

Dorothy Tubridy, Oral History Interview – 8/8/1966
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Biographical Note

Tubridy, an Irish friend of the Kennedy family, discusses the time she spent over the years with different members of the Kennedy family, her observations of Kennedy family dynamics, and John F. Kennedy's relationship with Ireland and the Irish, among other issues.

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Dorothy Tubridy

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Oral History Interview

with

Dorothy Tubridy

August 8, 1966
Dublin, Ireland

By Joseph E. O'Connor

For the John F. Kennedy Library

O'CONNOR: Mrs. Tubridy, I was wondering when you first met John Kennedy [John F. Kennedy]?

TUBRIDY: Well, I met him first when he visited this country in 1954, I think. I just met him briefly. He had been married, and they were on their honeymoon. He and Mrs. Kennedy [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy] just passed through for a short visit. That was just very brief. Then the following year I went to America and stayed with Robert [Robert F. Kennedy] and Ethel Kennedy [Ethel Skakel Kennedy]

O'CONNOR: You had apparently known them before, though, or something?

TUBRIDY: Yes. My husband met Ethel Kennedy at the horse show in New York. She was a very keen horsewoman, and he was representing Ireland. So they met. Then we both got married the same year and we both went back to America in 1951. So we had been friends with Bobby and Ethel from that time. Then when my husband was killed in a riding accident and Mrs. Kennedy suggested I come over for a holiday to America, I stayed with them in their home in Virginia. I met the President there and all the Kennedy family. Then I went down to Florida for a little while

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to stay in their father's [Joseph P. Kennedy] home. The President and Jackie Kennedy were there. We were there together for about three weeks or a month, so I got to know him pretty well then.

O'CONNOR: Well, there's awful lot of question about who really ruled the family and how much influence Joseph P. Kennedy, the older Joseph P. Kennedy, had over his sons.

TUBRIDY: I've run into that. Yes, well...

O'CONNOR: And in determining their political career or at least in suggesting and helping in their political career.

TUBRIDY: Well, I would think both the father and the mother [Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy] had quite a lot of influence on the whole Kennedy family. How they were brought up, you know, had a terrific influence, I think, on the President's way of living later on. I think the mother--from what I observed, she's a very strong character, very staunch Catholic, you know, in her religion and was very particular about making the children attend church very regularly, attend meals very regularly, attend everything. You know, she had this great way of keeping order. I think the father was a very strong personality, very strong personality but I don't think that.... I think he left it to each of his children to decide what they really wanted to do. I know he was very anxious for Jack Kennedy to become, to go into politics, you know, but I don't think he ever pushed any of them as hard as people really think he did, you know. I think they were all a very talented family, of course. I think what he and Mrs. Kennedy did was develop, help the children to develop, each one, what was their strongest talent--you know, the same with the girls as the boys. But I think John Kennedy was always interested in politics and, I suppose, particularly after his brother Joe [Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr.], was killed. So I think that the father naturally encouraged him. But I don't think at any time that he had that real strong hold. He had a father's influence, I would say, a strong father's influence, over all of them, and they respected their parents very much.

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But I think particularly the President, in my opinion, thought more freely for himself and made his own decisions. Of course, he was that little bit older than the rest of them, you know. I think perhaps Robert Kennedy was much more under his father's influence, for instance. Then, of course, by the time Robert got into public life his father was quite ill. But at that time I felt that the President.... They were both very strong people, and they constantly opposed each other, you know, what they thought.

O'CONNOR: Sure. Later on, I guess, their views went farther and farther apart.

TUBRIDY: Much farther apart. But I think later on then.... From time to time I visited, you know, through the years I visited them and stayed with the family and saw all of them together. I think later on the father respected President Kennedy's views on this and that and the other. I think, while he always voiced his opinion, you know, he never really hoped to have the last say and never tried to, I think.

O'CONNOR: There's also a lot of talk about the Kennedy atmosphere. For instance, people have commented all the time that, oh, the talk around the dinner table must have been about politics, or it must have been a very competitive sort of conversation. Would you say that's true?

TUBRIDY: Yes, it was. Well, no, not competitive, but it was always very stimulating, you see. I know now from my point of view. I was a visitor, say, from Ireland, so when I was there, you know, you were always asked about culture in Ireland, paintings, Irish writers. Things like that were always discussed. It was very stimulating, very interesting conversation because they were all terribly intelligent and well educated and very enthusiastic about everything. Usually they really only had people in their home who were friends, you know, close friends, so there wasn't much sort of idle chatter that you'd have, you

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know, like if you were entertaining a big group of people. There was none of that sort of.... And then Mrs. Kennedy, see, is terribly interested in all things. You know, she's interested in other countries and in art and literature, and so the father was too. So conversation was very stimulating, very interesting. Politics, of course, were discussed, naturally, you know. In fact, I always remember when I went to America first, I knew nothing, naturally, about American politics, and I was too young even to know anything at all about politics, Irish or American. But I do remember that I used to read the papers every single day from the time I arrived there because I knew, you know, everything would be discussed at the dinner table, and I would be so stupid if couldn't at least follow the conversation. I think it's so amazing, too, everybody read every newspaper every day.

O'CONNOR: People have often said when he was president, they had to read the newspapers early in the morning, so that when they got to his office...

