EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT HUNTER

February 11, 2009
Arlington, Virginia

Interviewer

Janet Heininger

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TRANSCRIPT

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Heininger: This is an interview with Bob Hunter on February 11, 2009. Let's start at the beginning. Tell me about how you met Ted Kennedy. What were your first impressions of him?

Hunter: I think I met him when I went for an interview to be his foreign policy advisor, a position he hadn't had on his staff before. As far as I know, I was the first foreign policy advisor in the Senate, somebody who was dedicated to this, as opposed to being on committee staff and the like. Since then it has become common practice, but I think he was a pioneer in that. I recall going in, and at that point I was growing a funny beard, which was a huge mistake, having that kind of beard. One thing about Kennedy is that he never responds negatively to that kind of thing. He's, let's say, correct in his behavior toward other people.

We met in his Senate office, and we talked about various issues. He was interested in what I had worked on. I remember that he had a strong interest right away in pushing the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. I said something to the effect of, "Senator, that's small potatoes compared to the other things you need to work on: the overall strategic relationship with the Soviet Union, the SALT [Strategic Arms Limitation Talks] agreements, et cetera." He picked up on it right away. It was clear that he wanted to do all the things that needed to be done in order to play a first-rate role in foreign affairs.

Before he was on the Armed Services Committee, I remember that the question was, should he go on the Foreign Relations Committee? The answer was that he didn't need to go on the Foreign Relations Committee. It would have been a waste of his time. Every door was always open to him. He recognized that although he could do the cameos and all of that, he wanted not just to be *seen* as a serious player; he wanted to *be* a serious player in foreign affairs. How much of that was connected to the possibility that he might run for President in 1976, nobody knew. He certainly didn't say so. Remember, this was the summer of '73, and it was a year and a half before he would have to make that decision. It was clear that he wanted to be in a position so that he could be a serious player in general, without having said anything about the Presidency.

I had interviewed for a similar position, though it didn't have the same quality of focus and specialness, with Fritz [Walter] Mondale, in 1970. Mondale is a very open, honest guy. He's the least neurotic senior politician I've ever met. I remember asking him in the interview—and this was only a part-time job, so I didn't do it—"Tell me, are you really serious about foreign affairs?" He said, "No, not particularly," which was an honest statement. A lot of people would

have denied that, and I frankly should have had greater appreciation for his honesty. I later worked for him on the ’84 campaign.

Heininger: If we recall, he became Ambassador to Japan.

Hunter: He was very good at it. There’s no question about that. He was being honest. Foreign affairs at that point wasn’t one of his priorities.

Heininger: In Minnesota, why should it be?

Hunter: There are a lot of statespeople who come out of Minnesota and Wisconsin. They punch way above their weight, particularly in Minnesota, as you may have seen over the years. I had already worked for [Hubert] Humphrey when I came to Kennedy. I had worked in the [Lyndon] Johnson White House. I wrote speeches for Humphrey for the ’68 campaign, as one of his principal speechwriters. I wrote speeches afterwards for him. I helped to write his maiden speech when he came back to the Senate, lots of things.

It was clear to me, referencing my interview with Kennedy, that he wanted to be serious about foreign affairs, and I also admit that the chance of his being President was attractive as well. He was prepared to be serious about foreign affairs, and the virtue of it was that he always was. He took right away to the idea of getting off the backwater issues like the test ban treaty and whatever the next one was. He got on the big issues, such as strategic relations with the Soviet Union, the Middle East, energy, and other things.

Heininger: How did your name come to his attention?

Hunter: Dick Holbrooke suggested me. I have no idea what their relationship was, but apparently he had asked Dick to recommend some people, and Dick recommended me.

Heininger: Who did you meet besides Kennedy when you first came?

Hunter: You mean after being offered the job?

Heininger: No, before. Besides himself, was there anyone else who he wanted you vetted by?

Hunter: As far as I know, no. I’m sure he did. One does this kind of thing, but I don’t know whether he did. I never asked. It never occurred to me. He didn’t say, “Who else can I talk to?” as far as I remember.

Heininger: Was there anybody else in the office he wanted you to meet?

Hunter: No, not before I was offered the job. As far as I remember, it was on the spot. Obviously it’s hard to say at what point I was introduced to other people. It may have been on that occasion and when I was getting vetted, as you put it. The two people who would have been important for that were Eddie Martin, the administrative assistant, and Carey Parker. I suspect that happened before the offer came, or maybe after the offer came, or before I made a decision, because I was a bit stupid in not saying “yes” immediately!

It took me a while to leave where I had been working, because the boss there tried to convince me to do it, but it was not a big deal. I remember that Kennedy offered me a certain amount of money, and I got him to give me $3,000 more, because back then the salaries, as you recall, were almost as much as a cup of coffee today. I can't remember whether the conversation with these people took place before or after. I don't remember.

Heininger: Aside from the U.S.-Soviet strategic relationship, what were the other issues that you felt he wanted you to deal with at that point?

Hunter: Europe. I had a good deal of experience in that. He had become a U.S. representative to what is now called the NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organisation] Parliamentary Assembly. In those days it was the North Atlantic Assembly. He had gone to a couple of meetings, and one of the things we were supposed to do was pump that up, to make him a leader on European issues, on NATO, on the European Union. I also had a strong Middle East background. We talked him through the central issues of U.S. foreign policy, the whole ball of wax, and he was very responsive.

He had folks who did other things. Mark Schneider, of course, was very much involved. He did, I think, Latin American issues, because he had experience there. He handled a lot of the domestic politics of the Middle East, and he handled quite a bit of the defense issues. Kennedy had Dale de Haan, who handled the Refugee Subcommittee, along with Jerry Tinker, who tragically died very young. That was one of those sad things that happens. So Dale did Vietnam and refugee issues, and I think he technically was paid out of the Refugee Subcommittee, which is part of the Judiciary Committee. That's where the money came from.

Heininger: Right.

Hunter: The Judiciary Committee staff, under James Eastland, was the largest staff by far in the Senate, because Eastland gathered a lot of issues. Here was Kennedy, a liberal, and here was Eastland, an archconservative. I'm a liberal, proud of it, so much so that [Rowland] Evans and [Robert] Novak once called me "super soft" in one of their columns in the *Post*. I was proud of that. In later years I used to be on CNN's *Crossfire*, and Evans and I got along famously.

One of the striking things was that when we on the staff wanted to travel, the money came out of the Judiciary Committee account, and Eastland never said no, but Kennedy had to ask him. It was wonderful politics. Bob Bates, who did African issues—one of the really great people in this business, with a great sense of humor—he and I traveled together to Africa. He later became the treasurer of Mobil Oil. In my judgment, he has been a vastly underutilized person in this business, but he is one of the greats. One of the things about Kennedy is that he hired very good people. Whether I'm one of them, I'll let other people judge. But I had the chance to work with a group of first-rate people. Kennedy would listen to people.

This will go in my memoirs, but I might as well say it now: I've divided the world of political people—and I've been doing this since I was in the Johnson White House -- for 45 years now, at the top levels of the government. I've seen a lot of things. I've been a fly on the wall. I divide politicians into two categories: the "do" people and the "be" people. The "be" people say, "I

want to be Secretary of State. I want to be President." And then, like the final line in *The Candidate*, "Now what do we do?" You know who that line was taken from, don't you?

Heininger: Yes.

Hunter: Kennedy's buddy from Harvard, John Tunney, the son of a fighter. He was a fighter, and he was a Senator.

And there are "do" people. Humphrey was a "do" person. Kennedy was a "do" person. All right, so he wanted to "be" these things, but he was driven. The idea that Kennedy was somehow just a lazy playboy—I've never met a political animal who has worked harder than Ted Kennedy has, from beginning to end. He's always on the go. I met my wife because of that.

Heininger: Oh no, we didn't include that.

Hunter: I suffer from jetlag. Kennedy doesn't. He gets off the plane, boom! I was running a trip for him to the Middle East in '75. This was after he decided not to run for President, so this wasn't about the grooming process or preparatory process, checking blocs and other things, training to be President or training not to be President. You'd be surprised how many of our people who run for President—and then become President—haven't bothered to train for it in foreign affairs.

Heininger: Most.

Hunter: Most of them. It's one of the tragedies of American politics, in dealing with the outside world. But he was serious about it.

Anyway, I was running this trip to the Middle East. On the way there, I'd arranged for him to speak at the Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference, in Geneva. I thought, *I'd better go ahead because he's going to hit the ground running*. I went the night ahead, and on the plane were Joan [Bennett Kennedy], his wife, and her brother-in-law. I had a free day, and the question was, do I spend it on Joan business, or do I do something else?

I ran into a friend from the Arms Control Association, Tom Halstead, who was the host of this thing, or who was involved in it. He said, "There's a reception at the *Palais des Nations* tonight. Why don't you come along?" I said, "No choice." So I went to that, and being a young guy—34, 35, unmarried—I looked around to see if there was an attractive woman maybe to have dinner with.

