

Howard W. Fitzpatrick Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 09/29/1967
Administrative Information

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Biographical Note

Fitzpatrick was a Massachusetts political figure; the Sheriff of Middlesex County, Massachusetts, from 1949 to 1969; the chairman of multiple fundraising events in Massachusetts for John F. Kennedy [JFK] and the Democratic Party; and a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1960. In this interview he discusses his role in Massachusetts politics and fundraising efforts for JFK and the Democratic Party; the 1952 Massachusetts Senate race; the attempt to get JFK the nomination for Vice President at the 1956 Democratic National Convention; JFK's relationship with several different political figures; and his personal interactions with JFK, among other issues.

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Oral History Interview

Of

Howard W. Fitzpatrick

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Oral History Interview

With

HOWARD W. FITZPATRICK

September 29, 1967
Cambridge, Massachusetts

By John F. Stewart

For the John F. Kennedy Library

STEWART: Why don't we start by my asking you if you recall when you first met John Kennedy [John F. Kennedy]?

FITZPATRICK: The first time I met John Kennedy was when he was actively campaigning for Congress over in Charlestown, and then I'd meet him around. I was in the catering business at the time, and I'd meet him around at several banquets and several club suppers and outings when he was really campaigning for Congress. Everybody took a liking to the fellow immediately. They all thought he was great. He was so down to earth. And after he'd get through talking, why, everybody in the banquet room would want to come up and shake hands with him. He was a very likeable fellow. He had a million-dollar personality.

STEWART: Had you known his father, Ambassador Kennedy [Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr.]?

FITZPATRICK: I knew Ambassador Kennedy, yes, I knew him. I knew Teddy [Edward M. Kennedy]. I knew Bob [Robert F. Kennedy], and I knew the family because.... And the mother [Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy], she was always interested in retarded children. Lots of times I served on committees with them to raise funds for retarded children.

STEWART: Just for a little biographical background, could you briefly describe the position you held, say in the late 1940s? Were you sheriff of Middlesex County?

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FITZPATRICK: I was Sheriff appointed by Governor Paul Dever [Paul A. Dever], who was a Democrat, in 1949. It seems that General Boutwell [Louis E. Boutwell], who was the sheriff at the time, died, and then the appointing power came under the governor of the state. It was a job that I didn't think I'd want to take, but after talking it over with several people, they said the sheriff of Middlesex is a high honor and you can do a lot of good. So I took it, and that's how during that time when he was running around, '56 there, or '58, I don't remember, but he was actively campaigning with house parties. And then they used to have a big night-before banquet at the Charlestown Armory, where there'd be a couple thousand people, and everybody'd be wanting to wait to hear Jack Kennedy speak. He was very popular.

STEWART: Do you recall any contacts or associations you had with him while he was in the House of Representatives? This could have been from '47 to '51.

FITZPATRICK: No, I didn't have any real contacts with him. I knew he was there, but I didn't have any real contacts with him.

STEWART: Of course he was running for Congress in 1946 as a fairly young fellow. In fact, he was only twenty-nine. There was certain opposition from regular Democratic people in the area because he was so young.

FITZPATRICK: Well, he run against, I think, John Cotter [John F. Cotter] from Charlestown, who later became fire commissioner of the city of Boston, a very popular fellow. And I knew John Cotter very, very well, but I told him one time, I met him, I said, "John, I don't think you can beat Jack Kennedy because, first of all, he's a likeable fellow, and you're a likeable fellow yourself. He's got plenty of ability. He's got money behind him." And I says, "I don't think you can beat him. And if I were you, I would join up with him and have him be elected instead of spending a lot of money because he'll spend a lot. If you campaign against a fellow who has money, you've got to have money to campaign right."

STEWART: Was it generally assumed in political circles around here that Ambassador Kennedy was very much in charge of the whole campaign?

FITZPATRICK: Well, I'd say where Ambassador Kennedy came into the picture big was when he was running for President more than these other campaigns. I think that he really was the drive behind him, and he really worked hard. I've seen him come in here to Boston at the headquarters when Steve Smith [Stephen E.

Smith] would be in charge of it, and he'd lay down the law that they should do this, and they should do that, and, boy, it perked up right away.

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He'd change the whole thing around if he thought things weren't going well. He had a suite at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, and I was there one day when he was laying the law down to Steve Smith at headquarters what he wanted done.

STEWART: In 1952, of course, there was a bit of a problem. Paul Dever was thinking of running for the United States Senate against Henry Cabot Lodge, and there was a decision by Paul Dever of whether to run for Governor again or run for the Senate. Let me ask you first, what was your association with Paul Dever?

