

**Willard K. Rice Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 8/03/1977**  
**Administrative Information**

**Creator:** Willard K. Rice

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**Biographical Note**

Willard K. Rice (1905-1992) was the coach of the Dexter School football team in Brookline, Massachusetts in 1926. This interview focuses on John F. Kennedy's [JFK] and Joseph P. Kennedy Jr.'s time on the Dexter School football team and his contact with JFK later in life, among other topics.

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Oral History Interview

Of

Willard K. Rice

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Oral History Interview

with

<sup>ABD</sup>  
WILLIAM K. RICE

August 3, 1977  
New York, N. Y.

By Sheldon Stern

For the John F. Kennedy Library

STERN: ./. and is everything <sup>that</sup> you can recall about your earliest contact with both of the Kennedy boys. Of course, we're interest<sup>d</sup> in Jack, obviously, but we often lack any kind of substantial material about Joe, <sup>junior [Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr.]</sup> and if you, in watching them, for example, play football, did you have any sense of what their relationship was like? Did you see any signs of hostility, <sup>or</sup> rivalry, <sup>or whatever--</sup> or anything of that kind? And, of course, <sup>the account of</sup> your discussion with the Kennedy parents, <sup>would be</sup> was very interesting.

RICE: You know, this all started in the autumn of 1926. Generally in the newspapers and so on, in the articles that <sup>have been</sup> are written, they have the date as 1927, but it wasn't 1927. It was

the autumn of 1926 when the lower school of Noble and Greenough had been changed to the new <sup>corporate</sup> title of Dexter School, and Dexter School took over the lower forms as the older school, Noble and Greenough, moved further west due to the fact that they had outgrown the building, with the preceding amalgamation of the Bolton School of Boston. They had become so big that they had outgrown completely the building, <sup>They had</sup> and sold the old Bolton school building on Newbury Street, and there they were in Brookline but, unfortunately or <sup>o</sup> fortunately, there was more and more enrollment in the school, so they finally bought the property in Dedham the year before and had built a new school there, and decided to leave the old school for the younger forms in the lower school, with a board of trustees which actually was going to be the same for the new school as it was for Noble and Greenough, the parent in Dedham. The head of the board of trustees was a very well known gentleman <sup>of Boston</sup> by the name of John Richardson, who, among other things, had been the head of the Harvard [Harvard College] Rowing committee for a period of years, was also on the football committee, <sup>e,</sup> and was not only a very well known member of one of the oldest

families in Boston, but was also a great sportsman. With the new school starting in the autumn of 1926, of course, they wanted to have a football team and came to me knowing that I had been injured and couldn't play at Harvard College, and made a proposition to me which was unbelievably good. They offered me the job of starting the new football squad and team, and becoming the head coach with a very handsome salary for that period of time for part-time work, and I was delighted to have the opportunity to do it. The principal of the school was a perfectly delightful, lovely person by the name of Miss Fisk, <sup>[Myra Fisk]</sup> who couldn't have been more helpful to me as head coach, completely sympathetic to an athletic program and the football squad and the football team. She did everything she possibly could to help me and to help my assistant (I'll tell you about him in a minute), and the relationship just couldn't have been better. The group of boys who were there were from some of the best known families in Boston, around Boston and the suburbs of Boston, but at the same time in came Joseph Kennedy, Jr., who was at that time <sup>eleven</sup> years old, and his younger brother. He was the oldest of the Kennedy <sup>boys, of the Kennedy</sup> family, and his younger brother was John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

They were both very attractive youngsters. Joe was eleven months older, therefore he was just eleven, Jack was nine. They couldn't have been more attractive <sup>Youngsters than they were</sup> ~~They were~~ just as eager as <sup>they</sup> possible <sup>could</sup> to learn to play football. It was their first experience, as it was the first experience for almost all the squad. As you will see with the team pictures, and so on, we had a pretty good-sized squad for a lower school of the first forms, and <sup>soon and</sup> so forth, right up to, well, anywhere from seven to thirteen years <sup>old, . . .</sup> ~~of~~ age. As soon as we got the group of boys together, I realized that as a lineman and a tackle that I'd never carry <sup>red</sup> the ball <sup>in</sup> the years I played football, so I wanted to see if I couldn't persuade Mr. Richardson to let me find a coach from the Harvard squad; ~~and so forth;~~ and I got hold of my classmate, Charles Frasier, Charles "Rusty" Frasier, who had been on probation all the way through <sup>from</sup> his freshman year right straight through <sup>to his,</sup> now, the beginning of his senior year, and had never played varsity football, but had been without any question one of the best backs at that period of time from 1923 through the 1926 season there at Harvard, and