A very attractive woman made her way out onto the balcony over Lake Geneva with some other folks, so I followed her out there. I stuck out my paw to say hello, and she looked up and said, "Don't you remember me, Mr. Hunter?" She had been a student of mine at the London School of Economics, in 1968. I taught many things, but one class was the Great Powers of the Middle East, and she was a student. She was a third secretary in the Iranian Embassy in London, and she was my best student by far. End of story, right?

Seven years later Kennedy and I were going to Iran, and I thought, *Who do I know? There's that general I met in Tehran in 19-whatever. There was an Iranian student whose name I can't*

remember. Two weeks later she was standing in front of me, and I couldn't remember her name. So I whispered to a guy, and somebody gave me a piece of paper with her name on it. I took her to dinner that night, along with Tom, and the rest is history. There she is in that picture [*pointing*].

Heininger: Gorgeous.

Hunter: On her behalf, thank you. That's 10 years ago. And she's one of the smartest people I've ever met. She was then *chargé d'affaires* at the Iranian mission in Geneva, under the Shah. Eventually she came to the United States, at the end of '78, as we were contemplating marriage. Two or three weeks later, her country disappeared.

Heininger: How could you have forgotten her name when she looks like that?

Hunter: I'm very bad at names. That was serendipity.

Heininger: Yes.

Hunter: So because Kennedy doesn't suffer from jetlag, I met the woman I have been married to for 28 years. I'm making the point that Kennedy is a driven person. Sociologists say it has to do with being the youngest child, and because of what happened to his three brothers, having four siblings die violent deaths.

Heininger: Yes, right.

Hunter: I recently sent, through Carey, a thing I'd seen on eBay and had bought. This is an incredible story. The first edition of *Time* magazine that came out after the beginning of the Second World War—September 16 was the date on it, 1939—had Joe Kennedy on the cover. Obviously they had worked this out before the war started. He was Ambassador to London. If you go through the story, there is a picture of Joe Kennedy sitting at breakfast with his young son Joe, and Teddy, whose feet didn't reach the ground. He was about this tall.

Also, this was two days after the war started, I guess. The Germans sank a ship that had a lot of Americans on it. The *Athenia*. It was out of Glasgow, and a lot of Americans died. Ambassador Kennedy sent his second son, John Kennedy, up to Glasgow to meet with the relatives of the survivors. All this ties together. I gave him a copy of this *Time* Magazine, and I'm sure he looked at the picture of himself in there. They had a picture of the cover in the Kennedy Senate office, but I don't think they had a copy of the actual magazine.

Obviously there is a sense of family responsibility there, and you can see it. Some of it might also have been, "I'll show the sons of bitches." Jimmy Carter has that quality. One reason he has been such a great ex-President is because he says, "I'm going to show these sons of bitches." People don't understand that Jimmy Carter, who is a great Christian inside, has a streak of obstinacy. I don't mean that in a negative sense. I worked for him for four years in the White House. Jimmy Carter was always grinning, but you have to watch his eyes to know what he really feels. If he narrowed the eyes, you knew he was angry. It was sort of like Kennedy thinking, *I'm going to show these guys*. "If your name were Edward Moore and not Edward

Moore Kennedy, your candidacy would be a joke," the famous line from the Speaker's nephew, Eddie McCormack, who has now disappeared, in the 1962 Senate primary.

The sum of it is that—and I worked for Humphrey, and I watched a lot of this—Ted Kennedy has sponsored into law more progressive legislation than any other Senator in United States history. Nobody else comes close, even people like Humphrey. It's a stunning achievement. Much of it came because of whatever the motives were or because of an accretion of doing one thing after another, building up this stunning record. I cut my political eyeteeth on a number of people, but the lessons I learned from Ted Kennedy were extraordinary. You, having been in foreign affairs and having accomplished as much as you have, will understand that foreign policy is nothing unless it's bipartisan.

Heininger: Right.

Hunter: The outside world doesn't give a damn who the President is. Unless it's bipartisan, it doesn't work. You learn very quickly with Kennedy that you treat everyone with respect, and you never burn a bridge. He worked with Bobby Byrd a lot, who is a fire-breathing guy on certain kinds of things. He worked with Orrin Hatch. I learned very quickly to park my ideology and partisanship at the door. You're working for Ted Kennedy, and you'll obviously get things done, and you work with whoever because today's enemies will be tomorrow's necessary friends.

One thing I like about the Senate is, as you know, there are two classes of people in the Senate. It's a democracy. There are Senators, and there's everybody else. Everybody else is more or less equal. Sure, there are administrative assistants and other things, but the gap is so huge. I tell people that I used to work on the Hill. Young people have an incredible amount of responsibility, for reasons you know. I say, "When you go see somebody, walk in the door and ask to see somebody about a job. If they treat you badly, you don't want to work there because the boss will be bad. If they treat you well, you say okay." That's the first thing. Melody [Miller], for example, was receptionist for a number of years, even before she became press secretary, an extraordinary asset.

Everybody expects Ted Kennedy to be arrogant. Of course he's not arrogant at all. I will say one critical thing. In recent years, though it's not as bad as it has been, they have had some young guys who have let it go to their heads that they work for Kennedy. Not a good thing. I mentioned that to Melody once, after she left the office and things had changed. She got it straightened out.

Heininger: What was your impression of Kennedy before you came to work for him? Did you see him as a lightweight? I know there was the issue of him running for President, but did your image of him change once you started working for him?

Hunter: Not really, because I had been in the game for a while—working for Johnson, Humphrey, and others—and I learned to suspend judgment about people based on their public images. It was clear that Kennedy was doing very important things, so the idea that he was a heavyweight was a given. Obviously there were a lot of things I learned about him. I was talking about "be" people and "do" people, and he was clearly a "do" person.

There's another quality too: his staff—very important. He has a tolerance for other smart people. Hubert Humphrey always had to be the smartest guy in the room, but he wanted other smart people in the room. Bill Clinton, at least in foreign affairs, had to be the *only* smart person in the room. I don't know about [Barack] Obama yet. I don't know him. Mondale had smart people, wanted smart people, and the issue didn't come up.

Kennedy didn't give a damn about any of that. He was a Kennedy, I guess. He wanted extremely smart people around, and he listened to them, and he was never threatened by them. He's a Kennedy. There was never an emotional problem with having really smart people. The other thing is that he would listen to them. But you couldn't put things over on him—there are a lot of Senators you can put something over on—because you presumed he was talking to other people, and he also was a very good judge of these things. Maybe he wasn't the smartest guy in foreign affairs—maybe in other things too—but he didn't have to be. Foreign affairs obviously wasn't his first love, but he would listen to people, and he had good judgment. Often he would do things, not because he necessarily knew the issue, but because he had learned to trust you.

I have great admiration for just about everybody who worked for Kennedy. I wouldn't say that about other people I've worked for. One of Humphrey's problems was that good people went on to other jobs, and the people who were not as good stayed around. He built up a lot of people around him like barnacles. I won't mention the name, but I knew of only one person that Humphrey ever fired. Not smart, not good.

Kennedy had these good people he would listen to. As a result he attracted good people well after the time that he might have been President, people who were enthusiastic and wanted to get things done. Maybe they were liberals in foreign affairs. It doesn't matter much. They were "Let's make the world a better place" people, as opposed to ones who say, "Let's screw the foreigners." He attracted people like that, and he listened to them. "Give me your head."

Another thing, to give you a contrast, is speechwriting. A lot of people fuss over it. Hubert Humphrey, who was a wonderful guy in many respects, had every strength and every weakness any human being ever had. I emphasize both qualities. He would masticate a speech. There are some anecdotes that I'll put in my memoirs, but he'd edit with a blue pencil right up to the second he'd give a speech, changing this and changing that.

Kennedy, I don't think, ever wrote a word to change something in a speech, but he would go through something and say, "I'm not comfortable with this. There's something wrong here." You'd try three or four formulations until he felt comfortable with it. You'd do the writing. That's no less engaged than somebody else, but he wouldn't impose his particular verbiage. By God, if it wasn't right, either in terms of policy or in terms of politics or something, he knew it. He would get you to do the work with him instead of his changing things.

Heininger: At this point had Carey Parker assumed the role that he later had with Kennedy, of being the superlative speechwriter?

Hunter: From the very beginning Carey was the go-to guy. It was clear that he was the guy of last resort and, later, of first resort too. He earned Kennedy's trust. He turns out copy of the highest quality day in and day out, and he enjoys it. Carey had charge of the Irish issue, and I got

involved in it, and, over time, working with Carey, I became an expert on the Irish issue. But Carey was the custodian of the Irish issue. That was good.

It was fundamentally a cooperative staff. There were a few people who would hug issues to themselves. Mark Schneider did that from time to time. But he was very good. Dale de Haan didn't like any competition. He was the only one who was really bad about it. I think he was deeply insecure about that. He had to have his issue.

Heininger: When Jerry Tinker took it over, was he the same way?

Hunter: No, Jerry was a totally different personality. In fact the only trip I wanted to go on that I didn't get to go on for the Senator was to Vietnam, when we started doing things on that issue. At some point I went to Kennedy and he approved my going, but Dale sabotaged it because it was his issue. He was the only guy who did that. He was very good at what he did, incidentally, on the refugees, but he was the only one who had a turf issue.