TUBRIDY: Yes, yes.

O'CONNOR: He'd already have read them, and he'd know. They'd have to know what was in the papers.

TUBRIDY: Yes, yes. And you know at dinnertime somebody might come out with some name or something that had happened that was all written in the newspaper. Then if you didn't try to contribute to the conversation

you'd be immediately pounced on, asked, "Why haven't you read one of the twelve newspapers?" But it was always terribly interesting to stay with the Kennedys because, of course, they're a fantastic family in this way. A lot of them have these basic qualities. You know, they're all the same; they're terribly energetic, all madly keen on sport and...

O'CONNOR: I guess that's true even for the girls too.

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TUBRIDY: Yes, even Mrs. Kennedy then. You know, she swam every day in the ocean no matter what the weather was like, and she played golf every day. Everyone of them either played tennis or golf or something. I know one day didn't go by without taking exercise, you know. So they all had this tremendous energy. And they all basically are the same in this way, that they're very sincere; they're very undemonstrative, if you like, particularly in public; yet they all have terrific regard for each other and are a terribly close family, you know, all very fond of each other, all very interested in each other. You know, they were always quite happy there even though it was the season, you know, as they say in Florida, and there were all sorts of parties going on everywhere. They were always quite happy to entertain each other. They had as much fun all together. Of course, there were a good many of them. But they enjoyed each other's company more than just going out visiting lots of people.

O'CONNOR: It almost seemed to be a kind of frightening experience to be invited into the Kennedy family at first because of the tremendous talent and the tremendous...

TUBRIDY: Yes, it is frightening at first. It was for me. But you survive, you know. The great thing it does, it makes you want to cultivate something for yourself so that you'll contribute. This is the effect they've always had on me, that when I'm going to visit the Kennedys, whatever I might be good at I'll naturally work hard at that for it. You get this competitive spirit the minute you go to stay in their house.

O'CONNOR: How about Jacqueline Kennedy? Now she seems to be a very quiet, a very reserved person. I wondered if she would fit comfortably into that atmosphere or whether she would feel overwhelmed by that atmosphere.

TUBRIDY: No, she fitted in very well. I would think, to my mind, she's terribly different, really, in many ways from any of the Kennedy sisters.

O'CONNOR: I would think so.

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TUBRIDY: But I think Jacqueline Kennedy--she's extremely intelligent, an extremely intelligent person. In her own way, she's much more talented, I think, than the most of the Kennedys, and so she survived because the interests she had.... She was terribly interested in ballet and art and those kind of things that a lot of the Kennedy sisters aren't particularly interested in--music, art, you know. So she had her own life; she made her own interests; and she created this atmosphere about herself. She always maintained, through all the years, I thought she maintained her own, she kept her own personality. She didn't change one bit, in a way, although she fitted in part of her. But she's such a strong person, and I think it helped.

O'CONNOR: Yes, she'd have to be very strong.

TUBRIDY: Well, she is, you see. She's very strong so she kept her own personality and fitted in at the same time. Then they're all extremely fond of her, you know, and I think in her own way Jackie is--you couldn't describe her as a frightening person, but she's so beautiful and she's so talented that most people just.... In the end you, well, you bow to Jackie more, just as much as any of the other members of the family. And they all respected her views about this and that.

O'CONNOR: Were there often many other friends there when you visited them?

TUBRIDY: Not too many. The same friends visited them all these years since I've known them, the same small group of friends. Bobby had two or three school friends who always came.

O'CONNOR: Can you think of who some of these were because there are an awful lot of people who have, since 1963, claimed to be close friends

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of the Kennedys. Some of them we have interviewed and discovered that the Kennedys were able very strongly to compartmentalize their friendships, that some of the people who thought they were close were not actually so close. They didn't have dinner with them. They didn't really talk with them. They were friends in one sort, maybe political friends or social friends or friends of another sort. I was wondering who you might think were....

TUBRIDY: Yes, well, I think the President's, probably his, one of his closest friends certainly was Lem Billings [Kirk LeMoyne Billings] who had been at college with him. Certainly he was always in their life all the time. Then Paul Fay [Paul B. Fay, Jr.] who was afterwards Under Secretary of the Navy. He was always there. Dave Hackett [David L. Hackett] who had been to college with Bobby Kennedy. It's hard for me to remember. They were the regular people who were friends of all the Kennedys, friends of the family. Then afterwards in Washington, I suppose, there were a few that were friends just with the President and Mrs. Kennedy. What was his name? Walton,

the painter.

O'CONNOR: William Walton.

TUBRIDY: Bill Walton, the painter. He was a great friend of theirs and saw them constantly, and some other people from New York who had often—they weren't maybe friends of the whole group, but generally. They hadn't that many really close friends. They had a small circle, I think, that just were with them constantly over the years, and they had a lot of acquaintances just, after that. I kept touch more with Bobby and Ethel Kennedy, you know, through the years. Then when the President, Senator Kennedy then, decided to run for the presidency I went and stayed for six months in Virginia and campaigned.

O'CONNOR: Where did you campaign? What did you do?

TUBRIDY: Mostly, I went just with the girls. I was in West Virginia, the West Virginia.

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O'CONNOR: Oh yes.

TUBRIDY: Yes, it was very exciting around there.

