Let’s take a look.” And that was when the sun came out.

The one thing I could do in that office at that time was hire people. I knew what the budget of the office was and how many I could hire and how many I couldn’t, and so on. But I knew who should go—and that was wonderful. To actually go out into the marketplace and look for people who had recently graduated from Harvard Law School and were on the *Law Review* and were smarter than I could ever be, or anyone else I knew. That’s the person you wanted to work for you. Somebody introduced me to a guy, Carey Parker, who—I can’t remember all of the degrees he had, in some of the strangest disciplines in the world. Population something or other, but he certainly was smart and he was quite different. He was quiet and sat in the corner and didn’t say much, but diligent and entirely trustworthy. Meanwhile, all of the butterflies would be flitting around having all sorts of ideas. Well, you need both. You need the butterfly over here and you need the solid citizen.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** And I was finding all of these things. I found, and it was wonderful, you could bring who you thought were the best to him and he would never shoot the person down, clearly not in front of the person. It didn’t trouble him for a moment that every person I wanted to bring around for him to interview—he still wasn’t going to get into policy stuff—every person I brought around, he knew was smarter than he was and more intelligent than he was, and me too. And he accepted that. That’s fine. Didn’t even enter on his radar screen. That’s perfect. He could work with anybody, he felt—because the smarter you are, the more he’ll drive you and just drive you crazy too. So that’s when I started to feel that this is my office.

We got some of those folks hired. And they *immediately* became a pain in the neck because they’re on you to do this, we’ve got to do that, we’ve got to do this, we’ve got to do that. Now I find I’m the funnel to him. Senator, do you think we should do this or do you think we should do that? I didn’t sit there and map out a chart of what we should do and how you should start to build your reputation. You take the recommendations coming from these very intelligent people who all have hearts of gold. That’s what it was.

**Young:** You said it was a wonderful experience going out to the marketplace.

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** Did you have connections or how did you find the marketplace?

**Burke:** I’d talk to anybody. You couldn’t embarrass me.

**Young:** People would come to you?

**Burke:** Yes. People would come to me. But not so much because I wasn’t that well known at that time. I’d ask Bobby Kennedy’s staffers, “Who do you know? Who’s smart? Who’s in next year’s class in Boston? Who’s coming out and who works for some committee that’s very unhappy with what he’s doing?” You know.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** And you become a pest. I know if you spread that broadly enough, you're going to get some real diamonds. And if you can pluck those diamonds and get—life is going to be so much easier and better for you, and so much more an exciting place to work because these are not the kind of people who are going to sit and do nothing.

**Young:** Yes. But you mentioned earlier that you had a sort of a model for the kind of staff that you were looking for.

**Burke:** Yes. Senator Jacob Javits of New York.

**Young:** Right. Did you take that as a model very early?

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** OK. Say something about that.

**Burke:** That was my road to salvation. If I had a staff that good and I was the boss of them, I'd be very successful.

**Young:** OK. So you talked with his staff. You got to know his staff.

**Burke:** Yes. They were all from New York. They were all brought to Washington, or so it seemed to me, for the very purpose of serving Jacob Javits, who could give you a major headache, a major headache. He'd drive you crazy five hours a day.

**Young:** What kind of headache?

**Burke:** What kind of headache? Like, he'd ask you things you didn't know and it would just drive you crazy. So if you were on his staff, you were harassed to death, not for petty things but for big things. And the staff responded; they were like elastic bands and they were just so smart. This one was an expert on crime. This one is an expert on antitrust. This one—whatever the committee assignments were. So he had wonderful people around him. I said, "We could have that. We could have that, too. By God, we'd better, because Bobby will." Bobby will. I was competitive with Bobby, with his people, just because human beings do that. If I'm associated with Teddy, then I'm competitive against Bobby.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** And in those days, I must say, it was, "How are you doing, Dave?" "I'm doing fine." "What are you doing?" "I'm going up to Capitol Hill. I'm going to work for Kennedy." "Oh, you'll love Bobby. He's great." "No," I said, "I'm going to work for Ted." "Oh? Why are you going to work for Ted?" It was like I settled for less when I worked with Ted, and that made me even angrier. In terms of competition and so on.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** And that has always been important to me in viewing Ted Kennedy. That oftentimes in his life, that was the reaction of people when measured against his brothers or his father or—or Joe [Kennedy], who was long-sainted and gone, but who clearly was the King of the Hill. All of those things. I remember those. That always was a driving force in my mind when I considered what was good for him. But he was just going to get better and better and better.

**Young:** How was it on him? I mean, he must have gotten the same vibrations.

**Burke:** We've talked before, and I've always felt, even up to this day—no one's radar is more sensitive than his in what you think of him. He can pick out somebody who is using him in two seconds. He can pick out somebody who thinks less of him in one second. And he's not paranoid about it. He's very gentle with it and he takes it—OK, that's your judgment on me, and he goes forward in life. But he can smell it right away because he's been so well trained to by the unfortunate things that—before I even knew him—the things that may have happened. So it wasn't—

At any rate, that's a long roundabout way of saying it just seemed so easy to emulate— Now, Jacob Javits was a Republican and his staff came from a certain area in New York and certain kinds of firms in New York. I wasn't interested in New York anyway, but I found it as a template—that's how I'm going to build the staff. That's how I want it. And it gave me firm ground if I were ever going to be faced with criticism because I didn't consider Joe's nephew, Frank. No. We don't do that. I don't care what their names are. I don't care who they're related to. No. This is going to be Ted Kennedy's office and Ted Kennedy is in charge and he is the star of the show, not these other people who are going to go on to have great careers in their life. But for now, they are going to feed us.

**Young:** Right.

**Burke:** And they're going to do all of the things I couldn't do.

**Young:** Yes. So it's from the old Civil Service model.

**Burke:** Down to custom-made.

**Young:** Custom-made. But also not the patronage model.

**Burke:** No. That would be the worst. Because other people know if you use patronage. We were young, not newlyweds, but we were young and socializing in Washington, and would hear things like, "Well, that's interesting, Dave. You're working with Ted Kennedy? So how did you get that?" And that question really is, "Who did you know to get that?" Well, I hadn't known Milton Gwirtzman. I had known this other fellow, Herb Schmertz, who was a very smart, able guy. So that cloud always hangs over someone who gets the job by favor. If you get it by just luck or confidence, it never hangs around an office.

**Young:** Yes. And this worked well for him?

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** And he liked it? It worked for him?

**Burke:** He liked it. He liked it. The more he got of it, the more he liked it and the more impatient he became.

**Young:** Impatient to do more?

**Burke:** Impatient with the people sometimes. “That’s not good enough. No.” When you see it today in these briefing books—“No, no, no. Where’s that thing that I’m looking for? That’s not good enough.”

**Young:** This is by way of preparation for him for a hearing or a speech or something on the floor?

**Burke:** Preparation for a hearing—the speech to the Chamber of Commerce. I think he felt that you are always being measured against what he had also experienced in the past. Clearly, John Kennedy had some great people around him, as they said, the best and the brightest. So, in a small way, his office staff was fighting those ghosts too.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** “Gee, I don’t remember my brother ever having a problem getting a speech when he wanted it.” You know, that kind of stuff. And the Old Senate Office Building is a great building and it’s got very long corridors. You can walk around the whole periphery of the building inside on your floor level and those long marble corridors. I had more walks on those corridors with staff members who—they weren’t crying but they were—I mean, grown-up people who had been first in their class, first in this, first in that, and they had just been destroyed by some criticism. They just weren’t used to getting criticism at all, because the star was always over their heads. And I used to walk those corridors with those people, which allowed me to form a bond with them.

**Young:** I know. But, talking about the young Senator himself, did he get down on people? He would criticize them, but—

**Burke:** Yes, he would.

**Young:** —but then would it be all over?

**Burke:** Oh, yes. It would. It was never a personal thing. It was always professional. He’d get down on someone but the next time he saw you, it would be fine. It’s all good. And he didn’t know it—I mean, he wasn’t Machiavellian, but his impatience and his demand for better and more allowed him to give approval in short bursts that had great effect. *[laughs]* So it was a very economic way of giving approval. Gee, he smiled at you today. Wow. Boom. That’s a good thing.

**Young:** You’re in the clouds.

**Burke:** Yes, that's right. And he was clearly under pressure himself. I don't know if you want to talk about that, but I'll tell you—

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** —he was under pressure himself. He was under pressure from Bobby because Bobby was “smarter” than him. I'm using the word “smart” in a strange way here. The former Attorney General was well tested, and he was just smarter. He had a great staff that was smart, and so on. All of the other people that he had known in his brother's administration were still in government when Lyndon Johnson was President of the United States. Even someone who wasn't close to him or his brother, Willard Wirtz, Secretary of Labor, would come up to testify. He was always so taken with someone like Willard Wirtz. So articulate, so sure of himself, so able. You could see his desire to be like that at some time, and he wanted to make sure he didn't falter when questioning someone like that, so that person would think the less of him. It was very important to him. He wanted to be highly regarded by the people whose high regard is a mark of some kind on our society.

**Young:** Right.

**Burke:** Well, here he is today. He's rather well regarded.

**Young:** And the characteristics and the quality of staff that would provide him with information, with knowledge, with insights that he—

**Burke:** And assurances.

**Young:** —and assurances would—

**Burke:** That's right.

**Young:** So this kind of staff was instrumental to the kind of person he was.

**Burke:** To his own self-reinforcement. That's exactly right. Exactly right. I mean, if he had a bum staff under him, he would be quaking in his boots that he was going to be made a fool of any minute. I knew that. Therefore, my life was going to be so easy if I assembled that staff as fast as I could and they were just the best, even if they were all pains in the neck. It was just like herding cats with some of them. So that just made my life so easy. It was selfish on my part to get that staff involved.

**Young:** All of the human motivations worked together, and I think—

**Burke:** Isn't that nice when that happens?

**Young:** It is. So often it doesn't. How about his relationships with the other Senators. You mentioned Willard Wirtz—

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** —somebody who is a distinguished, articulate Secretary of Labor, and the people who worked in his brother's administration, President Kennedy's administration. He was very much a junior in the Senate at this time, and there were the old bulls. There were the deans of the Senate and all of that.

**Burke:** Yes, that's right.

**Young:** So talk a little bit about that from your perspective.

**Burke:** That's different altogether. The way you gather approval among some people is on substantive matters and on the way you conduct yourself and how you articulate things. That's quite different from the way you gather approval in the United States Senate.

**Young:** OK.

**Burke:** This was a club in those days of 100—occasionally of 99—but 100, mostly males, who liked a good cigar, and a good drink at 3 o'clock wasn't too early to start. If you were polite to them, which he was a master at—he was just a master at showing what you and I might consider obvious courtesies, but to them was—you must recall that he came to the Senate much the same way that Hillary Clinton of late came to the Senate, with a big target on the chest. I mean, he was the brother of a President who, unfortunately, was assassinated, but maybe we hated him. And he's also the brother of a guy who, right out front, we hate, anyway. The Republican caucus was sort of that way. Not as bitter as today, but—

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** I understand, my friends told me this kid was light, he's not heavy stuff, so you better not screw around with me and you'd better—or quite the opposite. Ted observed all of the rules early, early on. Of course, the plane crash, too, interfered with his early days. When he came back, there was great sympathy for him because of the torment he went through the year with a broken back.

In my memory, it is so easy for him to be courteous that when he turns it on, it's a wonderful charm. That's part of every politician's armory, and he had a lot of weapons in that armory. He could be very courteous and very understanding, and he'd give way on the floor. He'd never say anything personal in his debating with any other Senators or committee hearings. Seniority to him was golden. You were always—and those old folks, especially in the Southern Democratic Party, there used to be one. They would say, "He's not what I thought he was going to be. He's a pretty nice fellow. Have you met Ted? He's a pretty good guy." There was a lot of that going on. And then there was cosponsoring across the aisle with Republicans on bills and so on—just waiting his turn, doing the right thing and—

**Young:** And not making waves.

**Burke:** No waves. No showboating. No rushing to the microphone first. No. He never did that.

**Young:** No trading on his brother's reputation?

**Burke:** No, never. Never doing that.

**Young:** Which may have been part of the expectation?

**Burke:** Yes, part of the expectation. Who knows?

**Young:** At least in '63.

**Burke:** If you talk to Senator Robert Byrd today he'll confess immediately that, "When I first met him, I hated him." Why? If you asked him why, and I'm not saying you should, but if you asked him why, I'm sure he couldn't really tell you why. "Because I'm supposed to. I'm in that club that doesn't like him, and, goddamn it, there it is."

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** So even today, he's held in high regard by a whole new population of Senators because the opposite also worked. When he became a bull, a senior bull, he was still nice to the freshmen coming in. So the Senate as an institution is important. One thing that I found was when he was going to be beaten down on an issue or on an item, his opponents did it nicely. They didn't shove his face into it. They just did it nicely. The best example, I think, is when Francis X. Morrissey—I don't know if you're interested in that story, but—

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** Part of this is my view of it, but I think historically it's—the Senator's father, Ambassador Kennedy, wanted something for what the press would call his old coat holder, Francis X. Morrissey, that he should become a judge. And most people thought that's a very difficult thing to do because Francis Morrissey is nothing to get excited about anyway. Lyndon Johnson is now the President of the United States. And Lyndon smells Robert Kennedy is coming along and any little embarrassment he can throw on the Kennedys is fine with him.

