EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT DOLE

May 15, 2006
Washington, D.C.

Interviewers

Janet E. Heininger
James S. Young

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TRANSCRIPT

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Young: Let me ask you whether we need to talk about the ground rules.

Dole: I read all that material.

Young: OK. Nothing you say here to us goes out to anybody else. You'll get a copy of the transcript. You'll have a chance to edit it, then we'll ask you for a release.

Dole: I think you're going to be doing this for me, the same company.

Young: I've been in touch with Bill Lacy. We owe him a reply because we're very interested in doing it. We had a new director come to the center while this was all cooking, Jerry [Gerald L.] Baliles, the former Governor of Virginia. He's the new director of the center. He's had a few things to do before getting to all of this. I'll be talking with him next week.

Dole: I'm supposed to furnish some names for Bill so he can send them to somebody.

Young: Yes, I saw the list.

Dole: We're going to revise it some, that was his suggested list.

Young: His suggestions to you, right. We hope very much that this will be the first of many. OK. I had suggested in my letter—although there are many things that we might talk about and there are other things that you might want to talk about—it's what *you* think is most important for people to understand concerning the Senate and concerning Ted Kennedy and the 28 years at least you were together in the Senate. Ted has told me from the very beginning that he wants this not to be just about him, but he wants it to be about the Senate over this period because it's the most understudied of all the government institutions: the House, the Court.

Dole: I've been gone for ten years. There's a lot of it I don't know much about.

Young: It may be a different world now, perhaps, I don't know. We'd like to hear about that from you. Do you want to start in just trying to give us your impressions, your assessments, and your observations about Ted Kennedy over these many years? How did you get to know him?

Dole: I don't recall when I first met Senator Kennedy, but you could look back over the years I was there. Two or three things: he's very liberal, he's a very hard worker, and he has a great staff. They all work hard.

It's not a job for Kennedy; it's public service. He doesn't need the job. Many times we agreed and most times we disagreed. I can't ever remember ever having an argument. You know, we'd have pretty testy debates sometimes on the floor over issues, but remain friends. My birthday is on July 22, which happened to be the date of his mother's birthday. Every July 22 I would make a little statement, in the 12 years that I was the Republican leader, about his mother and about her contributions. It's also Senator [William V.] Roth [Jr.]'s birthday and Senator [Kathryn Ann Bailey] Hutchison's and Dr. Karl Menninger's, but anyway, he always appreciated that. I probably have several notes, Kennedy's little notes he scratched. He writes little personal notes, which are very effective. I don't know where they are, but somewhere around. They're probably with Bill Lacy.

I've also said that he and Jesse Helms—Jesse Helms is the last of the quite far right and Kennedy is the last of the mainline liberals. Now that's of the old-time liberals; there are other liberals there who are probably more liberal than Kennedy but it would be hard. We've had a good relationship. He's been very helpful, very good to my wife when she was up for confirmation and now that she's in the Senate.

He's had a big impact on legislation. He gets involved in a lot of things. Despite a willingness to work with President [George Walker] Bush early on with No Child Left Behind, he's a very sharp, sometimes over-the-top critic, too, of Republicans who disagree with him. That's part of the—not to say part of the game, but sometimes he's a little harsh. In fact, in the ten years I've been away from the Senate—I don't lobby Senators—I've only asked six or seven Senators if I could come up and introduce them to someone, and Kennedy was one of them.

Young: Is he as liberal in—I asked Ken Galbraith before he died. I had an interview with him, and Galbraith of course was one of those.

Dole: I don't know how you measure liberal and conservative. It's pretty hard. Moderate or far right and far left. If you look at any of the different groups who score people, whether it's the old ADA [Americans for Democratic Action] or the Chamber of Commerce or whatever, Kennedy is very liberal.

Young: Very liberal in his voting record and his grades.

Dole: I don't think he denies it, he's proud of it. I don't see anything wrong with it—if that's what you believe, right on. He believes it. He tries to help the disadvantaged and people in this country who don't have a voice. Conservatives do that, too, but sometimes in a different way.

Heininger: What was he like to work with on *Face-Off*?

