EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH KILVERT DUN GIFFORD

July 13, 2005
Boston, Massachusetts

Interviewer

Stephen F. Knott

Index: page 31

EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEW WITH KILVERT DUN GIFFORD

July 13, 2005

Knott: I'll start by asking you what your first connections were with the Kennedy family, either with Edward Kennedy or Robert Kennedy, how that all began for you.

Gifford: We were not in the same class at Harvard. Ted's older than I am; he graduated in '54 and I graduated in 1960, but we had mutual friends and had Nantucket Sound and sailing and races in common. We weren't friendly at college, he was older and graduated before I entered. So, we didn't know each other. We were both members of the same with club at Harvard, and when he came back for football games or whatever we had mutual friends and I got to know him there a little bit.

I worked in the summer of 1965 for Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island as a legislative intern; I was at law school then. Claiborne Pell was a friend of the Kennedys—they were Senators from Rhode Island, New York, and Massachusetts respectively. Senator Pell was a notorious tightwad even though he came from a very wealthy family. The two brothers kidded him all the time about him wearing his father's shoes; his father's shoes were a couple of sizes bigger, so you could hear the newspaper in the toes crinkle when Claiborne walked. It was quite the joke. But they were great friends. Being a tightwad, Senator Pell was always trying to hitch a ride on Fridays, leaving Washington on the *Caroline*, the Kennedy family plane, which they then operated. The plane took him to Hyannis with them, and his wife Nuella drove from Newport to pick him up. Imagine! A free trip! Because I was on my way to Nantucket, just across from Hyannis, I don't know, a half a dozen weekends I got round-tripped on it with all of them. It was just one of those wonderful things.

I had no idea then that I was going to end up in Washington after law school. I hadn't planned to; I'd planned to stay in Boston and be a lawyer because I was then in law school. So I flew around in the *Caroline*—I don't know how many weekends it was—with Claiborne and with Bobby and Teddy and whatever gang of people was going on that thing. It was very convivial. It wasn't structured or anything. They were a lot of fun. Everybody was joking around and teasing everybody else, you know the way they are. It was just wonderful.

When I was graduating from of law school, a professor I'd done some work for (I had a young family, I needed some money, so I was doing some research work for him) was nominated by

President [Lyndon] Johnson to be an Assistant Secretary of what was then the brand new Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD. I had done research work for him and Bob Wood, then an MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] professor, who were putting urban development legislation together for Johnson. Bob was HUD's Undersecretary, and Robert Weaver was the Secretary. In that year, part of the research work I'd done was for his legislation, which became the Model Cities Act. It had a 78-syllable formal title of course—your Metropolitan and Urban Development Act, or something like that. I had done work for this task force and flown Robert around on private jet planes (a big deal in 1965) to go and meet with people that Johnson wanted professors Wood and [Charles] Haar to meet. So I was their staff person, more or less, even though I was still a law student. Then when Charlie and Bob went down to Washington as Assistant Secretary and Under Secretary, respectively, of the new Housing and Urban Development Department, they asked me to come down.

Knott: This is Charlie Haar?

Gifford: Charlie Haar and Robert C. Wood.

Knott: We're going to see Charlie Haar tomorrow.

Gifford: Are you? Good. Tell him hello. We were tight as ticks. And Robert Wood, who was an Assistant Secretary, is now dead, sadly.

I went down with Charlie and was his special assistant in the department as it was getting organized. There had never been one before, and it was just setting up. We were located on 17th Street and K Street, 1620 K Street. That was it. I told my law firm here in Boston that I was taking a leave to go to work in the government. That was also the summer of the urban ghetto riots and Congressional hearings. Lyndon Johnson and Bobby Kennedy struck major sparks over that issue, and their feud was intense. Because we were the HUD, (even though the department hadn't even gotten its phone numbers straight yet), we were thrown into all that intensity. I was up on Capitol Hill a lot at the hearings, taking notes and making memos to send back downtown.

During those weeks I saw Bobby and I saw Teddy a lot, and I saw others, too. I knew Senator John Culver, for example, and Senator John Tunney. I got to be very friendly with Bobby Kennedy's legislative assistants then, Adam Wolinsky and Peter Edelman, who handled urban issues for Bobby. I was on the other side of the fence, of course, in effect a White House man. But we got along with each other in those days, we really did. It wasn't like it is now today (2006), poison and vitriol; they seem to hate each other now. It was a very different atmosphere in the 1960s, notwithstanding the Kennedy-Johnson feud. All the staff people hung out together, for example. We all had jobs to do, which was to take notes, get memos, get speeches, get information. So we all were trying to figure out what each other was going to do, and take that intelligence down to our respective bosses.

Then one day Adam and Peter asked me if I'd come talk to Bobby, and I thought, Geez, if this gets around, I'm dead meat downtown. I'll be out of there. I'll be in the Army or Navy again—I had been in the Navy—or back in that law firm. But I went to see him anyway, as they urged,

because it was, *Why not? I know him.* I wasn't worried about talking to him. I was just scared that I'd get bagged.

Bobby talked to me about his Bedford-Stuyvesant project, in the Brooklyn slums. Would I be interested in working on it, or going up to be head of it? I had two little kids then and I thought, I don't think so. I was worried about stability—

Knott: Sure.

Gifford: I knew we wanted to have more babies. So I said no, after reflecting on it and talking to friends. In hindsight it was the right thing for me. In another sense, I'd wished I'd done it, just to be part of that struggle, but I didn't. Then Bobby said, "How'd you like to work for Teddy?" I thought, *What? Work for Teddy?* So that's how it started. Then the string played out, and I ended up going to work for him after I spent some time talking to Teddy and his chief aide Dave Burke and some of the others who were in his office.

Knott: But you already sort of knew him from these plane flights.

Gifford: Yes, I knew him. It wasn't a question of that; it was just a question of, did I want to: it wasn't on my radar. I knew that if you go work in the government in something, a specialty like urban affairs, and you go back to a law firm, you come in with at least some contacts and knowledge and you're not just some youngster straight out of a law school library walking into a law firm. I thought that Capitol Hill would be a benefit, and so did the law firm.

I took the job. I asked my father and mother about it. I asked other people. My dad and mother were Republicans. They were in Florida where they retired, and I said, "I've got to come down and talk to you about a job." My father said, "You're not going to get another job? You just got one." He was funny. I said, "I've got to talk to you about it, Dad." He said, "Well, what is it?" I said, "I'm not sure I want to tell you until I get down there." So he said, "Then I'm not going to talk to you. I need time to think about it." So I told him it was going to work for Senator Kennedy and there was a little bit of a silence. He said, "Come on down. You'd better come down. We have to talk about this."

So down I went. I got there on a Friday night. He picked me up at the airport and said, "We've got a great fishing trip tomorrow. We're going fishing, just you and me, with a guide." We were down at the Keys. We were going to go up to near the Everglades for some terrific snook fishing. I said, "Great, great," thinking he didn't want to talk to me about it in front of mother. He wants to talk about it man-to-man on the boat. Okay.

Off we went, got sunburned and hot. Not a word. Dinner, not a word. I thought, *Oh man, I've got to get on a plane at noon time tomorrow. What is this?*

So over breakfast I said, "Dad, we have to talk about this." He said, "We do, we do." I said, "Obviously I want your support for this. It's a big step for me and I need to know what you think about it." He said, "Well, you know what I think of Democrats." I said, "I do know what you think about Democrats, but I worked for Lyndon Johnson and you thought that was a good idea,

through the HUD, Housing and Urban Development." He said, "Yes, I know, they're all Democrats too." I said, "They are, Dad. Yes they are. But I need to know, I want to know what you think. I want to take the job and I think it's an exciting thing to do and it's a great place to be and I want to do it." He said, "Well, let's just put politics aside." I said, "All right, I'll do that. What comes next?" He said, "You'll meet a million important people. Go take the job." That was it.

Knott: Wow.

Gifford: That was it. So I felt good about it all. You want to have your family with you if you can. Then I showed up there and it was—I had come in from being with Bobby and people knew I knew them outside the office, the brothers. So it was a little bit tricky at first. It really was. I sort of knew it would be. I was very friendly with Bobby's legislative assistants, Adam and Peter.

Knott: That was the trickiness?

Gifford: I wasn't a direct hire, it was a lateral transfer, Bobby's man, and all that stuff. I didn't know my ass from my elbow about the legislative process, to be honest with you. So I had a rough start. The idea with those Kennedys is they just put you in the pot and then set the water on high heat to see how you do. Teddy said, "Your first project is we're going to reform the military draft, and you're going to do it for us." "Great, great, I was in the service." He said, "That's why I want you to do it. At least you know something. The rest of these people up here are all on deferments. You and me, we served and we're going to figure this out." That's the way the Kennedys are. They're wonderful. They make you feel like you're part of the decision and you're all in this together. It's a team and you're a member.