Mark would occasionally, when he had a strong political slant on something, do a little bit of that, but mostly not. He included me in everything. He and I went to Cuba together. I organized it, and I invited Mark to come along because he knew the issues and the language. I could have done it on my own, but that would have been stupid. I have very high regard for Mark, incidentally, so ignore anything I've said that might sound slightly critical. He was a 22-hour-a-day guy who could sit down and write speeches, statements of high quality endlessly. I'm a pretty good writer too, so I think I can judge others who are good, like Mark.

Heininger: So you came in knowing already that foreign policy was parceled out. Bob Bates, for example, was handling Africa.

Hunter: No, I didn't know that when I got there.

Heininger: Okay.

Hunter: It didn't bother me; and I learned almost immediately how good Bob was. I was the foreign policy advisor, and Kennedy made it clear that I was the guy, that I was being given a title that hadn't existed before. I was it. I was the central guy. But I like to think I'm not so stupid as to compete with or deny the capacities of other people. It's just dumb.

Heininger: Right.

Hunter: So I made alliances. As I said, the only one it didn't work terribly well with was Dale, because he was very insecure about these things. I made alliances with everybody else, worked with Mark, and had a wonderful time working with Carey. Carey is deeply serious, and he understands the human comedy at the same time, in the right way, in the way that lets off steam and enables you to get the job done. But the way he does it is absolutely serious. That's a good thing.

Bob Bates had a certain quality, this jet-black guy who understood exactly what was happening. He never allowed himself to be defined by his blackness. In other words, no chip on the shoulder, none of the psychological things that, thank God, the election of Obama has already

wiped out a large chunk of. I've always regretted that Bob never became an Ambassador, a senior government person. I never thought I was going to see it, but I always believed that we needed to get a Republican black President first, if I'm allowed to use the word black for African American.

The Obama election has had a miraculous effect on the nature of American society. I've always believed in my country, and I'm a do person. I'm attracted to do people because they often respond to other do people. Be people can sometimes be successful, but rarely over a sustained period. Sometimes you can take somebody and put them in there and they can be effective, but it's always the do people who have lasting value. I didn't know Phil Hart. I met him a couple of times. People worshiped Phil Hart. Have you met Burt Wides?

Heininger: We have interviewed him, but I was not the person who interviewed him.

Hunter: Burt has been a friend of mine for 53 years. We were closest friends in high school. We're still very close. He worked with Kennedy later on, in Judiciary. He worshiped Hart. Of course Burt has an extremely high regard for Kennedy too. Hart was a do person. They're the ones who have lasting quality, even Republican do people, for whom the country comes first.

Mac [Charles] Mathias was my Congressman when I came to Washington in 1961 for the summer. My parents lived in Cumberland, Maryland, at that point, and I went to see him. The following year, when Burt and I and some others shared a house in Georgetown for the summer, we invited Mac for dinner. I wrote two maiden speeches. I wrote Mac's maiden speech in the Senate, and I helped write Hubert Humphrey's the second time around. If I were to have a Republican President, it would have been Mac Mathias, but of course that means he's not a Republican. [*laughs*] That's like my admiration for Chuck Hagel. He's not a Republican either.

Heininger: Jack Danforth was a do person too.

Hunter: Yes. Coming back to Kennedy, he was devoted to getting things done and to having people who wanted to get things done, even somebody like Dale, who was a difficult customer. People didn't go around preening themselves. Their attitude was, "How do I use this job to advance the public good?"

Heininger: What did he have you work on when you first came in?

Hunter: I can get out the papers, I'm sure. I gave him a long memo on the energy crisis, which was, at that point, eight or nine proposals. It wasn't my area at that point. He wrote on it, "Great ideas, but politically it can't go anywhere."

And that's still true, even today, even a gas tax. I don't like the CAFE [Corporate Average Fuel Economy] standards. I think you should say—and of course you make exceptions for people in certain parts of the country—that if you buy a vehicle and a standard is set for miles per hour, then if your car's mileage is less than that, you pay a hefty registration fee every year. Five miles, $50,000. If you want to buy that, fine. It's your business. If you do better than that, you get about half of it back in rebate, and the intervening money goes to public transportation. That'll clean things up quickly. Kennedy got on—I think I got him to do this—the Energy Subcommittee, some damn thing. He took it very seriously. He also took on some extra things,

such as the Office of Technology Assessment, which he created, led by Ellis Mottur. OTA was killed later on by the Republicans. Kennedy would grab things when he had good people to work on them.

Kennedy was going to a meeting of the North Atlantic Assembly, in Brussels, that fall. I wrote a speech for him to give at some forum related to the European Economic Community, and I got a very sharp lesson early on about writing for him. The speech was more boilerplate than anything else. We were arriving in Brussels, and he got in the car, getting off the plane. He was reading the speech and he didn't like it at all, this phrase and that phrase. I made the mistake of saying, "That's the kind of thing Hubert Humphrey would have said." He said, "I'm not Hubert Humphrey." I sat up the entire night and was on the phone with Carey [Parker], and we produced a high-quality, substantive speech. It was a good lesson for me. It never happened again.

Of course I was to learn something else as we were going to the speech. I was bleary-eyed, and Kennedy said, "Where's my speech?" I said, "You have it." He'd left it in the car. I had a copy. That relates to my line about how he wouldn't rewrite anything himself. That wasn't a sign of a lack of interest or a lack of intelligence. It was a respect for craft. He had the knowledge and the instinct that something wasn't right and that something had to go into it, unlike a lot of these guys. It's what I call leadership, not from a guy down in the weeds who had to masticate a text. Our current President hasn't gotten there yet. We'll see if he does.

Heininger: He's new.

Hunter: Some of them never learn it. I pray that he will.

Heininger: You broached topics with him when you were hired. He said he was interested in the test ban treaty and you said, "You need to be broader."

Hunter: Yes. I said, "That's a minor issue. You need to be looking at—" and I listed a wide range of things, strategic arms control, détente, NATO, Middle East, Japan, economic development, energy. "Absolutely," he said. "Let's do it. That's why I'm hiring you."

Heininger: How did you carry that out? What actions did you have him do to broaden his interests?

Hunter: Lots of memos, floor statements and speeches, and I introduced him to some of the best people in the country, and foreign leaders who came through. Once, I brought in a German politician, who spent 58 of the 60 minutes talking about himself. When he left, Kennedy crooked his finger at me to come into his office. "There is *no way* that that guy will be *ever* be Chancellor of Germany," he said. It was Helmut Kohl. I was also the staff cat beller. Who would put the bell on the cat? If there was a difficult issue that he had to be told about, I would tell him about it.

Heininger: Lucky you.

Hunter: He would quiet down, internalize things, and take things on board. He had a temper if he got something that was of inferior quality or something like that, but he never shot the messenger—a very important quality in leadership. When I was running a staff or when I ran the U.S. NATO staff and had a leadership role in the Alliance, I never shot the messenger. I learned

in my very first job, in the Polaris program [1961]—Admiral Red [William] Raborn ran that—that the only time you shoot the messenger is if something happens that you hadn't been told about.

Heininger: That's the non-messenger.

Hunter: I'd reward somebody [on my NATO staff] who'd come in and say, "We have some bad news." I'd say, "Thank you for telling me about it in time for me to do something about it."

Heininger: Right.

Hunter: Kennedy never shot the messenger. I'm not making him out to be a saint. He had a temper, and he wanted things right away. Where is my so and so? What happened to this? Where is such and such? How come this, or how come that? He kept you on your toes. But he was never gratuitous. He didn't kick the cat, if that's the right phrase.

Heininger: So the first year you were there, the energy crisis blew up.

Hunter: I can't remember exactly what came up when.

Heininger: Who was handling energy initially?

Hunter: It was probably being treated as a domestic issue.

Heininger: Did you take over energy because it had so many foreign policy ramifications?

Hunter: I don't know how it came about, but when he got himself on an energy subcommittee of something or other. Up until then, there hadn't been a lot to do, not in a coherent way, when the energy crisis came. I'd spent a good deal of time on it, where I had been before, at the Overseas Development Council. How I ended up with it, I can't even remember. But Kennedy was willing to take it on, the extra subcommittee, even with the time demands, because it was so important.

I remember sitting in a hearing with Kennedy, and he was sitting next to Chuck [Charles] Percy. Various witnesses came up, and the head of the Cadillac Motor Division came up, and Percy asked, "Your cars don't get good mileage, so why do people buy them?" He replied, "The only reason we make cars that don't get good mileage is because people want to buy them." I looked at Kennedy, and he looked at me. We had that kind of relationship. He looked at me and was obviously thinking, *What a bozo*. I guess Percy had volunteered: "I guess the reason is that people want them." He was the one who did it.

