

Bernard L. Boutin, Oral History Interview—JFK#1, 6/3/1964
Administrative Information

Creator: Bernard L. Boutin
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Biographical Note

Boutin was mayor of Laconia, NH from 1955-1959; a Kennedy campaign worker in 1960; and Deputy Administrator and later Administrator of the General Service Administration (GSA) from 1961-1964. In this interview Boutin discusses the 1960 Democratic primary in New Hampshire; the 1960 Democratic National Convention; reforms that he made in the GSA in personnel practices, bidding and contracting, and implementing equal opportunity programs; the stockpile investigation; and John F. Kennedy's involvement in planning his presidential library, among other issues.

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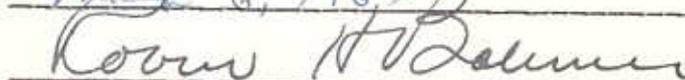
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Bernard L. Boutin—JFK#1

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First of Two Oral History Interviews

with

Bernard L. Boutin

June 3, 1964
Washington, D. C.

By Dan H. Fenn, Jr.

For the John F. Kennedy Library

FENN: Why don't we just start off and talk a little bit about President Kennedy [John F. Kennedy], what kind of a person he was, and what your personal dealings with him were before we get into the material about the agency as such?

BOUTIN: Well, Dan, the first time I saw President Kennedy was during the 1956 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. That was really one of my early ventures into politics. I had been the state chairman in New Hampshire for the Kefauver [Estes Kefauver] for President Committee and, of course, when we got out to Chicago, Ambassador Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson] had the nomination locked up and President Kennedy was then in nomination for the vice presidency and so was Estes Kefauver. I voted for Estes Kefauver but did see President Kennedy at that time and was, in fact, much impressed with him.

I never really met him until the following October of 1956. I was in at a meeting of the National Committee when I received a call from Ted Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen] who asked me if I would come up to the Senate Office Building to meet Senator Kennedy and I told him I'd be delighted to and went up. I spent about thirty-five minutes with Senator Kennedy and was so impressed with him that from then on I was one of his most devoted disciples! His keen insight into affairs, the astute mind that he possessed, all became very evident during this brief conversation that I had with him; and from that day forward,

actually, many of us spent a great deal of time discussing the possibilities for this election to the Presidency in 1960.

My relationship with him during the four years, 1956-1960, became a very close and very personal one and I had an opportunity to work very closely with him.

FENN: How about his famous humor that we are all so familiar with? Were you struck by that at the beginning or was it a fairly serious conversation that you had?

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BOUTIN: Well, the initial conversation was very serious, Dan, but from then on I did, of course, notice his humor and his peculiar type of humor which was most delightful to behold. I remember one particular instance when I was with him during the campaign. As we were touring New Hampshire, and we had been running a very, very tight schedule with him at the time, he leaned over to me and said, "Well, how about stopping for a hot dog?" And we went into a Howard Johnson's and he had a bowl of his ever-present tomato soup and then a couple of hot dogs. He had a conversation with the waitress there that really was just wonderful. He had the whole restaurant, everyone just listening to the conversation. He was a marvelous person to converse with, and his humor and wit were very sharp, really something wonderful.

FENN: I remember one experience that I had with him when I introduced him at a very standard sort of speech, actually, sort of station wagon set back in 1948, and I remember being surprised at how uncomfortable he seemed to be in that situation until he got on his feet and started to answer questions. Then all his ability and all his personality came sharply into focus. But just talking small talk before the meeting he was really quite ill at ease. Did you notice anything of that?

BOUTIN: Very much so. I remember, too, during the campaign, we were about to go to Dartmouth College where he was going to address the student body. All the way down in the airplane—it was in the *Caroline*—from Berlin, New Hampshire, he seemed ill at ease, in fact, almost jumpy. We had a tremendous crowd waiting for us at the airport and even then this didn't leave him, but the moment he got on his feet in that auditorium he had things to tell the students, his wit was very sharp, and he was just as much at ease as anyone possibly could be and seemed to just thoroughly enjoy himself! Even some of the questions which were fairly barbed he seemed to enjoy answering, and answered in his typical fashion which was directness with humor and with no evidences of being ill at ease at all.

FENN: And most things he seemed to enjoy. He got so much pleasure out of such a tremendous range of things. His interests were so broad.

BOUTIN: Well, I remember too, Dan, we were at the dog-sled races at Berlin, New Hampshire, and I don't think that the President (who was then Senator) had

ever seen one of these before. And we stopped one of the mushers with his team and gave the President an opportunity to look at the dogs, and even to try out the dog sled himself! This was a new experience for him and he just seemed to enjoy every single minute of it!

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But, along back from this meeting in 1956, it was evident to him, as it was to some of us in New Hampshire, that where we had the first primary in the nation we had to do our job, and do it well, to provide a proper springboard to the other primary states, and from there to the convention itself. I personally talked with him about every facet of political life in New Hampshire, who the strong people were, who the weak ones were, and what the best possible organizational structure might be. He appointed me as the coordinator for that whole campaign up there.

FENN: You were running for governor at the same time, weren't you?

BOUTIN: That's right. Well, actually I think it was due to his encouragement and to what we wanted to accomplish, more than anything else, that were the reasons I was running for governor. We knew that we had to have control with decent, strong people in the Democratic Party organization in New Hampshire if we were going to do a meaningful job in 1960. Up until that time the Democratic Party in New Hampshire, and this had been true for a number of years, was really directed by Styles Bridges [H. Styles Bridges], late Senator, as much as the Republican Party was! The Democrats were in the minority. They had had the tendency to be willing to accept the small recognition that the majority party was willing to give by way of minority appointments, things like appointments on commissions.

So, I did run for the Democratic nomination for governor in 1958 with his approval and won. This gave us an opportunity to take over the party organization and to put together a very strong operation that very nearly won for me, as a matter of fact, the governorship that year and certainly proved to be of great benefit in the primary of 1960.

FENN: This was a fundamental Kennedy approach to political organization, wasn't it? That you don't necessarily work with the people who are sitting in the seats at the moment but you search out new ones where the old ones are weak and build your own organization?

BOUTIN: That's absolutely right! He was always searching for the most talented people, the most sincere people, the most reputable people that he possibly could find. In fact, if it hadn't been for that '56 campaign that he had such an intimate knowledge of I am convinced that Tom McIntyre [Thomas J. McIntyre] wouldn't be sitting in the Senate of the United States from New Hampshire today, nor would John King [John W. King] be the Governor of New Hampshire. That was really the beginning of a responsible two-party system in the State of New Hampshire!

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FENN: Now let's look at this presidential campaign strategy a little bit. You say that it started to unfold about '57, '58 and, because New Hampshire was the first primary in the country, that was the one where it seemed important to make a real strong pitch?

BOUTIN: That is correct. Of course, Dan, I'm sure that you knew from your work with him at the White House that President Kennedy always was a good planner. He looked at all of the facts before he made his decision and this is precisely what he did during that campaign. He also engendered confidence in those about him. Our early conversations, going right back to 1956, convinced me (and I was convinced in that first thirty-five minute talk I had with him) that I was talking to the next president of the United States! This is the kind of faith that people had in him just automatically.

Nearly every time I visited Washington I was invited over to the home of Senator and Mrs. Kennedy [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy] in Georgetown. I had an opportunity to visit with them at their home in a very relaxed atmosphere, as well as to visit with him at the office. He also called me quite frequently on the phone. As you know, he wasn't one to write very many letters. He much preferred to pick up the phone and talk on a direct basis.

Going back to after 1958, Dan, we then started to meet with some of the people whom he was gradually bringing around him to actually plan the campaign itself. Larry O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien] and Kenny O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell] were two of the very early ones. We collectively came up with some new ideas on how the campaign should be run in New Hampshire.

FENN: For instance?

BOUTIN: Formerly the city of Manchester, the biggest city in the state, monopolized the delegates going to the convention because that was the Democratic stronghold where the Democratic votes were.

We decided that, if we were going to have a representative group of delegates, we should split the state in two by congressional districts and elect an equal number of delegates from each district. This was something entirely new in the state, either for Democrats or Republicans. The idea appealed to President Kennedy and we went forward with it and, of course, the result is history. It was evidently successful and we went to the convention with a solid group of delegates pledged to him. In fact, many who worked hard during the succeeding primaries came from that basic organization and those early delegates that we started with.

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FENN: You mean other primaries, other than New Hampshire?

BOUTIN: Absolutely!

FENN: Was this one of the reasons why the effort was so great in New Hampshire? It was perfectly obvious from the start that he couldn't lose that 1960 primary, but there was a tremendous amount of energy, time, and effort spent in that primary nevertheless.

BOUTIN: Well, the amazing thing, Dan, is that this has been distorted all out of proportion by some of the reporting on this campaign. The fact of the matter is that there were delegates who were running favorable to Senator Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey], to Senator Symington [Stuart Symington II], to Adlai Stevenson, and to a number of other candidates. And then, of course, he did have primary opposition even though it was someone relatively unknown. Paul Fisher [Paul C. Fisher], who ran against him up there, had a great deal of money and was spending it freely! This whole effort in New Hampshire was almost completely a grass roots type of thing.

Very little money from outside the state was spent in that primary. It's true that President Kennedy made four or five trips to the state, usually very short trips, hand-shaking trips, but the people themselves were so clearly behind him that it carried the appearance of being a real high-pressure Madison Avenue approach. This was never so. I handled every penny of the money that was spent in the State of New Hampshire. In fact, all of the receipts of that campaign will be in the Kennedy Library up at Cambridge so that anyone can see this for themselves, but we spent only about twenty percent as much money as General Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] spent in 1952 in that very same state!

FENN: In other words, it wasn't the kind of operation that the West Virginia or the Wisconsin ones were. This was much more of a homegrown effort than the other two.

BOUTIN: That is correct. This really was a pilot test of the effectiveness of some of the political ideas that the President had already proved to be right in every single instance. Pierre Salinger [Pierre E.G. Salinger] came into the state and spent some time. Larry O'Brien and Kenny O'Donnell spent some time in New Hampshire but always kept in the background while still offering effective guidance to us. It was local people, actually, who were always carrying the ball in the forefront through that campaign. I don't remember anyone from Massachusetts, for instance, spending any great amount of time in the state at all.

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FENN: From something you said earlier, I gather it wasn't just a showcase operation, that you really did have some problems up there and, obviously, he couldn't take a chance on just a victory. It had to be a good victory. And the opposition was serious enough so that it wasn't like the campaign against Vincent J. Celeste for the Senate in Massachusetts in 1958. This was something where you really had to go out and do something with an opposition that had some strength.

BOUTIN: That is true and then, of course, the whole nation was looking at this campaign

because it was the first primary. Also, I remember, when the President made his formal announcement in Boston that he was going to be a candidate for the presidency, we started the New Hampshire campaign almost immediately. I met Senator and Mrs. Kennedy at the hotel in Boston and, in fact, drove them to New Hampshire where we had a large group of Democrats waiting to meet them at the state line! This was the formal beginning of this whole campaign for the presidency of the United States.

FENN: Did you find in New Hampshire the same thing that we found in Massachusetts and really almost from the beginning? With most candidates it was a tremendous chore, you know, to get out an audience. You'd have to do a terrific amount of telephoning, promotion, and publicity and you'd stand at the entrance to the hall biting your nails hoping that these people were going to come in, but with this man we never had a problem! He attracted huge crowds wherever he went. People who didn't come to political rallies! There was something about his personality and his appeal which was just an automatic crowd-getter.

BOUTIN: This is true, Dan, and was very obvious in New Hampshire. Starting that very first day, wherever we went, the crowds were two and three times beyond our best expectations. There were very few of us, actually, trying to direct and run the campaign. We didn't have time to go out and generate crowds, but they happened anyway simply because of the magnetism of his own personality. And the crowds kept growing and growing and growing all the way through that campaign. People loved him. People wanted to do something to try to help him. They wanted him to be President.

FENN: You mentioned some of the techniques which were ultimately used in West Virginia and Wisconsin and the other primaries. You talked about dividing the delegates up in the congressional districts. What other campaign devices were developed or perfected in the New Hampshire primary?

