

Evelyn N. Lincoln Oral History Interview – JFK#2, 07/18/1974
Administrative Information

Creator: Evelyn N. Lincoln

Interviewer: Larry Hackman, William Moss, Sylvie Turner, and William Johnson

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Biographical Note

Lincoln was the personal secretary to John F. Kennedy [JFK] from 1953 until 1963, and the author of *My Twelve Years with John F. Kennedy* (1965) and *Kennedy and Johnson* (1968). In this interview Lincoln discusses her shorthand notes from her time as JFK's secretary; JFK's House and Senate files; JFK's staff; recording telephone calls and meetings in the White House; Lincoln's filing system in the White House; which materials the JFK Library should collect; and White House staff members Robert F. Kennedy brought in, among other issues.

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Oral History Interview

Of

Evelyn N. Lincoln

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Second Oral History Interview

with

EVELYN N. LINCOLN

July 18, 1974
Waltham, MA

By Larry Hackman, William Moss, Sylvie Turner, William Johnson

For the John F. Kennedy Library

LINCOLN: ...and I think I had quite a bit on the Labor Committee.

TURNER: Oh.

LINCOLN: [Inaudible]

TURNER: And what happened to that?

LINCOLN: Well, we never got it.

MOSS: There are some files that were with the President's Office Files that we transferred to Jo [Jo August]. And the pre-presidential...

LINCOLN: Okay.

MOSS: ...pre-inauguration files we transferred to Jo. And it may be in there, I don't know.

LINCOLN: They were housed in the Senate, but I had at least six file cabinets.

MOSS: It wasn't that much...

LINCOLN: It wasn't that much.

MOSS: ...there were about two file cabinets, I think, left with what had been loaned to us as the Lincoln group of files...

LINCOLN: I had...

MOSS: ...apart from the...

LINCOLN: ...I had, of course, I had all the speeches and all the notes he made on the speeches, I had all those. Then I [had] all the personal, and they were in little flat [Inaudible]. I don't know, maybe somebody had taken them out.

MOSS: [Inaudible] changed after '75.

LINCOLN: Oh, sure. But I had at least, let's see, fifteen file cabinets.

MOSS: Of what, of all the papers?

LINCOLN: Everything. Well, no, I had some that it was of course after the assassination. I didn't know what else to do with those.

MOSS: You had about fifteen cabinets altogether, including the presidential years.

LINCOLN: Yeah, yeah.

MOSS: Okay, now this is.... That sounds about right, sounds about right, 'cause there were three, two or three cabinets, we have had with that group of files, pre-presidential. A lot of it had to do with '59-'60 campaign and transition.

LINCOLN: Yeah, yeah, I was the only one, you know, that traveled with him after his election, I was with him constantly during that period and I was taking notes.

MOSS: What kinds of things was he having you take notes on?

LINCOLN: Well, about the appointments, people that were coming in....

MOSS: And those notes went into those files?

LINCOLN: No, like I was saying, it's my shorthand...

MOSS: Oh, I see.

LINCOLN: ...and I still have those and someday I'm going to transcribe them. I just didn't

have time during the time I was in--during that hectic period, you know, when they were having the exhibit going around the country. I had to dig in the files constantly for stuff like that. And then they were also all interested in Kennedy's papers and doodles and there was always newsmen and everything going and wanting things. So, you just didn't have time to do all the things that you would normally have liked to have done to get the things ready for the library.

HACKMAN: But those, those shorthand notebooks would include lots of information which would never have been put on paper in other forms? Some of it would be letters that he dictated to go out, but lots of it would just be reminders for you to call someone or for him to call someone or whatever? How about opinions of people when he talked to someone?

LINCOLN: Yeah, [Inaudible].

HACKMAN: But wouldn't those, wouldn't those normally have been transferred to paper then or not?

LINCOLN: Uhhh, yeah, they probably would but you know with everything that you have, even though you try to keep track of where the pieces go and I.... But he takes like something he's dictated and puts it in his pocket and well heaven knows where it will turn up next.