The father asked Bobby to move Francis Morrissey's name into nomination for a federal judgeship. And Bobby, knowing what he was looking forward to in the future, some day running for President, didn't want to do that. So Ted was the obvious choice to do it. Teddy agreed apparently, because at the time Lyndon Johnson was at his ranch in Texas and he had a press conference. The only reason for the press conference was to announce Lyndon Johnson was going to appoint Francis X. Morrissey to the federal bench. The press sort of said, "Is that it?" "That's it," he said. "That's his announcement," which had the desired effect, for everybody in the press to say, "Who the hell is Francis X. Morrissey. What is this? What's going on?" Quickly, they not being fools, they say, "So?"

Then game was, how badly can we kill this guy? But Teddy stuck with it. And even then, at that early time in his career in the Senate, they said, "Well, he's one of us. We don't want to go crazy here. We don't get involved between Johnsons and Kennedys and so on." So Teddy stuck with this thing, from his old man who is sick and frail, and Bobby was smart to duck it. Teddy's going to do it. I don't want to get off the track here but—

**Young:** Go ahead.

**Burke:** We went to visit with the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Everett McKinley Dirksen, of Illinois. The Senator and I went into his office, and Everett Dirksen, as you know, had a voice that sounds like mine today with this cold that I have. “Well, Ted, come in. Sit down. Such a pleasure to see you, Ted. Nice to see you too, son,” he’d say to me. “Sit down, Ted. What can I do for you today?” Clearly, he knows why Ted is there. “Mr. Chairman, I came to ask you for some consideration to be given, when the hearings come up on Francis Morrissey, and to allow him to make his case, allow me to make a case for him,” Dirksen said, “Yes, of course, Ted. We’ll do that. We’ll do it in a fine way. In a fine way.”

Ted said, “Well, Mr. Chairman, I should be frank with you: he’s had some difficulties, Mr. Morrissey; it took him a couple of times, if not more, to pass the bar in Massachusetts.” “Oh. Well. Now that *is* difficult. And I know that is difficult because I have suffered the same problem myself. The very person you’re talking to, Ted, took two occasions to pass the bar in my own state. So your words don’t fall on unsympathetic ears. I know what that can be to a person” and so on. “So I will keep that in mind. Thank you very much.”

Ted and I walk back to the office. He’s delighted, I’m delighted. That was nice. Wasn’t that nice? That’s nice. Well, when the hearing came, everybody on the committee who was against Francis Morrissey, which I think was a lot, everybody on the committee was just as nice and they killed it. They killed it and they sent it to the floor so it could die a death out there in public. It was awful. And Teddy went right on after that—he did what his father wanted and got Bobby off the hook and—

**Young:** Because why? Because it was for his father?

**Burke:** Yes. No doubt about that. I mean, Frank Morrissey had no other call on Ted Kennedy or Bobby. It was all a relationship with the father. Absolutely.

**Young:** His father had had a stroke by then?

**Burke:** Yes, I believe he had. So it was very important to him. And the fight got really difficult, not with the opponents of Francis Morrissey, but with members of the Democratic Party who he thought should stand with him. And didn’t. Especially one. In Maryland.

**Young:** Maryland. [Joseph] Tydings.

**Burke:** Joe Tydings, yes. And that was particularly bitter.

**Young:** Did Bobby play any role at all in this? At the end?

**Burke:** Yes, but not memorable. I can’t remember a great rousing speech. Teddy gave a rousing speech about—this boy grew up with wooden pegs in the soles of his shoes.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** People in the Senate would say, “What the hell is he talking about? Why would anyone have wooden pegs to hold the soles on their shoes?” Because they couldn’t afford nails. It was so awful. So awful. But his defeat, strange to say, left a good taste in the mouth of everyone in the

United States Senate. He's all right. He just got whacked. He took it right. He did the right thing for the things he had to do. He got whacked. That's it. Sort of like welcome to the club.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** Yes. That was pretty good.

**Young:** And he didn't do it with shame. He stood up there—

**Burke:** He didn't do it with shame. Stood right there.

**Young:** Put the best case forward.

**Burke:** Put the best case forward. Did the best he could. And thereafter, with the one exception of a friend who he thought had changed his mind or failed his trust, not every, but most members of the Senate felt that he did it with a certain grace and charm and even with a smile on his face when it was over, slapping people on the back going out of the chambers. So in the weird world of the United States Senate, that can be not a victory, but that allows you to be fully accepted. How you handle yourself when you're on a suicide mission.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** He handled it well. So that's how he—we started this with how he came to the Senate with a target on him. There was no target after that. And today when we look at Hillary Clinton, she has been masterful with how she's handled the Senate, where the hatred was even stronger most of the time. So it's important how you handle yourself in how you're regarded thereafter.

**Young:** That's an interesting parallel across a large span of time.

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** Going on to his—at the beginning, I guess immigration was his issue. He managed the bill.

**Burke:** Yes, he chaired the subcommittee. That's right.

**Young:** And that had been one of his subcommittees right from the beginning?

**Burke:** I don't know if right from the beginning, but when I arrived, he was on that subcommittee. And he had a very good staff person. Dale DeHaan is his name. Very good staff person.

**Young:** Yes. So that was an issue that resonated also with his brothers, was it not?

**Burke:** Yes, it was. And actually, they—he and his brothers, especially the President, not so much Bobby—you never could tell where Bobby was on things, but—For Teddy it's always been the case as with the President, the fact that I come from an immigrant family is vitally important to my biography and I never want it hidden anywhere. I want it in blazing headlines. He had a great deal of pride in where we came from and what we did.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** So that was an important issue. But having said that, he found, I think, great comfort in the fact that our immigration policy at that time was so skewed, and so openly biased—it was just openly and shamelessly—we had an Asian-Pacific Triangle. If you're Asian, you can't come in here. We only let a handful in every year. And you're lucky to get that.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** I mean, why? Here's where he got into some difficulty because there was long a complaint among northern Europeans that the Irish have a quota, a number—why can't we have something like that? Why are they favored? Why are the Irish so favored? And something has to be done about that. Now, how is this son of Irish immigrants going to handle the cutback on Irish numbers, to cut back the number of Irish individuals in this country, in fact? Remember, we're talking families and reunification and so on. Why do we have to get into this and—? But he took it on. It just was not right. I think that that was my first surprise with him, that there were certain things that he is deaf on, and one is political advice like, "I'd stay away from that issue, that's a killer." That's not a good way to open a conversation with him. He just looks at you sort of with a wonderment, like why are you—it's just not fair.

And we've seen that with other things he's done. I recall once counseling him that he shouldn't take a certain committee assignment—and I was no longer working for him—because that is the committee that is going to receive every big-mouth poverty advocate who is going to come in and strip your skin off if you don't give them every goddamn nickel and dime they want for something. And if some day you want to be President of the United States, and you're offered Judiciary, take Judiciary. People who want to be President should be picking federal judges and not fighting with some advocate for the poor. I don't know. I don't know, Ted, about that. And you know [*snaps fingers*], you lost him right there. You just lost him. Is he stupid or is he stubborn or is he—what is he justifying? What's the reward going to be? There's a personal reward, that's clear. I'm not a shrink, but there is a personal reward in doing the right thing. And we found it on immigration that year. We didn't cut the—first of all, we got rid of the Asian-Pacific Triangle.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** We had a first-come, first-served all around the world. And no special quotas any longer for people. That hurt the Irish because the back-ups were so great in Norway, Finland, Germany, France, and so on that the Irish who wanted to come in now had to stand at the end of that line to become a first-come, first-served person. They were furious. I mean, just furious. We encountered that when Bobby was running for President. We really encountered that, the Irish screaming at you in a crowded hall. Almost like terrorists.

I may have told you, we went into an arena some place, I can't remember, it was in Detroit or something, and we went in the athletes' entrance. The state police were good enough to do that for us, and suddenly, in this long corridor, there was a little fellow. If you are Irish, he's in your family someplace. And most likely, you knew him too. He started using bad language. "You dirty, rotten rat—look what you've done to your own people. When you get on that stage, I'm

going to let everyone in that hall know what you did, you dirty, rotten, filthy....” And we kept walking. We kept walking. And he kept walking about 15 or 20 feet in front of us. He was going to lead us into the halls yelling and so on.

Down on the left was a men’s room door and I hip-checked him—if you play hockey—I hip-checked him into the men’s room. He wasn’t expecting that because I don’t look like a fellow who’s going to do anything—and I hip-checked him and he went in. And in his confusion he went into one of the stalls inside and I went into the stall with him and shut the door. If you’re ever in a men’s room, you can’t get out of a stall if there are two men in it and the door is locked. *[laughter]* And what I heard was the roar of the crowd, which meant that Ted had arrived on the stadium floor and the people had risen up and given their applause to this wonderful Senator. So I opened the door to the stall and I said, “OK, you can go out now.” Because the dramatic moment was lost.

**Young:** What was this occasion?

**Burke:** It was a union in the Midwest, and we were—Teddy and I were out working in states that have conventions but not primaries.

**Young:** Oh, OK.

**Burke:** So therefore, if the autoworkers are having a dinner tonight for 2,000 people, you go and you pitch your brother Bobby because there are some delegates in that hall, and you just know there are.

**Young:** Getting back to something you said earlier, and I think this is important for the oral history, you’ve talked about immigration and you’ve talked about doing something because it was right.

**Burke:** I’m sensitive about saying that because it makes it seem like I’m over glorifying—

**Young:** No.

**Burke:** He’s just a human being.

**Young:** No, I don’t think it sounds like that. I think people who read this oral history are going to get it because your comments are not entirely unique, but they are very pointed and very eloquent. And you also talked about the choice of a committee assignment.

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** Poverty—getting involved in poverty. And the important point getting across is there is something beyond the political calculation in moving him forward, maybe he had his eye on the Presidency some day or going on to greater things.

**Burke:** Yes, I’m sure he did.

**Young:** But his Senatorial work was not calculating toward that end. The Senate was not a stepping-stone, in other words. Is that the way to put it?

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** He was there to do work. And he was also there to make some points of principle.

**Burke:** That's right.

**Young:** And improve fairness.

**Burke:** Right. And it's a wonderful goal to have. If I can just be a good Senator, that plus my name and background, I don't have to be a nickel-and-dime on issues in order to calculate my arrival in some high-end station.

**Young:** Yes. And they are big items, too. They are important issues.

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** It's not poverty.

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** Fairness and immigration. Do you want to talk a little bit about getting—you've already started to talk about this, but in the first year, in the early time there, you were mentioning earlier in the interview that you weren't involved in policy so much. You were building staff and you were fixing him up and fixing the staff up to get things done. And I had said that immigration was an issue early, but it was already on his plate when you came. But there were other issues that got on his plate, weren't there? Or maybe I'm wrong about this.

**Burke:** There were, yes.

**Young:** I mean, there's his involvement in the civil rights.

**Burke:** Health care.

**Young:** Health care. Civil rights. Vietnam—refugees in Vietnam.

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** By now, he had his staff. He had a good staff for these purposes. And he had good feelings in the Senate, among the Senatorial colleagues. He'd passed that sort of barrier.

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** He's more than we thought and not quite what we expected. So now he is moving—it looks like ever more broadly and intensively into public policy, into legislation.

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** Do you want to talk a little bit about how he was doing that, what you were doing in that. You maybe want to talk about Vietnam or—

**Burke:** What I got heavily involved with was health care.

**Young:** OK.

**Burke:** And I guess I got involved with it because he talked to me about it a lot.

**Young:** This was very early?

**Burke:** Yes. Well, it was '66.

**Young:** OK. Yes.

**Burke:** And it's a natural for him because of his constituency in Boston and the traditional health care people.

[BREAK]

**Burke:** He used to talk to me a lot about health care. He didn't talk to me a lot about all issues, so I always took that as I'm going to get involved in this issue because it's—You're right to say that the staff seemed to be pretty well put together as I had memory of it. It's amazing how the staff reinforces itself. If everybody is good, or feels they're good, they keep reinforcing each other. The competitive levels are such that if everyone is treated fairly, then it gets to be very productive.

So I set up meetings in Boston for him to meet with all sorts of folks. Not that he needed me to set them up, but I found with him, if he really wants to do something, he has an expectation that you're going to do something about that. I mentioned it to you, didn't I? "Aren't we doing something yet? What's happening?" And if you pick up those signals early, you can capture the initiative that he wants to bring to it.

I remember on one trip to Boston, we went to a neighborhood health center, which—I don't know where the concept is today but it brought health care to very poor people, in slums and in housing projects.

**Young:** Was this out at Columbia Point?

**Burke:** Yes, which happens to be exactly where the John F. Kennedy Library is today. It's extraordinary. I got stuck on neighborhood health centers and he got stuck on neighborhood health centers because doctors in Boston were talking to him about it—it's a good idea. But there was some federal funding going into neighborhood health centers. I found a woman in the Department of HEW [Health, Education, and Welfare], we used to call it, and her name was Lis

Bamberger. I'd call her up, talking to her about neighborhood health centers, and she finally interrupted to say, "You know, I have to tell you something, David Burke, and I don't even know you. But you're asking all the wrong questions." I said, "Oh, what should I ask you?" "First you should ask me—" Then she gave me questions. And that's where I got all of my information. Today she is the wife of Dan Schorr, who you hear on PBS [Public Broadcasting Service].