Then the former Governor of Massachusetts, Elliot Richardson, a Republican, came up to testify. He was one of the heroes of the Saturday Night Massacre. He was then Secretary of Commerce. I listened to him and then turned to Kennedy and said, "This guy talks like he has a plum in his mouth. How did he get to be Governor of Massachusetts?" He said, "Why do you think he never became a Senator?" Kennedy is shrewd, but he also has a killer political instinct from time to time, and he can be sarcastic about other people. You have to like that in your politicians. He's nobody's fool. He would treat John Tunney like a kid. So all right, fine. Who cares? He's a human being. He's an Irish politician, but his focus is on "How do we get the job done?"

Heininger: Did you handle arms sales?

Hunter: Yes.

Heininger: What was Kennedy's attitude on arms sales?

Hunter: It was interesting. If you look in the literature, you'll find an article I wrote for *Foreign Affairs*, I think, about the Persian Gulf.

Heininger: Seventy-five.

Hunter: Yes. I wrote that from my experience in this. I worked at the Institute for Strategic Studies. I'd had a very strong European and Middle East background. I've now worked on Arab-Israeli issues for 42 years—the same people, the same issues, same frustrations.

There was some stuff in the in the article about limiting arms sales to Saudi Arabia, and I remember that Paul Kirk was there. He said, "We have Raytheon up in the state." Kennedy turned to me and said, "Is this the right policy?" I said yes, and he said, "Okay, I'll do it."

Heininger: Why did he oppose arms sales?

Hunter: Because of the risk of fomenting conflict in the region. It was a generic thing. It wasn't, "This is the way because Israel wants it." It was because—and I still hold the opinion today looking back—the over-arming of various countries in the region, whether it was the Iranians or the Saudis or others, would lead to conflict at some point. That was an open spigot.

I'm going to use a formulation that I'm sure you'll understand. Modern weapons—high performance, rapid delivery, high impact—were designed for use over significant distances in a Central European war against the Soviet Union. If you take those weapons and you put them in a tiny little place, you don't get any arms-control effect. The guy who strikes first will prevail, as the Israelis demonstrated in the '67 war, where they had no choice but to go first. They wiped out the Egyptian Air Force in a few hours. If you put all these advanced arms in the Persian Gulf and somebody makes a mistake, all of a sudden, whoo! So the idea was to have arms control, of which arms sales was an element.

Heininger: How much did it relate to the energy crisis?

Hunter: Thinking back—and this is not a memory now; this is analysis—we were soaking up petrol dollars with arms sales. But I don't recall that ever being a consideration, and frankly it was only marginal anyway. We wanted to curry favor with these people and we wanted security, but we were pumping weapons out where, frankly, they wouldn't know how to use them except to get in trouble.

Kennedy had a constituency issue, but he chose what I told him. I was able to convince him—by that time he trusted me—that it was the right thing to do. He chose the right policy over the constituency interest with the Raytheon folks.

Heininger: How popular was this with other Democrats? How about the liberal Democrats?

Hunter: I don't remember. I could go back and look it up.

Heininger: No, no need.

Hunter: See, Kennedy was always in the lead, on the lead, on the point. I would then go around and build support. He was doing the ABM [Anti-Ballistic Missile] Treaty, for example. I don't know at what point [Richard] Perle came to work for [Henry] Jackson. I would almost say it was a tragic case, that Jackson became a prisoner of Richard Perle, Dorothy Fosdick, that crowd of people. In the early years of the Cold War, I think Jackson went off the deep end and later that became very sad. I guess I won't even use the words tragic and sad. I mean, he was a United States Senator, and he allowed himself to get used. Kennedy never allowed himself to get used, as far as I could tell.

Perle was dead set against any arms control at all, and he and I used to tussle at times. I had already known him. When I was in my second year at the London School of Economics, he came there as a junior-year abroad, so I already knew him. I've had a cordial relationship with him ever since—you do that in politics—but he and I used to have a tussle, and I beat him every time by doing organizational work, by getting the Kennedy statements, by getting in the amendments, and by going around in the middle of the night and putting them under Senators' doors for my colleagues. Perle was a political blackmailer in the sense of saying, "You're not a patriot," or, "You're not strong enough for Israel," and that kind of thing.

The Jackson-[Charles] Vanik amendment, which Perle pushed, was not designed to get Jews out of the Soviet Union. It was designed to kill the relationship with the Soviet Union in terms of détente and arms control. That's why it was done. All of us who worked on the Hill knew about it. We knew what he was doing. In fact the Jackson-Vanik amendment instantly stopped the flow of Jewish refugees from the Soviet Union, which Kennedy worked very hard on —Dale de Haan, me, Marc Ginsberg, who was a protégé of mine. It dried up instantly with Jackson-Vanik. When I was in the White House handling Middle East issues, I had the Israeli Deputy Minister for Aliyah, for people immigrating to Israel, come see me. He said, "The Jackson-Vanik amendment is killing us in terms of the exit of Soviet Jews. It's a disaster." I said, "Go talk to Senator Jackson." Perle didn't give a damn about the Soviet Jews or about refugees at all.

Kennedy got more Soviet Jews out than Jackson did. Marc Ginsberg had the lead on that.

Heininger: He got more out than anybody else.

Hunter: Sure. De Haan also worked on it. I worked on it. Tinker worked on it.

Heininger: Let's talk about the U.S.-Soviet relationship.

Hunter: Remember, a lot of this bridged over the time when Kennedy took himself out of running for President. His interest in foreign affairs did not flag at all.

Heininger: It hasn't since either.

Hunter: No. It hasn't. He didn't say to himself, "What the hell, I did that, worked on foreign policy so I could run for President. Now I'll go back and do something else." That then leads you

to wonder, *Was one of his motives that he wanted to do foreign policy even if he wasn't going to run for President?*

Incidentally I remember the fifth anniversary of Chappaquiddick. I was out at the house working on a speech with him, and he was giving a TV interview to Barbara Walters. Among the staff, when the anniversary came around, people talked about it with each another. This was after two years of working for him. You know what he was accused of doing at Chappaquiddick. Through my interaction with him, I'd come to believe that the Ted Kennedy I knew would not have been capable of doing what he was accused of doing at Chappaquiddick, as a matter of character.

He's no saint, as we all know, but I came to the conclusion that the man I worked for was not capable of doing what he was accused of doing—that is, either the affair or abandoning her. No, he wouldn't have been capable. And I believe that not because I want to believe it. You get to know people. Remember, these are not easy moral dilemmas. What we're talking about that he's been through and the issues involved, this isn't patty-cake. This is central stuff.

I remember that the only issue we on the staff had difficulty getting our minds around and our feelings around was the pardon for [Richard] Nixon. There was a difference of opinion within the staff on that.

Heininger: Really?

Hunter: Oh yes, and he listened to people. He took it all in. This was before he made up his mind. Bob Bates' view, which a lot of us were sympathetic to, was, "Look at what happens to my people. We don't get pardons. Why should this guy, who has done all these bad things, get a pardon?" It went back and forth. Kennedy, of course, always had to think about how it would look if he seemed to be piling on. Eventually he endorsed the pardon, which I think was probably the right thing to do, because history was going to punish the son of a bitch, and [Gerald] Ford did some remarkable things in there as President. I remember that we had a real set-to within the office, and Kennedy listened to people.

That was the thing: if he had a tough issue, he'd call people in and we'd have it out with one another, and he'd make a decision. He had an instinct for, *I have to get everybody in here, and let's go at it*. He welcomed people going at it, and that would include Eddie Martin, me, always Carey Parker, whoever had earned his trust. He didn't want us to be shrinking violets. Carey has superb judgment. Of course he would play games with Ireland, but that's all right. I learned how to do it as well.

A little anecdote. When I came back from NATO as Ambassador to see Kennedy, and his sister was the Ambassador to Ireland—I think she did a great job. I'd been over to see her in Dublin, and I watched what she did. It was the first time Jean [Kennedy Smith] finally had something she could do on her own, and by God she was serious about it. Everybody was very proud of her. He said, "How's Jean doing?" I told him I thought she was doing a great job, and I could detect a sense of envy. You have to understand the Kennedys, and I think you do. They are intensely competitive with one another. But the Kennedys versus the outside world? Okay, fine, very healthy.

Kennedy, as you know, is not very articulate. But he'll rehearse speeches, things like that. When I got to know him, I'd have a conversation with him and he'd start a sentence and would either finish the sentence or he'd start the sentence and then stop, but you knew what the rest of the sentence was. I'm confident the reason was that he was the seventh kid. He never got a word in edgewise at the dinner table.

Heininger: Right.

Hunter: He had to wait his turn and maybe it never came, so I'm sure that conditioned him. He did a lot of work on paper. He processed memos right away, overnight, or if there was a difference of view, he wrote on it "See me." You could come up with inventive ideas. He was immensely responsive to good ideas, no matter who had them.

I wanted him to travel. He wanted to travel. I ran trips for him to all kinds of places—for instance, the trip to the Soviet Union in which we had four hours with [Leonid] Brezhnev, just the two of us. I would insist upon going along to the meetings, and he was very good about that. He also wanted a record keeper. I treated him the way you're supposed to, never presuming, but he was always very good about including me in these meetings.

Heininger: Did you have an Embassy person with you in these meetings with foreign leaders?

Hunter: No.

Heininger: So you were the note taker?

