

Peter Cloherty Oral History Interview—9/29/1967
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Biographical Note

Cloherty was a Massachusetts political figure, campaign worker during John F. Kennedy’s (JFK) first congressional campaign (1946), a delegate, (1952, 1956) and an alternate delegate (1960) during the Democratic National Convention. In this interview he discusses JFK’s 1946 congressional campaign, Boston Mayor James Michael Curley, and differences within the Democratic Party, among other issues.

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Oral History Interview

Of

Peter Cloherty

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Peter Cloherty

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Oral History Interview

with

PETER CLOHERTY

September 29, 1967

By John F. Stewart

For the John F. Kennedy Library

STEWART: Why don't we start out by my asking you when you first met John Kennedy or how you got involved in the campaign in 1946?

CLOHERTY: Well, John, we were about to hold a dinner of the Brighton High School alumni following the end of World War II, and I received a telephone call from Mr. Joseph Leary, who was then the Headmaster of Brighton High School, a former teacher of mine when I went there. Mr. Leary told us that he had received a request from an individual in the city of Boston to have John Kennedy [John F. Kennedy] as a guest speaker at the dinner. And he went into some explanation about John Kennedy being the son of the former Ambassador [Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr.] to the Court of St. James and being a naval war hero in the Pacific in World War II. Mr. Leary was not really, in any sense, a politician. He said, "I haven't any idea of why they should want...."

[-1-]

And being active in politics at the time, the story was around a bit that John Kennedy was going to run either for lieutenant governor or possibly for Congress in what was then the eleventh congressional district, and I told Mr. Leary as far as I was concerned—and Dan Rufo [Daniel J. Rufo, Sr.] was with me at the time; he was co-chairman of the affair—that we'd be very, very happy to have him, and it would be a great honor for us to have someone like that as a speaker at our affair, as a result of which we extended an invitation to him. I

was asked to come in and see him at the Bellevue Hotel and to make arrangements for his coming out there and so forth, following which I received a letter from the Dowd Agency [John C. Dowd, Inc.], who was handling his campaign, in which they stated that they were sending me some background information which might be helpful in introducing him and also enclosed a photograph which could be used for publicity purposes in the local papers. And that's how I met him on the first occasion.

STEWART: Did they talk definitely then that he was going to run for Congress? It had definitely been decided by then?

CLOHERTY: Well, I don't think the decision had been finalized because the dinner was in January of '46, and I don't think that determination was made until sometime thereafter. There was quite a.... It was a very interesting year. Governor Tobin [Maurice J. Tobin] was the incumbent Governor, and there wasn't.... Senator Walsh's [David I. Walsh] term was.... Senator Walsh was up for reelection in '46, and they hadn't really quite broken the thing down as to which way they were.... I know the state ticket would have been very happy to have him. As it turned out, it became Senator David I. Walsh for reelection to the Senate, Maurice J. Tobin for reelection as governor, and then the former Attorney General and the '40 nominee for governor, Paul A. Dever, later the Governor of the Commonwealth, finally became the candidate for lieutenant governor, and Jack became the candidate for Congress, in the eleventh district.

[-2-]

STEWART: Could you, just for background, could you tell something of the political situation in Brighton at that time in 1946? Who were some of the more important political figures and....

CLOHERTY: Well, at that time the two state representatives from Ward 22—you see, we have two wards in Brighton, 21 and 22. Twenty two was part of that congressional district, and the two representatives from the district were Representative Charles J. Artesani and Representative Jeremiah Crowley [Jeremiah D. Crowley]. Representative Artesani is now the presiding justice of the Brighton District Court and was the Majority Leader of the House later on and so forth. But those were the two principal figures in the Ward 22 district which was part of the congressional district.

STEWART: Was this a solid Democratic area?

CLOHERTY: Yes, yes. As a matter of fact, the nomination out there was always considered tantamount to election. I would say, at that stage, the enrollment probably ran five or six to one Democratic. Once you were nominated, you didn't have to campaign in the November election for the particular office.

STEWART: Okay. I think he announced, more formally announced, sometime in April. The primary was to be in June.

CLOHERTY: June 18th.

STEWART: Right. How next did you get involved?

[-3-]

CLOHERTY: Well, as a result of his appearance at the high school alumni dinner, at which he made quite a hit, and of course having only been away from the school for a few years, all the names of the people were still very familiar, and I was able to introduce him to a great many people that night. He asked me to come in and see him at the Bellevue Hotel and talk to him about the election.

I came in to see him some few days later, and he told me that he was trying to get the campaign organized and that it was up in the air a little bit at that time as far as the scheduling was concerned, and he needed somebody in the office to help develop the schedule and to take some of the calls and to work on letters and so forth and so on. And he asked me if I would be available to do it. I explained to him that my father [Peter Patrick Cloherty] had died the day before I was discharged from the service a couple of years before; I still had three sisters [Mary Margaret, Sally, and Ann Winifred Cloherty] in school and my mother [Sarah Clasby Cloherty]; and that I just couldn't put full time into a situation; that it was necessary for me to work. And we discussed the possibilities of going on salary which would take care of the necessary expenses, and we came to an agreement about it, and as a result of it, I went to work for him shortly thereafter.

I think another interesting sidelight to that is that as a result of his appearance at that dinner, I was contacted by a reporter from the old *Boston Post*, Mr. James Colbert, who said he was interested in meeting him. I'm sure he would have had access himself if he just picked up the telephone, but he happened to see the story in the paper about it, and shortly thereafter I had arranged an appointment for Mr. Colbert to meet him. And he and Jack had lunch at the Ambassador Restaurant down in Boston, and Mr. Colbert had an extensive interview with him and from then on was very favorably disposed, you know, about his campaign and so forth and so on.

[-4-]

STEWART: So you were working in the headquarters.

CLOHERTY: I was working principally at the Bellevue suite. We also had a headquarters which we opened shortly thereafter at 18 Tremont Street.

STEWART: You worked there throughout the whole campaign or...

CLOHERTY: That's right. Until the 18th of June when it was concluded and then for a short time after that. Even at that stage of the game Jack was a stickler for thank you letters and follow up and acknowledging help from everybody. After he won the primary on the 18th of June, then we had a tremendous press conference the

next day, unusual for a freshman member of Congress except for the position that he and his family were in. All the national magazines covered and so forth. And he was leaving for a few days vacation at Hyannis Port, and he asked me to compile all the letters that I could and all the names of everybody that had worked and start to prepare thank-you letters to each of them, and that he would be back in a few days, and then he was going out to California for a short vacation.

STEWART: What did you see of Ambassador Kennedy in the office, and how would you describe his role in the whole campaign?

[-5 -]

CLOHERTY: I don't think I saw Ambassador Kennedy in the office at any time. I did meet him on two occasions, at least two occasions, possibly three, at the Ritz Carlton. He would come into town, and he would send for certain people that were working on the campaign at different stages. In other words, he'd see one at one particular appointment, another at another, and he'd ask some very probing questions about the progress of the campaign and how you felt it was going, and he would ask some very direct questions. He had a tremendous knowledge of the district, and he would ask some very searching questions about it. From what I understood later, he would ask similar questions of others and then correlate the answers to see if he was getting.... And apparently, he was constantly satisfied with the direction that the campaign was going in. His very close friend and associate Joe Timilty [Joseph P. Timilty], who was then Police Commissioner, was around quite a bit, and I imagine Joe was keeping him in direct touch with the results as time went along. But I only saw him on two or three occasions, and those occasions were at the Ritz Carlton Hotel.

STEWART: Who did you feel, from your impressions and from what you saw, was the closest advisor to President Kennedy as far as how he should campaign, where he should spend his time, and so forth?

CLOHERTY: Well, that's a kind of a difficult one because there's close advisors in various fields. Now, Joe Healey [Joseph P. Healey], for example, was writing some speeches and speech material and gathering speech material; Mark Dalton [Mark J. Dalton] was gathering speech material and writing it; Frank Morrissey [Francis X. Morrissey] was doing some work on speech material and so forth. And those people he consulted on issues and subject matters of speeches and so forth. Jim Kelly used to be with him a great deal of the time, drove him, was with him at the rallies and...

[-6 -]

STEWART: This is Jimmy not Billy [Kelly].

CLOHERTY: No, this is Jimmy.

STEWART: Billy [William J. Sutton] was a fellow in East Boston.

CLOHERTY: Billy.... This was Billy Sutton. This was Jimmy Kelly.

STEWART: Wasn't there a Billy Kelly?

CLOHERTY: There was an "Emmett" Kelly from East Boston from the Assessor's office, former Assessor for the city?

