



EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH DONALD DOWD

August 9, 2005
West Springfield, Massachusetts

Interviewer:

Stephen F. Knott

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TRANSCRIPT

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Knott: Keep in mind that none of this material is going to open for five and a half years and you control your transcript. The version that's put out in five and a half years is something that you have approved. So if you have second thoughts about anything you say today, you can strike it out.

Dowd: I will talk about the man, what I learned with Ted Kennedy.

Knott: OK. That would be great.

Dowd: Yes.

Knott: Thanks, first of all, for having us in your home. It's very nice of you to do it. We appreciate it very much, especially in light that we know that it's been a tough time for you. We really appreciate the fact that you're taking this time with us. For me personally, it's great to see you again.

Dowd: Yes.

Knott: Can I start off just—I want to ask a question about your background so that people who are reading this thing know who you are. If you could tell us a little bit about how you first started getting involved with the Kennedys and getting involved in politics, that would be great.

Dowd: Yes. I come from an area in Springfield, Mass., which is called Hungry Hill and I always said that they were all Irish immigrants that came over from Kerry. I always said you had to end up either being a cop, a policeman, or a priest or a politician. So on my street was Eddie Boland, who later became a renowned Congressman, and he was my mentor. We had a lot of pol—the Mayor lived on our street. I helped Eddie Boland get elected, tin cans and all that, parades and all that stuff, and then I helped Matty Ryan, who was elected district attorney. He came from our Hungry Hill. Then when John Kennedy was running, I did a little work around western Mass., but I really didn't hit the road because, at that time, I was running my father and mother's business. I spent 12 years at that business because my mother asked me to do that.

When John Kennedy was elected—and Larry O'Brien, who's from Springfield, was part of the Irish mafia and a good friend of mine through politics and everything, and in fact, my father and his father ran a barroom in Springfield. And that's where I ended up working for 12 years. So anyway, Joe Napolitan was also involved, a public relations man in Springfield, and he was on the Kennedy campaign. He said, "Come on down to the inauguration." So I said, "Fine, if you want me to come down." So I went down there and of course there's a whole Springfield delegation that went there. I roomed with a gentleman by the name of Ed King, from Ludlow, just came off the Kennedy campaign. Probably the nicest man I ever met in my life. I mean, he was like a father to me. He basically worked on the Chapman Valve. Strong labor leader. A man of the people, you know? So what happened was, I'm down there for three or four days and he said, "Don, would you like to help the President's brother if he decides to run?" So I said, "Certainly, Eddie."

That was in January '61. I got a call in December that Ted Kennedy is coming up to High Point Motor Inn. He says, "We want you to come." So I got up there and it's December 7th, 1961. Ted's there and he basically said, "Now look, I just came back from a recent trip to Italy." For some reason, Ted's always thought that he had to do more work with the Italians.

He and Frank Morrissey—Frank Morrissey was John F. Kennedy's administrative assistant in Boston—went on this trip to Italy and the filmed it. The Pike Company did this filming and it would show Ted with the Pope, and show him flying over the Matterhorn, and meeting all the Italian officials. He said he wanted to move this film around and wondered if anybody, you people, could help him get this film out to the Italian clubs. Well, I took the film and I did 32 showings. I went from Longmeadow, Mass., right up to North Adams. Italian Women's Club, Sons of Italy, anybody that had affiliation with Italian people.

Knott: Right.

Dowd: So the people in Boston—Ted says, "Well, I got this young guy out in Springfield that's doing this." They're doing nothing and he's kidding them. I enjoyed doing it because I was meeting people. I went up to Lee, MA and the Sons of Italy. What I used to do when I went in there—there still were a lot of JFK [John F. Kennedy] secretaries and I used to go to them and say, "Look, I need your help. I'm coming in to do this film on Ted Kennedy." So, the coordinator would put it in the paper.

Well, we go to the Sons of Italy and this young fellow comes down and he's saying, "I want to meet Ted Kennedy." I said, "Ted Kennedy's not here. I'm here. Who are you?" He said, "I'm Gene Dellea. I'm a selectman from West Stockbridge. I thought that Ted Kennedy was coming here." I said, "Well, it didn't say that. It said a film about Ted Kennedy. Would you help me?" And he says, "What do you want me to do?" I said, "We're going to be chasing delegates for the convention in Springfield." So that was the start of my friendship with Gene Dellea, and he's been with me at every campaign.

Knott: Right.

Dowd: Bobby's campaign—all of Ted's and—he and I are like brothers. Basically, Jimmy King and Ed King and myself and Gene, we started chasing delegates for the convention in Springfield in '62 for Ted. We worked the whole western part of the state. We did pretty good, but Eddie McCormack was a strong candidate. He was Attorney General.

Knott: Sure, yes.

Dowd: We had lots of areas where people were more or less committed to him, but we worked and we did well. We did well in the western part of the state for the convention. So we went and we had the convention at Springfield, and of course Ted won. From then on we went into the primary because McCormack still fought us.

The day before the primary was going to take place, Ted was out in Springfield. I was driving back with him. He's going to get on the turnpike and he said, "Can I do anything for you, Don?" I said, "Well, Ted, my mother's very sick. She loves the Kennedys. She's proud—she's from Ireland—of your whole family. Would you call her?" So he went to Worcester and he called my mother. So I thought, *Here's a guy that I'm going to stick with because I like what he stands for and I like, especially on a personal matter, what he did for my mother.*

Knott: Right.

Dowd: So we ran and we won the primary. Then we had the—with [George] Lodge—we had the general election and we won that. Well, if you remember, he had to work for two more years for John Kennedy's seat. Senator [Benjamin] Smith, our good friend from the North Shore, was there. So I stayed out in the western part of the state. In fact, I ended up with a job with the Department of Public Works so we took an inventory of state highways. I was able to keep in touch with all of them because I knew we had to run again.

So then the convention was going to be in Springfield in 1962, and this is in 1964—no, they had the Democratic Convention at the Eastern States Exposition in West Springfield, '64. So Ed King and I are up at Barnes Airport waiting for the Senator, Birch Bayh and Mrs. [Marvella] Bayh, to come in. Barnes Airport is an airport where you can't get into the tower—they had a cutoff point and you couldn't get up the stairs any further. So I would call on the phone to the tower and ask if they had heard from Senator Kennedy's plane yet? And they said no, and then I'd call in another 20 minutes. They did say that they thought they heard the plane, but they thought that they were headed to Bradley Field. I said, "That's strange."

Knott: Was the weather bad?

Dowd: Oh yes, foggy and everything. I call down to the Eastern States, to the convention hall, and I got Gerry Doherty, the State Chairman. I said, "Gerry, have you heard anything about Ted landing at Bradley Field? They can't find him up here at Barnes." He said no. I said that for all intentions, he was coming in to Barnes Airport in Westfield. So, I come down and at that time we started to hear sirens, because it was in the apple orchard, Southampton.

Knott: Yes.

Dowd: I had Joan over here in West Springfield at a friend of mine's home. I said, "Eddie, we better go down and get Mrs. Kennedy." The radio said that Senator Kennedy crashed and they took him to the Cooley Dickinson Hospital. So we went down and we got Mrs. Kennedy, and we drove her to the hospital in Northampton, Cooley Dickinson Hospital.

Knott: Had she heard the news or did you tell her the news?

Dowd: No, we told her the news.

Knott: How did she react?

Dowd: Oh, God, she was really heartbroken. We went up to the Cooley Dick and of course she went in to see the Senator. We didn't, but we were hanging around there. We stayed there. Senator Kennedy stayed up there for about three weeks, and we had to get volunteers just to answer the mail. It was just so overwhelming. He then went to New England Baptist, down in Boston.

Then the '64 campaign came along and my friend and Ted's friend, Eddie Boland, and Joan Kennedy campaigned for Ted all the way—the 128 from this area. She had other Congressmen, Tip [Thomas] O'Neil and everybody else, but they did such a good job that they got more votes than Lyndon Johnson, who was running for President.

Knott: Yes, right. So Joan was a good campaigner?

Dowd: Oh, yes. She was just great. She was not only beautiful but she was nice, and she just moved good. It was good that she was there. He was lying on his back down there in Boston. So anyway, Ted won big. Got more votes than Johnson, which is great.

Then he asked me that—there was a job open at the regional post office in Boston. I went in to interview and I got the job. I remember, this is just a side story, but when I was sworn in in Washington, Postmaster General [John A.] Gronouski was in charge, a John Kennedy appointee. There was a guy in the office by the name of [John] Carter. He was a big Johnson guy. And he says—Gronouski's there, he's there, and I'm there—he said, "I want you to know that Ted Kennedy isn't the only guy in New England." And I said—

Knott: Isn't the only guy in New England?

Dowd: Yes. In other words there's other Senators out there, Congressmen. So I just sat there and said I understand, and I've been around awhile, but in the back of my head I said I'm going to get this guy [*laughs*] some way or other. It was embarrassing to do it in front of the PMG [Postmaster General].

Knott: Sure.

Dowd: I mean, Jesus. So anyway, in those days I had a great job in the Post Office. I was assistant to the Regional Director. Every promotion came through my desk. I had to go out and do dedications for the Congressmen and Senators, beautification awards and everything, and I really knew all these Congressmen and Senators. I used to check with them see if they had a preference.

Well, in those days you could basically contribute to the Democratic National Committee, say they had a big dinner in Washington. There were 15 regions, and our region in Boston topped the field raising money. So, I get a call from this guy Carter. He says, "Now Donny, you did pretty good at fundraising." I say yes. He says, "When you bring the money down, can I go to the Mayflower Hotel with you?" I thought, *I got this guy. This is the guy that gave me a tough time.*

Knott: Right.

Dowd: So I got down there and sure enough, he meets me at the post office and we ride up to the Mayflower. He's saying my guy in Boston did this, and turned right around and became my friend.

Knott: Yes, right.