Hunter: Among other things, yes. He would be quite good about briefing the Embassy people, generally, but he preferred not to have them in the meetings, and most of them were smart enough not to insist. We were in Egypt, going to see [Anwar] Sadat, and the Ambassador was smart enough not to insist on going along, though I had told Kennedy beforehand, "This is probably the best guy we have on the Middle East." After about an hour of talking with the Ambassador, Kennedy came out and said, "If that's the best we have. We're in real trouble."

I remember one thing about when Kennedy raised the issue of Soviet Jews. Brezhnev came up with a formulation that translated into, "Some of my best friends are Jews," and Kennedy and I looked at one another. We had asked for [Mstislav] Rostropovich. This is something Joan did. I was so proud of her for this. Lenny Bernstein came to Joan and said that Rostropovich couldn't get out. So Joan made this her project. The first night there, we had dinner in the Rossiya Hotel, with the Soviets. They try to psyche people out. It's a technique the Russians have.

I had been there enough times. I had been there three times already before that. I had run a couple of student tours there, living on the Soviet economy. The official delegations are kept going day and night, because they keep you, when you're in an official delegation, from seeing what's going on. I already knew where the bodies were buried in terms of how they did things, having had to do it. On one of those visits, the person in London, a Dutchman, who ran these student trips had pulled a couple of fast ones, so when we got to Moscow I was told that our visit was cancelled. The actual words were, "Mr. Hunter, your group has been liquidated." Which didn't give me an especially warm feeling. So for a week in Moscow I had 18 people to take care

of. We were there "on the economy," which you just didn't do in those days in the Soviet Union, without guides and leaders—their leaders. I figured out how the system really worked.

So Joan was going to do this. She was there that evening and she started going on with these people about Rostropovich. Kennedy wasn't paying attention but was talking to other officials. In fact, they had a woman there who had been Minister of Fisheries since 1939, and here it was 1974. Can you believe it?

Heininger: That's institutional memory.

Hunter: Yes, but more important she had survived the [Josef] Stalin years and the turnover in leaders because she worked on fisheries, right? Everybody wants the fish to work right, so she had survived. Meanwhile, Joan was going on about Rostropovich. The next day, Kennedy and I were in the meeting with Brezhnev, and halfway through I scribbled Kennedy a note, "Be sure to raise Rostropovich." So he raised Rostropovich. It wasn't on his list. This was for Joan. Brezhnev said, "Really? I thought he left a long time ago." Ha ha.

Heininger: Ha ha, yes, right.

Hunter: As we were getting on the plane to leave Moscow, somebody from the Embassy came up and said, "Rostropovich has just gotten his exit visa." It was a gift to Kennedy.

Heininger: But you hadn't worked this out ahead of time. Subsequently, weren't there other trips where conditions were made about the release of certain people before he would go, or weren't there promises to consider?

Hunter: I didn't do the other ones. That was the only Soviet trip I did for him. Well, let's say we had made it very clear in advance that we expected them to release people. He had a list of names. He couldn't say, "You have to release them," but he gave them a list of names and was highly successful at that.

If I can jump to that trip, there's a photograph there [*pointing*]. Marc Ginsberg, a good guy, was working on these issues. I took him under my wing, a protégé, and he has done great things. He has been the Ambassador to Morocco and a lot of other things. When I was doing the Middle East at the White House, he was working there too, along with a man who was the liaison to the Jewish community, Ed Sanders, later Al [Alfred] Moses. One of my jobs on the National Security Council staff at the White House was to make sure that issues turned out right, which meant that if you wanted the Arab-Israeli thing to turn out right—which included my stopping efforts by some people in the State Department gratuitously to beat up on Israel—you had to have a very close, trusted relationship with the Jewish community.

The moment I got the job with Kennedy, he had a man, a close friend of his, a personal advisor, including in Jewish affairs—if memory serves, George Abrams—who took me around to meet the leaders, such as Sy Kenan, from the Jewish Telegraph Agency, and a number of others so that they could have a look at me. It's very important to create these relationships because you have to create the relationship with trust.

I had spent a lot of time as a teenager reading about the Holocaust. Before I went to Kennedy, I had been to Buchenwald, to Dachau, and then when I was at NATO, to Auschwitz. My wife was born the day Auschwitz was liberated, a fascinating coincidence, January 27, 1945. This was important, how I felt about these things. That's one reason why I have always had a trusted relationship with the Israelis and with the Arabs, because you have to show empathy and be honest. I suspect I'm one of the very few people in public life in this country who has a trusted relationship with both sides, to this day.

Anyway, so Marc had been working a case involving Stephen and Marina Epelman. Stephen Epelman was a doctor. They were from Leningrad. He had gone to a scientific conference in Vienna or some place, he was allowed out temporarily for that. He worked it out with his family and then defected to Israel. As a result, the Soviets wouldn't let his wife Marina out. Marc was working the issue, so he said, "See what you can do." I said okay.

When we were in Moscow, Jim King was Kennedy's advance man. Maybe the world's best advance man—a wonderful human being. We'd worked out what we were going to do on the trip. Incidentally, beforehand I wanted to make sure Kennedy saw the right people in the Jewish leadership, to be sure we were getting the issue right. I had done that with Ted [Theodore] Sorensen before. I'd been with him in Moscow when he was running for the Senate in 1970.

So I did my intelligence. I discovered that if Kennedy met with both the head of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry and the president of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, that was okay. If he saw any third person, he'd have to see a thousand. Kennedy invited them in for a meeting over a sandwich lunch, and he was talking about what he would do in Moscow. And do you know what the Senate cafeteria served? BLTs. [*laughs*]

Heininger: Oh, my God.

Hunter: It was amazing.

Heininger: They were talking about being tone deaf.

Hunter: Wow. Anyway, it wasn't the office. They ordered sandwiches, and those were sent up from the cafeteria.

Anyway, I had also taken Kennedy down to the Soviet Embassy to see Ambassador [Anatoly] Dobrynin to work out the trip. That reminds me, on another occasion Dobrynin's deputy came up to see Kennedy in his office, the number-two guy in the Embassy named Yuli Vorontsov. He later became a big Ambassador too. He was sitting with Kennedy and he said something about Kennedy's stand on arms control and how important it was that he was at variance with the Administration.

But that was way over the line, and Kennedy exploded at him. In effect Vorontsov was trying to get Kennedy in a position where he wouldn't be loyal on this particular issue. Kennedy exploded at this guy, and he threw him out of the office. It was absolutely the right thing to do. Then he waved for me to come in. I went in there and he started giggling. He asked, "So?" I said, "Absolutely, you had to do that." He said, "I had to do that. Now what do I do?" I said, "Why don't you call Dobrynin?" "Good." So he called Dobrynin and said, "Anatoli, it has been a long

time since I've seen you. What a great guy you are. You're fantastic. I'm a little less enthusiastic about your number two, however," or words to that effect. Boom.

He had this quality. Like when we came back from Iran, Tom Enders was an Assistant Secretary of State. A big, tall guy—one of these Foreign Service officers who thinks altogether too much of himself. He was coming to see Kennedy. That morning Sally Quinn had an interview in the Style section of the *Post* with Enders' wife, and she had said something about Teddy being a spoiled playboy, something like that. You can look it up. It's in there. So Enders showed up to see Kennedy, and everybody was looking around the corner to see this guy. Here was the guy, the husband of the woman who had just said this thing. It was incredible to see what was going to happen.

So it was just me and the Senator with Enders, and Enders started off by saying, "Senator, she was misquoted." "Yes, no problem. Don't worry about it. I understand," that kind of "don't worry about it" talk, very low key, dismissive. Then they started talking about Iran. At one point on the trip to Teheran there had been some friction with the Shah. Incidentally, there's the picture of Kennedy, me, and the Shah [*pointing*]. It was the longest meeting with foreigners that the Shah had ever had—an hour and 47 minutes—in his entire reign. That was in '75. Yes, '75, that same trip I was talking about, when I met my future wife in Geneva.

Heininger: Kennedy looks so young there.

Hunter: Yes, he did. I didn't. I had a beard. He looked young.

Anyway, the Shah had said a couple of sharp things about Kennedy in the press afterwards. A lot had been said, and we pushed the arms-sales-control ideas, and the price of oil in OPEC [Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries] and the Shah was unhappy about that. Kennedy does these things. He has guts. It was the right thing to do. So Kennedy said to Enders, "Somebody has to set this guy straight about some of these things, about the relationship with us. We need to send somebody tough over there to lay down the law to this guy. For example, we could send you—or we could send your wife." Payback. It was wonderful. [*laughs*]

Anyway, I went over the Soviet Jewish refusnik issues with Marc Ginsberg, and Kennedy was going to see Soviet Jews, and we had lists of people to try to get out. The U.S. Embassy control officer in Moscow, a wonderful human being, Warren Zimmerman, who died of cancer, who wrote a great book about some key American statesmen—he was under orders, he was a First Secretary, about not getting involved in Kennedy's off-agenda meetings. Well, I had already learned that you do your intelligence work. You prepare well for these things. There are always people in the bureaucracy who want to do the right thing. You find out who they are. It's your job, right?

