

John B. Hynes Oral History Interview – JFK#1 01/17/1969

Administrative Information

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Biographical Note

John B. Hynes was Mayor of Boston (1950 - 1960). This interview focuses on Hynes relationship with the Fitzgerald family, Hynes relationship with John F. Kennedy [JFK] during his campaigns, and Hynes role as National Committeeman, among other things.

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Oral History Interview

with

JOHN B. HYNES

January 17, 1969
Boston, Massachusetts

By John Stewart

For the John F. Kennedy Library

STEWART: Why don't we just start out by my asking you if
you recall your first . . . had any association
with Ambassador [Joseph P.] Kennedy starting back
then.

HYNES: I never did really.

STEWART: No?

HYNES: No, I never had any association with him at all.
I used to be disappointed/actually/because when I
ran against [James M.] Curley I didn't. . . . I
thought he might appear some day and give me some
help, but he never did.

STEWART: You never sought it, I assume?

HYNES: Hmm?

STEWART: You never sought his help when you were running against Curley?

HYNES: No, I don't think I ever did. I don't think I did. And, in fact, I know I didn't. I ran for mayor three times and I never asked, in the three times I ran, I never asked anybody for financial ^{gras...le} help. I let my committee do it. ^{it} I couldn't. I don't know what the hell ^{was}, but I just couldn't ask somebody to give me some financial help. I'd ask them ^{to} give me some help ^{if you can}, but I didn't mean ^{to} give me financial help.

HYNES: Did you know [John F.] Fitzgerald, Mayor Fitzgerald?

HYNES: Yes, I lived. . . . I lived as a young fellow out in Dorchester not too far away from where he lived, and I grew up ^{at} the same time ~~that~~ young Jack. . . . when Jack Fitzgerald or [Thomas F.] Tom Fitzgerald grew up. And I used to play football with Jack; He was my age. Tom's a little older. And I'm still very friendly with Jack Fitzgerald. I see him occasionally. I was quite friendly with him. The

Fitzgeralds were ^{the} leading family in old Saint Mark's Church in Dorchester, which had suddenly emerged from a little wooden structure into a nice, big, brick church, because that part of Dorchester--

Adams I'm talking about--had suddenly changed
from being ⁸⁵ eighty-five percent wasp to a majority
of Irish Catholic, who had come out from south Boston, or
Roxbury, came out there after the tunnel. The old
tunnel had come through from the South Station out
to Peabody Square. And this. . . . This made a
terrific change in that neighborhood out there and
the Fitzgerald family was one. . . . Well, I guess
he was probably the leading. . . . They're the lead-
ing, Irish, Catholic family in Saint Mark's Church.

President Jack's mother, Rose, taught Sunday school
in old Saint Mark's Church, the old wooden church.
And I was in the class. We didn't have any paro-
chial school; We had to stay after Mass Sunday
morning for Sunday school. And she had the class
in front of me. And I was always glad I wasn't in
her class, because she made her kids know their

lessons, you know. And we had a fellow; A fellow
was our teacher? ^{? Vdoh} He had a bench and when we. . . .
And he was an easy going fellow. You could bluff
your lesson, but with Jack's mother you had to know
your catechism. And she didn't know it, but she
was also benefitting us, who were in the class behind
her, but we were always glad we weren't in her class
because she was. . . . ^{4 world} She'd tweek you by the ear.

STEWART: You're talking about Rose, about Jack's mother, who
was a teacher.

HYNES: She was a teacher. She taught Sunday school in old
Saint Mark's Church.

STEWART: Well, she must have been quite young.

HYNES: Yeah, she. . . . Well, it was before she was married,
of course. Eunice, her sister Eunice, was alive
at that time. She died as a young girl. None of
them were married; None of the Fitzgerald girls
were married at that time. I'm going back now to
1910 or so, ^{Set 7} 1909 even, 1909 to '10. I have always
remembered her as a very, very bright young lady.
And I have no doubt at all, ^{when} I think in many instances

old J.P. gets a great deal of credit for the perspicacity and the ability and the character of the boys, but to me there's more of Rose's character. She taught them the eternal verity, you know, because after all Joe was a busy man. He was always on the go. She had these boys in their formative years, and knowing her as I knew her I'm satisfied in my own mind that Jack's mother had more to do with forming his character and giving him the kind of ability he had than the old. . . . The old man contributed, of course, too, But I think in many. . . . Many times people forget that he's also the son of Rose, in addition to being the son of J.P., who was a veryable fellow, too.

STEWART: So you knew Honey Fitz, certainly.

HYNES: Yeah, I knew him fairly well. When I ran for mayor, he supported me. And. . . . Because he and Curley were always, just about all the time, on the outs. And now and then they'd make up, but it was sort of a running battle, and strangely enough I went to work for Curley, but that's another point. But John F.

he didn't know me when I was a kid growing up. He got to know me as I . . . after I had matured and I was mixed up in politics. John F used to when he lived here in the Bellevue^{and} I was City Clerk, he'd call me on an afternoon like this. And he'd say, "Johnny, what do you think of this, see," some current event^s. And I'd give him my opinion on it. And he would talk thirty-five or forty minutes and then he'd say . . . And all I'd say is yes, no. And then after that, at the end of thirty-five or forty minutes, "Well, it was nice to have a chat with you, Johnny. So long."

STEWART: He did all the talking.

HYNES: Well, yeah. Well, he, you know, he was lonesome. He was lonesome up here. And he'd call up people that he knew, I guess, and talk to them. And I used to like to chat with him, because he was interesting. Even in his declining years, you know, he was a pretty interesting fellow. You know old John F. had an awful lot of ability himself. A lot of fine qualities.

I mentioned Curley. I went to work in Curley's office sort of by accident. I was working in City Hall in the auditor's office and the chief clerk in the Mayor's office got another job, and I got a call from the Mayor's office to come up and see the Mayor.

I said, "All right," went up, and the Mayor said, "Were you interested in going to work up here?" And I said, "Yes sir." I wasn't completely dumbfounded because Joe Connell had been congressman, and was a friend of mine had apparently called Curley, and said, "There's a young fellow down in the auditor's office . . ."