Dole: We had a lot of fun. We never practiced enough, that was the problem, and we didn't do it together. It was always he would do his and then I would do mine on a Saturday or Friday

morning; I can't remember. I'd have to go back and look at all the scripts. I assume they're available somewhere. We had different views without screaming at each other. When I stopped, Senator [Alan] Simpson started, right? It was a lot of fun.

Heininger: We talked to Senator Simpson last week. It was two and a half hours of laughing. He was as funny as ever.

Dole: He'd tell all the old stories again. He was in town last week criticizing Congress. Very harsh criticism. I guess once you're out, you can criticize the institution and the people in it.

Young: A few questions about the changes you've observed, or lack of changes, over these years that you and he have been in the Senate. First, have you seen him change or develop? Second, if you'd comment on the changes in atmosphere or the changes in the way the Senate works.

Dole: The atmosphere has changed a little. The best examples I can think of are when President [William Jefferson] Clinton nominated Justice [Ruth Bader] Ginsburg and then a member of Kennedy's staff, Stephen Breyer. I was Republican leader, so Clinton called me and said, "I'm going to send up Ruth Ginsburg." I said, "OK. I don't agree with her philosophy," but it never occurred to us that we ought to have a filibuster or that we ought to require them to have 60 votes. I think Breyer received 96 to 2 or something and Mrs. Ginsburg about the same. That's a pretty stark difference between what was happening then and what's happening now, at least in that area.

Again, I don't want to be another Al Simpson here and start kicking Congress around, because I was a part of it for thirty-five and a half years and enjoyed most of it. But it does seem a little more personal, a little more confrontational. You can see what they do on immigration and some of these issues that ought to be resolved on a bipartisan basis. "Bipartisanship" and "compromise" are pretty good words. President [Ronald] Reagan used to say, "If I can't 100 percent, give me 90 percent or 80 percent, or maybe even 70 percent, and I'll get the rest later." Kennedy was in that mold. He came from a different view, but you could talk to him and work out differences, as the briefing book showed that we did many times.

Young: Yes, you did.

Dole: Some of them I had forgotten about.

Young: We've studied up on a few of them. He was a liberal, there were conservatives, there were grades, but it didn't seem to inhibit the ability of the Senate to come to terms to get something done.

Dole: That seems to be the one difference now. It's sort of a daily gridlock. You never know whether you're going to get anything done or not until you get there. We had gridlock. We had times we couldn't move, but just looking back, without being too specific, in most cases we'd reach some agreement. We'd have a vote or we'd decide not to have a vote. We'd modify the measure or accept, say, a Kennedy amendment, knowing we'd probably work it out in

conference. There has been that change and that would probably apply to both parties. It takes two to tango.

Heininger: When you were majority leader, what was it like to deal with Kennedy? Was he always out there in the wings, you knowing that you were going to potentially have problems with him, or that when appealed to, he could compromise? Was he somebody who fostered compromise or polarization, or both?

Dole: Kennedy understood how the Senate works. You don't get much done unless you have some relationship with the leaders, not only your own, but on the other side. I imagine there were times we had our differences. I can't remember what issue, but sometimes we were pretty vocal about it. When I'd see Kennedy get up in the back, I knew we were in for something. Then he'd start screaming and shouting and I knew this must be more than I thought. But then he'd calm down. There are theatrics up there on both sides. If you go back and catalog the different bills that Kennedy's had input in, it would be a pretty big pile. As the leader, I was generally involved in some way, whether it was the Voting Rights Act or Americans with Disabilities Act.

Heininger: All the healthcare reform.

Dole: There was a lot of healthcare. One thing that Kennedy was right on about was the minimum wage. We had trouble getting— Even though I supported my Presidents, I have a different view. I don't think it is conservative to say you can live on $6.00 an hour. That doesn't make sense to me. Of course, as I said, he was smart and had this great staff. They knew parliamentary procedure, and if you didn't watch—I think I made a slip or two where he got something in I wasn't counting on. No question about it, from his philosophical viewpoint, he's probably the outstanding Senator up there on their side of the aisle and has been for a decade or so.

Heininger: Did you see a change in him after his Presidential run in 1980?