STEWART: Yeah, yeah.

CLOHERTY: Yes, yeah. It would be really hard to pin down. I think that probably a lot of his, a lot of the political judgment might have come directly from Joe Timilty, whose background and family were, you know, steeped in politics here in the city. And then, of course, he received the constant advice of the late Mayor John F. Fitzgerald [John Francis Fitzgerald], who lived just down the corridor from him and saw him quite regularly and gave his versions of.... But I think in the final analysis, Jack would listen to all of the suggestions that were being made, and then he'd come up with a decision himself.

STEWART: Did you have many, or any, problems getting volunteer people to come in and address envelopes and do all...

[-7-]

CLOHERTY: I think of all, the campaigns I've been involved in—and I've been at this a little bit since I was fifteen, which goes on to thirty years—that I've never seen a campaign like it as far as having an overabundant supply of workers. People were very, very anxious and very, very interested, and there was a glamour to Jack as a candidate, and there was an abundance of workers at all times, both at 18 Tremont Street and at the Bellevue and in all of the district headquarters that were opened up.

STEWART: Could you give some examples of the types of things that you were doing? You were involved in some of the scheduling, getting materials out to people, this type of thing?

CLOHERTY: Scheduling, getting materials out to people, setting up appointments, writing letters, which was a big thing with him, and in general I'd say trying to keep the momentum rolling along at the Bellevue.

STEWART: Did you go out with him to these places?

CLOHERTY: On a few occasions, but mostly I would be at the hotel. As a matter of fact, we'd have a lot of the girls typing at night, and they would finish so many letters, and when they were leaving the last rally, Jim Kelly used to call me

quite often and say they were just about to leave and they were on their way.

[-8-]

Jack used to like to go down to the Ritz late at night and have a bowl of tomato bisque, and I would go down and meet them there with a folder of letters that had been typed during that particular evening or that afternoon, and he would read them and was very meticulous about every single letter. It wasn't just a question of signing them. If the letter was addressed to "Dear Mr. Stewart" and it should have been "Dear John" because of his friendship or his acquaintanceship, he would change it, and if there was anything else to be changed in the letter, he would change it, possibly have that one retyped, or if it was just a matter of adding a personal footnote to it in his own hand, he would do that and would sign those letters. Then we'd bring them back up in the morning and put them in the mail. But almost everybody who attended a house party whose name we could obtain was sent a thank you letter from him, an expression of appreciation for their interest in his candidacy to the extent of being there and so forth.

STEWART: It's often been said, and of course a lot has been made of the fact that there were a significant number of young people in the Kennedy campaign organization in 1946 and also a number of people who hadn't been active in politics before. Was this your impression?

CLOHERTY: I would say that that's very, very true. I would say that it was rather a unique campaign inasmuch as there were a great many young people who I don't think ever had been interested in politics before. There were others who never were particularly interested in politics that weren't necessarily young. And there were many, many experienced people who had been through the political wars over the years who for one reason or another, friendship with his father or acquaintanceship with the family, that were involved. It was really a highly diversified group of people that were involved in the campaign.

[-9-]

STEWART: Did you have any contact with any people working for the other candidates, Mike Neville [Michael J. Neville] or John Cotter [John F. Cotter] or any of these people?

CLOHERTY: Yes, some. There were some people that I knew that were active in John Cotter's campaign. I don't know whether you're interested in going into the names of them or whether that just a.... But I did know some of them that were involved.

STEWART: What I was aiming at: Do you know anything of their reactions to Kennedy's campaign? Were they—again, it's been said that they

regarded him as a lightweight, really, at the start of the campaign because he was so frail and young and all the rest, and then...

CLOHERTY: Well, I think possibly his youth, and of course he was very slight at the time, having been through what he had just been through in the War, and he didn't carry much weight as far as physical weight was concerned, and it was rather new. And I think a lot of them thought that particular district being the district that was so strong in its support of his predecessor, Governor Curley [James Michael Curley], who was a real old time politician in every sense of the word—and in some of the finer senses of it as well—that there just didn't seem to be a correlation between this young novice going in a battle that it took an old pro like Curley to mastermind and win, even as a nonresident of the particular congressional district.

[-10-]

But I don't think the campaign was on very long before they had a very different view of the approach to it, because the thing went into high gear, and it moved, as most of his succeeding campaigns did, at a very fast pace. And he was a prodigious worker. He'd go out of his way at almost any hour or any time to get to meet someone, even though he was basically, in my opinion, kind of on the shy and retiring side at that stage of the game. This was kind of foreign to his nature, walking out into the street and meeting somebody and shaking hands with him and telling them who he was and so forth, which he later became so adept at. But at that time he was rather on the shy side, but, nevertheless, he did it and did it well.

STEWART: Do you remember any anecdotes or any stories or anything as far as he personally is concerned that you can remember? Funny or otherwise.

CLOHERTY: Well, he always enjoyed a good joke. I remember—of course he was having some trouble with his back at that stage, and we had Frank Bevilacqua, who was known around town as "Cooky McFarland," who used to come up to the hotel. Cooky had been active in the fight game and handled fighters and trained them and helped train them and so forth, and Cooky used to give him rubs, back rubs and shoulder rubs and so forth, to help this back pain that he had. And Cooky was a very unusual, you'd almost call him a character, and was very entertaining.

Of course, Billy Sutton was constantly an amusing source around, and of course, like everything else, when things don't go right in any campaign with any candidate, sometimes you reach a boiling point. And Billy was always one who always had the right crack or the right jest, and Jack'd break up over it, and the boiling point would be gone and be right back to where we started.

[-11-]

STEWART: Okay. You say now you stayed on for a few weeks after the primary.

CLOHERTY: Matter of fact, a couple of months after the primary.

STEWART: Oh, really.

CLOHERTY: As a matter of fact, when Jack went out to California and he had been selected even prior to the election, if my memory serves well, to an office for the Veterans of Foreign Wars national encampment which was to be held here that September. And I've forgotten whether it was coordinator or what. He had a title, and it was a fairly important one, a fairly prominent one. He got out to California, and we prepared a great many letters, and I shipped a lot of them out to him in California because he was a stickler for this, too. He wanted to sign the letters himself. He wasn't using any rubber stamps or having somebody sign his name or any of that type of thing. He wanted to sign it himself so that, again, if it should be to Mr. Stewart and say Jack, it was signed Jack. It wasn't John F. Kennedy and so forth.

We shipped them out there, but we didn't get them back. He extended the vacation out there a bit, and Colonel Joe Harkins, I think it was—I might not be pronouncing his last name correct—from Revere, who is one of the majordomos in setting up the National Convention, was on here, and I remember Joe being on our back constantly. "Where is he? Where can I reach him? When is he coming back?" and so forth. And, of course, he came back and had the luggage all piled up, including a lot of the letters that we had sent out just tossed in the bag, as a result of which we retyped them and got them all setup again to go out. Some of them were a bit wrinkled or one thing and another. So I stayed on until he got back from California. And, again, we're talking about twenty-one years ago so the exact date—but it was towards the fall. It was either September or October.

[-12-]

STEWART: There was no more camp.... I don't think he even had an opponent in November, or did he? There wasn't any further campaigning.

CLOHERTY: There was no further campaigning as far as he was concerned. He did some campaigning for the ticket, for Senator Walsh and Tobin and Dever. He made some appearances for them, but there was no further campaigning; there was no necessity for any campaigning in his own fight.

STEWART: There were no problems as far as the Dever, Tobin, and Walsh people asking him to do things or be in places that he wasn't too enthused about going, were there?

CLOHERTY: Well, I'll tell you, I honestly think that, and this is just a matter of opinion, that if they had their way, they would have liked to have had him every place because he was a young, attractive, glamorous war hero, a new type. As a matter of fact, as you probably have heard from some of the interviews, the campaign slogan was "A new generation offers a leader." The attractiveness of him as a candidate and the aura that went with the Kennedy name and, as a result of winning the

election, there was even far more publicity about him in the state than there ever was about all the activities of the Kennedy family before, and I think they would have liked to have had him at every rally if they could. But I don't remember any particular difficulty about it. I know that he couldn't possibly have made all the places they would like him to have been, but I don't think there was any particular difficulty about it.

[-13-]

STEWART: Just let me check... [Interruption]... Billy Sutton and Ted Reardon [Timothy J. Reardon, Jr.], of course, went to Washington with him when he went down in January. Was there much speculation as to just who would go? Were there many people seeking to go with him?

