



EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH JOHN D. DINGELL, JR.

June 16, 2005
Washington, D.C.

Interviewers

Stephen Knott
Paul Martin

Attending

Adam Benson

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TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEW WITH JOHN D. DINGELL, JR.

June 16, 2005

Knott: This is the Edward M. Kennedy Oral History Project. Senator Kennedy recommended that we interview you.

Dingell: I'm happy to cooperate.

Knott: In about three to four months, you'll receive a transcript of this interview, and you're free to make any changes to it that you wish.

Dingell: I don't think I will. Bring it to Adam's [Benson] attention; Adam is very good on these things.

Knott: This is our little backup recorder here. Thank you for giving us your time. We really appreciate it.

Dingell: You're welcome.

Knott: We thought we would start by just asking you to, if you can, recall your first introduction to Senator Edward Kennedy, how you first came to know him.

Dingell: I don't even remember. We worked together on a number of matters early in his career and fairly early in mine. We worked together on rail strikes; we worked against each other on firearms. We spoke occasionally on the same platform—sometimes on the same side of an issue, sometimes on the other. Rail strikes, matters affecting labor, healthcare were quite often things on which we met different ways. He was always a good man to work with—smart, decent, kept his word.

Knott: Did you know his brothers well?

Dingell: Rather less well, and for a rather shorter period. Bobby [Robert Kennedy] never was a member of the Senate; he was a member of the Senate staff. I met him a few times, but after that, and after he became Attorney General. Jack [John F. Kennedy] I saw and met a few times while he was in the Senate. I met him on the campaign trail. I saw him fairly frequently at the White House but not real often. Fairly frequently is a qualified word, if you understand.

I have generally—only, except on firearms—traveled the same philosophical path as the Kennedys. I've become quite close with Teddy, and I've watched him grow enormously. He's a very respected leader now. He has done so by taking very strong, principled, and vigorous positions on matters important. His positions are consistent; he doesn't waver around back and forth.

Knott: You mention you think he's grown over the years. Could you give us—?

Dingell: I think everybody is at that consensus.

Knott: He's a serious legislator?

Dingell: Oh absolutely, yes.

Knott: We've heard repeated reports that he's got, as far as the Senate side goes, a terrific staff.

Dingell: That's one of the things that was always a hallmark of the Kennedys. John had a superb staff, and Teddy has a superb staff. It's one of the reasons that they're good—good staff makes a difference between whether you're a good and respected member or not. I'm blessed in having a very good staff too, so I can understand the importance of it.

Knott: I wonder if I could just take you back a bit. One of the things we like to do with the people that we interview is just ask them a little bit about their own background. Much of this is on record with you, but you took the seat that had been held by your father back in 1955.

Dingell: That's right.

Knott: He had been a Congressman from Michigan for—

Dingell: He was elected with [Franklin D.] Roosevelt in '32. Sworn in, in March of 1933. He served until September 1955, when he died.

Knott: Your biography says that you were born in Colorado Springs.

Dingell: I was.

Knott: When did the family move to Michigan?

Dingell: I was born in '26. We moved to Michigan in '28. Michigan was where Dad came from. He went out to Colorado to die of tuberculosis at Union Parent Home. He recovered, fooled all the medical people, and, quite frankly, astounded and confounded the expectations of medicine. One of his brothers died and left four orphan kids that dad went back home to take care of. That happened in 1928. He ran for Congress in '32. Before that he was very active in Democratic politics. He was one of the few really strong Democrats in an area and a time when there were virtually none. Roosevelt shifted all that and everybody became Democratic.

Knott: Do you have any memories of meeting Franklin Roosevelt, by any chance?

Dingell: Yes, it was a great honor.

Knott: Could you tell us a little bit about what you were doing before you ran for the House?

Dingell: I did a lot in a fairly limited amount of time. I went to Georgetown University, Georgetown University Law School. I spent two years in the Army; I went to Infantry OCS [Officer Candidate School], Fort Benning, Georgia. I had an array of duties as a small-unit leader in the Army. I was a Second Lieutenant. I was supposed to go into the Battle of the Bulge, but I got meningitis, so I wound up for two months in a hospital. Went to Infantry OCS. I was supposed to be in the first wave into Japan. I had my orders to go when Truman dropped the bomb on the Japanese, and that ended World War II.