HACKMAN: Anywhere, yeah.

LINCOLN: You try to get it, but you don't always get those things. You don't make carbons cause you don't have time. You just don't think of those things, you're not library conscious. You're just not. There's just [Inaudible] at the time is the best way to do it.

TURNER: You just have to concentrate on day to day activities.

LINCOLN: Yeah, if you sit and think about, well, what's Dan Fenn [Dan H. Fenn, Jr.] going to do about this when he gets it...?

HACKMAN: I think it would be useful just for the record if you could just go over again what you were telling us at lunch about the House files and what happened to them 'cause that's something that people ask about a lot and.... When did you first come in contact with the House files? Let's start it that way.

LINCOLN: Oh, well, that's when, when I was appointed to go over to work on the staff. And we were deciding what to take over, Ted Reardon [Timothy J. "Ted" Reardon, Jr.] and I--Ted Reardon was the administrative assistant at that time. And so, Muggsy O'Leary [John J. O'Leary] was there too, he was his patronage, you know, his driver.... And so we decided to take them all over, put them in the store room over there

in the Senate Office Building. And Muggsy O'Leary was put in charge of those files. Then, each year as.... Of course everybody had a duty to do: one girl handled immigration; one handled the case files; another the military; others had legislation; and [it was] just like it was in the White House, everybody had a certain duty to perform. And at the end of each year, like in '54, '55, '56, all the files that dealt with that year were put in order and a label put at the top, of what it was--Immigration, 1954--and put upstairs in the storage. And we had places for all these years. Well, Kennedy was elected and it came time to move the files down to the White House and at the time I was going to see that those things got down to the White House, all the files and all. But he called from Palm Beach and wanted me to come down to Palm Beach. Well, I went up and in one day I took all, everything that I wanted to take of mine and put it so that the movers would put it in my part of the White House, and it was left to Fred Holborn [Frederick L. Holborn] and some others to do. I just didn't have time to go to the storage room and go through that. So, so they just threw it out, a lot of it was thrown out, they didn't have room to take them along. So that's what happened to the files. That's what happened to them. But they were kept intact and brought over from the House, the House files.

TURNER: They were with the Senate files at one time?

LINCOLN: They were with the Senate files up in the storeroom. They were all up there.

HACKMAN: Most of what you think was thrown out were the House files as opposed to Senate, or are there Senate files that you know of that were thrown out or that you recall that were around...

LINCOLN: Well, I think the House files more or less went 'cause there was, at the time we moved over there was, well, what were the House files now. And knowing me and all my keeping everything, we brought 'em along. So I would say too that filing system that they had, before I went with him, they did the same thing after we got set, was that everything was put under alphabet: no, no departments, no, nothing, everything was alphabet. If it was agriculture committee it was under a, I mean everything went a, b, c, d. They said that was the simplest way to find things and that's the way the files were.

TURNER: But then you kept, say, green copies and pink copies and things like that?

LINCOLN: No, no, never in the House

TURNER: Oh, this in the Senate though?

LINCOLN: In the Senate, I changed the carbons each year. One year I'd have green, the next I'd have pink and then.... But nobody got any carbon copies of things that I typed, outside of just me. Nobody got anything, so if there wasn't a carbon copy in there, there just weren't any.

JOHNSON: At the end of a year when you'd retire these files and send them upstairs for

storage, would anybody leave in the file downstairs any kind of a rough inventory of what went up, like x number of boxes of legislative files, or just go up with no paperwork?

LINCOLN: No, no, nothing. You had to work in the Kennedy office to know how hectic it could be. [Laughter, agreement] You had no time for card indexes, card files, these things: I had four telephones on my desk; I had a buzzer from his office; I had people coming in; I had no time for nothing [laughter], but just knowing where things were.