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** She's a wonderful human. She was just wonderful. So we went to visit the neighborhood health center. The point that I'm just trying to get to—we were talking about how he gets involved with certain issues, and he gets involved with them in a strange way and it's usually not grand—it's some things that are very important. We spent a whole day touring this neighborhood health center in Columbia Point in Boston, where UMass [University of Massachusetts] Boston now sits and where the John F. Kennedy Library now sits. And what came out of that visit—it was obvious, if you could have a neighborhood health center in the middle of poverty, it's got to be beneficial. But what was obvious to him was they're going to work and they're wonderful, because for nursing mothers, they have rocking chairs. And we should remember to put that in any building, there always has to be rocking chairs and a provision for it in maternity sections of neighborhood health centers. That was so important. I loved it. I mean, that will make you stay up late working on a bill.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** So that's a part of it.

**Young:** Was this—you set up this meeting?

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** After talking with Lis Bamberger. And he had been talking to you in general about health care?

**Burke:** Yes. He mentioned neighborhood health centers to me.

**Young:** And you took the ball—

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** —and talked to Lis so that when you went to one, you weren't just standing there like a gawker.

**Burke:** Right. Right. I was standing there knowing what the federal law said, how much was appropriated last year. And I knew all of the—because Lis Bamberger—

[BREAK].

**Burke:** And there were other issues that you were talking about too.

**Young:** Well, this was the first step.

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** This visit to Columbia Point Neighborhood Health Center.

**Burke:** Yes. Then the next step would be hearings down in Washington.

**Young:** On what? Health centers?

**Burke:** On various parts of health bills that were coming up.

**Young:** I see. Where did Walter Reuther come into this? The Committee of 100? You know, this is getting into national health insurance.

**Burke:** That's right.

**Young:** This is very big.

**Burke:** That's right.

**Young:** What's the transition from the neighborhood—

**Burke:** That, I don't know, specifically. But it was obvious—if the United Auto Workers are committing themselves to a national health policy, then I'm going to commit myself to a national health policy too because they are enormous supporters of mine and enormous supporters of my brother Bobby and Walter Reuther is one of the most highly regarded people in labor history in this country.

**Young:** When he was early talking to you about health care, was it really Massachusetts-oriented at that point, or national?

**Burke:** No, national. And we visited Columbia Point only because it was a good example of what exists in Detroit, if we had gone to Detroit. But it wasn't specific.

**Young:** You left the staff in '71.

**Burke:** That's right.

**Young:** And by then he, as chair of the health subcommittee, had already proposed national health insurance. And was off on trips all over the world.

**Burke:** Yes, that's right.

**Young:** To look at how their health care systems operated.

**Burke:** Well, he had built a whole network of professional friends who were in the health business—not business people, but health professionals.

**Young:** He had doctors he was talking with after this.

**Burke:** Oh yes.

**Young:** Yes. Were you involved in any of that?

**Burke:** Yes. The head of Mass General, for example, was one—he was a young man. He died very young, unfortunately.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** And of course in Vietnam we met another one who became number two at Mass General.

**Young:** OK. But other than the neighborhood health care, you were not involved specifically in legislation that he was proposing or—am I right about that?

**Burke:** Well, if by being involved specifically you mean actually writing the bill or—

**Young:** No. I meant larger issues than neighborhood health.

**Burke:** Yes, I'd be involved in larger issues. It was—the office wasn't so compartmentalized. Because, compared to today, the staff was small.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** The substantive people in the office were maybe five. Four or five. And the committee staffs were smaller too. Today he is the boss of 60 to 80 people, but in those days, it was small and so there was a lot of—someone would arrange the hearings. I'd talk to him about policy. Others would talk to him about policy. If others couldn't understand where he was coming from, then I'd go in and straighten out the kink in the hose, and why aren't people understanding each other in this. I'd do what a Chief of Staff is supposed to do.

**Young:** With today's large staff, that's harder to do.

**Burke:** Oh, today's large staff is—I mean, he's got more memos coming to him every day than a human being can actually.... And I'll tell you too about his bag.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** He has a bag that he takes home every night. And he did way back when we didn't know what to put in it because we weren't doing that much yet. "You should see the argument in *TIME* magazine."

**Young:** So he didn't have a lot of homework to do, to take—

**Burke:** Well, he did. We made sure he did, because he always had to feed that maw.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** There's a thing about—I have to do work. I have to do work, work, work, then I can have fun. And when I have fun, it's none of your business. And then I have to work, work, work, work, work. So he has to work. Work is the answer to a lot of things. You can't be all bad if you're working hard.

**Young:** Yes. Do you have any recollections of the poll tax?

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** The 18-year-old vote—you were involved in that, weren't you?

**Burke:** Yes, the 18-year-old was not of great interest to me. But the poll tax was. And that was—I don't know how *he* remembers this, but I know how I remember a conversation with him one day. "Now, Dave, there's going to be a civil rights bill and we have to amend it." "Well, what do we have to—what do you have in mind now?" "I don't know yet, but we have to amend it. We know Bobby's going to do something. We just got to—so, let's try to figure this out." And I called people and I called Joe—

**Young:** Rauh.

**Burke:** Rauh. And Joe Rauh was big in the civil rights era. A wonderful man, a really wonderful man. Did much to change the course of this nation. Joe Rauh was the kind of guy I liked because if you said to him, "We want to do something on civil rights, come down to my office right now," he'd say, "Come on. I'll feed you. I'll do anything you want." He'd grab on to you and adopt you, and I was totally open to adoption and being grabbed. We got along fine. The poll tax was a burning issue, and if I had been more involved in the civil rights movement, I would have known that, but I didn't. And again, you have to be sort of shameless, so what's the hot issue? What's up with this?

Joe Rauh provided all of the policy direction on the poll tax. Provided all of the other legal assistance on the poll tax. The writing of the bill and the language itself, Joe did it. The Senator's opening speech on the Senate floor was introduced by Joe Rauh. If you've got something good going like that, then you just let it go. And we did. It was a wonderful, wonderful fight. Lost, but it was a wonderful fight. As I recall, we think it really had an influence on the Supreme Court, but the issue had been surfaced, had been looked at, lost votes, but that doesn't matter. It's been aired and it's wrong. Poof. If there were doubters on the Court at the time—

**Young:** The administration was opposed to this amendment.

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** And [Nicholas] Katzenbach—

**Burke:** Well, that has nothing to do with whether it was a good amendment or a bad amendment, or whether it was a well-written amendment or wasn't a well-written amendment. As we see now in the current debate we're involved in—not to be parochial—but in the current debate, the Senate is involved in on immigration today, there are tipping points in the negotiation to get a bill through. And it could be, and it was in this case, I believe, for God's sakes, we don't need a poll tax. That's just another red flag to those guys down South. It's going to make them dig in even hotter. If we could just back off the poll tax and get around it, we'll get some kind of a bill this year. So I understand that. That's how these things are negotiated.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** Katzenbach came up to see him on occasion and that's when he tried to talk him out of the poll tax. I think I may have mentioned to you before, I always felt that there was a holdover effect from guys who had been in John Kennedy's government right through even until the late '60s, if they were still in the government, or even if they weren't, that Teddy was treated with some condescension and it ranged from what is he doing being so headstrong running for office when he could embarrass our beloved President, John Kennedy, and so on and so forth. It ranged from that to the original criticism—if his name was something else, he wouldn't be running for office anyway. I mean, there were just some people who didn't think highly of him. It would be hard to find them today, but—and I always had that sense of Katzenbach.

**Young:** Then [Michael] Mansfield went with Katzenbach on this.

**Burke:** He might have.

**Young:** He did.

**Burke:** I'm trying to remember if he did.

**Young:** Yes. But Dirksen was sympathetic. He went with him too and just shut the door. But the remarkable thing, one of the remarkable things about this is he came very close to prevailing on that amendment.

**Burke:** That's right. Yes. That's what I meant when I said he came close to prevailing on that amendment and the Court had to notice. Now, that may be wishful thinking, but I do believe that the Court is a bunch of human beings and that issue was red hot. "Boy, that was close. And if it ever comes up here, we've got to look at it."

**Young:** That was his first major initiative, wasn't it?

**Burke:** It was his first major controversial issue bill. What do I mean by controversial? I mean some issues that are ultra controversial because they are demarcation points between parts of our society. Others like the health bill are just—maybe one expert in sciences—

**Young:** You have different interests but you don't have the passions.

**Burke:** The passion. That's right.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** It doesn't approach a morality level, but this one did. And that was his first one. He did very well. Always very nervous, but he did it very well.

**Young:** Do you want to talk about Vietnam and your trip and how it came about, and that whole story? Not just the trip but—Ted Kennedy in Vietnam.

**Burke:** Well, early on, when I first met him in 1965, in the office around me, there was really no discussion of Vietnam. Yes, we were burdened with constituency up in Cambridge, Massachusetts, but we know all about them. I mean, they drive you crazy on everything. Some people say permanent republic of Cambridge. And academics are concerned about Vietnam.

**Young:** Stuart Hughes.

**Burke:** Yes. That's it. My gosh, you'd go to a ball game and that was the noise in the background and so on. That started to change after a while. But, he was—hawk is too strong a word. Disinterest may be a more appropriate one, because when you think, in his lifetime there had been World War II and Korea, where no one said a word of opposition to anything. The experience of people of that generation was if you are opposed to your government when American soldiers are at war, that's pretty cuckoo. So to learn how to be opposed, to first pass the barrier that it's all right to think differently than your government on a matter of foreign policy, when it's usually well accepted in the United States that the layperson knows nothing about foreign policy, that's why the pros take care of that. You can argue all you want about crime and health care, schools, public education because laymen are supposed to have some expertise on that, but not on foreign policy. That's really rather different. And so all of those barriers had to be overcome to be exposed to the war in Vietnam. As the war started to—in late '65 and '66, '67, as it started to get awful—

**Young:** In '64, when he was still in the Stryker frame, the Tonkin Resolution and the incident came up. He did not—he wasn't able to vote on it, but the newspapers suggested that he announced in favor of it, that he would have voted for it. And that's when the escalation begins, doesn't it?

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** So that by the time he's back in the Senate, in January of '65, it's ramping up.

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** And then the bombing and then the enormous escalation of troops, and it becomes a ground war—

**Burke:** Right. Yes.

**Young:** —and so forth. Anyway, that's what was happening.

**Burke:** And he had to overcome these other barriers—and also the extraordinary barrier that he, unlike any other except for Bobby, had—my brother was involved in this early decision-making, whether right or wrong, and to what extent—and people that he left behind in what had been his administration are still heavily involved in this. And to go against them violates all of the understandings I had from the dinner table. I talked to [Robert] McNamara from time to time. Who’s a good guy, who’s not a good guy, what this policy is and what it’s all about, when the incident started and all of that sort of stuff. And I watched Bobby when he turned against the war. He did it at one level, and his level was more to do with the international politics of Vietnam, the what I call the “shape of the table” argumentation, the fox and the henhouse—who should be in a compromised government and so on and so forth.

Ted’s opposition to the war took shape as something he was very comfortable with and—we are bringing enormous technology, tons of it, to bear on a population of people who are, as one person, Bernard Fall, used to say, running around in their diapers. He said it with affection, Bernard Fall. He was a great student. And they’re going to beat you. They’re going to just beat you silly because you don’t think they have a brain in their head. Anyway, that was Bernard Fall’s argument. When you watched the strikes from 25,000 feet, you can bomb anything and it doesn’t bother you because you’re just pushing buttons. And down below something is happening and I won’t be—I’ll never go by there again to see what happened. Teddy knew what was going on down below, or felt he did, and what he should know about and should care about that, and it fit right in with refugees and civilian casualties.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** So that, in a strange way, allowed him to be more blunt in his criticism about the war because he was doing it on behalf of innocents. It would be difficult for Bobby to be so blunt if he was dealing only with diplomats. But if you’re dealing—if you’re doing it on behalf of innocents, you can say anything you want. And he was very comfortable doing that. I don’t know where the idea was. I know that he had been to Vietnam once before—

**Young:** This was in ’66.

**Burke:** That’s right. With Joe Tydings and that crowd.

**Young:** With Joe Tydings—well, wait a minute.

**Burke:** He was before that.

**Young:** It was before that. It was—

**Burke:** Yes. It was before his accident, before the plane crash.

**Young:** Yes, you’re right. It was right after the Morrissey vote.

**Burke:** Yes. And it was a bad trip. It was a bad trip by the press that covered it. It wasn’t taken seriously. And it was a wasted opportunity or something—

**Young:** Do you know why he went?

**Burke:** I don't know. I wasn't involved. And he never really wanted to talk about that trip. That trip, he knew, was not a good trip. One night we had a dinner at his house in Georgetown, I can't remember what the reason was, but it was small. It wasn't about Vietnam. When everyone left he said, "Why don't we take a walk?" So we walked around the streets of Georgetown and he said, "You know, maybe we should do a trip to Vietnam." So it came from someplace, I don't know where. But he said, "It cannot be like the last trip. It should really be a good trip and we should focus on what we're going to focus on and make sure that we come out with something to say." Which is easy to do when your mind is made up or becoming made up—as opposed to the other trip, where he was just open to any suggestion. So, with funding from the Senate Committee on Refugees [Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees and Border Security], we could be slightly exorbitant in our design for the trip to make sure it's good.

We picked some people who should advance the trip—now this sounds like a campaign, but it was—and once you get in the hands of the United States military in Saigon, you disappear from sight forever. They just stuff things down your throat and that's it. You come home having been brainwashed or whatever other embarrassments that had happened to other public figures before Vietnam. They had had themselves embarrassed by it. Not that the military did that on purpose, but it turned out that way.