CLOHERTY: Well, I think there was speculation, and I think there probably were many that would have been interested in going. Here you're in an area where whatever conversations he had with them individually wouldn't be known particularly to me. I know that, in my own particular instance, we talked after he got back and after we had everything pretty well ironed out, and he told me very candidly that he thought I had done an outstanding job for him in the campaign and that he would like very much to have me go to Washington, but that he thought that he was going to have to have people who lived in the district.

Now, I did not live in the district. I lived in the adjoining ward, but that was one of the old bugaboos in the old days, that people were supposed to be residents of your district and so forth. But he said he was willing to be of assistance if there was anything federally or in the state or in municipal government in Boston that I'd be interested in. And, as it turned out, I had been offered an opportunity to go into the Mayor's office in Boston as the assistant city greeter. Having had that offer, there wasn't any need of requesting him to participate in it, and from the campaign I went directly into the Mayor's office.

STEWART: Curley was Mayor then?

[-14-]

CLOHERTY: Curley was Mayor then.

STEWART: Yeah, yeah. And you were the assistant city greeter?

CLOHERTY: That's right.

STEWART: That's interesting. How long did you do this?

CLOHERTY: About a year and a half, two years.

STEWART: Really. What kind...

CLOHERTY: Matter of fact, mentioning that name again here, George Curley was one of those who participated and tried to be helpful in the campaign, was up to the suite a few times to see him and tried to be helpful in the campaign. And the late Mary Curley, Mary Curley Donnelly then, was also somewhat active in the campaign, trying to be helpful and so forth.

STEWART: George Curley is his son or brother?

CLOHERTY: George Curley was the son of, is—George is still alive, of course. The father is deceased. [George has since died]. Mary is deceased.

STEWART: Really? They were helping Kennedy in 1946?

CLOHERTY: Yeah, yeah.

STEWART. That's strange. Cotter was his former secretary, wasn't he?

CLOHERTY: Cotter had been his secretary.

STEWART: I would have assumed that all Curley people would either be with Cotter or with Mike Neville.

[-15-]

CLOHERTY: As a matter of fact, Curley proclaimed to be neutral in the campaign. What his tendencies were, only he would know. But I first met George Curley, and as I say, later worked with him because he was the Director of Public Celebrations and the city greeter, and I first met him at the Bellevue Hotel in the Kennedy campaign in '46.

STEWART: That's interesting. Were you in Mayor Curley's office.... No, of course, you weren't because Mayor Curley went to prison when?

CLOHERTY: In 1947.

STEWART: '47. And it was, I think, early in 1948 when...

CLOHERTY: No, it was late '47...

STEWART: When Speaker McCormack [John William McCormack]...

CLOHERTY: Yes, I was in his office at that time.

STEWART: Do you recall this incident, and do you recall the reaction of people in the Mayor's office at that time?

CLOHERTY: Yes, I do recall the incident, and there was some rather strong feeling about Jack refusing to sign the petition.

STEWART: What were the reasons usually given? Or what were the reasons assumed by people as to why he didn't sign it?

CLOHERTY: Well, here again, we're going back twenty-one years.

STEWART: Yeah.

[-16-]

CLOHERTY: I think most people thought that he just felt that there had been a violation. He was a new type of a politician, again in the best sense of the word, and Curley was the old school and so forth, and he just wasn't going to get associated with it.

STEWART: Yeah, yeah. What kinds of contacts, if any, did you have with Kennedy's office here in Boston during the time he was in the House of Representatives, with Frank Morrissey and these people?

CLOHERTY: The only ones would have been social—if I met them out somewhere. I'd meet Billy Sutton around the town here and there, and I'd meet Jimmy Kelly once in awhile, although Jimmy wasn't actually in his office. I'd meet Frank Morrissey. But they were all social. Grace Burke [Grace M. Burke], Joe Kane [Joseph Kane], people that I'd been associated with in the campaign. You'd bump into them. Joe Timilty. But not associated through the office, but just, you'd meet them out socially, or you'd meet them in a restaurant, that type of thing.

STEWART: Did you see President Kennedy during this period at all?

CLOHERTY: Yes, I saw him a few times during the campaign, the November elections, when he'd be at a rally, here and there. I was active and, you know, moving around a little bit in the campaign myself, and I'd bump into him here and there. Not too often, but on occasion.

STEWART: I mean during the time he was in Congress, did you see him at all?

[-17-]

CLOHERTY: I did, but again not often. If there was some particular Democratic affair going on, I might see him at it. And then, of course, when we got up to

the '52 campaign, I was elected to the Democratic state committee, and from time to time we'd see him at, you know, various different Democratic functions, including the Convention in Chicago in '52.

STEWART: There was some brief mention of putting his name in for vice president at that '52 Convention. Do you recall that at all?

CLOHERTY: Not particularly. Matter of fact, you see, going back to '52, he was still a Congressman. When we held the Convention, he hadn't been elected to the Senate.

STEWART: No, he had announced in...

CLOHERTY: He had announced, but he hadn't been elected to it. And I don't particularly recall any conversations about putting him into the '52 thing. I do remember the '56 campaign.

STEWART: Do you recall any problems as to who the Massachusetts delegation would support in 1952?

CLOHERTY: Yes. Of course, there are always problems. You have the, you know, different schools of thought as we've had right up to the present time. The thing was rather split. As a matter of fact, I think if we went back to the actual vote of the delegation, it was split when it was cast out there.

[-18-]

STEWART: They cast—I may be wrong on this, but Paul Dever got thirty-seven votes...

CLOHERTY: As a favorite son. Paul was the keynoter.

STEWART: As a favorite son. I assume these were all from Massachusetts.

CLOHERTY: There were all from Massachusetts. Paul was the keynoter of the Convention. As a matter of fact, while it doesn't completely touch on the Kennedy situation, it was a little bit unusual, Phil Reagan [Philip Reagan] had invited me down to the Kentucky Derby with him in 1952. And at the Derby there were some very—Phil was the Master of Ceremonies for the Kentucky Colonels' dinner the night before—and at the Derby there were in attendance quite a few members of the Senate, including the present President, Lyndon Johnson [Lyndon Baines Johnson], as a senator, the gate Senator Tom Hennings [Thomas Carey Hennings, Jr.] of Missouri, of course Earle Clements [Earle J. Clements] of Kentucky, Russell Long [Russell B. Long] of Louisiana, and so forth. And also in attendance were Leslie Biffle, who at that time was the Secretary to the

Senate, and Skeeter Johnston [Felton M. Johnson], who was then Secretary to the majority, I think at the present time is still the Secretary to the Senate and so forth.

It was rather interesting because Leslie Biffle was on the committee to select a keynoter for the Convention, and I remember at the Derby talking to him—and I didn't know him except through the introduction of Phil Reagan—and telling him about the tremendous talent and the recognition that Dever had received all over our area as one of the real great orators. And then, of course, when he got to the Convention, that story is old hat by now about losing his voice during the middle of the thing and so forth.

[-19-]

But Paul was the favorite son. And then after they got away from that, then the thing was kind of broke up. I think, as a matter of fact, if my memory serves me right, that Mike Ward [Michael J. Ward] voted for Dick Russell [Richard B. Russell, Jr.] of Georgia, and I know the late District Attorney, Bill Foley [William J. Foley, Jr.], voted for somebody else. The thing wasn't.... Kennedy was interested in Governor Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson] from the outset; Governor Dever was interested in Governor Stevenson from the outset. I don't particularly remember who Speaker McCormack, then Majority Leader McCormack, was supporting at that time. But there was a difference of opinion on the delegation, which I think eventually led to some of the problems in '56.

STEWART: Oh, really?

CLOHERTY: Well, Governor Stevenson was to be the nominee again, and he was supported by Senator Kennedy. That was the year that McCormack's name went on the ballot as the favorite son, and there was a little feeling about it at the time, and McCormack won—as a matter of fact, on a write-in vote—over Stevenson. And at that time, of course, he was then former Governor Dever was supporting Stevenson; Senator Kennedy was supporting Stevenson. There was a little bit of feeling over this.

STEWART: Why don't you get into that whole '56 matter, as long as you've touched on it, as far as the primary was concerned, the write-in?

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CLOHERTY: Well, see, this takes place in April in the pre-presidential primary here in this particular state. And McCormack's name was put up as a favorite son candidate, and he ran on stickers. They got the signatures and put him on the ballot on stickers, and of course, there was some campaigning being done.