HACKMAN: Let me ask you if there was, in addition to yourself, who was there for a longer period and was personally involved very closely, is there anyone else, and I'm thinking primarily of women, who was on the staff, and the staff of any of the major assistants, who you think would have very useful information about the personal relationships among the staff and about the way the various staff members operated, whether Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen], you know, what was the extent of Sorensen's responsibility in the Senate years? How much did he write for the President? How much did the President review? Any names that come to mind, you think would be particularly useful to talk to? Jean Lewis is one that I know of, and she comes later?

LINCOLN: No. Well, the system of setting up who should be what in the various--when we moved over to the Senate, it was just Mary Barelli, who was an Italian, she knew immigration, okay. Jean McGonigle [Jean McGonigle Mannix] and Jean Donovan.... Well anyhow, she worked on the campaign, she knew when the Bostonians walked in the door she'd recognize them. And Lois Goldberg [Lois Strode], she was married to a man, but she was divorced, a man who was in the service, she handled service cases. That's the way it evolved. So there was Ted Reardon and I, I knew nothing about Massachusetts or anything, but Ted Reardon and I figured out all these things with Kennedy. And so there wasn't any real person at the head that kept track of.... Ted Reardon did with the case work and Dorothy McCann[?] and so forth, but as far as him knowing what Sorensen did, no, or what I did, no. There just wasn't any central figure, so you couldn't find any one person. You could find Gloria Citron[?] who worked for Ted Sorensen that would know exactly what Ted Sorensen did. She would be.... And she worked for him for the majority of the years in the Senate and then part of the time in the White House. She knows about Ted Sorensen. Now, Ted Reardon no, he wouldn't.... He would know about Dorothy McCann and that was case history and things like that he would know. Ted Sorensen had more or less of the operations force over legislation and speeches. I did all the scheduling of speeches and everything on that, so there's nobody outside of me that knows about appointments in the Senate.

HACKMAN: Can you.... Do you have strong impressions of people who came and went on the staff and why they came and went, for instance, Lee White [Lee Calvin White] was there for a while and then left and then....

LINCOLN: I can tell you why Lee White left. You know that don't you?

HACKMAN: Well, I've heard from...

LINCOLN: Okay, Lee.... There was a girl by the name of Maeve[?]. I was out sick and I came back and they had hired a girl by the name of Maeve that worked with Lee White on legislation. Maeve sat right in front of me in the office when I came back. That was my old desk, although I didn't have my job back. And she was new and a very sweet girl, and Kennedy had more correspondence, I think, than anybody on the Hill in any legislation or anything. So the letters kept piling up and Lee White, 'course he was thinking about things, legislation and stuff, he didn't pay a lot of attention to what correspondence was here and Maeve was putting it in her desk and all over here, you know, and trying to pretend like everything was going on okay. Well Maeve got sick and so somebody went through her desk, when she was sick, and they saw all these unanswered letters. Oh.... And they piled them on Senator's desk and they were up this high. They were unanswered. You see this was Lee White's responsibility. Kennedy didn't like that, so he was, he was.... He got a job with Cooper, Senator Cooper [John Sherman Cooper].

HACKMAN: Right, the thing that's always puzzled me then is how he comes back so quickly into the White House.

LINCOLN: He's from Omaha, Nebraska; Ted Sorensen's from Lincoln, Nebraska. They were very good friends. And Lee White had a good mind. And, it was inadvertent on Lee White's part, it wasn't intentional, but Kennedy didn't like it. [Laughter] So that's, that's why. Well, as far as anyone else....

HACKMAN: One of the names that sort of floats around way back there somewhere is Langdon Marvin, Jr.

LINCOLN: Well, now that was a, a very close friend of Kennedy's, buddy-buddy all through his younger years. He had only one thought in mind, Langdon Marvin, that was airmail subsidy. He was a strong advocate of airmail subsidy. He worked with Congressman Flood [Daniel John Flood] on the House side. He worked for several congressmen on the House Interstate over there. And he helped with the people who were brought in the staff when he became senator. He was that close to Kennedy that he was saying who should be what and who should, you know what, who should be hired and stuff, you know. But he didn't fit in to the organization because he was so interested in that airmail subsidy, that's all he worked on. He had other duties to do but he never got 'em done. And you had to work if you worked for Kennedy, you had.... Your mail had to be all most current and all this. You had to work if you worked for Kennedy.