FITZPATRICK: Oh, I was very, very friendly with Paul. He's the governor that appointed me to the sheriff's job, and Paul was a wonderful speaker, and he really was.... I think I was more friendly with him at the time than I was with Jack Kennedy.

STEWART: Do you know why he decided not to run for the Senate?

FITZPATRICK: Well, probably Paul figured the same way, that Kennedy was a likeable fellow, and he had a lot of people that were on his side, and money, and everything else, and his association. He figured Kennedy would be a hard fellow to beat.

STEWART: Was it assumed that there could be a primary fight between Dever and Kennedy?

FITZPATRICK: At that time, I don't think so. I don't think that.... A primary contest with a fellow like Dever or Kennedy would cost each one of them a lot of money, and they'd hurt each other because there'd be such a bitter fight to get the nomination, then Cabot Lodge would gain by it.

STEWART: What do you recall about the 1952 campaign? What role did you have in it, either for Paul Dever or Kennedy?

FITZPATRICK: The only role I had would be, of course, in Middlesex County, it's fifty-four cities and towns. And I would—most of the men that worked for us, like court officers and guards and fellows like that, why they lived in different parts of the county, and we would try to help the Democratic Party as much as we could. And we really did do a lot. We'd have dinners and banquets and outings, and raise money. We did a lot of that in those days.

STEWART: Was there much fund raising for Kennedy's campaign as opposed to

Dever's?

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FITZPATRICK: No. Dever would be more looking for.... I don't remember participating in any fundraising for Kennedy at that time. It was mostly for whoever was the Democratic governor and he was running for reelection. You'd line up a lot of people, and you'd contribute yourself. It costs a lot of money now, and at that time it cost a lot of money, too, but more so now because the price of advertising and TV wasn't in there at the time, and radio and signs. It cost a lot of money.

STEWART: It's often been said that there was a certain friction between the Dever campaign and the Kennedy campaign in 1952. Do you recall?

FITZPATRICK: I never noticed any real difference of opinion at the time.

STEWART: You know, a matter of how closely they could be coordinated or run together.

FITZPATRICK: Well, I think at the time, I think Jack Kennedy was the type of a fellow that he wanted to run his own campaign. He wouldn't tie himself up with anybody, where Dever was a different type. Dever was a campaigner like you'd.... I think Dever at that time was a real campaigner. He had the experience, and he could talk well, and he had been governor. You know what I mean, he had all the people that he had done things for, appointed jobs and that, and he didn't have too much trouble getting money, which is a big thing in a campaign.

STEWART: Were you at the 1952 Democratic National Convention, do you recall?

FITZPATRICK: No, I don't think I was at that one. I was at the '56, and was at the '60, and I was at the '64; I was a delegate-at-large.

STEWART: Do you recall if you were optimistic about Kennedy's chances against Henry Cabot Lodge?

FITZPATRICK: Well, I thought that he'd beat Cabot Lodge even if.... Cabot Lodge, of course, at the time he had a terrific following, and he was highly respected, and he was a good looking fellow like Jack was. At that time, Jack wasn't really as good looking a fellow as you get later on because he had some kind of a malaria, you know, and he didn't look as good and as strong as Lodge. But still the people and the womenfolks they really liked the

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way Kennedy campaigned. He was down to earth. He wasn't a long talker, but when he'd talk, he'd usually tell you some good jokes, you know, that you haven't heard before. Nice, clean, good jokes. And a likeable fellow. And stay around and shake hands with everybody.

He'd really have a lot of people with him, like a lot of young girls that'd run these teas at these big armories. There were thousands would come to him. And then his mother and his sisters always would help him. He used to have a terrific organization. And then they'd go on these coffee hours on radio and TV at the time. They'd have people call in questions. I remember that Jack, he and his sisters would be sitting there, and then people would call in questions for him to answer, and he'd answer them just right. And people liked his frankness. And if the question was a tough question, he'd laugh it off some way and say something funny about him, about the way he combs his hair or something like that.

STEWART: Were you, at the time, or later, chairman of the Jefferson [Thomas Jefferson]-Jackson [Andrew Jackson] Day committee?