Dole: Not really. I also tried in 1980 and got about as far as he did. There may have been, but I didn't have any real social contact with Ted. It was all on the Senate floor or he'd walk by and we'd have a little visit or I'd go back to where he was and have a little visit, just to say hello. I wouldn't be a very good judge of that.

Young: Not on the social side, but some people observe—I don't know whom they're talking about, but it can be an impediment in your effectiveness as a Senator if you're known to be or thought to have ambitions beyond that.

Dole: Oh, tell me about it, yes.

Young: You both can talk about that, but that's one of the questions that are raised about him. After, in effect, his Presidential hopes, realistic hopes, were over in 1980, he didn't let it drop. Some people who have written about him say that was when the change happened, after 1980; then he became a serious legislator. We don't know whether that's right or not.

Dole: I wouldn't know, either. I know he became a serious legislator, but I don't know whether I could date it. When did he come to the Senate?

Young: Sixty-two.

Dole: He had been there six years when I got there. I haven't gone back to see what he did from '62 up to '68.

Young: One of the first things he was involved in was the 18-year-old vote and also immigration. He got involved in that. That's when Senator [James O.] Eastland was chair of the Judiciary Committee. In '74, after you were there, '74 and '75, he and you were on opposite sides of antibusing. The Supreme Court had legalized—

Dole: We had the antibusing crowd; John East and Jesse Helms and the Senator from Mississippi were very close.

Young: That was a strong reaction against the Supreme Court.

Dole: I offered some amendments about cutting off appropriations or something. Funny how those issues rise and just fade away. Nobody talks about busing today.

Heininger: And in watching how issues rise, why did ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act] pass when it did? What did it take for the critical mass to be reached such that there was so much popular support for it that the votes were huge?

Dole: It's a great piece of civil rights legislation. We were in the majority, so I had the honor of managing the bill on the floor. I used to kid Senator [Strom] Thurmond, who was chairman of the committee, I said, "Strom, you told me you'd be back in a minute. Here it is three days later and I'm still managing the bill." Kennedy was, of course, very prominent in that. That's the Martin Luther King [Jr.] Holiday bill. The ADA bill was something we worked on for years. As you properly point out in the briefing materials, both he and [Thomas] Harkin were strong advocates. Harkin had a brother with a serious disability and, of course, Kennedy's son.

Young: And Rosemary [Kennedy], his sister.

Dole: That's right. I had a strong interest because of my disability. We were getting the White House on board, saying who can oppose legislation like this?

I remember speeches in the Senate about people with disabilities when they couldn't get into the Senate to hear them in a wheelchair. The curbs weren't cut. We'd be pounding our chest up there talking about all these things that ought to be done, and unless you had somebody to lift you up over the curb, you weren't going to be there. That was very important legislation that Kennedy had a particular role in.

Young: But he couldn't have done it alone. You were a key, weren't you, particularly in dealing with the White House? As I understand it, that was a real division at the beginning within the

[George Herbert Walker] Bush White House or the Bush administration. John Sununu and Sam Skinner started out very opposed to this. Dick Thornburgh was more moderate on it.

Dole: Thornburgh has a son, of course, who had a very severe disability. When I gave my testimony, I told them, "Give us some time, the White House is coming around." I couldn't understand any reason to oppose most of the legislation. Again, there was a willingness to compromise. Kennedy wasn't saying, "I want this or nothing." He was the same as Reagan used to say, give me whatever.

Again, I didn't see that as a conservative/liberal issue, just mainstream America. Every family either has someone or knows someone with a disability. I'm talking about serious disabilities. Forty-two million is probably too high, but I'd say 20 million people have a pretty serious disability. As you point out in the briefing, which I don't recall being a factor, Harkin was running for reelection, but I thought it was a positive thing because he was very active in the legislation.

Young: And Lowell Weicker [Jr.] before him, who also had—

Dole: I didn't mean they were all selfish. It means they understood my view that people have problems whether they're rich or poor, they're black, they're white, and sometimes they need legislative help.

Young: Why do you suppose it didn't come up before as a major piece of legislation?

Dole: I don't know. I made a speech every year on disabilities, on the 14th of April every year or about then if we were in session. I don't know why we didn't do it earlier. What year did it pass?

Heininger: Weicker started in '86 and the bill wasn't enacted until '89. Do you think there might have been something with the change of administration that caused there to be some critical mass that got reached at that time?