HACKMAN: People have said before that one of the things that the Kennedys can't do is fire someone. How did something like that happen when there was a problem with Lee White or Langdon Marvin or whatever? How was....

LINCOLN: They say that if they don't like the person that's there, I mean, if they didn't like the person to be in the job that he or she was, they'd say well he didn't like to fire anyone, but....

HACKMAN: If he wanted to, he would get it done.

LINCOLN: That's right, he wasn't soft. But you had to produce.

HACKMAN: What about Fred Holborn?

LINCOLN: Well, Fred.... He was brought in as a researcher in legislation, but as in any organization, some people fit in and some don't. Let me tell you that competition's tough in an office like that, and so he got pigeonholed into writing letters to hundred year old people....

HACKMAN: Right, right we've seen some... [Laughter] Special messages they call that. [Continued laughter]

LINCOLN: And he didn't fit into the set. Well, he worked on legislation quite a bit, but then he, when he came down to the White House that's when he got to be with that. And he was very good, very good at that. But, I guess he got in a little difficulty with Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson] and with some of the stuff he had.

JOHNSON: Could you sketch again just briefly for us what you were saying about the tapes because that's one area that's always been difficult for us to reconstruct. At one point and time we find ourselves with the tapes and we've never really been able to even semi-accurately reconstruct the history of the tapes and how they got started and who worked on them and when they were worked on?

LINCOLN: Yes, I'll be very happy to 'cause I think it would be helpful to you to know these things. I don't know what the meetings were and.... But I think it was more or less along about the time that--now this is just not for publication to anybody--but I think it was during the time that Bobby [Robert F. Kennedy] was thinking about this Mississippi. Getting....

HACKMAN: Barnett [Ross Robert Barnett].

LINCOLN: Right, and he wanted some of the conversations with the governor and those people down there. Then I think it evolved that maybe there would be some important conversations over the telephone that would need, that they would need to have it verbatim so that the man--what he absolutely said. It wasn't to really get anything on the man, or do anything like that. So they set these up. My desk, over on this side, I had a big, what looked like a bookcase that you could open up.

MOSS: That's to your right as you were sitting at the desk?

LINCOLN: Yeah, it was to the cabinet room. And it had in it, these dictatapes. Had two sets of dictatapes. That's for the telephones. And that was connected to, I had a little board down below the top of my desk where I could turn the dictaphone on and that would connect with my telephone and the president's telephone in there. Just those two. Okay, that's the telephone. And this, this down here below my desk, would.... He could put on a light which would say go, it was green I think, that meant I'd turn on the dictatape, so that would be recorded. And then when he was through I'd turn that off, at the end of the tape. Okay, now for the cabinet room, that's the only other thing that was taped. He.... There was an intricate system underneath the table and he had, where he sat, a place where he could push down to turn on that tape if he wanted something recorded. Okay that would show up on my board, and I'd watch that, and I'd try to figure out what time, what time to what time, that was on. Sometimes he'd forget and I'd have to turn that, I could turn that off. I could turn it on or off.

TURNER: Did he tell you ahead of time when this was going to be done?

LINCOLN: Well I never left my desk, so I watched this, well, then if he did, if he wanted something on the telephone, he might say to me well I'm going to, I want this conversation taped or taken. He would tell me that, yes. And then....

HACKMAN: So you might do that before a cabinet meeting and if he forgot then you would activate it, right?