So I was all enthusiastic and I stayed up one night and wrote a speech that he was going to give on the Senate floor. I brought it in and gave it to him. The way the Senate office was then set up—imagine the Senator's office, big, very big, with a very big desk. There was a connecting door to the crowded office that the legislative staff was packed into, and through this door was my desk. So Ted and I could see each other when it was open. But I didn't want to see who he was with, and he didn't want me to see who he was with. I didn't want him see us raising hell in the office where we were all packed in like sardines. Worse, everybody smoked in those days. It was awful. Everybody smoked, me included. You couldn't even see.

So I gave him the speech about the military draft and about an hour later he opened the door and said, "Come in here." I went in and I thought, *Oh, great, great*. He said, "This is really awful. I couldn't give this speech. This is really bad." I thought, *Well, it's going to be a short life up here on Capitol Hill. This isn't going to take long*. He said, "I want you to go downtown and talk to Milton Gwirtzman." He was here before me. "Ask him for help."

I said, *Oh, boy*. Pouring rain. So off I went. I really had been up most of the night. I was exhausted. I went down to see Milton, gave it to him, he read it and he said, "This really sucks. This is terrible. You can't do this to a Senator." I thought, *What's wrong? Help me out. Don't tell*

me how stupid—just help me out, guys. He said, "You don't have a five-point program." I thought, *Oh well, okay, at least that's an answer*. He said, "We've got to work one out."

Milton and I sat down there, and he'd done some of the research on the draft before he'd gone off to be a lawyer, and he'd written speeches that Teddy loved. Milton coached me through it, he really did. He was just wonderful. I went back and redid the whole thing and figured out, talking to people, what some of the hot buttons were, and what needed to be done, and the civil rights angle—southern draft boards were all white. I figured out from talking to Bobby's people that this was really a key button for the whole thing because none of the Selective Service Boards in the South were integrated. So there was that fairness issue, so powerful in America. And it touched on Vietnam—college kids got deferments, working kids went to war.

Ted got people like Burke Marshall involved, as you probably remember from the research and reading about it, and we ended up with a kind of advisory group that put a book together. That drove the executive branch to respond—Johnson futzed around about it, but when [Richard] Nixon was elected, the volunteer army was the response he came up with to keep his southern base calm. But anyway, it was a very good and very important issue.

I learned quickly what the needs of the job were; it's easy to understand the life of a legislative assistant. There are bills that are proposed and debated in committees and then come up on the floor of the Senate and somebody has to keep track of them, and it can't be just one person so you have a legislative staff. This is a kind of mechanical and repetitive piece that absolutely must be managed.

Then there's the interaction with the other side of the office where the Senator wants to have a program to help employees of the Holyoke Power Company that's going out of business, and nobody is going to have jobs or cheap electricity anymore because it's all going to be nuclear power instead of water power, and a million crazy issues like that.

The first one for me was when he came back one day from a swing through Massachusetts—this is really near the beginning of my time there, too—and he said, "You know, we've got the first steel-making" —or iron-making, or whatever it was— "place in the whole United States up there," near Saugus. I said, "What are you talking about? We don't make steel in Massachusetts." He said, "We did, we did. We were the first ones. We want to make a national site or national park or something out of that place." I said, "What is it?" He said, "Just figure it out."

So, by God, we now have a national historical site up there, Saugus Iron Works National Historical Site. In Saugus, by God, there was some iron ore, not much, but some, and the settlers found it and they made iron back in 1787 or 1842 or whatever it was. We got the bill through the Congress, and that's the first bill that I actually wrote that went all the way through. It was thrilling for a kid like me. I was just excited. An iron mill in Massachusetts? You think, *What is with these people?* But he was dead right and the unions loved it, the towns loved it, the people loved it, the state loved it. Federal money for a park? Guys with their Smokey Bear hats? And I love it to this day when I drive by the signs for it on Route 95.

So that's the kind of life it is—you go from an issue like that at one extreme, all the way to something like reforming the military selective service system on the other. I just loved that part of the job. I loved that part of it more than anything. It was so human. You're dealing with everything and everybody.

Knott: How engaged would Ted Kennedy be with these issues that you were working on? I guess I'm trying to get a sense of how it worked between the two of you. Were you pretty much just given a mandate, "We want to do this park in Saugus. Go for it"? Or would you keep him apprised of what you were doing?

Gifford: Well, you break it into two parts. One part was our responsibility as research assistants on substantive issues relating to the legislative process. That meant we had to figure out what the bills from other Senator's offices were all about, and from the White House, too.

Knott: I see.

Gifford: We had to be a constant liaison with them, the Senators that we were all together with, and even the ones that we weren't. But, you know, that's part of the job, so that when the Senate bell rings for a vote and you're racing down the steps into the little trolley, the subway, and the Senators are all asking their aides, "What the hell is this bill all about? What are the issues?" You have to know the answers.

Knott: That's true, okay.

Gifford: That's a key piece of the job when the Senate is in session. There's another piece of it, which I started to say was research, and that's like the example of the Selective Service System. What is going on? Who is doing what? Anybody? Anything happening? You have to go find out from the Armed Services Committee people. What's going on? Any hearings? You have any prior history on this issue? Anybody doing stuff? You need to be friends with other staff people at that level to get this done quickly and accurately.

There are a number of different levels—the committee staffs, the personal staffs, the office staffs, and then levels within those. Yes, you do research. You do everything. You really do everything. Or, the Senator has to go up to his or her state—he says, "Gee, I'm going to Holyoke. Is there anything in the pipeline about Holyoke? What are the reps doing, the House members doing, about Holyoke? Any bills pending? What can we do?" So you race around and get memos pulled together for him.

The most amazing thing about him that I can think of is that every night, when we were all there in the Senate office together, "the briefcase would close." I'm sure you've heard this already. You would find out from Angelique [Voutselas], or whoever was doing it, what time he was leaving the office, because that's the deadline. That's it. If you don't get your memos into his briefcase, they aren't going to be done that night. So you see him sitting on that briefcase to close it, trying to snap it closed before he left. It's stuffed full of memos and files and articles and all this stuff. But no matter what he was doing that night, that stuff came back read, or noticed, in the morning.

Knott: Even if he had a social event that night?

Gifford: Even if he was raising hell, or working at home, or having a family dinner. It was an amazing discipline. I've never, ever seen it anywhere else. Sometimes it was just a check mark, which meant he looked at it and it was either not interesting or on hold. Oftentimes three or four pages were all annotated and scribbled on. Sometimes it was just, "See me," and that meant he wanted to talk about it, as opposed to one or the other two things. It really fell into three classes: "Don't bother me with it now," "See me now," or, "Here's what I think, and rewrite it and send it back."

That was a discipline for the whole office. It went for the press office, it went for the admin office, it went for us on the legislative side and it went for the committee staffs. It was awesome. The capacity for that—people don't believe it when you tell them about it. "Yeah, Ted Kennedy, yeah, he's out partying, right?" No, no, he was doing his homework. I don't care what you say he was doing. I know he did his homework because I was there in the morning when he came to work. So that's another thing about his incredible work ethic.

I guess another piece of what we did, which was always important, was he wanted to have a quiet lunch once a week—it was kind of his rule of thumb. Sometimes it was three times, sometimes it was two weeks with nothing—in his office, with somebody. An example was he wanted to talk to Pat [Daniel Patrick] Moynihan. So we worked out a schedule and Pat Moynihan came for lunch. I think maybe Dave and I were there with Pat for a while and then we left, and then the two of them talked alone together. Moynihan was a professor then; he wasn't a Senator.

That was almost always alarming because you think that when the lunch is over, then he's going to come in and say, steaming, "What do you mean you don't know about the legislation that's pending?" You'd go, "Ahhh!" You can't stay ahead of him. He had, as did Bobby, this amazing capacity for work. That's what I loved about him. That's why the job was so rewarding. We were all bright people working for him. We all had really good performance in schools and other places and things. But he worked us hard.

He and I had a lot in common because of the Cape and Nantucket and because I was on the America's Cup one time, a successful defender of the Cup, and he admired that and so did Bobby. Part of the difficulty for me personally was we also had a lot of social friends in common and often went to the same parties, and that was sometimes awkward in the office.

Knott: It was resented in the office?

Gifford: Sure, but it was just one of those things that happens. For example, we did a fundraiser at my house for Cesar Chavez and it was written up in the paper that Ethel [Kennedy] had come, and a number of incidents like that. You go into the office the next morning and you see people looking at you kind of funny. But it's all right. It comes with the turf. I'd been in the Navy by then, and there you learn to get a thick skin.

Knott: Was that an aspect of the job that you liked the least, the office politics? I mean, what about the job did you not like?