he was delighted to come along as coach of the backfield coach and cooperate with me. We were great friends anyway, so that part of the picture worked out just as well, <sup>as</sup> we could possibly hope, with the backing of Miss Fisk, who was so useful and so helpful to us. <sup>7</sup> The squad was eager, and the ages <sup>as</sup> that I pointed out was a pretty tender seven and eight, <sup>and so on and so forth,</sup> playing football, but the idea was to turn this squad into a football team of the first varsity, with substitutes and so on at each position, and as you can see from the picture that you've got, we really had an in-depth <sup>squad.</sup> ~~team.~~ They were eager, they worked hard, and there was never any foot-dragging, there was never any rivalry to the point of being petulant; <sup>or anything of that sort</sup> we never had any disciplinary problems with them during the whole season, and as you know the record speaks for itself. <sup>8</sup> The first contact with Joe and Jack was with their mother and their father, who were tremendously enthusiastic about the opportunity of their boys having a chance to play football, and I shall never forget Joe Kennedy, <sup>senior, [Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr.]</sup> Sr.'s remark to me that, "Well, Coach,

you're going to have quite a problem, because here are two young 'micks' who need discipline, and Mrs. Kennedy and I will give you carte blanche for any disciplinary measures that you need to take to get them into line and to teach them to play, and to teach them to be good sportsmen." I appreciated that; so did my fellow ~~co~~coach, "Rusty" Frasier, and they backed us up all the way through. They were enthusiastic parents--(there were others just as enthusiastic-- but no one was more devoted actually to that football team than Mr. Joseph Kennedy and his wife, Mrs. Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy, who, incidentally,-- this has nothing to do with football, but who without question was one of the most beautiful women I've ever seen, with her dark blue eyes and her black hair, and her brilliant coloring of her cheeks, she was absolutely... first of all, charming and perfectly beautiful. They were devoted parents and they were a great help from a coach's standpoint in the fact that the morale of the youngsters, and so on. There was a problem in the picture, because here were, as far as I <sup>can</sup> recall it, the first

Irish Catholic boys on a football squad in a private school in the Boston private school league. I may be inaccurate, but I don't think I am.

STERN: I think the evidence suggests you're correct.

RICE: That's absolutely correct. There was some feeling<sup>1</sup> not on the part of the other boys directly, because the boys were too eager<sup>2</sup> to play the game and to learn and to have a winning team. <sup>3</sup>there wasn't any trouble there in any<sup>way</sup> shape, or form. <sup>4</sup>but the intrusion, if I may use the word, of a new element in a very much of a closed society as Boston was, even as late as 1926, was a bit startling. However, that didn't have anything to do with actually what happened, and the cooperation that I was able to get with strict discipline from the entire squad was absolutely excellent, <sup>5</sup>and the proof of the pudding is that it was an all-winning team. As you may recall, we had an active league at Brown<sup>6</sup> and Nichols<sup>7</sup>, which was my old prep school, where I had played from the time I was <sup>twelve</sup> <sup>8</sup> years old, and Brown and Nichols had been in Cambridge, <sup>9</sup>and had been very

strong athletically, not only in football but in all the other games that we played in those days, ~~ice~~ ice hockey, rowing, baseball, and so on and so forth. They were the defending champions in that autumn of 1926 in the private school league. The other teams that were playing in ~~it were Rivers School, Fessenden, Longwood Day and Country Day,~~ <sup>[Rivers Country Day School] [Fessenden School]</sup> and when we started out there was no question of the fact that Browne and Nichols as <sup>the</sup> defending champion was probably the strongest team in the league, and here we had a brand new squad of players who we didn't know what their capabilities, <sup>capacity was way,</sup> ~~were~~ in any shape, or form ~~we~~ we had to find out, ~~and~~ <sup>as</sup> things went along, we ~~were~~ lucky enough, they boys played absolutely marvellously together, we had good depth, ~~there~~ there was never any trouble or rivalry or any backbiting in the fact that you would take one out for another, substitute or anything of that sort.