I did an array of unimportant things in the military, obviously—platoon leader, infantry instructor [at] Fort McClellan, Alabama. I spent a long time at Camp Pickett waiting to go overseas as what they called a “casual officer.” I finally went to Panama where I had a little bit of troop duty but not much. I became a staff officer. I’m not particularly proud of being a staff officer. It’s an important and necessary thing, but it was never my bag.

But I had 27 full-time jobs. I was Assistant Adjutant Military Personnel Officer. I ran two PXs; I ran four NCO [non-commissioned officer] clubs for a while; I ran a bowling alley in a theater; I ran two NCO clubs; I was, about every third day, either Officer of the Day or Officer of the Guard; I paid about four million dollars a month in military payrolls and about the same amount on civilian payrolls. All this was paid in cash, so I was associated, not infrequently, with people who carried guns because we had a lot of money in canvas bags.

I was discharged in 1946. I went back to Georgetown; got my degree in ’49; got a law degree in ’52. Spent most of my summers as a park ranger in Rocky Mountain National Park and then Mt. Rainier. Was married in ’52. Took the Bar; passed the Bar. Went back home. Was law clerk to a wonderful federal judge by the name of Theodore Levin. Set up my own law practice. Served a little later as Assistant Prosecutor for Wayne County on what they called the “B Court,” which meant you prosecuted and tried all manner of cases from murders and capital offenses down to trespass and things of that kind in the small courts around Wayne County.

Dad died and his friends suggested I run for Congress. It seemed like a good idea at the time, so I did, and I was elected. I came down here and was sworn in in January, the same day they had [the] memorial service for my Dad. That was quite an experience for me. I was assigned the last committee choices and the last office in the place, but I made quite a success out of it. I was on Public Works and Merchant Marine Fisheries where I later became a subcommittee chairman. Sponsored a lot of the major conservation legislation now in place.

I moved from Public Works to the Commerce Committee the following Congress in quite a fight with a fellow who became a very dear friend of mine by the name of John Moss, who left the Congress and died about 22 years later. Became a subcommittee chairman on Merchant Marine, was put on Small Business Committee by John McCormack over my violent protests. I became

subcommittee chairman on the Commerce Committee in '76 after we led a revolt against the chairman, Harley Staggers, which was, by the way, successful.

I ran the Energy and Power Subcommittee all during the energy crisis of the '70s; wrote a lot of the legislation on that. I've always been interested in the auto industry, so I spent a lot of time protecting it. I was a member of the Board of Directors of NRA [National Rifle Association]. I was the head of the American Cancer Society's fundraising operation for southeast Michigan in the 1960s. I did it about four or five years. Then, when Staggers died, I became the chairman of the Commerce Committee; that was 1981. I married the lovely Deborah. I'd been divorced from my first wife for about five years.

I went through two rather difficult redistrictings, the first in '64 where I was put in the same district with a guy by the name of John Lesinski, Jr. I'd voted for the Civil Rights Bill in '64; he voted against that in the firm expectation he'd be in Congress as long as he wanted to be because of that vote. In a very nasty primary in which that was a major issue, we beat him rather decisively. I got 55 and a fraction percent, and he got the rest.

Knott: How did you overcome that?

Dingell: We asked a question: why is it that a white American citizen should be able to vote and a black American citizen should not? We campaigned like hell. One of the issues was I pointed out that the district needed representation which could do something, and I showed I could and did—and that he could not and did not. I also suggested the district needed somebody who could make an intelligent and understandable speech. Usually, when we appeared on the same platform, he would support my view by showing he couldn't be understood when he talked. We both followed our dads. He was senior to me by about five years. We went in and took the district away. Half of it was an area where I knew almost every elected official because it had been one of the areas in which I had been an assistant prosecutor. I'd helped almost every elected official out in there.

As I said, then we had this nasty race, which we had against Lynn Rivers when they redistricted the two of us into one district. That was an unbelievably expensive and difficult race. I became a member of the minority in '94, as you will recall. While I was chairman of the Commerce Committee, I was also a chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Committee and I was, I think, one of the better investigators they've ever had here. If ever there was a year when we didn't make defense contractors give back a billion to two billion, it was a bad year when we didn't. Frankly, sent a fair number of folks to jail or forced major changes either in policy or personnel or both in the federal government. I kept a picture of Joe McCarthy on the wall to remind me what I did not want to be and what a bad investigator was.

I followed in the chairmanship of great men like Oren Harris and Sam Rayburn, who was Chairman of the Commerce Committee before me. They've always showed me the way in which committees should be run, and I've tried to follow it and been modestly successful. I left behind a fairly decent reputation as chairman of the committee. I'm now the ranking minority member; it's my job to lead the Democrats, and they seem to be happy with my work.