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BOUTIN: Well, one of the things that was very effective up there that was really a first, was on the proper handling of bumper stickers. Previously, in any campaign that I've known anything about, bumper stickers, lapel buttons, things of that type were simply handed out. You never knew whether they were being used or not. In this campaign that was not so. We would go up and ask people if we could put a bumper sticker on their car! We didn't simply give it to them. And if they said "yes" and the response, by the way, was usually "yes," we actually put the bumper sticker on ourselves. We did the same thing with lapel buttons.

The way that we used TV and radio, saturation type of advertising, certainly paid some handsome dividends at minimum cost. The proper use of coke parties and coffees and teas certainly was a great advantage. Much of this came from his experience in Massachusetts in 1952. These techniques were used in a big way during the '60 campaign.

FENN: Was the family up there also?

BOUTIN: During the primary itself, very little. During the election afterwards, they were. The President's mother [Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy] came to New Hampshire for about ten days. I traveled with her a part of that time, and she spoke at Plymouth Teachers College and at Keene Teachers College and before women's groups, like the League of Women Voters, and did just a magnificent job!

FENN: Did you use the tabloid newspaper and the local phone campaigns which we did in Massachusetts?

BOUTIN: Yes, we did. We organized women's groups and actually worked out telephone lists, and assigned telephones and lists to individual women. This worked just magnificently and was kept up all the way through the campaign. We used volunteers who were most receptive to this, were anxious to do it, and did a remarkable job. Tabloids in the first primary were also used and were very effective. He used a very good advertising agency in Boston, the Dowd Agency, and they really did a remarkable job in designing the materials that we used. The President's brochures, in particular, were just excellent and we've got an awful lot of mileage out of them!

FENN: What was the final vote? Do you remember what the figures were?

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BOUTIN: Indeed I do. The previous record up there for a Democratic candidate had been established by Estes Kefauver in the 1956 campaign when he got something like 22,000 votes. President Kennedy in 1960 more than doubled this. His total vote on the Democratic side alone was something in the order of 46,000 (which few believed possible to achieve). I remember telling the President we were shooting for a 45,000 vote and he simply laughed and said he thought I was exaggerating a bit. In addition to that, he had about 2,500 write-in votes on the Republican side which, of course, opened the eyes of some of the Republican leaders in the state!

FENN: What do you think that the impact on the convention and the other primaries of that New Hampshire primary was?

BOUTIN: If he hadn't done well in New Hampshire, I think that the West Virginia victory and the victory in Wisconsin would have been impossible. This was the first one. It was covered extremely well by the news services. Some of the best writers in the country were up there. I remember "Scotty" Reston [James B. Reston] traveling with us a good deal and many of the other best-known columnists. The TV people were there all the way through the campaign and gave fantastic coverage. If after all of that coverage they had reported that he did not do well, even if he had only done as well as Senator Kefauver had done, for example, and if Paul Fisher had been able to get a respectable vote, I think that it would have been much more difficult to accomplish what was done in the other states.

FENN: Let me ask you a question about his campaign techniques. Some people say that he did the handshaking and the speeches from the tops of the trucks and cars well but that it wasn't something that he really enjoyed doing. He wasn't a Harry Truman [Harry S. Truman] kind of campaigner, they insist. He was effective but he wasn't naturally easy in this kind of situation. Do you agree with that point of view?

BOUTIN: I didn't find it true at all, Dan. Not only in New Hampshire but in other states that I worked, I found him a very good campaigner. I went through I don't know how many manufacturing plants and hospitals and business establishments with him and his always seemed to enjoy it. I've seen him shake well over two thousand hands a day and he was beaming as much at the end of the day as he was at the beginning. This man loved people! He'd stop and chat with them and they liked him and he liked them!

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FENN: And he always had something to say! It wasn't a series of platitudes.

BOUTIN: And what a fantastic memory this man had. I remember going back into the state with him during the election campaign and seeing him recognize people that he had only had a very few minutes with at some gathering previously and being able to talk to them by name! It really was remarkable. And this was without any prompting on our part at all!

FENN: You said that some of the people who had worked in the New Hampshire primary and had been trained in the New Hampshire primary went on to some of the others. How many of these people were there who "attended" this training school?

BOUTIN: Well, I was one who worked in other campaigns Fred Forbes who is now over at Housing and Home Finance Agency worked through the West Virginia campaign Bill Dunfey [William L. Dunfey] was very active all the way through right up until election in several states Walter Dunfey [Walter James Dunfey] stayed very active, and Emmet Kelley [Emmet J. Kelley], the former National Committeeman from New Hampshire, was another who used his wide contacts all over the country to be very helpful. These names come to me readily but there were others, too, who played perhaps lesser roles but nevertheless were active.

FENN: And what did you do when the New Hampshire primary was over?

BOUTIN: When the New Hampshire primary was over, I was named by Paul Butler [Paul M. Butler], the National Chairman, at the request of President Kennedy,

to be a member of the arrangements committee for the convention, and so my first responsibilities were to make sure that President Kennedy's interests were protected at the convention itself.

I spent some time in California, the convention state. While I was out there, I had a chance to speak to some of the most influential people in the Democratic ranks. I remember spending considerable time with people like Stanley Mosk, Jesse Unruh [Jesse M. Unruh], Governor Brown [Edmund G. "Pat" Brown], Mrs. Elizabeth Smith [Elizabeth R. Gatov] (who later on was appointed Treasurer of the United States), Mrs. Roz Wyman [Rosalind Wiener Wyman], and some of the other people out there at a time when it was undecided which way California was going to go in the convention. I also was brought into the Maryland campaign and directed much of that primary campaign. I also went into Vermont, spent some time in Maine, and spent some time in New York at President Kennedy's request working with some of the party leaders there. That is about the sum total of it.

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At the convention itself, I was co-chairman with Hy Raskin [Hyman B. Raskin] of the Kennedy for President headquarters. That in itself was quite an experience. We handled about a hundred and twenty thousand people in five days. We gave nothing away free in order to make sure that the materials were properly used. We sold campaign buttons, hats, recordings, and other material and yet could never get enough! We used to make frantic telephone calls every day of the convention to manufacturers requesting them to get us more, because we were usually out of materials within two hours after we opened the headquarters every day.

In addition to that, on the floor of the convention, I had several states that I was responsible for as one of the Kennedy coordinators. Our job was to make as certain as possible that the votes of the states were going to be properly cast for Kennedy.

FENN: What kind of problems did you run into, if any, in the arrangements? After all, when you first started, the outcome of the convention wasn't quite as clear as it became a few months later.

BOUTIN: Well, perhaps I was the right man to be appointed to the job, Dan, because I never had doubt! I just went right ahead as if it were clear-cut that he was going to be the Democratic nominee and did my best to make sure that his interests were protected, even to the selection of the keynote speaker, the permanent chairman, the housing of delegates, and the provision of space for himself and his associates. I worked very hard to make sure that we had the facilities that were needed.

FENN: Did you find some of the other candidates presenting some problems at that stage of the game?

BOUTIN: Oh, they were all presenting problems to us, Dan, because each one of them was sure that he was going to be the nominee, of course, including President

Johnson [Lyndon Baines Johnson]. So they were all looking for the best space, they were all looking for ready access to where the news media was going to be housed, and so forth.

FENN: Were there any particular struggles over arrangements that you remember?

BOUTIN: Well, I think, perhaps, the one that comes most readily to my mind was the location of each candidate's headquarters. At the Biltmore they had a number of large rooms suitable for headquarters and, of course, each candidate was jockeying for position, trying to get

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the large rooms that were closest to the center corridors where the greatest number of people would be passing by at any given time during the convention! We won that argument and the Kennedy headquarters had the best location of all!

FENN: Well, now, how did you win it? How did you go about winning an argument like that?

BOUTIN: Well...

FENN: Did you have the votes?

BOUTIN: I had some very wonderful people whom I was serving with on the arrangements committee and they supported my position and, when I could, I supported theirs.

FENN: Not an unfamiliar situation! Now, was there anything at Los Angeles that you think that ought to be mentioned, particularly in terms of his reaction or his approach to the convention, any problem or any incidents that you think we ought to record?

BOUTIN: Well, Dan, out at the convention it was much like in the primary campaigns. A tremendous amount of planning went into the whole effort so that every single person who had a job to do knew precisely what that job was! You'll remember that at eight o'clock every morning the Attorney General, Bob Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy], would hold a meeting of all of the coordinators and would outline the situation as it was that day, would also give us a reading as to where the trouble spots happened to be, and what could be done about them. I remember the second day we were there having Bob stand up on a footstool and say, in very curt language, but he was very right in doing it, that he understood that the previous day some of the coordinators had gone out to Disneyland. He said, "Now, if any of you think it is more important to go to Disneyland than it is to nominate the next president, you ought to quit right now," and, of course, he was saying this to entirely

workers. There were none who left that room. Everyone understood what the Attorney General was saying and they worked. They worked right around the clock!

But all of this planning out there was the handiwork of the President himself! He was the fellow making the decisions and giving the directions to the Attorney General and to his lieutenants, Larry O'Brien and Kenny O'Donnell. In fact, before the nomination was accomplished, Larry

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O'Brien was already working at his request on the campaign outline, the booklet of campaign procedures to be followed in the general election.

FENN: Yes, I guess Kenny and Dick Maguire [Richard Maguire] started on the transportation scheduling and the plans for appearances and so forth while they were still at the convention.

BOUTIN: That's right. Everything was always geared to the plans for the future. He also had a great way of taking little people like myself and giving them a job and making them feel a part of something, working personally with them and, therefore, getting every bit of mileage and ability out of an individual that was humanly possible.

FENN: When do you think that he was sure that the convention problem was solved? After West Virginia?

BOUTIN: I don't know. I would say that that would be as good a time as any because that was such a remarkable victory and, of course, this was recognized, too, by the news media people and by politicians *per se*. I think this had a great effect on his thinking and from then on he seemed to be planning toward the election as much as toward the nomination. It was a dual road that we were following from that day forward!

FENN: Talking about arrangements, I should have asked you how come the ticket allotments all went to the Stevenson types in the galleries? I'll never forget that!

BOUTIN: They never did! That still remains one of the great mysteries. Those tickets actually were all allocated to alternates and VIP's and we thought were being properly used, but someone just did a whale of a lot of persuasion and was able to get these tickets; and I remember, as you do, what a tremendously large crowd of beatniks and supporters of Adlai Stevenson stormed the convention almost at the nth hour! But they did not secure these tickets by assignment from the arrangements committee or the Democratic National Committee. They worked that out themselves!

FENN: It was some operation. They had that gallery really packed.

BOUTIN: I doubt if another person could have been squeezed in.

FENN: Now remembering that this thing we can sanitize and clean up and so forth, do you have any thoughts on that vice presidency? Dick Donahue [Richard K. Donahue] and I had a drink the Sunday before the thing opened and it wasn't supposed to go in the direction that it finally went.

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BOUTIN: Dan, I had been given to understand the morning after the presidential nomination that the vice presidential preference of President Kennedy was Stuart Symington.

FENN: That's what I thought.

BOUTIN: And I left the campaign headquarters and headed out to the convention with that as an absolute fact in my mind and it was on the way out...

FENN: Me too.

BOUTIN: ...that in turning on the radio I heard the President had been in conversation with Lyndon Johnson and that he had announced, in fact, that he was his preference. You couldn't have surprised me more with almost anything that could have happened. In fact, I frankly didn't believe it until I was able to get out at the convention arena and talk with Governor Ribicoff [Abraham Alexander Ribicoff] who told me that this was precisely true.

FENN: Well, did you ever get any background that you thought was reliable as to what had happened to make this change?

BOUTIN: I never did and I've talked to a great number of people. Evidently this was his own thinking and he did it strictly on his own volition. I have never detected any pressure on him to do it. Certainly it didn't come from the Texas delegation because I can remember the tears of Sam Rayburn [Samuel Taliaferro Rayburn] when Lyndon Johnson said that he would be the John F. Kennedy running mate.

FENN: Why was Rayburn opposed to it?

BOUTIN: I think Rayburn was opposed to it because his relationship with Lyndon Johnson in the Congress had been such that they were the two recognized strongest people in Congress, one in the House and one in the Senate and they pretty much, were able to handle legislation as they saw fit between them. They could usually generate sufficient votes to have their own thinking reflected by the action of either house of the Congress. I think, too, that Sam Rayburn was truly, completely dedicated to the thought that Lyndon Johnson should have been the presidential nominee.