STERN: You saw no problem with the boys in terms of the fact that the Kennedys were Catholics?

RICE: None whatever, none whatever on the field and ~~so on~~ -- not a bit of it.

STERN: Do you have any recollection of any physical problems with Jack? I mean, there was so much of that, <sup>as early as Choate [Choate School]</sup> ~~in his earliest childhood.~~ Anything with his back? ~~we~~

RICE: No, not at all. Jack... Joe was the older boy, the stronger boy, physically heavier, physically more muscular. He was my first fullback and was outstanding. Jack was lighter, rangier, thinner, not as strongly built as Joe, but there was a difference, my gracious, a difference of so many months... in boys of that age is evident. But, he was strong, but lean and hard. The other boy was huskier, and as a result, Joe became first fullback, played right straight through. He and Jack Jones, who was the captain of the team, alternated as fullback, and they were both rugged as they could be. You could always count on them to gain, if it was humanely possible, for them to gain the necessary yardage. they were both outstanding. Jack was lighter, as I have already said, but he was brainy, and he was excellent in filling the position that Coach Frasier and I had for him, which was, <sup>actually</sup> as a quarterback. He was not the first-string quarterback. He was the second-string quarterback, but the second and the first were so close in ability, that actually

there was no first or second string. This <sup>S</sup>was squad played from the first game right through to the championship game. There wasn't any member of the squad who did not get into all the games <sup>o</sup> and this is one of the most important things that we wanted to do because, after all, this was a team game and we wanted all of the participants, all of the people who were active and <sup>were</sup> working hard, to play just as much as they could. I think possibly this is one of the greatest reasons for the success in the fact that we had an unbeaten <sup>an unbeaten</sup> team, ~~for the season,~~ is the fact that everybody did participate.

STERN: You <sup>says</sup> ~~said,~~ you recall nothing in terms of Jack's <sup>?</sup> having back problems?

RICE: No, no, not at all. There was no such thing.

STERN: Do you have any specific recollections of what he was like as a boy, <sup>Y</sup> as a person?

RICE: Well, he was a delightful boy. He was just as fresh as he could be, but there were a lot of other fresh kids in that squad, <sup>o</sup> and so on <sup>o</sup> and so forth. He wasn't any fresher than some of ~~the~~ others. He had a wonderful sense of humor, <sup>o</sup> so did Joe. They were two of the most attractive boys that I <sup>was</sup> ~~ve~~ ever <sup>o</sup> been associated with.

STERN: Can you recall any examples of their sense of humor? Any incidents, or anything of that kind?

RICE: Well, when I first played at Browne <sup>and</sup> & Nichols, my first coach was a character ~~coaches~~ very often are characters ~~and~~ and he had an expression, and his expression was "on the hotfoot." Now, "on the hotfoot" meant that when you were out there on the field, you were hustling all the time. You didn't drag your feet. When you were playing either in practice or when you were playing <sup>n</sup> the games we played, when the play was completed, the whistle <sup>had</sup> ~~was~~ blown, you got up off the field and you hustled, just as fast as you could back in <sup>to</sup> your position, with the coach's command "on the hotfoot", which you had heard so much in practice. Well, I was used to it and, of course, I used the same thing, and everything was "on the hotfoot", ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup>, of course, when I first <sup>had</sup> heard this from my first coach and so on at Browne <sup>and</sup> & Nichols, why, <sup>if</sup> if you didn't move quickly enough and so on, sometimes you felt the foot of the coach in the tail end to help you along, ~~so that...~~ I told Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy about this and they thought ~~this~~ <sup>it</sup> was

a wonderful idea. They came out to the practices, they saw it happen.

STERN: They lived right near by, didn't they?

RICE: Yes, they lived right across from the school. They had a lovely house right across from the school, so that the boys practically speaking fell out of bed and walked across, right across to the school, which was not many yards away, and, of course, the playing field was there as well, so that it was a very satisfactory arrangement for them for their living set up and so on, but, the most important thing was the cooperation of the players themselves. they learned, they learned well, they were satisfactory. These two boys were outstanding. Joe was the better athlete of the two, but he was the older boy. he was husker, heavier, stronger, but Jack was an absolutely first-class athlete as well, as he proved later on. They were attractive, they were good fun, they were easy to work with. I never had any trouble with either one of them, and they became great friends of mine. There isn't a single incident that I can think of. well, I am doing this after <sup>--what?--</sup> fifty-one years, and never that