STEWART: When would this have been?

HYNES: Hmm?

STEWART: About when was this?

HYNES: This was 1924. And Chrley found me out, and he said, "Can you do this business?" you know, shorthand, and typewriter. I said, "Yeah." "You know the routine?" I said, "Yes." He said, "All right, come up and go to work tomorrow morning at nine o'clock." It was just like that. Didn't know me from nothing,

you see. So I became a Curley man, because I worked in his office. That was November of 1924, and he got out in December of 1925, so I worked there about fourteen months in his office as ~~chief~~ ^{then} clerk. And he got out. And

Nicholas came in. And I went on to other jobs in City Hall. And then by a series of accidents I became the Major temporarily in 1947. And then . . .

STEWART: Well, what do you remember anything about the President Kennedy when he first ran in 1946?

HYNES: Very slightly, because he . . . It was a district that I wasn't interested in at all. It was the other side of the city. And in those days your interests were confined, more or less, to your own bailiwick, you know. And I was a Dorchester-Roxbury boy, and I wasn't interested in East Boston or Charleston. I didn't know any of the figures over there, the political figures. I didn't like it, but when Jack appeared on the scene he was a new face, of course. And he was aspiring for one of the top political jobs, you know, congressman. He was looked upon by the old political types as an

upstart, as a stripling. And physically he was; He was a very slight thing. You see his pictures, you . . . At the time. And I don't think I met him at all when he was running for Congress. As I say, I wasn't interested in the fight. It was centered in Cambridge and East Boston and over in that part of the city in which I had at that time no interest at all. Actually, I never got to know President Jack Kennedy very well. We never. . . . We were always friendly because I think we both realized we represented a new era in the political life of Boston. And for that reason there was a little empathy between us. And he knew I was fighting. See, I had to. . . . finally had to run against Curley and win.

STEWART: In '49 or . . .

HYNES: Hmm?

STEWART: When, in 1949?

HYNES: '49, yeah. And I think there was a sympathy between us, an empathy between Jack and I. For that reason, he was fighting the established, old established

like, see
order. [Interruption] But I also was fighting
the old established order of things. But what the
old established order didn't realize was that this
great force of young fellows had come back to town,
who had been away in the War. You know, we had
ninety-odd thousand boys from Boston that were
in the World War II, and when they came back, well ↑
they might have had some little regard for Curley.
Other than some of the older fellows, they didn't
feel that they belonged any more. That there ought
to be a new, a big change here, and this is why one
of the main reasons, a fellow like Jack Kennedy at
that time and certainly the main reason why I was
successful, because of this new grouping of young
people who came along, and the older boys didn't
realize it was there. They just couldn't believe
that it was strong enough, you see, to upset them.
Now a lot of things happened in that congressional
fight that . . . I don't recall them clearly, but
there were six or seven candidates in the first fight ↑
and there was a couple of [Joseph] Russos. There were

accusations that old J.P. had loaded the field
for Jack. And there's also accusations that there
was a lot of money being spent in the favor of Jack.
Despite all that, I think Jack Kennedy on his own,
on his own that time, would have won the thing be-
cause he represented something different. All the
other candidates running, as I recall, were felāows
who had been starred up a little in politics, had been
to the well a couple of times, and they weren't new
in the sense that Jack was new. And he had a
magnetic sort of personality. He was diffident, you
know. He was a little upstage a bit. He never
mingled with this type of ordinary politician, the
socalled dye of the wool, six o'clock Democrat.
This was his first experience. But I think even
without his father's help, and even without a loaded
field, if it was loaded, I think he would have won
this thing himself on the very basis that he repre-
sented something new and the young people in the town
~~are~~ ^{the} looking for something different than they had
before.

STEWART: But he didn't give you any help or get involved in the '49 race at all?

HYNES: No. No, I don't recall that he. . . . I know he was with me. I know he was against ~~Curley~~. He didn't

want Curley in there. But he didn't give me any actual help. In fact, I ran three times and I never ^{didn't} got any help from any of the Kennedys, which was always a sort of disappointment to me somewhat. But maybe it was my own fault. Maybe I didn't go after it. But when Jack ran for the Senate against [Henry Cabot] Lodge, I knew Lodge better than I knew Jack Kennedy. I didn't dislike Lodge at all, but Jack was a Democrat and I was a Democrat and I was with Jack. I was the first one that went on TV with Jack over WBZ on an afternoon when he had two. . . . This is the first time I ever saw ~~Tele-~~ prompters.

STEWART: Oh yeah. There's a little story in Richard Whalen's book, The Founding Father, . . .

HYNES: Is there?

STEWART: . . . about that. . .

HYNES: *Is Alvin?* Yeah?

STEWART: And he mentions your comment about the Teleprompter.

HYNES: Yeah, Jack was, you know, so careful fellow. And he wanted everything to be perfect, you know. And he wanted perfection. This was his first time on TV in this campaign. I guess it must have been May of 1952 or something. And one of the ^{time} Teleprompters went out. And it momentarily threw Jack off stride. And we came back later, either that night or the next day, I'm not sure now, and did it all over again. Now I was only on for . . . This was only a five minute thing. I think I was on for fifteen seconds. But this was my first experience with Jack Kennedy in a position where I could observe how meticulous he was, really. How he wanted everything he did that was going out to the public, especially, to be done perfectly.

I ran a big rally for him in June of 1952 on the roof of the Parker House. We had five hundred people up there. On June twenty-third I think it

It was
was one of the hottest nights of the year. Had
five hundred people up there. And I made a rousing
speech for Jack Kennedy. I asked all of the people
who were there, all supporters of mine, all active
people who were active in my campaign, to do as much
for Jack as they did for me. He was very grateful.
Bobby [Robert F. Kennedy] was there, and he was eter-
nally grateful, said he was. This gave him a big...
I got a letter from him to that effect. Gave him
a big lift in Boston, where he was kind of dead,^{you}, see.

STEWART: There were rumors and accusations that you weren't
that enthused with Kennedy as opposed to Lodge.