Dowd: Anyway, I stayed with the post office for about five years, then Larry O'Brien was the Postmaster General. He replaced Gronouski. So being very close to him, when I went down there he used to yank me from the group and bring me in his office and we'd talk politics. We're having a stamp dedication for John F. Kennedy in Boston. Larry is the main speaker, and there's rumbles about Bobby going to get into the race. I asked Ted, "Senator, is Bobby serious about this thing?" And he said, "Yes. Saturday I think he's going to announce." I'm in the car going up to Holyoke with Larry O'Brien, and of course Larry O'Brien is a strong Kennedy guy, but he's a Cabinet member with Johnson. I said, "Larry, Bobby's going to announce. He's going to go against Johnson." Larry said, "Geez," and all that stuff.

So I come home and I sat down with Phoebe [Dowd] and Debbie [Dowd] and I said, "Look, I got a good job, but Ted Kennedy got me my job. I'm loyal, always been loyal. I'm going to go and work on Bobby Kennedy's campaign." So, I end up in Indianapolis, Indiana, eight of us in the Sheraton Hotel, and Johnson that night says he's not going to run.

Knott: Oh right, yes.

Dowd: We're out there so that's all right, but the Indiana Democratic State Committee had a strong structure because they had no Civil Service. Anybody who worked for the state had to pay dues to the Democratic Party, had to get out on election day, and stand out in front of the schools, and their wife and the kids and everything. They were very strong. So they assigned me to District 8, Evansville, Indiana. I got out there and the only person I meet is a young Democrat by the name of Phil Hayes, who later became a Congressman, by the way. So, this is it. So I said, "Jesus, who's the Mayor here?" They said Mayor [Frank F.] McDonald. I said, "Let's go see him." So I went in and saw Mayor McDonald. I said, "I'm here for Bobby Kennedy and I know you're with Governor [Roger] Branigan, and I know you have a strong Democratic structure. But

look, there's no reason why we can't at least talk to each other." I got to know him a little better and when I was leaving I said, "When we're in the White House, Mayor, I'm not going to forget you." He laughed. He became my friend.

So in Evansville there were 13 counties. I was—Gene came out and Joe Scanlon came out with me. He worked for Congressman Freddy [Fernand J.] St. Germain, the Congressman from Rhode Island. So we had a headquarters and we started opening up the field and everything, but to get recruits was very difficult. They had a home show there, so I rented a booth and I put up Bobby Kennedy's pictures. I started signing up volunteers, and in that same home show, there was guy over there by the name of David Hoyer, who would predict the future. He was famous in the Midwest area.

Knott: H-O-Y?

Dowd: I think it's H-O-Y-E.

Knott: OK, yes.

Dowd: He was well known in Indiana. He could predict the future, so I start hanging around his booth. So I say to him, "David, who is going to win this primary? I mean, you predict the future." And he says, "Bobby Kennedy." So I ran to the phone, call Indianapolis [*laughs*] and I say, "David Hoyer just announced that—" Oh, he came running over to me and he says, "What are you—" I say, "Well you said it, and nothing wrong with it, David. He's going to win." Anyway, he wrote a book and before I left he gave it to me and he says, "I know you're going to be in the White House in public relations."

Knott: Right.

Dowd: They had a lot of these celebrities that you could have on the campaign. I said I need some out here because I need some volunteers. So the University at Evansville, I had Bobby Darin and Lesley Gore—6,000 people at the concert.

Knott: Wow.

Dowd: I was signing them up and everything. Jean Kennedy Smith is going to speak for her brother, the Senator. So I pick her up at the airport. I put together a little speech so she could say a few words and everything. She says, "I'm not going to speak." I say, "Jean, we've got a crowd. You're representing your brother. He's running for the President of the United States." She said, "I'm not going to speak." I remember Bobby Darin met us at the door there and I said, "Bobby, she's not going to speak tonight." "You've got to be kidding me." I said, "No, she's not going to speak." So, I've got to fix her so I said, "What are you going to do?" She said, "I'm going to sit in the corner on a chair on the stage." I said OK.

We had a guy by the name of Paul Bitz, who worked for Vance Hartke, the Senator, and he was in Evansville. He had a daughter and she must have been about eight years old then. So I said to her, "Now when I tell you, you get these flowers and you go up on the stage, and you see that

woman over there seated? You go over there and give her these roses.” So sure enough, the show is going along and they’re introducing Jean. I get the little girl to go out there and Jean accepts the roses. Then she got up and went over and started to say a few words.

Knott: Right. OK.

Dowd: I told Ted, “Ted, your sister come out there and she didn’t want to talk.” I’m telling the story. So he calls me the next morning. He said, “My brother wants to see you up in Indianapolis.” I knew Bobby but I didn’t know him intimately. I think he came up. We did the JFK Building dedication in about ’67. Then they had a thing over the Harvard Club and I was invited.

So, Gene and I ride up to Evansville and I had the yellow pad and I started to put down what I did since I came to Evansville. You know, labor groups who formed committees, the teachers, and all that stuff. I had about three pages. I go up to the Sheraton Hotel. I was supposed to meet him at 8:00; Gene and I were there, and Bobby’s not back from the campaign yet. He’s out on the bus and everything. About 9:30 the bus pulls up and he gets in there. I said to Gene, “He’s not going to see me tonight. Gosh, it’s so late.” So Gene and I go to our room.

I get a call from Dave Burke, Ted’s AA [administrative assistant]. He said, “The Senator’s ready for you up at the suite—11:30.” So I go up there. I’ve got the yellow pad. I walk in the room and there’s about 25 people there with Ted, Bobby. Ted says, “Don, will you tell my brother what you’re doing out there in the 8th District?” Luckily, I go along for 20 minutes and Bobby gets up and he says, “You’re doing a good job, innovative. I appreciate what you’re doing.”

Bingo. I go outside and I said, “Ted, what’s this all about?” He said, “Bobby’s people were saying that my people were riding around the state doing nothing. I knew that you would do a good job. I wanted to show my brother.”

Knott: So there was sort of a rivalry between the Bobby folks and the Ted, your folks.

Dowd: Oh, and the JFK folks. There were three groups in there, and they all were—So anyway, we did well in Indiana.

Knott: Right.

Dowd: I didn’t know the makeup of the state. There’s a lot of Germans out there, a lot of furniture makers and everything. I had 13 counties and I had one county to go to get a coordinator. So, we go out on a Saturday and we go to a town near the Kentucky border. We’re having no luck. Gene’s there, Paul Bitz, and myself. No luck at getting a coordinator.

We walk into a radio station and the receptionist says, “Who are you people?” We’re with Bobby Kennedy’s campaign and everything. She smiles, lit her face up, and I say, “Would you help us?” She says, “What do you want me to do?” I say, “Can you have 20 people at your home Tuesday night?” She says, “I can do that.” Her name was Rita Gettelfinger, I’ll never forget her. So, Rita had the 20 people there. Gene went down, I stayed in Evansville, and she became one of

our best coordinators. She was the 13th, so—she used to call me up and say, “Don, I’ve got to get a Kennedy down here.” It was a whistle stop, and I thought oh geez, I got a problem—here’s this great girl.

So Joe Scanlon from Rhode Island is a handsome guy, Irish-looking guy, and I say, “Joe, I hate to do this but you’re going down as ‘Joe Fitzgerald,’ the cousin to Senator Kennedy.” *[laughter]* And I say, “You go down there and here’s the first thing I want you to say.” So Joe goes down there, Rita meets him, and Joe calls me about 11:00. He said, “Christ, I’m a star down here. I’m on radio. I’m at the chamber.” *[laughter]* Rita was so happy. I was telling that story to Ethel Kennedy one day and she laughed.

So, the Sunday night before the primary in Indiana, Bobby and Ethel come out to Evansville because it’s Vance Hartke’s, the Senator’s mother’s, birthday. Big crowd, Evansville. So Bobby’s there. I say, “Bobby, I got my coordinators in. This is the last push.” And they’re over there—we met in the Civic Center in a boiler room, and Bobby Kennedy addressed them. So then I said we’re going to have a breakfast in the morning. I said, “Can you just drop by and just say hi to these people because Tuesday is the election.” I told Joe Scanlon, “Joe, Rita’s coming in; stay in your room. I don’t want her saying to Bobby, geez, your cousin is a great guy.”

Knott: Your cousin’s a great— *[laughs]*

Dowd: Your cousin, yes. So anyway, I’ll never forget her. We won in Indiana, came back to Boston. I was out in Los Angeles four days later. Steve Smith said to me, “I want you to go out to Los Angeles.” So I go out to Los Angeles and there’s a guy by the name of Tony Akers out there, a former Ambassador. So Steve says, “See what he’s doing.” I went out there, and I met Tony Akers and he was a gentleman. He really looked the part of an Ambassador, but he wasn’t a politician. So I remember—

Knott: Was he supposed to be running things in LA [Los Angeles] for Bobby?

Dowd: Yes, he was. Steve sent him out there just to get things moving. But Jesse Unruh had his whole group there. He was Speaker of the House, but they had a group, Bobby Kennedy. They had a meeting on a Saturday and I went to the meeting and it was about—they had a workshop operation. It looked good on paper, Madison Avenue presentation, and it really was good. Knocking on doors and asking people to come to our workshop. I stick up my hand and I say, “This is great but do you have the volunteers to do this? I mean this is really a good program.” Well, there was a woman there by the name of Sylvia Chase. Sylvia Chase was the field director. She eventually ended up on 20/20. She was on radio and TV.

Knott: Yes. I knew that name was familiar.

Dowd: She’s got her nose out of joint and I know it. She says, “Here’s this hired gun from—” and I wasn’t hired “—the East coming in and telling us what to do.” So that week, Joe Scanlon, myself, and Gene are coming out of our office at night, about 8:30, and we see a group of volunteers stuffing envelopes, and we take our coats off and we help them. Sylvia saw that, and changed—from day to night—and when we were leaving California, June 4th, she wrote me a

letter, which said, “When you first came out, I really thought you guys were just here for the ride. But when I saw you people sitting down with the volunteers, I knew you were for real.” She became one of my best friends. We worked together in perfect harmony.