FENN: Yes, and he just didn't like this idea of taking a second spot?

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BOUTIN: Well, I think it perhaps even goes further than that. I think that perhaps it would be a fair statement to say that at that time Sam Rayburn had serious doubts as to John F. Kennedy's ability to win!

FENN: Because of the Catholic issue?

BOUTIN: Primarily because of the Catholic issue. That's right.

FENN: Well, Bernie, so where were you election night?

BOUTIN: I was in Manchester, New Hampshire, because, of course, I was again running for governor of New Hampshire and wanted to be with my own campaign workers and it wasn't, of course, until well after midnight that it became obvious that John F. Kennedy was going to be elected. You asked me previously though, Dan, about the family coming into New Hampshire. Between the primary and the election the family did come into New Hampshire. Eunice Shriver [Eunice Kennedy Shriver], Pat Lawford [Patricia Kennedy Lawford], Jean Smith [Jean Kennedy Smith], the President's mother, Bob, and Ted [Edward Moore Kennedy] came in and did a fantastic job! The Attorney General spent a good deal of time up there and, of course, it was under his direction, really, that from the primary on I was working. He was the "General" and told us where to go and what to do and what they wanted to have accomplished next. But the whole family, with the exception of the Ambassador [Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr.], spent a good deal of time in New Hampshire. Relatively short, but very effective visits.

FENN: When did you first come down to Washington as Deputy Administrator-designate?

BOUTIN: The President-elect called me two days after the election. He called me personally—I just picked up the phone and the voice came on and said, "This is Jack Kennedy, Bernie. How are you doing and what are you going to do now?" I told him that I was going to go back to my business which I had been neglecting because of politics! And he told me, "Well, I don't want you to do that." He said, "You make arrangements so that you can be away from your business because I want you to come to Washington to work with me," and, of course, I didn't need much persuading. I thought so highly of him that I wanted to be part of his administration and readily agreed to do it. However, it wasn't until I think about the last week in December, that I got a call from Larry O'Brien telling me that the President would like to have me serve as Deputy Administrator of General Services and I first came down, Dan, on the 16th of January, 1961, to rent myself a bachelor's apartment because Alice and our ten children were gaming to remain in New

Hampshire until the school year was finished. Of course, Alice and I were here for the Inauguration, and the following Monday after the Inauguration I reported to work.

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The transition was really something! I had the opportunity to spend all of about an hour and a half with the outgoing Administrator, Franklin Floete, so really we were starting “cold” on that Monday morning.

FENN: How about the Administrator? Did he have a little more transition time than you did or did you both come in that...

BOUTIN: John Moore [John L. Moore], Dan, who was appointed Administrator, didn't have any more time than I did.

FENN: And you hadn't met him before?

BOUTIN: I had never met him before either! John came down from the University of Pennsylvania where he was vice president but had had some government experience before. He had been in War Assets Administration and one or two other agencies, both during the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations, but he knew very little more about GSA than I did, although he'd had experience with one of the component parts that eventually went to make up this agency.

FENN: Did the President have any thoughts on the function that he wanted GSA to perform in the administration or changes that he wanted you people to make? Or did you start out with a completely open charter?

BOUTIN: With a completely open charter, Dan. At the time I didn't have any opportunity to discuss what the President wanted specifically done at GSA. I don't know whether he had an opportunity to talk with John Moore about this or not, but he didn't talk with me about it. It wasn't until the following November when he appointed me Administrator that he called me over to the White House and had a very candid talk with me and told me that he wanted me to run the agency as I saw fit. Some of the specific things that he wanted me to be sure to do were making sure that whatever GSA did was honest, was above board, was in the best interest of the taxpayers; that he wanted me to be eminently fair in dealing with the public—really a wonderful charter because he gave me a completely free hand to reorganize, redirect this whole agency.

FENN: Did he have some specific projects which he wanted GSA to carry out?

BOUTIN: One of the things that really concerned him and, of course, he had come to know this from his long experience in the Congress, was he knew the sensitivity of the agency and he knew, with all of the contracting that was done both in real and in personal property, that there

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was a high degree of susceptibility in this agency to external pressures from particular Congressmen or from five percenters or from any member of the public, and he wanted me to formulate a program whereby everything would be completely aboveboard and in the open so that our records at any time would bear public scrutiny and this is precisely what we've done.

FENN: How have you gone about this? What have you done specifically?

BOUTIN: Well, Dan, one of the first things we did was I made it a rule of this agency that all bid openings must be in public and I prescribed specific procedures for bid openings. I localized bid openings nationwide, in our Business Service Centers and in regular bid opening rooms where the public could come in—anyone—the newspapers, interested bidders or anyone else, and be present for the bid opening for any single project that we had or any single contract that we were going to award. I also strengthened the regulations for negotiated type contracts, substituting whenever possible the competitive bid system. I'm happy to tell you that, as of today, about 92 or 93 percent of our total procurement is on the basis of competition.

FENN: What about *ex parte* discussions between the contractor and the bidder and agency people? Was there a lot of that before we came down here?

BOUTIN: I'm certain that there was some of it. Also, going back to the old system of bid openings, many of the bids were opened in private. There was little possibility that an unsuccessful bidder could be certain that he had received completely fair treatment. Now we make it a matter of public record. Now we require a record of any discussions held with anyone seeking to do business with the government.

I recently had an experience with a newspaperman who came in here and thought that we were being arbitrary or unfair in some of our dealings, I told him that our files are open and I'd be glad to have him examine all of them. He looked at me and was simply incredulous and said, "Why you can't mean that!" And I said, "I mean precisely that!" He spent a whole afternoon going through the files and I found out later that he had already written in the morning a story extremely critical of GSA. After going through the files, he ripped up the story and never printed it because he found to his own satisfaction that this operation is clean, is well run, and that we are not hiding anything from anyone.

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FENN: But the pressures must have continued even though the techniques of dealing with them changed. For instance, you must still get a tremendous number of calls from the Hill on personnel problems and contracts and property disposal and so forth, don't you?

BOUTIN: I would guess that we, perhaps, in mail and telephone calls, both from the Congress and from interested members of the public, receive about three or four hundred letters and perhaps five or six hundred telephone calls a week.

I get in my own office here sometimes as many as two hundred telephone calls a day! Many of them come from the Hill, others from manufacturers' representatives in town. They have learned over the period that we have been here, that we can say "no" and mean it, but we are very quick to provide any legitimate information to anyone that we can.

FENN: What do you do with the "must" cases where we've got a particular congressional problem and someone calls up with a perfectly reasonable request for an appointment or a contract or something?

BOUTIN: Dan, we go on the basis that the facts have to speak for themselves. Let us take, for instance, the disposal program—whether or not we make a piece of property available for a local school district or sell it on a competitive basis, both authorized programs by the Congress, all things being equal, then we try to accommodate a congressional request if it is reasonable and if there is a good case for it.

FENN: Do you get most of your requests on that kind of thing or on personnel changes or appointments or promotions?

BOUTIN: Dan, it really runs the whole gamut. You have to remember that this agency procures for the federal government, in personal property, about a billion and a half dollars a year, which means that we have about fifty thousand contracts in effect at all times to suppliers, jobbers, and manufacturers. We receive many calls in this area. We have many unsuccessful bidders who are unhappy and we have to explain to them exactly what their appeal routine is, what they can do, what their rights are if they think that their case has not been treated fairly. The Congress, of course, gets these same pressures so they are calling us all the time. In construction contracts it is exactly the same thing. Also on our disposal program in the strategic and critical stockpile materials and the Defense Production Act inventories, and so forth.

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And then, of course, on personnel actions this is equally true. We have made, since I've been here in the last three and a half years, about seventy-two hundred personnel changes. Now some of these have been through normal attrition, people leaving for other jobs or retiring, but also we have gotten rid of a tremendous amount of deadwood which is precisely what the President wanted us to do with people not making a contribution, not doing a job. We've simply got them out of the agency.

I'm happy to say, too, that we haven't had a single case where the Civil Service Commission has ruled against a decision we have made. We haven't lost a single appeal. So this has been a most happy experience.

FENN: How did you move some of these people out? This can be quite a problem.

BOUTIN: Well, Dan, the...

FENN: I know how you moved a couple of them because I got them!

BOUTIN: [chuckles] The principal vehicle used was reorganization. Our reorganizations were for a very good purpose. I was not at all satisfied with the organization that I inherited. It didn't make very good sense. I didn't think it was good for a sound management of the agency, and I didn't think it was good for the proper carrying out of our responsibilities. We did reorganize, and in reorganizing, of course, many jobs that were filled under one organizational structure became vacant under another. It is a very effective tool and we tried to use it wisely.

FENN: Had the Republicans tended to use GSA from a personnel standpoint as a dumping ground? Did you find a lot of people who were politically appointed when you came in?

BOUTIN: We have about eighteen Schedule "C" appointments which are of the type allowing some latitude to make changes. The Administrator, of course, is appointed by the President, but we had some who were obviously appointed previously on a political basis. They were political appointments but in Civil Service jobs. Those who weren't performing, we got rid of. Those who were doing their jobs well, we kept.

FENN: And the reorganization route was the main way that you did it?

BOUTIN: That's right!

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FENN: From the management standpoint, how do you go about spotting in an agency of thirty-five thousand people the ones that aren't doing their jobs?

BOUTIN: The tool that I used, Dan, which is the most effective that I know of, was to put into effect a manpower utilization program. All jobs where productivity can be measured, which constitute about eighty-two percent of our total employment, are evaluated on a time and motion study. We have put together our own version at GSA, trained our own teams to carry it out, and we have established standards of productivity for the various jobs.

FENN: For example, can you give me a job, and what the standard was, and how you measured it?

BOUTIN: Well, a very good example would be in the custodial cleaning work in the agency where we assign a given number of square feet of area to each

custodial employee. We evaluated what a good worker could do and then used that as a measure for all like employees. The same thing, of course, is true in our depot type operations in supply. We have some fantastically large depots handling millions and millions of dollars every week. There our system is also based on productivity, on what each employee is producing. If they are selecting from open bin stock in filling orders, we are able to establish how many items they should be able to handle in a given hour.

So the system is really quite basic. It was difficult to train the people to carry out this program, but the system has given us a good handle on the ability of the people we have. The further benefit is that it offers some real incentive as to promotion.

FENN: Yes, and you've got a basis on which to do your promoting.

BOUTIN: That's exactly right.

FENN: Did you have outside people come in or did you use your own people to set up productivity schedules and the training program?

BOUTIN: We used our own people because they are most familiar with our own operation and this has worked extremely well.

FENN: Now was there any such program before or is this something which you developed?

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BOUTIN: This is something new. There was no comparable program before at all. We had no way of measuring as we planned our next year's budget, for instance, how many people we needed to do the amount of work planned. It was impossible. We had to make some educated guesses on the budget requirement for personnel. Now we are able to establish with preciseness how many people we need to meet a given workload.

FENN: Did you find a lot of difficulties in installing it? Were there some morale problems and so on?

BOUTIN: Well, at first there was some resistance. This we were able to overcome and the remarkable thing, Dan, is that the simple announcement that we were going ahead with this program raised the productivity in GSA substantially! I can think of one good example where it went up thirty percent simply with the announcement that we were going to start with a time and motion study in one of our organizational units.

FENN: What about that notion that is currently being talked about, particularly for AID [Agency for International Development], of a selection-out authority for "x" percent of an agency? Do you think that this is necessary or advisable or useful?

BOUTIN: It would be unfair for me to comment on that in that it is Dave Bell's [David E. Bell] problem over at AID.

FENN: No, I don't mean so far as AID, but just as a general policy for the government?

BOUTIN: I think, Dan, that the head of any agency should have more flexibility than is now possible, either by the provision of substantially more Schedule "C" appointments or else an easing of the regulations which now exist which would enable an agency head to weed out the employee who is not doing a decent job.

FENN: Your Schedule "C" appointments. How many of those are top administrative people and how many are secretarial and confidential?