While the Senator and, I'm sure, the former late Governor Dever were not trying to offend the Speaker or anything—I keep getting back to the newer titles; he was the Majority Leader—they weren't trying to offend the Majority Leader, they thought that the best way that they could get Stevenson nominated was to get as many votes as they could early in the Convention. And, of course, we then had the.... He was elected, and then the State

Committee was elected at the same time, the same day. And then, of course, the former State Committee Chairman, Bill Burke [William H. Burke, Jr.], became the candidate for the Chairmanship of the State Committee. It left the Chairman of the State Committee in a fairly strong position as far as the operation of the Party in Massachusetts were concerned. The Senator supported Pat Lynch [John M. Lynch], the former Collector of Customs, for the Chairmanship. He had been elected, just been elected for it, and of course, they prevailed at the meeting that we had at the Bradford Hotel.

STEWART: What was the generally assumed reason why Kennedy got into that fight?

CLOHERTY: Why, I think it was in order to try and solidify, as much as possible, the Commonwealth on behalf of Stevenson.

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STEWART: And, in turn, make himself more acceptable as a possible...

CLOHERTY: Well, I think that at that stage of the game, he was four years in the Senate, and it was a contest for leadership. He wanted to be the one to speak for the Party in Massachusetts and show that they could control, to a degree, the way the votes were going, the way the Party was going to operate. I think that was his principal reason for it.

STEWART: Was it generally recognized by everyone that this was a very true, clear-cut McCormack-Kennedy confrontation? Or weren't the lines that clearly drawn?

CLOHERTY: Well, I don't think at the outset that they were, but I think the newspaper stories would indicate, as the thing came along, that it finally got into that stage. There was never any personal recriminations that I can recall by the Senator with regard to the Majority Leader, nor vice versa. As a matter of fact, from what I understand, later, as President, that there was never any—they worked harmoniously together. When we had the huge dinner here, the New England salute to President Kennedy, in 1963, in October, about five weeks before he was assassinated, there was some discussion, I understand, in Washington in regard to the Chairman of it, and he was the one that said there'd be nobody else but Speaker McCormack, even following the campaign of '62, in which his brother [Edward M. Kennedy] was involved and the Speaker's nephew [Edward J. McCormack, Jr.] was involved. But at that time, it was a question of the leadership, and it was more or less the new guard moving in to try and replace the old guard, if that's a good way of putting it.

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STEWART: As far as you could see personally, did Speaker McCormack go all out to try to get as many delegates, as many votes as he could, within the

committee? Was he personally that involved?

CLOHERTY: I really don't think that he was that personally involved because I know he never called me, and he could have, and I really don't know of any that he called. I think he just—I think it more or less got down to the fact that people who had recognized his efforts over the years as an outstanding Democrat and a leading Democrat, and people who had been associated with him more or less over the years, but he didn't get involved in it, I don't think, to that degree. Now whether there were some telephone calls made to others, this I couldn't answer. As opposed to the Senator's interest where he went all out on the campaign and went to visit, from what they told me—other colleagues on the state committee told me he went to visit their homes to talk to them about supporting Lynch and so forth.

STEWART: What do you feel was the chief leverage that he was using to get people on the side of Pat Lynch?

CLOHERTY: Well, I would say that, being a young Senator with very definite future potentials and even if he hadn't been elected president of the United States.... And I don't think at that particular time, even though the movement was started for New England supports John Kennedy for vice president and so forth, I don't think anybody really felt, way down deep, except some of the people possibly very, very close to him and some of the real staunch admirers, that there was a chance as early as 1960 to elect a Catholic as president of the United States. But even if he weren't to be elected, he was in the Senate and it certainly was obvious to anybody who knew anything about politics that he would probably stay in the Senate if he didn't go on to a higher office just as long as he wanted to. So I think that was part

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of the strength of it. Plus the fact, here again, the glamour of the Kennedy name and the glamour of his own character.

Most people on the State Committee, as you probably know, or may have heard on some of these, we don't have a tremendously heavy vote come out of the primary, and it's more or less a popularity thing in one's own district if you get elected, and it's a rather flattering thing for a United States Senator of his prestige and background and so forth to come to someone's home and to ask them personally to support a candidate for the Chairmanship. This is what I'd say would be the real motivating factors and the strength behind his support.

STEWART: You mentioned that you thought it, in part at least, boiled down to a new, young people versus an older, more experienced, probably more politically active group. It's been said that the whole issue of Senator McCarthy [Joseph R. McCarthy], and McCarthyism was involved here. Would you agree with that at all?

CLOHERTY: No, I hardly think so, because...

STEWART: Because, well, let me just say that, of course, I guess Burke made some statements relative to Stevenson's supporters, and made some extremely critical statements about people like Alger Hiss and some of the left wing liberals who were around Stevenson. From this people have assumed that it came down to a pro-McCarthy and an anti-McCarthy...

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CLOHERTY: I don't think it did at all, especially not as far as Majority Leader McCormack was concerned, because with all of the description of liberals and so forth, here's a man who was a liberal before most of these people were born. When he was fighting the New Deal battles, they were calling them Communists because they supported Social Security. So I hardly think that, you know, they could put it in that category. Now, any statements that might have been attributed to Burke personally, I would say, wouldn't necessarily reflect or be the thinking of John McCormack.

STEWART: They weren't totally close, as the saying goes.

CLOHERTY: Well, I think they were political associates. I think that the Speaker, who has always been known for his loyalty to friends and supporters.... Burke had been a supporter in previous years and, as a matter of fact, had received what was looked upon as one of the real top flight appointments in any administration, that being Collector of Customs, under Roosevelt [Franklin Delano Roosevelt] that he had to be, you know, somewhat closely aligned, but I don't think necessarily that every statement that he made necessarily endorsed the Speaker's thinking, Majority Leader McCormack's thinking.

STEWART: Were there bad feelings that continued long after this fight as far as people in Massachusetts were concerned?

CLOHERTY: I think only a few of those who were directly involved. I don't think that the chairmanship of the Democratic state committee is an overriding issue at any time with people generally. I think the professionals in the party are interested in having some good leadership there, but the rank and file of the enrolled Democrats—as a matter of fact, I think if you went out on the street and asked today who the chairman of the Democratic state committee or the Republican state committee was, if you had one out of thirty that could tell you, you'd be getting a very high batting average. And I think it was

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even to a lesser extent then. So I don't think that there was any strong feelings that ran high amongst the rank and file Democrats. There might have been, and probably were, some

strong feelings that existed for awhile with those who were directly involved in the matter. I think they were probably dissipated to some degree by the Speaker's support—the Majority Leader's support—of Senator Kennedy in the Convention in 1956.

STEWART: Did you, personally, make any efforts to get votes for William Burke?

CLOHERTY: No. I made a commitment to vote for him myself, and I did vote for him myself.

STEWART: Okay, going back to the 1952 campaign, do you recall anything of the problem when Paul Dever was considering running for the Senate and John Kennedy was considering running for Governor, and vice versa, and why Dever made the decision not to run for the Senate?

CLOHERTY: I remember discussions about it at the time, but the reasons for the final determinations were something that would have been, you know, decided in councils far beyond anything I was involved in. I would think that—of course, Dever had done an outstanding job as Governor, and I think that there were some phases in the program that he would like to complete, although I do think that he had a life long ambition to serve in the United States Senate. Whether or not he recognized the fact that Cabot Lodge [Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr.] was a very, very difficult opponent and that whoever you are, as governor or mayor or anything else—as witness to the primary here last fall for the Democratic nomination—you make enemies because you can't say yes to everybody, and the one that you say yes to, you make ten enemies for. What the high level discussions were, I don't know; what Governor Dever's additional commitments were, people that he wanted to do something for besides the people in general, might have had a bearing.

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I really.... This is something that probably only people on the very top level of the party strata, the Kennedy family themselves, possibly the Ambassador and Jack himself and Dever and probably a few of Dever's closest allies would...

STEWART: Who would you say were, say, two or three of his closest associates at that time?

CLOHERTY: Governor Dever's or...

STEWART: Yeah. Who are possibly still...

CLOHERTY: Let's see, some of them aren't. I think one of his very strong advisors was the late Judge Edward Coughlin [Edward Augustine Coughlin, Jr.], who he had a great deal of confidence in. I think that Judge Fox carried some weight in the councils, the discussions. John Kewer was a very, very close advisor. I think his own brothers, his brother Ted and his brother, John [Robert F. Kennedy?], and sister, Marie

[?], were very close advisors. The late Judge Morris was a close advisor. Those would be the ones that I'd say. I think that John Kewer would have to be put in that category of close advisors. I'd say that was pretty much the inner circle.

STEWART: Okay. What role, if any, did you have in the 1952 campaign, either for Kennedy or for Dever?