Gene Dellea and I were the last ones out of the headquarters of Bobby Kennedy in Los Angeles on Wilshire Boulevard. We went over to the Ambassador and we were going up to change and—the previous Sunday night we had a big rally, indoor and outdoor rally, at the Coconut Grove. Then we went out—it was such a big crowd, we had to go out into the garden area at the Ambassador. So, Andy Williams and Bobby Kennedy and all the Hollywood stars are leading the show. And doing that that evening, Gene Dellea—Polly [Pauline] Fitzgerald. Remember Polly?

Knott: Sure.

Dowd: She came over and said, “Don, there’s a guy by the back of the stage area, the platform. We can’t get him out of there. We can’t get him to move.” So, I said, “Gene, go on over and see what they’re talking about.” He came back and he said, “This heavyset guy’s there. He’s of foreign extraction.” I said, “Well, get security.” So we went over and Gene got security, but by the time security came the guy was gone. So, during the course of—Bobby had a great habit of shaking hands, putting his hand down. You heard all kind of noise, like chairs, people trying to get up to say hi to him. So they brought him out the back door Sunday night. In the meantime, Gene said, “There’s a guy there. That’s the guy that we tried to get moved out of—” He was in the middle of the crowd, Sunday night.

So Gene and I go back Tuesday night after the polls close and we’re going up to our room to basically just clean up and go down the ballroom. To get into the ballroom you had to have identification from the campaign. So Gene and I are there and I saw Pete Smith, he’s the advance guy for Bobby, and I say, “Pete, what are you doing?” He says, “We’re changing the route. The press want Bobby to come through the kitchen. He was going to come into the main ballroom door and we’re changing it.” I say, “Well, that’s fine.” We’re standing in the back of the ballroom and I see this guy from Sunday night in the middle of the crowd in the ballroom. I say, “Gene, how could he get in? He wasn’t in our campaign. How did he get identification?”

After Bobby made his speech, we heard these shots and I thought it was the same as Sunday night, knocking down chairs and everybody wanting to see Bobby. But a woman came running across the floor and she said he’s been shot. So, Jesus, I ran in the back, went out to the desk and I said, “Did you call an ambulance?” They said, “We already did.”

In the meantime, one of the girls who was with Polly Fitzgerald says we can’t find Polly, will you find her? I found her, and I was actually standing behind a pillar in the hotel when they brought [Sirhan] Sirhan out. These people were—they’re jumping over couches and everything trying to get at him.

Knott: They were going to kill him.

Dowd: Yes, and, you see, there was a lot of hate out there. I remember when our cars came back from the field every night, we had “Kennedy for President” signs in the back and they’d be ripped up, on the ground every day. The night that Bobby Kennedy debated Senator [Eugene] McCarthy, when he said about the jets to give to Israel, because we had a lot of pressure coming from west LA, Jewish people. They said McCarthy is moving in and Kennedy has got to do more. He certainly did and evidently that kind of ticked off that whole group. But there was hate out there, you know?

Knott: But, Don, that guy in the back of the room was Sirhan. The guy you saw on two occasions.

Dowd: No, no, no.

Knott: That was not him?

Dowd: No. It was a portly guy and that’s why—

Knott: No, I didn’t think so. It didn’t fit his description.

Dowd: —that’s why I said it was a conspiracy. It wasn’t just Sirhan Sirhan.

Knott: I see.

Dowd: And when I came back—

Knott: This guy was stalking Bobby, you’re pretty sure. This guy you saw.

Dowd: Yes, because he wouldn’t move for the women.

Knott: Yes.

Dowd: And when I came back to Boston, the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] came in and I told them the story. They told me this crazy thing about they had a film of everybody who went into the ballroom that night. I said Bobby Kennedy, he had Bill Barry, he had Rosie [Roosevelt] Grier. We didn’t have any FBI people and no cameras. I said, Jesus, that’s kind of strange you’re telling me this because I—so, I never told too many people that story.

Polly Fitz [Fitzgerald], that night, said will you take me over to the hospital? She was very close to Bobby. She ran all these teas for him all throughout the campaign. So I went over the hospital with her and we’re waiting in a room with JFK, Pierre Salinger and singer Andy Williams and his wife and Frank Mankiewicz, Bobby’s press director.

Knott: Oh right, Frank Mankiewicz.

Dowd: And then they said the Senator is coming down—Ted, from San Francisco. So I went to the elevator just to greet him. The guy was just devastated.

Knott: He was?

Dowd: Oh, devastated. I've never seen so much love between brothers, genuine love. I've seen Ted walking around with little notes—a U.S. Senator—to help his brother. He was delivering messages. I'm just saying this is so unique, and I think the father and mother brought the kids up that they basically care about one another. Ted still does for the whole family.

Anyway, he went upstairs to see Bobby because we were on a different floor, below. When we went back to Boston the next day, Steve Smith asked me, "Can you corral the people when you're back to Boston?" We did and—Steve is a great guy. Getting back to the story, about the dissension of the people who were—

Knott: Between the different camps?

Dowd: Right. Bobby got beat in Oregon. Steve was on the phone with Larry O'Brien and I was in the room and I said, "Steve, ask Larry to come down here." He said, "Larry, why don't you come down? We've got the election next Tuesday and everything." Larry came down and I met him at the airport. So I remember taking him to the Ambassador Hotel, he had a little suite there, and Steve gave him some work to do with the state senators in LA. That was like on a Thursday. He called me Saturday and he said, "Don, I'm going back to New York." I said, "Why, Larry?" He said, "Well, basically, I did what Steve asked me to do. I have nothing else to do." I said, "Larry, we've got an election Tuesday. I want to know whether—" I was field director. I said, "I want to know whether I've got this thing in the right direction." He said, "We've got the convention in New York. I'm going back."

So I took him to the airport like on a Sunday morning and I came back and I was with Jerry Cummings from New York, who's a good friend of Steve Smith and worked on the RFK campaign, and I said, "Jerry, we're like a Chinese Army out here. We got people coming from other states, but we just don't seem to have it all together." So he said, "Why don't you tell Steve Smith?" [*laughs*] Well, I could talk to Steve that way and I said, "Steve, Larry O'Brien, he's got some ability as far as campaigns. He's going back to New York." He said, "What for?" I said, "Well, he did the work that you told him to and he had nothing to do." So he said, "Get him back here." So, I called Larry and I said they want you back for election night. So Larry said OK and he came back. Election night Tuesday June 4, 1968.

And the next morning, he was going to be made Campaign Manager or we were going to have a big meeting, Kenny O'Donnell, all the guys, but you see, they thought that O'Brien stayed with Johnson too much.

Knott: Yes, right.

Dowd: You know, Larry told me—down the Cape he says, "Don, I was the first one who gave the letter of resignation to Johnson. Dave Powers and Kenny O'Donnell came after me." But he says Johnson said to him, "Larry, don't you want to finish Jack's agenda?" Larry said, "Look, I'll finish the agenda. I'm out after they adjourn." So Lyndon Johnson invites him and Elva

[O'Brien] and young Larry [O'Brien] down to the ranch. They get down to the ranch and on a Sunday afternoon, Johnson says, "Let's take a ride, Larry." Brings him to a country store, on the porch he swears him in as Postmaster General. He just didn't want him to leave at all. So Larry felt bad. He says, "Here these guys think that I stayed with Johnson, but Christ, I got boxed into it." I wasn't going to say, "How many kids from Springfield become a member of the Cabinet of the United States?"

Knott: Right. Sure.

Dowd: So it never transpired and we all went back to Boston. And after the—the '60s were tough. And Mr. [Joseph] Kennedy died in '69.

Knott: Right.

Dowd: I went down there to arrange the transportation for the family. Mrs. [Rose] Kennedy had a small invitation [list]—they waked Mr. Kennedy in the compound, and there were seven people who were invited.

Knott: Seven?

Dowd: Seven. Morton Downey, Father Cavanaugh from Notre Dame, and a few of Mr. Kennedy's intimate friends. Ted Kennedy stays up all night seated by his father's casket.

Knott: Wow.

Dowd: And didn't go to sleep at all. Loved his father. Loved his mother. So anyway, during the conversation the next morning, it was November. Ted says, "Don, would you have somebody go up to Squaw Island and get my overcoat?" So I said fine. I sent Bill Connors from the Veterans Agency up to Squaw to get Ted's overcoat, come down, and the last three in the house were Mrs. Kennedy, Father Cavanaugh, and the Senator.

For some reason, Father Cavanaugh put Ted's overcoat on. Ted comes over and he said, "Father Cavanaugh's got my overcoat. My father gave me that." So I said, "Jesus, Ted, I'll work it out." So we went up to St. Francis Xavier Church for the mass and then we went up to Brookline, MA. After the service, I went up to Father Cavanaugh and I said, "Father, I think you have Senator Kennedy's coat on." He was a little guy, like Barry Fitzgerald. I said, "Take the coat back to Notre Dame and send it to us." Oh, no. He took it off his back, gave me the coat, and I just didn't know [*laughs*], but I mean that's what he requested.

Anyway, Ted took great pride in his father's coat because it was his father's, and poor Father Cavanaugh—but he was so gracious and so nice.

So '69 was a tough year for the Senator and he was lost.

Knott: Don, can I ask you, I mean you may feel uncomfortable with this, but '69 was also Chappaquiddick.

Dowd: That's right.

Knott: And I know you weren't there, but what did you see at that time? I mean, did you pick up anything as far as the impact of that on him or—

Dowd: Oh yes. Yes, it's a—fortunately, I mean in one way—

Knott: You could have been there, right?

Dowd: Yes.

Knott: Weren't you invited to that?

Dowd: Yes, but my daughter wanted to see Tom Jones, the entertainer from London, at Wallingford, CT. Women throw their pants up on the stage at him; he was very popular. We went down to a Wallingford tent show in Connecticut. That's where I was that night.

Knott: Yes, OK.