So we—as you know, Vietnam was broken up into four CORDS [Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support] areas. We had one person in each CORD who would proceed and go into Vietnam by about three or four weeks. And each would be assigned to a CORD, and I'd go to Saigon and manage it from there. They would go out and about and come back into Saigon, and go back out again and so on and so forth. So by the time—

**Young:** You really organized it.

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** When he said, "Let's go," it was in your hands.

**Burke:** Yes, it's typical of the situation. As someone who has always been in the relationship, naturally, if I'm concurrent, philosophically, with the idea—if he says, "Let's go, man," I'm straight up and it's going to be done. It's got to be done, not with bells and whistles, but it's going to be done with flair in the substantive sense. It's going to be good. So, I'd be in Saigon and these fellows would go out.

**Young:** What were these people doing?

**Burke:** They would go around to—they would meet any nongovernmental organization they could, goody-goody people, do-gooders, any other horrible word the people want to put on them. The NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] of this world were wonderful—doctors in the field and Amnesty International, Doctors Without Borders, all of that kind of stuff. They'd meet with those people: what's the problem here in the delta? What's causing all of these deaths and what's causing all of those deaths? I want to see that hospital. I want to see that orphanage. I want to see what kind of care is there. How are they being fed?

And so finally, when it was time for him to come, we had books ready for each CORD and we had a whole schedule laid out for where he wants to go, what he wants to see. And that was just for us. We didn't tell the Army where we wanted to go and what we wanted to see. And they hadn't really focused on what we were doing anyway, because how could they make a relationship to me in Saigon with some guy in the delta who was talking to some—

**Young:** Yes. Did anybody give you any problems when you were there?

**Burke:** No, not at that point. Once we were out of the bag, yes; then they gave us problems, but—I mean, attitudes do change and I don't blame them. We sort of ambushed them a bit.

**Young:** OK.

**Burke:** So I flew out to—

**Young:** So this was information-gathering?

**Burke:** That's right. That's all it was, information-gathering.

**Young:** And it was really about refugees, the camp populations, the villages—

**Burke:** And also a good dose of military activities of late—Is the rice moving? Is it not moving on the highways? Is it coming in—all of the things that Bernard Fall taught us, here are the signs. Watch—if this happens, then that's happening. If that is happening, then this is happening. So we had all of this. And how many air strikes and how much devastation, and so on. When he and I returned from Manila, and you've seen him study books—he was really studying this stuff.

**Young:** You met him in Manila.

**Burke:** I flew out from Vietnam to Manila, yes. I spent New Year's Eve in Manila, and then flew in with him. When we arrived in Saigon, naturally, we were well met and the military told us that—

**Young:** But he had the briefing books?

**Burke:** Oh, he had them all. He had already ingested to the extent that he can, which you know, is endless. If he read them once, he read them twice. The military met us and they said that at 0800 hours tomorrow morning, we want to give you your in-country briefing, they called it, or something like that, before you begin your trip around and we coordinate the kind of places you should go to, where we think you should go and what you want to see. And he told them, "I don't need that at 0800 hours tomorrow morning. But tomorrow morning I'd like to present you with where I want to go and how I want to get there, and when I want to get there" and so on and so forth.

Well, that took them back a little bit. "Are you sure you don't—" "No, no, I don't." Now, I'm with him and our four guides are there too, who were wonderful people. You know them, I believe. You know their names. John Nolan and [E.] Barrett Prettyman, the son of George Prettyman, and a young kid, [Thomas] Powers. I don't know where he went in life. I wish I did

know. He can speak Vietnamese, which was wonderful. I couldn't believe it. And so now then, you can imagine the cables going back to the Pentagon. This is—

**Young:** These were military folks or civil—

**Burke:** Those people I just mentioned were civilian. They were our advance team.

**Young:** Yes, but the people who wanted you briefed—

**Burke:** Oh, those were military. They control you when you're in-country. Because to get around, you have to be in their helicopters.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** So we had to be in their helicopters. But we were just going to tell them where we wanted the helicopters to go, and they had to make the decision—if they wanted to clean up a mess, then they could say, “You can't go there tomorrow” or the next day or something. They have to give us a reason about why we can't go there. So they had to decide early on, are we going to try to screw this up for them, or will it be so obvious because it's going to be—because you know the *Washington Post* is going to love it and the *New York Times* is going to love it. Here comes Ted Kennedy—and these other guys were good, straight-shooting citizens of the United States of America, and they're going to really raise hell.

So they met us the next morning and we arranged our trip in terms of how many helicopters we would need and where we were going, and of course when we went to I-CORD, or II-CORD or III-CORD or IV-CORD. We brought the advance man with us so he'd take us right up to the head of the hospital and right to the nun who was running the infirmary for the kids and so forth. And it was awful. It was an awful trip because we saw things that you shouldn't see.

**Young:** Such as?

**Burke:** Napalm burns on a child. Bones—arms frozen to the side of the body by the melted skin. Just horrible things that you don't want to see and we are dropping tons—Bernard was right, Bernard Fall—tons of technology on human beings in diapers who had done nothing to us. We were just doing it. Like a steamroller, we were rolling over this country. Yet all we hear back in Washington is we're in the hearts and minds of these people. Teddy Kennedy, who is an extraordinarily fine politician, it doesn't take much to convince him that you don't win the hearts and minds of people by treating them so cruelly. I mean, just abject cruelty.

And we wanted to see prisons. We went to see prisons and we went to see those holes that we used to pour lime into, and oil. Nothing has changed. The seeds of Iraq we were looking at in terms of treatment of humans, for sure. I mean, we were always polite and he was hail fellow, well met, but the underlying core of our visit on our trips was devastating and they knew it. Someone didn't get the word—we went up—some monk on some hill some place, and there was an artillery group on top of that hill. And they thought there were Viet Cong, and there were free-fire zones over there.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** Everyone within range of that hill is obviously VC [Viet Cong]. There are all sorts of ways you could be obviously VC. If you're obviously VC, that's it. All you have to do is say, "Obviously VC; kill them." And so we went over there. Whoever was running that, nice fellow, I'm sure, thought it would be—in honor of the Senator's visit, they had a shell that they had carved his name in it. And this is the 5,000th shell shot this year from this station in this gulley. Oh, it is. Boom. They shot it. And he said, "Where did that shell go?" They said, "Well, this is a free-fire zone. It's a free-fire zone." "But, coming in here on the helicopter, we were surrounded by farmers in the fields and rice patties and—I mean, that shell, you wouldn't shoot that off in—where are you from? Illinois or Iowa? You wouldn't shoot it off in your hometown, would you? Who is that hitting?" "This is a free-fire zone. There are obviously VC in there."

And the disgust just got stronger and stronger and stronger. You didn't want to be personally cruel to these young kids who were risking their lives and who thought they were doing a great thing firing a shell with his name on it. These are little learning moments that reflect themselves, can heap up more intensified criticism when you return. So there was no way home after that. No way back. That's—this war has to end. And it has to end right now.

**Young:** Was he talking to people in the government?

**Burke:** When he got back?

**Young:** On that trip. No, in the South Vietnamese government. All of the regional provincial governments?

**Burke:** Only if our advance man brought us to those people. We didn't become an expert in the ever-changing government of Vietnam. But we also had, hanging on sometimes, some people from the State Department, or I would assume some people from the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] who were civilians, and they were always dressed as civilians, and army people, of course. They would say, "Well, you shouldn't see this, you shouldn't see that, and you should do—" and it would fall on not rude, but deaf ears. We just wouldn't—we'd just keep doing—because we had the schedule. You can't be rescheduled if your schedule is good. So that's what it was. That trip had an enormous impact on him. An enormous impact. It just made a whole difference in his life.

**Young:** I was going to ask, was his mind more or less made up—

**Burke:** Before?

**Young:** —when he went, and the trip was confirmation or—

**Burke:** Yes. I think his mind may have been pretty well set and he was looking for some confirmation and—

**Young:** But he didn't know how bad it was.

**Burke:** No. Therefore, when he came back, his mind was clearly made up and he had no fear about stating it because "I've been there and you haven't," and it was a wonderful underwriting insurance policy. "I've been there and I've seen it. I can't tell you the things I've seen, so don't

tell me, pal.” He would get into one of those arguments. So he wasn’t just a fresh Senator any longer. He was rather an expert in this, and he cared what they were doing in Saigon because that—just like in Iraq now, who cares what’s going on in the Iraqi government—

**Young:** Was that a shock for him to be confronted—he had never been confronted with anything on this scale before, had he?

**Burke:** Not the gore level that we were at, no. None of us—and our advance people, God bless them, he told them there was no holds barred on this thing. No one is protecting the delicate Senator from anything. You just show him what you’ve got and how bad it is. And every time you’d leave to go in the airport, little kids are holding their hands up looking for something and he was—it would make you cry. It was awful.

**Young:** It was emotionally trying.

**Burke:** Oh yes, yes.

**Young:** Very emotionally trying.

**Burke:** Yes. It was a good trip. In terms of—it was a good trip subsequently because we had drawn the right conclusions and the advance had been perfect, and afterwards we were now on a warpath.

**Young:** And how did he go down that path? Did you talk with Johnson?

**Burke:** Yes. And another thing after that was—he was very good going around to various foreign policy associations in Boston with the states and cities around him, always first his own constituency. But he’s fortunate that his own constituency happens to be a newsmaker kind of constituency in Cambridge and Boston and so on.

So, yes, Lyndon Johnson couldn’t keep his nose out of anything. And he read all of the cables, I know for sure, and must have been—these guys aren’t just making this up, now. There must have been cables to the effect of who are these wise guys anyway and what do they think they’re doing? Don’t they realize we’ve got a war to fight? And they’re talking with people that we’d never let them talk to. Some people, you get the feeling, would cast doubts on your patriotism. When we got back, President Johnson said he wanted to see him. Ostensibly, he said he wanted to see him because, “I want to find out what you learned, and I sit here in Washington and I know I’m isolated and I have to know what everyone knows about this. I have to find out, so, Teddy, you come down here and tell me what you learned.” So we did. I’ll tell you that story.

**Young:** Tell it.

**Burke:** We go down to his office—the Senator was concerned about this visit, and I think it was because he knew the investment that Lyndon Johnson had in Vietnam. And he was about to go up against that, which is not an easy thing to do with a person like Lyndon Johnson, who is fabled for his pressuring methods and his sense of righteousness and so on and so forth. Also, his brother, Bobby, clearly we knew, was going to run for President of the United States.

**Young:** But hadn't announced yet.

**Burke:** Hadn't announced yet, but everyone who was anyone knew—clearly Lyndon knew it. So therefore, what you have to do here is not conduct yourself with the President of the United States that would, in any way, wreak havoc, even in a small way. If you have a difficult visit with the President, if he got angry with you and said so later, the charge would be “this is all politics,” and it would be awful. And for Teddy, at this point, Vietnam was not politics anymore, if it ever was. So he went down and he was nervous about it. I could tell that. I was too. He was nervous; I was frightened. So—“Come in. Come in here.” And you go in. “Teddy, good to see you. David, good to see you. Please sit down.”

Teddy sat on a couch and I sat on another couch and we were looking at each other, and Lyndon Johnson is in a rocking chair at the top of this thing. A fellow from the State Department is sitting next to me. He's there to report back to the Secretary of State, I guess, what this is all about. Lyndon is settling into his chair and Teddy is getting himself ready, and he said, “Well, Mr. President...” “Now wait a minute, Teddy. Wait a minute, now. Don't rush here. We're not in any rush here. There are some things I want to find out. First of all, Teddy, would you like something to drink, a Fresca or something like that?” “No, thank you, Mr. President. No, thank you. I don't want one.” “Well, Dave, would you like a Fresca?” “No thank you, Mr. President,” I said very self-righteously. I had been preceded by my boss. “Have you seen my dog here, that the Russians gave me? You know, it flew on a satellite once, that dog did, Dave.” He's now dismissed Teddy from the conversation—we're now into serious business here and Teddy has failed by refusing the Fresca.

And that dog looked at us—and the dog, I don't know what his name is, Zookie or Yuki or something—jumped on the couch and put his head on my lap. When a dog does that, it's a cute little dog and you put your hand on the dog. It's an innocent pet. He said, “Well, Dave, your President is going to have a Fresca and you mean you won't have one with me?” I said, “Yes, I'll have a Fresca, Mr. President.” Teddy looked at me and I might just as well have called Trixie [Burke] to say pack up the kids, we are dead. We are gone. Ruined. So the United States Navy attendant in his white uniform brings in two Frescas—one for the President and one for me. He only brought two Frescas.

Now I'm left in a situation where I'm patting his dog and drinking his Fresca. Teddy can be a very happy fellow at the moment; I think it took some of the edge off. After all that—it's *so* Lyndon Johnson. I will control this meeting by ridicule or by something. And Teddy told him—we gave him our report. The bottom line of our report was that it was not accomplishable this way. And that line that I've already used—any politician worth their—would not possibly do to people what we're doing to people and expect to win their hearts and minds, and expect they're going to then become our best friends and a democracy at long last. Even today in Iraq, it's the same damn thing.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** So, John said, “Now, you come back any time you'd like. Anything you want to tell me in the future, Teddy.” So, we left. Nothing came of it. I mean, there was no great statement afterwards by us or him.

**Young:** How did Johnson react to the—

**Burke:** He didn't like it. But after a while he got to be—he was in his rocking chair and he was tired and we knew he was tired, and we knew it was a terrible time for him, psychologically and in every way. He was going down the chute here. And, as I recall, he would not interrupt Teddy in anything Teddy was saying. Teddy sort of had in his mind what he wanted to say and he was doing his best to say it. And Lyndon had his hand up to his face, just looking at him and leaning on his hand, like, I am bored to tears but I'm going to let this fellow continue. So, it was like that. It wasn't a hail fellow, well met meeting. It was not a good meeting. He was not a happy President.