Dole: I don't know, but I remember the scene at the White House, when you saw all these people there in wheelchairs, white canes, gurneys, dogs. It was a sight to behold.

Young: Were the veterans' groups strong or active on this issue before it came up as a policy? Do you know?

Dole: I think the Paralyzed Veterans of America were fairly active. The others I don't recall now whether Legion, VFW [Veterans of Foreign Wars], all those people got involved. It was primarily just other groups around the country, cerebral palsy and different groups. They have all these different groups in D.C. In fact, I tried to get them all together once, all the disability groups. "No, no, we're raising money for hearts." "We're raising money for lungs." It's competition, but we did have the meeting and they all seemed very friendly, and that was the last of it. I don't remember the veterans playing a big role. I think it was just the rank-and-file people, but it was a good piece of legislation. It was bipartisan. I don't remember the final vote.

Young: It was big, very big.

Dole: Eighty-two to six or something like that.

Heininger: Yes, very big, very big. I remember the vote on the floor, too. That was a really important day.

Dole: I don't know whether it's been revisited or not, but there are probably things, like any major legislation, you should go back and look at.

Young: There was a now-famous meeting in your office.

Dole: The Senator walked out.

Young: I didn't know he walked out.

Dole: Well, maybe he didn't walk out. He'd walked out of another meeting, which is all right with me, but he did represent the White House. Again, as you point out in your briefing, I'd forgotten about the staffer that Kennedy had who upset him so much.

Young: [Robert] Silverstein.

Dole: Kennedy said he must be doing a good job.

Young: That was Carolyn Osolinik, but Silverstein was on Harkin's staff. Sununu blew up at him, and apparently it produced a strong reaction from Senator Kennedy.

Dole: He walked out on one meeting and Kennedy told him off, the one you referred to. Then again, Kennedy had been pretty tough on people, too, so I don't imagine Sununu worried him very much.

Heininger: What do you think makes Kennedy tick?

Dole: He loves it up there. He likes it. It's like a fix every day to go to the United States Senate. I don't know how much time he spends with constituents because he's a national figure now. It's not Kennedy from Massachusetts, it's Kennedy, period. He's good at what he does. He would obviously be more effective with a Democratic Senate. We used to think he was running the Senate, even though they had others who had the title. "Well, what's Kennedy got in store for us this week?" "He's not the leader." I would say, "Well, OK, maybe not on paper."

Young: Was he too liberal in the Senate to get a formal leadership post in the Democratic Party? He had been whip and Senator [Robert] Byrd defeated him for that to succeed Russell Long.

Dole: Didn't Byrd get somebody in the hospital to vote for him?

Young: Senator [Richard B.] Russell [Jr.] from Georgia, I think.

Dole: Yes, but that was then. Now Kennedy could be elected to a leadership post. There aren't any southern conservatives left on the Democratic side who would oppose Kennedy. There aren't very many moderates over there except [Earl Benjamin] Nelson of Nebraska, who is looking at the numbers. He probably doesn't want it; he doesn't need it, doesn't need the headaches. I don't imagine the leadership turns Kennedy down very often. If he wants to go with something, I imagine that in about five seconds the leaders say OK.

Young: As far as you are aware, when he started making an investment or getting involved in a piece of legislation, did he always try to start with support from both sides of the aisle?

Dole: If you look back on some of the things he did, there was always—not always but generally—some Republican attached. So the answer would be, generally, yes. Kennedy didn't need the attention. It wasn't the fact that he can get his name on a bill. He did a lot of work with Orrin Hatch. I used to say "Hatch, you're just like Donald Trump, if they put your name on it, you'll vote for it." There are a lot of Hatch/Kennedy things floating around out there.

He knew where to look. He didn't run over to Jesse Helms and say, "Jesse, I've got this great civil rights legislation." You get a sense of who the people are up there after you've been there as long as he has been and watch the voting habits and conversations and speeches. I don't know how many people listen to speeches. He probably had a pretty good sense, like go to [Nancy] Kassebaum on the health bill program, which they worked out after I left.

Young: He finds out what people are interested in?