O'CONNOR: I would have suspected that you would actually be able to help them most in areas that were Irish or areas that were Catholic or something of this sort.

TUBRIDY: No, not really. The way they campaigned was--it varied in different states. In sophisticated places where there were big crowds they arranged coffee mornings. Different families--just Democratic people, I suppose--arranged coffee mornings. They had maybe fifty people there, and the girls came, we came in twos. Each one visited different houses. You just gave literature about the President and then, depending on who it was, spoke for a little while. Some of them liked to; some of them didn't.

O'CONNOR: Do you mean some of the girls?

TUBRIDY: Jean [Jean Kennedy Smith] always hated to talk, but Eunice [Eunice Kennedy Shriver] loved to talk, and she's very bright and very good at it. Mrs. Kennedy [Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy] loved to talk. She loved speaking. She enjoyed it.

O'CONNOR: She was quite an addition to their campaign.

TUBRIDY: Yes, she was really marvelous. Then, of course, they had so much personality and they were so attractive looking that this won a lot of people. But, you know, they never strayed from the point, just putting it across about the President, all the things he had done in Congress and his war record, things like that. Then the main purpose was to try and encourage people to come to the rally, which was the final thing in all the cities, to hear his speech. In the poorer states we did different things. We knocked on doors in West Virginia.

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O'CONNOR: Did you go around doing that?

TUBRIDY: Yes, I knocked on many doors.

O'CONNOR: Oh my gosh.

TUBRIDY: Yes.

O'CONNOR: That must have been a strange sensation for you. You're not even from the country.

TUBRIDY: Yes, fantastic. Because when you arrived at a door--you see, some of these were very poor areas and we might do as many as four hundred doors in a day--when you knocked on a door, you just said, "I'm representing Senator Kennedy. I'd like to show you his literature. I got various reactions. Some people said immediately, "You're Irish. What are you doing here?" Then the others liked that, or some of them were Irish, too, and you wound up having tea and discussing America and Ireland and maybe even singing a little Irish song for them. Others, of course, just were very cross, said, "Oh, he's the Catholic. I don't want to hear anything about that." But generally people were very nice and very friendly and were interested. From my point of view, I found they were very interested to know why would I do this. Of course, you have to talk madly to try and convince them. The important thing is to convince them that you knew this person very well, you thought he was a trustworthy person, and that they must come and hear him, because people are a bit lazy about going to rallies. You know, they decide, "Oh, that's too much trouble," or something. And the whole thing about Jack Kennedy was the effect he had on people when they did see him in person rather than just, you know, television or...

O'CONNOR: Hearing about him.

TUBRIDY: Hearing about him. It was quite amazing how he could influence people by his personality. And you could see.... It was kind of

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fascinating. In a way, I thought West Virginia was rather like Ireland because it's quite a poor state compared with other states in America, and the people there were very reserved and very quiet and noncommittal. They wouldn't say who they were going.... You always tried to see before you left, to say, "Now will you give him your vote?" In West Virginia they wouldn't commit themselves. They just said, "Well, we'll think about it." With the result that right to the very end, I think, the President didn't know. Even the polls didn't indicate who was going to win. But I understood this very well because the Irish are like that. If you ask an Irishman who he's going to vote for, he wouldn't dream of telling ever, you know, because it's a small little country, and they're not going to disclose that to you. So for me it was quite like Ireland, visiting West Virginia. Then, of course, it was terrific, very exciting, you know, the night he won.

O'CONNOR: I guess you really couldn't tell, or perhaps they talked to you about it, whether they were optimistic, specifically with regard to West Virginia because West Virginia was considered by many the greatest hurdle prior to the election itself, the greatest hurdle that he had to go across because there was such a small Catholic population and this sort of thing. Would you be able to remember whether they were optimistic or pessimistic about the state?

TUBRIDY: No, they were pessimistic. They weren't a bit optimistic. Then this thing of the people not committing themselves--right to the end they couldn't be optimistic about it. But it was amazing. In a way, it showed me one characteristic of the President when he was there. He really was pessimistic about it. They felt that probably they weren't going to win. He never said anything to anybody really. It was never discussed that probably we weren't going to win, but everybody somehow worked harder. He worked harder. He got up much earlier. Sometimes he started off on those buses around the country at something like 6:30 in the morning. And he worked. He went to more places. He made a tremendous effort to get to every place, to make the public appearance himself rather than have anybody go instead

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of him. He really fought very hard, as if even if he was going to lose, he was going to try his very best. Then he went back to Washington the morning of the....

O'CONNOR: Of the primary.

TUBRIDY: The final morning, yes, he went back. I think he went to the movies that afternoon. We all stayed.... Most of us came back. Bobby Kennedy stayed down, and Ethel stayed. We listened to the results in Jean Smith's house--Jean Kennedy. In the beginning the results weren't too great, you know, but then even when.... Then we all got on his plane to go back to West Virginia for the final appearance, and he knew on the plane that he had won. But even when he took it very quietly. We were very excited.

O'CONNOR: It's amazing that he could go to a movie the night of the primary.

TUBRIDY: Yes, he went to a movie, but I think this was his way of.... He was concerned, you know. It wasn't that he was so unconcerned that he went to it. I think he wanted to get away from it all, and he just wanted to relax. And he loved movies anyway. So I think that. But even in victory he was always terribly quiet, terribly reserved. You knew he was very pleased, but he more or less considered it something well done rather than a personal something for himself. Especially in West Virginia because it was a big stepping stone.