Gifford: That's a hard question. I don't know. I loved the job, I loved getting up in the morning and going to work. I loved the travels. But some of the stuff down there, like monitoring the Senate, got a little heavy after a while, the same old stuff. Every year there's an appropriations bill for the Veterans Department. Oh, what should we do for the Veterans Office in Jamaica Plain, outside Boston? So you have to find that out. But that's what the younger guys in the legislative staffs did, like I did when I started. You have to learn the system. The Senator didn't put me on the Saugus thing as an accident. I know he wanted to make me do it. We all needed to learn the ropes.

Another example. There was an historic house down in Plymouth, an ancient house, a beautiful house. It had been literally lived in by William Bradford, or somebody just as important. A formidable social friend of Joan Kennedy's named Muffie Wentworth lived in Plymouth in the summer, and said, "We have to save this house." One thing led to another and the next thing I know we're trying to get HUD, that's it, the Department of Housing, trying to get it designated and thus available for federal rehabilitation funding. It turned out it was the Interior Department; it wasn't HUD. But the long and the short of it was we ended up there in Plymouth on a dreary rainy day dedicating this historic house. Ted had done it. You think, okay, that's a physical piece of something, like Saugus. You feel okay about it. In hindsight I felt good about it. But at the time it was such a nuisance. It wasn't the Defense Department and we weren't rewriting something for the Federal highway system or doing this or that. It wasn't big, it was just nitty-gritty. But you look back and every time I go up and down the highway and see the sign for Saugus Iron Works or the Plymouth Historic District, it makes me smile.

Knott: Sure.

Gifford: Then, of course, we ended up doing the whole Bobby campaign thing too. That was a little later on. The legislative part of the Senate office—I loved it. I really loved it. I loved going to talk with the other Senators' staffs and trying to figure out building coalitions—you know about the anti-ballistic missile, the ABM thing. I quarterbacked that one for Ted and we ended up getting a powerful book written about anti-ballistic missiles by MIT experts. We had almost daily meetings of the like-minded Senate staffs. We had a staff designate from all the Senators who were opposed to it, and kept on trying to talk quietly with the same group on the other side so that—you know, your Senator doesn't want to get into some kind of disaster-crazy mode, way out there on a limb. That was exciting stuff. Then we ended up fighting with Nixon about it, a very big fight. The Nixon Pentagon came out with a reconfigured ABM, called Safeguard, as opposed to Sentinel, and all because a gigantic radar was going to be built in North Andover, and the town didn't want it.

When you're working for a guy with a high energy level and sense of humor like his, most of the time you're exhausted. You've been traveling all over the place because of some phone call from some unnamed person who said, "We've got to do something about this North Adams problem. We're not going to get the missiles built," or, "We're going to get the wrong ones built," or, "We

don't want it." Or whatever it is. Pretty soon it turns into a big issue, a really important one, with major local political impact.

Someone had said to him, "There's a great civil rights issue about the Selective Service draft boards in the South—no black people on them." And you think, *Ooh, that's quite an issue*. That turns into a book by the time you're finished with it, and legislation. And we beat the ABM system, too, and got a book out of that one, too. We didn't do badly.

Knott: Was David Burke the Chief of Staff?

Gifford: Yes he was, and brilliant, a brilliant man, capable and smart. Nothing you could take away from him. He was good to work with. Later on when I was getting ready to go back to Boston, he said, "You going to stay? Go?" "I haven't decided. I don't know." He was great to work with, and we were all a good team. Ted trusted him extraordinarily on things that were important politically. We on the legislative side were supposed to stay out of politics. They were supposed to stay out of legislation. We had to negotiate that gray zone in the middle. That's okay, it's like a marriage. It's clear what some things are and the ones that are murky—you've got to deal with them.

Ted was a good boss. Looking back, there were some great stories. When we were taking the plunge on the draft issue, he said, "We've got to go meet these guys on the Armed Services Committee. We're going to go meet them." I said, "Great. But, like who?" He said, "All the chairmen." I thought, *Oh my God. [James] Eastland? [John] Stennis? Oh my God*. He said, "Don't worry about it. We're going to meet them at ten o'clock."

So we went one morning. I was really apprehensive. I thought they were going to chew us up and we just had to take it like when you get scolded in school or something like that. Not a bit. "Teddy my boy, nice to see you," said Chairman Stennis. He had his staff guy, and Teddy had me. We sat in front of his desk; they sat behind it. Then a bottle of bourbon, tumblers, three or four fingers of bourbon, and it's ten o'clock in the morning. You knew you couldn't ask for coffee. They were charming and funny, Chairman Stennis and his aide. And so was Ted.

They came out of a mold, now broken—they were southern gentlemen, comfortable with their power, and Ted was solicitous but never craven. We drank our bourbon for an hour, the four of us, and Ted made much of the fact that I'd served three years in the Navy. Walking back to his office, Ted said that we'd done well, and that the best thing to do now was get a lot of strong Irish tea.

The benefit of meeting staff people under those circumstances was that you could then pick up the phone and call them and you can say, "You know, Senator Kennedy's got this amendment. We're trying to do something for North Adams. Can you give me a hand?" "Well, come on, let's talk about it." And you'd go to lunch with the staff guy. You sit down and you see what you can do. You say, "Well." He says, "I'll go pitch it to my guy, but with the change we just discussed." I say, "I'll see if Ted will take this change, I don't know." And you work it around. But it could never happen unless Ted was willing to go and sit down with these guys, and drink some morning bourbon.

There are times at the other end of the day, down on the Senate floor, trying to get some amendments accepted, like the amendments to the Selective Service laws to try to integrate those draft boards—you think we're going to have the votes on that? Did we think we were going to have the votes on that? Not the first year, no. Not the first year. We lost nearly every damn vote. It's six or seven o'clock at night and you're exhausted and depressed. John Stennis was Chairman, I think, one of those years, and we'd just lost all these votes. We had Wayne Morse and Ernest Gruening, maybe Joe Clark, with us—four votes out of a hundred to get the draft boards integrated. When it was all over, I was sure Ted was going to kick my ass around. Not at all. Not at all. He went over to talk to Stennis. I went over to see the staff guy, because we did work together to tell them what the amendments were and everything, not wanting to spring it on them.

Stennis says, "Let's go have a drink." The staff isn't supposed to go in the Senators' cloakroom but there was nobody else around, so it was two Senators and two staff guys. In we go to the cloakroom and—guess what? We have a couple of pops, bourbon on the rocks, everything's friendly. "Next year," says Stennis, "we'll be right here again, won't we, Ted? You'll be back, won't you?" Ted looks around, "Yes, Mr. Chairman, we'll be back." "That's what I think. We'll be ready for you." And then we drank a toast to that, and the storytelling began, and we had a few more bourbons together.

That's a good way to have it. They must deal with each other. Not like today where they don't even speak to each other. It's poisonous up there on the Hill now.

Knott: So it really was a more civil place back then.

Gifford: Yes, and they got all the work done in five or six months. Then they went back to their states or districts, or stayed in Washington, whatever they wanted to do. There wasn't all that showboating. Maybe there wasn't as much television. I don't know. I don't know how to explain it. I'm just telling you, Teddy was good at this stuff. He was a natural, natural communicator and his colleagues loved him. He teased them, they teased him back. You know how he is. You've been around him enough.

Knott: Can you tell us a little bit about the differences you saw between Robert Kennedy and Ted Kennedy? You knew them both.

Gifford: I did. I worked with them both a lot. Particularly towards the end of his life—Bobby's—I was with him a lot on the campaign. In the Senate it was, you know, Bobby was intense. He was severe on the issues and it came through. It was his nature, it was his way. Teddy was much more of a, "Let's talk it over and let's laugh together a little bit and see what we can work out there." Bobby was, "Let's get the job done." They were different. They were terrific together because of that. They were an A and B, a plus and a minus. You need them both.

There were some times, for example, on the Labor and Public Welfare Committee where—there was a time when [Robert Sargent] Sarge Shriver [Jr.] was involved, he was running the OEO [Office of Economic Opportunity], the poverty program. The meeting was all about authorization

for the programs. They wanted to add a new project, the neighborhood health centers. The man who dreamed it up was Joe English, another intensely committed and persuasive person. It was named Neighborhood Health Centers of the OEO, Office of Economic Opportunity. That's what it was called then, right? The poverty program was the OEO?

Knott: Yes.

Gifford: We were sitting in the Senate hearing room one day. It wasn't even the hearing room; it was like the Senate committees' meeting room. So it must have been like a committee meeting, as opposed to a public hearing, because it was just Senators and staff, both sides. The discussion was, "Can we do this or not?" The Southerners and the Republicans really had worked against it, and the vote breakdown was close. It was about fifty-fifty. You can imagine it's not just Northerners and Southerners, or just Republicans and Democrats. Where on that scale do you put [Charles H.] Chuck Percy? Everybody understood that poor people in Chicago didn't have health centers, and so the question is, what do you do about it?