LINCOLN: Yes, yes, yes. So it was a very simple operation. You just had to be there and you just had to watch and.... But it wasn't any devious way of getting material from anybody or using it, because when those dictabelts.... I'd check and I also had a little thing here showing when the dictabelt was coming to an end. So every morning I'd check and see where it was and how much we had. Then I'd take those dictabelts and I'd put 'em on the front of this dicta.... I don't know whether you've seen them or not, if they've been brought up here yet. Well, whose the conversation was and what time and all this, I'd put all of those in a little office next to the president's office. There's a little kind of a room where he had a little sofa and a desk and things where he'd go in and take private telephone calls where nobody could listen to him. And I'd put 'em in there. And nobody ever got 'em out, nobody ever saw 'em, nobody knew they were in there. The same way with the tapes. That was down connected to a system down in the basement, in a little secure room where I had files and had this down there and that opened with a combination.

MOSS: Nobody knew about it but you and the President? What about Robert Kennedy?

LINCOLN: And Robert.

MOSS: Robert Kennedy. Sorensen did not know?

LINCOLN: I doubt it. I don't think so. If they did it was.... I don't.... Never discussed. Nobody knew. And in fact when, after the assassination, I came back in the office on the 23rd, Bobby says to me, "Get those tapes out of here." I took 'em home. Beause he didn't know, you know, what they would say about them.

MOSS: And the system was installed by the White House Army Signal Agency?

LINCOLN: The communications, yeah the signal corps, yeah.

HACKMAN: Did anybody ever say to you later what happened to the system then when the Johnson people came in? Whether they used the same system or redesigned it or how they did it, 'cause I mean I know everybody's talked about them using something, but...?

LINCOLN: Well, I think they maybe they ...

HACKMAN: I assume they put in something more sophisticated probably.

LINCOLN: I think they did too. I don't know. I don't really know what they used, but we did and then those tapes from downstairs I also took also 'em and put what time and stuff and put 'em back in that cabinet. So I was the only one that knew what those things were. So it wasn't common knowledge, and it wasn't for anything but just for his memoirs. That's all it was.

JOHNSON: What's your recollection of when George Dalton first became involved in the tapes? Do you have any memory of that?

LINCOLN: Yes, in my office. Yes. After the assassination Bobby said we have to get those transcribed. I said, "Well, I can't do it. You need a certain kind of a system but I don't know anything about it." Well, at the time that I went to the EOB [Executive Office Building], Mugsy had two friends that he didn't, that wanted to be taken care of--that didn't want to go back to the White House, they were drivers, White House, garage, Boots [George Miller] and Joe Giordano.

HACKMAN: I remember him. He was at the archives once, I remember when I was....

LINCOLN: Yeah, yeah. They were in there with me, see? And George...?

HACKMAN: I remember Joe, I don't remember the others....

LINCOLN: Joe and Boots and George Dalton. So, George Dalton.... I was the one that said well maybe George Dalton could have it. Because he had been very helpful to me in the White House doing little odds and ends.

TURNER: Were many cabinet meeting taped then?

LINCOLN: Not the whole.... Well it was mostly national security problems, as I recall, mostly national security things that they wanted to pinpoint. But they never used 'em for any reason. Never. Nobody ever asked do you have tape on so and so, lets run it. Never, never.

MOSS: I want to come back to something that you were talking about earlier, you said you had shorthand notes from the transition period...

LINCOLN: Yeah.

MOSS: ...between the election and the inauguration. Do you have similar things from other periods? Or other materials of that sort that we wouldn't have?

LINCOLN: You mean from the Senate and.... I don't, no, I think, I don't know what I did with those....

MOSS: I'd like to move to the way the files were set up in the White House and, in your office, and how you described to us when we were having lunch the rationale behind them, if you call it that, as a responsive thing to him. Could you talk about that a little bit?

LINCOLN: Sure, over the years I devised the system of knowing where things were that he was interested.... His questions of what he thought, I mean, how he would, how I should respond to his requests in other words. He was very date conscious. Oh, "day before yesterday", "a week ago", "a month ago", so I kept daily files because.... Not under subject matter could you always find what he wanted because he said we discussed something, "day before yesterday", somebody was in the office here I want to know what it was, what letter he had and what.... Well, I had that in the daily files. That's what that was.