O'CONNOR: Oh yes indeed. Yes indeed, they call that the primary that won the presidency sometimes because it was extremely important.

TUBRIDY: Yes, terribly, and I think then, too, he became confident, for at least that little success there gave him terrific enthusiasm to go ahead after that.

O'CONNOR: Then you were in the United States really from the time in the primaries through the night of the election.

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TUBRIDY: I didn't stay. No, I didn't go to California for the....

O'CONNOR: I wonder if you were there, in the United States, at about the time he was debating on television with Richard Nixon [Richard Milhous Nixon]?

TUBRIDY: Oh yes, I was there for all that, yes.

O'CONNOR: Have you ever had a talk, or have you ever heard any of the other members of the family talk, about Richard Nixon, what they personally felt toward Richard Nixon?

TUBRIDY: I think that all of the Kennedys, their attitude towards people, particularly their opponents, they never.... I never heard them ever be nasty. They never even discussed the really personal things about any of their opponents--Hubert Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey] in West Virginia or Richard Nixon. I think the way they always looked at everything was what hurdle had they to overcome. They discussed his strong points rather than his weak points and what would his strong point be in debating. They made themselves familiar with these things. They always.... The President, of course, was always terribly close to his brother, Bobby Kennedy. They discussed everything together. Of course, naturally, the family always listened in to all of these debates with fantastic interest. But even they, even the girls.... And you know girls sometimes can be a little nastier, not through just being nasty but just being so anxious, I

suppose. But it was always rather on a higher level--how could they win, more than how could they defeat a personality.

O'CONNOR: It's very easy, though, to begin to believe your own statements. You have to make statements deprecating the men you're opposing, public statements, and it's very easy in this long campaign to begin to believe these things and to begin to feel a little bitter about your opponent.

TUBRIDY: Yes.

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O'CONNOR: I wondered if he ever disclosed any of this.

TUBRIDY: No, no, I think this was another outstanding quality about President Kennedy. What he felt, I suppose, in his heart--everybody, you know, feels certain things within you which hurt--but he had a tremendous capacity, really, for accepting whatever came his way and forgiving people. It was a tolerance really. I don't know now how much he forgave them really completely, in himself, but certainly he had a great tolerance towards people who hurt him from time to time. I was often present when nasty newspaper things came out. He read the newspaper--they all read it, you know--and you would feel that he was hurt or upset about something, but somehow he always took it very quietly. He never lashed out or lost his temper like a lot of people do. I did see him once or twice through a campaign get angry. If you knew him well, you knew when he was angry. If things were slung him that weren't true, I think he felt this a lot and he would say, I did hear him say once or twice, "You really wouldn't think that"--whoever the person might be--"would stoop that low." But somehow he never fought back with that kind of nastiness. He always recovered from whatever he felt, and he was terribly big then about being gracious to that person when he met him.

O'CONNOR: You don't remember some specific things about when he might have gotten angry or anything like that, do you? It's hard to pin down exactly what sort of things would make him angry. People do talk very often about his ability to contain his feelings within himself, and so it's not very often that people will remember or will have seen an instance when perhaps he lost his temper or he got angry about something.

TUBRIDY: I think.... I can't remember really a specific instance, but I can remember through the campaigning it was generally if something terribly untrue had been said, some nasty statement about his family. I do remember in West Virginia there was something nasty said, I think about Bobby, as far as I remember, calling him a "carpetbagger." And there was something nasty said

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calling him a "youngster," and "Why doesn't he stay at home and play?" implying that he was a little boy rather than a grown man. Then I think I remember him being a little angry because I think he felt they were attacking his family rather than himself.

O'CONNOR: One specific attack that was leveled at him--this was not during a primary, but it was long before, of course, though it came out during the presidential campaign--was the statement about his earlier marriage, the statement that he had been married once and that he was married a second time. I wondered if that had made him bitter or whether you had ever heard him talk about that.

TUBRIDY: No, I must say I never heard him discuss that. But I don't think he was bitter about anything. As I said, he had this capacity. He may have been angry or he may have felt something and been hurt, but he never let it affect his way of thinking. More than any of the other candidates, I would say, he had such control and such intelligence about his approach to people and to life that I think he knew that by getting bitter about any of these things would hurt himself.

O'CONNOR: Sure, it would make it a bigger issue if he did.

TUBRIDY: His attitude toward life. I think that he really, he tried to understand people. He was one of those people who, when he met you--no matter who you were and no matter what your capacity, whether you're his opponent in this, that or the other--he really tried to get to the heart of you, to understand what made you think like this or that. He gave you his full attention if he was talking to you about anything. He gave you undivided attention to discover how you thought or what was your way of thinking. Then I think he judged people by that, you know, not by his way. In his capacity in meeting these people again, he judged them by their attitude toward life. I don't think he was ever bitter about anything. Really, I don't think he ever would have been if he'd lived to be a hundred and two.

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O'CONNOR: That's quite a quality in itself.