Dowd: Then I come back and I got a phone call from a friend, but in all fairness, Ted Kennedy was sailing down there that weekend and he knew these girls and they were honorable girls. They worked for Bobby in the telephone room and all that stuff.

Knott: The boiler room?

Dowd: The boiler room, and Joey Gargan says, "Geez, Ted, they work for your brother, and would you drop in?" He just—as I said, he went there and I wasn't there but I imagine that—it was just kind of a party and he had to get back because he was still sailing the next day. I take his word that that's what—the mishap happened. But I think that really was tough on him because at one of the town meetings, somebody asked him that.

Knott: Really?

Dowd: In Sudbury, Mass., and he said to them, when they brought up Chappaquiddick, he says, "I hope that you don't have to go through life thinking every day about that young girl." So that did have an effect on him and I think that's where—when he lost Bobby, that was basically—you can imagine that he just felt life wasn't worth living.

Knott: Yes.

Dowd: And that's why I think that he was open for whatever he—He loved sailing and everything and they were so close. It was really bad. I went down there to help, when he was going to court and all that. He was wandering around there with John Tunney and he was bewildered. In all fairness, I think that when he did get down himself, injured in diving and the car crash, with his neck and everything, she went from the front seat to the back seat. He

couldn't find her. Ted's a good swimmer, but he just was hurt. When he got Paul Markham and Joey to go back down there, they couldn't find her. So you say to yourself maybe she got out and she's walking around.

After Bobby, he wasn't right and it just, the press took advantage of him. They were very cruel to him because Ted is the most compassionate guy in the world, and he just cares about people and he cares about—he's a lovable guy.

[telephone interruption]

Knott: That's fine, Don. Let's take a break.

[BREAK]

Knott: You mentioned that Senator Kennedy is a very compassionate man, very generous man. Can you give us some examples of that that people might be interested in knowing about down the road?

Dowd: Well, he does a lot secretive stuff.

Knott: Yes.

Dowd: You know my friend Ed King?

Knott: Yes.

Dowd: Who got me into—he died in the '70s. I was going to come to that. He gave Mrs. [Ed] King a check for years, just to keep her going.

Knott: A personal check?

Dowd: Yes. Nobody would ever know that. He does things like that that most people really don't—one thing I was coming to, but as I was saying, I was going by years.

Knott: You want to go that way, Don, go ahead. If you want to get back on your chronology, that's fine.

Dowd: Yes, I think yes. So, we're in '69 about Chappaquiddick. I was with him the day he came back from court. It's a heartache for him, the whole thing was a heartache. He's a proud man and for that mishap that basically caused a little girl's life that he really didn't know that well.

Knott: Yes, yes.

Dowd: You see. He was doing it because people said for your brother, you've got to do it. Go to that party.

Knott: Yes, right.

Dowd: And Charlie Tretter and Jack Crimmins and all those guys, they just wanted to get together and thank him. I think the press made it a kind of a different type of party, which it wasn't. I mean, these people knew each other.

Knott: Yes.

Dowd: The Lyons sisters [Maryellen and Nance], they're good people—hard working and very religious.

Knott: The press tried to portray it as this wild party.

Dowd: Right, which isn't so. Anyway, he has to live with that. Basically, he's a good man and a compassionate man. So after '69 we've got '70 coming.

In the meantime, Mike Barnicle is working for John Tunney, and John Tunney is going to run for the U.S. Senate. So Mike Barnicle calls me and he says, "Don, you've been out here for Bobby and you've got a good image now. Will you come out and work for John Tunney?" And I said, "Has John Tunney talked to Ted about this?" He said, "Well, no. Let me put him on." So John Tunney got on the phone and he said, "Don, I should have you come out and be Assistant Field Director." I said, "John, would you talk to Ted Kennedy about this?" So, I called him back, or he called me, and he said, "Yes, Ted said if it's a better opportunity, he'd like to see you go and everything." So I said, "John, this is Monday. I'll call you Friday."

I called him Friday and I said, "John, you're one of Ted Kennedy's best friends. I imagine you know what loyalty is. Do you know that your friend Ted Kennedy needs guys like me around him, especially this year, going into '70, the Chappaquiddick? I can't accept that. As much as it sounds appetizing, I can't accept it." So, Monday I'm over at the JFK Building and I'm walking over to headquarters with Ted Kennedy. He says, "Oh, you've got a new job." I say, "Ted, do you think I would go?" And he turns to me and he says, "Not Don Dowd." End of the story.

So they called me and they said they wanted to do a town meeting in Sturbridge, Mass., 1970, for the campaign. A kind of a lull before we get into the—they said do it in Sturbridge, Mass. I go out to Sturbridge and it's about 95 degrees and we're going to do it on the second floor of the town hall. Guggenheim, the Virginian film maker, he's up in Lowell doing another section of the campaign film.

Knott: Charles Guggenheim?

Dowd: Yes. And they're running late and I've got about a couple of hundred people waiting in the stairwell in this 95-degree temperature. I called Guggenheim and I said, "Look, I've got to move these people." He said, "What about the equipment? We've got to get it—" I said, "Well,

I'm going to get them started." So I took the people and said I'm going to place the people like a New England town meeting. I didn't want all the elderly in one spot. So I actually gave them their seats and we put a table in the middle, round circle theater style.

Ted came up, took his coat off, and he started the town meeting. Question and answer, and everything. It went pretty good. So Dave Burke says me, "We want you to do some more." And I said, "Where do you want me to go?" He said, "You pick it." So we went down to our second—Sharon, Mass., 65% Jewish and everything.

So I went to Sharon into the town hall and I met a town clerk by the name of Arthur Collins. I said, "Arthur, I'm down here to do a town meeting for Ted Kennedy." He said, "Don, there's never been a U.S. Senator in Sharon." I said, "That's great. I'll tell you what I want. This is legitimate. No phonies or others, I want people who are concerned about issues who will stand up and talk to Ted Kennedy and ask him questions." So we went to the community house, and we had 600 people. I said, "I'm going to make this a little different." So I set up the seating circle where there would be an aisle in between, and I gave Ted a roving microphone. And I said, "Ted, when John Riley sticks his hand up, you go right down and stand next to him. Ask him his name and say, 'What's your concern, sir,' and if it's a good question, and we're taping this, we can use it in the campaign."

Knott: Yes, yes, sure.

Dowd: That was the first time that the facts book was established, because when I went down to Sharon, I did a whole makeup of the community and I gave it to the office. That's when they started—every time a candidate goes out, Ted or anybody, they have a facts book. If they're going into Deerfield, Mass., what's the makeup of Deerfield?

Knott: Right.

Dowd: And that became, from Sharon, Mass., the first one. I did 14 of those in areas that we wouldn't normally go to in a campaign. Sudbury, Mass. But it was a filler.

Knott: Sure.

Dowd: We did them and they were very successful. We were the first ones to do them, then [Nelson] Rockefeller picked them on New York State. But what Rockefeller used to do was, like [Michael] Dukakis, he would bring his Cabinet. It wasn't one person.

Knott: Yes, OK.

Dowd: So the last one we're going to do is out in Natick, Mass. We're at a school out there and it was a Jewish holiday. Beryl Cohen, a Senator, says you can't do a town meeting on a Jewish holiday. He was overruled so we end up—I had to go out to the Wilson School in Natick. So I'm out there about four in the afternoon, and I try to look for the janitor, the maintenance guy, and up rolls this TV truck. I said to the driver, "What's this all about? What are you looking for?" He said, "I'm looking for this school. We're going to tape the town meeting of Senator Kennedy."

I'm thinking *that's* why they didn't tell me. That's why they didn't move it. They had this thing going, so they get set up. British television taped the town meeting.

We had an Independent candidate running that year and he was getting no place, but he showed up at the meeting. I go in and I say to Ted, "Ted, your opponent's out there at the town—" He says, "Invite him in." So I get him a seat in front. Ted takes the roving mike, he gets up there and he says oh, we've got so and so with us tonight. He says, "Would you like to say a few words?" This is his town meeting. They're taping this, so the guy gets up and says who he is and what he's running for, sits down. Kennedy goes through all this town meeting question and answer, his usual talk and everything. Before he leaves, he says, "Would you like to say something else, sir?" and he brings the guy up again with the microphone and they're taping all this. I'm saying this is show business now. *[laughs]*

So anyway, they completed that and that was the last one we did. We did 14 of them and it was very successful because people got close to him. It was always big crowds and everything.

Knott: Sure, and he was good in that format?

Dowd: Oh yes, very good. So that was '70. We won very well. We won excellently, and then I think we ran against [Josiah] Spaulding that time.

Knott: That's right.

Dowd: So around '72, Ed King got very sick and I went to Washington and I told the Senator that our friend, Ed King—he loved Ed King. Ed King never drove. Ed King used to take a bus. If Ted Kennedy gave him a case in Fall River, he'd have to jump on the bus to go down there. I said, "Ted, Ed King's very, very sick, why don't you get out to see him?" He was on his way to Atlantic City with Paul Kirk. He said, "I'm flying into—I'll go up to see Ed King and then I'll go back down to Atlantic City."

So we're riding in the car and he says to me, "How do I say goodbye to Ed King?" I said, "Ted, let me handle that. I know Ed King." I worked with him and he just was like the greatest guy I ever met. So we went up to Ed King's house and of course he's got his room down the first floor. They moved his bedroom down there in like a library, and Paul Kirk and I had lunch with Mrs. King in the dining room. When we were going—Ted's schedule, he had to leave—I walked into the room and I said to Eddie King, "Eddie, the candidate's got to go," and that clicked with him. He said to Ted, "You better go down there, you got to go to this thing." And that's the way Ted was able to say goodbye to him.

Knott: Oh, I see.

Dowd: Ted got emotional because he loved this guy.

Knott: Sure.

Dowd: And Ed King felt the same way about Ted Kennedy. You know, he worked in San Diego on Bobby's campaign and he just was so great. He was a good friend of Larry O'Brien, too.

Knott: Did he pass away that year?