FITZPATRICK: I was the chairman I think, I don't remember the year, but I was the chairman of two Jefferson-Jackson Day dinners. One we raised a hundred and thirty-eight thousand dollars, and then the one in '59, because I can remember the night that we wanted to give him some money to kick off his campaign for President. There was a little feeling with two or three of the members that we should have a regular, formal vote. But this particular night we told him we were going to give him fifty-thousand dollars, and we didn't want to make a big thing of it that night to let everybody know we were giving him fifty, and he didn't want it that way. But one particular fellow, that's the treasurer, Gilgan [Edward P. Gilgan], he wanted to make a speech in giving him the fifty thousand, and as he did it, he took the check and he put it in front of him, and he didn't think anything of it. What I wanted to do, I wanted him to give him the fifty-thousand dollars in a quiet way and say, "Here's a start for your campaign." So then later on, why, I went down to Washington to see him after the convention. And Jack Fulham [John N. Fulham, Jr.] and myself, that was the first thousand-dollar breakfast we started. We'd interview six fellows at a time, take them to lunch, and tell them that they were picked as one of a hundred...

STEWART: This was during the 1960 campaign?

FITZPATRICK: 1960 campaign for President.... And we told them that these were the hundred fellows that wanted to kick off his campaign at a thousand-dollar-a-plate breakfast.

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And it was such a big success.... Of course, we only interviewed and talked to fellows that had money and had a good reputation, a high-grade reputation, because the Kennedys would check every one of them out.

STEWART: Really.

FITZGERALD: You know you'd talk to them and they'd say, "He's all right." But certain ones they'd tell you they didn't want, no matter how much they did. So, as I was telling you before we went on tape here, that we went over to the airport. We had a buffet breakfast, not a sit-down breakfast, just a buffet breakfast. And we had a hundred and fourteen people that agreed.... The money either was in or they were going to pay it that morning. And we got four young ladies before the entrance to the Georgian Room and the Statler Hilton, and once you saw them with that little name on there, you'd know they had paid. But they couldn't get in, we had detectives and the Boston police department just to keep out people, you know, that weren't supposed to be there. And then we wanted to have it orderly because here was a fellow that was going to run for President and was well liked. No matter where—as soon as he'd come into the hotel, there'd be crowds waiting for his entrance.

So we had, as I say, 114 went out to the airport to meet him. He was coming up from Hyannis on a Monday morning, as I remember. And he come off the plane, and he says, "Howard, I don't think I can stay over fifteen or twenty minutes." And I said to him, "If you can't stay longer than that, at least a couple of hours, here are 114 fellows who were promised...." We had three or four photographers to take a snapshot, to speed it up. And I said, "If you can't come over here and spend a couple of hours, you'd better go to Washington, and come up here a day you can." "Well," he says, "that sounds better. I'll come in Friday because I'm going to California, and I'll be in by at least seven o'clock." So he came in before seven, and took a shower and dressed up in that pencil striped blue suit. And gee, he looked terrific with an all night riding and driving and campaigning out there.

We had succeeded with a little publicity we got, fellows called us up, high-grade fellow, and said, I didn't know about that time you were going to have. I want to be considered one of them." We sold seventy more thousand-dollar tickets, and so we had a hundred and eighty-four thousand dollars. We had two or three fellows, I think, that picked up the tab for breakfast. And Jack's breakfast would be two four-minute eggs and toast and coffee, a little orange juice! That's all he'd want. Then he'd get up and thank them for coming and took a picture with them. And I think he, the original first

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group, he signed autographs on a plane with a lipstick pencil.

STEWART: Oh, really.

FITZPATRICK: Yes. It was quite a thing.

STEWART: Without mentioning any names, could you give some examples of the types of people that after their investigation they turned down?

FITZPATRICK: Well, for instance, if they knew that some fellow that had—say, a particular lawyer, that all the cases he had would be for questionable

characters, they wouldn't want him. One particular fellow, I don't want to mention his name, they didn't want him there. Then, if they saw another fellow that didn't have a real good reputation in the city, or the neighborhood.... They never wanted any losers with them. They didn't want losers, they wanted winners, and fellow's a successful businessman, and people well thought of in the community, on big drives like the March of Dimes, and helping out retarded youngsters, Boys Town of Italy, and things like that. They'd want that type of fellow.

STEWART: Did they actually turn down many?

FITZPATRICK: No, because we knew who.... This Jack Fulham, he owns the fish pier, and he's now a partner of Estabrook and Company, the stock people. He was a very high-grade fellow, and he knew the cream of the crop. They'd get together, and I'd have my driver pick them up, and we'd meet over at Jimmy's Harbor Side and have a luncheon and all. We wouldn't tell them what it was about until after we had the lunch, and then, invariably, nine out of ten would write out a check there. No corporation, it had to be a personal check of their own.

STEWART: Going back, you, I assume, were associated with fundraising for the Democratic Party in Massachusetts throughout the period when President Kennedy was in the Senate. Do you recall, was he always totally cooperative as far as dinners and breakfasts that you were arranging to raise funds when he was in the Senate? Did he get involved that much?