Dole: Yes. He has a good antenna and the antenna picks up a lot of things in the Senate chamber. A lot of static, but you get a little good stuff now and then, too.

Young: Do you know whether he spent a lot of time with his antenna in the House of Representatives when a piece of legislation was on his mind?

Dole: The Democrats controlled that for so long that he probably had a lot of influence in the House, too, the fact that he was Senator Kennedy. Let's face it. He's a very powerful figure in the Congress and Tip [Thomas Phillip] O'Neill was from Massachusetts and oh, what a deal.

Young: They weren't always like that though.

Dole: Not always. I guess Tip would be the conservative in that duo. Of course, he didn't have to vote very often.

Heininger: He had Joe Moakley, too. I've heard he didn't need to worry about appropriations bills because they already came over with what he needed.

Dole: It's changed now. I worry about where this appropriation thing is going, just as a citizen. What a place to do the wrong thing.

Young: Make some contrast there, from what it was when it worked right and now. I don't mean to be criticizing anybody now, but that is something that seems to have changed and changed pretty radically.

Dole: It seems like now, if you get on the Appropriations Committee, your job is not to so much national, but how much can I get for X, my state, my district, my whatever. That leads to a lot of earmarks and spending that probably couldn't be justified in a hearing. I'm sure some of that was going on. I remember an unnamed Senator saying to me one day, "You don't ask for enough around here. Think of something big you want for Kansas and I'll help you get it." It's changed.

Young: I can't imagine anybody saying that today.

Dole: It was a friend. He came to me as a friend.

What's going to happen when you get all this information? Are you going to weigh it or what?

Heininger: Yes, we'll weigh it first.

Dole: Are you writing a book?

Young: No, no, we're not writing books. We hope others will.

Dole: It's just going to be preserved.

Heininger: In archives, yes.

Young: It's going to be preserved.

Dole: Kennedy will obviously get to read it, right?

Young: Only when everything is released.

Heininger: Only at the very, very end and only depending on what restrictions anybody has placed on them or removed, which is why we give you an opportunity to look over your transcript, so if there is anything you've said that you want to place a restriction on—

Dole: You might guess he wrote me a little note for this.

Young: Yes. I don't know whether he'd mentioned this in his note or whether it's publicly known yet, but they're in the process of raising money to establish an Edward Kennedy Center for the Study of the United States Senate. This is going to be in Boston, but it's not going to be at Harvard. It's going to be at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. I think the building is going to be out there at Columbia Point near the library. This project is one of the things that will be archived there. He wants to use it for educational purposes as well. He stipulated this in the beginning. They are subject to restrictions. There's a move afoot, as you probably know, among

various Senators studying the House or the Senate that are trying to get an association together to share the materials.

Dole: Some of them should have studied it while they were there.

Young: Should have. [*laughter*] So this is what we're doing. It's to help history, so that when we're all dead and gone—I include myself in that; you, of course, Janet, will last forever—the next generation can listen to and read this material.

Dole: It's sort of like the oral history project on World War II veterans, except we're not talking about ourselves.

Heininger: But it's the same thing. The importance of that is that there are all these written records about what happened, but not about the people. The importance of this, aside from documenting Kennedy's life, is that you can't understand the Senate unless you've been in it. It doesn't have rules like the House.

Dole: If you wrote a book about the Senate without Kennedy, there would be a lot of gaps in there. Let's face it, the guy—whether you agree with him or not, whether you like him or not, whatever your feelings are toward him—he's productive and effective.

Young: He said from the beginning he wants us to look at his adversaries, his opposition, his allies, but most of all he wants to get a real picture of the great legislative battles and accomplishments of his time in public life. Not all his own, but to use it to instruct people about, as he put it once—

Dole: He never was much help on farm bills. [*laughter*] Not too many farmers in Massachusetts. Used to have dairy farmers out there and cranberry farmers, but that was always a liberal's good conservative vote, they'd vote against the farm bill. So we decided that's OK, we'll put food stamps in with the farm bill. We'll get them all that way. Senator [George] McGovern and I were longtime allies, both losers in the Presidential race, but we're still working together. Now we're working on an international school lunch program for about 300 million kids who don't get one good meal a day. Clinton signed off on Bush's. He kept it going, but we only appropriated enough money to feed 20 million, mostly girls. Males are given preference in most of these African countries, but Kennedy, with something like that, would be very supportive.