CLOHERTY: I was active in the campaign in '52, in my own district, my own area.

STEWART: With one or both?

CLOHERTY: With both.

STEWART: Were there any problems as far as coordination between their campaigns?

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CLOHERTY: Not in our area. As a matter, of fact, '52, I think I served as chairman of my own ward, again having been elected to the State Committee earlier. We had no problems with coordination. I think that there may have been in town.

I think at some stages of the campaign that some of the people involved were of the opinion that Dever was a shoe-in, that he had no contest at all, that Congressman Herter [Christian A. Herter] was relatively unknown, and that Dever didn't have any problem at all, whereas Congressman Kennedy had a real tough battle against another glamorous figure in the person of Senator Henry Cabot Lodge. And I think that towards the tail end of the campaign, there was some concentration of effort on the Kennedy campaign because of the impression that Dever was well out in front.

STEWART: Did you have any contacts at all with people in the Kennedy headquarters? Robert Kennedy or any of those people?

CLOHERTY: Not particularly. I'd bump into them occasionally. I had contacts with Senator Powers [John E. Powers], who was the Suffolk County coordinator for both campaigns—I believe he was coordinator for both campaigns—I was in contact with him and with the people working with him at the Suffolk County headquarters. But I didn't really have much contact with Bobby at that time.

STEWART: Moving on, as far as the 1954—in 1954, of course, Kennedy people had all that start of their problems with Foster Furcolo. To what extent, if at all, were you, involved in this?

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CLOHERTY: Well, I was involved in it to the extent that I was very closely affiliated

with... [BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 1] ...Bob Murphy [Robert F. Murphy], who was the Democratic nominee for governor. As a matter of fact, I worked all of Bob's television programs with him, handling the cue cards and so forth, and in that respect the campaigns were run out of the same headquarters down on Milk Street, and I was active in it to that degree. But I was very, very active in the Murphy campaign, and as the senatorial campaign touched on that, I was associated with it. I was at the studio the night of the now highly publicized confrontation, when Senator Kennedy came up from the Cape to make an appearance on the program, channel 7, WNAC-TV.

STEWART: Did Robert Murphy make any serious attempts to heal that split between Furcolo and Kennedy?

CLOHERTY: He worked very, very diligently at doing it. As a matter of fact, he went to Hyannis Port to meet with and to talk with Jack, and from all I've ever been able to find out, from all I understood at that time, and from what took place, I think that Senator Kennedy had a great deal of admiration for Bob Murphy and for what he stood for and for his role as the Majority Leader from 1949 to '52 and then his role as Minority Leader in '53 and '54, and it's my opinion that the reason he came and agreed to go on the television program was because of Bob going to him, persuading him. I think he had a lot of admiration for him. Well, it was later pointed out, as a matter of fact, Ted Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen] says in his book, that he was sent up here to help Murphy in the campaign, and I'm sure that...

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STEWART: And also to help Saltonstall [Leverett Saltonstall]?

CLOHERTY: Also to help Saltonstall.

STEWART: Is this generally known?

CLOHERTY: I don't believe so. As a matter of fact, I'm sure it wasn't, sure it wasn't. The fact that there was no great love lost between Furcolo and Kennedy was known somewhat amongst the political group. I don't think it was known too generally by the general public.

STEWART: Yeah. Continuing, did this—of course, a lot has been written about the good relationship that Kennedy had with Senator Saltonstall. Did this always cause problems in Massachusetts Democratic circles?

CLOHERTY: Well, I don't think it caused problems. It probably caused some talk, but these things, when people connected that closely with the Party get together, these things come up, and they're discussed from time to time. But I never saw anybody broach the subject with the Senator or make an issue of it. I mean these.... The strange thing about politics, generally, I've found over the years, is that a lot of

times people that are in the Party will be highly critical of somebody when they're around with a group talking or chatting, and the person appears on the scene, and the talk all goes right out the window. They don't have same things to say, or they don't say it to them in person, and so forth. But I'm sure that, you know, he found himself in a rather difficult position. First of all, he worked closely with Saltonstall down there, and he didn't get along with Furcolo, and then he acceded to Murphy's request and made the appearance for him and then.... I don't know, do you want to get into that particular occasion or not?

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STEWART: Yeah. Go ahead.

CLOHERTY: The night of the TV appearance, which was highly publicized, and just a short time before the election, the Senator had agreed—and he was apparently having a good deal of difficulty with his back at that time because he was on crutches—to make an appearance on this program. There was a lot of work done on the speech. Joe Healey, who was doing some of the speech writing for Murphy and was also friendly with the Senator and they had written the speech and got it all worked out, and we had it put on the cue cards that afternoon. And we went out to the studio a good deal earlier than we generally did because of the importance of this particular speech, where there were a group going to be involved in it rather than one person.

The Senator arrived there quite seasonably, and Murphy was there, and Joe Healey sat in for Furcolo, reading his lines. We rehearsed the speech, and we reviewed it, went over it and so forth. And it was only a short time prior to.... There was agreement on certain changes in the script, they weren't of any great import, and Joe Healey had taken the cue cards out into another studio where there was a little more room and a place to work to make these changes on them.

And Foster Furcolo arrived rather late prior to our going on the air. As a matter of fact, I don't think we had a half an hour before we were going on. And he was highly critical of the speech, which I later understood had met with the approval of somebody who represented him in the conference between the Senate and his representative and Bob Murphy's and so forth, but he was highly critical of the speech, and he told the Senator that he wanted him to make an outright attack on Saltonstall. And Senator Kennedy said he didn't intend to and that he thought the speech covered the situation and the endorsement.

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It became somewhat heated, and he asked for his.... I had taken his crutches and put them over on the side so they'd be out of camera range, and he became rather heated, excited about the thing, and quite mad, and he started to look for Frank Morrissey. Frank was out in the other studio with Joe Healey making these changes. He said he wanted his crutches, and I went over and got the crutches and brought them to him, and he got on the crutches and started out of the studio. My first impression was that we had just blown up the whole campaign, that he was walking out, and we had an advertised appearance of Senator Kennedy, with the candidate for Governor and Senator and that he was leaving.

STEWART: Whose show was it? Who was paying for it over there?

CLOHERTY: Well, Murphy, actually. They tried that year to combine the funds a little bit, such as they are now attempting to do again. But Murphy basically was putting up the money. I say Murphy, his campaign committee so forth.

It looked like he was leaving the studio. He came out, with much effort because WNAC-TV is in an old building out there. The men's room was at the top of the stairs, and he had to go up the stairs on crutches. And he went up to the men's room, and I went racing in to Joe Healey and told him that I thought we'd just blown the fight right out the window, that he was getting ready to leave. And Joe came rushing out, went up and talked with him and apparently calmed him down somewhat and convinced him that he should stay on there. If, in fact, he was going to leave—I hardly think that he would have, but if he were going to, Joe talked to him.

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Anyway, he came back to the studio, and went through the speech. And, again, I was handling the cue cards for it. We finally got to this famous or infamous last line where Bob turned to him after he closed his final sentence, and Bob turned to him and said, "Well, Jack, aside from politics"—this isn't a direct quote, just from memory, but basically this is what it was—"Jack, aside from politics, we all know that you're shortly entering the hospital for a very serious operation, and I know whether Democrats or Republicans or Independents, the good wishes and the prayers of all the people of the Commonwealth go with you for your speedy recovery and so forth."

And the next line was Jack turning back to Bob and saying, "Thank you, Bob, and I want to wish you and Foster and the entire Democratic ticket every success." And when we got to that line he said, "Thank you, Bob, I want to wish you and the entire Democratic ticket every success," leaving out just two words, "and Foster," which I'm sure—Foster was part of the Democratic ticket—wasn't even noticeable had it not been picked up by the papers the next day in one column with a couple of lines. And then it was blown up beyond that taken they started calling him, asking him for further comments. And, of course, as I say, he was getting ready to go into the hospital, and there weren't any more. And, of course, then it became a headline story. I remember Cornelius Hurley of the *Associated Press* setting a featured headline story about the split that had taken place.

STEWART: Yeah, Yeah. Well, the Kennedy people, and again Ted Sorensen says that part of his effort was to make sure that all the papers knew of exactly what happened and what the President's feelings were; namely that he wasn't that enthused with Foster Furcolo.

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CLOHERTY: Well, I'm sure if Ted Sorensen said it, that he knows what he was told,

and the fact that he came there—I think that Furcolo made a major mistake in pressing the thing as he did at the time because, well, he lost by twenty-nine thousand votes, which is a change of fifteen, and I'm sure, had that not taken place, that he might very well have defeated Saltonstall. But I'm sure, if Ted says that he was instructed to make sure that they knew that it was deliberately intended.