HYNES: Well, I know how that came about. It came about
because there was now secret about... I was
friendly with Lodge. Well, nothing intimate at all,
but I was friendly with him. If he had been a
Democrat and Jack had been a Democrat, I would have
been with Lodge, because I knew him better. But
Jack was a Democrat. He wanted my support, and I
said, "Sure, you can have it. I'll do anything
you want me to do." And I did. There were two

people in my office who were with Lodge. [Lawrence F.] O'Brien come down to see me. He wanted me to get these two people off the Lodge bandwagon, put them on with Jack. And I said, "Now look, I don't want to do this, because immediately you make martyrs out of these two people. Immediately you make a big issue out of something that doesn't amount to anything. These two people between them can't get fifteen votes. And I don't want to ask them; I don't want to pull them off; I don't want to make any political story out of this so that that will hurt Jack Kennedy. Leave the thing alone. They don't amount to nothing." But somehow or other this got around that I wouldn't cooperate with the Kennedy group, because I wouldn't pull two people out of five hundred who were also out working actively for Jack Kennedy of my supporters. I got hurt about this, really. When I heard of the reaction to it, I got hurt about it. They wanted too. I was president of the United States Conference of Mayors. They wanted letters sent to all the mayors

of the United States.

STEWART: Now this was in 1960 or '59?

HYNES: '59. I sent a letter ^{of} ~~over~~ my signature to every mayor of every city of twenty-five thousand people or better in the country, personal letters. And I got responses. And as they all came in, I got--I don't know how many--a thousand responses or something. And I sent them all down to Larry O'Brien in Washington. I got hell from a lot of the ~~mayors~~ who were not ~~in~~ the Southern mayors ~~in~~ who were not with Jack Kennedy, wee. And ~~in~~. But it was decided at that time that these letters had quite an effect on some of the mayors throughout the country. Even if the letter--I don't know how many thousand went out--even if those letters only had an effect on fifty mayors in the country, it was worthwhile, you see, at that time. So when the accusations ^{were} made, and I always feel ^{and} I still feel hurt, that I was never given a chance by any of the Kennedy people to defend whatever charge they might. ^{had} accusation they might have. They never pinpointed

it to me. I never knew exactly what it was; I don't know to this day. I wrote to Bobby one time when I was National Committeeman and explained this thing to him, and he said he was going to drop by and go over it with me. He never did. I always have felt hurt that I didn't get a chance to knock whatever these rumors were. I had a fellow working in my office--this is in the record, too--named Fleming, Harry Fleming, who was a friend of Jack Kennedy's from away back. Harry had a spotty reputation, to say the least. Every time there was a job vacant--He was an assistant chief clerk in my office--Any time there was a job vacant for any kind of a... . an important job, whether it was a technical job or whatever it was, Harry wanted it. He wasn't fitted for it. And there were jobs around in the lower. . . . a little lower echelon, At times I tried to get him into it, but every time I moved to put Harry Fleming into a job as, let's say, a chief clerk or , the Commissioner would come down and throw up his hands and say, "For

God's sake, anybody but Harry Fleming." After the election when Jack beat Lodge, I wrote Hodge a letter. I can't tell you what I said in the letter. I didn't think it was so private or personal or anything like that that I had to hide it without in the files. I suppose it was one of those letters in which I said, "I'm sorry you lost." You know, After all, I knew this guy. I know that the letter. . . . He grabbed this carbon of it, I guess. Took it down to [Kenneth P.] Kenny O'Donnell or somebody and on the basis of this letter they interpreted whatever I said, and I really don't know John. I couldn't tell you what I said, but what do you say to a guy that's lost? You try to be nice. Hmm? Hmm? And whatever I said in that I'm not ashamed of even today, you see. But I don't know what I said.

STEWART: Well, the letter must exist some place.

HYNES: The carbon was disappeared. Harry Fleming had taken it out of the files, brought it down to Washington and this and other things, I suppose combined, they

came to the conclusion that I wasn't as strong for Jack Kennedy as I should have been. And let me tell you, John, that I was the only politician ~~of~~ any standing in this damn town or in this state and '57 or '58 who would dare to get up to a dinner in the Copley Plaza or the Statler or some^{one} of these political affairs any place and if Jack Kennedy was on the platform and going to speak, I would turn and I'd say, "And ladies and gentlemen, here's a young man that we are so proud of and one of these days this young man is going to be President of the United States." And the pols would look at me and afterward they'd say to me, "Are you crazy? Are you crazy?" They couldn't believe, they could not believe that Jack Kennedy was everygoing to be President of the United States. I always felt that there was a star of destiny hanging over this young fellow. And yet when it was all over and he was the President, they were in with both feet and I was out in the bleachers some place. I'm talking too much here.

STEWART: That's all right. That's all right.

HYNES: But ~~I~~ know how my inner ~~I~~ feelings. Or am I letting you in on the feelings? But as far as the President and I were concerned, he was always very affable and very nice to me every time I met him after he was President.

STEWART: Did you ever see him during the '52 campaign or were all of your dealings with O'Brien or . . .

HYNES: Well, early in the campaign, as I say, yes, I saw him. I was on TV with him, the first one. At the big rally that we had, he was there. And I suppose from time to time I saw him. And in that year . . . No, no, that was the year. . . . But I told Jack Kennedy that I would do anything for him that he wanted me to do, and I did. The only thing I didn't do for them was to pull off a girl and a fellow who were with Lodge. Now I don't apologize for that one whit, and if you were Jack Kennedy sitting there, I'd say that to Jack Kennedy too. I wouldn't do . . . To me it was a small, mean thing to do, you know. If you're a big man, you don't go after two little people, who didn't amount to ~~anything~~ ^{nothing}, really. ~~back~~ and back.

really. They couldn't get you any votes one way or the other, you know. So. . . . But I suppose that. . . . I don't know what. . . . I don't know what they asked me to do, John, that I didn't do.