The Republicans were scared of the poverty program because they knew it had a political side to it, not overtly, but that poor people were coming together and feeling their power. It didn't have to be Democrat or Republican power; it was going to become *political power* if you enabled them to come together around programs and buildings. You're either against that, or you're for that. There's not much middle ground.

So it got very intense. What is the neighborhood health center going to be? It's going to be a place where they can go and get their babies healthy—and shots and medicine and check-ups if they're pregnant. They don't have any other place to go so this is where they're going to go. "Well, what else are they going to do there? What's this 'Power to the People' business?" All these questions. What's all this about? "Oh, that's nothing to do with our neighborhood health centers." "Yeah? What about this farm workers thing? Are they going to try to unionize the farms?" "Aren't you marching with those people, Bobby?" "Well, yes." "Didn't you go down to Mississippi and hang out with the sharecroppers and say they didn't have any food, and education, lights, no water? Didn't you do that?" "Yes, I'm right too. They don't."

It was amazing. The success of those two brothers working together made it happen. The program was authorized and it got appropriated, and it came right out of that room. Then you had to get it on the House side, but that was easier because of Carl Perkins of Kentucky. He controlled the committees differently. The Southerners had to know what was happening if there were going to be programs to aid sharecroppers, if there were going to be programs to aid the rural poor. They went with it, ultimately, and if they hadn't, it never would have gotten passed.

Some kind of transformation was taking place, and it was the same thing with the draft boards. They had to know there would be black people starting to serve on the white people's draft boards; that black people were not going to be the only ones drafted anymore.

Knott: Sure.

Gifford: They also knew that the change was coming. I'm sure they never said that. We were sure they never said that when they went back campaigning. It happened. I really don't think—Bobby was always talking about his urban constituencies. "New York—Come on, I got this New York in my district. I got these working families. I've got to deal with it. I want to help these people."

The legislation just came together, seamlessly. In terms of the interaction of the two of them, the different personalities, they used the differences effectively. If Bobby was hard and pushy, Teddy was negotiating and teasing and saying, "Let's do it this way," "Let's do it that way." It was very effective, because you've got a flanker on both sides. But that's not to say that Senator Joseph Clark and others on that committee weren't there with them too. They were. I'm not saying it was only the two of them at all. But they were sure the stars of that long, tense morning.

Knott: Sure.

Gifford: But your question is, how did they act together? So there's one example.

Going all the way to the other side, when it came time to figure out the campaign in '68, again, you knew that the two of them had discussions, mostly with Steve Smith, that none of the rest of us could even imagine. It wasn't our business, that's the way I always looked at it. It's not my business. It's their family business. But you sure want to know what's going on. You always want to know what's going to happen. The speeches about the Vietnam War and the slaughters there and the military buildup and the problems with it—all that was swirling right there around us the whole time.

Dave Burke was the one who supervised this for Ted. He was brilliant. He was just good at it. He was able sometimes to temper Teddy. The morning Teddy came in about Hamburger Hill, none of us could stop him. He had seen the story of its senseless slaughter on the TV news in the morning, or read about it in the paper, or heard it on the radio. He came in and that was it. He was going to make that speech. He had won the Army green and I think the needless slaughter of all those young men really moved him. He was *angry*.

Knott: Could you elaborate a little bit on that, what Hamburger Hill was, just for somebody who might be reading this?

Gifford: Hamburger Hill was an incident in the Vietnam War in which our troops, soldiers, were ordered to attack a hill and they did and they got beat back and the commanders said, "Keep going, you're going to take this hill." Hundreds of them got killed, and terribly wounded, mangled, because it was going up a hill against an entrenched force. I don't remember the details, but it was rough. It was all over the news that morning. It was at a time when the liberals on the campuses and in the magazines and the newspapers were saying, "Where the hell are the Democrats on this thing? What's going on with these people?" And Hamburger Hill brought many more people, the fence sitters in the middle, if you will, into the doubt-the-war camp.

But for whatever reason, Teddy came into his office, he came in with a huge head of steam and he said, "I'm going to the floor at noon. I'm taking the lid off this thing. I'm going to do it." We

all went, "Ohhhh, Jesus." He said, "Here's what I want to say." We all pitched in, but Dave did it. Dave kept him from being crazy. But we loved that day, it was one of the best days we ever had in that office. Ted took the gloves off, said the right things. We were thrilled. It helped change the debate, it just did. He was clearly angry and the word got out in the press that Teddy was angry and that meant that Bobby would be right there with him too, and—"Oh my God, they're taking on Lyndon Johnson, head-on, in this thing."

If you look back in the books, you'll see that it really was what [Malcolm] Gladwell calls the "tipping point," a turning point it used to be called. Now it's called tipping point. Two "T" words again—I don't know what the next one—would you like to think of the next one?

Knott: I'll try.

Gifford: Turning, tipping—transforming? That doesn't work. It's the speechwriter in me trying to figure it out.

Knott: That's right.

Gifford: So that was an important moment. I don't remember the date exactly, but it was right around that time and it was almost propulsive—that whole winter of the decision about whether Bobby was going to run or not, that was an element in it. Of course, that loosened up Bobby if you think about it mechanistically. For Teddy to say it then makes it easier for Bobby to come out on Vietnam more strongly, to do whatever he wants to do. And Teddy having served in the army as a soldier—he wasn't behind an office desk. The details of Hamburger Hill are there in the history books, but I remember best the emotional power of him coming into the office. We all knew right away that something had happened and we found out what it was. He was steamed and he was normally in much more control than that, but that was a real insight into his personality.

Knott: Interesting.

Gifford: Other moments that show that same kind of thing—and there are some funny ones. One Sunday in the Spring—I don't remember what year it was, but one of those years—I was kind of hanging around at home with my babies, my kids, and the phone rang and it was Teddy and he said, "You know, I'm going to Albuquerque tonight." I said, "I know, you've got to speak to the National Congress of American Indians," or whatever it was. He said, "Yes, I don't like my speech." I hadn't written it so I didn't mind. I said, "Well, there's not much time left to get it done." He said, "We can do it on the plane." I said, "What?" He said, "We can do it on the plane." I said, "I don't know about what's going on with your Indian Affairs Subcommittee." He said, "I can tell you. We can do it on the plane." I said, "You want me to go out with you, don't you?" He said, "You're going to go out with me. I'll pick you up in half-an-hour."

So he did. On the way in from McLean he stopped in Cleveland Park where I lived across from the Cathedral and off we sped to the airport. We went over what he wanted to say flying out to Albuquerque, and I stayed up all night and wrote this speech for him. Then I went to bed. I didn't even hear him deliver it, but it was fine and the audience loved it. It wasn't something that hit the

headlines of the newspaper, but it was a good speech. The reason I tell you this is that he was the kind of person who would trust you, and when he trusted you, you loved him and would go through hoops with him.

He went to bed when we got to Albuquerque because he had to be fresh to deal with all the meetings and greetings of being at the convention. I didn't even talk to him in the morning, since I got up after noontime or something because I hadn't finished the speech until 6:30 in the morning—I didn't know much about the details and had to keep on referring to the briefing book prepared for him, which he had in his briefcase and gave to me. It's that kind of a relationship that you value. I loved the fact that he trusted me, which made me want to work even harder. At lunch I heard people all over the room tell him, "Great delivery, great speech." I thought, *Gee, he didn't even have much time to read it, either*. It's those short sentences.

These are great moments. When you'd travel out with him back then, we had a lot of fun.

Knott: We've heard that he was opposed to Bobby running in '68. Does that sound right to you? Is this something you would have been familiar with?

Gifford: Yes, but I don't think I can add much that I'm comfortable with. I don't think it was a yes or no, and I don't think it was consistent. I think there were times, I know there were times, when he thought it would be a terrific thing for Bobby to run. I know other times that he was worried about it. But once Bobby made up his mind, there was nobody more enthusiastic than Teddy.

Knott: Sure.

Gifford: There were other members—there was Ethel to deal with and Steve Smith to deal with and Pat [Patricia] Lawford to deal with, Eunice Kennedy to deal with, and Sarge to deal with. There are a lot of people who had influence on Bobby. Teddy was just one of them. Teddy may have been the most influential because they were so close. I'm aware there are two sides on the thing. Some people swear Teddy was for it and some people swear he wasn't. I just don't think you can say he was for or against. I don't think it's that simple. If he'd said, "No, Bobby," I don't think Bobby would have done it. And if he'd given him the real reasons he was worried, I don't think Bobby would have done it.

Knott: What do you think the real reasons were?

Gifford: I think, A—he might not win, and B—he might get killed.

Knott: He'd get killed?