BOUTIN: Each of the commissioners: the Commissioner of Defense Materials, the Commissioner of Utilization and Disposal, the Commissioner of Public Buildings, the Commissioner of Federal Supply, and the Commissioner of Transportation and Communications, are all Schedule "C"; the Assistant Administrator of Public Affairs, which includes congressional relations and public information is Schedule "C"; our Director

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of Information is Schedule "C"; the Archivist of the United States is Schedule "C"; the Deputy Administrator is Schedule "C"; and the others we have are almost all of the secretarial or confidential assistant type.

FENN: How many of those top ones did you have to change?

BOUTIN: I have changed every single one of them except the Archivist of the United States.

FENN: Have you!

BOUTIN: All except the Archivist of the United States. He was appointed during the administration of President Truman, served throughout the Eisenhower Administration, and is still serving now: Dr. Wayne Grover.

FENN: How about—we talked about relations with Congress a little bit. What about some of your legislative battles? What do you remember as being some of the key struggles that you've had there?

BOUTIN: Our principal battles have been not on authorization or legislation, but rather on appropriation. Albert Thomas, congressman from Houston, Texas, has

been chairman of our House Appropriation Subcommittee for Independent Offices. He has been a very tough chairman because, no matter how austere a budget we present, he believes in cutting it a set percentage anyway. I have insisted that our budgets go to the Bureau of the Budget as well as to the President and to the Congress on the basis of minimums without any fat in them at all. Albert Thomas regards these budgets as he has regarded the budgets under previous administrations. He believes they have some water in them so he likes to cut them ten percent or fifteen percent. To counteract this attitude has been a real struggle all the way through!

FENN: Well, given this fact, why haven't you gone on and added ten percent to your budget?

BOUTIN: Dan, if I had done that and then gone to the Congress and said "this budget is my best judgment of what I need," I would, in effect, have been lying to them and I haven't been willing to do that. We have been able to make ends meet and have worked out our problems, but it has been extremely difficult.

We had the big hassle about what we were going to do with the tempos, the old World War II temporary buildings that have covered the Mall,

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particularly down at this end of town for years. Some members of Congress were very much against tearing them down even though in my opinion, they have been a national disgrace! I was told on the Hill by some of the congressmen that these buildings had many years of useful life left in them. We won that battle, and the tempos are coming down as of this moment to the tune of in excess of a million and one hundred thousand square feet. This is going to restore the Mall area to the original concept of L'Enfant [Pierre Charles E'Enfant] and this demolition is going to be most helpful to employee morale! I don't know how some of the government's employees have worked in these buildings. And actually, Dan, it is going to save the government a lot of money because the maintenance of these buildings has been fantastically high! You couldn't cool them in the summer or heat them in winter. The buildings were literally falling down! Franklin Roosevelt [Franklin Delano Roosevelt] said when they were constructed that he wanted these buildings built so that if they weren't torn down in five years they would fall down, and here we were nearly twenty-five years later and they were still standing. The layout was bad, communications as far as paper handling and work organization were very bad, and in the long run I'm certain this is going to save the government an immense amount of money.

FENN: I should think that the morale would have been terrible. I had a friend who was assigned to one of those and he went to tack a picture of the president up on the wall in his office and the hammer went through the wall! He was so mad, he kicked the wall and his foot went through! That's a little discouraging, you know!

BOUTIN: [chuckles] The day that we started the demolition I took a sledge hammer and just gave one stroke to the side of the building, figuring I might dent it a little

bit, but instead the head of the hammer entirely disappeared—went right through the wall!

FENN: Well, now, why was the Congress so, or why were some congressmen so interested in preserving these? Was this because of expense of tearing them down and of building alternate space or—they certainly didn't have any other attachment, did they?

BOUTIN: Dan, they just had the feeling that these buildings had a lot of years left in them! This, of course, I disputed to the maximum of my ability. I think that they had far outlived their usefulness, but there are those who feel that anything constructed in Washington is a waste and, of course, we know that up until last year there were no votes even for president in Washington. The people have no representative and no

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Senator who can speak for them. Without any congressional spokesmen, there was no one to say “they should come down.” The tempos were a blight on the national image, but we were able to win the battle.

FENN: Well, this was a project the President and the First Lady were particularly interested in, wasn't it?

BOUTIN: Tremendously interested in! In fact, the President encouraged me and backed me a hundred percent all the way through. Mrs. Kennedy was immensely interested. I used to keep her informed on nearly a week-to-week basis on progress being made. I can remember her delight when I told her that we were moving ahead and were about to award a contract.

In fact, Dan, to go back to one of your questions, there wasn't a single thing we were doing at GSA that the President wasn't personally interested in. I never had any trouble getting in to see him. He always had a great many questions to ask me. He used to also quite frequently pick up the phone and call me here at the office. This would drive my secretaries frantic because the voice at the other end wouldn't be Evelyn Lincoln [Evelyn N. Lincoln] or someone else in his office, it would be the President himself! He'd call to ask about things! How are things going? What are we doing?

FENN: What kinds of questions? Lafayette Square...

BOUTIN: Lafayette Square was another important project, of course, because right in the White House front yard we had the facades of Jackson Place and Madison Place which had gone downhill for years. It had been the plan of the Eisenhower Administration to destroy both of these facades and to replace them with modern buildings, even though there was great historical significance.

Both the President and Mrs. Kennedy did not feel that this was proper and proposed instead, in the national interest and in preserving something that was very important in history, to preserve what was worth preserving on the facades. We decided to demolish some of the buildings of more recent vintage and reconstruct these facades as nearly as possible as they were many, many years ago.

You know, of course, that this project is presently under way. The only sections of the two facades which will not be restored are what originally must have stood on the Belasco theatre site. The old theatre is being

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torn down to provide the entrance for the new Courts Building which will be built in back of the facade of that side of the Square. The Dolly Madison House and the Taylor House will be restored. On Jackson Place the new Executive Office Building will actually be on 17th Street and will be built to the rear of the buildings along Jackson Place. This facade will be restored to its approximate appearance in the nineteenth century. It will really be a showplace for all Americans!

FENN: You had quite a bit of flack over the Belasco theatre, didn't you?

BOUTIN: A tremendous amount because we had to move out the USO [United Service Organizations]. They had occupied that old building for many years and they were very much opposed to moving. We were finally able to work out an arrangement with the District Government through Walter Tobriner [Walter N. Tobriner] and space that the District owned was made available to the USO and we are now going ahead with the demolition of the building.

This is going to be a great Square! One of the greatest, I think, in all the world! We've had many people who have made great contributions to our way of life here in America who have lived there and who worked there.

FENN: Now the Eisenhower plan was almost ready to be put into action, wasn't it?

BOUTIN: That's precisely true! In fact, the architects were well along with plans. We terminated that architectural contract, we scrapped those plans and started completely new. I am also happy to tell you, Dan, that with all of this replanning that has gone on, we are going to be able to do the total job of restoration, provide the new building for the courts and the new Executive Office Building of the president—all of this—within the original appropriation which was just for the two new buildings.

This has been quite an accomplishment and the President and Mrs. Kennedy deserve the full credit. I can remember going over to the White House with plans as they were developed. The plans were so voluminous that we couldn't put them on a table, so we'd spread them on the floor and would go on hands and knees from one plan to another looking at them with Mrs. Kennedy. She always had comments to make on whether she liked something or whether she didn't, and would make recommendations or suggestions. The President was also very helpful.

Another project, Dan, was the U.S. Pavilion at the World's Fair. Actually, the design was selected by President Kennedy himself. Bill Walton [William Walton] who is now chairman of the Fine Arts Commission and I went over to the White House with some sketches made by the architect and he went over them with us. After he had seen them all, he said, "This is the one I like." This of course is the one I have built.

FENN: Yes.

BOUTIN: It has proven to be the most attractive building at the entire fair!

FENN: Yes.

BOUTIN: And by the way, one of the least expensive.

FENN: Do you remember any specific suggestions that either the President or the First Lady made on these projects which were incorporated, things in either the plan for Lafayette Square, or the World's Fair, or any of the other things around town where there were particular contributions that they made that you can, see, or will see, in bricks and mortar?

BOUTIN: You would have to start as a beginning with Lafayette Square because it was really the President and Mrs. Kennedy who requested me to scrap the old plans and start over.

I remember in particular the gateway from Jackson Place to the Executive Office Building through the center of the facade and how we looked at a number of schemes before we came up with one that they liked.

The President had very definite ideas on what he wanted Washington to become, what he visualized in this city, and these ideas were reflected in every single project.

I remember, too, that there had been a plan to demolish the old War-State-Navy Building, now the Executive Office of the President, next to the White House. The President was adamant against doing this. This building also was historically significant and it was architecturally unique to say the least. Rather than tearing it down, we came up with a method whereby it could be cleaned!

Dave Finley [David E. Finley, Jr.] who was chairman of the Fine Arts Commission wrote to me and steered his opposition and that of the Commission to cleaning the building

and said that it just couldn't be done properly. The President told me to go ahead and do it. With the work now done, the building looks as good and as fresh as the day it was built.

FENN: It seems to me that you once told me a story about the problems of deciding

how clean that building was going to be. Wasn't there something about how white was white?

BOUTIN: Oh, yes. We tried different methods. We tried a method using acid, acid and water cleaner, and we were not satisfied with the results. I asked the President what his feelings were and he took a look and liked it even less than I did. It didn't clean the stone as thoroughly as we thought it should. It left some streaks. It didn't restore the stone to its original luster. We experimented until we found a satisfactory process.

FENN: What about the White House itself? There has been so much publicity about the redecoration of the Mansion.

BOUTIN: We only do the work on the East and West Wings. The Mansion itself comes under the Department of the Interior. We did do some of the work at the Mansion, actually, when no other funding source was available. Just a fantastic job was done at the White House by Mrs. Kennedy. I remember Mrs. Kennedy calling me to see if we had, at Archives, busts of Presidents Jackson [Andrew Jackson] and Roosevelt and Jefferson [Thomas Jefferson] to use in the little niches above the doorways in the Cabinet Room. She always had a great interest in all of these details.

The restoration of Blair House and Blair-Lee House was done by GSA. We worked very closely with Mrs. Kennedy and also with Mrs. Duke, the wife of the Chief of Protocol [Angier Biddle Duke], on this restoration project. I was amazed that the guest house of the President, really the guest house of the United States for foreign dignitaries, had deteriorated to a point where it was just incredible! The wallpaper was literally hanging off the walls, it was dirty and dingy, nothing had been done there for, I guess, generations. And many generations, at that! Both houses now have been completely restored and are showplaces. They are simply absolutely beautiful!

But here, again, a lot of the work, like at the Mansion itself, was not done at government expense but was from voluntary donations and contributions from interested citizens.

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You know, even better than I do, Dan, what was done at the White House by interested people from all over the world! They gave beautiful pieces of furniture and many were of historical significance. The same thing was true at Blair, Blair-Lee.

FENN: I heard one story that you told one time, Bernie, about the mural in the swimming pool. This was one that the President accepted the responsibility for himself, didn't he?

BOUTIN: He called me one day about it. I don't know the full story of how it was installed but I think it was perhaps a group of close associates at the White

House who thought that this would be very enjoyable for him and they had a mural of Cape Cod installed at the pool. It really was very beautiful and we at GSA did the work while he was away on a trip.

The President called me when he returned and said how beautiful he thought it was and then he said, "Well, who is going to pay the bill?" I told him that I didn't know the financial arrangements but would guess that the government would pay the bill since this was part of the White House. He said oh, no, that he wouldn't have that at all. He told me to gather together all of the bills for all of the work that had to be done in connection with it. The bills came to about \$58,000 and the President paid them out of his own pocket. He consistently refused to have anything from his personal convenience and pleasure paid for by the government.

FENN: Yes. This was not an exceptional incident. He did this more than one thing like this, I gather.

BOUTIN: I think that, if we knew the whole story, Dan, many similar instances could be identified. I discussed with him a number of times the need to replace the rug, it had holes in it and was in very bad condition, in his reception room where Kenny O'Donnell had his desk, but he just wouldn't hear of it.

I remember, too, the door to the restroom, right outside of the office of the President. The door opened the wrong way so that if the door to his office was open, you couldn't open the restroom door. I asked him if he wouldn't let us change that. I told him that it was going to cost very little, I think it was around \$150, but he said, no, he would leave it like it was.