Knott: Did Senator Kennedy ever campaign in your district?

Dingell: Came up, made a speech for me one time at an annual dinner, which I used to have at a place called the Yack Arena. We'd put about 2,500 people in the hall. Made a wonderful speech. My people loved him. I was always very grateful for him and to him. The speech came at a very happy time; it preceded by a year or so the tussle which I had with Lynn Rivers. He did not come for that particular reason. I don't normally bring in other elected officials to campaign for me; although, during that campaign—but this was then a conscious part of the campaign—I had Bobby Rush, Jesse Jackson, and that wonderful John Lewis (three very dear friends of mine) come in, and Lois Capps (who was a wonderful woman) and Pat Schroeder came in. I think that's all we had come in for me, but normally I don't have people come in. I've been in the district long enough that I have no end of friends to campaign for me, except in the extraordinary redistrictings. It's just me getting around, seeing my friends, and reminding them I need their help—and they always come through.

Knott: When Senator Kennedy ran against President [Jimmy] Carter in 1980, did you take a position on that?

Dingell: Yes, I did; I supported Carter. It didn't have anything to do with hostility to Ted. It had to do with the fact that I thought an incumbent President should be supported, should have a chance to a second term. I also was apprehensive that divisions in the party would cost us the election. Well, as events occurred, that was what happened.

Knott: I guess Kennedy narrowly carried Michigan, according to our—

Dingell: Michigan's a peculiar place. It did, and Teddy is a very popular guy. But Jesse Jackson carried it, and who was that racist guy from—

Benson: The other one that I think of is [John] McCain.

Dingell: Wound up getting shot?

Knott: George Wallace?

Dingell: George Wallace carried Michigan.

Benson: McCain beat [George] Bush.

Dingell: Yes, McCain carried it. So Michigan has an odd way of voting in primaries. I don't say that because Teddy carried it; I say it simply because that's what happens. The system of caucuses is an odd system, which leads to very peculiar results. It's very possible to stack or pack something of that kind, and not in a corrupt or illegal way—just out-manipulate, out-maneuver, and outwork your opponent, and it happens.

Martin: Were the rail strikes the first major interaction that you had with Senator Kennedy on policy?

Dingell: Oh, I worked with him on rail strikes; I worked with him on healthcare bills. I can't even tell you which was the first time. We always work well together.

Martin: What happened with the rail strikes? What was your goal?

Dingell: When we first started, Ted was on the Education and Labor Committee, or whatever you call it over there in the Senate. I was on the Commerce Committee, which had, at that time—we've lost it—but, at that time, we had jurisdiction over railroads, a lot of things. At the early point, I was just a junior member, and Staggers was the guy who actually ran the conference for the House. We just legislated into place, basically, direct recommendations of the Presidential Emergency Board.

Later, I became the chairman of the committee, and we worked directly with Teddy. We had two strikes that I recall. The first we solved in about eighteen hours, and the second we solved in about two days or three days. I think in 48 hours we solved it. Parenthetically, probably the biggest mistakes ever made because nobody ever knew what we had done, and so there was little support for us keeping jurisdiction over railroads because nobody ever knew how good we were at dealing with rail problems. I've dealt with him on a lot of other matters—a lot of health bills, budget, and on the Patients' Bill of Rights where he was a tremendous tower of strength.

Martin: Then the first rail strike, did you work very closely? You said you solved it—

Dingell: The first rail strike I didn't count for much. I just was a member of the conference, and I supported my chairman in handling those matters. I'd deal with him on rail and labor legislation where we had it. We'd deal with health legislation because I was generally on the health subcommittee of the Commerce Committee. Teddy was always very interested in health matters.

Knott: You were actively involved in the '60s with the Medicare proposal that ultimately passed.

Dingell: I was very proud of that. My dad was the original author of Medicare. I worked like hell to get it through. [Lyndon] Johnson's election and the [Barry] Goldwater debacle and the landslide, the loss of a lot of seats by Republicans and a lot of enthusiastic Democrats made that a Congress in which there was a huge amount of social legislation, education, health, things of that kind. Teddy was active in all of it. On Medicare, I was one of the principal sponsors and John McCormack, who had the soul of an Irish poet, actually invited me to preside over the House when Medicare was passed. I've still got the gavel I used up there in the cabinet. I worked with Ted on it. He went west when Johnson took us all out to the signing, which occurred at the [Harry] Truman Library in Independence, Missouri.