**Young:** How long was it after that before he decided not to run?

**Burke:** He decided not to run in March, I think.

**Young:** And you were there in this meeting with him when?

**Burke:** Well, it must have been a week after we got back. January.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** Yes, and I think Tet was around then, too, about a week or two after we got back. So he had either experienced Tet or he was about to. I don't have the days on that.

**Young:** So you didn't get any indication from Johnson about—

**Burke:** No. He was never going to share with the likes of us.

**Young:** No, he wouldn't share it with you, but that's—I wonder if in some comments he made.

**Burke:** No, not that I remember. Not memorable. But the dog was nice.

**Young:** Yes, and it shed all over you.

**Burke:** Yes. And that story has lived on because we met that night at Bob Kennedy's house with a group of folks who Bob was having serious conversations with about going forward on the race for the Presidency or something, and there were howls of laughter at Dave's weakness in front of Lyndon. I mean, he certainly can't be too involved in any campaign because he's ready to fold right now. More howls. Larry O'Brien says, "President called me today. He wants to know why the Kennedys always have long-haired jerks with them." And I thought, *Ah, that was me*. More howls. Anyway, it was good.

**Young:** So you give the report.

**Burke:** That was it. Then wrote speeches. I wrote speeches endlessly for the Boston Council on Foreign Relations, for Worcester. He went, and kept giving—clearly, this was going to go on and on—

**Young:** And then the antiwar movement is rolling by then.

**Burke:** Rolling and loving us. Yes, he is now a leader.

**Young:** And it's coming from Gene McCarthy, and Bobby was the leader, wasn't he? Or wanted to be.

**Burke:** He couldn't be. You couldn't be the leader of the antiwar movement—

**Young:** No. But the cause—

**Burke:** Because you'd have to do things that would kill you in other parts of the country where you're trying to run for President.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** So—and Bobby was always constrained, whereas Teddy wasn't.

**Young:** OK.

**Burke:** And then you add that to the fact, which I truly believe, that Teddy was talking on behalf of the innocent, which is a wonderful thing. If it can't be faulted. If it's not a game you're playing.

**Young:** It was at this time also that he began to—Teddy was concerned about the draft, wasn't he? The unfairness of the draft?

**Burke:** Yes. But I must say—as they say, there is a black spot in my eye about the draft and the 18-year-old vote and all that sort of stuff.

**Young:** OK.

**Burke:** Those things were—because I was so deep into it, this Vietnam thing was going to be a knockdown. It was going to be the best.

**Young:** Now, by this time, Bobby is running for President.

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** And do you want to say something about your thinking and Ted Kennedy's thinking about this before you get involved in the campaign itself? There was a lot of evidence that neither of you thought this was an advisable course of action.

**Burke:** That's right.

**Young:** Do you want to talk about this?

**Burke:** Yes. I think it was not advisable, I think, from Ted Kennedy's point of view, because I think he thought Bobby was volatile and hence vulnerable to some crazy human who was looking for a twofer or some historic moment. And he really believed that.

**Young:** He did?

**Burke:** He was almost prescient. He really believed it. I am more of the view that Bobby wasn't going to win, a view that was later reinforced a bit when he did announce and Teddy and I went around to the states, the majority of which had conventions in those days as opposed to primaries. Delegates chosen by convention are pros, and Hubert Humphrey had worked them forever. There was just no way—he wasn't even going to get the nomination. But I didn't know that then, at that point. I just didn't think he was going to win. I was, I suppose, selfish about it too. I thought Teddy would be a great person. I didn't want to see it, so we were different that way. I never knew and I never asked him, do you think your brother can win? We would have conversations about, boy, this is difficult. We're having a hard time here, this thing and that thing and the other thing. But he was quite open about the fact that he shouldn't be running, and I think that that was what he felt—that he was going to be hurt one way or the other.

I remember the morning when Bobby was announcing. We were with him in his bedroom at Hickory Hill before he went down to the Senate to announce. When it was all arranged and all done, and Bobby had chosen the right tie to wear and everything like that, and Ethel [Kennedy] was there making a big fuss about everything, Teddy said, "Let's go out and get some air, Dave." And so we did. We went out into the backyard and we walked around and he said, "We have to do the best we can on this. This is going to be very difficult." He was clearly very unhappy. It was a fait accompli then. Within an hour or two he was going to announce and that's it. I remember him saying, "Well, we're going to be all right." That was it.

**Young:** So it was not the issue or the question, Ted's mind was not on winning or losing, it was concern for his brother—

**Burke:** His well-being. Yes. I always took that to be the case.

**Young:** Yes. So in light of what happened, it's just—it's almost more than you can bear to think about for his own feelings afterwards.

**Burke:** Yes. He was a wreck when it happened, too. It was awful, just awful. The National Guard in California was good enough to bring us down from San Francisco. Bobby was doing a victory presentation in Los Angeles and we were in San Francisco. The whole night started off terribly. In San Francisco, you know there was no security in those days, so we're at some victory rally and it was a noisy, crazy crowd, and there was a balcony. It was like a theater and there was a balcony with overhanging signs—free the such-and-such five or something, which was a 1960s kind of sign. And these were all folks who had been arrested who happened to be black. Free the Alameda Five or free this county seven, or whatever the hell it was. They were yelling at us. We realized we had to get out of there while we could because someone might block the doors. What do we know? And we did.

So we got back to the hotel and he turned on the television and there it was, the press conference, the thing going on at Los Angeles. "Dave, look at this." And we looked at the screen and someone was at the microphone saying, "Quiet down, quiet down, quiet down." Clearly, chaos has just occurred and we just missed it. What's going on down there? And it took a fraction of a second to know that what had happened was a horrible, horrible event. Just horrible. And he said,

“I think we ought to get down there.” We still didn’t know anything. I said, “Let me see if I can get us there.”

Meanwhile, he got on the phone and he’s trying to find someone, somewhere, to tell him what’s—and we were on the 10th or 11th floor. I remember, I ran down the stairs to the lobby. Someone told me later that’s an adrenaline reaction. I couldn’t go in comfortably and step into an elevator and silently push the button like the world was a normal place. I had to run down those stairs to guarantee that I got there.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** I went up to someone, an information desk, travel information, or whatever, and I said, “Is there some way that Senator Kennedy and I can get to Los Angeles right away?” Clearly, the lady in the lobby hadn’t been watching television. She said, “Well, no. We have this flight.” And I said, “No.” And a Congressman came up next to me and he said—he’s a Californian, a northern Californian Congressman—and he said, “I’ve heard it. It’s terrible. I’ll get the National Guard to take you down as long as you include me on the trip.” I said OK, and told him what room we were in, what the number was, to call me when the National Guard are here. And then I ran back upstairs.

So then we waited. Teddy had been on the phone with some folks, Frank Mankiewicz or someone down there. The worst had happened. And then we got the call from the Congressman. “OK, the Guard is down here. The Guard’s waiting for you at the airfield. They put on an emergency flight. The state police will be at the front door of the hotel. We can go.” So we went downstairs and he got himself together. Then he just walked out and state policemen were there. They knew what happened. They were very kind. Held his arm and put him in the squad car. I said to another state cop, “If anyone else tries to get in this car, shoot them. No one is getting in this car.” “Yes, sir.” He didn’t know what I was, security—he didn’t know.

So we got in the car and then the Congressman comes running over to get his trip down so he can be in the photo op getting out, and we zoomed off. That was the end of him. And we went to the airbase over the Golden Gate Bridge.

**Young:** Was John Seigenthaler with you?

**Burke:** No. No. I don’t believe—no. He would have been down with Bobby. He wasn’t with us.

**Young:** I’ll check. I talked with him last week. It may have been that he was referring to—but anyway—he was in Los Angeles. OK. I will check it.

**Burke:** I can’t remember anyone except just the two of us going to the airport. I was vindictive about the Congressman because how could he possibly ask for a deal, and then he had a difficult time containing himself on the flight down, I must say.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** We arrived there and we went up to where Bobby was in the hospital. We had a little suite up there, and I was given a little room so I could use the phones and I could look in—I

could see the screen outside of Bob's room, which showed life support systems and that sort of thing. It was just awful. I don't know what that adds to anybody's knowledge about anything. Not that I'm seeking to add. It was just—these events are—I can tell you this one was—because he knew it. He just knew it.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** Why couldn't anybody foresee it?

**Young:** Well, what did you do afterwards?

**Burke:** Afterward—

**Young:** He went sailing and various things. As he said, I guess I sort of checked out.

**Burke:** Yes, that's right. I went up to Maine, just some place. People were very kind. Someone who owned a hotel up in Maine, who had been an old friend and contributed to John Kennedy, said to come up here. Bring your wife and just spend a week with us. So I did. It was just terrible.

**Young:** And then he gets back.

**Burke:** Then he gets back and there was a convention coming up, and he was going to sail into that convention. That will be fine. And I must say, manning the phone in the hospital, no one could be as gracious as Hubert Humphrey was. He'd called me every half hour. How's it going? What do you need? What does Ted need? What does Ethel need? What does Rose [Kennedy] need? He was just wonderful. Extraordinary. Just wonderful. I have a lot of affection for him anyway. I didn't know him personally—I don't mean to imply that—watching his career and so on and so forth.

Then there was a lot of chatter about Teddy. And the mayor of the city of Chicago, Mayor [Richard] Daley, was sort of in the lead on this thing, which I thought was terrible because it was impulsive and it was unreal. And then there's no preparation. There's nothing here. And in a spasm of agony at some time you're going to throw—Hubert Humphrey had put in Teddy Kennedy, is that what you're thinking of doing this? It's awful. I can't find any other words in my mind to say it. It is just awful on all sorts of levels and it's selfish and it's—and if there ever were questions about how ready he is to run for the Presidency of the United States before, as a result of this tragedy and what I had seen in him during this tragedy, it is now beyond question, this is a very hurt person.

So—and we listened to—watched a lot of the convention in Hyannis Port. There was one night the phone calls were red-hot. Steve Smith was out there, however. Never leaving a moment unwatched. Steve's got—can't tell. That's Steve's major. Hey, who knows? He was calling from the hotel out there that he was the favorite. And at times in the crowd of—not crowd, but 10, 12, 14, 18 people in Hyannis Port, you could even feel there, in a sophisticated group of people, the thing would shift. You know, this might—someone just got off the phone with the mayor. The mayor is going to make sure the security is so deep. He'll get you into the city by helicopter and other ways.

And I'm telling you the roof is going to come off the convention hall. It will physically come off the convention hall when Ted Kennedy hits the floor, says Daley. It's just—people—"Do you hear that? Put the Senator on." And so the Senator will get on the phone and talk to somebody, maybe even Daley, and say, "Well, I don't think so." And he'd banter it back and forth. You don't want to say when someone is in full froth, as Daley and his minions were. Daley wanted to deliver the blow of the century to—and it was quite in keeping with his reminiscences when John Kennedy was President and he was important in that, too. He just wanted—this is a great opportunity. Anyway, thank God that night passed.

**Young:** Yes. Was any of his family with him during these conversations?

**Burke:** They'd be in and out of the room. It was very informal. This is not businessmen sitting around a boardroom table.

**Young:** Were these staffers? Friends?

**Burke:** Yes, like that. "Can I get you some more ice cream? Would you like another Diet Coke?" It was very informal. But you could feel the temperature rise and fall because no one wanted—this is the last moment. We either grab it now or you'll never—that argument bounced off the walls. This is it.

**Young:** And was Ted sitting there hearing all of this?

**Burke:** Yes. But being very, not happy, but jovial and joyful and.... It was a party.

**Young:** How could he carry that off?

**Burke:** I don't know. I don't know. I mean, he wasn't dancing with a funny hat on his head.

**Young:** No.

**Burke:** It was just—OK, we're just going to watch this thing. And we're going to watch Hubert do this thing. They didn't quit for a long time. It was a great relief for me when it—well, I think for him, too.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** No question in my mind about it. We were ill-prepared to do anything and it would have been a decision irrationally made—

**Young:** Yes. But, the exploitation, the Daley—it's a form of exploitation, I guess. Seize the moment.

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** Now bring the third brother forward.

**Burke:** Oh, oh, oh, what a dream. If you're Daley. Oh, God had just delivered you the entire universe, if you're Daley.

**Young:** You've got to think about what's going on in Ted's mind as he witnesses all of this.

**Burke:** Yes, he's no fool. He knows when he's being used. And to trot him out like a circus animal? Awful.

**Young:** It's amazing he just wasn't turned off about the whole thing.

**Burke:** Yes. Yes.

**Young:** And saying, "I've had it."

**Burke:** He's amazing. You asked the question about who was in the room with him? Very experienced people were in the room. It's amazing what the potential for power can do to all of us—I'm not rising above it, but to all of us—you've got to watch yourself all the time so you don't get swept off your feet. God, I don't know what my position would have been if I hadn't experienced what I just experienced from the flight to San Francisco forward to—

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** It's just impossible.

**Young:** So then—

**Burke:** So then we got back and I'm trying to say, where are we when we got back, and what were our issues then?

**Young:** Well, the first thing—I think he gives his first public speech, doesn't he? Wasn't that in Worcester?

**Burke:** In Worcester. Yes.

**Young:** Where he's going to take a foreign stand.

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** He didn't use those words at that time but that was the idea. And then the first thing he throws himself into when he gets back is Biafra.