Young: His family has also, for years, been involved in charities.

Dole: He's been very anti-Iraq.

Young: From the beginning, and he's very outspoken about it.

Dole: No, he hasn't been a Johnny-come-lately. I've probably told you more now than I've ever known. The one thing you miss up there, unless you're like [Christopher J.] Dodd and Kennedy, who were just great social friends, you never get to know them, the real person. You get to know the political persona, the person who comes to the floor and makes the speeches. If you're on a

committee, you get a little closer relationship, but if you're just one of the 100 who are not on a committee, say with Kennedy, for example, the only time you have any chance to witness what he does maybe is on the floor. If you're a Democrat, maybe you have policy lunches and that kind of thing.

I think I had two meetings. I said let's get all 100 Senators together and see if we can't figure out some of these little nit-picking things that drive us up the wall, but it didn't produce that much. It's not a social club, but there's not enough time to sit down with one of your colleagues on your side or the other side, particularly the other side of the aisle, and get to know the person.

Heininger: It struck me that the few times that that went on would be when people would sit next to each other on the floor. You could tell they were chatting. Whatever else was going on, here were two people just talking to each other, probably not about what was being talked about.

Dole: Probably Byrd was watching to see that they weren't talking too loudly. "Order in the Senate, order." That was a good way. I used to mosey around and sit down next to somebody and talk about your life instead of your politics.

Young: This raises a number of things. You said he's known for his staff, the Kennedys were all known for their staffs. What was it about his staff that was different?

Dole: They had facts. When Kennedy got up to speak—I don't know whether that was the first time he'd read the speech, maybe the second or third—he could rely on it being accurate. I assume they made mistakes, but it was just a given that when you were going up against Kennedy, you'd better have some good staff work, because he's got it and he's got resources where he can get it from Harvard or from wherever it comes from. Who was his longtime chief of staff?

Young: Carey Parker is still there. He's not chief of staff, but Carey is still there.

Dole: Carey is the one. They know their boss and they know how far to go and how far not to go, what to say, and what the issue is; they do the research. There are a lot of people who don't take time to do that. They don't have a staff equipped to do that and get up and make a speech; somebody asks them a simple question, and they don't know the answer. Now, if Kennedy doesn't know the answer, he'll put in a quorum call and ask somebody.

Young: He has a funny story that I've heard many times. I'm sure you've heard it, too. It was about his brother, Jack [John Fitzgerald Kennedy], when he was in the Navy. He was in some outfit that had to go around the South and various places and tell people to be on the guard against sabotage. He was in a factory in South Carolina. Lieutenant Kennedy was there explaining to them about the difference between fires that start with electricity, fires that start with wood, and fires that start with other things, and that you can't treat all these fires the same way.

He had this line, he knew it all, but this factory worker from the back says, "Lieutenant, say we've got a fire out there in the back. How do we know whether it was started by wood or by

electricity or by something else? How do we know that?" Kennedy says, "That's a very good question. There will be somebody here next week to answer it." Senator Kennedy would use that when he was asked about wheat, there will be somebody here next week. He does study up before he gets involved in an issue; we've noticed that.

Dole: If you watch Kennedy at a committee hearing, he's not reading the questions. He may look down or maybe have notes. Some Senators, if they had lost their paper on the way to the hearing, might as well go on home, but Kennedy, as you said, he'd probably spend a couple of hours, an hour, a half hour, reading a case or looking over a brief that somebody's written for him. It's much more effective if you're looking right at the witness rather than looking down.

Heininger: You also make an interesting point when you say his "use of staff." His staff knew how far they could go. People certainly knew that with you. They knew where Sheila [Burke] could speak for you and exactly when she could speak for you, which was a lot.

Dole: I told Clinton, "If you can sell your health bill to Sheila, I'll vote for it."

Heininger: That's a big issue. It's a big issue in assessing a Senator's effectiveness: How well do they use staff and how well does the staff know how far they can go without having to go back and get clearance from the Senator? When can they speak for the Senator?