I can remember  
the slightest bit of trouble with them in any way, shape or <sup>form</sup> ~~manner~~. There were one or two players in the team who felt they didn't get as much time as some of the others, with youngsters of that age, and so on, there is bound to be rivalry, bound to be jealousy, but we kept <sup>it</sup> this well in hand all the way through. The most important thing is the fact that from the beginning of the season, the first game and so on, <sup>our</sup> games were all played in the league on Fridays, and on Saturdays we used to take the team, the squad, to the Harvard Stadium when Harvard and the Varsity was playing, so that here was this miniature Harvard varsity, wearing the same crimson that <sup>the</sup> Harvard varsity was using in the stadium, it was nothing more than a miniature Harvard football <sup>game,</sup> ~~team,~~ and the fortunate thing about it was that I had gotten permission of the Harvard coaching staff, through Jack Richardson, to install the exact system that Harvard was using, the same plays, the same form, all the way through, so that these youngsters would go to the stadium on Saturday and see their big brothers, the enormous Harvard squad at that time, playing

exactly the same football that these youngster from eight to thirteen were playing right through the week in their practice and <sup>playing in their</sup> games on Fridays. It was a unique situation. There had never been anything like it before, nothing <sup>of this sort</sup> like this, <sup>had</sup> ever happened in the private school league, or on the public school league of, for example, a miniature Harvard team, because that's what this was.

STERN: It must have given them quite a sense of identification.

RICE: Well, you know how many of them went to Harvard, -- practically speaking, all of them. The Kennedys were a set of brothers. Then, of course, there was another set of brothers there, the Bundy's, and there were the Bundy's -- <sup>[Harvey H. Bundy]</sup> Harvey Bundy, who was the older brother, the position was the same vis-a-vis his younger brother, Billy, <sup>[William I. Bundy]</sup> that existed between Joe and Jack Kennedy, because Harvey was just <sup>enough older</sup> as much older as Joe was, to be the stronger and the ruggeder physically, and very much like the Kennedys, so there were two brother groups with the same difference in age, and so on and so forth. As you know, of course, Bill Bundy was in the...was in Washington

at the time, of course, that Jack was President, and they were fast friends all through their lives; so was Harvey. Most of these boys kept up their friendships, as I can recall it, all the way through prep schools, and when they went on to other schools, and when they went on to college as well.

STERN: Can you add anything <sup>on</sup> to your contacts with Joe and Jack after Dexter School?

RICE: Well, after they graduated and so on, and so forth, they went to Choate School, as you know. They continued to play football. I followed all this, of course, and was in touch with them all through that period of time, and after I had gotten out of Harvard I had gone on and done my graduate work <sup>at Cambridge University</sup> in England, so I was out of the country in 1927 and 1928, and then started in <sup>the financial</sup> business in New York, in the financial business, but I was just as much devoted to football as I ever had been, and followed the prep schools and all of the careers of my graduates of Dexter School as they went along into the other schools, and the higher and the older forms in the schools, when they went on to Noble & Greenough, some of them

went on to Brown<sup>and</sup> & Nichols, some of them went on  
to Choate, they went on to Groton, St. Marks, <sup>[Groton School]</sup> <sup>[St. Marks School]</sup>  
any number of the other schools, <sup>[Phillips Exeter Academy]</sup> Andover, and so  
on, Exeter, <sup>so</sup> I used to follow them as much as  
I could, but it was a little more difficult doing  
it from New York, <sup>then</sup> it was, for example, doing  
it from Boston. If I had been there and been  
active in Cambridge, and so on. <sup>but</sup>, I kept in  
touch with them, <sup>and</sup> they kept in touch with me,  
<sup>and</sup> finally when they went into <sup>Harvard</sup> Joe was a class  
ahead of Jack, <sup>Joe</sup> went into Harvard earlier, the  
year before, with every chance of becoming a  
freshman regular and a varsity regular. Jack went  
into the famous class<sup>in</sup> which they had the biggest  
turnout of football captains in the freshman<sup>m</sup> squad  
that Jack was on, that I think Harvard has ever had  
in its football history, and, of course, you know  
what actually had happened. Jack was in one of  
the early autumn practices in that freshman year, <sup>he</sup>  
<sup>he</sup> suffered the hip injury which was the thing that  
he never got over until he died. That never left  
him, and that incapacitated him so that he never  
played football after that freshman year. That was  
in his right hip, and that was the end of his football

career. Joe <sup>had</sup> continued on and had done reasonably well at Harvard, but at that point in time Harvard had a lot of outstanding squads, and so on, that it was pretty rough going to be standouts.