Dowd: He passed away and Ted came up for the funeral. I was going to be one of the pallbearers, and Jimmy King came over and he said, "Don, Ted wants to be a pallbearer. Will you let him take your place?" And I said sure, so I knew what Ted, how he felt about Ed King.

Knott: Sure.

Dowd: So he was a pallbearer for Eddie King. And as I said, Eddie was the first guy that I ever met who asked me into the Kennedy group, which was a lucky day for me. But anyway, Ed passed on. Ted was always having press conferences because people wanted him to run for President in '68, '72, '76. And I remember, in the '68 convention, I was down the Cape at his home and we were having dinner. They kept calling him from Chicago, would you be a VP [Vice President] and all that stuff.

Knott: Right, right.

Dowd: And he just was hurt, and didn't want to know anything. Seventy-six was coming up and Joe Kennedy was going to be the campaign manager. So, we're going from Orange, Mass., to Greenfield, Mass., and we got a reporter in with us by the name of Neal Perry from the *Greenfield Recorder*. Neal starts telling him about all the Indian history and all that stuff, and Route 2. Ted says, "Geez, Don, I'd like to take my kids and my nephews and nieces on a camping trip." I say, "A camping trip?" He says, "Yes, I'd like to get them to know a little about history of the western part of the state." So he says, "Will you do it for me?" So Gene and I get stuck with formulating a camping trip. So '76, '77, '78, '79. We did it every summer for four years.

Knott: They did these trips every summer?

Dowd: Yes, for four years.

Knott: Wow.

Dowd: So we go from the Cape, up to the Berkshires, MA—we knew the route. We had to go out and ask selectmen of the towns if we could swim in their private pond. Ted insisted that these kids get some education while they're camping, but, see, these kids never slept outdoors. Never had a fireplace. Never had canoes, fresh lakes. They loved it, the kids, and we used to sleep out, and we went from—our first stop would be Riverside Park, Six Flags now, and then we'd go up to the Berkshires.

We went up to a ski area, Butternut Basin. We'd have a cookout and we'd canoe and then we'd go to—we'd have a state park. We'd have to go out and actually reserve a spot for this Kennedy group.

Knott: How big of a group would this be?

Dowd: Well, the first year we did 17. I was driving. It was like a big Winnebago. Seventeen kids plus Steve Smith, Eunice Shriver, Jean Smith, the Senator, and Joan Kennedy.

Knott: Wow.

Dowd: And we had these kids and they'd bring their friends and I said holy— but they were good kids. And we would sleep out at night and set up tents and all that, fireplace and all that, and they loved it.

Knott: Did they?

Dowd: Oh, they couldn't wait to do it next year.

Knott: Is that what this picture is Don, by any chance? Is that from one of those trips or is that?

Dowd: No, this is the latest one.

Knott: Oh, OK, that's recent.

Dowd: We did this one in Boston. This is the—

Knott: Thompson Island?

Dowd: The lighthouse. We slept at Thompson Island.

Knott: That's what I thought, yes.

Dowd: We did, I think that was '91. Anyway, the camping trip—that's Gene Dellea at one of the camping trips, Gene and me.

Knott: Oh, right.

Dowd: Basically, we did these and they got great press out of them. We went to Norman Rockwell's museum. We went to [Herman] Melville's home, the author of *Moby Dick*, and we went to the guy that did the Lincoln statue in Washington, [Daniel Chester] French, and the Shaker Village. We made sure they learned something. So, he really enjoyed it. Then, for two seasons we did ski trips. He came out here with the kids, John Kennedy [Jr.] and all the rest of them, and they would basically hit the western Mass. ski areas to promote them. Mount Tom in Holyoke and we'd go up to Butternut Basin.

We were up Brody Mountain. I remember John Kennedy at that time had Jack Walsh as his Secret Service guy. We're up at the Red Lion Inn, staying over there in the winter, and Jesus, I get a call from the management, and a couple of them were up on the roof throwing snowballs at

2:00 in the morning. John Kennedy and both his pals. So I wake up Jack and I say, “Jesus, Jack, get that kid off there or we’re going to get thrown out of here.” So poor Jack had to get John Kennedy to get off that roof.

But they were kids who really enjoyed each other. I mean, the cousins and all that stuff. But in the camping trip, we went to places like Umpachene Falls. That’s in Mill River, MA.

Knott: What’s it called?

Dowd: Umpachene Falls. It’s in Mill River. An Indian name, and they loved it. There was a cave and the kids, oh they had a blast. It was very interesting, but anyway.

One of the trips, we were coming into the compound and Ted’s mother was walking there—she walked at night—and he said, “Don, give her a little shock, give her a little jolt.” So I pulled down the window of the big camper and they were all hiding, and I said, “Could you tell me where the Kennedy’s compound is?” She looked at me and said, “Over there. Who are you?” I said, “I’m from the western part of Massachusetts.” She said, “Oh, my son’s out there with all his nieces and nephews and they’re enjoying it.” Ted and the kids are laughing at her and I go on and on, and she’s probably saying this jerk wants to come in. So then they come out and say, “Hey, mother.” But they were great. So, we did that right up until he got into the ’80 race.

In the last camping trip we had, Roger Mudd was supposed to come with the CBS crew. The CBS crew came with us and they went up from Riverside to the Berkshires and then they found out that Roger Mudd can’t come on an assignment. So they took off. So when we came back the last day of the camping trip, that Sunday Roger Mudd interviewed Ted—

Knott: That’s when he did the famous interview.

Dowd: Yes, he was all alone and this guy popped in on him.

Knott: Right.

Dowd: So that’s how that ended, but he was supposed to have been on the trip with us that day, through the whole camping trip.

Knott: I see.

Dowd: Because these guys stayed with us, ate with us and everything, the CBS crew.

So Eddie Martin and I are living together. We’re down in—we lived at 122 Bowdoin, President John Kennedy’s old apartment, but then Joe moved in so Steve said, “You’ll have to find another place.” Eddie bought a place in Quincy. We used to go down there. Then in ’80 Eddie, was the Regional Director of HUD [Housing and Urban Development]. Big job. I was with the New England Commission. We’re at the breakfast table and I said, “Jesus, is this his—do you think he’s going to run? That means here we go again.”

I go in to Director of the Commission, [J. Joseph] Grandmaison. I said I'm leaving December 11th. Eddie's going the same way. He said, "Why are you leaving?" I said, "I'm going out for Ted Kennedy and the chairman of the New England Governors is Governor Hugh Gallen, he's with [Jimmy] Carter." So Joe said, "Well, let me talk to him." Joe's a Carter appointee. He comes back to me and said, "No, you take a leave of absence." So I got a lesson in politics because they knew if we won, they would have been the good guys, to say oh, don't fire him.

Knott: I see, right.

Dowd: I went up there December 11th. In January, I think it was Birch Bayh's birthday out in Indiana, and for some reason they wanted—I was going to be the Indiana coordinator in the '80 campaign, which I ended up as. They said, "We want you to go out with Ted to the Birch Bayh party, meet him out there." So I go out there, but in the meantime, like I did with Robert, I put about three-pages on a yellow pad about what I thought about New Hampshire, about Ted's campaign. I wrote down what I observed up there since I was there in December. I saw that there were a lot of Senator Paul Tsongas people and a lot of Dudley Dudley New Hampshire people were up there, early '79, pushing Ted Kennedy for President. I said, "Ted, none of your people are up there. None of the people that helped for you to win in Massachusetts. They know you." He said, "Why don't you get them up there?" So, he read the three pages, showed it to his daughter, Kara [Kennedy] when we were in the limousine going to a party, and he said, "Put it in effect, get my guys up there." So I said OK.

There were 1,200 people at Birch Bayh's party. Ted is very close to Birch. So we leave Indianapolis to go to Caribou, Maine, on a plane, and the staff from Washington are saying, "Ted, he's a great friend, he didn't even endorse you." And they kept it up. Ted turned around to them and he says, "Let me say one thing. I don't want to hear any more of this. This Birch Bayh saved my life, pulled me out of an airplane, that's it." He was just adamant about it. He says, "He can do whatever he wants. He's my friend." These guys, they just were silent.

Anyway, we went up to Caribou and I let Eddie read the pad, the three pages I prepared for EMK. He calls up Tommy O'Neill. Tommy O'Neill was the coordinator of New England and he's just, you know Tom. So he calls—

Knott: I don't.

Dowd: So he calls the coordinator up in New Hampshire that's running it, Dennis Kanin, a good person in charge of N.H..

Knott: Oh yes.

Dowd: And he said, "Don wrote a letter to Kennedy about what he observed in New Hampshire and it became a big deal." I went in Monday morning and Dennis said to me, "Donny, can I see you?" He started, "I hear you're writing memos to Kennedy about what's happening up here." I said, "No, I'm up here for three weeks. I've got to tell him what I'm doing or what I observe, and I always give him memos." So he went on and on, and I said, "Why don't you read it," and it

was nothing. I didn't say anything bad about anybody up there. I just said that there weren't any of his people up there now.

So Dennis became a little suspect of me. He said EMK's going to be coming in and out, so they put me in charge of Labor, which is fine because I love the labor people. We stayed up there, and after he mentioned the Shah of Iran [Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi], and all the haters were up there from Chappaquiddick on the radio shows.

Knott: Well, the gun stuff was a big issue too, wasn't it?

Dowd: Oh yes up at the—

Knott: Highway control.

Dowd: —Highway motor inn. Some guy was in the lobby wearing crazy outfits. Ted wanted to go there. We said don't go there, these guys are crazy. They come out of the woods. One guy was in the lobby with a scuba diving suit, walking around [*laughs*].

Knott: At Chappaquiddick?

Dowd: Yes, but I mean that's the way he was—yes, in the lobby of the highway—So Ted didn't go, but it was tough up there. The people in West Manchester, they would have President John Kennedy and the Pope's picture, and they wouldn't vote for Ted. Because they just felt insulted the way these guys painted him, and what we did up there, and I tried to explain to them in New Hampshire, it's drive time. Not television, it's radio, drive time to and from work.