I don't. . . . I can't think of a thing. When I was President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors,

Jack ^{was} is now a senator and he's a potential candidate for the mayor. I think it was 1958. We were

having our annual meeting in New York. And we closed the annual three day meeting with a luncheon on the third day. We were at the Waldorf. And [George] Meany was going to be one of our speakers. We always had two speakers for that closing meeting.

And I had invited Jack Kennedy to be a speaker, see.

Now a lot of my mayor friends from the South didn't like this. They didn't want Jack Kennedy to speak to them. They knew he was a potential candidate for mayor. They didn't want Meany either, a lot of them. And Meany didn't want Jack.

STEWART: Oh, really?

HYNES: Mea But beyond that, Jack got sick and couldn't make

it. And I got a call at 11 o'clock in the morning from [Theodore C.] Ted Sorensen, he wanted to know if I could tell telling me that Jack was pretty sick and he couldn't talk and would it be all right if Bobby came. Well, immediately I saw this little conflict between. ^{I mean} Here's two guys that never speak, Meany and Bobby. And they don't like each other and a lot of the audience don't like either one of them. And I'm in a little spot, but I said, "By all means, if Jack can't come, send Bobby." Bobby came and made a hell of a talk.

STEWART: Really?

HYNES: Really. And I think changed the opinion of a lot of these people. But I was, for a while, I was persona non grata with some of the other mayors. But I was president of the organization and I. This was my last year; I could do anything I wanted to do. And this is what I did. Now I could have said at that time, "If Jack can't come, we don't want any substitute." You know, I could have said that, you see. But I didn't. And Bobby came and, as I say,

Bobby made a very fine impression on the people.

STEWART: He wasn't a very good speaker in those days, I don't think.

HYNES: No he wasn't. And Jack wasn't one of the best either, in those days. We had another meeting down in Florida the following year. That was in '58, in '59. The meeting was down in Florida. And Jack now is an active candidate. Got a hold of me to ask me if I could arrange for a cocktail party, Get all these mayors, as many as I could, to attend this cocktail party. And I said, "Sure. Who's going to pay for it?" He said, "I will." I said, "All right. Can you spend... Can you afford a thousand dollars, because these guys like to drink, you know?" He said, "Sure." I called.... I had to do this in a hurry. I got this cocktail party together, and believe me, John, we had almost every mayor who was at that meeting and their wives. But the things that impressed Jack the most that night--it was late in the afternoon, early evening--was the fact that the wives came around in the line two or three times to

shake hands with him.

STEWART: Really?

HYNES: Yeah. The men didn't, but the wives. They wanted to shake hands with him more than once, and they did.

So he was tickled to death to have this party. Now, this ^{I was} is in '59 and at a time when I could have felt,

well, why the hell should I do anything for Jack Kennedy ^{and}, you know, ^{and} he doesn't like me now.

There's a wall there some place, and I can't get over, but I did these things. I'm not sorry. I'm glad I did them. And I wouldn't do otherwise again. Which again brings me back to what I said, I still feel hurt, but . . . that they did not give me a chance. Did not give me a chance to defend myself.

And this is something that you give anybody, anybody.

And I went down. . . . [John M.] Pat Lynch, when I was chairman and now I'm out as mayor, Jack's elected. I'm National Committeeman at Jack's request. I went on as . . . Jack asked me because they wanted a non-controversial character, so they got me. All right. Pat Lynch said to me one day, he said, "Why

don't you and I go down and see Kenny O'Donnell? There are some jobs down there that you might be interested in." And I said, "Well, I don't know of anything that I. . . . I don't want to go down to Washington." But, well, Pat said, "Let's go down and see Kenny?" So he made the date. So we went down to see Kenny. Well, we were in the Fish Room, you know. And a lot of people are coming and going. And finally--We chatted for a while with ^{and} Kenny--then he said, "What's on your mind?" And I said, "Well, I haven't really got anything on my mind. Pat says that there may be some jobs that I'd be interested in." I said, "I don't know what they are. What are they?" He said, "We haven't got any jobs." You know, as cold as that. Well, I said, "Okay, I'm not looking for one." But he said, "I'll tell you what I'll do." He said, "I'll send you over to [Richard] Dick Maguire, who'll take care of you." He said, "You're a lawyer, aren't you?" And I said, "Yeah." Well, he said, "Dick can get you some nice law business." And I said to

Kenny, I said. . . . I didn't. . . . I hardly knew Kenny. I said, "Mr. O'Donnell, I don't want Dick Maguire shilling for me. If I'm going to get ~~me~~ any law business, I'll get it on my own. I don't want to get it any other way, and I don't want to see Dick Maguire." And, now here we are one door removed from the President's office. You think Kenny O'Donnell would say to me, "I got up to go. You'd think he'd say to me, "Well, while you're here, why don't you come in and shake hands with the President?" Now a bit of it. I walked out of that office. I walked across Lafayette Square, and I say to Pat Lynch with me, I said, "Kick my bottom all the way across this square, will you please, because I'll never, never come down here again." I never did.

STEWART: You never saw the President?

HYNES: I never got requested. And I never tried to go down again. I kept entirely. I knew then and there that as far as I was concerned the curtain was down and forgot it. I really did forget it. And that's

the way. . . . That's the way it went.

STEWART: Did you ever talk to the President while he was in the White House?

HYNES: Never.

STEWART: Not on any trips up here or anything?

HYNES: Never. The trips up here ^{of course} I think I talked with him briefly at some meeting. And never ^{got} down to cases at all. He was always very nice, very friendly with me, apparently. And. . . . But word got around because ^{that} I wasn't acceptable, I guess. And that's the way it was, and it's too late now to correct it. It's done. It's over. But I do repeat, if I may again, that I felt very hurt, but ^{that} I didn't have a day. . . . the chance that any man should have to come in and defend himself against charges that he didn't even know what charges they were, you know. Jack Kennedy must have thought enough of me when [Foster] Furcolo and [John W.] McCormack were squabbling about who was going to be National Committeeman to suggest me and called me up and asked me if I'd be willing to take it. And

I said, "Of course I'll take it, if you want me to, if the other two guys are willing." He said, "They'll accept you."

STEWART: Who else was Who was being argued about, or Who did . . .