FITZPATRICK: He never got involved with any fundraising. Jack was—when he was Senator, I think that he wanted to be on his own, and he never looked to us for any money at that time. I think Governor Furcolo [John Foster Furcolo] was the governor at that time. That was the year that I got to be chairman of the

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Jefferson-Jackson dinner committee. They have it once a year. I think the top money that they got in the Jefferson-Jackson one year was with Paul Dever—he was the governor at the time—I think it was a hundred and five thousand. But with this particular one at that time, it was about a hundred and thirty-eight, and then the year following that we got a hundred and sixty-eight. I think that was the year that we gave the fifty-thousand-dollar contribution to the campaign. You know, it wasn't a question of he had money, but he couldn't spend it. You know, the laws prohibit him from spending his own money. He wanted to get small donations, big donations, and what the law would allow. They were very careful. They wanted to do everything right. The Kennedy people were very, very exacting in everything. They wouldn't want anyone with them that had any kind of a taint of, you know, that didn't have the right reputation in the community.

STEWART: But as far as getting involved in fundraising within the state, there was very little of it?

FITZPATRICK: Very little of it then because the Jefferson-Jackson would be the main event, and that would be to take care of the Democratic state committee. They had to pay the one that was running it there, and the girls in there. A lot of times they were underpaid. And they never had enough of money, the Democrats, in those days: they never had really enough money. And then when the governor would come up for election, or lieutenant-governor, or treasurer, and all that, everybody used to go on their own to get money. We'd always try to run several breakfasts and dinners on a smaller scale, like a twenty-five dollar breakfast. Usually we could get fellows who were in the contracting business, and I don't know what they expected to get, but they'd all want to be with a winner. Whoever looked like the winner, he wouldn't have too much trouble getting money.

But Kennedy never went into that at all at that time. Of course, the President time was a different ball game. He needed millions to do that. And he really.... I think that he was so well liked, and he had the connections with the people. I think they wanted to run.... This was an innovation in the state, a thousand-dollar-a-plate breakfast.

STEWART: To go back a little bit, do you recall or were you involved at all in this split between John Kennedy and Foster Furcolo, which started in 1954?

FITZPATRICK: No, I wasn't involved, but I remember the night that happened. It seems that—I don't know who was late, whether Jack was late or Governor Furcolo was late

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at a TV station, WNAC, and I think that Governor Furcolo didn't like the way he was speaking about any—you know, they got some kind of a little.... I wasn't there; I only saw it on TV. But I think there was a little feeling there at the time. I forget what it was.

STEWART: Were you involved at all in Furcolo's race against Saltonstall [Leverett Saltonstall] in '54?

FITZPATRICK: You mean for governor?

STEWART: No, for the Senate. He ran against Senator Saltonstall in 1954.

FITZPATRICK: Oh, for the Senate. So, I wasn't too much, but I probably gave a donation. I forget, when was he governor?

STEWART: He was elected governor in '56. He ran against Saltonstall in '54.

FITZPATRICK: Well, he wasn't so well known because he was a congressman in Washington.

STEWART: Of course, Kennedy didn't support him.

FITZPATRICK: No, no, that's right, because, I'll tell you why I can see why he probably didn't do that was that Jack Kennedy and Saltonstall got along very, very good together down in Washington. They were very cordial, and they would never.... They worked together like they were both Democrats or both Republicans. There was no trouble with each one of them. Kennedy was the type that, you know, he'd never get in any arguments, but if he was mad with you, he could really tell you where you get off at. I didn't participate much in that campaign with Furcolo and Saltonstall because I didn't think he could beat him. Saltonstall was very highly regarded. Everybody loved him in the state. Republicans were strong for him, and a lot of Democrats were strong for Saltonstall.

STEWART: Did this relationship of Kennedy with Saltonstall cause many problems with local Democratic people here in Massachusetts?

FITZPATRICK: Well, you'd hear a little discussions about it, but it didn't create too many problems, not that I knew. Some rabid Democrats could say he shouldn't have been so friendly with him, but I think it was the right way. That's the way I'd be. With a high-type fellow like that you couldn't....

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You know, they'd get together, and if they differed on something [Interruption] point of difference, you know.

STEWART: Were you at all involved in the 1956 fight over the chairmanship of the state Democratic committee? Do you recall? Bill Burke [William H. Burke]? Pat Lynch [John M. Lynch]?