We had a gentleman up there who put these tapes together. He was very clever and he had this tape about the White House, the Rose Garden and the plane taking off with Rosalynn [Carter] and Mrs. [Lillian] Carter, but no Jimmy Carter. He was staying there because they had the captured American soldiers over there—

Knott: The hostages in Iran.

Dowd: Yes, and they had the tape we put together "Hail to the Chief" in the background and we were—Well, I went down, brought it down to Paul Kirk and these guys down the headquarters in Boston. Right away they said this has got to be a commercial, TV. I said they get Boston TV up there. You don't get the guy driving to work. So they never really got off the ground but it was a hilarious thing.

From there I came back to Massachusetts election. Then went to Connecticut.

Knott: He won in Connecticut, didn't he?

Dowd: Connecticut and New York that day.

Knott: Yes, right.

Dowd: I remember the night before the primary, I was in the restaurant with some of our guys, and Ella Grasso was in there with the Carter guys. She said to me, called me over and introduced me, and she says, “I hate you loyal guys, but I also admire you.” So the day at the election, I was in Connecticut and I talked to her. I just said, “This is the best we ever won.”

From there I went to Indiana. I established headquarters in Indianapolis.

Knott: You were running the state, essentially?

Dowd: Running the state. Carl Wagner sent out a woman to be our field director on campaign staff, Angie Martin, from Washington, and she used to stay in headquarters on the phone all the time. I said to her, “Do you know that that title means?”

Knott: You’ve got to get out.

Dowd: “Have you ever been to Gary, Indiana?” She said no. I said, “Do you know who you talk to in Gary, Indiana? The guy may have two heads.” But she wouldn’t go out of the office. She didn’t even know who you were talking to. We could have the worst bum in the world representing us. It was an uphill fight in Indiana.

Knott: Yes, I’m sure.

Dowd: We split delegates, which was very good. Mayor [Richard] Hatcher of Gary controlled a lot of the—from there I went out to Sacramento with Ron Brown. Gene went to San Diego. I went to Sacramento to work the State House. In the last day, we took six out of eight primaries.

Knott: I remember this, yes. He finished strong.

Dowd: He finished strong and see, people say what happened, but I said, “Look, if you’re the President of the United States and you’ve got election the next year, you’re inviting all the people, the leaders of unions and Democrats, down to the White House for dinner with their wives. This is what happens. You get commitments out of them.”

When we were at the convention, we were gone because Carter used to have—you know my best friend, Chick [Sol C.] Chaikin, president of the labor, the garment workers. He and his wife Roz went down to the White House committed to Jimmy Carter. You say to yourself, Chick, how can you? “Well,” he says, “he is President and everything,” and that’s what happens. That’s where they use the power.

Knott: Right, right.

Dowd: And most guys, when they’re, especially their wives, go to the White House for dinner with the President, they were all over.

Knott: That's an unforgettable event. Don, why do you think Ted challenged Jimmy Carter? That was a high-risk thing to do and—

Dowd: I think he is surrounded in Washington by a lot of people who don't know Ted Kennedy, how he—this guy used to do 17, 18 stops in a day in Massachusetts. They see him on the worldwide, all over the country as the big star. It's like everything else, like Howard Dean is trying to do. We've got to get back to the grass roots, the people. Karl Rove did it in Ohio, and we didn't do it. We got all these big ads and it doesn't work that way. So I think that they felt as though everybody wanted—

Senator [Daniel Patrick] Moynihan and Hugh Carey went up to the Special Olympics up in New York State. Pleaded with them to get into the race. The polls showed that he was this way and that way, but the power of the Presidency, you can do a lot of things that nobody knows about that you're building up. And up in New Hampshire, I remember in the Holiday Inn, his Washington staff were telling him, get out, you're going to get embarrassed. It's not going good up here.

Knott: Really?

Dowd: And his sister, Eunice, says to him, "Ted, you be a man, you stay in there. You're in there now." And he listened to her, who is a great influence on Ted, and he stayed and we did fundraisers in Sacramento, California, at the end of the campaign, for \$5,000. He couldn't believe it. But like a star, he stayed in there, and his speech at the Democratic Convention was the best one.

Knott: It blew the place away.

Dowd: Yes, blew the place—it's history. I mean, it was a great speech.

Knott: Right, right.

Dowd: But in the meantime—

Knott: Do you think he disliked Jimmy Carter? I mean, he just didn't like him, or did you ever pick up any of that?

Dowd: Well, he just thought he wasn't confident. Jimmy Carter was an intellect, but he wasn't a day-to-day politician and that's the difference. I mean, you get these guys who didn't come from Harvard. I remember we had a guy working at the commission from MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology]. He was brilliant. I watched him one day, and it took him 15 minutes to cross the street in Boston. And he ends up, believe me, in the White House working for Carter on nuclear bombs. I'm saying to myself, I just can't believe—this guy, I was watching from the window and he just didn't know how to get across the street. And, this is the funny thing, but you see, some people are really intelligent but they just don't know everyday living and all that stuff.

Another thing in '72 was that I had the misfortune of saying to Ted, "The Massachusetts Special Olympics should be the best one in the country, and each state has their own organization." He said, "Will you help Eunice?" So I go down and tell Eunice I'm going to help her. There was a group of people in Taunton that were just doing a little Special Olympics and she wants it moved to Boston. It was like the Civil War, going back to the people in Taunton saying we're going to move it to Boston. *[laughter]*

But Wendy Minor, who worked for Lt. Governor Tom O'Neill in Boston, MA, got us an office in the Park Plaza Building, Saunders people. All we had to do is pay for the lights. Eddie Martin and I got involved and we had a Board of Directors. I became the president, and I was president for seven years. I hired Ken Hodge from the [Boston] Bruins and we started flying. We ended up in the black and he stayed with us 12 years. I was president seven years and then I said let somebody else carry the ball. I enjoyed that. I just think that she does a marvelous job.

Knott: Eunice, yes.

Dowd: Oh, she should be Nobel Prize.

Knott: Yes, right.

Dowd: Yes really, she should. So after the '80 campaign, Eddie and I ran the '82 campaign. I did the field. Eddie was the director and I really enjoyed that. I still say, if I had to go out to Ted Kennedy today, I just have that upbeat—I love it. I know what he does and what he does for people, and how people get excited about him.

Knott: Sure.

Dowd: So, from the '82, I went with Coca-Cola. Of course, I had the greatest job in the world at Coca-Cola because Government Affairs, I worked for Congress and the State House and everything. I had the opportunity to introduce Ted Kennedy at Coca-Cola in Atlanta. My boss, Earl Leonard, said, "Will you introduce him?" So I'm saying to myself, these stiff up here would never vote for him in a—they're all Republicans, and I said what am I going to talk—

Knott: The corporate Coke guys.

Dowd: Yes. There's 300 of them in the audience and I'm saying they don't—so I said, "OK, I'm going to give them a little Ted Kennedy, what I know about Ted Kennedy, why I'm a Ted Kennedy loyalist." I started to say, "Look, here's the reason why I got involved with Senator Kennedy, because I believe in what he believes in. I like what he says. I like his concern about the people. I want to tell you about this man. He basically is the leader of his family. He's got a mother that he goes to see every weekend. He has sisters that he cares about, he's got 17 of his brothers' and his own children that he takes care of. He's at their weddings, he's at their baptisms. He's at their first communions. And he doesn't miss a beat and he's a father to all of them."

What I'm trying to stress is, these guys in the audience, if they had the same responsibility, how would they live up to it? I was trying to make him humanized by saying, hey this guy just doesn't sit down—I mean he's got everything going with his family. So it went over pretty good. At least Ted liked it.

Knott: Right, right.

Dowd: And you try to—you read the newspapers and they don't write about the real Ted Kennedy.

Knott: You get a caricature.

Dowd: Yes. They don't read about what good he does. And how he's always—I just told him the other night. He called here and I said, "Ted, I watch your Emerson theater, Emerson College." They have—He has people on from the state and different issues—

Knott: Oh right, yes.

Dowd: —education or labor or whatever. I said, "You had a young man on that I was so impressed with." He said, "I know the kid you're talking about." This kid, his family are immigrants and he was going out working to basically take care of his family. The kid was about 15. I said, "Ted, what an inspiration he was." He remembered him. I said, "Boy, that program is good because you're touching ordinary people, and people don't realize what they're out there doing and what category."

After the '82, of course we got into the—let me tell you one story about the '78 before we get into dedication. We had the worst snowstorm, remember, in the East?

Knott: The blizzard of '78.

Dowd: The blizzard of '78. Ted Kennedy and Ed Brooke—I don't know if Eddie told you this, Eddie Martin, Ted Kennedy, and I came up from Washington with Ed Brooke. Eddie Martin and I went out to the airport with a state trooper to pick him up. We come back and we drop Ed Brooke off at the Federal Building, and we went over to Revere to see the people who were out of their homes, whether they was flooded or what, and we stayed there and we went down to Hull to see the people down there in the school. We had dinner with the people down there in the school. During the course of the dinner, Ted has a phone call. So he goes to the phone, he comes out and he says, "Don, that was Ethel. Kerry Kennedy broke her leg. She goes to Brown and she broke her leg, and Ethel asked me to go down there." I said, "Ted, we're lucky to get back to Boston, never mind going to—" He said, "I've got to go."

Knott: Go down to Providence.

Dowd: Yes. So I said OK. There was a guy by the name of Ed Pringle out of North Adams, we used to use his airplane. I called Ed up and I said we need a plane. He said, "Geez, Don. It's in getting overhauled and everything but there's a guy in Great Barrington who has an airplane. Let

me call him, where are you?" I gave him the number. So he called me back and he said, "Yes, you can have the plane but you've got to get us into Logan, there's only one runway open."

So I called Bobby Cunningham with Public Safety. I said, "Bobby, you've got to do us a favor. We've got to get in to Logan Airport tonight." He said, "OK, let me check on it." He comes back and he says, "Come in at 11:00 at night." Then I called Governor Joe [John Joseph] Garrahy's office in Providence, Rhode Island, and I said, "Joe, Ted Kennedy's going down there, can you help us get to this hospital?" He said, "I'll have the helicopter there."