HYNES: Well, I really don't know, but there was. . . . Apparently, Furcolo had a candidate, McCormack had a candidate, who wasn't acceptable to either ^{of them} one man, and to Jack. And I happened to be what, I suppose at the time, was considered a neutral candidate who was not offensive to either Furcolo or to McCormack.

STEWART: Let's see, that was in '58, you were appointed.

HYNES: Yeah, I guess it was '58. Yeah.

STEWART: Let's go into that a little bit. What do you recall of Paul Butler's attitude about Senator ^{John} Kennedy? I assume you got to know Paul Butler reasonably well.

HYNES: I got to know Paul Butler fairly well. He was a very harrassed man. He was fighting the Southern ^{the} block thing, who were anti-Kennedy, anti-Butler. And Paul, as far as I can recall, was pretty much a

Kennedy man. And he was tagged as a Kennedy man and was considered one, and the policies that he followed were policies agreeable to the North rather than to the South and to the anti-Kennedy bloc. But, again, Paul was a very harassed man, and I think at times you felt that he wasn't getting enough consideration or help from the Kennedy people themselves, see. [Interruption]

STEWART: Look it, how much time do you have? Have you got. . . .

HYNES: Well, I've got another half hour. I don't want to take up all your time.

STEWART: No. No. As long as you have . . .

HYNES: So you go ahead. Can you clean me out in half an hour?

STEWART: Oh, I will try, and if we don't, we can do more tomorrow. Do you recall any incidents as far as you and the National Committee were concerned when Senator Kennedy--then Senator Kennedy--wanted you to do anything for him on the Committee or . . .

HYNES: No. No, I don't think there was anything that came

along. I think Paul Butler expected me to more or less go along with him, which I did. I think on. . . . He probably transmitted this word back that Hynes is all right. He'll go along. So there was no problem with me in that respect, I'm sure. Actually, there wasn't much. There was some jockeying, you know, and all that. But I never got any word from Jack at that time that he wanted me to do one thing or another or not do something. And even after he was President and I was still National Committeeman, I never got any requests from anybody in the White House or any place else. I never was asked whether I, as National Committeeman, would approve any candidate for a job or, you know, most National Committeemen or Women seem to have the traditional right. . . . tradition, anyway, to our extent that they approve or disapprove of a given person to be appointed to some job. Like you ask the senators, but. . . . And some of the National Committee people were pretty important people for that reason. But the Massachusetts

National Committeeman and National Committeewoman
were not asked, in any case, any job, as far as
I know. I know I wasn't.

STEWART: And you stayed on as the National Committeeman until
when?

HYNES: I think I stayed on until about--Now, I'm guessing
~~now~~--I think I sayed on until the realization
came home to me, without question, that I was a
useless appendage, that I didn't mean anything. I
wasn't consulted on anything at all; I was completely
bypassed. I felt that there was no reason for me
to stay on any longer and I resigned and I'm not
sure, John, exactly when that was. But I would have
stayed on, naturally, if I was asked to. But I wasn't
asked to.

STEWART: If I may, let me just go back and run through a few
things that we ^{my} have. We've been skipping around
quite a bit, which is all right, but we may have
misseed a few things. Do you remember anything
about Kennedy as a congressman? Now he was in, of
course, the House of Representatives while you were

Mayor from [redacted]. Well, he was in the House of Representatives until 1953, through 1952, when you were Mayor from 1949. Do you recall any associations with him at that time?

HYNES: No, I used to get letters, / Letters back and forth on something or other, but. . . . And I used to drop down to see him when he was a congressman, and when he was in the Senate, too, I'd drop in to see him. In fact, the year before he ran he said to me, "When is your term up?" And I said, "The end of this year," I guess it was, '59, yeah. He said, "What are you going to do?" And I said, "Well, I'll. . . . Thank the Lord, I'll have a pension that will but it'll keep me in coffee and cakes so I won't have to go on welfare immediately. And I may pick up a little. . . . Open a little law office and serve. . . . I can't. . . . do a little business in that way." But I said, I had nothing, really, that's abiding." He said, "Would you be available to work for me next year?" And I said, "Sure." I never heard another. . . . I never hear/ from him. Now, I

would have been available if he had--after I got through as Mayor--he called me and said, "Come down. ^{I want to} Talk to you. I'd like to have you be one of my Boston representatives up there. I want you to do this or that." This I would have done. I'm sure I would have done it. Because I saw ~~the~~ I saw Jack Kennedy in a different light, as I told you before, than most of the pols around here. I saw him as President of the United States of America. This is what I saw myself. And I would have been glad to have been part of that, ^{job John} to feel in my heart that I contributed a lot towards it. I don't feel that way now because I was asked to do enough that I was willing to do. So--this sounds like a defense of myself, but it really isn't. I hope it isn't. Because, as I say, I was willing at that time when he asked me to do anything that he wanted me to do the following year.

STEWART: Do you recall any ~~the~~ -- by what were you going to say?

HYNES: You know when he was running for Vice President in 1956.

STEWART: Yeah, I was going to ask you about that.

HYNES: Well, I was Mayor, and I knew all the mayors, the
big time mayors, ^{you see} and [Estes] Kefauver I had been
with in '52. I had made a seconding speech for him.

STEWART: Oh, that's right. Yeah.