Heininger: Right.

Hunter: You get around. There was a guy named Mel [Melvyn] Levitsky in the Embassy. I went to see him, and he was the liaison to the Soviet Jewish community, so he was our guy. I can't remember if this was before or after we went to Leningrad. So we were going to Leningrad, and we decided to try to see Marina Epelman. The U.S. Consul General was quite useful in this. I got with Kennedy and said, "We're going to arrange a meeting with Marina," so the Consul General

helped arranged it. Just before we were about to leave for the meeting, we got a message that Marina Epelman had hollered across the companionway, out the window, to a woman neighbor—like Molly Goldberg —that she had been barricaded in her apartment by the KGB [Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti]. You have to remember, when Kennedy was there, he was under complete KGB control.

Heininger: Of course.

Hunter: I had said to Kennedy before the trip, "No matter what you do, they'll know in advance and they'll run everything. You can't help it." We stayed in the Lenin Hills. We stayed in the same suite where [Henry] Kissinger would have stayed, to keep us under control. I managed to go around and do a few things, because I knew some things that could be done around Moscow, keeping the intelligence flowing, Jimmy King and I. So in Leningrad, I said to Kennedy, "This is what has happened." He got furious. He said, "We're getting in the motorcade and we're going there right now." I said, "No, because she won't be there by the time you get there. The KGB will make sure of it."

So we came back from Leningrad on the plane to Moscow with the National Security Advisor to Brezhnev, [Andrei] Aleksandrov-Agentov, I think it was. We had one of Brezhnev's personal planes. We got back to the airport in Moscow, and we were about to transfer to the cars, and Kennedy sat there and reamed this guy out. It was for what he'd done in general, what he'd done to a United States Senator, what he had done with Marina Epelman, how they treated the Jews. He just, wham! And that guy got out of the plane absolutely ashen. Of course they'd done something to embarrass a guest of the General Secretary, right? This was still '74, when Kennedy might have become President. But he let him have it. It was wonderful.

The sidebar to that story was that we went to Israel several months later. Marc continued to work on the case, and he finally got Marina Epelman out. She went off to Israel. Six months later or something, Kennedy was going to Israel. I was running the trip, and Jimmy had gone ahead as the advance man. I said to him, "See if you can find the Epelmans." He called back and said, "I found the Epelmans." He said, "They're in Be'er-Sheva." As luck would have it, Stephen was a doctor there at the Ben-Gurion medical facilities. And as luck would have it, Kennedy was going to go speak at Ben-Gurion University, in Be'er-Sheva.

So we went down there and I said, "We have it arranged. He's going to meet the Epelmans." Sure enough we got him to the Epelmans, and we explained all of what Kennedy had done to get Marina out. Golda [Meir] was there. She was out of office then, and she was a pistol. So I wrote the line I'm most proud of out of all the ones I've written for Kennedy, which he then read out loud during his speech at Ben Gurion. It told the story of the Epelmans, Leningrad. "So," he said, "for the Epelmans, 'next year in Jerusalem' is this year in Be'er-Sheva." I'm so proud of that line.

Heininger: I knew of the line.

Hunter: Anyway, so when it came to Soviet Jews, Warren couldn't touch it. He was under instructions. He wouldn't touch it, but I'm sure he was told not to touch it, because he was a man of quality. So I went to Mel Levitsky, who organized a meeting with a group of refuseniks at

someone's home. I can't remember. I have the list somewhere. But I knew that if we were to take Kennedy from the Lenin Hills out there, they would be gone, the KGB would see to that.

Jimmy and I arranged to go in advance, and the Embassy wouldn't give us a car to do it. So we got them to take us down to the Intourist Hotel, which has since been torn down to build a nice modern one, near Red Square. It was snowing and it was slushy. They dropped us off there, and of course we were followed by a car with KGB guys in hats, and we waited for a cab. We finally got a cab and gave the driver the address, way out of town somewhere, in high-rise apartments with numbers on them, that sort of thing—no names, just numbers. Of course this little car was following us. They could have taken us if they had wanted to, but they didn't know where we were going, because we were going to get there first and then send a message back to bring Kennedy out. We wanted to be physically there.

We found this place, and I went inside. The cab driver said it was the right one. I went in, to such and such floor and such and such number. I knocked on the door, and I suddenly heard loud voices inside. It was obviously the wrong place. I said to myself, "These poor people." Here was a knock on the door in the middle of the night. The guy must have thought, *I'm off to the gulag*.

Heininger: Yes, that's right.

Hunter: It was terrible. I felt so bad about it. They didn't open the door.

So we then went around to find it, and we got to the right place. We went up and knocked on the door, and someone, maybe [Aleksandr] Lerner or [Benjamin] Levich, opened the door. There were these folks, eight or nine of them. It was one of the most incredible moments of my life. These people, these refuseniks, a set of people who had been persecuted, some of the most gentle people you'd ever meet, they had a transfigured quality about them. All the big names were there. [Viktor] Polsky. I can't remember all the names now, but these were courageous people, who had gone to Siberia and still did it again. [Vladimir] Slepak was one of them. We eventually got him out, but he was sent to prison six months after the meeting with Kennedy for putting a banner out the window saying, "Let My People Go!" Boom, off to prison.

We got on the phone and called back to the Lenin Hills to bring the Senator. He came and he had a long conversation, and Kennedy was extremely good at it. There's a photograph of it, by Ken Regan, a great photographer, did all Kennedy's trips. Also did a book on Bob Dylan. I'm in that photo [note: it is also in Kennedy's autobiography]. You won't be able to tell which one is me, with my rabbi look.

Heininger: He's sitting three to the left of Kennedy?

Hunter: I'm sitting next to him, on Kennedy's right. One or two down is Slepak, and one of them is Levich. Polsky was also there, et cetera. A fantastic meeting.

But the final point of the story is that when Kennedy arrived, he came with his KGB handlers. It was either Mrs. Lerner or Mrs. [Tanya] Levich. We were in her kitchen, and these two KGB guys came in. She invited them in, sat them down, and gave them tea and cake. They were guests in her home, even though they were the persecutors. One of them was in a little pork-pie hat—guests in her home.

Heininger: I take it they behaved themselves.

Hunter: Absolutely, sure, of course they did. They had to. They were there just to—

Heininger: They were just minders.

Hunter: Minders sure, but I thought that was wonderful. One up for us, with all they'd gone through. Instead of saying, "Go off in the corner somewhere," she said, "Sit down. Have a cup of tea. Have a piece of cake." That's humanity under duress.

Heininger: Miss Manners would approve.

Hunter: Jimmy was so great. At one point on the trip he said to one of these KGB guys who had a little pork-pie hat, "You've been fantastic. There's a guy back home who has written a book called *Inside the KGB*." I can't remember who wrote it. Jimmy said, "I'm going to get him to autograph a copy, 'To Oleg, without whom I could not have written this book.'" "Oh no, Jimmy, I go to Siberia."

I'll tell you my favorite Jimmy King story about that. I've told you already about the funny relationship between Kennedy and Jimmy, because Jimmy's a happy Irish and Kennedy comes out of the glum Irish tradition. After the Brezhnev meeting, they opened the door and brought in the Kennedy family—I don't think I have a photograph here—and Teddy [Edward Kennedy Jr.] was there. Young Teddy had lost his leg. Kara [Kennedy] and Joan—I can't remember if one of the sisters was there—and Jimmy. The translator was Victor Sukhodrev. We were in Brezhnev's office. Of course Brezhnev was a bear of a guy and very gracious, because you can be a murderer and still be gracious, right? But he looked at Jimmy and said through the interpreter, "Wow, you're so big, so huge." And Jimmy said, "Actually I'm a giant panda, but I shave all over." [*laughter*] And Kennedy went, "Aaah." Wonderful.

Heininger: Tell me about the Moscow State University speech he gave.

Hunter: This was an error. This was my fault, an error, with all of these things happening. Shows what happens with the media. We worked very hard on this thing, and I wanted to get some little sayings for the speech. The Russians have these little two-line aphorisms for everything. So I called back to the Senate office and said, "Can you send us a cable or a telegram?" or whatever the equivalent was in those days. I guess we were beginning to get faxes then. I said, "Come up with a bunch of things." So somebody did some research back on the staff and came up with about 30 of these two-line aphorisms and sent them over. It drove the KGB bananas because they thought they were code. They were in English. They didn't recognize that they were just English translations of Russian sayings.

But we went in there to the University for the speech, and I mistook a cue. I was sitting down here, and it was one of the times I wished I could have done something differently and didn't. This was a miscue. We were getting into Q&A, and Kennedy started motioning to me like this, quite anxious. They kept getting him to go on, because they were seeing whether they could get him trapped in something. Of course these people all asked pre-approved questions, party-line questions. He kept making this motion to me, and it was clear that he wanted to get out of there. I

finally said, "I don't think he's feeling well. I think we need to go." At that point, off Kennedy went.