So, we go back, Eddie and I. We got back to the headquarters where Dukakis is in, with his sweater on and everything. Then we go down to the Parker House and just get a drink. We go out to the airport and Ted's ribbing me saying, "That plane's not going to come in tonight." I said, "The guy's going to come in." Bingo. At 11:00 the guy comes in. Ted Kennedy gets on that plane at 11:00, 11:10, flies to Providence. Joe Garrahy picks him up and takes him to the hospital.

He stayed there until 4:00 in the morning, with Kerry Kennedy, then he did the reverse back to the Green Airport, back to Boston, got one hour of sleep, and then he's down to Quincy to see the people who lost their homes. Most people in the world would never know what Ted Kennedy did that night. Just because his sister-in-law—that's how devoted they are to each other.

So then, we come to the dedication of the Kennedy Library. We're all at a meeting and Dan Fenn and Angelique [Lee] are telling what it's going to be and all that stuff.

Knott: How the ceremony is going to go?

Dowd: Well, the whole thing they're planning. And Ted and Steve Smith are shaking their heads, this thing's not going to fly. So they called me out in the office. They said, "Don, will you take this over? We'll talk to Angelique." So I said OK. I went back in the room and Steve called me out and he said, "Angelique doesn't want to get off." I said, "Look, Angelique is my friend. I'll work with her. We can do the dedication."

So, like everything else, I surrounded myself with people that I can rely on. They were all Kennedy—Don Steele, Ben Smith, Bill Hartigan, Tommy Costin. These were people who were always Kennedy supporters. Then I got all the people from Waltham, who worked nine months on that, and working together but—

Knott: Yes, I know.

Dowd: —Ted had this great idea about having a family picnic for the opening. We said we don't even know how many people he's talking about. So Angelique knew this woman who was down in Disney World, Florida, and she called her and said, "We've got a problem. We've got this dedication and Ted wants a big picnic and people." She said, "I want you to call this fellow in New York, Bob Jani. He worked for Walt Disney in California. He's reopening Radio City Music Hall."

So I called him up and I said, “Bob, we’ve got a problem over here. We don’t know what to plan. This thing is good. Would you come up? We don’t even know where to have the dinner.” So he said, “I’ll be up.” He came up on a Sunday. I took him over to the library and I said, “We can’t fit all the people we want in the pavilion for this big dinner, black tie and all that stuff.” So he went down the stairs and he said, “Let’s put them with the exhibits,” which we did.

Knott: Yes, right. I’d forgotten that.

Dowd: And we had all the tables around the exhibits. So he says to me, “Here’s what you have to do.” Oh, I love the guy. He says, “You’ve got to park them. You’ve got to transport them. You’ve got to seat them, and you’ve got to feed them.” That’s fine. So Anthony was going to do the dinner on a Friday night.

Knott: From Anthony’s Pier 4?

Dowd: Yes. Anthony Athanas. Paul Kirk called me and he said, “Don, is Anthony union?” This was ’79. He said, “Ted may run for the Presidency.” I said, “I don’t know, I’ll go over and ask him.” I went over to Anthony and I said, “Anthony, are you really unionized?” He said, “I’ve got something better than the union. I’ve got my own system.” I said, “Anthony, you didn’t answer my question. If we have a big thing at the Kennedy Library and they don’t have a union caterer.” So he said, “I still want to do the dinner. I still want to do the entrée.” I said OK. So we go down and we get Hart Catering down in Randolph. They’re going to do the salads and the dessert, and Anthony’s shipping down the entrée.

Knott: The nonunionized entrée.

Dowd: Yes. So we get down there and we’ve got 500 people coming down the exhibits, and I’ve got Anthony with Ted Kennedy and Mrs. [Lady Bird] Johnson, Jacqueline Kennedy, at their table because that food came to \$14,000. Then we find out that they can’t hold the entrées in the small kitchen at the Kennedy Library. So the night of the dinner, we have Hart—they’ve got the entrées in these heating plates, and we have a police escort coming from Randolph to the Kennedy Library with the entrées for this big dinner. So we pull that off and we basically—Bob Jani, he had the people parking in South Boston. We had girls on the busses giving out the programs.

We had no VIP [very important person] seating. Mrs. Murphy was sitting next to Walter Cronkite. No VIPs. We had 7,400 people. We had the tents all along the side there and the Hart Brothers were going to dish out the boxed lunches. People were going back to their seats and they had the lunches. Then we had the program, we had the Boston Pops and we had Joe Kennedy giving that speech and it went off beautifully.

Knott: And he ripped into President Carter.

Dowd: Yes. And then at 2:00 we opened up the library and it just went off [*claps hands twice*]. Steve used to—I used to go down to his house in New York and Bob used to come over. Jani and Steve and I, we’d have a little breakfast and Steve used to complain because this guy’s got all

kinds of cologne on. I said, “Steve, he’s in showbiz. I mean, he’s not, you know. Will you stop it? He’s good.” Steve said, “I can’t stand him.”

Anyway, Steve said, “Don, we’ve spent too much money we’ve got to see if we can take off on the bill from Bob Jani.” I had to go over to Radio City [Music] Hall. Bob was up in this big office, great guy, and he was strictly showbiz. I said, “We’re running over. Can you help us at all?” He took \$8,000 off this bill.

Knott: Wow.

Dowd: Eight thousand dollars like that and he opened Radio City, got it started and everything. He passed away a few years down the road and I wrote to his wife. I said your husband was unique. He had a touch of class. He knew just exactly—even at that dedication dinner, we had the glasses with the name of the event, the time, in the velvet bag. He gave these to each person there. It was just so classy. Each person left, took their own glass. Bob had a way about him that he was just a—

Knott: October 19, that was the night before the dinner. [*reading from the glass*]

Dowd: Oh, he was great, and he pulled off Radio City. He used to do the fireworks for Walt Disney in California. In 1980, when Ronald Reagan was elected President, Bob Jani did the fireworks for Ronald Reagan—

Knott: Did he? Yes.

Dowd: —both times. He was an amazing and just a nice guy, and well mannered. I wrote his wife and I said you should be so proud of this guy because he had such class and everything.

The year before, I was with the New England Governors, and Mike Dukakis asked me to coordinate the National Governors’ Conference in Boston, 1,000 people. So the year before, I went to Detroit to see what they did. They had the National Governors, and they had this big banquet with about 2,000 people out for the Governors. I said I really don’t want to do it that way when they come to Boston. These Governors never get a chance to be together alone.

We had the Sheraton Boston as the highlight of the—we had the six states involved in this. I formulated a group, my guys that I could trust and everything. And no limousines. I said they’re going to travel by bus. We’re not going to have 50 limousines roaming around Boston. So what I did is we had an event at Sheraton Boston, but I had the Governors go to Anthony’s Pier 4, in that room on the side, like a terrace.

Knott: Yes, right.

Dowd: For them and their wives, I had a little music and they had an opportunity to chat with one another rather than the big crowds. We had a schedule for the women and all that stuff. It really worked out well. It was a good experience.

Then I got in the next year with the dedication. Surrounded myself with good guys and everything. Then that was getting into the—they announced in '80. Senator Kennedy spoke at the NGA on health issues.

And then I helped Patrick [Kennedy]. I helped Joe in their campaigns running for—Joe ran for Congress and Patrick ran for State Rep. I took Patrick on camping trips and everything. He was just like a—I remember giving him money for his fish tank and—

Knott: Money for his what?

Dowd: Fish tank. He had when he was a kid. Ted loves him so much, and one thing about Ted, he's a good father. Oh, he's great.

Knott: Yes, we've heard this.

Dowd: Great father and he really had some tough times with his kids as far as health and everything. And he was there, and people don't know that. Young Teddy with his you know and Patrick with his asthma. You know he used to carry it. Now Kara had a little cancer problem. You'd never know that because he doesn't really open up.

But I remember one night at the Parker House. We're sitting there. We did a function in town and he and I are sitting in the Parker House and he made me feel good—embarrassed me actually. He said, "You know, Don, everything I ever asked you to do, you did well. My kids love you." I said, "Geez, Ted."

Knott: Wow. When did he say that to you, Don? Any idea when that might have been? Around what time that would have been?

Dowd: Well, I would say I was with Coca-Cola and we did a Hands across America. And we had a function at the Boston Common and he came up and he participated. Senator Kennedy marched as a favor to me. Made all the papers. I'd say it was in '86 or so.

Knott: Mid '80s, yes.

Dowd: But he really, it made me feel good.

Knott: Sure.

Dowd: But it was a little embarrassing because I'd do things for him today. But he's that type of guy.

Knott: Do you hear from him a lot, Don?

Dowd: I do, but I don't bother him unless it's something important because he's so busy. There's so many people lugging at him and picking at him.

Knott: Sure, sure.

Dowd: Unless I really have to, but he's—since Debbie, my daughter. He'd come up and spend an hour there with his wife Vicki, and he knew Debbie and Phoebe. He calls me to see how I'm doing and everything, but I understand his life. As I said in the speech, his own family, his sister Pat [Kennedy Lawford] is not well. She could—you just don't—he's got so much going for him.

Knott: Sure.

Dowd: But in 1994, when we ran against [Mitt] Romney, I worked with Michael Kennedy months before we even got started on the campaign, trying to get him out to different people and everything. I got a call from Rory Kennedy and she said, "Don, I want to take my nieces and nephews on a camping trip like you took me." I said, "Rory, we're running for our life. We're on the ropes with Romney. I'd love to, Rory, but we can't. This is bad." So that campaign—I always said that when Ted went to Faneuil Hall and had that debate, he was the old Ted Kennedy, and he basically just—

Knott: That turned it around.

Dowd: Oh yes, yes.

Knott: Was he really in trouble, Don? I mean was he really in personal trouble? I've often wondered.

Dowd: Well, I think the media.

Knott: That's what I was wondering.