STEWART: Yeah, yeah. Did Murphy lose by.... He lost by a sizable amount.

CLOHERTY: Murphy lost by seventy-five-seventy thousand. It was under seventy-five. It was a little above seventy and not up to seventy-five.

STEWART : Yeah, yeah, well this had no real impact then.

CLOHERTY: Oh, sure it did.

STEWART: Did it?

CLOHERTY: Oh, it sure did. Positively. Sure it did. Because, here again, that was a change of thirty-five thousand votes, and a lot of the so-called ethnic group, the Italo group in Massachusetts, were furious because of the play this got. This was now the Irish against the Italians, and so, while the vast majority of Italos obviously voted for him, he lost enough of them to.... As a matter of fact, if you go into Furcolo's own district, his congressional district that he used to represent, up in Springfield, Longmeadow, and so forth, there was a sizable reduction right in that district of the vote between what he got and what Murphy got. And I remember very vividly for the balance of the time, a week or ten days or whatever we had left, Judge Tomasello [Frank W. Tomasello] going to as many Italo clubs as he could possibly get to and

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speaking before them, telling them that not to make any mistake about it that the Irish and the people of Irish background had control of the delegates to the Convention and without their votes Furcolo wouldn't have been nominated and not to make any mistake and get split over this thing and so forth.

So I think it had a very decided and definite impact, and Murphy, although as the underdog against Herter running for reelection—and we were tremendously short of money. We cancelled several television shows the last week of the campaign. I think it had a very definite impact, and I think it changed the entire future years of politics in Massachusetts because Murphy could have been governor and would have been, and I think we'd have had an entirely different picture.

STEWART: Really? He at least would have been a governor who got along well with a Democratic senator in Washington, which may have made a difference.

CLOHERTY: Well, I think that, plus the fact that he was thoroughly experienced with

the legislature and the legislative mind and the legislative workings, and, I think he could have worked well with the legislature. Instead of Herter being reelected and then coming back with Foster two years later for a four year term and then losing it again in '60, you'd have had Murphy for a few terms and possibly would have been able to be in a position to have a real strong candidate when his two or three terms were up. But, of course, this is conjecture.

STEWART: Yeah, yeah. Okay, as far as the 1956 Democratic National Convention is concerned, you were there and, I assume, got somewhat involved in the fight that Senator Kennedy made for the vice presidential nomination. What do you recall of that?

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CLOHERTY: Well, I know that I talked with Jack at the Convention, and one of the things that he was disturbed about was the fight that had taken place in the state committee. He felt that John McCormack had a good deal of influence around various sections of the country because of his association with members of the Congress and could be helpful, and I told him that I wasn't that important to have any strong impression on changing whatever his views were; that I would be happy to talk with him; and that I thought that it was very important to the Party in Massachusetts; and, knowing what a strong Party man McCormack had always been, that I'm sure that he was big enough to overlook this particular thing and go along with it.

Following that conversation, of course, we had somewhat of a to-do in the caucus. McCormack was the favorite son, and there was a big argument as to how long the delegation should stay with the favorite son, whether they stayed through one ballot or two ballots and so forth, and there was quite a heated discussion about if someone looked like they could win and the delegation wanted to change at the end of the ballot. I think it finally was determined that they would stay until that time, and then at that time they would caucus again. And, in the meantime, I think it was on the Thursday morning of the convention, Stevenson having thrown the thing open to the delegates on the floor...

STEWART: Wait a minute.... To get back a bit. McCormack's name was put in nomination? He was actually nominated.

CLOHERTY: McCormack was nominated for President.

STEWART: As a favorite son, and all Massachusetts votes went to him on the first ballot...

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CLOHERTY: That's right.

STEWART: And did they switch later or after they'd gone through or....

CLOHERTY: Uh. Before it was over, they had switched, and the majority of them went to Stevenson. There were just a few holdouts.

STEWART: Yeah. But this, of course, was after Stevenson was apparently the winner.

CLOHERTY: Well, he was well out in the forefront, if I recall right. It was Kefauver [Estes Kefauver] he was up against.

STEWART: Right. Harriman [William Averell Harriman] was involved there. In fact, the reports go that McCormack was actually in favor of Harriman.

CLOHERTY: Well, Harriman was involved. Harriman, Symington [Stuart Symington, II], Stevenson—oh gee, there were a couple of other candidates. Dick Russell, I think, was in that fight. I think Bob Kerr [Robert S. Kerr] was in that fight at the time.

STEWART: No, I think it was '52.

CLOHERTY: Was it '52?

STEWART: Yeah.

CLOHERTY: '52.

STEWART: Yeah, yeah, yeah. But did you later get to talk to Speaker McCormack himself?

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CLOHERTY: On Thursday morning, before the vote was taken, when I went into the hall, I bumped into the Speaker—again Majority Leader at that time, Majority Leader McCormack. And he called me aside, and he said that he had been asked to second Senator Kennedy's nomination and that he wondered how the people who had more or less supported him in the chairmanship fight would feel if he took that position at this time because of the somewhat hard feelings that were still in existence about it.

And this part of it I recall very, very vividly: I pointed out to him that I thought that he had made himself the biggest man in the Convention by his speech on the civil rights plank; that he had actually held the Convention together when the South was trying to find a reason for walking out; and that the only thing that could possibly make him a bigger man in anybody's eyes was, in this situation, supporting the candidate from Massachusetts, and I didn't think that anybody who backed him or his candidate in the chairmanship fight would have any right whatsoever to feel offended by it. And I also pointed out that the Democratic ticket in Massachusetts all would be helped tremendously by the presence of Senator

Kennedy on the ballot. That would mean a sweep of the entire state. We concluded the conversation.

He told me to find Bobby Kennedy. I went to the back of the Convention hall, and I found Bobby, and he was talking with some people. And as soon as I got a chance to get him aside for a second, I mentioned to him, I said, "Would you like to have John McCormack second Jack's nomination?" And Bobby, who seemed to be very perturbed about it, said, "We already asked him, and he refused." And I talked to him further and said, "I think if you ask him again, he'll consent." Now, I'm not sure whether he used the word refused or he said he won't do it. "We already talked, and he won't do it." I don't want to use the wrong word in relation to that, but he either said he wouldn't do it or he refused.

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I said to him, "I think if you ask him again, that he will do it." And I walked down the aisle with him to where the Massachusetts delegation was seated. Congressman McCormack was talking to another member of Congress, and he didn't break it off immediately, and Bobby started to walk away. He made the comment to me, I said, "Aren't you going to ask him?" He said, "He turned his back." I said, "He's talking to a member of Congress that he serves with, Bob." I said, "Just wait a minute."

So, with that, the Speaker concluded his conversation, the Majority Leader, rather, concluded his conversation with him, and he turned and he said, "Yes, Bob." And Bob was a little hesitant about asking again. I don't know whether he felt there'd be a refusal or he wasn't quite as aggressive a young man as he has become since that time. And I said, "Mr. Leader, they would like you to second Jack's nomination." He said, "That right, Bob?" He said, "Well," he said, "Congressman, yeah, it would be very helpful." So he said, "All right, come on." And with that, he went down the aisle with him to have Rayburn [Sam Rayburn] recognize him to second Jack's nomination.

The follow up to it is that *Time* magazine later reported that Bobby practically forced him down the aisle, which was not true at all. Further, Bobby later sent him a telegram saying that the story was completely erroneous and he didn't emanate from any source with which they were connected. As a matter of fact, I've seen and have a copy of the telegram.

STEWART : Really? Then, of course, it was probably in the same article, but there was a story that McCormack got Rayburn to recognize I think it was Missouri...

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CLOHERTY: That was erroneous, too, because I went with the Speaker, or with the Majority Leader, to the New York delegation, and the group of them were all very much opposed to Kefauver's nomination for the vice presidency. And at that time, part way through, most of the way through the first ballot, when neither of them were going to get the nomination, Mayor Wagner [Robert Ferdinand Wagner, Jr.] of New York was one of the candidates, and John McCormack talked to Governor Harriman,

Mayor Wagner, Carmine DeSapio [Carmine G. DeSapio], who was the leader, and I think it was just the three of them. I don't recall anybody else.

And the only reason I had gone with him, I used to walk somewhat ahead of him to try and make a place—you know how crowded a convention floor gets—to try and make a place for him to get through without seeming to be pushing people around, pushing them aside, and so I stood practically in the middle of the conversation while he was talking with them. And Wagner wanted to stay for a second ballot. And John McCormack pointed out that if he did so, Kefauver would probably win the nomination.