There was an AP [Associated Press] reporter there, a young woman, and you have to remember, this was when the *Washington Post* was on strike. She wrote a lead. It turns out that Kennedy and the family were supposed to go to the circus next, and he didn't want to be late. He was with Teddy and Kara. That's why he was waving at me, and I said, "He's not feeling well." In any event it would have been a little difficult to get him away quickly, though if I had handled it differently, it might have come out differently. I would have said, "That's enough questions." Anyway, out he went, and this AP reporter totally misunderstood what was going on. She wrote this lead, "Kennedy expelled from Moscow University." Well, we didn't know a thing about it. It didn't mean anything to us. It was a minor, little thing, but the *Washington Post* was on strike, being run by editors, so they bannered it at the top of page one.

Heininger: Oh, my God. That's like an international incident.

Hunter: I intervened with the Soviets to keep her from losing her job, because they were going to expel her for this. I don't know whether Kennedy said something, but I certainly did, to the National Security Advisor. I said, "We would take this amiss if anything happens to this woman." Nothing happened to her. So that's what happened. It was a total error of my judgment, the way I handled the situation. Ted was very good about it. He brushed it off.

Heininger: Tell me about the Cuba trip.

Hunter: I wish I had my notes here.

Heininger: What was it like meeting with [Fidel] Castro?

Hunter: Mark Schneider and I went down. I organized it through the Cubans. Kennedy gave permission. This was at a time when one was looking at the possibility of a changed relationship because a lot was happening. Détente and a number of other positive things had happened with the Soviets. I got the bright idea of going down over Christmas break in 1974, and Kennedy said fine, so we organized this through the Cubans in New York. Of course their goal was to get him to come for a visit, the brother of a slain President, who had done the Bay of Pigs and the Cuban Missile Crisis. I think Kissinger got cold feet during that period about improving relations with Cuba. He had other things on his plate.

Anyway, I took Mark along, and we went down. Of course you couldn't fly directly to Cuba. We flew to Mexico City and got a special travel document. We had to turn in our passports. You don't get any stamps, but this had all been worked out with the U.S. government, with Kissinger. He knew we were going. I was very careful about those things. We had their approval to do this, because the last thing you wanted was, "Somebody from Kennedy's staff went down," et cetera. We had Kissinger's personal approval.

I did that another time, when Kennedy was going to go to Portugal, at the end of '74, on part of a major trip, and that was going to be the end point. I was at a dinner in a Georgetown kitchen somewhere. The Assistant Secretary for Europe, Art Hartman, was there, and he was fulminating about Portugal going to the Communists, as he put it. That was when Kissinger was making all

this fuss about Portugal going Communist, which was BS. Hartman was going on about Kennedy going. "What a terrible thing this is" and everything. I reported back and Kennedy said, "What do I do? I guess I won't go." That was before I understood the background, all the Portuguese in Massachusetts. I later figured it out. So I said, "You want to do it? Go see Kissinger." So he went to see Kissinger.

At that point my judgment was that Kissinger wanted to be Secretary of State for life. He thought he could be Secretary of State under Kennedy, if Kennedy were to become President. I mean, if [Andrei] Gromyko did it, he could do it. Anything Kennedy wanted, Kissinger gave it to him. So Kennedy asked for this, and Kissinger said, "Fine, do it." That may have been the occasion when Kennedy showed Kissinger the mongoose, or maybe another time at the house.

Heininger: What mongoose?

Hunter: Something little Teddy had. He had a wooden box with a "mongoose tail" coming out of it. He wanted to show Kissinger the mongoose. Kissinger leaned over the box to look at it, and Teddy pressed a button and the tail flipped. It was just a tail. It flew across the room, and Kissinger jumped. It was a mongoose joke. Anyway, Kissinger said fine about Kennedy's going to Portugal

So we went to Portugal. When we came back I said to Kennedy, "We have to save this revolution, to help [Mario] Soares, because the Communists are nibbling at it. Let's get them some money." He said fine. I put $100 million for Portugal as an amendment to an appropriations bill. Fifty million—that was a lot of money in those days—survived, and that money, as much as anything from outside, helped to save the Portuguese revolution. [Frank] Carlucci later went as Ambassador and claimed that he'd done it. It was already well under way before he got there, but that's all right. Kennedy did it. Kennedy helped save the Portuguese revolution by giving the good guys the money they needed to out-organize the Commies.

Where was I?

Heininger: Castro.

Hunter: Castro. We went down there. We were staying in a government hotel, and we had our minders. Mark is very inventive, very assertive about doing the things you do for a leading Senator. We went to see a clinic. At one point we were in the car with our Cuban guide, another "minder," and I said, "Mark and I would like to visit an average Cuban family." Mark said, "I want to go into that block of flats." We stopped, went in, and he said, "All right, I want to go to this one, number 3B." We went up, knocked on the door, went in, talked to the people, and they had a certain amount of good furniture, a TV, a small but well-kept apartment. You have to understand that the Cubans have done a lot better than one would have expected. Their medical system, for example, did quite a lot despite all the embargos. There are drugs on the international market that the Cubans have produced in their own laboratories.

We had picked an apartment at random so that it wasn't a Potemkin village thing. Mark is fantastic at that. Often we would be driving along and he'd say, "I want to go see that." There was a clinic and he said, "It looks like a clinic. Let's stop. I want to go to that clinic." "All right, we'll go to that clinic." We went in and met the doctors and saw what they were doing. They

were talking about what they were doing, and there were patients there. On New Year's Eve we went to the Copacabana. While we were there, just as we arrived, they had the 75th anniversary of the introduction of baseball in Cuba.

Heininger: Oh, that must have been big.

Hunter: We didn't go to it. It happened, I think, the day we got there or something, and Castro pitched the first three innings, a no-hitter.

Heininger: What a surprise.

Hunter: Anyway, so we didn't know if and when we would see Castro. You never know. They do it Soviet style: you never know when your meeting will come or whether they'll come at all, and then "Hurry up! You have to go to the meeting." We had four hours with him, along with his National Security Advisor, whose name I can't remember now but who is an incredibly smart guy. We met with him separately. Castro, of course, is very charming. These guys are all charming, right? Somewhere I have my notes from it. It was a hell of a meeting. It was four hours, with interpretation, but Mark also knew Spanish. That helped.

Castro was wearing his silk combat fatigues. He offered us a cigar, which I smoked half of. I still have the other half—a terrible cigar. He smoked the second-rate stuff. The Cohibas, incidentally, which are now the thing, were not the thing in those days. They were the presentation cigars, but they're nowhere near the best. That's what they give to tourists and dignitaries. That's the Cuban cigar. I used to smoke, but I haven't for 20 years. The best cigar of all is a Montecristo No. 2. A Cuban cigar is one of the seven or eight great pleasures in life.

"A woman is only a woman, but a good cigar is a smoke," as [Rudyard] Kipling said. That's an old joke. There's a Kipling poem called *The Betrothed*, about a guy whose fiancée said, "You either give up smoking or I won't marry you," kind of thing. It's a long poem comparing the two, and at the end he decides to stick with the cigars. Kipling had a sense of humor. "If Maggie will have no rival, I will have no Maggie to wife."

One of Castro's first questions was, "How are my Cubans doing up in Miami? I'm very proud of my Cubans in Miami. Cubans make the best Americans."

Heininger: Interesting.

Hunter: I can't remember a lot of the rest of it. We talked about everything, and of course he's a smoothie and very smart. Didn't need prompting from anybody.

Heininger: Was Kennedy planning a trip?

Hunter: No, he wasn't. Mark and I had this in the back of our minds, obviously, when we went. Incidentally, when we came back, we had a lot of souvenirs, including a bunch of wonderful coins, American coins, because nothing new had been there since about 1960. For example, there was the twin of my father's 1939 Ford still running. It was like a time warp. When we came out and we had changed our—whatever the currency is—back to dollars and they gave us change, they gave us these 100-year-old dimes.

Heininger: Oh, wow.

Hunter: And quarters, things like that. So we went back to Mexico City, and we had all these souvenirs, including cigars. We went to the U.S. Embassy and debriefed. You always debrief. Kennedy was extremely good about always debriefing at the Embassy. If he didn't have time, I or whoever else was with him would do it and keep it straight with the government. No hanky panky. Debrief the Ambassador if he was there, or when we got back, you would go see someone in the State Department. Always make sure you do it right, very correct. A lot of things Kennedy did were like that, correct.

He sometimes didn't take sitting Presidents on, for example, procedural issues, particularly if somebody in the Senate was trying to pare back a Presidential authority, he would never back those things, because, I suspect, "Maybe I'll be President some day and I'll want that power." It's also probably statesmanship. I remember he once hid from a bunch of us on the staff for a couple of hours. We couldn't find him. We were sure he had figured out that we were going to suggest he vote to limit a Presidential power. He wasn't about to talk about limiting Presidential powers on something. I can't remember what that was. We should have known better.

I said to the guy at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City, "We have all these cigars and souvenirs," and he said, "I'll take care of it." So he put everything in a box and sent it up to the U.S. consulate at the border. Somebody walked it across the border with a diplomatic passport and put it in the mail in El Paso. That was nice.

Heininger: But he wasn't planning a trip.