FITZPATRICK: Well, I'll tell you Pat Lynch was the fellow that the President wanted, and I think Burke was the fellow that John McCormack [John William McCormack] wanted, see. I can just remember that though, but.... Pat Lynch was a good friend of mine. But they won out, and Lynch got the chairmanship. But it caused a little bit of feeling that.... Lynch made good—both of them were very good in my estimation. I didn't get—cause I wasn't on any committees for that. I try to keep out of those kind of things, you know.

STEWART: You say you were at the 1956 convention, Democratic National Convention in Chicago?

FITZPATRICK: Yes, that was the time when a lot of the news media would always come to Jack, you know, to see what he was going to do. And then he had a film on about the Kennedys. When he would put the film on, and after.... We had several meetings, like at breakfast and luncheons, and he'd say that he really didn't want

the Vice President's job. But then when the night before they were going to nominate, Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson] got up and said he wasn't going to pick a Vice President, it was wide-open. That was the real time that they really got together and did some work. The supporters of Kennedy worked all night lining up fellows they thought could.... And they came darn near getting him the convention. It was a good thing he didn't get it, or he probably wouldn't have been President.

STEWART: Were you at all involved in that effort? Did you have any contact outside of Massachusetts?

FITZPATRICK: No, just with fellows down there. We'd put on luncheons, and we'd invite them. We spent a little bit of money at that time, down there in '56. We did a lot of good for him, you know, because we'd call different fellows. Dan O'Dea [Daniel D. O'Dea], the late Dan O'Dea of Lowell, knew a lot of people around the country, fellows like Mayor Daley [Richard J. Daley] and them from Chicago. He did a great job. We lined up them. Then another fellow who was with us knew some people out in Nevada, and he got six votes there through this fellow—he's dead now. I forget what his name was:

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he owned the Desert Inn. But he lined up Nevada, and fellows like that had connections. And he was an easy fellow to sell because they liked him. I can remember Bobby Kennedy at the time. He and Bobby'd be sitting down just the same way they did in '60 in the convention hall. One particular time there there was a mix-up. A fellow had to have his tickets to say that he was a delegate, and I think Bobby come in one day without a ticket, didn't have it on him. This fellow went to tell him to get out, and Bobby told him to take his hands off him. So we straightened it out and got him a ticket. He had a ticket, but he probably mislaid it.

STEWART: There have been stories in some books about John Kennedy, that Speaker McCormack wasn't too enthused about his running for Vice President and didn't do all he may have done to help him. Now, were you at all aware of this, or do you think there's any truth to it at all?

FITZPATRICK: No, I was a very good friend of John McCormack's and also of the Kennedys, see. But John McCormack always was for Kennedy. I don't remember any.... You know, people outside would stir up these things. But I can never know of any time that John McCormack wasn't for whatever Jack Kennedy wanted. He was 100 percent for him. Even when he got to be Speaker, a lot of people stirred up that probably Kennedy wasn't going to have the speaker when he got in. But there wasn't any trouble at all. He went right down the line for Kennedy always. And that time when Eddie McCormack [Edward J. McCormack, Jr.] run against Ted [Kennedy], which was a big mistake for Eddie—he could have been governor that year, and Ted would have been Senator. But McCormack never said one word about the Kennedys, always spoke very highly

of them. But he used to get—the politicians would have them fighting, you know, and it was embarrassing more to McCormack more than it was to Kennedy.

STEWART: You said a while ago that Senator Kennedy, President Kennedy didn't take much of a role in fundraising within the state. To your knowledge were many attempts made by people around the state to get him more involved or to get him to take more of a hand in Massachusetts politics?

FITZPATRICK: No, it was pretty hard to get Kennedy to do something that he didn't want, you know what I mean. It was hard to reach him, you know, but he picked his friends, and he had a select few people that he could confide in. I never saw him get embroiled in anything like that. Maybe he'd talk about it, but I never saw him myself.

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STEWART: Just for a little background, had there always been controversies over exactly how the Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner money is spent, or is doled out to various candidates?

FITZPATRICK: Well, there was always discussions about that, but the state committee never had enough of money. I can remember there'd always be a deficit because, number one, you'd have to give so much money to the national committee in Washington, with the state. And I know at the time President Kennedy was interested to see that that bill was paid to the national committee for the simple reason, he comes from Massachusetts, and when they'd get to a party, they'd say, "Massachusetts, your state, hasn't given their quota." Say, for instance, you took a hundred and thirty-eight thousand, the gross figures: you'd have about twenty thousand for the dinner, and then you'd have to run the state committee and the salaries and everything out of that. Then to give what they owed in Washington, they always were behind, and it was hard really to function without money. And then I've seen times, Pat Lynch and Jerry Doherty [Gerard F. Doherty] and myself would go down to the City Bank [City Bank and Trust] where Ruby Epstein [Ruben Epstein], who was very friendly with the Democrats, would sign a note to bridge them over until the next election without any interest—he was very, very friendly and tried to help.