**Burke:** Yes. Biafra.

**Young:** Biafra and starvation and all of this. But let me ask for your reaction to something. I tried to track what he was—once he got back in the Senate, what was he doing? Where was he going? What issues was he taking up? What he was doing leading up to—in the interval between Bobby's death and Chappaquiddick? And it looks like to me, I think I may have told him this, that he was driving himself beyond, what seems to me, any normal human being could endure. I mean, he was taking up Bobby's issues—

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** He had that awful Alaska trip.

**Burke:** Yes, it was awful.

**Young:** That was Bobby's. He took Bobby's place on the Committee on Indian Affairs.

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** He was going around to schools. He was—it's just a remarkable. What he was doing, just the travel, is exhausting.

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** Tip [Thomas] O'Neill was on the plane with him when he was coming up to the Edgartown Regatta, but he was going to Boston. Adam Clymer has this in his book: Ted said, "I've never been so tired at all in my life." And what was it? You know, you saw him during this period.

**Burke:** It was not just the travel to—this issue and that issue too, though; it was the whole family thing too. Ethel had a lot of children. And he immediately—

**Young:** Of course. Of course.

**Burke:** —he immediately—I don't know who the God in the sky is, I don't know, but he takes it as a given that it's his responsibility. He's got to take care of this one that way and this one that way. I mean, the one thing—and you'll find it yourself, the one thing—if ever you became sick and you were in the hospital, you're goddamn lucky he wouldn't fly out there to see you to take care of you.

**Young:** Yes. Yes.

**Burke:** He's got this exaggerated sense of obligation when moments like this arise. I say exaggerated because we all have that feeling, I suppose. And those kids were of an age level and the scale was such that some of them were still weeping and others, you would have thought the world had come to an end.

**Young:** Yes. And Rory [Elizabeth Katherine Kennedy] was on the way.

**Burke:** That's right.

**Young:** Didn't his father die?

**Burke:** His father died.

**Young:** He died in '69. And Jacqueline [Kennedy Onassis] remarried.

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** And he had the family and he was returning to work in the Senate and.... You were observing him at this time. So my question is—this is what I’m just piecing together from that year of whatever it was, grief-work and everything else he was doing. Were you back on an even keel yourself?

**Burke:** I don’t know.

**Young:** You don’t remember.

**Burke:** You don’t know. I know one thing for sure—you don’t come back and suddenly start afresh. You can’t start afresh. You can’t get the interest up to start afresh. There is a deep sense of uselessness. Why are we doing this? There’s a deep sense—regardless of what the issue is and that has to be overcome. I’m really exaggerating to make a point, but it’s like people who return from combat, they have to readjust to reality, to life and—

**Young:** And life is not the same anyway.

**Burke:** No.

**Young:** Can’t be.

**Burke:** No.

**Young:** So is the zest gone?

**Burke:** Yes. Youth is gone. Et cetera. Et cetera.

**Young:** You’re an old man, now?

**Burke:** Yes, oh yes. *He* was. No question about it. In some ways. In the meanwhile, the wife and I, thank God, continued to welcome new children. A Senate salary is a Senate salary. And also there has to be a less troubling existence than one crisis after another.

**Young:** So you were thinking the next step in your career already at this point?

**Burke:** Yes, after ’69 I was, but I was absolutely not going to do anything until he was re-elected.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** Just not going to do that. Just walk away.

**Young:** Were you involved in the ’70 campaign?

**Burke:** Oh, yes. I was up in Boston all the time. Steve was in New York.

**Young:** The ’70 campaign, when we were early in the project, he said, “You don’t need to talk about that. That wasn’t the important one.” And I bought it. Now I’m sorry I did because I think it was a very important campaign.

**Burke:** It was a good campaign.

**Young:** Well, it also comes after Chappaquiddick.

**Burke:** That's right.

**Young:** And that in itself makes it very important in what he did and how he conducted that campaign. Could you—

**Burke:** I forewarn you. I had a general feeling it was a good campaign. I cannot remember specifics of it. It was to be survived. And I can't—I can recall much more of the other campaigns. It was—after the difficulties he suffered from Chappaquiddick, it was really flaunting the gods to think that you're going to run for re-election. That you're going to have an easy walk.

**Young:** But it was an easy walk.

**Burke:** It was an easy walk. So then how, genius, did you pull off that easy walk? No, I can't remember much about that.

**Young:** Well, we have some detailed accounts of it. But I haven't talked with him about it. I will. But it's all insisting on being with people. Letting them see him. Pressing the flesh.

**Burke:** That's right. That's right. Yes.

**Young:** It was intensive interaction.

**Burke:** That's right. Apparently, that's why I was in Boston.

**Young:** It wasn't "speechified."

**Burke:** I was in Boston all of the time for that campaign, which I never thought I would be. Ted Kennedy is up for re-election, you can stay in Washington.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** I was there all of the time because of the issues that were raised and—

**Young:** Paul [Kirk] was with you.

**Burke:** I've seen every nursing home in the state.

**Young:** From the outside. *[laughs]*

**Burke:** But during that campaign—I do remember that. He loves nursing homes, especially when his mother was alive, he loved nursing homes. Because he'd say, "Ladies, I was talking to my mother this morning," and that would be the beginning of something. It would make them all say, "Aw." They'd all get so—oh.

**Young:** There was a gathering at the house after, in the day or so following Chappaquiddick. And a lot of people came. You were there. I don't know who was called, who came of their own volition, but I think it would be useful to know, thinking about what public statement he was going to make at that time and that was part of the business that was being discussed there.

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** And I don't know whether Arthur [Schlesinger, jr.] was there or not. Ted Sorensen was there. McNamara—

**Burke:** Dick Goodwin. It was a gathering of giants. Literary—

**Young:** Literary giants. I wanted to ask you about that speech, the writing of that text and how it was put together and what he had to do with it. Can you talk about that? It's very murky in Clymer, and there may be a good reason for that, I don't know. But it's something—I mean, I'm not looking to see all the emotions and everything that were going on, but you have to come up, he has to say something, he has to give a speech and it was a speech, not to the court, to the people in Massachusetts. And Clymer refers to an intense and sometimes bitter debate among advisors about what ought to be said in that speech. Can you talk about that at all?

**Burke:** Well, I know that there was that debate. I didn't write it. I had nothing to do with the writing of it, so I wasn't involved in it. You're going to have to ask Ted Sorensen or Dick Goodwin or—

**Young:** I have talked to—

**Burke:** —what the argument was because I was not—Steve Smith was there and ran the show. And I was not involved. I really wasn't.

**Young:** In the speech or in anything?

**Burke:** In the speech.

**Young:** OK. I have talked to Ted about it.

**Burke:** Yes, there may have been a meeting of the things I was involved in.

**Young:** Nobody seems to remember about the speech.

**Burke:** Well, nothing is more open to mystery than arguments among speechwriters about who won that argument that day and who—and he succeeded because I got that in there. Who cares?

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** I'll selfishly tell you that I'm very happy I wasn't involved. But I remember sharing a bedroom with Robert McNamara. That's not the most fun I've ever had. And I got into a fight with Burke Marshall. I remember that. And that's not something you should ever do, because he was a saint.

**Young:** How many people were there? I can't even make a count—

**Burke:** It was a caravan of stars. I mean, people coming and going and coming and going. There was not one time when everyone was there at once.

**Young:** Well, how should one understand why all these people were there? The press has written this up. Others have said, you know, they were all summoned. Were they all summoned? Who summoned them?

**Burke:** It's a confusion. It's a confusion of things.

**Young:** Well, I can understand.

**Burke:** It is not—these are not robots who can be summoned. These are people in their own right who have their own lives and their own reputations and their own careers. Everyone who came was there for the simple reason they wanted to be there. They thought help was needed, and being so smart, "I have to go there."

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** And thank God they were there. They weren't dragooned. How could you—how could—and, of all people, Teddy, who was last on the list of brothers, you wouldn't respond to his summons? You respond to your inner ear, you go there. Also, people like that, myself included, are like firemen. We like to be at a blaze. That's why I went into the news business. You've got to be there. You have to—you can't be normal. *[laughs]* You get the feeling that this earth won't keep turning if you don't pay attention.

So, those things happen. For an awful moment, that was the hub of the universe. You had to be there. Someone else will screw it up. I mean, I've had this fight with Dick Goodwin before, and he'll screw it up, so I have to go, says Joe Jones, you know.

**Young:** Was that a comfort, you think, to Ted? Having all of those friends around?

**Burke:** I don't know. There was no comfort. I think he could have done without it.

**Young:** Could you talk a little bit about the whip post, which he held for two years? Getting it and losing it.

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** And what, why, and then I'd like to ask a question about how—what he did after he lost it, whether this was an important turning point for him or not, in terms of how he's going to make his path in the Senate, which you might have—

**Burke:** Yes. I think it was not, but the reason it was not may be involved, if I go back and tell you about the getting of it.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** My strong sense is the getting of it was what it was all about. And once he got it—oh, when you think of it, it's the worst thing in the world. People liken it to being a shoe shiner, to being—Senator Jones' third cousin died. We have to arrange the schedule. He had to get Senator Jones in time to go to the funeral and, you know—I mean, it's awful. It isn't—people think the whip is someone who goes around and rounds up votes and—so, Tom DeLay in the Senate or something like that.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** The whip's job was sort of taking care of the guys' job. It's sort of like a legislative concierge or something like that.

**Young:** Was that Russell Long?

**Burke:** No. That's why he lost it. Because he was drunk all of the time. He did not—he was an equal-hour drinker. I mean, at morning, noon, night—he didn't care.

**Young:** And did Bob Byrd do that job for him? Senator Byrd, he was working with Long, wasn't he?

**Burke:** Oh, yes. He would do stuff like that, but Long would do that stuff, too. But he didn't do that sort of stuff.

**Young:** OK.

**Burke:** And he would—I remember the fellow involved in this was Charlie Ferris. Charlie Ferris was the closest thing that Mike Mansfield had to a chief of staff in the Senate. They loved each other very much. And when you got the sense that you were going to catch Russell Long sound asleep—whoa. All of your hunter instincts come out. This is going to be wonderful. We're just going to tip that guy right over. He'll never know what hit him. Et cetera. Et cetera. Et cetera.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** Boy, are we wonderful. And that's the way it turned out. Teddy was off skiing some place.

**Young:** He was off skiing and he's the one who brought this up to you, wasn't he?

**Burke:** I think so. Yes.

**Young:** Yes. In your interview many, many years ago you said you were flabbergasted and delighted.

**Burke:** Yes, that's right. Especially with delight. Flabbergasted hadn't occurred to me. It should have. It really ticked me off. But it hadn't occurred to me because it was such a strange role for him to want to do that in the United States Senate. So I immediately—of course, Charlie Ferris was a good friend. We used to play poker once a week maybe with Mark Shields at Mark Shields' apartment when Mark Shields was a bachelor. And so—it was just so yummy. We got

Russell walking around thinking everything is coming up roses. Whoa, we're going to kill him. So we knew Teddy was off skiing and he wasn't treating it lightly because it wasn't a lark but it was—I remember the day he came back and he and Charlie and I got together. And this thing is doable and we've got votes. It was wonderful. So he did. So when he got it, he'd be perhaps angry with me, but I'll tell you, I don't think he really wanted it. But it sure was nice to have. And it just felt good to—but why he wanted to go up that side of the ladder—

**Young:** Well, Wayne Owens came in. Did you do that?

**Burke:** No. I don't believe I hired Wayne. Wayne was recommended to him by the Senator from Utah, I believe, or by a Congressman. Bennett Johnston, was that—? No.

**Young:** I don't know.

**Burke:** It doesn't matter. I may have even had the wrong party there. Wayne—it was a mistake for Wayne to take the job but Wayne was a wonderful, straight-laced Mormon. Just wonderful. But very politically ambitious too. And he would lament to me, "Why can't I get his attention? Next week we're doing this, this, and this on the floor, and this, this, and that, and I can't get him to..." I liked Wayne a great deal. I listened to him with enormous patience because I respected him. We come from very different cultures. He's from the Wild West and pastoral America and I grew up on the streets, the son of a cop. And you'd feel like shaking him by the lapels and saying, "For God's sake, Wayne, get over it." You know. Wayne thinks it's on the level that he's supposed to meet with me everyday and I'm supposed to tell him what's going on—this is never going to happen. Never going to happen. And it didn't happen, unfortunately for Wayne. It didn't help him with his political ambitions.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** Because no one in Utah is going to vote for a guy who worked for Ted Kennedy, I don't think. It was—so—back there on the Senate—

**Young:** So when Clymer or others write that there was a charter or an interest or something in developing something substantive out of the whip's job, that Ted could get his teeth into.

**Burke:** Sounds like Wayne. That's a Wayne concept.

**Young:** OK.

**Burke:** Will this make you interested if I show you that—this is going to lead from A to B to Z.

**Young:** Well, that's important because the implication is that this was you and Ferris who brought Wayne in to try to reshape the whip's job to suit Ted. That's all wrong?