They then asked him about the Texas situation, and he said Texas was going to go for John Kennedy. And we went down to get over to the Texas delegation, and we went right down the aisle that they were in. And as we turned right, the first delegation, of course, was Illinois. And I remember very distinctly him stopping to talk with Jake Arvey [Jacob M. Arvey], and one of the news people on the floor were trying to push a microphone right in amongst them, and I kind of moved the guy back a little bit because the conversation was private.

After he talked with Arvey, we went over to the Texas delegation. And the Texas delegation had left and were upstairs in caucus. And he went upstairs to where they were in caucus and went in the delegation, and I stayed outside the door. And following that, you know the results. It's when Johnson made the speech about the "fighting son of Massachusetts" and so forth, and Texas cast their fifty-seven votes for him.

[-39-]

So I think that John McCormack was very instrumental in helping to promote the number of votes that made the race so close and so electrifying which put him in the national spotlight to the degree that it did. And then, of course, *Time* chose to write it the way they wanted to, but I'm sure that it's been generally accepted, and, if I remember, this is why I made reference to it, and Bobby himself said that at no time was this true. I'm under the impression—and, of course, here again we're going back ten or twelve years to recall it—that he was trying to get him to recognize someone, but it wasn't Missouri, and I'm not sure that it wasn't Kentucky that was going to change. I don't know whether Kentucky had switched at that time or not.

STEWART: I'm not sure.

CLOHERTY: But I know that they made the charge that he told them to recognize Gore [Albert Gore, Sr.] and so forth, which Bobby says in his telegram—and if this were true, I don't know why he would have bothered to go out of his way to go to New York to try to talk them into supporting him and go out of his way to go up to the caucus in Texas. And I mean these things actually happened, so....

STEWART : Moving on again, what role, if any, did you have in 1958 when the President ran again for the Senate?

CLOHERTY: '58 was the campaign of, let's see, the reelection. It was Governor

Furcolo's reelection.

[-40-]

STEWART: Right. It was a big sweep.

CLOHERTY: Yeah. Furcolo got reelected, and Senator...

STEWART: Eddie McCormack [Edward J. McCormack, Jr.] got elected...

CLOHERTY: Eddie got elected Attorney General. I was more active in the Attorney General's campaign than any other at that time. As a matter of fact, I probably wasn't too much except for the tremendous amount of activity in the Attorney General's campaign. I think Jack was running against Vinny Celeste [Vincent J. Celeste]?

STEWART: Right.

CLOHERTY: That was his opponent?

STEWART : Yeah.

CLOHERTY: Well, we hardly considered that a contest. He won by about eight hundred thousand votes.

STEWART : Yeah, yeah.

CLOHERTY: No, I was strictly active in the McCormack campaign.

STEWART: Had Kennedy people or Kennedy himself had any involvement in the primary race that McCormack had against Peabody [Endicott Peabody] and Joe Ward [Joseph D. Ward] both in '58 and in '56? Or was it generally assumed he was on one side or the other?

CLOHERTY: It wasn't generally assumed he was on one side or the other, and I don't think that he personally had any involvement in the contest. I think if we went back and checked over the delegates to the convention, you would find Kennedy people in the McCormack camp, Kennedy people in the Peabody camp, Kennedy people in the Ward camp. I think they just went on their own. That was their choice, and they made it. I don't think he got involved in any way.

[-41-]

STEWART : Yeah, yeah.

CLOHERTY: As a matter of fact, you know, the natural conclusion of politics, it would have been silly for him. Why should he make a couple of enemies over who.... If he supports one, he's got two of them.

STEWART: Okay. Again, as far as the 1960 nomination campaign, Kennedy's efforts before the Convention, were you at all involved?

CLOHERTY: In 1960?

STEWART: Yeah.

CLOHERTY: Yes. I was in Los Angeles as an alternate delegate from my district, and I was under the impression that the Senator personally approved all of the delegates and alternates that went out there. I have been known to be a fairly good mover on a convention floor, and I was out there, and we worked and we propagandized, if that's the proper word for it, but, you know, did everything we could talking it up around the various places in Los Angeles.

One anecdote connected with that that I think might be of interest. I know that the night or two nights, before, I think it was the Monday night we arrived there, there was rather a large party at Dave Chasen's restaurant that was attended by all of the candidates. And, gee, there were so many governors there, it would be impossible to recount them, and United States senators and everybody else. Phil Regan hosted the party. I think Dave McDonald [David J. McDonald] of the Steelworkers might have been his co-host, but the invitations went out from Phil and his wife, Mrs. Regan.

[-42-]

And on that particular night, Senator Kennedy was there. He was rather late in arriving, but he arrived there and went around and spoke to everybody that he could. And as he was leaving, and Bob Morey [Robert F. Morey] was driving him, Congressman O'Neill [Thomas "Tip" P. O'Neill, Jr.] talked to him just outside the restaurant and within earshot. There was a discussion relative to any commitment on the vice presidential campaign, and Congressman O'Neill indicated to him that from some discussions he had had—and it was my impression that one of them was with John McCormack—that it still might be possible for them to get Johnson on the ticket and so forth.

And there had been previous discussions, I know, in which the Ambassador was involved where it was pretty much agreed that the ticket that could win was Kennedy-Johnson and not Kennedy-anybody else and not Johnson-Kennedy and not Johnson-anybody else. My further recollection, that he indicated that they had asked him, and he had turned it down cold. He said, Tip told him, "Don't close the door. I think there's still a chance," and so forth. That was pretty much the last part of it. I think that was the last time I saw him until he arrived at the little bungalows they had outside the convention hall.

When it was over, when the balloting was completed, they called on the phone, and they wanted John McCormack to come over there to see him, and he was on his way in from downtown Los Angeles. I went over with McCormack, and we were.... He was interviewed

outside the gate; I was along with him and a couple of others. And I remember thinking they had gone off the air for a commercial and tugging John's sleeve and bringing to his attention that Governor Loveless [Herschel Celler Loveless] was standing right in the background there, and he had been one of the key swingers of the delegation at the time. Then he brought him into the picture and so forth, and then into the convention hall when the nominee, the Senator, came in.

[-43-]

STEWART: Speaker McCormack was one of the leaders when they brought him in. During the campaign, were you there the night he came to the Boston Garden?

CLOHERTY: Yes, I was.

STEWART: What do you recall of that?.

CLOHERTY: Well, it was rather interesting. There's a.... I went down to the Garden. Speaker, the late Speaker of the House in Massachusetts, John F. Thompson, had said to me that afternoon, "Would you represent me at the Garden tonight?" And I said, "I'd be happy to." He had a letter of invitation. And I said, "I wish you'd have one of the girls type up a letter authorizing me to represent you because I imagine that's going to be a bedlam." So I went to the Garden, and I went in and went up on the stage. And one of the people running the rally asked me to leave the stage because.... And I told them I was representing the Speaker. He persisted in my leaving, and I pointed out to him that I was not only representing the Speaker, that I was a member of the electoral college and that I was a member of the general court and that I was a member of the Democratic State Committee, and I didn't think that was very nice treatment. And he insisted that I leave the stage.

I was, of course, running for reelection myself and I wasn't anxious for any incident at the place, so I went off the stage. I was standing down below, right below the platform, and shortly thereafter—the nominee was about to arrive—they cleared out the whole area and put everybody right out of the whole section, outside the doors where you go into the Garden, just outside, within the building itself, but outside those doors that close it off.

[-44-]

I ran into a Boston police captain that I knew. They had the police lined up on both sides where he was about to come in. We exchanged greetings, the captain and myself, and he said, "How are you, Representative. How is it?" And I said, "Not too damn good right now." I said, "Your police officer just put me out of the auditorium." He said, "What do you mean, they put you out?" I said, "Well, I just got put out of there." And he said, "Well, you come with me."

And he walked me up between the ranks of the honor guard that was lined up there to the door, which was now closed solidly, trying to keep the crowd back and so forth, and he

told a sergeant that I was to be admitted and to make sure nobody bothered me. So I got back in there, and I was right near the steps leading up to the platform. And there was an old policeman there that used to work nights at City Hall when I was a Secretary to the President of the Council some years ago and I was more or less helping hold back the crowd. It was moving up all the time, and he finally said, "Why don't you slide up behind me just as he's coming in."

So I wound up on the platform leading the cheering in the Garden. And I understand the fellow who has asked me to get off had made a bet of a hundred dollars that I wouldn't be on that platform because I'd been on the platform out in California when he arrived that night, too.