FENN: One important and long-range decision which you made in this whole field of the arts, aesthetics, and so forth, was the selection

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of a top architect for GSA that was going to make decisions on government buildings all over the country. What can you tell us about that story?

BOUTIN: This was part, really, of the reorganization that took place. We finally did find the type man we were looking for who had an excellent background and reputation with the architectural profession up in Wisconsin. We hired him to come to serve as the chief architect at GSA, to help us make the proper decisions and to plan top-flight buildings.

But actually the full story, Dan, goes back to the day of the Inauguration when Arthur Goldberg [Arthur J. Goldberg] remarked to the President that he felt very much dissatisfaction with the type of architecture, as reflected here in Washington, that the government had been securing for the money that it was spending for new buildings. The President agreed with this and appointed an ad hoc committee, of which I was privileged to be a member, and we came up with a number of completely new ideas and also a set of criteria that the President readily adopted. These are now known as the guidelines we use for the selection of architects and the directions given to architects not only in Washington but

on a nationwide basis. The purpose is to assure (1) that we get the best architectural talent that is available, (2) that the building to be built reflects the dignity of the American people and the vitality and stability of the American government and also reflects the image of the local community so that we don't build a building in Phoenix and then build one exactly like it in Chicago and expect that it is going to harmonize and is going to be applauded by the American people.

This has worked extremely well. We are getting much better buildings today than we were getting three and four years ago. The President took a personal interest in every single building we were putting up no matter where it was located. We are getting a much better performance from the architectural profession because we have balanced what is contemporary, what is restoration, what is preservation, depending upon the need of a given circumstance. Ideas now really flow from the architectural profession to the government instead of the stereotype of the government to the architect, so we are always developing fresh, new designs.

I think one of the best examples, and the President was much impressed with this project, is going to be the new national office for the Housing and Home Finance Agency at the corner of 7th and D that is being designed by Marcel Breuer. The building that we put up at the World's Fair is just magnificent. The building that was built at the World's

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Fair in Seattle is another concrete example of excellent construction and this is taking place all over the country!

FENN: Let's leave the arts for a minute and look at the Cuban crisis. What was your role and GSA's role in the missile crisis, rather than in the Bay of Pigs?

BOUTIN: Well, Dan, to understand what we did during that crisis is to understand GSA itself. Seldom does anything of significance happen in the government unless GSA has a hand in it, and this is from the nature of the heterogeneous type of agency that we are. We have a vast—and I've referred to this before—procurement and supply operation where we supply not only the civilian agencies but also the Department of Defense. In fact, about seventy percent of our total procurement and supply is for Defense, and only about thirty percent for the civilian agencies.

The moment that the situation became acute leading up to the Cuban crisis, the moment that Defense started to send men into the Keys and into Florida, planes and military equipment, we were called upon immediately to support those activities. We supplied communications and a great many of the 750,000 items in our supply system. I'm happy to say that we were 98.6 percent effective in our supply and procurement responsibilities during that crisis on an emergency basis. We worked twenty-four hours a day right around the clock! Also, we provided space in federally-owned property all through that area, not only for the military but for some of the civilian agencies like USIA [United States Information Agency] that had a great responsibility during the crisis.

We also provided other logistical support, like vehicles from our motor pools. Vehicles were diverted to the Florida area and to other places in the South where bases were

quickly activated. The Opa Locka property down there, which was a tremendous air facility during World War II, had been deactivated and we were in the process of disposing of it. Within twenty-four hours we had that base back in operation ready to receive planes and men from Defense. We had an important role all the way through.

FENN: When did you get into it? When did you find out about the pictures?

BOUTIN: Actually we got into it about twenty-four, no, more than that, about forty-eight hours before the President's speech to the people, but we didn't know the full impact at that time. We didn't know about the

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photos showing the missiles. We knew that there was trouble brewing but we didn't know what it was and we were simply doing our best to meet our responsibilities without questioning the reason for it.

FENN: You got your first call from whom? How did you get activated?

BOUTIN: I think the first call that I received, if I remember correctly, Dan, was from the White House.

FENN: And they asked you to do some specific things in terms of the Florida build-up?

BOUTIN: That's right. And, of course, then the calls we were getting were very numerous. We were receiving calls from USIA and from many, many other agencies requiring a certain type of support and this we were providing. All of our central office operation was on full "stand-by."

FENN: Yes, that was the best kept secret certainly in the three years or so that I have been down here. The security on that thing was so tight that even a lot of us over in the White House area who had no particular part in it hardly knew of anything that was going on until within twenty-four hours of the speech.

BOUTIN: The first information that became known to all top staff in the agency is when we went on DEFCON 3 [defense readiness condition], Dan. In other words, when we went on alert, quite a few knew that something was in the wind but yet they didn't know any of the facts and they kept it to themselves beautifully anyway.

I traveled for about two weeks with a suitcase beside me all the time ready to go to a relocation site, as required in case of an emergency situation. But I agree with you, it was just magnificently kept confidential on a "need to know basis" and extremely well handled.

FENN: And again that planning that you were talking about before. Everything was thought ahead. Not just the obvious things that you could see on the political

moves, but on all the background.

BOUTIN: I think, Dan, this is very typical of the whole Kennedy operation. His every move as president was not simply to meet a situation today so much as it was to look beyond today's problem and examine the impact of various solutions on tomorrow. He set a

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climate, a tone. It was almost like being part of a crusade in many ways. A complete transition from previous administrations.

FENN: Yes. He—I can understand, finally having seen *Camelot*, why that appealed to him. He had a sense of what this administration was going to look like five and ten and fifteen years from now and what it would stand for in American history.

BOUTIN: Agreed.

FENN: And he wanted that carried out right throughout the town. Let's talk about some of these long-range efforts in which he was especially interested. What about GSA and civil rights?

BOUTIN: Well, we had a definite role to play. I am a member of the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity and this committee started with first things first. It looked at the internal posture of the government and what we were doing with our employee relations and hiring practices. We found cases of very talented people who had never had a real opportunity to utilize their talents because of being Negroes. Some of these people had been just as badly treated by the government as others by the private sector of the economy and so we went about cleaning our own house and from there went into the problem of government contracts. The Partners for Progress program was a good beginning whereby the committee went to private industry and got them voluntarily to agree to adhere to the standards for equal opportunity established by President Kennedy. This is still going on and the advances that have been made, I think, are terrific.

We also had an important role to play during the March on Washington because we had the responsibility of protection, in case of violence, of federal buildings. We also provided rest-rooms for the thousands of people who were here. You know, I think it is significant that with all of these people who were here we didn't have five cents worth of damage to a single piece of federal property. Even in the restrooms there wasn't even a mark on a wall. That day was really one of the most fantastic I've ever witnessed in my life!

FENN: As you looked ahead towards that, did you have the same apprehension that a lot of us did that this was going to be a very difficult thing to pull off?

BOUTIN: I was very concerned about it, Dan, because there are so many influences here

that were working counter one to another. There

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were extremists, for example, like Lincoln Rockwell [George Lincoln Rockwell] who said he was going to have his Nazis out and prevent the march. There were extremists on both sides who forecasted violence and, when we started to receive the estimates of the number of people who were going to be here, it seemed almost inconceivable that the March could go off smoothly without an eruption of violence and bloodshed.

FENN: What did you have? You had the restrooms to provide, you had certain service. What other things did you have?

BOUTIN: Just about all of the march, except what was on public streets, was on federal property administered either by us or the Park Service and we had to take every precaution to see that there were no conditions that could lead to bodily injury on the part of anyone. We also had to have drinking fountains available. The day proved, as you remember, very warm and people just had to have a place to get a drink of water. We had many guards on duty throughout our buildings in the march area to help maintain order but, thankfully, they were not needed.

This is essentially what we did. I have a wonderful book of photographs we took during the march and it is going to the President's Library.

FENN: We were talking about civil rights. I had the feeling that when we came the problem was much more neglect than discrimination in the government. Nobody had really grabbed hold of the ball and decided "o.k., now the time had come to do something about the waste of the human resources and human talent."

BOUTIN: I think that is precisely true, Dan. There was a great waste of talent within the federal government itself. We had minorities, Negroes, all over the agency. In fact, you know, I think that we're perhaps, next to Post Office, the biggest employer of Negroes. We have, I would guess, about ten or twelve thousand.

Many of these people had, just as a matter of course, been assigned to blue collar work. They'd never really ever had a decent chance. This may not have been through anyone's real intention but, as you say, neglect. No one had done anything meaningful about it.

Because of the President's interest we started early in his administration on this. We started evaluating the capabilities and performance of these people. We gave them an opportunity to get into training programs. We established our own GSA Institute, not only for minorities but for all of

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our employees. Certainly they were beneficiaries of a lot of this. They had a chance, a completely equal chance, for any single job in the agency. This really worked magic because

it gave them a new lease on life. The whole attitude of the agency changed, and the results have been dramatic.

We now have Negro architects; we now have Negro job foremen. In fact, our equal employment officer here in GSA is a Negro and gets along beautifully with everyone. He does just a great job.

The biggest impact when you start talking numbers though, Dan, as much of a plus as the GSA program was, was the effect on government contracting. I can remember one job in particular, the construction of the Federal Office Building in Chicago, where the Negro community, and rightfully so, was up in arms because they simply were not properly represented on that job. Funds from all of the taxpayers were being used to pay for it, something over \$40 million.

We found that the contractor was very agreeable, in fact, was doing a pretty good job himself in the employment of Negroes, but many of the trade unions had really a locked door, not so much that they were against Negroes but because over the years they had had an apprentice program that went from grandfather to father to son to grandson and so forth. This had to be broken down. We worked with Judge Campbell, Judge Parker, Mayor Daley [Richard J. Daley] (and Mayor Daley was extremely helpful to us in meeting with the unions), and with Bill Wirtz [W. Willard Wirtz], the Secretary of Labor, who was very influential during all of these discussions both in getting the unions to let down the bars on the apprentice program and the contractors to insist upon equal opportunity for the minority because they were getting their employees from the union hiring halls. The contractors didn't have much of a voice in it unless they wanted to take a strong position. This we insisted upon.

The result again was dramatic. The ratios changed almost overnight. Qualified people among the Negroes were available. They had the ability but they just weren't being recognized, not given an opportunity. The Chicago project has been just a prototype of what has happened all over the country.

Dominic Tesauro, who is our regional administrator in Chicago, in fact, really lived with that project day and night for months on end making certain that we were getting our message across. He deserves the lion's share of the credit for making it work.

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The premise of equal opportunity for all received a varied reception among our industrial contractors. Many of the big rubber manufacturers, for instance, have plants all through the South. Some told us that they had no discrimination policies at all, yet we'd find segregated washrooms, lunchrooms, and even paycheck lines in some instances were segregated! We told them that if they were going to do business with the government, they would have to do it on a completely equal basis as far as their employment practices were concerned. We sat down with the presidents of some of these companies and worked out solutions.

I have just used the rubber companies as an example, but the problem was in the oil industry, transportation, and almost any one of them you could name. They worked with us and this whole old procedure was turned around effectively.

We made about 3,100 or more surveys a year of manufacturers' facilities, people doing business with the government, to make certain that they are following these national policies of equal opportunity.

FENN: What about in your own structure here? I imagine that GSA, from what you've said, was similar to a lot of agencies and that you had—you've mentioned a large number of Negroes at the lower end of the general schedule or else on the wage board. Have you found over the course of the last two or three years that you have more and more who are GS-12's, 13's, 14's?

BOUTIN: Absolutely, Dan. We haven't only depended upon in-house capability to find these qualified Negroes but we have gone out to the leading colleges and universities of the country talking to juniors and seniors and encouraging the most talented of these to come to work with us. This has been very fruitful work and some of these higher graded employees who are with us today came out of that program.

FENN: Do you find much trouble recruiting for GSA? It is not as glamorous an agency as State Department or AID, or something like that.

BOUTIN: Dan, strangely, I think it is the most glamorous of all the federal agencies. I have talked with some of our people who have actually been out doing the recruiting and they have told me that it is getting easier all the time to bring top-flight people to GSA. There is a much better awareness by the public of GSA. Potential employees today know what we are doing, they like our program, they are interested in it, they know that we offer a real challenge and that we recognize ability.