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** OK. Say it. *[laughter]*

**Burke:** This was just—this was a fixed gunfight at the O.K. Corral, that's what this was.

**Young:** OK. All right.

**Burke:** And once it was over, OK, what do we do now?

**Young:** OK. But then he lost it.

**Burke:** Teddy lost it, yes. After Chappaquiddick, he lost it.

**Young:** That's right.

**Burke:** That's right. And that's why.

**Young:** It is. OK.

**Burke:** Yes. That and a determined group of Senators who liked good old Russell Long. He was a good old boy and we got really screwed. I mean, Teddy came out of the bushes and just ambushed him. We didn't want him to be the guy who, after Chappaquiddick—Mike Mansfield was particularly, particularly wonderful to Ted Kennedy. He used to hold a press conference at his desk every morning before the Senate business began. He called one morning and he said, "If you're back in town, Teddy, I want you to come over and chat with me," which was—I don't know what that did for him in Montana, but it did a lot for other people.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** And Wayne went on to continue to do God's work in the Middle East and suffered a heart attack at a very young age. I guess it was a heart attack. It was a great loss because he was a very decent person. That is—I've already made clear. He thought it was on the level.

**Young:** Yes. Well, Senator Byrd wanted that job—

**Burke:** Wanted that job. Oh, that was perfect for him. Yes.

**Young:** Oh, yes. He was very articulate about that.

**Burke:** Yes, he was.

**Young:** And when the oral history comes out, you'll be delighted at the way he tells this story.

**Burke:** About the whips?

**Young:** Figures very large in his mind. Took a long time with that. And it just is riveting to hear him give his account of how he planned.

**Burke:** And he lurked and he festered over this thing while—bubble and toil and trouble.

**Young:** He got great pleasure out of this.

**Burke:** That's something. He's a fascinating man.

**Young:** But when the vote was announced, he lost, and Byrd got what he worked for. He made a big point of talking about how Ted Kennedy was the first person to come up to him and shake his hand and congratulate him.

**Burke:** I was there that day.

**Young:** Yes. Yes. And from then on, it began to change.

**Burke:** To mellow.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** That goes back to the very beginning of this discussion. How did Teddy win them over? And it shows you that the consistency of his behavior lasted even over the years and over all of these events we have talked about, so at the very end, he's still winning them over. And today he's still winning people over, like Judd Gregg, for God's sake. And that's a priceless gift that's going to pass with him.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** Too bad. It's really too bad.

**Young:** Was—this is a gift that his brothers didn't necessarily have?

**Burke:** I don't think Bobby had that gift, or inclination. It's not that it's a gift he should have and he's less because he doesn't have it—

**Young:** No.

**Burke:** —it's because it was just not his inclination. And Jack, I can't speak about the President; I didn't know him personally—and that rocket was going too fast. Perhaps it's best to say that he had learned how to successfully live in a very competitive environment before he ever came to the United States Senate. He did it well.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** And it means you don't always win total approval in the first week you do it, but if by week 722 you do it, it's happening.

**Young:** And it's worth it.

**Burke:** It's worth it. He's got it now.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** He is the lion of that body. People in the hinterlands can say whatever the hell they want. Jon Kyl of Arizona would not have aligned himself on a bill as touchy as immigration with Ted Kennedy if there wasn't some benefit for Jon Kyl in there.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** And the benefit is his ability to pull things together because he's selfless in the pulling of things together. At the news conference announcing something, "Do you want to talk first? Talk first." He doesn't care. He's beyond that.

**Young:** Yes. We had mentioned earlier, before the tape went on, you might say a word about the meeting in Paris that you were in, and how that all came about, and what Ted Kennedy was getting involved in. It looks like a back-channel kind of thing.

**Burke:** It was, yes.

**Young:** And it was about prisoners and so forth.

**Burke:** Yes. There was a moment in time—it may not be as mysterious as—there was a moment in time when the Paris Peace Talks were underway that the Vietnamese were playing American politics pretty heavy. They were actively trying to entice notables in the United States to come to Hanoi to see what kind of people they really were and to bring back good news about them so that the United States in its bargaining situation would be more at a disadvantage. These are rather reasonable people. That was the game they were playing, I believe.

And they did get people to go there. Most of them, as I recall, were very well-meaning, religious people who would go there to see what the country was like and to try to free an American prisoner, if possible, to get them for their presence—The bargain would be, I'll come there if you'll do something that will ease the humanity of prisoners or to go easier on the people down in the South or whatever it was. I know that John Nolan, who was one of the advance people—Teddy and I sort of chose him. Teddy chose him and we had a conversation about it—to go over and get a list of names of who was being held. Imagine, we didn't even know who the prisoners were. That's not hard to imagine. It happened a long time—

**Young:** Was Ted himself invited by Hanoi to go over?

**Burke:** First, he was given the list, for some reason. Now, who instigated that, I don't know. But John went. Someone had to go and pick it up, and John went—very smart move of Ted. No one associated with this office was involved with this at all. Feelings were running very high and it was the same atmosphere—it's now 1973, I think, and I'm working at the Dreyfus Corporation in New York, and he called me. The Senator called to say—and the conversation was very quick and very—you know, "The North Vietnamese, they've been in touch with me a couple of times. But now they really want me to come over and they really want to make some kind of a statement by what my visit—and prisoners could be involved. And I don't know whether that's good or bad or smart or right or wrong, but it's very touchy because if there was anything you could do that would alleviate the condition of a prisoner and you didn't do it, how are you going to live with that fact? But, on the other hand, you don't want to look as though you were a sap and you were taken in because of your naiveté. So I had a couple of conversations with Averell Harriman about this. He said, 'So why don't you—'"

**Young:** He was in Paris?

**Burke:** Averell Harriman? No. He was retired. He wasn't in on the deal.

**Young:** He was retired. OK.

**Burke:** He had conversations with Averell as an advisor.

**Young:** Yes. OK.

**Burke:** Because Averell was on the Human Rights Commission. "So why don't—now, he has a farm out there in Westchester right close to where you are, Dave. I'll make an appointment or I'll have my office make an appointment for you if you go up and see Averell and see what he thinks" and so on. So he did and I did. I went to see Averell, which was an interesting thing to do at any rate. I don't know what his age was at the time. He was very acute and very tough. I think I gave him that argument about if I could have helped one prisoner and I didn't, does that—"Well, if that's a moral problem to you then live with it," is Averell's point of view. "I'm going to tell you what the facts are here. Teddy Kennedy is no Unitarian minister or no lady-do-gooder who is trying to.... If Ted Kennedy, a representative of that family and time and part of our history is—at this time is going over to Hanoi, he can do that if he comes home with no less than 50 or more. I mean, let's be very hard on this. It's going to be a major breakthrough, one that can't be passed off simply as a symbolic gesture, but can only be passed off as a significant contributor to peace and the welfare of soldiers."

OK. I called the Senator and I told him this. I said, "Those are pretty clear orders if you want to do it. I'm for that." And it never occurred to me that he'd want me to go to Paris to—because I didn't even know who got in touch with him. That's right. "Well, Dave, could you go over?" and so on and so forth. "And of course we can't let anybody know." Now, it's true, I don't work for him any longer. I'm at the Dreyfus Corporation in New York, but I was known as a very close associate of his working life. So we have to be very careful on this, that we don't run into ourselves and come around the corner and meet ourselves some place. So the appointment was set up in Paris. I can't remember whether it was a Sunday appointment or something like that. I left my office at the Dreyfus Corporation on Friday afternoon. Next Monday morning, I'm back at my desk. No one knew I had left the country. And you saw the memo I wrote to him about the meeting.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** And that's basically—I'm sure there was a taped recording of my meeting with him. How the CIA should be fired, you know. And I may have told you, going to the meeting, walking down the street, typical Parisian street. The Consulate is on my left and across the street is a row of beautiful apartment buildings, windows floor to the ceiling. And you know somewhere in one of those apartment buildings, there is the CIA and they're watching you.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** So I put my finger up for the last 15 or 20 feet of the walk.

**Young:** Which finger, Dave? *[laughs]*

**Burke:** It was my middle finger that I put straight up in the air. By that time, in '73, if you were against the war you were fanatically against it.

**Young:** Yes. What came of it?

**Burke:** Nothing. He never got back. I tend to believe—there was a guy there with me who I don't remember—he was State Department. Who put him on me? How did he get there?

**Young:** I don't know.

**Burke:** He wasn't—was he a friend of Teddy's going back?

**Young:** I don't know.

**Burke:** I was just told you're going to meet this guy. Here's his number in Paris. When you get to Paris give him a call.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** And he'll have a hotel room for you and the whole thing. I didn't know who the hell the guy was, but Teddy had friends in many places. Or old Jack friends or old Bobby friends or—so. But I said some very complimentary things to—one thing I didn't put in my memo was I said, "I have many children and I'm going to tell them of the opportunity I've had to meet with the founding father of a new Vietnam." I could hear the CIA guys across the street listening to that. It's treason. But he liked it, of course.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** I think he was a little intrigued that this thing could really be—it might even be fun. It might be—but who knows what happened the next day when they were having the peace talks, and something may have cross-cut something and— But what they did learn from that meeting was—and they never called back again—they weren't going to get Ted Kennedy for free, on the cheap.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** So the fact that they didn't call back again may well be the case that they moved on to more open grazing. Because they weren't going to get Ted Kennedy, not for free. But for 50, he would have done it. I think Averell was right about that.

**Young:** Yes, he did send a doctor there once, didn't he?

**Burke:** I don't know about that. See, I was not in—I'll tell you, when I left in '70—when I arrived in '71, I mean, I really left. I used to say to folks, "Bobby used to have a great saying on the campaign trail. 'I don't want anyone leaning on the fenders of the car. I don't want anyone leaning on the fenders.' Cars don't have fenders anymore, but I don't want anyone leaning on them." Kennedy comes out of a meeting and the guys are leaning against his car like they belong there. When I left, I left. You don't lean on the fenders of the car. Maybe some people in

Kennedy's office thought I had deserted him, or I didn't want to play anymore or something. But it wasn't. It was just—I just do that all of the time anyway, so.

**Young:** We can't go on too much longer, we don't have too much more time. I wondered if you want to say something about his run against [Jimmy] Carter in the 1980 campaign for the nomination.

**Burke:** I was not involved in it at all. I can't add anything to it other than what I read in the newspaper.

**Young:** OK.

**Burke:** I visited his hotel suite in New York one day. I think some people were disappointed that I didn't join that effort.

**Young:** Yes. You were at ABC [American Broadcasting Company] then?

**Burke:** I was at ABC. Five children. ABC. Executive Vice President for news. I mean, I'm on a trajectory here that I'm not just going to quit. And I had enough fights at ABC anyway with people who knew I was associated with him and who were child-like that they constantly tried to—I got a new documentary idea, let's take a look at Chappaquiddick again. All right. What do you think of that, Dave? Is that a good idea? You know, there was a lot of that going on. Nothing like that ever occurred.

**Young:** Well then, maybe 1994—

**Burke:** 1994—

**Young:** You're back into it again.

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** Your situation has changed. Maybe you've changed.

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** But you did remark that he was—in our earlier conversation—on the phone, he was a different person then, or he had changed also. So, it's obvious, I mean, from the '60s to the '90s.

**Burke:** We all grow up. That's right. Yes, he was—yes.

**Young:** We grow up. OK. You could talk about the campaign. Talk about the person you saw then.

**Burke:** Yes. I'll take it in order, maybe—the circle goes around. If you remember, I started off talking about Milton Gwirtzman, who got me the job in the first place.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** So here's Milton Gwirtzman again. In 1994, I am now—I've arranged for the culmination of—for the merger of Dreyfus and Mellon. I'm on the board of directors of various funds but I am not—I am sort of semi retired. And I think I was the head of international broadcasting for the United States government at the time. Milty called and I hadn't heard from him in a long, long time. He called to say, "You know, Teddy's in some trouble up there." I said, "You're kidding. Up here on the Cape, I'm not blindfolded." "No, no. He's in trouble. His numbers look bad and Mitt Romney is right out of central casting and this is going to be a tough race for him." I said, "Well, thank you, Milton, I'll give him a call." He said that would be good.

So I gave him a call. "Aren't you nice to call, Dave," said the Senator. Immediately quite polite. "Been a long time." "Yes. Good of you to call me," he said. I said, "Well, Milton told me that you're in a tassel up there. You've got a fight on your hands with this guy. I just wanted to call and tell you if there's anything that you think I could do, I'd be very happy to do it and help you in any way that I can." He said, "Thank you very much. That's great. To get a call like this makes my day. Thank you very much." Click. Click. So I figured, well, he said all of the right things. I said all of the right things. Ceremony accomplished. It's over.

The next day he called back and he said—I figured he was going to ask for a check. Or for the televised debates, maybe I know something about television now. Maybe I could find a good producer or something to help him. Whatever. He called me. He said, "Dave, would you ride in my car?" I said, "That's young people's work." He said, "Well, I'm doing pretty well at it." And I said, "Yes, you are." He said, "If you want to do that, that would be helpful to me." I said, "Let me look at my appointment book. Let me see what I got so I can do." "OK, Dave. Well, thank you very much."

So our negotiations are on the way with all of the right words. And my wife Trixie was all over me. "Why did you even say that? Why didn't you say of course you would? Of course you'll do anything he wanted." She's not his biggest fan. "Why—I hate to see you like that? Why didn't you say yes you'll do it?" So I called him back. I said, "Yes, I'll do that." So, wow. I went up to Boston and got my yellow legal pad and a Pentel pen with a soft point, so I could sit in the back and write notes and pass them up to him in the front seat.

**Young:** At what stage was the campaign?

**Burke:** I can't remember. I think we were about five weeks to conclusion, or six weeks.

**Young:** So it was pretty late in the game?

**Burke:** Pretty late and his numbers were bad. And maybe it was—I don't know, we can find out—but the thing I discovered at the campaign was that the campaign was being run by his nephew, Michael [Kennedy], and campaign headquarters was manned or womaned by people who the last time Ted Kennedy and I worked together were in pre-nursery school or something. Thirty years ago or something. Because I left in '70 and this is '94. This was 24 years later. Some of them were not even born. And they gave him no comfort or assurance at all. I mean, he's in the car with a phone and he's talking to a headquarters full of kids or younger people or people who he doesn't know, and he's getting frightened. Hello, hello, who's there? That kind of an attitude.