TUBRIDY: Oh, tremendous. And I don't think you get this overnight. I think he developed this. He had this great magnanimous way of forgiving people and being tolerant. Now he wasn't weak. He didn't sort of accept them and be madly friendly with them. He was quite strong about showing that he wasn't exactly delighted with what they had said in a lot of ways, but no bitterness. No, it never went further than that. In this way he was, very sincere which is very hard to do as a politician because the tendency naturally is to be so nice to everybody that you.... At least, that's what I found.

O'CONNOR: That you have almost no personality.

TUBRIDY: You shake hands with everybody. No, but he wasn't like that at all. He kept his reserve. He made it clear to people that he didn't agree with what they had said, but he agreed to differ. I don't think he ever had any bitterness about anything.

O'CONNOR: All right. We can move on to a later period unless you can think of some more things that you might comment on during the campaign or your work, the parties that you attended or something of that sort prior to his inauguration and prior to his election.

TUBRIDY: No, I can't. It's so hard to think of everything together. The next.... I was in Washington for the Inauguration. Of course that was a very exciting time for everybody because everybody felt they had worked hard and he had won, and everybody was very happy, and he was very excited about moving into the White House. He had this childish quality about him, really, that he was terribly excited about everything, excited seeing the place and excited, I think, to get working at whatever he was to do.

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O'CONNOR: There are plenty of funny stories told about the first day or so and moving into the White House when they looked around and could scarcely believe that they were there. They felt like young people that had just inherited this house for a week or so.

TUBRIDY: Yes, true. This was true. He was terribly excited about running around the place, figuring everything out. They all were. The whole family were just like children in this way. Of course, the Inauguration was terribly exciting, and I think he enjoyed all the festivities tremendously that went on.

O'CONNOR: Did you ever hear him talk during this period about what sort of relationship he would have with Robert Kennedy after he became President? In other words, it was obvious that Robert Kennedy, being as close as he was to him and being intelligent and as capable as Robert Kennedy was, would or should have some point, some post, in the Administration.

TUBRIDY: No, I never...

O'CONNOR: There was some debate as to precisely what post he should have because of the conflict--you know, people would complain that "you're putting your brother in" or something of that sort.

TUBRIDY: Yes, well, I never actually heard the President discuss.... Of course, I heard the family talk about very.... They had a funny way of doing things. I think the President knew Bobby's strength or what he could

do in various capacities, and I think Bobby took it for granted that he would be something close to the President because he was so fantastic through the campaign. He worked so hard. I've never seen anybody.... I don't think I've ever seen any person in my whole life work as hard and devotedly as Robert Kennedy all through that campaign. He never, ever spared himself. He was absolutely tireless. He did an awful lot of spadework and the groundwork. He had just a few hours sleep, I would say, per night. He worked endlessly, so he was terribly devoted to the President. I think he would have taken whatever the President thought was good for the President. He

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would have taken whatever post just because he felt that would be doing his brother a great service.

O'CONNOR: I thought possibly being close to Robert and Ethel you might have heard them talk about posts that Robert might have wanted or something of this sort.

TUBRIDY: No, not particular. I think he just left it to the President that whatever way he could be of the most value, that he would appoint him and he would accept it if it pleased him. In fact, as far as I can remember, there was a lot of joking about it. But I think that's the way it was left. Of course, he was always so terribly interested in vice and cleaning up the place that naturally, I think, he was very happy about his final appointment because he had a fantastic interest in that and working in that field.

O'CONNOR: It was quite a risk to put his brother in the post of attorney general—in a certain sense it was quite a risk--and I wondered whether or not he was put in that post because Robert Kennedy desired it or because John Kennedy suggested it. In other words, I wondered where the impetus came from.

TUBRIDY: No, I think it would be because John Kennedy suggested it and because I think he felt he'd do a good job, you know. He wouldn't have put him in that post if he hadn't felt that he was capable of being a good attorney general. This I do know, knowing.... And I feel neither would Robert Kennedy accept a post that he didn't feel he could really make a lot of. So I think it was the President really who decided that. I also think, of course, that the President loved to have people around him that he could trust, and he could trust his brother more than anybody in the world.

O'CONNOR: That's why it was so obvious, really, that his brother had to be in a position close enough that he really could advise.

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TUBRIDY: Yes, close enough, yes. I think he probably felt that his brother could help and do more for him than any other person in the whole world. They both were so devoted, they knew this. This was never spoken about, but they knew this about each other. I think that Bobby Kennedy took an awful lot--this is why his image today is as it is--that he took an awful lot of nasty things away from the President, which was a wonderful thing to have a brother who would both take the nasty cracks and take all the abuse that went with it. He did all through the presidency, I think, take all this. Which, of course, as things worked out really created a dreadful image for Robert Kennedy.