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This year, for instance, in our intern program we didn't have one single declination among those we selected to invite to come with us. Not a single one!

FENN: And has this been true in the Negro community and the white community right across the board pretty much?

BOUTIN: That is true—right across the board!

FENN: Are there any other things in the general civil rights area in GSA that we ought to talk about? Have you had any major problems getting this whole approach accepted?

BOUTIN: It has been very difficult, Dan, to say the least. It has been difficult, first of all, to create the atmosphere internally among our own employees to actually go out and get this job done, to talk with people outside of the government as well as inside the government in terms that let them know that we meant business, that we were going to do everything that we legally could to achieve equal opportunity.

Another job that I remember was the job at Howard University where the whole student body picketed a job that we were doing for the University which is largely, of course, supported by the federal government, because very few Negroes were employed on the project. This is, of course, a university with a very high percentage of Negro students and yet a situation tantamount to segregation existed right on campus. By working with the contractor and the unions we were able to bring about a big improvement in the employment practices.

These people are impatient. We can understand their impatience and we're trying to do something about it.

FENN: Do you think that as far as your area is concerned there has been need for new legislation or do you think that under existing legislation and executive orders you can have enough weapons to operate with?

BOUTIN: I think that we have had reasonably good weapons to work with but I think to really create the climate that is going to lead to a meaningful program across the nation we must have a strong civil rights bill passed by the Congress.

FENN: Were there executive orders which President Kennedy issued that made it more possible for you to do some of the things within GSA with the contractors than you were able to do before?

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BOUTIN: In fact, if it hadn't been for the executive orders that were issued by President Kennedy, together with the memoranda which he issued and the statements that he made, we would not have been able to accomplish anything at all. We were able to accomplish much even in the absence of a strong civil rights bill because he created the proper climate for progress.

FENN: Let's talk a little bit more about some of the GSA management problems. One of the landmarks of the administration so far as government management was concerned was the whole new program of labor management relations and collective bargaining and so forth. Did you participate in the development of that and how did they affect GSA?

BOUTIN: In such a discussion, we'd have to start at the time the President issued the executive order allowing federal employees to belong to unions and put some real meaning in their being unionized federal employees. The AFL-CIO then started to play a more effective role in representing government employees.

The vast majority of our employees are now unionized. They have their own spokesmen. It has been another significant step forward.

Labor relations as they have application to unions and government contractors is a completely different problem. Let us take, for instance, Dan, the problem of contract cleaning. Some of these really fly-by-night contractors, frequently with really very little

capital, would go out and employ people at the bare minimum wage. In fact, until the new minimum wage bill was passed at the insistence of President Kennedy, they were paying only about \$1.00 an hour in many instances—sweatshop wages. The government wage board rate for the same type of work was often as much as \$0.50 per hour more and government wage board schedules are based on prevailing rates in a community.

Some of these contractors refused to allow their people to unionize and used every subterfuge at their command to prevent an orderly election of the employees. Dave Sullivan [David Sullivan], who is the president of the national union, and both Arthur Goldberg and Bill Wirtz worked very closely with us on the problem. We examined this whole problem very carefully and made the determination that to allow such conditions to continue was just not in the national interest. These contractor employees were being taken advantage of and so we reversed the direction of the previous administration. We are now using government employees to do about eighty-five percent of our custodial type work instead of contracting to have the work done.

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Our relations have been very good with the unions and those contractors who were doing a good job, who were treating their employees well. But going the next step further, Dan, you know as I do that many people had the mistaken idea engendered by some of the special interest groups that President Kennedy was anti-business. In my experience the only people he was against were those who were doing something wrong, not those who were doing right. I never had any indication that he was against business any more than he was against labor, or Protestants, or Catholics, or anyone else.

In fact, in our relations at GSA with private industry, I think that we did much more to establish an atmosphere of harmony with business across the country than ever was done before under any other administration. For instance, in developing specifications for items that the government wanted to buy, we invited industry groups to sit down with us to make sure that we were getting the best specification we could and one that would develop the broadest competition possible.

In our disposal of materials from the stockpile program we also conferred frequently with industry. Cadmium is a good example. We invited in the users of cadmium and discussed how best we could put together a disposal program so as not to disrupt domestic markets and create unemployment but still allow us to get the fair value for the cadmium.

These are just two examples. I could cite a great many of them from my three and a half years of experience. We worked very closely with industry. The President and the people around him certainly were not anti-business in anything I have ever been able to detect.

FENN: Did you find that business was pretty responsive to this kind of an approach?

BOUTIN: Tremendously responsive. The only difficulty was that the accomplishments never got into the newspapers! In our work involving the disposal of surplus property we always tried to find a user-buyer—some manufacturer who would buy the property and then put it back to productive use and create employment. We created tens of thousands of jobs clear across the country from this program.

The new communications program of GSA was ordered by President Kennedy in March of 1961. In fact, I headed that program as one of

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my first responsibilities with the administration. As implemented, it was actually a joint project of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company and GSA, working in harmony together in the national interest. This new communications program for all agencies of the federal government saves us twenty-three million dollars a year every single year it is in use, and this saving is going to increase as time goes on.

There never was a hostile attitude with business at all as far as this agency was concerned.

FENN: Let's talk a little bit about that program. That started in March of '61 and...

BOUTIN: That is correct.

FENN: And what was the objective?

BOUTIN: The objective was to provide for the federal government an economical system of communications that would be much more effective than had been in use before, that would provide the maximum of security in case of a national emergency. The system was engineered providing for automatic circuit switching and new circuit configuration to assure survivability in case of damage to major metropolitan areas. Calls could still go through by being automatically rerouted around damaged areas.

It is a dedicated system which means that it is entirely for the use of the federal government. There are no other users and in dialing a call, unless the calling party's line is busy, circuit capacity is available so that a busy signal should not occur in over five cases out of a hundred. It is extremely dependable.

These are leased lines from AT&T, its member companies, and independents, engineered specifically to our requirements, providing direct dial to all of the various locations that the government uses nationwide. It presently connects three hundred and fifty-five major metropolitan areas plus the satellite communities around them and consists of about three million miles of circuits!

FENN: Now what did we have by way of a communications system when we came?

BOUTIN: We were largely using the regular commercial system just like John Q. Public.

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FENN: So in other words, if someone in the Civil Service Commission wanted to call the Boston civil service office, they used to go through the regular switchboard.

BOUTIN: That was the situation but is no longer true. Now we have our own system whereby instead of paying on a per call basis, Dan, we pay on a circuit mile basis. Regardless of how much the circuit is used, we still pay a set monthly charge.

In addition to that, because of new rate filings that have been made by AT&T, we were able to combine circuits under what we call TELPAKS. We were able to reduce our costs per circuit mile from about two dollars and a half down to an average of thirty-eight cents. You can readily see the tremendous savings that were involved.

FENN: Now this is an inter-agency operation. In other words, if you wanted to call the OEP office in Michigan, you could do it on this circuit without and...

BOUTIN: Absolutely. I could call any government installation, as well as any nongovernmental point anywhere in the United States. It is wholly compatible, by the way, with the Defense system and there is interconnect capability between their military system and our civilian system.

FENN: What about the total cost? Is this not only more secure and quicker and easier but is it going to be cheaper than the...

BOUTIN: It is much cheaper. That is what I was referring to. Not only is it much better but with all of these improvements it is about twenty-three million dollars less costly a year than the old system. We anticipate that, when the full FTS, which is what we call our system, is implemented, this will climb to savings of around thirty-five million dollars a year!

FENN: Where did the concern about this problem come from?

BOUTIN: Actually this had been under study for some time before and there had been a report recommending the system sitting on President Eisenhower's desk for something like six or seven months with no action taken on it. I discussed the matter with President Kennedy shortly after the Inauguration and recommended that we immediately proceed with an engineering development and a thorough study as to the feasibility of the system. This he immediately gave me the go-ahead on and from there we just simply went ahead with the engineering, agreed it was feasible, agreed it would save the United States a lot of money, and started with implementation.

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FENN: Did you get into the international communications problem at all during and after the Cuban crisis?

BOUTIN: No. The international problem was handled exclusively by the Department of Defense with a voice in their decisions by the Department of State for some of

the circuits and they did have some problems. We are presently confined in our program to the contiguous states of the continent.

FENN: You mentioned the stockpile. You mentioned disposal of various items. This stockpile investigation which was started or announced at the President's press conference one day developed into quite a stormy chapter, didn't it?

BOUTIN: That, indeed, it did. This came from a study that we had made here at GSA. The General Accounting Office had also been actively interested. The study showed quite conclusively in my opinion that there had been vast amounts of money spent unnecessarily in the development of the stockpile. In other words, a great deal of money had been spent for acquisition of materials when there were substantial surpluses already on hand. There was also a serious question of the propriety of some of the procedures followed during the previous administration. After the statement by President Kennedy calling for a full investigation, Senator Stuart Symington headed a committee which held hearings. We at GSA furnished extensive testimony.

FENN: Now your role and GSA's role and this was in terms of the acceptable level of the stockpile or the problems of disposal, or what?

BOUTIN: GSA is the custodian of the stockpile. The policy decisions are made by the Office of Emergency Planning, the old OCDM [Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization]. They make the decisions of when to buy, how much to buy, when to dispose, how much to dispose, and they instruct GSA to go ahead and do it. That doesn't free GSA from responsibility by any means because GSA actually is the agency making the contracts. We were very much involved in those hearings and I think we presented testimony to the Symington committee that opened the eyes of the American public as to what had gone on previous to the Kennedy Administration.

An ad hoc committee, which I was privileged to serve on, established completely new criteria as to what kind of a disposal program we should have and recommended new procedures to handle any new acquisitions, if such were needed in the future.

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It was decided by President Kennedy that any new acquisitions were to come from barter of agricultural surpluses through the Commodity Credit Corporation. The only exception was jewel bearings which are produced under a management contract at a government-owned facility at Rolla, North Dakota. It was also decided that we would start with an orderly disposal plan to reduce the amounts of the surpluses that we had. Out of all of this has come the Symington Bill that is pending before the Congress at this time, which I am sure President Kennedy had he lived, would have been a very, very strong supporter of.

FENN: Wasn't there a tendency to use the stockpile device as kind of price support program?

BOUTIN: There's no question about it at all! In fact, decisions were made under the previous administration whereby certain manufacturers under contract to provide materials were allowed to defer delivery when prices were higher than the figure in their contract until the market dropped below the contract price. In other words, they were allowed a windfall.

FENN: Now this was an administrative decision, not a legislative decision?

BOUTIN: It was an administrative decision. That is correct.

FENN: And this would be prevented under the Symington...?

BOUTIN: Absolutely! The Symington legislation establishes an exact, precise system of contracting that meets entirely our recommendations here at GSA not only for an orderly disposal program but for a sensible program of maintaining the stockpile and acquiring such new items that may be needed in the interest of the national security. The bill also provides an opportunity to meet requirements of American industry.

As an example. The procedures now are cumbersome. We have to go to Congress for specific authorization and, unless they waive the requirements of the present law, there is a six months waiting period. Such a waiver now has to pass both the House and the Senate. If there is a domestic shortage of a material, unless we can act quickly to release a supply from our stockpile, business has to close down. With a six months waiting period and required congressional action, it is impossible to be responsive to this need. Under the Symington Bill we would

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simply report a recommendation, a plan of disposal, to the Armed Services Committees of the House and Senate and these two committees would have delegated to them by their full bodies the power to make decisions. Unless there was an objection within a fixed period of time, I believe it is thirty days, we would go ahead with the disposal.

FENN: Now did you start—were you able to start disposing of some of the stockpile after or during the investigation?

BOUTIN: We instituted about two and one half years ago a real hard-hitting program of disposal. The total inventory in our three stockpiles is about \$8.6 billion at acquisition. Of this, about \$4 billion is excess to the objectives that have been established, so we've got a long way to go. We have a specific requirement, with which I wholeheartedly concur, that these disposals must not disrupt our domestic market and, at the same time, must not prove detrimental to the interests of friendly countries. In disposing of these surpluses we had to identify which items were in long supply and then develop a formula, a disposal program. If I remember correctly, we were disposing at a level of between \$40 million and \$60 million a year prior to the determination by President Kennedy. This year, interestingly enough, fiscal 1964, we are going to dispose of nearly 170 million

worth of materials. This money goes right back into the Treasury and can be either used to reduce the debt or to meet the operating requirements of the government!