Hunter: No, but we were trying to get him to go, and he kept hemming and hawing. He has good instincts. That's why he's the politician. What people don't understand is that politics, when done well, is a craft. It's a talent. Whether you're born with it, whether you learn it, it is a talent. Politicians are different from ordinary people. It's not just a matter of studying books. It's pulling everything together.

I've had a chance to work for three Presidents now, and I've worked for just about every Democratic candidate who has run for President since 1964, in the campaigns, and I watched how they inculcate stuff. That's what you pay them for. There was a sign on Harry Truman's desk, "The Buck Stops Here," which [Ronald] Reagan wanted the original of, and I guess Bess Truman wouldn't let him have it. So Reagan had a replica made. My line is that, on the back of that, in very small ink, which only the President can read, it says, "And if it's not of Presidential quality, the issue better not get here." Okay?

Heininger: Yes.

Hunter: That's what you pay him for. Kennedy was very good at delegating, obviously. He would have been a very good President. I have no doubt about that. Anyway, having watched a lot of these people, I think you can tell the ones who would be good and the ones who would not be good. But he hemmed and hawed and said, "No, not right," about going to Cuba. Then a few months later, Castro invaded Angola. Remember?

Heininger: Yes, I do.

Hunter: In fact I am convinced, having watched this issue now since its beginning, that Castro has relied upon the émigrés in Florida to prevent a reconciliation with the United States. Every time it looks like relations might improve, he does something to make it impossible. I believe Castro would have been gone decades ago if we had opened up, like what happened with Central Europe and elsewhere. It's changing in Florida now, but the émigrés have helped keep Castro in power.

Heininger: Interesting theory.

Hunter: I don't know whether money gets funneled to some of them for their campaigns, but certainly, every time it has gotten to the point where relations with Cuba might change, Castro has done something like that to make it impossible. Interesting.

Heininger: I had forgotten that that [Angola] happened at the same time, right after you went.

Hunter: Soon after that. I mean, even Kissinger was clear.

Heininger: Yes.

Hunter: I had talked to Kissinger about it a couple of times, and it was clear that there was something in the air, then Castro killed it. I've always believed that was the main reason that he sent troops to Angola. I mean, he didn't have any other reason to do it, except maybe some more money from the Soviets. They welcomed the cutting off of a chance for U.S.-Cuban rapprochement, with their competition with the United States. I'll have to get my notes out on the Castro visit. I have them somewhere.

Heininger: Talk a little more about the U.S.-Soviet relationship. What issues did you raise with him to broaden his view beyond the test ban treaty?

Hunter: Well, arms control to begin with, where Kennedy gave full support to President Ford's efforts. I had got Kennedy in the full arms-control agenda and then got him into the overall nature of the relationship—what the structure of the Cold War was, what détente was about. It wasn't just looking at a narrow focus. It was getting him to understand the kinds of things that senior statesmen have to be able to deal with. He had had some staff give him a couple of little things to work on, but they were just sidebar things. One thing we did for the Brezhnev meeting, I got the CIA to put together a big map of the Soviet Union with all the "no go" places on it, where foreigners weren't allowed. The idea was to try to get the Soviets to agree to open up some more places if the U.S. would do the same. Kennedy unrolled it for Brezhnev, who leaned over to study it: "I never saw this before," he said through the interpreter, "I didn't know there were so many places people can't go."

Heininger: Whose idea was it, when it came to the Vladivostok accord, for him to work with Mathias and [Alan] Cranston?

Hunter: I was no longer there. I was in the White House then.

Heininger: Why did Larry Horowitz take over the relationship with the Soviets after you left?

Hunter: I have no idea. You can ask him.

Heininger: We have.

Hunter: Did he tell you?

Heininger: Larry, well— [*laughs*]

Hunter: Larry's a good guy. They're all good guys. And look at what a lot of Kennedy people do. Steve Breyer, for example, the Supreme Court.

Heininger: How much contact did you maintain with Kennedy and with the office after you left? What contact did you have when you were in the NSC [National Security Council]?

Hunter: Every once in a while. I have always maintained contact with him. I haven't seen him for a couple of years now, but I've always maintained contact with him. He likes to have the alumni come around.

Heininger: We've heard it described as, "Always on staff, regardless of payroll."

Hunter: I can understand that. He'd call once in a while and ask for something. You do it out of respect for him, though it's fun too because you get a little self-aggrandizement out of it, obviously. It was a very important time for me, working for him. I learned an awful lot from him about an awful lot of things that matter, working directly for somebody who cares so much about this country and who is so good at it.

Heininger: What did you think of his run for the Presidency in '80?

Hunter: I thought it was a disaster. I was very unhappy about that because it was doomed from the beginning. All it did was help elect the other guy [Ronald Reagan]. I thought it was a big mistake. I remember in '74, when he called us on the staff in one-by-one to tell us that he wasn't going to run for President because of Teddy's leg amputation. I said, "I respect your decision. I just regret it." I think it was a mistake in 1980 for him to run, and I think it helped defeat Jimmy Carter. I don't think any less of Kennedy for it, but it was a mistake, and I was torn, I have to say that. I'm sorry he did it. It was a difficult period.

Heininger: It must have been. Why do you think he didn't run again?

Hunter: Which year?

Heininger: Well, '84, '88.

Hunter: The time had passed. Also, I don't know. I think a lot of people in the party, after what he did in 1980 and we lost, would not have looked kindly on it. To have a second try in the Democratic Party requires certain kinds of unique circumstances. [John] Kerry came out of nowhere. He wasn't a great candidate. [Albert] Gore [Jr.], I think, could have run again, but for a couple of things. One, he mishandled the Florida recount. He was elected President of the United States. He lost by a single vote—5 to 4, right?

Heininger: Right.

Hunter: When people say, "Does voting count?" I say, "We had an election decided by a single vote." That's why I don't like Sandra Day O'Connor. The Supreme Court did this. But another thing about Gore, he never said thank you to anybody.

Heininger: Kennedy says thank you.

Hunter: That's right. Gore never says thank you. He didn't on that occasion. He didn't thank anybody. Afterward I went to one of the key people, a top guy, and I said, "A bunch of people were on my little taskforce." There were about 200 of us, all kinds of people, and I talked to Marc Ginsberg about it. He was also involved in it. I said, "Do a letter. Put it on the robotype." He said, "I wrote that letter. I couldn't even get Gore to have something robotyped to people."

See this letter here? Have a look at it [*points*].

Heininger: That's Lyndon Johnson.

Hunter: What does it say?

Heininger: "I'd like to express my personal thanks for your valuable help to me."

Hunter: Okay, and what's the date on it?

Heininger: November 4, 1964.

Hunter: That's Election Day. That's a robotype signature. I won't tell you how I know. Do you know who wrote that letter? I did. My boss said, "We had all these people from around the government—Daniel Patrick Moynihan and all kinds of people—who were helping," which was technically illegal. There were about 30 of them. I worked for Douglass [Silas Douglass] Cater [Jr.] on education, so we had I don't know how many people from around the government helping out with the campaign. He said, "We have to do a thank-you note, but you have to be careful."

I worked it out in my head, and I finally wrote this thing. I thought, *People will be pleased they got a thank-you note from the President.* To say any more, you'd get the recipient in trouble. I figured that one sentence would say it, and sure enough, nobody would throw it away. That's a signature by the official forger. I won't tell you how I know, but there's a way of telling.

Heininger: It doesn't matter. It says what it needs to say.

Hunter: Sure, it's the same thing. It doesn't matter.

Heininger: All you ever have to say is thank you.

Hunter: Kennedy's very good about it.

Heininger: Usually by hand too.

Hunter: Absolutely. When you would go on a trip with him—Angelique [Voutselas Lee] would organize this—he would have a couple of hundred postcards that we would have obtained through the U.S. Embassy. They would have sent them to us in advance—postcards of Leningrad, postcards of wherever he happened to be. They would be preaddressed to constituents. He would then sit and do these notes on the plane going over and when we'd get there we'd hand the 200 of them to the Embassy control officer with $50 or whatever it would cost, and they'd put the stamps on them and put them in the mail. That's how he did it. He'd always say thank you. One reason Jimmy Carter got elected was because of his personal handwritten notes. Gore thanked nobody after the campaign.

I first learned that from Richard Nixon. In 1966 he campaigned for 87 Republicans for Congress, and every single one got elected. He chose wisely, and he went out and worked hard at it. In 1981, when we were leaving the White House, I was four years on the Carter NSC, and we were frog-marched in rows through the Oval Office to snap a picture, about four seconds each. We got a signature later on. Carter probably did it himself. Kennedy, by contrast, would say boom, boom, boom, "Hi, how are you?" Etc., etc., boom, boom, boom. In fact one of the people in line to get a photo with Carter said, "Who was that masked man?"

I went to see Mondale. I was quite close to Mondale, and I told him about this. So Mondale had everybody on the staff in for a photo, and he spent 10-15 seconds with everybody. "How are you? How are your kids? What have you been doing? I know you did so and so." The entire White House staff were Mondale people from that moment on. It's so simple. Kennedy, he loves to do that.

Heininger: Well, this has been delightful.