Gifford: Sure. I don't believe, I mean, how many times have you been hanging around at dinners over the last 20 years talking about this with people who are veterans of it all and getting all sorts of conflicting stories? I'm one of the ones who thinks that Teddy didn't have a strong position to try to persuade Bobby of A or B. But I don't think I'm in the majority. There are people with whom Teddy talked about his views, to sharpen them, which is one of the things he

did and still does, who may have taken that discussion to represent what Teddy ultimately summarized and transferred over to Bobby. You see what I mean?

If you're Teddy, you win by talking to a whole lot of people, because it helps you. When you're up there at that level, if you just read the newspapers and talk to your close staff, you're dead meat. You get narrower, narrower, narrower, and Ted was never that way. He talked to everybody. My guess is that there were people who went to him and said, "You've got to get Bobby to do it," and there were people, "You've got to stop Bobby from doing it," and everything in between, where I was. I was in between. I just didn't think there was a clear answer. It's one of those 49 to 51 things.

I was glad he did it. I was obviously distressed at the result, but I was glad he did it. It was good for him. He loved it. It kind of opened him away from his brother and from Johnson, and just made him his own man. As everybody knows from watching the campaign and reading the books, the trajectory of Bobby maturing as a remarkable individual during the campaign is crystal clear.

Knott: Right. You took a leave from the Senator's office—Senator Edward Kennedy's office—to work on the campaign?

Gifford: I did. I took a leave from active day-to-day presence, but I went to the office a fair amount. There was a lot going on, but I spent as much time on the campaign as I did the Senate work, at least at the beginning. Part of it was just accidental. These things are funny. The day he announced, everybody sits down, looks at each other, and says, "Okay, nobody is prepared for this, so let's figure out." Steve Smith is running this meeting. Who else? "Okay, what do we have to do and who's going to do it?" So he figures it all out. He was really good at that, he was a genius at it. "Here's the thing that needs to be done. You do that one. Here's another thing that needs to be done. You do that one." Right around this room.

I think I was near the bottom of his list, but he said, "Find an office." I said, "Find an office?" He said, "Find an office. We have to have a campaign office. Find an office." I said, "How big?" He said, "Just the right size. Just do it." I thought, *Oh, that's great. This is going to be terrific. What am I going to do?* I never rented a big office in my life. But I knew some people in Washington in real estate so I got some office space. It was wild getting it organized, phones, furniture, who gets the corner office, all that kind of thing. Then one day it was done and I ended up working in the boiler room, which I loved, with Dave Hackett. Steve put that together too.

Knott: And the purpose of the boiler room was essentially—that was *the* coordinating center? How would you describe that to somebody from the outside?

Gifford: It was the coordinating center for the delegates to the national convention. That was its sole purpose. After the convention it would have had other purposes related to the general election. So we had a room that had seven women working in it, seven smart women from the two offices (Bobby's and Ted's), or veterans of the offices. All worked in politics. They understood thoroughly. They were very valuable people, smart and strong. It was a closed-access, big room with no windows and a lot of phone lines. The 50 states were divided up among

them. Each had a group of states and their job was to gather information from all the Kennedy connections about who were the delegates, or who were going to be the delegates, and what their positions were on Bobby. We then could figure out—should they get a letter from Bobby? A phone call from Bobby? A signed book from Bobby? Some other type of stuff? It's done in every campaign, of course, but it's very exciting because it's secret. I mean the count of delegate preferences is ultra top secret.

Knott: Right, sure.

Gifford: You give your information in this case to Teddy and Steve Smith, which was initially the connection with Bobby. Teddy was the political senior of the campaign. Other people were organizational seniors, media seniors, but Teddy was the top—Dave Burke and Teddy decided how you were going to handle a problem on the delegate side of it. But we were the information source. So it was really fascinating, just cool as anything I'd ever done before or since in politics.

I would fly or drive out to where Bobby was campaigning, for example, with a big thick notebook of the state-by-state delegate info. He'd want to know everything—he knew so much about so many people, it was crazy. "Let's talk about Idaho," he'd say. I'd turn to the Idaho tab. He'd look at the list and he'd say, "I remember him. Should I call him?" "No, he's already for you." "Well, should I call him, thank him, and can I get him ginned up? Maybe he can help with some of these people we don't know anything about. I'll call him." He usually was able to make those calls, not 100 percent of them, because of too many demands on his time, but he loved to do it, because he had done it for President Kennedy. So he knew all the tricks.

It was a thrill. One time I got on a plane to go out to Indianapolis to meet him, and rode around in the car with him flipping the pages. I've forgotten where else, somewhere down South I think, and then we came back to Washington. I went out to Hickory Hill with the book a couple of times. It was a terrific experience, such a kick.

And hard work? You can't imagine how hard the work was, because somebody always knows one of the people you don't know anything about and they say, "You assholes, how come you didn't figure out about Johnny Jones? What do you mean you don't know how to reach him? We've known him for 20 years. He was a county commissioner, blah, blah, blah." "How are we supposed to know that," I'd reply, "if you don't tell us? Why didn't you send us a memo? Call us up. You knew him." "I didn't know you didn't know him." Then you go out and have a beer or two. Politics is great, it's just great.

Knott: The boiler room was physically separate from the main campaign headquarters?

Gifford: Not separate, just in a secure space within it. The first one was right near Capitol Hill on the top floor of an old hotel, just an interim solution. We had to get a larger space ASAP and some phones, so we did that in a hurry. It was clearly not acceptable, but we knew that. Then we found another place in a building that was just being completed—the building covered literally a city block, and we had half of the seventh floor. It was just the cheapest kind of carpets and unpainted wallboard, like all campaign headquarters in those days. "Why spend money on that stuff? We don't need to impress anybody," was the refrain. Then we took a corner of it and

walled it off for the boiler room, no windows, sort of inside a corner. The pictures of that room show all the girls on the phones at their desks, but no windows. In this room they would put the state-by-state books together, and then out I'd go with them.

We had other ways of trying to figure out who these delegates were when they were appointed or elected at their caucuses, and a list would be posted and you'd call Kennedy supporters or the state chairman, the state people for the information. "Who are these delegates? Who are these people? Can you get us some information, a phone number? We want to call them, send them a book, get them a letter." You work the system. It was a good and productive system, too, and drew its power and strength from the Kennedy connection.

The greatest thing for me was that Bobby loved to look at the book, he just loved that book. He wanted to see it. "Gee, I was just in West Virginia. Let's see, I talked to him. I talked to him. Send him my book."

It was nice, and I was lucky, because I think that the combination of the Senate and the campaign made it a complete experience for me. I had an intense legislative part of it, and then the intense campaign experience.

I had planned to go back earlier to Boston because my wife was pregnant again, but then Chappaquiddick happened, so I didn't. I stayed another year.

Knott: Would you be willing to talk about that? Why you stayed on? What you did?

Gifford: Why I stayed on? I loved those guys, Teddy and Bobby. I loved working at the front edge and making a tangible difference. But the salary stinks.

You probably know that in the spring of '68, Teddy asked me to charter a big sailboat, and I did, and went with him sailing for great parts of that summer as he was trying to get himself settled down about Bobby's death.

Knott: I've read that.

Gifford: They sailed back and forth to Nantucket a couple of times while I was there, and would come off and take showers and stuff, just to get on the land, and go to some restaurants instead of having boat food.

He was quite something. He said, "Go get us a boat to sail on." "Do *what*?" He said, "I want a boat." "How big? What kind? Where?" He said, "A big boat. Just get it. We'll go wherever the boat is." That was the instructions. I thought, *Big? What was big?* Right? But he knew that I knew because I'd been sailing the America's Cup; I must have known something. I'd also beat him in a few Wianno Senior races, he knew that. He beat me too, in others.

Again, it's a kind of privilege to have that kind of experience. Yes, we sailed with Jackie [Kennedy Onassis] and the kids, and Ethel and her kids, all over the place, up and down Long

Island Sound, Vineyard Sound, and Nantucket Sound. I didn't go with them to the Maine trip because I wanted to spend time with my family, and my three little boys.

Knott: How was he coping?

Gifford: It was hard at first, he had a hard time. But he's resilient, he likes people, he likes jokes, he likes to tease. So he would figure out who he wanted to invite for another week of sailing, it would all be arranged and happen. My job was helping to keep the boat straightened out, and helping with the rotations of people. My own family was on and off from time to time, too. The captain was truly terrific, making everything much, much more pleasant than if he'd been a martinet. The boat ran perfectly, because everybody got into a groove about pitching in.

How did he cope? He coped by having friends with him, family with him. A lot of times, he would be morose and I could recognize it. He had a vast support structure of family and friends, coming and going. But sometimes you just knew he was down. So I'd say, "Why don't we go anchor off this island?" And he'd either swim in or take the dingy in and just walk off by himself for a while and then come back. That happened a lot at the beginning. There were other times when he just needed to have a whole lot of his friends around, raising hell, making jokes, telling stories, whooping it up. It was all the above. It was what you'd expect.