Dowd: The media was building him up. They wanted to give him a tickle. They love him but they like to give him a tickle. Romney was an empty suit, like he is today. He's very attractive.

Knott: Yes.

Dowd: You just—perception. The media, the way they put you on television and everything, and I remember—Eddie won't admit it, but when we did the Faneuil Hall thing, Eddie knew the guy who was the janitor over at Faneuil Hall, and he had him turn the air conditioning on three days before the debate. Didn't want a Richard Nixon.

Knott: Right. *[laughs]*

Dowd: And we had changed the podium. It made Ted a little smaller, and we made it a little bigger. So Ted wouldn't, and nobody—that's the way you do things.

Knott: You changed the podium so that the Senator would look bigger, is that what you're saying?

Swerdlow: No, smaller.

Knott: Smaller.

Dowd: No, no, smaller.

Knott: Because of his weight problem.

Dowd: Yes, and you make him look good. We changed the podium. Yes, so it's those things. So in '95 I had to take Rory Kennedy and her nieces and nephew back to the Berkshires. The same thing. And I'm saying if she enjoyed that so much, that must have made an impact on her, which it did. And we did that and she—

One thing about Ted Kennedy that I remember, he's got a great memory. Great memory. In 1980 we had a clambake down at the compound and we had a gentleman by the name of Martin Harmon from Sacramento, California. He came all the way from California to the clambake. Ted Kennedy called me in 2000, 20 years later, and wanted to know the guy's name who came from Sacramento to Cape Cod to the clambake because he was going out to San Francisco and he wanted to invite him to the fundraiser. I said, "You've got to be kidding me, 20 years later." I got the guy's name for him, Martin Harmon, and he showed up.

But it's remarkable how he can remember. I've been there. He's very sharp that way.

Knott: The same would be true, for instance, when he'd come out to the western part of the state—he'd remember people and—

Dowd: Oh yes. He'd remember people. He had an awful situation with Eddie Boland, who did a lot of work for him. Never asked him for anything. Boland had a brother-in-law, married his wife's brother, who wanted to be a federal judge. Jack Egan. And there's a difference between Boston and Washington. I mean, in Washington people are very liberal, and a lot of people were telling me around here that Jack Egan wasn't going to get that. I went down to Ted and I said, "Jesus, Ted, Jack Egan, he's very popular. His family has represented the diocese of Springfield for years. He is Eddie Boland's wife's brother." And he said, "Don, the committee says he's a bad candidate."

Knott: The Judiciary Committee?

Dowd: Yes. And I said, "A bad candidate? Christ, he's an outstanding lawyer." Later on I found out that he was pro life and they tucked it to him.

Knott: Oh, geez.

Dowd: So we come out here for—Sister [Mary] Caritas, a very prominent Sister of Providence at Mercy Hospital. Ted loved her, testified down in Washington. She had a retirement party and we go out there, and the Sister, around that time for the Jack Egan thing, and Eddie Boland and his family are at the party, the dinner. Ted gave a speech and he said, "Don, should I go down to see

Eddie Boland?” I said, “Yes, Ted, you deserve to go down and see Eddie Boland.” And he went down to see Eddie Boland and Eddie gives him the fish hook, the handshake. Mary [Boland] barely speaks to him. I said, “Ted, you did the right thing.” I mean that’s—so this thing has turned around. They became friends again.

Mary Boland is a staunch supporter of Ted’s. So they have a statue of Eddie Boland down in Springfield, Main Street, and Ted’s never been there. I said, “Ted, we’ve got to go down there. You’re in Agawam.” Because Mary had asked me, she said, “Do you mind if I have my children there when he comes?” So I said, “Ted, you have to go down there and you’re going to have to meet with these people for 20 minutes. They want to see you. They want to meet you.” Ted’s probably thinking what are they going to throw at me, but they were so nice to him and they—and he’s helped the kids and everything. But it was just a—the committees and the people in Washington filled his mind with, oh this guy’s this, and I said, “Jesus, you get votes up here.”

Knott: Yes.

Dowd: It turned her around and Mary’s a great supporter of Ted Kennedy’s now, but people in Washington don’t know what people up here do. And Ted does. Ted doesn’t forget a thing. Teddy and Kara did the ’88 campaign. I just kind of worked out here and they did a good job. We didn’t have much of a candidate.

Knott: Much of an opponent, yes.

Dowd: And then ’94, Romney. And then 2000— did you know that Jack Robinson was around, and I had to go, I had to testify about phony signatures. Well, turn in the sheet for signatures to get on the ballot.

Knott: Robinson had phony signatures?

Dowd: Oh yes.

Knott: Yes. You had to go testify?

Dowd: Oh yes. Because I found phony signatures, but it was one of our local TV guy’s girlfriend. She was Vietnamese and I went up to the house and I—she signed all of them.

Knott: She was the one signing this?

Dowd: Yes. He called me up, my friend, and he said, “Jesus, Don, this is embarrassing” and everything. So I said, “Jesus, they’re really on this guy’s case. I’ll take it easy on her.” I had to testify but I didn’t really pinpoint her. I don’t even know if he’ll get an opponent the next time. I hope he doesn’t.

Knott: It doesn’t look like it, yes.

Dowd: I hope he doesn't because I think the people of Massachusetts are understanding what he's done. You know, his first campaign, I can do more for Massachusetts, it's true. I mean this guy is on every issue—

Knott: Sure, sure.

Dowd: —everything that goes on, and he's so happy now. Vicki's so good for him and God was good to him when he gave him Vicki and her two children. And with his family and his grandchildren. He's really a happy guy now and he'll go on as long as he can, as long as he's more or less, his health and everything. He's been a credit to Massachusetts, he's been a credit. And no matter how you look at him, the Republicans respect him in the Senate as much as the Democrats.

Knott: Yes, that's right.

Dowd: Orrin Hatch and those people, because he's a nice man. He stands for what he believes in and he's firm on it and he's right on it. People, they need a man like that who's not going to be wishy-washy or anything. Sometimes it may hurt on the decisions, but he believes in what he's talking about and he does research. Boy, there's nobody that gets his issue—

Knott: Does his homework.

Dowd: Oh, in the car, in the morning, we're going to work, these guys are staff. They're bringing him up to date on issues.

Knott: Right. I heard about the famous briefcase that goes home every night stuffed full of—

Dowd: Yes. Give me that, give me that again now, what are you talking? Well, that isn't this, and he'll question, and that's where Vicki comes in. She's a very smart, lawyer you know, and she'll say, "You know, Ted, you know this seems to have a little more to it." Or something like that. Or, "Why don't you...." They're a good combination.

Knott: They are.

Dowd: I feel very happy.

Knott: Yes. We're going to see her parents on Friday, down in Nantucket.

Dowd: Oh, I love the judge. He's been so nice to me, calling me about my daughter.

Knott: Oh really?

Dowd: —Debbie, and he told me that he offered the communion for Debbie at his church in Louisiana. I love the guy, and what I love about him, his personality.

Knott: Is he?

Dowd: He's not a stiff. He's everybody's kind of a guy. He loves to laugh and he's smart. It's different politics down there. It's like Indiana. You get out to Indiana—now it's changed but they have no Civil Service and they know—these people have a different way about them, but they're good people.

Knott: Yes.

Dowd: But we think we know everything up in the East and the West.

Knott: [*laughs*] Yes.

Dowd: And we really don't know this exactly. So it's been 44 great years. I had a lot of—I'd never meet the people that I've met through my life if it wasn't for Ted Kennedy. I never regretted when I left my job to do it because in 1964 a lot of the guys around here wanted me to run for Register of Deeds. Eddie Boland, Matty Ryan, and everything. I took a ride out to the airport with Ted and I said, "Ted, be honest with me. I've got an opportunity to get a six-year job out in the western part of the state. Tell me if—" He said, "No, Don. I don't know what my brother's going to do." Bobby. He said, "Would you stick around?" I said, "That's good enough for me." Bobby was so much a part of him. Jack was a little older and there wasn't that closeness. So they're a good family and nothing put on about them. The father's coat and things like that. I mean they really treasure that.

I'll never forget, we had a big dinner out here for the four counties for the Kennedy Library. They were over in Springfield, MA, and Mrs. Kennedy came out, Rose. Bobby Fitz [Robert P. Fitzgerald] drove her out and she slept coming out, but she still was kind of tired. She pulled up to the hotel and we got her a suite. Maureen Maher from Amherst, MA, was with me and Maureen was a Kennedy worker, volunteer and everything. Very, very good. And Mrs. Kennedy says now, 5:30 at night, will you send this dress out to them? I want to get it pressed. I'm saying to myself, 5:30 at night. So I said, "Maureen, we've got to do tricks." So I went to the next room we had and I turned the steam on, got her dress up there, hung it up, and turned the steam on and it came out beautiful. So I brought it in to Mrs. Kennedy. I said "Here's your—" "Oh, lovely!" [*laughter*]

We were up in Williamstown one time and we were on the campaign trail and Christ, Ted looked like he slept in his suit. So I said, "Give me your pants." He said, "What do you want my pants for?" I said I want to get them pressed. He said, "You can't get—" We're in the hotel, the Williamstown Inn. I said every hotel has an iron, they have an ironing board. So I take them, I go down, have Tony Marcella. He's pressing them and everything. I bring them back and Ted says, "How did you do that?" They never had to do that. I explained to him. He says, "I'm going to have that done every night with you guys."

But you see, somebody is always doing something for him.

Knott: Right. Well thanks, Don. This has been great. By the way, you were very great to me and I'm extremely grateful for that.

Dowd: Well, you were a good—you did everything that—

Knott: I was your Paxton coordinator, right.

Dowd: That came up because for some reason, Donna Smerlas told Barbara that you were a Republican.

Knott: *[laughs]*

Dowd: I said get out of here. I says, for Christ's sake, Donna, he was our coordinator out there in Boston.

Knott: I was your Paxton coordinator and I was the Assumption College coordinator for Kenny O'Donnell.

Dowd: Yes.

Knott: That's right.

[phone calls ends interview]

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