MOSS: What sort of things? Where did you get the things that you put in the daily files? What kind of things...?

LINCOLN: From each day's, each day. I had a whole month in this file cabinet and I'd start, say January first and whatever took place in that day was on his desk, notes that he had on his desk, or anything that, any letters that he would have dictated on that day or anything, in that day. Each day that was.... Well, at the end of the month maybe I would transfer some of those things out and put in other places....

MOSS: To subject files?

LINCOLN: But, for that.... Yeah. But for that time, it was most essential to have, for a whole month to have, those things at my fingertips. Then names: Charlie

Bartlett [Charles Leffingwell Bartlett], Bundy [McGeorge Bundy], General Taylor [Maxwell D. Taylor], Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower], so you, instead of putting them in subject files, you put 'em in name files.

MOSS: Well, we have three name files that we've found. One was chiefly staff memoranda.

LINCOLN: Yes.

MOSS: One is a special correspondence on V.I.P. file.

LINCOLN: Yes.

MOSS: Another one is a general correspondence file. Could you give us an idea of the distinctions that you made between those three?

LINCOLN: Let me see, you say V.I.P.?

MOSS: Well, we have two alphabetic files. One is a very general one and one is, has been called a V.I.P., or we call it a special correspondence file because it has people in it, like Winston Churchill [Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill], Dean Acheson [Dean Gooderham Acheson], people of some note or people who were close to him. With the exception of one or two people like Aunt Leticia and so on who are in the general correspondence file....

LINCOLN: Oh, Loretta, yeah, Aunt Loretta, Loretta.

MOSS: Loretta, I'm sorry, not Leticia, Loretta.

LINCOLN: From Florida, yeah.

MOSS: And I was wondering why people were in one and not the other, or why occasionally you'd find them in both?

LINCOLN: Well, let me see, why did I do that? The V.I.P.s.... Well Aunt Loretta was, she would have been, she was very high up on the list as to what was taking place with her. I had a little – with me like Winston Churchill and all of those. They, to me, they had a little historical something or other so I might have thought in my mind that it was kind of nice to have files on them. On the general file was staff. I just couldn't break them down. I did have some that were more important, like Bundy and Sorensen and them that I did, but as a.... For staff that would lump 'em all, I couldn't have individuals for them. I didn't have time to file 'em for that.

MOSS: There are two, two sets of files that we've got at the end of the files. One is called 'Special Events Through the Years.' Do you remember that title being

used at all? It's a collection of odds and ends of things that pertain to his career, things like the tally sheet from the convention, things of that sort.

LINCOLN: Yeah, well those things that I saved that he had something to do with, that I never got to file away. They just lumped into one.

MOSS: You had saved these or did he ask you to?

LINCOLN: I saved, no, I saved them all. Everything that's in there is stuff that I saved.

MOSS: And then we have one little series we call personal secretary's files, which has in it things like references to list of his favorite books, his favorite songs...

LINCOLN: Yes, yes.

MOSS: ...birthdays and that kind of thing.

LINCOLN: I had to have that because people wrote in constantly.

MOSS: That's what we had assumed.

LINCOLN: Yeah, I had to have those. Even now I have those at home 'cause people are constantly saying to me "What was his favorite song?" Well, his favorite song was, it says *Anchors Away* on some of those and....

MOSS: "Hail to the Chief?" [Laughter]

LINCOLN: But, what is it....

MOSS: Wexford.

LINCOLN: Noooo. [Singing] Won't you please come home...

SEVERAL: Bill Bailey?

LINCOLN: *Bill Bailey, Won't You Please Come Home.*

MOSS: I hadn't heard that one. [Laughter]

LINCOLN: Yeah, yeah, you know, at the time when he moved in the Senate, I said to him they're going to ask what your favorite song is and he says, "Well, it's *Bill Bailey, Won't You Please Come Home.*" But he said, "You can't say that."

[Laughter]

MOSS: How did you know whether a particular piece of paper should go into your

files, or into the central files, or into Bundy's files?