HYNES: Sure. Now Kefauver's ^{the} candidate of Vice Presi-
dent, and so is Jack. Suddenly Jack becomes a can-
didate. He didn't have time to caucus, you see.
I think the decision must have been made quite
suddenly that he would be ^a candidate. Now we're
at the meeting, the next day; There's going to be
a roll call. Bobby Kennedy came to me, and he said,
"Can we get any of these people that we haven't
been able to see them in caucus?" But, "he said, "I
don't know these fellows. Will you take me around?"
And I took him around, John. I introduced him to
mayors from Georgia, Atlanta, Georgia, from New
York, [Edmund G.] Brown of California, who was Attorney
General then, but he was ^{the} leader of his group, the
mayor of Cleveland, whatever his name is, ^{Tom somebody or}
^{the} others. You know, I took him around to all the

big time mayors who were powers in their own Convention group, you see, their own delegation. And would you believe this that we went around that floor three times? Now, I'm not as young as Bobby, and believe me, Bobby was tuckered out and so was I. My, I was dragging. Three times around that amphitheatre and you're talking to [James A.] Farley. Bobby had never met Farley, had never met [Robert F.] Wagner. You talk to these fellows. You have to stay a little while. And we did this three times around that damn floor. Now, Jack didn't win that time. Now, I could have, and perhaps it was expected of me, with Kefauver, and if I were, I could defend it by saying, "Well, I was with him four years ago for President, certainly I ought to stay with him for Vice President." But I didn't think Kefauver should be running, you know. And I wanted Jack to make it if he could. It was good fortune for him that he didn't make it, but he made, at that time, as you recall, he made a tremendous impression on the delegates who were there and on the country itself.

But this is another thing that was long since forgotten, that at a time when I could have been and justified in being with Kefauver, I was with Jack Kennedy for Vice President. And Bobby knew this himself. ~~he~~ was so. Bobby was only . . . How old is he now? ~~then~~

STEWART: He must have been just about thirty.

HYNES: Yeah, just about.

STEWART: If that. But they. . . . There was. . . . You know, they just assumed you were for him or was Bobby aware of your former support of Kefauver and asked you about?

HYNES: Oh, I would guess. ~~No~~. No, I guess he did. He knew it. Well, I'll tell you how effective it was. Pat Brown. . . . The California delegation had already caucused and were going to vote for Kefauver, and we went over to see Pat Brown, who I didn't know too well, but I knew him slightly. And we argued with Pat Brown there, and John McCormack was walking by. And we grabbed John, and he got in on it. The three of us surrounded Pat Brown. And he agreed that he would have his delegation caucus right

there on the floor again to see if he couldn't swing them over to Kennedy rather than to Kefauver. Now I really forget whether he was able to do it or not. I think ^{he} failed; I think by a vote or two.

STEWART: Right. He did.

HYNES: ^{Yours} But he was willing to do it. And he did. He caucused them there. John McCormack, Bobby Kennedy and I working on Pat Brown. And this was part of this work out I had that day with Bobby. And, as I say, that was also thrown ⁱⁿ the discard when they were measuring my support of the . . .

STEWART: Do you recall the 1952 Convention. Now, of course, Kennedy was a [Adlai E.] Stevenson supporter both in '52 and in '56 and you said you were for Kefauver in both of those years for the Presidency?

HYNES: I wasn't with Kefauver in '56. That's when Jack ran for Vice President.

STEWART: No, but I mean, but Kefauver had been running for the nomination for ^{the} Presidency and then he dropped out when he got beaten by Stevenson.

HYNES: Kefauver. Let me go back. Kefauver, I got

acquainted with him. He did what [Joseph R.] [Eugene J.] McCarthy did to some extent. He come out ^{to} of New - well, I guess it was - England early in the '52^A '51^A. And he came into Boston on several occasions. He went to Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, you know the states. He came down to Boston ^{several times} to settle down and so I got fairly well acquainted with him and I got to like the fellow. You know, he had a lot of very fine homely qualities. And he'd get to sort of rely on me to help him. And I had no^t, I never heard of Stevenson. You know what I mean. Never really knew^t I didn't know anything at all about Adlai Stevenson. So I said to Kefauver^A. He asked me at that time, "Will you helpf me?" And I said, "Sure, I'll help you. I'll do all I can for you." [Paul A.] Dever was then organizing the dele^t gation for Stevenson. And I had to say to Paul, "Now look, I'm with Kefauver, and I don't know whether he's got a chance or not, but I'm with him." And he said, "Okay." But I said, "I won't try to steal any of your Stevenson men. If any of them want to

come along, fine. But I'm not going to try to
steal them, from you." ^{Paul} So we had that understanding.
I don't recall where Jack was, whether he was active
in that picture or not. Dever was. He was the head
of the delegation. Dever was. When we got out to
Chicago, I really didn't think I was going to be
any more than just an ordinary supporter of Kefauver
and to vote for him, like you mentioned. Suddenly
I'm called into the Kefauver headquarters; I'm
given assignments to speak here and there. And
also they asked me to make one of the seconding
speeches, a five minute speech. Well, suddenly I'm
projected into the lime light, that is something
I never had experienced before. Here I'm before
a big national Convention, and all of a sudden I'm
somebody. People are coming to me wanting to know
what's going on. Jim Farley comes to me, "What's
going on?" You know, and all this. And they didn't
want to be with Stevenson either. And don't forget
that Kefauver was ahead on two ballots, and it wasn't
till Walter Reuther and the labor crowd got working

between, in the recess between the second and the third ballot, that they swung Michigan and Pennsylvania, a couple of the big states, from Kefauver over to Stevenson. This started the bandwagon for Stevenson, and he won. Now, I heard Stevenson's acceptance speech. This is the first time I've seen Stevenson in the flesh. I heard his ^{Hall no. 2} ~~he said~~. I sat there and listened to his acceptance speech, and I said. . . . ^{He said} ~~from where ever~~ ^{Billy Muller's} of the a little. . . . Hell, dead and gone now. Sitting next to me. He says, "What do you think of this?" And I said, "Billy, this man is tremendous. If I knew him ^{as well as I know him now,} I would have been with him rather than Kefauver." This man is Presidential, real Presidential material, and I would love to be with him." "Well," he says, "you're going to have a chance. ^{long ago} We're going to nominate him." So when Kefauver lost, I went with Stevenson, naturally. We all did, you know, we all went with Stevenson. I forgot what your question was, but. . . .

STEWART: No, it. . . . I was asking, I said, that Kennedy, of

course, was always a strong supporter of Stevenson's, and I was asking . . .