STEWART: But Kennedy was interested in trying, in '58 and '59, to keep them current?

FITZPATRICK: Oh, he wanted them to keep up their payments to the national committee because it would be a black eye if you're running for President and your own state wasn't contributing because they needed so much money to elect a Democratic President. Republicans in those days didn't have any trouble getting money. They had all the big people donating big money, but the Democrats in those days had a hard time to get it.

STEWART: Do you recall in, I think, late 1958 John Hynes [John B. Hynes] was appointed Democratic National Committeeman, and then before that in 1956, I think, Senator Stanton [Elizabeth Stanton] was appointed [Democratic] National Committeewoman. Do you remember any differences over the appointment of these two people to the national committee?

FITZPATRICK: I forget now, but Hynes was a high-grade fellow, and Betty Stanton was a Senator. I forget now who was looking for that instead of Hynes. I forget the party who wanted that. I don't really remember. But Hynes and Betty Stanton were good appointments, I believe. I don't know whether

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Kennedy wanted Hynes or not, you know I don't know.

STEWART: I think there were other people discussed...

FITZPATRICK: That wanted it.

STEWART: ... that wanted it. Yes.

In 1959 there was a bit of a squabble over the appointment of the district attorney of Middlesex County...

FITZPATRICK: Oh, John Droney [John J. Droney].

STEWART: Droney, and Peabody [Endicott "Chub" Peabody], and Zamparelli [John F. Zamparelli] were involved.

FITZPATRICK: Well, I'll tell you, Governor Furcolo was the governor at the time, and to be frank and honest, I think, the one that Mrs. Furcolo [Kay Furcolo] was for I think it was Chub Peabody: that's who she wanted. And then the next choice, I think, was Zamparelli in Medford. Kennedy wanted Droney because Droney was a big factor in his campaign. He ran his campaign around Cambridge. So he called on the phone to Furcolo, and he told him he wanted Droney, and he went along on it.

STEWART: There was some reluctance on the part of Furcolo.

FITZPATRICK: Oh, yes. That's right, that's right. Because you can see that, I think, his choice was Peabody. His wife liked him, and she said he should give it to Peabody, you know. And then Johnny Zamparelli was very close to him, they were Italian people, and they really wanted to give it to him. But after he got right on it, he got Furcolo to appoint Droney.

STEWART: To your knowledge did this cause any lasting problems between Endicott

Peabody and the Kennedy people?

FITZPATRICK: No, but somehow or another, I don't know, there must have been something they.... I'd notice it when Jack Kennedy would get off a plane and Peabody would be down there at Hyannis waiting for him with his youngsters or so, then he'd just shake hands and go right along. It wouldn't be like if he met a friend who he liked, he'd stop and laugh a bit and say something. There must have been something there. I don't know what it was. But it's a funny thing, they never tell you, you know, but once you get in wrong with the Kennedys, you get in wrong with them for good. They never forget it. I don't know what it could have been.

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But I know that Peabody was a high-grade fellow and so were the Kennedys. But somehow or another he didn't hit it off so well with them. It must have been something.

STEWART: I've heard stories, but I've never really been able to pin it down. During the time that Kennedy was running for the nomination before the convention in 1960—of course, he had two very important primaries in West Virginia and Wisconsin—were you at all involved in raising funds for these efforts, or doing anything along this line?

FITZPATRICK: No. Well, I donated.... I went out to Wisconsin.

STEWART: Did you?

FITZPATRICK: Yes. I went out to Wisconsin, and we arranged a big banquet with the sheriff out there. Because I happened to be sheriff, and I went and looked him up. I went to a couple of breakfasts. And we did a little bit of work out there for him. This particular night that we had this, the sheriff had it, it was standing room only. They didn't even have any chairs; they were packed in there like sardines. And in the rush of things when they came in, Bobby was in back of Jack, and somehow or another he got in a rush to get in, and he couldn't find where Bobby went to. So when we got up on the platform, he said to me, he looked around and said, "Where is Bobby?" He came in the back way. But there was such a rush getting in there. And they were all standing up. No chairs at all. The reason I was on the head table there was because we arranged it through the sheriff out there in Wisconsin. He was strong, and this Congressman Zablocki [Clement J. Zablocki], or something of that name, oh, he was a great, great fellow for him, and he would be always around with him. That particular day I got out there, we wanted to catch up with the caravan, and we found out where we could meet it to let him know we're in town. We met them there, and told them what we were going to do and help them out there.