FENN: Do you have any idea why the stockpile investigation which seemed to have a tremendous amount of dynamite in it stirred up as little newspaper and general public interest as it did? I would have thought that some of the revelations about how the stockpile had been used and misused would have created a great deal of interest.

BOUTIN: I thought that a great deal of the information developed by the Symington committee merited headlines and I'm prone to think that, if this had been a Republican administration following a Democratic one and the same disclosures had been made, it would have received headlines. Unfortunately, the information developed received very scant notice in the national press.

FENN: And there were no follow-up Justice Department actions or anything else?

BOUTIN: Oh, yes. In fact, at present we have a case pending involving one of the companies that supplied substantial materials to the government. We expect there will be others!

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FENN: So there will be some outcomes of that type as well as the establishment of the criteria?

BOUTIN: Oh, yes, absolutely.

FENN: As well as gradual disposal. We should say something about the President's library because this is not only a project of great interest to him but of great interest to us and something with which GSA has been greatly involved.

BOUTIN: We are directly interested and involved because GSA, under its National Archives and Records Service, has the responsibility for presidential libraries across the nation. There are four right now: the Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, the Truman Library at Independence, the Eisenhower Library at Abilene, and the Hoover Library at West Branch.

President Kennedy had an immense interest in these libraries because he had such a great interest in history and high regard for the Office of President. He planned his library almost from the day of election. Shortly after the Inauguration he started to talk to us about what he visualized his library would be.

He sent out a memorandum to the heads of all agencies telling them to preserve all of their records so that they would be available for study at the library in perpetuity by students of history. These records, I'm happy to say, were well preserved. Immediately upon

notification of the assassination of the President, work was started correlating these records, sorting them, putting them in good order so that they could be microfilmed for the library.

But his interest even went beyond that. He visualized his library as being a place where he would work after he left the presidency. He had a great love, as you know, for Harvard University and the archivist, Dr. Grover, and I went up to Massachusetts and selected three or four sites that he could look at. He went up personally and looked over these various sites and selected the location where he wanted this library built only about two months prior to the assassination. This was going to be the location of his office as well as the library of his presidency.

The assassination, of course, changed all of that except the location itself is exactly where he determined he wanted it and where it would have been if he had lived. Mrs. Kennedy, the Attorney General, and

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Senator Ted Kennedy have taken the responsibility of planning and providing for the library from the date of the assassination and have done a magnificent job. It is going to be not only a library, but a memorial, a museum, and an educational institute as well. It is going to be alive. It is going to be meaningful. It is going to be stimulating to thought development and, of course, it is going to play a great part in the history that will be written about the period of his presidency and the fantastic contributions that he made to the American good and the whole free world.

FENN: Now this is going to be administered by GSA?

BOUTIN: By GSA. That is correct, Dan.

FENN: And in cooperation with Harvard in some way?

BOUTIN: We'll be working very closely with Harvard. In fact, I'm hopeful that the colleges and universities in the entire Boston metropolitan area will take an active interest with Harvard in not only the library itself and the memorial which will be part of the facility, but in the institute program, the teaching program, that will be established there. Simply because it is on the banks of the Charles, on land donated by Harvard, should never mean that B.C. and Tufts and Boston University and Brandeis and the other schools up there shouldn't take equal interest because this is precisely what I'm sure he would have wanted.

FENN: Talking about education, you mentioned one thing which we didn't pursue earlier and that is the establishment of the GSA Institute.

BOUTIN: The GSA Institute, Dan, has two basic missions. Its primary mission is to develop a strong internal training program for all of our employees regardless of their current position. If they have the ability and the will to learn, it affords them an opportunity to attend courses in many, many fields to improve their capabilities and

become eligible for promotion and, thus, to play a more important part in the total role of the agency. Its additional mission is to provide training for government employees of other agencies in our broad field of property management.

For instance, we conduct courses in proper traffic management, in procurement, in dealing with small business, in paperwork management, in forms development, and many, many others. Howard Greenberg, who is one of our commissioners, has a course, for instance, that is given by the Institute called "Stretching Federal Dollars." This is a course

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in the proper utilization of personal and real property that has become excess to the needs of one agency and is available as a first source of procurement for another agency.

The Institute has proven to be a remarkable program. I've talked with people all over the country who marvel at its accomplishments already. It has been very helpful to other agencies as well as to GSA and is another step forward in our efforts to properly fulfill our basic management responsibilities as the business arm of the president.

FENN: In this enterprise and in others you must be constantly involved in federal-state relationships in dealing with state agencies, state governments, and local authorities and so forth. Have there been any developments in that area which are worth mentioning?

BOUTIN: We have almost daily problems involving local municipalities as well as county governments and state governments. Take, for instance, the program that we discussed a little bit before, the disposal of surplus property. With all real property that is excess to the federal government requirements, we have to make the judgment as to whether or not it is to be donated to another governmental unit for educational, health purposes, or for airport use. Many times there is a difference of opinion between the local governing body and GSA, or even between local governing bodies themselves, such as a difference of opinion between a state and a city. We have to referee that kind of a disagreement.

Choosing a site for a federal building is another example. Normally nearly everyone in a community is anxious to have a new building for his city or town, but seldom do we have anything even approximating unanimity as to where the building should be located. Everyone wants it on someone else's property and not his own. We have to walk a very fine line in making the final decision. Our relations with other governmental bodies have been, however, extremely good! Regardless of the political atmosphere in a given state, we've managed to maintain these good relations.

One particular instance comes to mind that proved most difficult for us and that involved the Mitchel Field property in Nassau County up in New York State. This Air Force facility was declared excess and FAA wanted the property badly for a local airport. Jeeb Halaby [Najeeb Elias Halaby] felt that the location should be retained for airport use to serve Nassau County and the tremendous population that they had up there. The local

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community just got up in arms because they didn't like the sound of aircraft going over their homes. They were most unhappy about it and after we reviewed the entire problem we made the decision that we would not retain the property for airport purposes but would dispose of it.

Nassau County wanted us to make all of it available to them. They had all kinds of programs. One was the Nassau County Community College and plans for a huge civic center. They also wanted parts of the property for a park. Working very closely with HEW [Department of Health, Education, and Welfare] and their Mr. Lund, we evaluated their requirement and finally turned over to them one hundred and thirty-five acres of land for their community college which they immediately put to use. Part of it was retained for a federal center which the government needed very badly and which, of course, took precedence over all other requirements. We then sold most of the balance of the property to the county for over thirteen million dollars. If we had simply gone along on the basis of their first request and given all of the property to them, I am convinced that it would not have been in the best national interest and in fairness to all of the taxpayers. We were able to meet the requirement for their community college which is going to have an enrollment of around ten thousand students a year.

We provided by donation land to Hofstra College and Mitchel College. We donated land to the state for a new highway and we provided land to three other groups for both elementary and secondary school construction.

FENN: Why did you finally decide to turn Najeeb Halaby down?

BOUTIN: We finally decided to turn down the request for airport purposes because FAA was unable to find an operator. The general attitude up there was such that I think any potential operator was scared away by the adverse feeling in the community. The people up there did have a good deal of merit in their feeling that with the build-up around Mitchel Field, the tremendous housing areas that had been developed, it was a potential danger for the people who were living in the area.

FENN: You must have heard from the Hill on that one!

BOUTIN: Oh, golly, I spent some long hours, particularly in Senator Javits's [Jacob K. Javits] office who was, of course, being besieged by his constituents. Mr. Gene Nickerson [Eugene H. Nickerson], who was the first Democrat I guess in a hundred years to be elected county executive for Nassau County, was calling the White House about every ten minutes. And so we were getting a good

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deal of pressure from everyone, but President Kennedy backed my judgment right from the very beginning. I went over to the White House and explained the problem carefully to him and he thought we were on the right track and doing the right thing.

FENN: Did you have any more particularly lively ones like that?

BOUTIN: Another one that I can think of was up in Adrian, Michigan, where a defense plant was being closed down. This was an aluminum or magnesium reduction facility. Adrian was in a labor depressed area, and everyone wanted this property to go to a user-buyer but no one had been able to come up with a user who was interested. The administration was being criticized almost daily by the Republican congressman from the area who, in turn, by his statements was generating criticism both for himself and the administration from the local townspeople who were unemployed and very much disturbed.

We finally were able to find a user-buyer in Harvey Aluminum and we sold the property to them for about three million and six hundred thousand dollars, which was the appraised fair market value of the property. They immediately set about restoring the property for productive use through a modernization program, and started to hire local people almost from the date of title transfer.

We've had a great many cases like this. This, too, Dan, was all part of the program of the President to get the country moving again and every one of these plants where we were able to get a manufacturer to move in and start producing became a contributor to the sound economic posture we find ourselves in today.

FENN: Did you go out and search for—recruit in a way—people to buy this? In other words, it wasn't a question of putting an advertisement in the paper and indicating that this facility was available, but it was a question of sending people out to talk to companies and inform them about this and try and persuade them to buy it?

BOUTIN: This is precisely true and precisely what we are still doing today!

FENN: What about that one in Oregon? Wasn't Senator Morse [Wayne L. Morse] involved in it?

BOUTIN: Tongue Point, I think, is the one you are referring to. This was a standby naval facility where we had a sizable moth ball fleet at

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anchor. The Navy had a sizable group of men there, caretaking this group of ships. This activity was phased out and Senator Morse was adamant that we should reassign the property to another government agency to restore employment there, replacing what had been lost by the Navy moving out, or else find a manufacturing concern to move in to use it. He was on the telephone to the White House, I guess every day, including talking to your old colleague, Ralph Dungan [Ralph A. Dungan], about it. I know Ralph became awfully tired hearing about it! We were able, in fact, to assign a small amount of the space to another federal activity, an air-sea rescue unit of the Coast Guard, but right up to this time we are still trying to find other government uses for Tongue Point and Senator Morse is still calling.

FENN: We talked about differences between federal and state and local government. It seems to me that I remember some squabbles within the town over office space problems with some of our colleagues or agency heads who had worries about wanting this space or that space. Do you have a lot of those to reconcile?

BOUTIN: Dan, we probably have twenty-five calls a day on this. The ad hoc committee that I spoke about on federal architecture also came up with some recommendations to the President which he adopted on this whole question of federal office space utilization. He issued an executive order which made the administrator of GSA the person solely responsible for the determination of what agencies will occupy what space and for providing standards of occupancy so as to achieve the greatest economy in space possible. The ad hoc report approved by President Kennedy also provided the administrator of GSA guidelines for construction priorities in Washington, badly needed for the last thirty years, to provide decent housing for federal agencies. For the last thirty years far too great a proportion of federal utilized space has been leased and this is about twice as costly as government-owned.

The support of President Kennedy has proven to be extremely beneficial to economy in government. We found from a study we made that, for every square foot average occupancy per employee of the government that we could reduce, we could save annually a million and a half dollars! We have developed occupancy guides for use in agencies and have implemented a great number of these already with the result that we have reduced the average occupancy across the nation by federal employees by about five feet. So you see that we are talking about seven and a half million dollars a year that we have in direct savings.

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Dan, I'm sure you know as well as I do, that the tradition in the government had been that as you go up in grade you acquired status symbols, such as a certain style of drape, a rug on the floor, a special size of office, and it made no difference what your responsibilities or needs happened to be. This has all been changed so that with our new buildings, in particular, we evaluate the job and, depending upon what the individual has to do, design the space accordingly.

FENN: I've seen plenty of offices around town that are a great deal bigger than the oval office of the White House.

BOUTIN: A great many. In fact, some of them are far too big. You'll be interested to know that the room adjacent to my office that I use as a conference room and training room is officially the office of the administrator. I couldn't live with myself if I were to rattle around in that room all day long, so it has been put to productive use and I have this much smaller office here which is more than ample for my requirements. On the other side of the coin, Dan, there are some who have been too austere in the provision of space and I can think of your own agency as an example.

FENN: Oh, we're breaking it down. [chuckles from both] I would think with the responsibilities over the assignment of office space you'd be both the most popular and the most unpopular man in town!

BOUTIN: And it varies on a day by day basis. It just depends whom I'm talking to, believe me.