Martin: Do you remember how much direct coordination you had between the House version of the bill and the Senate version, how many conferences they had at that time?

Dingell: Not really. There were some. This was a Ways and Means matter; it wasn't a Commerce Committee matter; although I got it on Commerce Committee so that I could begin

moving healthcare legislation. And my dad's healthcare bill, which was one of the things that has always meant a lot to me, was referred to the Commerce Committee—and it still is referred to as the Commerce Committee—so that was one of the reasons I fought very hard to get on the Commerce Committee. On that one, it was mostly that I worked directly with the Administration on it. I particularly worked with a wonderful man by the name of Wilbur Cohen (dead now, God rest him), who had been one of the drafters of the original Social Security Act. He was one of the original drafters of Medicare, worked with my dad back in '43 when he introduced the first legislation on this. I worked mostly with Wilbur, who first was the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Matters down there and then became the full Secretary of what was then HEW or Health, Education, and Welfare before it was split into Education, and Health and Human Services.

Ted and I had some interchange. I was not a conferee on the bill, but there wasn't much conferencing to do. The bills were close. I don't remember, but there may not even have been a conference on that particular bill. So I didn't have a lot of interchange, but Ted was very interested in it. As you'll remember, his brother and Johnson in '60, after the nomination, held what they called a "special session" and kept the Senate in session. Johnson was one of the leaders in that. Johnson and Kennedy tried to do a lot of things in healthcare and Medicare and things of that kind, to the great outrage of the Republicans that they didn't succeed. So the Kennedys were always very interested in that matter, as was Johnson.

Knott: Let me ask you to jump ahead a bit and talk about President [Bill] Clinton's healthcare proposal, perhaps any interactions that you recall with Senator Kennedy.

Dingell: I worked with Teddy on that; although, remember, the House and Senate don't work together easily. It's said that's the longest 400 yards in the world, the distance between the House and the Senate. It was our job to handle it. It was referred to three committees: Ways and Means, Education and Labor, and the Commerce Committee. Bill Ford, who was a great friend of mine from Michigan, got it out of the Education and Labor Committee, but because of the way the situation worked and jurisdictional concerns and things of that kind, that bill wasn't going anywhere. But Bill certainly deserves honors for getting it out because it did help me. I needed one vote, which I never was able to get. The individual is still back here in this Congress, and I'll tell you that (off the record) he ain't never going to get back on the Commerce Committee, and I've told him so. At leastwise not as long as I'm where I am.

We worked like hell. What beat us was the 500 million dollar expenditure by the healthcare lobby (mostly insurance companies), but to a limited degree the AMA [American Medical Association]. Interestingly enough, much big business, including the automobile companies, were very anxious to have that bill passed, but they couldn't take the pressure that came from their colleagues in industry. Had a meeting of the business roundtable where they just beat the living hell out of the automobile companies. So we were never able to get them under the tent.

If the administration had moved faster, we'd have gotten the bill. The bill was announced—or the idea was announced—by Clinton in February. He didn't get it up here until November, by which time the Republicans and the healthcare lobby, particularly the insurance companies, had spent a huge amount of money and poisoned all the wells, so the bill simply couldn't move.

Kennedy worked hard on this in the Senate. He'll have to tell you about that. I know less about what he did. I was busy frying my own fish over here.

Martin: Do you think that your friendship with him has bridged any of the House–Senate, you know, the long 400 yards?

Dingell: Ted Kennedy and I are friends. He's a very likable guy; he's a very decent guy, a man of strong principles. I respect him enormously. I don't think it makes a whole hell of a lot of difference with regard to my attitude toward the Senate, good or bad. I just think he's a great Senator. He's a great friend of mine; we're great friends. The bottom line is the great deal of respect that I have for him. So I don't even see the importance of the other matters or how they might impact, or be impacted by, the friendship. Probably, I guess you'd have to say that it helps in my attitude toward the Senate, most particularly now [with] the miserable way in which this body and that body are being run by the Republicans.

Martin: Can you talk a little bit more about the committee bills that came out from Commerce? Then it shifted over to—this is the healthcare bill in 1994—it shifted over to Ways and Means. How much influence were you able to have on that?

Dingell: We've always had shared jurisdiction with Ways and Means. On Medicare, Ways and Means has jurisdiction over the parts of Medicare that is tax insurance related. We have jurisdiction over all the rest. We have jurisdiction over most of Medicaid and were we to get a fair treatment under the rules by the Republican leadership and vigorous leadership from our own chairman, we would be very active participants in that.