HYNES: Now, I don't recall that Jack took too active a part in that. Now he might have outside of the state of Massachusetts. Here in this state Dever dominate^{ted} the whole thing, you see. And Stevenson come out into Boston to speak at, I think, at Mechanics Building, you know. I was chairman and it was a real good meeting. You can pack about five thousand people there. It was a very good, warm meeting in every way. We got back. . . . We were riding back, and Dever said, "Now you got to go out to the G and G." So these. . . . I'm in the back of the car with Dever and Stevenson. And he turned to me and he said, "What the hell's this G and G?" I told him, I said, "You'll be lucky to come out with your arms. They'll pull you apart out here," which they almost did. They wouldn't let him get out of the car. They wouldn't let him back in the car. He made a speech. But it took a lot out of the poor guy. Went back to the Statler, and he had a couple of

drinks. And everybody had left except me. And then he said to me, "How am I going to do in Massachusetts?" I said, "You're not going to win." He said, "Everybody tells me I am." I said, "No, you're not going to win in this state. [Dwight D.] Eisenhower is going to carry the state of Massachusetts, and you or me or nobddy can do anything about it because he's got an Uncle Sam aura about him. People aren't going to vote against this kindly man." He says, "Well, the fact that I'm a divorcee, divorced man." I said, "No, that has very little, if anything, to do with it. It's just that Eisenhower seems to be the kind of a man that people want this time, and you can't be." Well, he said, "You know, I think you're right." And he said, "You're the only one that's told me the truth about Massachusetts."

So from that point on Stevenson and I were quite friendly. And every time I met him he. . . . His son and my son went to Marine school together there, down in Virginia.

STEWART: Quantico?

HYNES: Yeah, Quantico. And the day they graduated I was the speaker at the graduation exercises inside and he was the speaker outside. And I remember they gave him. . . . The general me thirteen minutes. He said, "Now, you've got thirteen minutes to make the speech." Well, I said, "General, if I talk twelve is it all right?" But Adlai was there that day because his son and my son. . . .

STEWART: But you made no efforts on behalf of Stevenson before the 1950. . . . in behalf of Kefauver before the '56 Convention?

HYNES: None at all. I didn't believe that he ~~had~~. I thought ^{that} he had had a ~~shot~~ shot. If he couldn't make it then, he was never going to make it. And that was right. He either had to capture it at that time. . . . He did sort of capture the fancy of the public, but he couldn't do it again. And the more ^{him} I saw of him, the more I knew, the more I began to realize that he wasn't the Stevenson caliber, ^{your} wee. So the next time around I was. . . . for Stevenson.

STEWART: What was your role, if any, in that big fight in

1956 about the State Democratic Chairmanship? Do you recall the Kennedy people got into [William H.] Pat Burke . . .

HYNES: Yeah. I was . . .

Pat Lynch -- I don't mean a man STEWART: Burke who presumably was with McCormack . . .

HYNES: Well, I was with Pat Lynch, although I didn't have a vote. I wasn't on the Committee. I had no direct influence. But I'm an old friend of Pat Lynch's. He's an old man like myself. And I was with Pat, although I wouldn't dare say to you that I influenced any votes. I think the fight resolved something into a fight between the two forces, you know, the Burke-McCormack forces and the Kennedy-Lynch forces and I was with Pat. Although, as I say, I had no direct effect on that, the outcome.

STEWART: Is there any more about this whole McCormack-Kennedy feud that presumably has been going on, off and on, since the late 1940's? Is there any more about this that you can recall? Going back, for example, to the when it presumably started in late 1940's when Kennedy was a congressman and, oh, did a few things that

irritated McCormack.

HYNES: No, I don't think I ever got involved in any way in that kind of. . . . in what was going on. As a matter of fact, I don't recall that Jack and old John ever had much of a feud between them. There might have been occasions when they didn't see eye to eye, you know. The feud didn't break out into any kind of a thing until Eddie [Edward J. McCormack, Jr.] ran against Teddy [Edward M. Kennedy], which I don't think John, old John, favored. I don't think he wanted young Eddie to run at that time.

STEWART: Really?

HYNES: I don't think he did.

STEWART: In 1962,

I don't think he wanted him to run in my story
HYNES: This is my. . . . I can't verify this really, but let me ~~say~~ tell you this! I don't think he encouraged him to run at all.

STEWART: You mentioned that, I think, that you had been quite friendly with Maurice Tobin. Do you recall what his relationship was with President Kennedy? What

his opinions of him were?

HYNES: No, I think. . . . No, I don't recall that he ever expressed, not in my presence, any way, anything. . . . I think he felt that he was ahead of Jack, that they weren't going to. . . . there wasn't going to be any conflict there.^{Hot} The possible conflict was between Dever and Tobin. And Jack wasn't in that picture at that time. He was coming along. See, Jack really even as against Tobin and Dever was almost a part of another generation.

STEWART: Dever had some ideas about running for the Senate in 1952, didn't he, and then bowed out?

HYNES: I think he did. I think he did, yeah. I don't know why he bowed out; I was never that close to him.^{He Dever} What type of forces. But there was always that little division between the Tobin crowd and the Dever crowd as to which one ~~was going to~~ ^{sta. to} emerge as the number one man.

STEWART: What about your relation when you were Mayor with Kennedy's office in Washington? I assume you had quite a few dealings about jobs and other things.

HYNES: Yeah, and most of those, John, were done by his secretary or my secretary, Tom McRae, and whoever was representing Jack. I forget.

STEWART: [Timothy J., Jr.] Ted Reardon, probably.

HYNES:q Probably Ted Reardon. And Ted used to come into the office once in awhile when he was in Boston.

Kenne O'Donnell used to come in once in awhile looking for something. This was before Jack became, you know, even a potential candidate for Mayor.

But I think the things that transpired between his office and mine during this period that you mention were just the ordinary things. He'd be interested in Joe Po^{blow} for this thing or that thing and I'd be interested in Joe Snd^{blow} for something else down in Washington. And we'd have these kind of letters going back and forth, which your secretaries in most instances would take care of.

STEWART: Did you always feel you got as much cooperation on, you know, more substantive things relating, for example, to port and federal facilities in the city and this type of thing? Did you always feel you got as much

cooperation from Kennedy and his office on these matters as you could expect?