FENN: It seems to me that you had some problems between the Federal Power Commission and who was it? Civil Service Commission?

BOUTIN: Yes, and this often happens. When the Civil Service Building was planned, it was determined that both the Federal Power Commission and the Civil Service Commission could go into that building. In the meantime about five years went by before the building was even near completion and, as the country grew, the federal government was undergoing nearly a commensurate growth. When the building was complete, it was not big enough for both agencies.

I had to break the news to Joe Swidler [Joseph C. Swidler], the chairman, and tell him that, unfortunately, he couldn't go into the building with the Civil Service because of lack of room and that I was assigning to AID the relatively small amount of space not needed by Civil Service. Of course he was very upset,

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but we finally were able to provide a solution, working with GAO [Government Accountability Office], whereby the Federal Power total space requirements have been met in good space at the GAO Building.

FENN: And Joe tells me that he is very, very happy with it.

BOUTIN: Well, I'm glad to hear it.

FENN: You mentioned considerably earlier, Bernie, that the President would call you from time to time or would ask you to come over and he'd have a whole string of questions about different kinds of things. Do you remember some of those questions? We talked about the one on Lafayette Square and some of those specific ones. What other kinds of things was he interested in as far as GSA was concerned?

BOUTIN: Oh, many things. For instance, as you know, Dan, the President had a group of congressional leaders in for breakfast nearly every week. If one of them raised a question about a project in any particular location, he would pick up the phone and chat with me about it to see how it was coming, who the contractor was, and what progress we were making. It was always a very friendly relationship.

To go back to what I said earlier, Dan, the period before the election was a wonderful opportunity for me to get to know the President and his family. A personal relationship like that made it very easy for me to work with the President in my job, and from knowing him to

know what he wanted. He never wanted a long rambling answer to a question. He wanted it very concise and I always tried to accommodate that desire. Occasionally he liked to just sit and chat.

The last time I saw the President alive was about ten days, I think it was, prior to the assassination, when Ken O'Donnell called me and said the President would like to see me. It was well along into the evening and I knew the President had had a terribly busy day. I was, therefore, surprised that he wanted to see me.

Ken took me upstairs to the President's and Mrs. Kennedy's living quarters and I found the President resting in bed. I sat next to his bed and talked to him for about an hour and a half. Part of the time the Attorney General was there and Ken O'Donnell. Part of the time he and I were alone just chatting as easily and on as friendly a basis as possible.

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FENN: What did he have in mind? Anything in particular?

BOUTIN: Yes, he did. We spent a good deal of time talking about the civil rights problem and the possible issuance of new regulations by GSA which would have required that surplus government property could only be made available to those communities and states which would guarantee not to use the property for any segregated purpose.

We also spent a good deal of time talking politics. I don't know whether you know this or not, Dan, but in June of 1963 the President asked me if I would put together an operation on my own time, even though I'm not "Hatched," [subject to the Hatch Act of 1939] to make a political evaluation nationwide.

This I went about doing immediately and had, in fact, developed a very good operation and we were able to get information on a weekly basis at least, and much more frequently where needed, in every single state of the union. I had just given him a full summary report the Monday or thereabouts before the assassination. It was an interesting report because, if my prognosis was correct and I'm sure in my own mind that it was, the President, regardless who the Republican might be running against him, was a top-heavy favorite for a smashing victory this November!

FENN: Now this was on the basis of people that you knew in the different states that you called and talked it over with?

BOUTIN: That's right, or people that I'd gotten to know during the campaign who were traveling extensively, as well as some people right here in Washington who had a good deal of savvy in politics and who were traveling about the country very, very frequently.

We weren't just looking for the opinions of the professional politician who would normally be inclined to tell you only the things you wanted to hear but we were interested in the reaction of the cab driver, or the barber in the hotel, or the salesgirl at the cigarette counter in a drug store. In other words, in a good, broad cross section. The popularity of the President has since been conclusively demonstrated by the tremendous crowds visiting his

grave every single day and by the outpouring of grief all over the country at the time of the assassination and since. He was an immensely respected and popular man!

FENN: And did you discover that there were going to be some problems with civil rights, reaction? Did you see any trace of this as being any kind of a problem for November?

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BOUTIN: Civil rights, in fact, was the number one problem, but this varied from one part of the country to another. It particularly was a problem in suburbia and as far as he was concerned a potentially serious political problem. Too frequently there was a lack of real understanding of what he was trying to do and some tended to feel that he was solely responsible, that he had created this problem. The vast majority, however, knew that he, far from creating it, was trying to do something about it.

I felt sure then as I feel sure now that prior to the election the civil rights bill would be history anyway and would not be a great issue in the campaign. But I'm sure that, if the President had lived and if there had been no civil rights bill passed by the Congress, which is hard to visualize I admit, the good sense of the people, both Democrats and Republicans, would have mitigated against their support of any opposing candidate who would attempt to set back the country a hundred years!

FENN: Did he look forward to the election with a good deal of confidence?

BOUTIN: Immensely. In fact, I was just delighted in talking with him the night I referred to because he was really thinking about it and looking forward to it and talking about it. And he was talking about it with pleasure. That grin of his was much in evidence and he seemed anxious to hit the campaign trail.

I don't think he was ever happier than when he was talking to people who were politically oriented, particularly good people, sound people, who were interested and informed in politics.

I remember in '62 when Governor King was running for governor of New Hampshire and Senator McIntyre was running for senator, he wanted to know what was going on up there almost on a day-to-day basis. He was very interested. He was interested in good people in government and politics all across the nation.

FENN: Did he have any thoughts on who was going to be the Republican candidate?

BOUTIN: He didn't really seem to be disturbed who it was going to be. He was confident and rightly so.

FENN: I suppose that for the record we ought to talk about the few days after the assassination. GSA, officially, must have been involved in the funeral and all those arrangements?

BOUTIN: Within about thirty seconds of the first shot ringing out we were immediately alerted that the President had been shot. They weren't even sure at that time if he'd been hit, but he had been shot at and this was way, way in advance of his reaching the hospital in Dallas. We went on full alert immediately.

When the word came that the President was dead, having the management responsibility for federal buildings all over the nation, we issued the orders immediately for the flags to be flown at half mast. Then we worked with the Civil Service Commission on the early dismissal of federal employees not needed for emergency procedures.

We also called the Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, New York, and got Dr. Drewry [Elizabeth B. Drewry] and some of her assistants to gather together all of the various pieces of information on President Roosevelt's state funeral. This information was flown down here that night so that it would be available for the Attorney General and Mrs. Kennedy and members of the family. Also, work started immediately on taking the President's records, his mementos, and other items, out of his office so they would be in safekeeping for use in the library that would be established and also, of course, to make room for President Johnson to move in.

We had just completed the work at Blair-Blair Lee House. We made immediate arrangements to make this available for Mrs. Kennedy.

We also had a vital mission with communications because we had to keep switchboards and circuits open on a twenty-four hour basis at the request of the FBI and the Secret Service. No one knew precisely what the attitude of some of the foreign governments hostile to the United States might be under the circumstances so we had to be prepared almost for any eventuality.

I personally stayed here at the office until well along in the evening. I did this first because I had many things to do and, secondly, because I wasn't emotionally in a condition to see or talk with anyone.

The next morning Alice, my wife, and I went to the White House to view the casket containing the body of the President, and to pay our respects. Sunday we came into town for the procession, the taking of the body from the White House to the Capitol, and then on Monday I attended the funeral mass.

We started almost immediately making arrangements, including changes in the West Wing that the new President wanted to fit his own desires on

his operation and to prepare the presidential office and so forth for President Johnson.

FENN: As a matter of fact, you were just finishing up President Kennedy's office that Friday afternoon, weren't you?

BOUTIN: That is correct. President Kennedy had told us precisely how he wanted his office to look and we were finishing the work the day of the assassination. He never saw it done.

FENN: I was over there that afternoon and, as I remember, they were still hanging curtains or putting the rug down or something.

BOUTIN: Our people were hanging drapes that afternoon and had just finished the final coat of paint. You see we had just been working on the air conditioning in the West Wing and this had necessitated cutting some holes in the walls and we were just putting the office back into proper condition when the word came of the assassination.

FENN: Is there anything else, Bernie, that we ought to talk about, either in terms of your reminiscences or specific GSA projects, or life in the last three years in this town?

BOUTIN: Well, Dan, there are just a couple of things that I would like to touch on. I remember visiting with the President during the lull between the convention and the actual beginning of the campaign down at Hyannis Port. Others who were there included Dave McDonald [David J. McDonald] of the steel workers, Chester Bowles [Chester B. Bowles], now Ambassador to India, and a number of others. The President kept three and four and more conversations, going on almost simultaneously. I remember sitting there with awe at his tremendous ability to retain a vast number of facts and bits of information. I also just marveled at how well this man was informed on almost every subject imaginable. Without a note, with one person talking to him right after another, he could thoroughly understand, grasp what they were saying, and would refer to it in precise terms in later discussions that day or in subsequent days.

I had gone to Hyannis Port to bring him what he told me was the largest contribution that he received up to that time and, believe it or not, it was from a Republican! The President, too, was wonderful in recognizing people and doing things for them. During his own campaign, when life for him was as hectic as

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it could be, he did something for me I'll never forget. The Democrats were holding a big political dinner in my honor in New Hampshire, and the Attorney General, Bobby Kennedy, had said he would attend. The dinner was to be on a Sunday night and on Saturday evening I received a telephone call from Hyannis Port and it was the then Senator Kennedy. He said, "Bernie, I am sorry to tell you that Bobby can't get up there." I, of course, was as disappointed as I could be. A very large attendance was assured for the dinner and I knew everyone would be disappointed. Before I could say anything, he said, "But I wonder if you'd take a substitute?" And I said, "Well, who do you have in mind?" He said, "Would you be willing if I came up for him?" and then the wonderful chuckle that he had! And you know that man, as tired as he was, rented a small plane, a small Beechcraft, if I remember right, and in a driving rainstorm flew all the way up from Hyannis Port to Manchester, made a wonderful speech, and then flew back that same night!

FENN: That's the kind of day you'll never forget.

BOUTIN: Oh, I'll just never forget him. I remember, too, speaking about the retentiveness of his mind, traveling with him during the primary days on the *Caroline*, seeing him after a hard day of campaigning get in that airplane and start to do campaign bookkeeping. He evidently did a lot of this himself, keeping up to date on campaign expenses in a given state, like in New Hampshire. He knew exactly, dollars and cents, how much money went where and for what.

Every so often, Dan, as you know, people would say, "Well, the Kennedys are buying the election," but with all of their money you know as well as I do that this was just absolutely not so. They spent very little money comparatively. I know from the campaigns I was in we were dealing with minimums all the time and were using tremendous numbers of straight volunteers. I know in four years working with them, the only money I ever received was drawing four hundred dollars for expense money once. I made a couple of trips across the country and, oh, all over the place and never looked for or thought of pay. Everyone was doing exactly the same thing and loving every minute of it!

If he'd have asked any of us to go any place, we'd have gone. We were that devoted and dedicated to him. And I for one would be glad to do it all over again. We loved him.

After he was elected, he never forgot people. If something was going on at the White House, he wasn't highly selective in whom he'd invite within

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the executive branch or even the legislative branch. He liked to have people there who were his friends, and Alice and I went to many events over there for as long as he lived. And always he seemed glad to see you! These are things that you absolutely never forget.

Dan, as far as the personal reminiscences, I think this is all. As far as the workings of GSA, all I've tried to highlight is that this man was knowledgeable and interested in the work of the agency and available to discuss every single thing we did. He knew what we were doing. Any advice he could give, he gave freely, he gave nicely, and gave pleasantly. As a result of his interest and encouragement, this agency today is doing about twice as much work as it was doing even as recently as 1960, and we are doing it with very little change in payroll and total employment. Our people loved him. They were willing to work for him. My deputy administrator and good right arm in managing this agency, Lawson Knott [Lawson Knott, Jr.], as an example, was as dedicated to the President as I was and he had not had the opportunity to know him personally as I did. My secretaries I'm sure felt exactly the same way and this was true right down the line from the highest to the lowest grade employee in the agency. They all understood him and this is something you can't beat!

FENN: We were lucky to have him for the years we had.

BOUTIN: And how.

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