Republicans run this place differently than the Democrats did. When I was chairman, I was chairman. When the Republicans run the place, there are so many constraints on the chairman, whoever he might be, because of the way they run their caucus, that it's never clear who the hell is running the committee. My assumption is it's some guy either in OMB [Office of Management and Budget] or in the White House or the Republican National Committee or the Speaker's office or maybe it's Tom DeLay. I don't know who the hell runs it; they don't tell me. When they got to control the place, they had a leadership representative on the committee who told the chairman what to do on any particular piece of legislation. Kind of reminded me of the commissar system in the Russian army; seemed to work about the same way.

Knott: You mentioned earlier that you had some differences with Senator Kennedy on the issue of gun control.

Dingell: Yes, strong.

Knott: Would you like to talk a little more about your position on gun control and perhaps any exchanges that you've had with him.

Dingell: I was a director of NRA. I'm a hunter and a fisherman, as you can see. I spent a lot of the best time in my life out hunting, a lot of times with my kids shooting, fishing, camping in the out-of-doors. I see no reason why an honest man should give up his guns when criminals can get

them so easy. I worked with Ted and others on trying to have strong enforcement, but I don't like the idea of taking guns away from law-abiding citizens. Teddy and I agree to disagree on these matters. There's no animosity there; although there is a lot of animosity, as you know, inside this issue that flows back and forth between different people who are involved. A lot of it is based on lack of understanding. A lot of it is based on very strong emotional flows that exist between—We differ, but it's with enormous amounts of respect.

Martin: Do you think that gun control issues and, say, the assault weapon ban, how do you think that those affected the ability to reintroduce healthcare legislation, or do you think that those two things were connected?

Dingell: I don't think it matters a whole heck of a lot in healthcare. Teddy has sort of transcended that. The Democrats are finally beginning to understand that most of the red states that you see on the map became red states in good part because of the Democratic Party's position on gun control. I'm of the firm belief that Clinton and [Thomas] Foley, because of the handling of the gun control legislation in '94, cost us control of the Party and cost us the election. Leadership always comes to me and says, "Dingell, you've got to help us on guns." I say, "Not sure I can help you on guns. I think the only guy who can help you on guns is yourself, and that's to change your damned position."

Foley, if you remember, wouldn't listen to us. [Jack] Brooks and I begged him not to put that control section in the crime bill; he did. Cost Brooks his job. Cost me a lot of agony in the general election. Cost [Albert] Gore the election. Cost the Democrats control of the Congress and cost that silly Foley his job. Teddy, I think, understands it. Barney Frank, who is a very smart fellow, says, "Get away from the issue; you can't win on it." At least the Democrats can't. I'm the guy who set up the political action arm of NRA, so I understand how they work, and they're good. I saw to it, because I was tired of getting kicked around, being the thin, red line that protected my firearms and everybody else's when these periodic gun bills would come up.

Knott: Do you happen to recall an event in 1967 where Senator Kennedy asked to speak to the NRA and was allowed, I guess, a private meeting with the board?

Dingell: Yes, he and I both spoke at the same time.

Knott: Any recollections from that day?

Dingell: Yes, Teddy made a quick speech and got the hell out. You can't necessarily blame him. It was poorly received, as you might imagine. I spoke immediately after him. I made a much more acceptable speech to the audience. I admire his courage, but it was—let's be honest—it was a political act. He had no expectation there was going to be acceptance there. It was a remarkable piece of courtesy on the part of the NRA, and he was received graciously by them. There was considerable stress on them. The question of whether he was going to be heard was the subject of rather intense debate inside the organization. I was not a member of the board at that time, but I worked very closely with them on gun control legislation, and we talked back and forth on a lot of things.

Knott: If I can take you back to another healthcare-related issue and that's the catastrophic healthcare proposal that I believe passed in 1988.

Dingell: Yes, I worked with Teddy on that. By the way, we worked a lot in reconciliation packages where they would try to reconcile the laws and the budget each year as part of the budget exercise so that the budget would, in fact, work. I worked with him a lot and with [Lloyd] Bentsen, for whom I had enormous respect, who now has had a stroke and is confined to a wheelchair and can't speak. You had a question about something.

Martin: One thing I am curious about is, when you speak about working with Senator Kennedy, is this you and he face-to-face or through staff?