So, it was clear that was getting no succor from his campaign staff in the headquarters. I may be exaggerating that it was kids, but he had no comfort that—and his own staff in Washington, he knew—I know he knew. I never had a conversation with him about it, but he knew that they were actively dismissing the thought that he could have a debate. And the reason he couldn't debate was that he was not up to it. And that Mitt's out of central casting. Looks like a movie star. He talks in perfect sentences and Teddy doesn't. And he can't debate him. Now, if you don't have a local staff who is anyone you know in your campaign headquarters, and if you know your staff who has been around for a long time thinks you'd lose the debate, that's a lousy way to get up every morning and campaign. And that's what it was.

**Young:** You discovered this pretty quickly.

**Burke:** Oh yes, I did. I don't know all of the details on how I discovered that quickly, but I discovered it.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** One night from my hotel room there was a conference call. Every so often there would be a campaign conference call with his Washington staff and maybe a select person or two from Boston. And I told him that he's got to debate. He said, no, he can't. I said, "You know, the *Boston Globe* and the *Boston Herald* and the three television affiliates of ABC, NBC [National Broadcasting Corporation], and CBS [Columbia Broadcasting System] have joined forces to take out full-page ads to demand a debate and they'll give free time for it. And you're going to say no to them?" Well, that's it. We're going to say no. Well, I quit. I quit. I won't be associated with it. It's demeaning to him and it's—it's unlivable. I'd like you to sit in the back of that car every day, 15 microphones through the windows, yelling at you, why won't you debate? And an atomic bomb falls on San Francisco. Why won't you debate? Russia declares war on the United States of America, Senator, why won't you debate? It's going to be endless and he's going to be demeaned and he'll get smaller by the day. He's going to debate, or I quit, and if—I don't care. I just don't want to be associated with something like that. Whoa. He wasn't on that call, by the way. And that changed. That changed immediately. I think I won over at some point, not fully, Bob Shrum. So, in the campaign—

**Young:** Bob Shrum went along with it?

**Burke:** No, not fully. No. I'll tell you why I say that. I said finally what—you know, people said, "Dave is such a political genius, how could he go to that campaign and suddenly it turns around, the numbers get better and everything is better? What plan did he have?" He had no plan. Once again, fear. I'm not going to forget those microphones. All you've got to do is debate, for Christ's sake. OK, now that it was decided; yes, all right, then we will debate. And Teddy was agreeable.

Then the campaign changes its complexion. Now people are busy setting up space where he can practice and have false debates. OK, we need someone to play the part of Mitt Romney. And the campaign—this barge now has a prow. That's what it was. We're going to debate. We're going to beat his ass. That's part one of my great plan.

Part two was, Ranny Cooper came from New York to work in campaign headquarters in Boston. Now there's a new rule about those goddamn phones in the car. I talk to Ranny Cooper; Ranny Cooper talks to me. If Teddy wants to have his own personal conversations with people, he can do that, but when it comes to the campaign, especially with what's happening every day and on details of the candidate, it doesn't have to—I talk to Ranny and Ranny talks to me. So now Teddy is no longer talking to kids who, every time he calls them, are in a panic and are bouncing off the walls because they're so afraid the Senator is talking to them. It's just grown-ups. Grown-ups at headquarters. Grown-ups in the car. And a happy candidate and the cloud of no debate is no longer hanging over him.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** He was liberated and every strength he has came out. He was wonderful to be with, and it was fun again. Let's kick ass. It really got good. It really got good. So there's a campaign strategy.

**Young:** Say where Ranny Cooper came into it, where was she and what was she doing?

**Burke:** In New York she was in a public relations firm, I believe.

**Young:** But she was helping out on the campaign.

**Burke:** Yes. She's a lawyer and she's done some fundraising for him. You know, originally, she was his AA.

**Young:** I know.

**Burke:** Very competent and very able, good person, good judgment, good calls. And she's—

**Young:** Is she advising or listening or looking?

**Burke:** I don't know, to tell you the truth, but I know that he relies heavily upon her. I mean, he does.

**Young:** She had not really been part of the campaign that was being run by Michael.

**Burke:** Yes. Not to the level she was now.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** Michael wasn't any more, so—

**Young:** He was just there but—

**Burke:** Old fogies came in and—*[laughs]*

**Young:** Took over.

**Burke:** —took over, and sometimes it just takes someone to go against the commonly held belief that the guy can't do it anymore. Oh no, no, no. That isn't the way you send your fighter into the ring. So it was good. So after the debate—the first debate cleaned the floor with Mitt on the bay.

**Young:** But tell about the debate and setting it up and the practice and all this.

**Burke:** Well, practice sessions were very good and are held in—

**Young:** Who played Mitt Romney?

**Burke:** Mitt Romney was played by Ranny Cooper's partner. [David] Smith is his name. He works for a union, I think, now. I don't know. A very nice guy. They live out—they have a summer place out in the West. And he played Romney. Shrum was there, of course. Now he's going to run the whole thing. And you've got to love him for it. He can do anything. So he was there. Shrum is a masterful debater. He really is. You know, he used to teach debate and he used to coach debating teams for various universities, I'm told—I'm led to believe. But he was just masterful. I mean, he's never seen a jugular vein he hasn't attacked or something.

And it was—at some time, Mitt Romney is going to say something about health care and when you hear the words “health care,” you go after him without ever stopping again, starting with, “What kind of a bill would you—who would write that bill for you? And how would you get it written, and what subcommittees would you go before, and what committees would you go on to push that bill?” And what would you, and how would you do this, and how would you do that? Mitt couldn't get his breath and he didn't know the answer to these highly specific, who gives a shit, questions. But the public sees he wouldn't know how to pass anything. And we know Teddy can do that all of the time.

**Young:** Yes, yes.

**Burke:** So Shrum was brilliant on that. And that was the beginning of the end of Mitt in that debate. When it was all over, in the back of Faneuil Hall, I came in through a service entrance. I'd left the main door and then went around and back up through the service entrances. I told the Senator I thought he did a hell of job. Shrum was there, of course. And Shrum says, “You were right, you bastard. You were right.” The campaign was over and we knew it was over. There was another debate and he didn't do half as well, but you couldn't get the boiler pressure up again to the extent that we had that one. And that was—that did it. Then the numbers really started to climb.

**Young:** This was in Faneuil Hall?

**Burke:** Yes. Faneuil Hall.

**Young:** And there was the set-up for the podium that the lectern Mitt was talking to?

**Burke:** Oh, yes. Yes.

**Young:** There was attention to that?

**Burke:** Yes, we went and looked at the rehearsal, and Paul Kirk was involved. You might ask Paul about that. The podium was very delicately constructed and rather nice looking and so on. But Teddy was a bear of a person, and him behind that little podium would look like—and Mitt looked as beautiful as Mitt is every day, absolutely wonderful. So in the overnight hours, suddenly those podiums got changed. You'll have to ask Paul about that.

**Young:** All right; I'll do that.

**Burke:** And the late beloved Eddie Martin. Yes. Eddie did a lot of things in the middle of the night. That got changed. That was wonderful. Oh God, that was wonderful. And I told you the story of going to the debate in Faneuil Hall in the car.

**Young:** No.

**Burke:** Well, you know Steve Breyer on the Supreme Court—

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** —he used to work for Teddy on the—what committee?

**Young:** The Judiciary.

**Burke:** Judiciary. Yes, that's right. Of course. OK. So, now, the day of the debate—

[BREAK]

**Burke:** He went and he spent that day of the debate behind the John F. Kennedy Library. He wanted to be out there by himself. They put a chair out there for him and so on and so forth. And he sat there to think about the debate.

**Young:** Continue.

**Burke:** And that night, we eat in the van. Some kid is driving the van, and Vicki [Victoria Reggie Kennedy] and I are in the backseat and Teddy is up front, with his briefing books. He's up there and he was going through them, and going through the briefing books and we're driving to Faneuil Hall and it's a hot, muggy night. Inside the van he's creating a lot of heat. The van is really—the windows are getting a little drippy and so on. Some state police lead us toward Faneuil Hall. We pull in behind and the blue lights are flashing and there are, God bless them, the Teamsters. The Teamsters and the Carpenters Union and they've got their Ted Kennedy signs and they're ready to beat off anybody with a Romney sign. They'll deck them.

So we're creeping now because there are a lot of people. It's like an old-fashioned election night. If there had been flares, it would have been—and we're creeping toward Faneuil Hall. Vicki is nervous. Teddy's—I'm nervous. I said, "Senator..." "What, Dave, what? I'm reading this book,

Dave.” I said, “Right, right. But I want to ask you—” “What? Ask me.” I said, “How come Steve Breyer is on the Supreme Court and I’m stuck in the back of this fucking van with you?” And he took the book and he threw it on the floor, and that was it.

**Young:** That was it.

**Burke:** Then he got out of the van and the crowds enveloped him and he’s now florid in the face. And he’s hugging, and then they’re going into the debate. Then he remembered his instructions and strategy on the debate and he killed him.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** That was a happy night. That was a happy night.

**Young:** Let me turn this off for a moment and check something.

[BREAK]

**Burke:** Well, how he had—let’s see, I left in 1970, so this is 24 years later.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** A lot of growing has been done on both sides, and maybe I look at him differently 24 years later. But, except for what I consider to be the extraordinarily poor planning for this campaign, that he was almost caught flatfooted by a very attractive and articulate candidate, and the clarion call hadn’t gone out earlier to people—besides all that, when he was Teddy, he was a different Teddy than I remembered 24 years ago. He knew so much. Or I thought he knew so much. Maybe it’s because I was older and I’m not such a wise guy myself anymore, that I know everything. But he knew so much. You couldn’t mention a subject, a bill—when you’re campaigning, there’s a lot of time just to ride around. You’re going from here to there, from one legion hall to another. The conversation would vary. Maybe he heard something on the local news broadcast and we could talk about it. And he was comfortable. He was substantively comfortable. I hadn’t, to tell you the truth, ever seen that before. I had seen him handle substance well before, but not totally comfortable with substance all the time.

He had no doubts about himself and the issues of the day facing our nation. He had no doubts about that stuff. And whatever the policy ramifications were—that Congress had any oversight for—he knew the members of Congress who were doing it. He was a truly grown-up senior citizen who people should have respected more before they had this crazy notion that he could duck a confrontation, how the public would—I get very angry about that. And the only claim I could make to contributions in 1994—that and that alone, which doesn’t take a genius—is sufficient. Because once he was liberated, once he was free, then he had all his back-up reserve. I mean, he had big batteries to fall back on.

**Young:** Yes. This is a very telling kind of comment because he's quoted as saying in his '62 campaign, that what he really liked was the street politics, but about these issues he said, "Oh, *that* stuff."

**Burke:** Yes. That stuff. That's right. That's right. And that's the answer. Here in '94, that stuff is the stuff of his daily diet. He lived on that stuff now, and he still loved the politics of the touching and the feeling and the "Let me tell you a story about my mother" kind of campaigning—

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** —and it still had all of that. So it was a complete, rounded Kennedy.

**Young:** Yes, it's all come together.

**Burke:** It's all finally together.

**Young:** Right.

**Burke:** And it will stay that way, now, until the day he dies.

**Young:** Yes.

**Burke:** That's where it is.

**Young:** Vicki was actively involved in the campaign, too, was she?

**Burke:** Yes.

**Young:** Going with him in the car.

**Burke:** Yes, in the car. And thank God she was, too. Sometimes she'd bring one or two of her children too, and I'm very good with children of a certain age. I mean, I can do some things. Like, I can split my fingers like that and they can't. I can make faces, they can't, just to keep them amused so they don't cry. So we had a good time and she was very good at that. But besides being a smart and intelligent lawyer, Vicki's also a concerned wife, afraid that we could lose this thing. So she didn't have the distance from it and, thank God, you wouldn't want her to have the distance. She really cared. I'd say things—I'd say to Vicki, "I just heard that Mitt Romney beats his wife." "I bet that's true," she'd say. And then she'd get off on another, and laughter would prevail.

So I think we have answered that.

**Young:** OK.

**Burke:** Because he's the round person at the end where I'd forgotten—I don't remember anything about that '62—Isn't that wonderful? He just came around.

**Young:** Yes, he'd go out and have these seminars and I think that he's anxious to get back—

**Burke:** Yes. He was forced—he ate the spinach all his life. He did what—he was forced to do it.

**Young:** And this whole career of preparing and mastery of subject matter—

**Burke:** Yes. Yes. Which he just hated.

**Young:** —you see it start, but it becomes one of his strengths in the Senate. I mean, that's the way—

**Burke:** Right.

**Young:** —and he still likes the politics—he's good at the politics of the Senate.

**Burke:** That's right. That's right.

**Young:** And of the street. Do both.

**Burke:** Yes. And he now knows the Senate so well that when it comes to negotiating a bill like immigration, I mean, in his head, he knows every back door to go through to solve this problem and that problem and this problem. It's great satisfaction. It has to be, if he stops and reflects on it. I'm sure he does, from time to time. A great satisfaction.

**Young:** All right. Well, shall we end the interview now?

**Burke:** All right. If you're comfortable with that.

**Young:** Thank you. Thanks very much, Dave.

**Burke:** Thank you.