HYNES: Yeah, I can say that I don't recall ever being disappointed in anything I was trying to get down in Washington with the reaction of the Kennedy office or the Senator himself. You know, when you're Mayor you have to make the rounds when you're after. . . . Now, urban renewal when I was Mayor there was just breaking through. Eisenhower was against urban renewal. He felt that the federal government should not be expected to bail out the cities, that this was a problem for the states. It was more of a local problem. The consequence was that everybody in the bureaucracy down there was very hesitant to do anything which was even permissible under the law in urban renewal and redevelopment.

We were having a tremendously difficult time, and on four or five occasions [David L.] Lawrence of Pittsburgh, Wagner of New York, [William B.] Hartsfield of Atlanta, George [Anthony J.] Celebrezze of Cleveland, myself would go down to see Eisenhower. We'd

have a very pleasant conversation with him, and we'd try to impress upon him the plight, the plight of the cities. We told Eisenhower at that time--and I used to say this in speeches. I used to warn people what's going to happen to the big cities of America. We couldn't get this across to Ike. And then we'd get ~~symied~~ them and you go around to McCormack's office, Kennedy's office ^{e/sr's -} somebody's office make the rounds. But the road-block, the roadblock, was the President's attitudes, which was well-known all down through the various levels of government. Now, when President Jack Kennedy took office, the law he--one of the things he did, he broadened up the law. And he took the wraps off. "Go ahead. Help these people." And it became easy. When John Collins became Mayor, he went down to Washington one day with [Edward J.] Logue and come back with a promise of ninety million dollars, you see. We couldn't get nine thousand commitment under Ike, you see. So the whole atmosphere changed. But really when I was

Mayor, the problems that we were running up against, this was the most serious problem, the housing and the renewal. The roadblock was not any place else but the Presidential opinions. And Ike would smile at you and be very nice and pat you on the back.

"Come ~~on~~ we'll have a picture taken," You know,

STEWART: You don't feel he really understood the problem at all?

HYNES: But when Jack Kennedy became President, the whole picture changed. It made it easy, you know.

STEWART: What exactly was your role, if any, in the 1959 Boston mayoralty race?

HYNES: In the 1959 race John Collins was the candidate, decided to be a ~~candidat~~. He was a city councilor, and he had supported me when I first ran for mayor. He was a representative. And a couple of years after that he decided he wanted to be a senator and he ran against a fellow named ~~Tom DeWitt~~, who by all rights should have had the job, as a senator rather than John Collins. We put our whole organization ~~on~~ the line for Collins and he beat

Vic Marano in a very bitter, hard fought contest by about a hundred and fifty votes. Marano was very disappointed and very put out with me and I don't blame him, but I was paying Collins off for what he did for me. Well, Collins was on the Council and I wouldn't say that he was ever a real leader in my behalf in the Council. John had other ideas, I guess. But anyway, when he decided to run for Mayor, ^{at} the end of 1959 when I was getting out, in '59, come down to see me and he said he'd like to have me with him. And I said to him, "I am with you in spirit, and I'll do all I can in that way for you. Most of my people know that I don't want John Powers to succeed me."

STEWART: He had run against you twice before?

HYNES: Yeah, and John wasn't helpful up in the Legislature. All our bills, John wasn't helpful. And I said, "I don't want John Powers here. I want you and I'm with you. I'm going to vote for you myself. But," I said, "if I come out openly for you, this fight will immediately be a fight between Powers and Hynes all over again. You'll be the third man." You'll be

the forgotten man; and Powers and I will be out there. And I'll have to defend everything he says about my administration because when I'm openly with you, my administration's on block, and I'll have to get out and defend it. And where the hell are you going to be, John?" I said, "No, you shouldn't have me with you in that way."

Well, he was disappointed. It took him years to realize it was right. And when he was getting out, he didn't support anybody for this very same reason, see. Now in that campaign, Collins--we helped. As I say, most of my people were with Collins. Some went with Powers. They were promised jobs, you know, and all this, so they went with him. They thought--everybody thought Powers was going to win.

STEWART: In a walk-away.

HYNES: Even the Kennedy people thought Powers was going to win, you know.

STEWART: And were supporting him.

HYNES: They thought he was going to beat me, too. You know that?

STEWART: Did they support him at all?

HYNES: Yeah.

STEWART: Did they?

HYNES: I think so. We have some, well, indication that they did. I think John Powers was the kind of a fellow who would ingratiate himself with the Kennedys to the extent that they felt he was doing a lot more for them than perhaps he was doing or a lot more than anybody else in the political scheme at that time was doing. But at any rate, Collins was known to have said publicly that the Kennedys were not with him. And the feeling between the Kennedys and the Collins crowd was not good for a while, but it ~~worked~~ itself out.

STEWART: Do you feel this, too, had something to do with your relationship with President Kennedy, the fact that you and Powers had always been on opposite sides in ^{and} ~~they had~~ the native support ~~of~~ Powers?

HYNES: It could have been. He might have felt that he owed Powers more ~~than~~ he owed me. I don't know what Powers did for him. He may have done a lot of things that I don't have any knowledge of at all. He might have felt that he owed it to Powers, and that's perfectly all right. I don't ~~might~~ ^{mind a} ~~the~~ fellow. I

never minded a fellow being against me as long as he had a reason. I didn't want somebody to be against me for ⁿ~~no~~ reason and to vilify me or something like that, but I've always been willing to recognize in all my campaigns (and even when I wasn't running myself) that the other guy's going to get a certain ~~num~~ number of people with him and they have good reasons a lot of times, very good reasons. It never disturbed me, really, to know that I wasn't getting any support from them. It never really disturbed me. It wasn't the kind of support that was open, you see. I don't think it was fitted, but it wasn't an open. . . . They just didn't come out openly for me. I guess in Collins, though, they did. I think Jack did support . . .

STEWART: Yeah, they did.

Hynes: Yeah, they did. But in my campaign they did not, but nevertheless I'm inclined to believe that they were with him rather than me, you see.

STEWART: Well, look it, it's almost 4 o'clock, and. . . .

HYNES: Well, I'm all through, if you are. . . .