O'CONNOR: And will cause him problems

TUBRIDY: Yes, terrible problems. And I feel--of course, that's how history went. But in my opinion, knowing Robert Kennedy so terribly well and having lived in their house and seeing him at home with his children for so many years, I think this is a very wrong image of Robert Kennedy. Most Americans, in my opinion, don't really know the real Robert Kennedy. I think probably over the years now he'll eventually, I suppose, he'll efface that ruthless image that he gives, and perhaps they'll get to know the man himself. But Robert Kennedy basically is a terribly kind, really kind, home loving person. They talk about him being ruthless. He's a dedicated kind of person who, if he decides to do something, works endlessly towards that end and achieves that end somehow or other. Now this maybe has been described as ruthless, but it's not a ruthlessness; it's dedication and a perseverance. It's hard to believe that people think of him as such a horrible--a lot of people think he's such a hard, cruel person. Whereas, even of all the Kennedys, I would think that Bobby Kennedy is probably more shy and more retiring and more sensitive than many of them because, you see, he came between. You know, there were--Jack and Joe were two wonderful older boys. Then Bobby was the in-between one that was only a little fellow, you know, when these were grown up. So this has left--this is noticeable in their family. With his own children at home, he loves children and he's a wonderful father and has a wonderful home life. Of course, his wife is one of the most fantastic people that I've ever known

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in my lifetime. She's really a wonderful mother, and they have a terribly happy home life. I feel that he, of course, was terribly cut up about his brother's death. It took tremendous courage, on his part, I think, to face public life at all after it. You know, he really was deeply upset. I think he had to work very hard at composing himself and coming back into public life. Although I think now that that's his life, that's what he loves doing. I think that eventually, as I say, I hope people will get to know him for what he is because he's a very dedicated person and works terribly hard and probably will as senator of New York. I would think that he's.... He has a very alert mind, and he's constantly thinking of things to do or ways to approach his job because he does come under a lot of fire.

O'CONNOR: Indeed he does.

TUBRIDY: Sometimes unnecessarily, but I suppose if you're in public life, you have to expect that. For me, I suppose, the most exciting thing about the whole, my relationship with the Kennedys was the President's visit to Ireland because when I visited them always, you know, we always sang Irish songs and played Irish tunes on the piano and generally had a lot of Irish evenings just because I suppose when I was there, you know. And I was always terribly anxious for the Kennedys.... Somehow I knew that John Kennedy was going to go someplace. You know, you knew he was that kind of person. From the time he became president, of course, I had terrific interest in having him interested in Ireland because in my work, I work for one of the most successful Irish companies, and so I promote Ireland.

O'CONNOR: Everybody in the world knows of Waterford crystal.

TUBRIDY: Also, then my husband used to ride for the Irish jumping team. So we represented Ireland all over the world. It's very exciting to represent your country in sport. So I suppose you get a feeling of patriotism which is roused by visits to other countries. So I always wanted to interest him particularly in Ireland because,

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as you know--you've been here now yourself, and you've talked to people--I think he's more loved in Ireland than anybody ever could be. Certainly after his visit I don't think there'll ever be any person loved as much as John Kennedy. Even our own people here--many personalities who are very much loved by the people--nobody would ever, I don't care who they are or what they do, I don't think they'll ever have the same feeling about them here in Ireland as they had about John Kennedy because his coming to Ireland, from the time he became President, being Catholic, being Irish.... We called him Irish, you see. It was always "the Irish president"; it was so funny. They had this fantastic interest in him and this pride in him. You see, Ireland had been depressed for so many years that toward 1960 things began to improve generally in our country. Economically we became more sound and emigration stopped a little bit and industry commenced here. Those were crucial years, say from 1950 to 1960, so it was very important to us, his visit to Ireland, really, because people were just getting back their confidence as Irish people.

O'CONNOR: Since the 1840's, practically speaking.

TUBRIDY: Yes, since the year of the famine, you might say. His coming here brought tremendous prestige. It really made people all over the world more aware of Ireland.

O'CONNOR: It's very interesting, though, that you would point that out because the first time I heard someone say that, that his coming was almost like an end to an era, the era having begun with the famine, an era of going

downhill and then finally turning up, it was a little hard for me to believe that people actually could look upon it that way.

TUBRIDY: Oh yes.

O'CONNOR: But you're not the first, you're not the second, you're not the third person I've heard talk in just those terms, that it was almost as though Ireland had gone through very bad times and that this was kind of a pinnacle. This was bringing them up again.

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TUBRIDY: Yes, that's true. Not only because of the interest it created, but his coming here--you know, people became aware of Ireland more--but what his coming here did more for the Irish themselves. You know, it gave them a confidence that they hadn't had up to that. They were beginning to get confidence. We were beginning to feel that Ireland was improving. But his coming--we felt he was Irish, and he had been so successful against all odds. He had fought so hard as a Catholic, as everything, to get there. I think this gave the Irish people a feeling, "Well, we can do it, too." I think all his speeches here, of course, referred to various parts in our history which also made us see that, well, we had contributed something. He pointed out that the Irish had given their people everywhere, you know, in the United Nations, in the Congo. And this was the way we had contributed. So I think we got very proud of ourselves, and he gave an inspiration to the people. Teachers now were very taken with his philosophy. Since his visit here, they've studied his life very closely, more what he thought, and they've read all his books. Children, he took children completely by storm, the Irish children and the Irish youth. The young boys and girls, they really just respected him as well as I think he realized all their dreams--that as well as being such an attractive, wonderful personality that he had all this basic thing which gave them great inspiration. Since his visit here, constantly his words are being quoted in schools and everywhere. I think even our politicians, he was an inspiration to them. I've heard many of them.... I think a lot of them even decided to fight things like he did.

O'CONNOR: Sure, to imitate him.

TUBRIDY: In their daily lives.