Dole: And who do we know on the other side and all that stuff. Staff, even though they're different parties, they get together probably more than the Senators. Particularly if they're on the same committee, they have to work together. There's no substitute for a good staff. As smart as Kennedy is and as hard he worked after 1980, or maybe even before, he can't do it alone. You just can't get on top of everything by yourself. You have to rely on somebody; you finally have to say, "OK, I'm going to, in effect, turn my life over to this person on this issue."

Young: When you first came to the Senate, you didn't have a large staff, did you?

Dole: No. I had the old story: The first six months you wonder how *you* got there and the next six months you wonder how *they* got there. No, I didn't have a big staff and got involved in all these Vietnam debates. I became [Richard Milhous] Nixon's sheriff of the Senate, as I remember one headline in the *Evening Star*. You learn pretty quickly that you'd better get staffed up.

Young: The staffs have grown enormously, the sizes.

Dole: Oh yes, I don't know what they have now for Senate staff.

Heininger: Huge. It was 17,000 to 19,000 when I left ten years ago. When did Sheila come to your staff?

Dole: Early '70s I think.

Heininger: You got lucky. You got staffed up really well early on.

[redacted]

Young: Did you know his brother Bob [Kennedy] when he was in the Senate? Jack?

Dole: No. I ran into President Kennedy only a couple of times when he had an open house for all the new members in '61 and a couple of other times. I may have met Bobby, but I don't have any recollection about it.

Heininger: On a totally tangential subject, how is it being a Senate spouse?

Dole: I get to hear everything every night. It's like having a recording. I ask her; I say, "What's happening? Any excitement today?" "Oh, not too much." I say, "Good," because I'm one of these TV nuts. I like to watch the news and politics and all that stuff. We'll probably be debating election year. I imagine there will be [Albert] Gore [Jr.]/ [Elizabeth] Dole debates, Gore and McGovern. "Dole, will you have these—entertain corporations for money and probably get Clinton in one or two of them?" It's a lot of fun. You find out more about yourself that way.

Young: How is life after the Senate?

Dole: It will be ten years June the 11th for me, but I'm still interested and I still miss it. I miss my colleagues, my staff, and the people who make it run. It really was an unexpected, great experience. You know the old line, the best job in the world. I'm not sure of that, but it's an important role that people play. But right now it just seems that everything is head to head.

Young: Contentious.

Heininger: It's about five to three.

Dole: I hope I've given you something.

Young: I'm hoping this won't be the end. We're coming to you because Senator Kennedy said, "I'm not going to have an oral history without Bob Dole in there." I said, "I may need your help in getting him." He said, "You just tell me." You were one of the people he mentioned in my very first meeting with him, the first thing he said. "I've got a lot of allies. You've got to look at my allies in the Senate," and he started naming people he had collaborated with and who had collaborated with him. He named you and some of the obvious others. Then he said even sometimes Phil Gramm. "Even Gramm," he said.

Dole: That's what happens if you get to know each other. That's the thing that's missing up there. You get to know each other, you have more confidence and more trust. You each have more credibility and you can go to a person as almost a friend. It doesn't mean you're going to change his mind or her mind. It means you might at least be able to talk about the issue.

Young: For Senator Russell, the Senate used to be his life. He would be there even on Christmas Day working in an office. Today it strikes me that so many people parachute in, so to speak, on a Tuesday, then go away on a Thursday.

Dole: It's ITT—In Tuesday, out Thursday.

Young: Right, so there isn't the time to interact as much. Senator Kennedy told me President Kennedy gave him advice: When you go to the Senate, there're three things you have to do. One is go to the Senators lunch, it was a common table. Do that every day. The other thing is go to the prayer breakfast, then go to the steam room, go to the gym. He said you just do that.

Dole: Kennedy may have missed the gym a time or two, but he has this unusual talent of shedding a lot of weight. If he makes up his mind, it's gone. In two or three months, he'd be about three or four sizes smaller. I haven't seen him lately.

Young: He has an annual target now. I think that's Vicki's [Reggie Kennedy] doing.

Dole: Yes, well, Vicki must be a great cook, that's what I thought. But you surely can talk to Senator Dodd, I suppose. Aren't you? They're very close as friends.

Young: We've been trying to get Senator Byrd, but his wife died recently.

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