That was the last night, and it was the last time I saw him until he walked down the aisle of the General Court to address, I was a member of the House at the time, the last time I saw him, to walk down the aisle, and Eddie McLaughlin [Edward F. McLaughlin, Jr.], who was Lieutenant Governor, who had been active with us in the campaign in '46, nudged him as he came down along where I was, and he just kind of looked over and smiled and continued on. And I didn't see him again for quite some time after that.

[-45-]

STEWART: You mention Speaker Thompson, he's passed away?

CLOHERTY: Yes.

STEWART: I know very little about him. Was he an active Kennedy supporter or a McCormack man or what?

CLOHERTY: Well, I don't think he was ever too much involved in the.... John Thompson was a very ardent Democrat, and with John, whoever the leader was, that's the way the thing went. Even to the extent that former Governor Peabody, who tried to unseat him as speaker a couple of nights before he was to be sworn in as governor, tried to get someone else elected speaker, and when Peabody became governor, that was it as far as he was a Democrat and he was the leader, and so they went on from there. But I don't think you could really identify John. John, although a young fellow, was more or less of the old guard type of thinking than the newer group, but he was a very ardent Democrat, and I don't think you could really identify him with either wing of the party, if you can call them wings.

STEWART: Would you call yourself a member of the old guard?

CLOHERTY: Thinking wise, yes; age-wise, no.

STEWART: In what way thinking-wise?

CLOHERTY: Well...

STEWART: I mean, specifically, in what way would you say people of the old guard thought in a different way than, say, the Kennedy people?

[-46-]

CLOHERTY: Well, not necessarily the Kennedy people, but I think that we've gotten away completely from a party loyalty, a party loyalty to a philosophy of government. I have to think back to the great advances that have been made in the country as a result of the Democratic Party, as a result of Democratic officeholders, as a result of a Roosevelt and, a Truman [Harry S. Truman] and a Kennedy and a Johnson. And I think that if you're a member of it, that you have to be a part of it and participate in it and work for it and stay with it, and if everything doesn't go exactly the way you think, that you don't just say, "Well, I'm going to pick up my baseball bat and go home, and you can't play the game without me."

Some of these newer people are of the type that "if you don't play the game my way, then I'm not going to play." We've got examples of it of late where people serving on the advisory committee and supporting Republicans—or they supported the Republicans prior to serving on the advisory committee, and then they don't particularly like this, and three or four months after an appointment.... And you sometimes wonder. For example, General Gavin [James M. Gavin], whether or not he took this appointment knowing full well he felt this way and was going to walk away from it four or five months later and was this an opportunity to say I'm resigning from something that I don't know how much of a contribution was made to it.

I'm the old guard in that respect that I think if you're in the party—I supported other candidates; I supported candidates who didn't win; I supported Mayor Collins [John F. Collins] for the Senate in the Convention and in the primary. When he didn't win, I supported Peabody for the office. Same way in 1960. I was with Bob Murphy for governor; Joe Ward won it—I supported Joe Ward. I just don't think you can take this off and put it on like you do a suit of clothes. And I think that is the big difference and the basic difference between what we refer to as the old guard and we refer to as the new thinkers in the Party. That, to me, is the basic difference.

[-47-]

STEWART: Does this relate to the Kennedy people specifically? Let me put it another way. Would you say that the majority of new people or new thinkers are Kennedy people or have been Kennedy people traditionally?

CLOHERTY: Well now, you have to define your terms. When you say Kennedy people, I think the late President was kind of a perfect bridge between both. I think he recognized the practicality of politics: to wit, was very, very happy to have a Charlie Buckley [Charles A. Buckley] support in New York; was very, very happy to have a Mayor Daley [Richard J. Daley] support in Chicago; and was very, very happy to have a Bill Green [William J. Green, Jr.] support in Philadelphia. I think he was a professional in the finest sense of the word, at the same time recognizing that we were in

changing times and that there had to be room for new thinking and new ideas, but that there was a happy medium between the two, and where there wasn't a complete identification with one group or the other, that you could bring them together and resolve something and then try to go forward from there.

As somebody said, "Politics is the art of compromise." And with it being compromising your ideas, or your ideals, rather, that there's a happy medium in here, and I think the late President recognized that and was part of it. I think to somewhat lesser degree Senator Ted Kennedy recognizes that you've got to deal with both facets of this. Now Senator Bob Kennedy's approach to it, I don't know. I haven't been that closely associated since he's been down in New York. But I think it's a party that's big enough and has room enough for all kinds of thinking and all kinds of thoughts and all kinds of ideas, but you also have to recognize the practicality of this. And I don't think that we've been recognizing it or we wouldn't be losing elections.

[-48-]

STEWART : Do you think that Senator Kennedy, President Kennedy when he was in the Senate, could have done anything, if he had tried, to "straighten out," in quotes, the Democratic Party in Massachusetts or to do anything as far as giving it more of a unified...

CLOHERTY: Yes, I think that in the Senate he could have exerted stronger leadership here. I can readily understand his reluctance to get involved in it because this has been a most unusual state going back over its political history. You had a Curley wing and a Dever wing and a Tobin wing and a McCormack wing and a Kennedy wing, and it's awfully hard to bring them together, but I think it could have been done. I think he was one of the ideal people to do it, but I can readily understand his reluctance to.... He was thinking more in national terms and international terms than he was in state terms. And who know what goes on in anybody's particular mind? You know, why do you want to stay away from it or once burned twice forewarned. I think he could have. He probably felt he had good reasons for not getting any more deeply involved.

STEWART: Okay. Were you at the dinner they had at the Armory in October '63?

CLOHERTY: Yes, I was.

STEWART: Is there anything in general you recall about that?

[-49-]

CLOHERTY: No, except that he seemed to be very, very much at ease and very, very much at home and very, very happy to be here and seeing some of the old faces and seeing some of the ones that he probably hadn't had a chance to encounter in a long, long while and completely relaxed and completely at ease and, I think, extremely happy in the job and extremely happy to be back, to really be back home.

Related with that, I don't know whether you've had Congressman O'Neill in or not as yet, but he tells an interesting story about being at the White House one night for a meeting with some of the Democratic members of Congress. The program had been pretty well bogged down, bogged down pretty much in the House, and he had called them in to have a discussion with them as to why and what could be done and what their plans should be and so forth.

Congressman O'Neill had gotten a ride over there from a friend of his who had dropped him off and gone along about his business, and when he started to leave after the meeting was over, he started out the same way, which left him somewhat of a lengthy walk out to the street, I think it was the west gate. And when he realized that the car had gone, he turned and started to go back through to go out the entrance that was close to Pennsylvania Avenue so he could get a cab.

And as he relates it, the President came darting out of his office and bumped into him and said, "What's the matter, Tip?" And he said, "Well, Mr. President, I got a ride over, and I forgot the car was gone. I was going out to get a cab. I thought this would be quicker." He said, "Never mind a cab." He said, "I'll get one of the Secret Service fellows or one of the chauffeurs to drive you over." He said, "I've got three quarters of an hour before I've got to be upstairs. Come back in."

[-50-]

So they went back in, and he said, "will you have a drink?" And apparently they had a bottle of beer or a high ball or something. He never was much of a fellow for—you know a social drink or two, and that was it, but they went in and they sat down, and he started chatting. And Tip told the story later on. He said it was amazing. He said, "He started to ask me about some people. 'Do you ever see Jimmy Kelly?'" (I don't know that this is the chronological order). "How's he doing? Do you ever see Bill Sutton? Do you ever see Joe Healey? Do you ever bump into Mark Dalton? Do you ever happen to see Peter Cloherty?" He ran down about five or six names. He said it was just one of those nostalgic periods, you know, that must have been going back. And I think the same thing must have been going through his mind at the Armory that night, going back over the fifteen, eighteen odd years since he'd been up here and gotten involved in it, and he seemed to really be thoroughly relaxed and thoroughly enjoying himself.

STEWART: Yeah, that was quite a night, I guess.

CLOHERTY: Oh, it was a fantastic night.

STEWART: Huge crowd.

CLOHERTY: It was a fantastic night. There's never been another affair like it.

STEWART: Yeah. Well, that's just about all the questions I have unless there's anything else you want to throw in here.

[-51-]

CLOHERTY: Well, there isn't really anything else that I could add to it. You know, it's like everything else, the more questions you ask, the more things come to mind, and so forth. We've covered a period of twenty-one years. I'll probably drive home and lay, "Well, I should have told John this or that or the other thing, but..."

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[END OF INTERVIEW]

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