O'CONNOR: Other politicians from other countries have attempted the same thing really. There are some outstanding examples of people patterning their campaign or their speeches after the things he did.

TUBRIDY: Yes, yes, but I think it was mostly, apart from trying to copy him and be like him, it was this great inspiration; he inspired terrific

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confidence in the people that we could be something and that we should be. He did more or less say that we should forget our past because there is still a lot of bitterness in Ireland about.... It's understandable in this way, that, you see, a awful lot of the older people in Ireland today are still alive who had their sons shot right before their eyes.

O'CONNOR: Sure, I've friends in the United States who talk about things like that.

TUBRIDY: Yes, well, it's hard for these people to forget completely. Some of them lost five and six children, just in a row, shot down. But the younger people of today don't know this, you see, and of course, it's better too to forget history and do what we have to do in the future. So he brought this out to them, that this period of history had passed in our country and that now we must go ahead and contribute more. He had so much energy, and he was young. If an older person says this to you, young people are inclined to say, "It's easy for him to talk." But he was so young and so enthusiastic and so like one of themselves, and he became so Irish, like themselves, when he was here that I think they felt he was one of them and so they had more confidence in him.

[End Tape I, Side I]

O'CONNOR: Okay, we can continue on about the visit then. This thing is going backwards now.

TUBRIDY: Yes. He himself, I think, really enjoyed this visit to Ireland tremendously. When he arrived here, he was very tired, I thought, and he seemed in a very thoughtful mood. He had just left Germany, you see, just come straight from Germany, and I think that had a tremendous effect on him, his visit to Germany. When he arrived at the airport, he seemed rather tired and preoccupied and very thoughtful. But as each day went on, he became happier and more relaxed. It really was tremendous. This is why I was so anxious for the President to come to Ireland. You really had to experience this. You know, when people talk about Ireland, people in various countries have different impressions of Ireland. Some people in the United States even think our country is still pigs in the

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kitchen and things like that. The whole thing I think about Ireland--I don't know if I'm right but as an Irish person--I think the whole thing about Ireland is, the people, the feeling that the people have for things in general. In Ireland generally we live a very simple life, although in some ways it's quite sophisticated. We have very good theater; we have wonderful music; we have lots of ways of entertaining ourselves; we have wonderful horseracing, all kinds of beautiful horses, wonderful sports of every kind to attend to, and golf courses--in this way we have lots of sophistication. But generally people live rather simple lives, mostly at home, in their homes entertaining their friends and families, that sort of life. With the result, I think, they love people to come here. They're interested because we seem to have lots of time to

read and be interested in other countries. Then we're terribly interested when people come and visit us to what they think about everything. For instance, the average Irishman, even the man on the street, will probably know as much about your politics as you would. They really read every single thing that goes on in America. Of course, they're particularly interested in America because I think Ireland and America are so close as two countries. They're more alike probably than any other two nations in the world. Then, I suppose, so many Irish are in America. They have an interest. You might even find while you're here now if you say you're from some state in America, they'll say, "Well, did you ever come across my Uncle Joe?"

O'CONNOR: Sure, it happens all the time

TUBRIDY: Yes. I mean they have no idea of the vastness to begin with, but they are terribly interested. They read every single thing about American politics. They follow every step of American politics and, of course, particularly President Kennedy. They read everything he did, everything he said. They knew everything about he and the family. So I wanted him to come here though to feel because I knew their reaction to him would be this way, and I knew his reaction to them would be that he'd be so happy.

O'CONNOR: Did you, ever specifically encourage him to come?

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TUBRIDY: Oh yes, all the time. In fact...

O'CONNOR: Then you can take some of the credit for his coming.

TUBRIDY: I don't know. I suppose I could. But I always encouraged him madly to come, always. And I tried to explain this to him, you know, that I knew if he came to Ireland, he would feel how much they really loved him. I was very happy to plan.... I did help plan his trip.

O'CONNOR: What did you do? When did you hear that he was coming, and how did you hear he was coming?

TUBRIDY: I was in Washington when...

O'CONNOR: You were there at all the right times, weren't you?

TUBRIDY: Yes, I was there, yes, yes. He was very nice about it. This was another great thing about President Kennedy. He always remembered his old friends, always. If he knew I was in Washington--and I always stayed with Bobby and Ethel, you see--and there was anything relating to Ireland on, somebody would tell me to come to whatever it was. He'd be sure that he'd remember to have me invited. So he knew how anxious I was and how often I had said.... I said to him that I was

just going to persecute him until he did come. We joked about it, and all his friends joked about it. So when he decided, I was there. His secretary phoned me to come to the White House, that he wanted to see me. Everybody was wondering what it was because everybody was always very excited when they were invited to the White House, especially unofficially. So when I got there, he said, "I want you to be the first to know I'm coming to Ireland." So I was terribly excited about it. Of course, he had two ideas in doing this. He also wanted to find out from me the best thing to do in Ireland for him. This was another great thing about him. He was so intelligent about this. If he had a problem about anything and he knew somebody knew or was familiar with that exact problem, he always had that person come