STEWART: Were you...

FITZPATRICK: And then New Hampshire, but I didn't go to Virginia, but a lot of my

friends went down there.

STEWART: You say you were in New Hampshire with him?

FITZPATRICK: Yes, just up there because we knew some people up there and tried to help him. You know, we knew some

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good friends up there. The Dunfey boys [William L. Dunfey and Walter James Dunfey] up there, they did a lot for him up in New Hampshire. They did a real good job. Of course, they'd come down here when we'd have an all New England dinner. You'd get to know these fellows, and New Hampshire was important to him at the time. When he came out of there good, then he went on to Wisconsin, then West Virginia. And really that was the making of him, if he was going to really be a winner.

STEWART: Was there much fundraising here in Massachusetts before the convention, during these primaries, or even before that?

FITZPATRICK: Well, we had the dinner. We had one dinner. We had three breakfasts though. Three thousand-dollar-a-plate breakfasts. And we raised quite a lot of money. That was before he was...

STEWART: Before the convention or after?

FITZPATRICK: No, after the convention, after the convention. But before the convention, there weren't too many fundraising dinners. As I said, there was a dinner for the Jefferson-Jackson that we gave him the fifty thousand. But that wasn't the way to do it. The way to do it was the way that I said: to give it to him separately and not in front of all those people.

STEWART: To go back just a bit, when he ran for the Senate—there wasn't much of a campaign—again in 1958, were you at all involved in that campaign?

FITZPATRICK: No, just we'd go around with him at rallies and things like that. But he looked like a sure winner then anyway. There was no trouble at all. We'd run a lot of teas. We'd run some teas. One of the biggest teas we ran was down at the Quincy Armory for about forty-five hundred people. Then he'd run these like times at the Commonwealth Armory and at the Malden Armory, and then Lawrence and Lowell, and places like that. He'd have a lot of house parties, you know, and then he'd be on TV with the coffee hours, and have his mother there or his wife, Jackie [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis], would be there. They'd all be there, and they'd send in questions for him to answer. But he didn't really need—he really sold himself to people and they liked him so that.... Whenever Jack Kennedy was going to be at a rally, they'd really want to be there for him.

STEWART: Do you want to stop for a minute? [Interruption] Could you tell us about Los Angeles? You went to the Democratic National Convention...

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FITZPATRICK: I went to the Democratic convention, and believe me...

STEWART: In 1960.

FITZPATRICK: ... the rooms out there. You know, out there, in the Statler Hotel out there, what we'd call a suite here in Boston, compared to the suite, would only be like a twin bedroom. So we didn't have enough of rooms. We sent out a good friend of mine over to the Beverly Hilton, and we got a lot of rooms over there. We did a great job. I'll never forget how organized they were. They had about three hundred and fifty Ford cars, brand new, that—I think the Ambassador got them from the Ford people. We got cars for fellows that could do him some good, and we'd put on times at the Beverly Hilton. Then they had a hundred-dollar-a-plate dinner at the Beverly Hilton over there. They had thousands there. I knew, he was Senator, Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson], he wasn't the Vice President.... But when they picked him, why, it was a good running mate for him.

But then on this dinner, you see, in '63, my firm catered that dinner. And I'll never forget. That was the largest dinner—and I think they took in six to seven hundred thousand dollars on that dinner.

STEWART: Really.

FITZPATRICK: Yes, that was a big dinner. I'll never forget.... You see, the type of a fellow he was.... When we came in to meet him from coming from Maine that particular day, we were over there—Tom White, the contractor, and myself were co-chairmen of that particular dinner—and we didn't know who was going to ride with him. I thought probably Governor Peabody would ride with him, or John McCormack, but a Secret Service fellow called me aside and said, "Do you want to get over there, White and Fitzpatrick, to ride with the President." So we rode in to the hotel, and then we had this big dinner.

And we were so afraid that in case we didn't have enough room at this armory, I engaged a dinner at the Statler Hotel. In case there was an overflow, we'd send them down there for the dinner, and then buses to take them back to hear Kennedy speak. But we had enough room. Then after the dinner was over, we had these people like the troopers and the policemen and the fellows from the various guards and all, and we had them come down. So it shows you what type of person he was.

The next morning—I didn't get out of there until two o'clock—but the next morning we got a call from, they said it was President Kennedy on the line wanting to talk, and I didn't think it was so.