STERN: Did you correspond with Jack at any point?

RICE: No, I used to see them periodically and so on, because of the fact that I'd get back to Cambridge and the games. I followed it all the way along, and by this time I was getting into some professional football myself in the middle thirties, and finally became one of the original promoters if you will, or originators, with a group of other Harvard people, [H. (Tack) Hardwick] Tack Hardwick and Ernie Soucie, who were great varsity players at Harvard, and they were interested in pro football, and in 1938 we had already been associated in other athletic ventures and so on, which were side-lines of our banking business, our investment banking businesses respectively, and in <sup>the season</sup> 1938 to 1939 season we got together with a number of people in Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Chicago and so on and so forth, and started the American League, now that's the First American League, and the reason

for it was that we wanted to have a league that would be free of the taint that surrounded the starting of the National League in 1925. We felt that we could get first-class people who would be interested in financially backing a new league; we felt that there was plenty of room for it, and so on and so forth, and this is the reason for the beginning of the American League, which ~~was~~ finally ended up as the All-American Conference. At the end of the war, and with the Cleveland, which was one of our original teams, ~~the Cleveland Browns~~ becoming, as you may recall, one of the outstanding teams for a number of years, and finally in the junction of the American end of the picture they had the International League, and so on and so forth.

STERN: Did you have any contact with Jack after he got into politics? -- 1946 and on?

RICE: Oh, yes. I had contact with him, and in 1955 when he was the youngest man on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and beginning to make a name for himself, if you will recall the trip that he made at that time, because in the Commonwealth of

Massachusetts <sup>he had</sup>

STERN: Poland and Paris, Ireland?

RICE: That's right, but the most important part of that at that point was the fact that in Massachusetts, he had, of course, a very strong Irish-Catholic group that was really a constituency for him. then, there was another group, particularly in the manufacturing cities, such as Leominster and Fitchburg, <sup>Methuen,</sup> and Athol, Haverhill, and so on, of the Polish-Catholic group <sup>that had come in there</sup> and so on, and he had a chance in 1955, as I recall it, he was the youngest member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and he also was tremendously interested in his Polish supporters and had a chance to be the first Senator who I recall actually had a chance to go into Poland after the war. In 1955, at this time, I was living between Algiers in Algeria, (the capital of Algiers) and Paris, and I had been overseas from 1942 right straight through the war. I started at the very beginning of Allied <sup>Forces</sup> ~~Wars~~ Headquarters in London early in the spring of 1942, was one of the first officers working on the plans for <sup>the</sup> a North African possible, but not probably <sup>e</sup> invasion, and had no idea that in November, 1942, with that invasion,

that I would <sup>have been</sup> still interested as late as 1955. But ~~that~~ I was, and the reason for it was, among other things, ~~is~~ that I had been in the military intelligence picture and had become commanding officer for the vast area of the western Mediterranean for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Marshall <sup>George C. Marshall</sup>, General Arnold <sup>Henry H. Arnold</sup> and Admiral King <sup>C Ernest King</sup>. At the beginning of 1944 I had been the executive officer of the top ranking intelligence set up which was called the Joint Intelligence Collection Agency. <sup>Office of Strategic Services</sup> OSS and their subsidiary Special Service Unit worked with us and under us because we belonged to the War Department General Staff, G2, Military Intelligence Division, Military Intelligence Service; and the Joint Intelligence Collection Agency, represented the joint chiefs of staff directly in whatever the theater was, whether it was the European-North African, whether it was, . . . finally in the Pacific, . . . that was the last one that ~~was~~ finally <sup>they</sup> set up, but in 1946, this agency and OSS joined together and became the Central Intelligence Group <sup>[CIG]</sup> so CIG was founded at that point and the first commanding officer of that new setup was Rear Admiral Sidney Sowers <sup>Sidney Sowers</sup>, who was a very intimate friend from Kansas City of Harry Truman <sup>Harry S. Truman</sup>, President Truman. He was the one who persuaded Harry Truman,



who was not particularly fond of the intelligence picture, that it should be continued on the highest level, and this is the way his persuasion headed. |././.