Dingell: Sometimes either way, sometimes both ways. Our staffs get along very well. My staff helps his; his staff helps me. They talk back and forth; we talk back and forth.

Knott: If I could just ask a follow-up on that catastrophic healthcare. It was reversed, and yet repealed a year later with quite a—

Dingell: I thought catastrophic health was a very important piece of legislation. I thought it was a very good piece of legislation. We were never able to sell it to the senior citizens and when that became clear, there was no point keeping it in place, so we repealed it. Didn't have to do with a cowardly retreat or a lack of principle, just simply had to do with the fact that if they didn't want it, there's no point in trying to shove it down their throat. So we repealed it. I supported the repeal. I told them, "You're going to be sorry. This is one of the best buys you're ever going to get." They wouldn't listen. Actually, some of them would, but the problem was, the noisy ones dominated the discussion amongst, and on behalf of, the seniors—and they were on the other side, as you might remember.

Benson: I don't know what your schedule is like, do you have anything for noon?

Dingell: No, we have a few more minutes, and then I have to go—

Knott: Just a general question. You've in the minority now for ten years or so. Prior to that you had forty years in the majority. What's it like for you? You touched on that a little bit already but—

Dingell: First of all, do I like it? Not at all. Is it a pleasant experience? No. Is there a better way to run the place? You bet. Have Democrats run it. My Republican colleagues are extraordinarily arrogant, and they really don't understand how to run the place. If you look, they can't pass budgets; they can't get the place adjourned; they can't pass their legislation. They whine and complain about us being responsible for their own incompetence and their inability to get legislation passed. I see that important things that need to be done are not being done. There's no oversight of the Administration on crazy things like getting us into this asinine war. It's generally a bad situation. Sooner or later the country is going to understand it, and when they do, we'll get rid of them. But that's a while to come; that's a while to be yet.

Martin: Do you think the prescription drug bill in 2003, the passage of that, the holding up in the Capitol, the passage at 3 o'clock in the morning—

Dingell: When I became chairman of the Commerce Committee, I went to see the parliamentarian. I went around to see a lot of people. I asked them how I was going to be a good chairman. The parliamentarian said to me, “John,” —this is Lou Deschler, who was a great parliamentarian— “two things you’ve got to do to be a good chairman: one, be fair; two, *appear* to be fair.” The Republicans were neither in that instance and many, many other instances. It was an outrage. They lost. But they don’t play by the rules.

Knott: If I can just ask you one last question, I don’t know if you’ll feel comfortable answering this, but we like to ask it of everyone we’ve been interviewing for the Kennedy project. If you had to project ahead, what do you think Edward Kennedy’s legacy will be? This is a man who has served in the Senate now for forty-three years or so, running for reelection again.

Dingell: Long and distinguished record of service in the Senate, remarkable record of leadership there; extraordinary record as a Democrat; remarkable leadership on many important causes; a lot of legislation. You can go through and look at the different laws that he’s been instrumental in getting. Great respect and affection that he has earned by very faithful and able and dedicated service. I won’t go through the list of bills that he’s been responsible for, or how he has affected them. He has been in health, been in education, been in the environment.

I didn’t agree with him at all times, you’ve got to understand that. But I’m able to look and see that there’s much more than my personal agreement with him over any particular piece of legislation on which he’s worked. And, very frankly, I think a lot of people now view Teddy— And he’s got friends, if you look across the aisle, with people like [Orrin] Hatch, which is probably a rather surprising friendship. But I think it’s one built on the same kind of respect that Teddy and I have, even though his views and mine are much closer together, and we tend to work together more often than he and Hatch do. But the country is going to have felt, in a very serious way, the accomplishments of Ted Kennedy. And most people will feel that these were great and good and necessary accomplishments in the public interest.

Now, he’s got a lot of enemies, and some of his enemies are folks that I’d be proud to have as my enemies.

Knott: Thank you very much. We’ll be spending four-and-a-half hours with Senator Kennedy tomorrow morning, so we appreciate you giving us this time. It’s terrific.

Dingell: I’m not sure I told you anything you didn’t know.

Knott: Fifty years from now, a hundred years from now, scholars who are reading this transcript, I think, will be grateful.

Dingell: A hundred years from now, they’ll probably remember Kennedy. I have serious doubts they’ll remember Dingell, but I don’t much give a damn. I’ve done around here what I thought I should do, and I’m quite content with what I’ve done.

Knott: Thank you so much.

Dingell: Thank you gentleman and ladies.

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