LINCOLN: I never sent any to the central files. I never sent any to Bundy.

MOSS: You didn't? How did things come to you and from where would they come? Would Bundy's operation send them to you?

LINCOLN: No, that mail room. You see everything.... At the beginning of when we moved to the White House, I gave to the telephone office and to the mail room letters; I mean a list of people that if we got any mail from them, say there were fifty, they come to me directly, unopened, because they were people that were personal to him. Then it evolved that there were other, but then they finally got down to where outside of these fifty or what have you, there would be some that they thought were personal that they would send to me, but they'd open them. Yeah that's where they get.... And the same way with the telephone, they'd know from my list who they should put through to me before-
-that I would talk to and put through to him.

MOSS: I understand that randomly every 50th letter was pulled for his viewing, what would happen to that letter?

LINCOLN: Put it to me. What happened to that? He saw 'em. I put 'em on my desk right like on this corner and at intervals during the day he'd come out and read and he'd put over the ones he'd looked at. Then maybe sometimes he'd dictate, but he got a sense what people were writing about. Yeah, it was a very good system.

TURNER: On the whole, did he like to have people come into his office to talk to him and these people usually then would find it was easier to go around through you then through Ken O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell] to get to see him?

LINCOLN: He liked that.

TURNER: Yeah.

LINCOLN: He liked that. He didn't like to be cooped up in that way. He'd come out, he didn't want to be in there alone. He'd come out if he didn't have anybody and stand around and see wouldn't be somebody there for him to talk to and see my door was open to the hall and people would pass by the door and he'd "hi", "hi".
[Laughter] Very friendly.

TURNER: Yes.

HACKMAN: Do you know from talking to other people who were around then of materials that people have that you think are very valuable materials, that we, or we

don't know about probably or the library doesn't know about, that we ought to be concerned with? That would contribute something?

LINCOLN : Well, if you.... The staff people that were there like Sorensen, Larry O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien]. I don't know whether you have Larry O'Brien....

HACKMAN: We don't have O'Brien's or Feldman's [Myer "Mike" Feldman] or Dungan's [Ralph A. Dungan] yet, or we have some of Feldman's.

LINCOLN: Feldman, yeah, that's right Feldman, well he....

HACKMAN: I think we have most of the others.

LINCOLN: Ted Reardon. Do you have his?

MOSS: Well, a very small batch of Reardon, two or three boxes, I think, at the most.

LINCOLN: Well, see, he was with him all during the House.

JOHNSON: The question comes to my mind, because of a case that we've gotten ourselves involved in, as to any knowledge you might have of stuff that was left behind in that rush to get the files together and get them out.

LINCOLN: I think nearly all.... You mean out of the White House?

JOHNSON: I was thinking particularly of the White House Staff Files 'cause Dungan was a case where we only have two small boxes of material and we've been asked by the Justice Department 'cause we're involved in a suit against the government and the plaintiff is asking for Dungan's files. They went to the White House and identified a couple of Dungan things from the Kennedy period that are apparently still there. I wonder what, what kinds of things might still be there?

LINCOLN: You know that's possible because when you think of.... All except Ted Sorensen and I stayed in the White House with Johnson. Now when they left Johnson did they, what did they do with their files?

HACKMAN: You know I've seen Dungan's files in his house and Feldman's in his house so I know that when they left they took quite a bit with them.

LINCOLN: Well I know Ted Sorensen took all of his.

JOHNSON: Does Dungan still have quite a bit, Larry?

HACKMAN: When I was interviewing him, right next to the chair we were sitting in there was a stack of files in boxes two, two piles both of about head high to me. We

can talk to him, we'll get busy on that.

JOHNSON: Is that the sort of thing I should tell this Justice Department guy when he comes next week looking for Dungan files? He's got enough sense to ask Dungan.

HACKMAN: He ought to have.

TURNER: I'm sure the Johnson Library would have some too.