he was a very able intelligence officer, with whom I had never had any contact prior to this time because he had been in the Pacific, and I had been in the Mediterranean and Europe and so on and so forth all the way through, but in 1946 he took it over, and then two years later CIG became [Central Intelligence Agency] CIA, the central intelligence group, and the first commanding officer of that group was the outstanding Air Force general, Hoyt Vandenburg, who was [Hoyt S. Vandenburg] Senator Arthur Vandenburg's nephew, [Arthur H. Vandenberg] and whom I'd had the pleasure of serving with on General [James H. Doolittle] Doolittle's original staff, which was set up in Bowling Field in the spring of 1942, after he had just made his famous raid <sup>on</sup> over Tokyo, when morale in America, <sup>in</sup> the United States, was at its lowest ebb, and I received orders to report to a non-existent wing of, <sup>at that time,</sup> the Army Air Corps, at Bowling Field, and the first person I ran into there was General at that time Colonel Hoyt Vandenburg, but neither he nor I had the slightest idea what was going to finally happen in the intelligence picture.

STERN: So you didn't expect that you would still be abroad in 1952?

RICE: I had no idea of it, but the reason for it was a very interesting reason, and that was the Soviets who had no interest and no participation in any way, shape, or form in the Mediterranean picture, because they were well occupied in the Russia, <sup>Soloth</sup> but in March, 1943, an airplane appeared in the skies overhead, in the murk, you couldn't see it, but you could hear the signals, and announcing that it <sup>had</sup> flown directly from Moscow and asked for landing rights for our bomber field at Maisson Blanche, just outside. . . . this was our main bomber field. We had a second one south of it, just outside of Algiers, and in the signals and so on from them, they had flown directly from Moscow. The interesting thing about this was that we knew perfectly well that the Russians didn't have an aircraft that was capable of flying directly from Moscow, so it had to be American or British, and the chances were certainly seventy percent to thirty percent that it was American. and at that moment I was wearing a number of hats, one of which, I was on the staff of American operations with the

British. The British actually were in charge of Maison Blanche, the bomber field, the eastern air command and I was <sup>on the staff--I was</sup> also the Liaison Operations Officer with the Eastern Air Command. so we had an office in the control tower, and late in the afternoon I had gotten out to the field with other duties, and so on, in the city, and here was the airplane up in the murk asking for landing privileges. No one knew anything about it. We couldn't find out what the story was, why they were there, and so on and so forth, <sup>I</sup> and finally told them gave them landing signals. They came down, I I was out at the bottom of the ladder, and when the door opened, here were ten Soviet officers in uniform. When they came down onto the apron they spoke very little English, no French whatever, which was the common language of communication in that vast western Mediterranean area, they were unheralded, unwanted, uninvited, but there they were. Nobody could find out why they were there, and they turned out to be classical arabic speaking officer, <sup>S</sup> classical arabic in that vast area was about as useful as Eskimo. Well, we looked out for them, and took care of them. We had a liaison

section in <sup>allied force</sup> our headquarters, because allied  
force headquarters in Algiers was running the  
entire, not only North African but European show  
with General Eisenhower <sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower</sup> as the overall commanding  
general; <sup>Walter B. Smith</sup> ~~Beetle~~ Smith, Walter Smith, <sup>-- that's</sup> as his  
Chief of Staff, and we had a liaison section which  
consisted of Hungarians, Polish, other middle  
European <sup>disaffected -- particularly with the Soviet. / / / /</sup> ~~Beetle~~ wanted no part of anything that  
smacked <sup>of</sup> with the Soviet at all, and didn't like  
this part of the picture at all, so this was a  
very tricky problem. Finally, these people were  
able to get hold of a villa which belonged to a  
former Vichy editor of one of the ~~the~~ two most  
important papers in Algiers. Algiers, ~~was~~ in  
effect, <sup>was</sup> actually the capital of all of North  
Africa, because it was the biggest city, ~~and~~ the most  
important city, and the city in which the French had  
been ever since 1830 when they <sup>had</sup> made their original  
invasion. So, this was the center place and the  
center point of all activities of the Mediterranean,  
~~and so on, and so forth~~, although we had troops  
and we had fighting, <sup>of course,</sup> in the Tunisian front, ~~and so on and~~  
~~and so forth~~ and we had air bases and we had naval bases all the  
way from Port Lyautey ~~to~~ Bizerte, <sup>and so on and so forth.</sup>  
but this was the  
headquarters, <sup>and</sup> the interesting thing about it was