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I got on the line, and, sure enough, it was. He said, "I wanted to tell you how wonderful it was. Ted tells me he had a great time down at the Statler Hilton last night. Nothing like it." He says, "The best job I've ever seen." Now, I didn't know whether to call White to find out if he called him or not. But that night I was talking to Tom White, and I just happened to say, "Did the President call you?" And he said, "Yes, he did. He called me."

The night of the dinner he did something: there was a fellow there that went blind from the Battle of the Bulge. This Pandora Sweater executive, that owned the Pandora Sweater in New Hampshire, that was a very substantial contributor to Kennedy, he wanted to know if he could have this fellow and his wife see the President. So I went up to the Secret Service fellow, I was at the head table, and I talked to him. "Sure," he says, "right after the dinner's over have him meet me over at that ramp, that's the best place for him." He went right over there and he put his hands around him. The fellow was in tears, you know. And he was going through one dinner into the next rink—there was such an overflow, you know—and there was a little colored youngster going through the crowd and he picked her up and she said she had a doll and she called it Caroline.

STEWART: One thing I forgot to ask you. Your name was formally mentioned after the election as possible replacement in the United States Senate for John Kennedy.

FITZPATRICK: That's right, that's right.

STEWART: Did you talk to him at all about this?

FITZPATRICK: No, I didn't talk to him at all. He sent up three names. I think the names were Torbert MacDonald [Torbert H. MacDonald], Ed Hanify [Joseph E. Hanify, Jr.], and myself. Governor Furcolo talked with the fellow that—I don't want to mention the name who was supposed to have talked to the Governor—and he told him, he said, "I'm going to give that to Howard."

STEWART: Furcolo said this?

FITZPATRICK: Furcolo, yes. Furcolo said he was going to give it to me. So I went down to the Statler with this fellow that went up to talk to him, and I think he was the fellow that Kennedy sent up to see the Governor, and he says, "There's a job for you." And I said, "I couldn't." I said, "I'm in the catering business. I'm in the sheriff's job. What'll I do down there for two years." "You just warm a seat down there." I said, "I just

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couldn't take it." So I let him know that, and then later on it seems that before he appointed Smith [Benjamin A. Smith, II], Governor Furcolo called me and he said, "Howard, I just got a call from Palm Beach." He says, "They want to give that job now to Ben Smith, but I'm not

going to do it. I'm going to give it to you." I said, "No, I just couldn't possibly go along. I don't want it because," I said, "if they want Smith now and you don't do it, when Bobby comes in the first year, he'll do it. And so," I said, "I'd go along with them on that."

STEWART: It was definitely your understanding, though, that it was a two year thing?

FITZPATRICK: Oh, sure, sure.

STEWART: Was it your understanding...

FITZPATRICK: Well, not from the Kennedys now. This was the fellow that Kennedy sent up to meet with the Governor about it. I knew from him that it was just for two years. You'd go down there for two years, and then you'd come back, and you couldn't hold the job as sheriff. So I didn't want to do that. I wanted to stay on as sheriff. See?

STEWART: Was it assumed Teddy was going to run or Bobby?

FITZPATRICK: Well, I figured it was Teddy.

STEWART: Oh, did you?

FITZPATRICK: Yes, but I know the father said he didn't know whether he'd want it, whether Bobby would want it. He said someone has to run this empire of his, you know. And he said that it was a job he didn't know and he said he hadn't discussed it with Bobby. But I figured it would be Teddy. Teddy was a very likeable fellow. Bobby is more quiet, you know.

STEWART: Other than this one dinner did you see the President at all during the time he was in the White House?

FITZPATRICK: Oh, yes. He invited me down one night as a guest down there at some function, and we had a wonderful dinner there.

STEWART: Oh, was that reception a dinner for the President of Ireland?

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FITZPATRICK: Yes, yes, that's right. He invited me down to that. It was quite a thrill to be down there. We sat with, I think, we sat with Bobby Kennedy and Ethel [Ethel Skakel Kennedy], and different people from all over the United States, big people. When I went through the receiving line I remember him saying, "Here's a fellow that did a lot for me during the campaign." I was very close to Jack. You never were looking for anything. As a matter of fact, when he came up that time, when we rode over

from the airport over to the hotel, he said, "I've never done anything for you personally, but some day you ought to come down and see if we can do something for you."

STEWART: Did you ever consider any other jobs down there?

FITZPATRICK: No, no, no, just.... I like the job I'm on. I like the sheriff's job. It's a job that I like.

STEWART: Okay. I don't want to keep you. But that's all the questions I have. Anything you want to add?

FITZPATRICK: No. That's fine.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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