Joan and the kids came often, of course. We went off with him and my wife and Jackie and our kids for a while, I don't know, three or four or five days at one point, just sailing around. It wasn't like we were going anyplace on an itinerary. But we both knew the waters.

Knott: This is off the coast of Maine?

Gifford: No, this is in southeastern Massachusetts and Long Island Sound. I didn't do the Maine trip. That was John Culver and John Tunney.

I sailed with him up from New York, where we first picked up the boat. I've raced all my life in those waters, Block Island to Newport, there's one that goes from New York to Block Island back down again to Long Island Sound. We practiced for the America's Cup in Block Island Sound and then raced it in Newport and I was the navigator of one of those boats, so I didn't get lost sailing with Ted. I knew what harbors were big enough for the boat and where we could go in and have dinner and all that. It worked well. He didn't have to worry. He didn't have to get on the phone and find out where to go for dinner or something when he wanted to go into Newport. So that part was fine.

He took Ethel and her kids. One time we went over to Hyannis and got them all, then sailed over to Edgartown early in the morning, got there in time for them all to go to church and that was a big time. I remember the mental image of the dock, Ethel and all her little babies running right after her and they were just going to make it to church. Teddy was thrilled. He said, "Thank God. Imagine the trouble I'd be in if they missed church."

Later in the summer after they went to Maine, I was in Nantucket. There's a little sand spit of an island off Nantucket called Muskeget. They would sail from Hyannis and I would bring my boat

over from Nantucket with friends who were on Nantucket and we'd meet the Kennedy team there and have a big picnic all day, swim and play games and grill over big fires, and then everybody would go back again their own way. I think the families, the activities, the water—it was what Ted really needed to heal himself.

He was also having to say, "Okay, now I'm the boss. I'm the oldest. Now what? What am I going to do?" That's the thing. I knew that was really at the bottom of it. Grieving is one thing and you get over that but then you think, *Oh my God, now what? Now they're all going to be looking at me*. And they were, everybody. "Now what, Teddy? Now what are *you* going to do?"

Knott: Sure.

Gifford: So there was that base element of it. There was the grieving and then assuming the inevitable responsibilities. There's not much you can talk about because it's such an internal and individual and subjective process. Grieving is internal.

Knott: Sure.

Gifford: So you can be with him and provide avenues and mechanisms and opportunities. I really worked it out in my own head that it was worth being away from my family for a bit of time that summer, just to be part of that and helpful to Ted. I wasn't unhappy when they went to Maine without me, since I needed also to be with my kids and my own family. I have a large family on Nantucket, two brothers and a sister, nieces and nephews, and my parents were bustling around, too. So there's that part of it.

Then the Chappaquiddick—I don't know. There's nothing that really—how does this work?

Knott: You have complete control over the transcript. You will get an edited copy of what is said here today in about three or four months. You can at that time strike anything out that you wish, you can add material, or you can even say to us, "Look, I don't want this thing released until 20 years after I'm dead." You can put any restrictions on that transcript.

Gifford: As of now and until then it's confidential?

Knott: Whatever you say in this room stays in this room.

Gifford: Then it's useful.

Whatever happened there happened. I wasn't there. I didn't witness it. I was there early the next morning. I flew over—you probably know all this, right? I chartered a little plane. I flew over with a friend of mine. He flew me over. I really didn't know much when I got there, just the bare story. I went down to the bridge and looked at what was going on there. Went to the—actually, my first stop was to go see the Chief of Police, Dominick J. Arena. I thought that was the right thing to do and it was. I said, "I'm here. I don't have an agenda—whatever I can do to help you."

He said, "Really?" I said, "Really. Just try me. I'm his legislative assistant. I work in Washington. I have a house in Nantucket. I've been around these waters a lot. I know what's going on. I'm a big boy and I went to law school." I think he just didn't trust me at first. [*Interruption*] So that was my first stop. Then I went to see the medical examiner because I knew there was an issue about identifying the body legally. I was looking around to see if any of the boiler room girls or anybody else was still around. They were getting the ferry to the Cape and so I only saw them for a few minutes. There were no state policemen around to talk to. There was no prosecutor around to talk to. I sort of went down a mental checklist that anybody else would do if thrust into that situation.

I went back to see the Chief again. I told him what I was doing. We got to be friends over the years; he worked up here outside Boston afterwards. But anyway, I satisfied the medical examiner that anything he wanted he'd get and he was happy with that. I said, "Just ask me, and I will go to the people involved and I'll get whatever I can get if you have any questions." A couple of hours later I went back to him again. I kept going back to these people because I just didn't want to leave anything hanging. He said, "You know, I don't have any questions. She's ready to go to the funeral home." I said, "Then release her to the funeral home. That's the right thing to do." So he did. Then I went back and told the Chief and then I went over to the funeral home because I was the only one who could actually make the I.D. of her body, of her. So I did.

Knott: You'd known her from the boiler room?

Gifford: She worked for me in the boiler room, and we'd been friends. I mean friends, not just acquaintances. She was one of the best of them. I identified her body. I looked at her clothes that had been put in a bag. I had some instinct about wanting to see whether she was cut or anything. So I asked—I didn't have to ask. This is a naked person lying on a table, right? You don't have to ask much. I looked closely to see—and I'll come back to this in a minute. I said, "I need to see the other side." Okay, fine. She's who she is reported to be. I worked out getting them in touch with the family's choice of a funeral home down in Pennsylvania. I made that connection with Bill vanden Heuvel.

Then, you might say I was volunteered to accompany her down to Pennsylvania, which I was happy to do because I liked her and there wasn't much left to do, nothing left to do. The medical examiner, funeral home, police department, had all done everything that needed to be done. So I said, "Okay, let's make the plans to leave from here to go down to Pennsylvania tomorrow morning." I made one more set of rounds to everybody, the Chief, the medical examiner, just to make sure nothing was hanging. It was late afternoon by the time I got back to Nantucket.

I had talked to Senator Kennedy regularly during the day, which was his and my agreement, so that he knew what I was doing and if I had any questions, I asked him and he answered them. There was never any problem with that. It was clear she was dead. It was clear that she died from being in the car and I didn't know, I didn't ask, I have never asked Teddy for any other version of the story than the one he has told. I don't think he ever lied to me about anything I asked him. Quite the opposite. We had come to trust each other for all the reasons I've already talked about, going back a long way together. Then I went back to Nantucket for the night.

The next morning, I flew back to the Vineyard from Nantucket with my suitcase. I met the hearse at the airport, and then the plane flew in. It's a small airport and you can't fly in in secret, so it was all known almost immediately by the airport people what was happening. Everybody was buzzing about it, all standing around. It was late morning by the time we took off with all the paperwork done. She was in a body bag, a normal funeral-home body bag. It was a twin-engine plane and the only place to put her was in the aisle where you walked between the seats. The plane had about ten seats, and two pilots. I sat in the back with the body bag. Off we went. It was a miserable day. Thunderstorms. Not one smooth ten-minute period in that whole entire flight. God is smiting me down for being involved in this, I kept on thinking. We landed in a downpour in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, transferred the bag to the hearse, and I went to the funeral home in the hearse, too.

Then the funeral home director and his wife had to get a dress for Mary Jo and do the make-up, because her mother and father wanted an open casket funeral. The funeral home people had never seen Mary Jo before, or a picture of her. So I said, "Get her dressed and made up and we'll work from there." So they did, but with the worst hairdo you can imagine and with lipstick like this, almost like a baby-doll hooker. I looked down and they showed me and I said, "No, no. She never wore her hair that way. She always wore it straight and she barely wore lipstick. We're going to fix this up." They said, "No, this is how we always do it here in Pennsylvania." I said, "Well, it's not how we're doing this one." So we got her all fixed up and she looked really terrific when they had her redone. They put a simpler dress on, not a frilly thing. Then we had the moment when her parents came in and saw Mary Jo for the first time. That was awful. It was me and them and the open casket. That really was the worst part of it for me, with her parents, and as a parent myself.

Then the second worst part, I had to go outside—I knew I had to do this—I had to go out and talk to the press about what was going to happen. I'd never before been pinned against the wall, and it was the first time I'd ever been the object of a mob. But I didn't anticipate it somehow, I wasn't thinking straight I guess. That was very difficult. There was nothing to say except, "Her family has been here and now they've gone away. You won't get a picture of them today. You can't talk to them. They are very upset and don't want to be bothered. Yes, the funeral will take place in a day or two and Senator Kennedy will be here with his wife and others," and so on, over and over.

The funeral itself was fully covered—very fully covered—by print and electronic media, of course. But the fascinating thing for me was the quick emergence that Mary Jo was alive right after the accident, and if Ted had dived down he could have saved her from drowning. This became a staple of the scandal sheets and sensationalist TV programs.