that the Russians were there, it was obviously an intelligence mission, and they were there for ten long years until December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1952, and [Interruption] everything that happened with the Tunisian Independence Movement, with the Moroccan Revolution, and then finally on the <sup>first</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> of November, 1954, the Algerian Civil War started, and didn't finish until 1962. The connection between the work that they had done, that I was absolutely in the position that I knew what they were up to and what they were doing. everything worked out exactly as they wanted it, so that I had a long connection, if you will, as <sup>an</sup> <sup>e</sup> observer of what was going on in that vast area of which I had been on active duty, of course, <sup>the</sup> as commanding and top-ranking intelligence officer of the whole area; and working directly for my superiors who were the members of the joint chiefs of staff.

① In 1955, going back to Jack again, he let me know that he was going to be in Paris <sup>o</sup> in such-and-such a date. this was when he was finishing up with his Polish trip and so on, and I was there. He was staying at the Hotel <sup>kasba</sup> Rafael on the Avenue <sup>kleber</sup> Claibair, which was one of the lovely residential hotels very close to the Arc de Triumph. <sup>o e, the étoile</sup> he was there for 72 hours, completely worn out by his Polish trip, in pajamas, with his crutch

Or his crutches right there. I spent 72 hours with him, practically speaking, briefing him on the situation, such as I have just been mentioning; and he briefed me and <sup>he</sup> gave me an accurate accounting, I think, of what he had done, and what he had found in Poland, and of course, the most interesting part of it was the same sort of thing that I was interested in, which was, of course, the Communist work in both Poland and in the entire North Africa affair, which I was completely interested in, so that he knew just as much as I could possibly give him when he left there.

STERN:

Was Mrs. Kennedy, <sup>[Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis]</sup> with him?

RICE:

Mrs. Kennedy was with him, and I had met her for the first time. I had known many of the family's friends, <sup>and so on in New York</sup> ~~etc.~~ and so forth, but I hadn't known her father. I <sup>didn't know him as a friend, or any kind of sort</sup> had met him, but I didn't know him personally, but I knew the group of people, and I knew the Auchinclosses <sup>[Rhode Island]</sup> in Newport and so on, because I had spent summers there during <sup>some of</sup> my college days, and had played court tennis there. ~~as~~ as I am still doing, by the way, one of the oldest court tennis players now, <sup>in</sup> of either in Europe or this country, active ones, ~~and~~ and I thought she was a perfectly marvelous fashion model. she was tremendously interested in the couturiers of Paris, and her

favorite, which I remember so thoroughly was Balenciaga, and she was spending her time seeing the various collections <sup>there</sup> Maggie R. <sup>and</sup> Chanel Balenciaga, and the others, while Jack and I were putting our heads together trying to compare notes on his trip <sup>there</sup> in Poland, and what I thought I knew about the general European situation and, of course, the Mediterranean situation, and, of course, the basis of the whole thing was <sup>the</sup> a question of Soviet influence in the areas that he and I were both interested in.

STERN: Did you have any contact with him while he was President?

RICE: In 1960, before <sup>when he was on his</sup> ~~.....~~ was the famous speech that he made in regard to colonialism, particularly the French colonialism in Africa, which I think did a great deal, and I think it is the general opinion that it helped <sup>him</sup> tremendously in achieving the nomination of the <sup>Democratic Party for the race in 1960</sup> ~~.....~~. Incidentally, during that period when we were together in the Raphael, he told me all about his being a skipper of the PT-boat, and the fact that the Japanese destroyer had hit the ship while he was on the bridge, and the fact that he had gone up and come down and landed right on his old original football injury, which had troubled him

all the way through, and the fact that he had been in and out of the hospital with a chronic condition which was accentuated by the moment that he was over-fatigued, and in those three days that he was there and in Paris and completely knocked out, actually he didn't even move out of

his room, and this gave us the chance to go through the

geopolitical situation pretty thoroughly. Because I had more experience in the Mediterranean, than ~~then~~ certainly any living American, <sup>had had</sup> from an intelligence standpoint and so on, and he <sup>had</sup> had a very interesting experience in Poland.

End of tape