LINCOLN: Yeah I would think so.

JOHNSON: The Johnson Lib--I think the Johnson people made an effort to take literally everything that was there.

LINCOLN: They did. They took everything, absolutely everything. They cleaned it out. But you see we moved out in three hours.

JOHNSON: They spent months. I can remember working over there weekends. They had to bring whole crews of us up from the archives to just load boxes on trucks.

LINCOLN: Yeah, yeah, yeah. No it.... If we'd had a little more time to work on this project we'd have had a better system but you just didn't, you didn't think about things like this.

HACKMAN: You talked about the, the recording system being partially an outgrowth of a conversation with Robert Kennedy or Robert Kennedy's concern. Are there other kinds of things like that that you can remember Robert Kennedy suggesting to the President? Either on the way paper was handled or.... I don't have anything specific in mind but....

LINCOLN: Well....

HACKMAN: The way he should operate with his staff or....

LINCOLN: Ahhhhh.... Well, as you know, there were two operations. I mean there were two.... When we came to the White House, Ted Sorensen, Ted Reardon and I were from the Senate. Bobby Kennedy brought his own--Kenny O'Donnell, Pierre Salinger [Pierre E.G. Salinger] were on the other side. So you had two forces there and not always working together.

TURNER: A lot of competition?

LINCOLN: Bobby had his friends; Kennedy had his. So there was.... But I think that's in any organization that you have sides on. I guess that's what makes for a good

organization, you have the rivalry, you put out in order to stay where you are. I see where Haldeman [Harry Robbins Haldeman] and Ehrlichman [John D. Ehrlichman] tried to shove Rose Mary Woods into the EOB so...

HACKMAN: Do you remember anything about Dave Hackett's [David Hackett] function? He was called something like Director of Correspondence or something at one point during the campaign.

LINCOLN: He was Bobby's friend. That's about it. In fact, Dave Hackett was also in the campaign. He was in West Virginia, the primaries. And he didn't have real important decisions.

HACKMAN: No?

LINCOLN: No. there was Dick Donahue [Richard King Donahue] too. Remember him?

[SEVERAL]: Yeah, mm hmm.

JOHNSON: He's a local boy now.

LINCOLN: But he was let go. I never did know why, but he was.

TURNER: There were no strict organizational lines I guess either, were there, as to who reported to whom or that kind of thing?

LINCOLN: Well, I think maybe Kenny had of course Helen Lempart and his staff that they had to report to him. Kenny, would report to the President. Larry O'Brien had his operation, Claude Desautels [Claude John Desautels] and those people up there.

MOSS: Touch very briefly perhaps on, and as gently as you want to, on a rather more delicate subject. There's a great deal of chatter around the edges of all this about Pierre Salinger's stable of young women and the way they provided feminine entertainment for the men in the White House. How did this impact on you?

LINCOLN: Well, now I will say this, I was far afield from what went on.... Of the other members of the staff.... I always felt, and I never had close contact with any of the news media because I figured that anything I might say, anything I might do, would be a reflection on the President. So I never had any.... In fact he used to say I was aloof but I didn't really get too close to any of the members of the staff. So what they did, even when we went to Palm Beach or came up here to Hyannis, I was always either out of the house or holed into my room or--under the pretense that I had to be available at all times. So as far as what they did...

MOSS: The goings on?

LINCOLN: ...the goings on, I.... I really don't.... I couldn't comment. I might have heard about certain things but as far as really knowing about it, I couldn't really tell you. It's a lonely life when you, when you are close and you try to be loyal. There were staff members that become chummy with the news media that Kennedy didn't like and I was told not to have too much to do with them, because they have a way of eliciting information.

MOSS: Do you recall any instance when that was particularly embarrassing or he was, he really felt as though he'd been let down by a staff member?

LINCOLN: Oh, not.... Just reprimanded a couple of employees that.... It was in print that they had been told by so and so.

MOSS: I think in order to be fair to the rest of the staff we've got to.... We have about three o'clock.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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