I haven't spoken about this publicly and I'm doing it here because of the confidentiality arrangements you've just explained to me.

If you look at the pictures of the car after it was pulled from the water, you'll clearly see that the windows were broken. There was broken glass inside the car, and on the windows. If a person had been alive in the car after it crashed, that person would have struggled to get out, not just lie there. The instinct for survival takes over, I don't care who you are. The only way to get out of

that car would have been to try and find a window that was open and squeeze out, the way Ted did. There would have been severe cuts from the broken glass, inevitably.

Mary Jo had no cuts on her hands, and none of her fingernails were broken. I saw her clearly when I identified her in the funeral home on the Vineyard.

So I am fully persuaded that she was unconscious. Alive? Who knows? But for certain not conscious. There never was the kind of autopsy that would have determined whether she had contusions from being hit in the neck, or whether in fact she had a broken neck. But I'm persuaded myself that because her hands and fingernails were pristine, that she never struggled. Had she struggled, she would have struggled with cut glass, window glass, and her hands would have been severely cut.

Teddy knows I know this and he's said, "It's your story. It's over for me, and that's it." I always thought he might want to have me say it, but he didn't. The aftermath of it was difficult for everybody. I was never called as a witness at the inquest, which sure was fine with me. I didn't care one way or another. If I had been called, I'd have told under oath what I know.

I think it truly was an accident, and a very sad one. I think it's pretty clear where they were headed. They never got there. I don't think there's any doubt about that. Again, that could have been innocent or not, depending on your point of view.

So that's the Chappaquiddick piece. The aftermath of it, the Nixon Presidency—politics were turning nasty by then. Ted would have been President but for that. That's really it.

We stayed in touch even after I came back here to Boston.

Knott: You left in September of '70. Did I get that correct?

Gifford: Yes I did. I came back because the school year started and my kids were old enough to go to school here, so that was the timing. I had three little boys and I wanted to get a job in Boston. I got a good job and I worked hard. I like to do that. So that's what I did. I didn't do much more—I did one major thing with Teddy after that, which was trying to get land use approved for protections on Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, with legislation called the Nantucket Sounds Island Trust bill. I worked with him and his office to write that legislation. It was to be a kind of an extension of the Cape Cod National Seashore. He always had it in his mind that his brother President Kennedy had wanted to do that. He talked to me about it for years. I don't know why he didn't want to do it until after I left the office.

But anyway, he did, and I helped. I spent a couple or three years on that project and became within a couple of votes in a Republican-controlled House of Representatives to get the bill through committee. Interestingly, as a result of it, all the towns, none of which had zoning, put zoning in, and the local people got activated as a result about land use and conservation of open spaces. So, it had very good results even if it never passed. It was close though. Man, it was close.

Knott: That's too bad.

Gifford: It was too bad. It was. And it still is. But it was a good thing he did it. I love him for it. He's terrific. I don't see him much now, though, because we go different directions.

Knott: I've read that you had a falling out with him over the Kennedy Library siting. Is that accurate or inaccurate?

Gifford: That was my wife. She had been a long-time activist in Cambridge and was involved also with a group of activists who had developed land use protections for the Charles River banks and didn't want to have buses on Memorial Drive. That's what it was. Steve Smith went to see her. I was not involved, literally. But there were many who said, "Why didn't Dun control his wife?" Well, that's okay. It wasn't a falling out for me and him. We don't have any problems with each other. A lot of staff people get in the way of those things, but I'm a veteran of that. My wife acted on principle and was part of a group of concerned local citizens of the city. A lot of people don't like her. She then developed a zoning overlay on Harvard Square that kept out fast food joints. There's no McDonald's in Harvard Square and no Burger King. That's my wife's work.

Knott: God bless her.

Gifford: She did it herself. Yes, God bless her. It's a good thing. But the Kennedy Library did not get where it wanted to be.

Knott: Well, it's at a beautiful site.

Gifford: It's at a beautiful site. It's got expansion room and everything else and they've got the Kennedy School of Government on that site on the Charles River, which keeps John's—the name of President Kennedy—alive and present all over the world. It works, but it's not what the family wanted. It was hardball. But that's okay. I took it the way it was.

Knott: You mentioned earlier that if it weren't for Chappaquiddick, he would have been President. Did he really want to be President?

Gifford: Sure.

Knott: He did?

Gifford: I don't think there has ever been a single Senator who didn't want to be President. Whether they could be, or would be good ones, doesn't matter. Teddy would be a really good one. He'd talk to people and the country; he'd be energetic; he'd be aggressive; he'd be out there in everybody's face about getting stuff done. The energy of successful politicians is what really carries them. I mean, one of the things about [George W.] Bush is he's got a lot of energy. He's always doing something, flying here and there. He's doing a lot of seriously bad stuff but that's a different issue. You can like him or not, but as you can guess I think he's screwed things up. It's

the ones who don't have the energy that seem to be the lousy Presidents. Teddy would be all over people. It would be fun again. There'd be music in the White House.

Knott: Not country music?

Gifford: We don't even know if there's even country music in the White House now. They watch TV, those people. I don't know what else they do. Do you know? What happens for three weeks straight in the evening?

Knott: I think they're in bed by ten o'clock.

Gifford: Maybe that's what it is, as simple as that.

Knott: I shouldn't be saying this.

Gifford: It's all right. It's a secret, right? This is all confidential. No, Ted would have been wonderful—just think of the energy level, the commitment, the direction, the vision. He has good people around him, and he always has had good people around him. I think one of the fellows who worked with me there is now back working for him again, Jim Flug. He was there when I was there, but I never wanted to go back. I didn't think it would ever be as good again, and I never really wanted to run for office. It was a good time to be there at the end of the sixties, just a great time to be in the Senate. You'd talk to Senators. I was part of the staff group that worked up Earth Day with Gaylord Nelson, for example. I was Teddy's man on that group, and I ended up being deeply involved in it.

Knott: Didn't he just pass away?

Gifford: Yes he did. God, that was exciting. Those kinds of visionary things—I don't think it works like that anymore, I just don't think it does. I think it's bitter and mean-spirited—true believers and all that. That's why I never went back. I had a good life here.

Knott: So now you're devoted to—what are you doing now?

Gifford: I set up this 501c3 nonprofit organization, Oldways Preservation Trust. We're working to reintroduce the values of the old ways of agriculture, patterns of eating, and things like that—sustainability in the food system. We've had terrific luck, at the right place at the right time with intense attention on nutrition. We're deeply involved with projects all over the world.

We work with major universities around the world, and large organizations. If you've heard of the Mediterranean diet or the Mediterranean diet pyramid, we developed and popularized that concept, and have a copyright on it. We'll have a large book out a year from now, five hundred pages, explaining the whole system. We'll do some TV around it, I think. That's been good. I travel all over the world and make speeches to spread the word. I'm going to Thailand next week, for example.

Between Oldways and leaving the Senator's office, I worked in real estate for a national real estate company, Cabot, Cabot & Forbes, and I loved that job. Then I did a lot of entrepreneurial things, which were not as much fun—interesting, much more interesting, but not as much fun. It was harder. Scared every day you're going to lose your funding or something. Did that for enough times to do what I needed to do, get my kids a college education, and then organized Oldways.

Knott: So you've had a good life.

Gifford: I've been lucky, I really have. My good friends believe you make your own luck, and I agree with that. I keep telling my kids, "Don't trust to luck, make luck." You trust to luck, you've got a lot of waiting to do. Again, it's funny—I think a lot of the training came from working in the Senate. You learn about thinking ahead strategically—you can't just keep attacking your enemies. It doesn't do any good. They're not going to change their minds. You've got to figure out some overlaps where common interest exists. Then you can get something done, even if you're not going to get everything you want. Stake out your own position but let's get something done here. I've used that lesson over and over in the years since being in the Senate.

I know this doesn't sound like the Kennedys. If you ask ten people in the street, they'd say, "No, they're always fighting with everybody." But when you look deep into it you find out that their successes were because they found common ground with people they were opposed to, and vice-versa. Teddy is still doing it, even if it means hanging out with Orrin Hatch in a singing group. They're having a little fun, but he's getting some legislation through the Judiciary Committee. Those were great lessons. You know, people always have to look at results, but it's much more interesting to look at— [*Interruption*]

I suppose one of the most remarkable things about Ted is his relentlessness. He comes at you like a wind in a hurricane, not just every once in a while; it's always there. He just has this energy and strength and conviction. I was there when he had some terrible things happen, so there were pauses, but we always knew it was just the calm before it happened again. Part of his 40 years, or whatever it is now, of success is because he's relentless. He has a point of view. He's convinced of it, he fights for it, but he doesn't do it in a nasty way. He does it the way I talked about. He trades, he bargains, he deals with the other side, and he uses his wonderful sense of humor. He knows you have to bridge these gaps. You don't see him engaging any more—or ever, I guess, in the last 25 years—in the kinds of mindless squabbles which diminish people. More and more you see it's Tom Delay and people like that who are the haters and the isolators.

The other thing that this Kennedy family has deep in it, from whatever source, is their public service gene. It really must be genetic. You think, *How the heck did they get it from that pirate of a father and that saint of a mother?* But it's there, and they all ended up with it one way or another, no matter whether you're the Lt. Governor of Maryland, or the river keeper, or the citizens' oil entrepreneur that Joe [Joseph Kennedy, III] is now. It trickled down into this generation—not everybody, but it doesn't matter. It's amazing, from a financial-pirate father. I don't think you can find—you can go look at the Roosevelts and it's just a handful of the scattered numbers of them that got involved in public service. There is something unique about this family. I have no idea what it is.

You hear people talk about it all the time when you're dealing with the subject matter. They'll say, "Oh, well, it was Honey Fitz [John Francis Fitzgerald]." Wait a minute, that's a lot of genes ago. Nobody knew him who is alive today, right? So it can't be that. It's got to be something else. I don't know what it is but it's one of the mysteries of this family. It's one of the pieces of its power. You know, Maria [Shriver] out there with [Arnold] Schwarzenegger? You think, *What?* But look, she's doing what they all do. She just did it through her husband. He's pumping iron and she's on the phone. Pat Lawford and Peter, and Eunice, bless her soul.

Knott: Do you have a favorite memory, perhaps one of the sailing trips? Is there one moment in particular that might stand out? It seems like you had an unusual role. You were on his staff but you got to know him on a much deeper level than most staffers.

Gifford: I knew him before I went to work for him, and I knew his brother well, too. That's the key to your question. And, there's one sailing example. I think it's like the time when he decided he was going to jump off a ski jump even though he'd never done it. He said, "I can do it. If these other assholes are doing it, I can do it." He did it. And you think, he could have smashed—he could have really wrecked his back and everything else too. But he succeeded.

We were sailing in that 1968 summer, and remember, this is a big boat, a 65-foot yawl. It's hard to handle three sails, right? Jigger and jib and main. It was a beautiful, windy summer afternoon, just perfect, just what you love to sail in, not too much wind but enough so you really move along. We were transferring some crew off the boat, and picking up some new crew. The crew coming in was Joan and their kids and my wife and my two oldest kids. We were saying good-bye to some friends of his from New York who had been on board for three or four days, who we'd picked up in Long Island Sound and sailed up to New London where we were making this transfer.

In those days you didn't have cell phones. It's really hard to do this. You're doing this with a radio telephone and it's scratchy and squawky. The Coast Guard had such powerful radio telephones, and when they came on the air, they drowned us out and we had to try again. It's really hard sometimes. We were trying to get a car for the people who were returning to New York, and then figure out what time Joan and my wife would arrive. Neither of them were known for being on time, so we had to worry about that.

The professional captain normally would have landed the boat in a crowded and busy harbor like New London, but Ted said, "No, I'm going to do it." The captain looked at me and I said, "We'll stand by him." So with Ted at the helm we went whistling into the harbor, all sails set, just the wrong thing to be doing. But he knew just what he was up to. We were looking at the charts, trying to figure out where the pick-up/drop-off dock was. I'd never been in that part of the harbor before, and no one else had either. We had to do it all by charts. "It's over there." "Okay, it's over there." "No, no, that's it over there. That's where we're going. I see a sign." "Okay, that's the one." I am glued to the binoculars and trying to figure it all out. "Anyone see the car? Where are they?" Nobody knows anything. Are they going to be there? Nobody knows. This is a prearranged deal. We wouldn't talk until we get ashore and can call them on the telephone. But if they're in their car they can't talk. It's one of those—and you just think, *Geez*.

So Ted said, "I'll take her in." We had all the sails up, moving very fast, and got closer and closer. Our captain was a wonderful black professional from the Bahamas. We loved him. He started to turn white as we got closer to the dock. I knew we were going to crash that boat, I just knew it. I was standing in the stern, by the wheel and the mizzen mast, because I wanted to hold on to something. Ted wheeled our gorgeous yacht in there and rounded up into the wind, and we just missed the dock. As a result of just missing, you make a perfect landing, because you just come right in close, maybe six feet that away. Any closer and the boat's a smasher. Twelve feet out it's sloppy, but he came in just right. I'm sure it's his combination of fearlessness and experience and courage. He'd sailed all his life. I had too, but he'd never sailed a big boat like that, ever. We all laughed, you know, with nervous exhaustion from the release of panic. He boomed his great laugh and said, "Dun, it's your name on the charter contract, good."

Knott: That's a great story.

Gifford: It's a true story. So we all laughed and had a drink, which is what you're supposed to do on a boat, just what you're supposed to do. The guys went off in their car down to New York, and our wives were a little bit late, which we expected. But we got them settled and off we went and sailed into Block Island and anchored overnight. I think we had dinner on board.

That's a good example of my own experience with Ted. Fearless, but also not crazy. He somehow knew he could land that boat. I didn't. Neither did the captain. The point is Ted's personality and his courage, and his willingness to take a risk. All of those things are what's good about him. Legislative risks are necessary if you're to ever see new laws passed that are on the cutting edge. You don't want people to take too many personal risks, but he did always, jumped off ski jumps.

Knott: Riding a bucking bronco?

Gifford: Yes, it's the attitude—"I can do it." It's like Bobby climbed a mountain. He never climbed a mountain before. Up he went with Jim Whittaker, an accomplished mountaineer. You're not interested in the Bobby material, so we don't need to do that. That will be another time, maybe.

There's another thing about Teddy. You see, I went in the ambulance with Bobby when he was shot. Did you know that?

Knott: I didn't realize that.

Gifford: I was one of the ones who wrestled with Sirhan Sirhan.

Knott: I didn't realize that either. Wow.

Gifford: The pictures—you don't remember it, it's such bedlam, but in the photographs I have my arm around Sirhan's neck, I was one of the ones who helped take the gun.

Knott: I think I can picture that.

Gifford: Then I went—I don't know how it happened, but I went with Ethel and Jean in the ambulance to the Central Receiving Hospital in Los Angeles where all trauma cases go before they're transferred to a specialty hospital. Teddy was in San Francisco with Dave Burke and they flew down immediately. I was there when Teddy came in. You talk about grim. He was like a frozen man he was so angry. He was just barely controlling himself. I knew it was anger. Again, you love that in him. He was clearly sad but he had figured out by then that Bobby was really going to be sick, if he made it. Everybody knew that right away.

Knott: Do you think he ever considered getting out of politics either after Bobby's death or after Chappaquiddick? Was there ever a point where he might have thought, this is just too costly?

Gifford: No, I don't think he considered it seriously. But I do know he flirted with it that summer.

Knott: The '68 summer.

Gifford: Yes, the '68 summer. We even teased about it. "Let's set up a charter company," he's say, "one in the Med and one in the U.S. We'll have a charter boat company." We talked about it. We laughed and joked, never really made any plans, but he talked about it. He said, "You know all the boat stuff. I know all the rich people. We'd make a hell of a killing on this thing. We can have some fun. We'll set a place in Marbella; we'll set up a place in Palm Beach; we'll set up one in Newport. We'll have some fun."

When we flew to appearances where he had to make speeches we used to talk about it. But I knew what he was saying. He was saying, "I'm going to be the player, and you're going to do the work." Right? "I'm going to be out there, 'Rent my boat! Come have a cocktail!' And you're going to be taking them out." I didn't like that picture, I didn't like that much. But we had fun with it, and that's the thing.

On a different subject: I suppose that if you think carefully about political organizations, you can see that when my wife went after the Cambridge site, it wasn't just her. There were three dozen people on this committee—but you could see that me not controlling her was a loyalty issue for a lot of people for whom that kind of relationship with a spouse is not conceivable, back in those days. So I knew it was going to happen, but again, it's your life—you've got a bunch of little children, a mother, and I was in business. So I wished it hadn't happened and been an upset, but it did happen, and I think it's important for people to know that I wished it didn't have to happen. But the course of events took it that way, and when all is said and done, you have to make your peace with your life.

Knott: Sure.

Gifford: And I did. If it hadn't happened, I might have taken a leave of absence and gone to work in the '80 campaign, and my life would be very different. I might not be sitting here doing what I love to do—researching, talking, making policy deals, trying to get professors to testify,

getting articles in newspapers, making speeches. Oddly, it's analogous to what legislative assistants do in the Senate, except that now I'm the boss. And I love it.

Knott: It seems like it.

Gifford: I do. I'm a happy camper. That's it. If I think of anything else, I'll let you know.

INDEX