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to him. You know, he'd really pick your brains about everything. He just said to me, "Do you think I should do this or do you think I should go there? What would the people's reaction be to that? What do you think the people in Ireland would like me to do?" He as very.... We discussed it. Originally, he had only decided to stay in Dublin, just to come and visit Dublin. You see, time was very precious. I felt that he should see more of the country and spread himself, so to speak, more so that the people in other parts of the country would be so delighted to have him too. So that was decided then that he would go by helicopter to the South and the West, which was very good for the people here. Everybody couldn't come to see him. So he was very nice about that because it was tiring to get there. And he did that specially, visit all the counties. He did say.... When he was leaving, I remember I said to him, "Are you glad you came?" And he said, "These were the three happiest days I've ever spent in my life." He was really very happy--a little sad leaving, or lonely, I thought. I think he was very taken not just by the people about him, by the simple people about him who greeted him everywhere. They didn't upset him in any way here until he.... The crowds were everywhere, masses of people. But until he indicated that he wanted to go right in among them, they stood back and let him.... And I think he loved this in a way. Yet the minute he decided to go among them, they nearly went wild with excitement. So they had a tremendous respect for what he wanted to do here. I think he really enjoyed his visit terribly.

O'CONNOR: Yes, everyone says exactly that, that he did relax here and enjoy himself here very much.

TUBRIDY: We were all very sorry, of course, that Mrs. Kennedy couldn't be here. That was the one little thing about it. I hope she will come sometime with the children. I suppose it would be rather sad for her to visit this country particularly.

O'CONNOR: I've heard her say--or I've not heard her say but heard other people tell me that she has said she would like to bring the children back here when they're old enough, perhaps, to appreciate a little bit more.

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TUBRIDY: Yes, well, certainly everybody in Ireland is very anxious...

O'CONNOR: Oh yes, they'd love to have them come.

TUBRIDY: ...for her to come. But she hasn't that much association, not as much as the others, with Ireland. But still I feel that she'd be welcomed here just as much. I hope she does come soon.

O'CONNOR: Maybe you'd better persecute her, too.

TUBRIDY: Yes, I think I'll have to start. But we have had Teddy [Edward Moore Kennedy] here quite a lot and his wife, Joan [Virginia Joan Bennett Kennedy]. They had the library exhibit here which was a tremendous success. I think the Irish people want to see the Kennedys come as much as they possibly can

O'CONNOR: You talked a lot about Robert Kennedy and about John Kennedy, but we said very little about Teddy Kennedy. I wondered if you had much contact with him or if you cared to sort of compare and contrast those three members of the family.

TUBRIDY: Yes, I know Teddy and Joan, his wife, very well. He was quite young, of course, when I went there first. Through the years he's always been there, too, all together. I think he's a very fine person really. He has a lot of the President's personality. He's much more outgoing than Bobby. He's a complete live wire, full of enthusiasm, full of energy. I think that he really will go very far, very far, because he's also got this dedication. He's a hard worker, a very hard worker, and I think he's probably.... He's got a mixture of both the President and Bobby Kennedy. I remember the President used to say he wished he were like Teddy. That's true because Teddy is so outgoing. He's full of life and he's wonderful with people and he's so easy to talk to. This is a thing that--this is a disadvantage, in a way, that Robert Kennedy has. He doesn't make friends as quickly; he's rather shy with people. He's rather reserved, so people sometimes take this that he's not friendly. It's just that he's a quiet person, and Teddy isn't. He's very friendly.

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His visits, one or two visits here, were a tremendous success. You know, he just sang Irish songs and was, I suppose, more like the Irish than any of them. I think Teddy Kennedy has probably more Irish traits and is more like the Irish people than any of the Kennedys.

O'CONNOR: That's interesting.

TUBRIDY: I really do. He's got that sincerity too. He's got that sort of strength of character that he can just put people exactly in the right place in life. Oh, he was a tremendous success here, and I think he enjoyed his visit,

too. It was a little sad for him because he came quite soon after the President, you see, and people in Ireland were sad too. I mean, at the time of the assassination I didn't think--the whole country just stopped, not just for a day, I mean, for a week. Everything just ceased here, just the same as for his three day visit everything ceased. Nobody did anything really but enjoy themselves for three days. People hated to go to work. I don't know if you're familiar with nuns here, our Catholic nuns who are very confined to their convent. I think that for his visit reverend mother allowed the nuns out a little bit more. I remember one particular nun told me that she made an excuse to buy shoes, she got downtown to buy shoes so she could see the President. On her visit, anyway, she went into a newspaper office to ask them if they had a picture of him because she was so carried away with all this and she wanted a picture of the family. The newspaperman said to her--a newspaperman told me this--he said, "Isn't it great, Sister?" See, everybody was going around in Ireland saying, "Isn't it marvelous?" You know, it was like all of our birthdays. And he said, "Isn't it great, Sister?" She said, "Marvelous. Not a prayer said in four days." [Laughter] So, I mean, that shows you the tremendous effect. The whole country stopped for those three days. At the same time, at the time of the assassination the whole country stopped again. Really, everybody, I think, felt they had lost one of their own family. He was this close to people.

O'CONNOR: It is amazing that there was a strong reaction, not only in the United States but in every country, practically.

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TUBRIDY: Oh, there was, yes.

O'CONNOR: And probably in Ireland more than almost any other country.

TUBRIDY: Yes, I mean, generally you couldn't talk about him here because everybody was weeping. Everywhere the churches were full. Always, all day long, people went to church, of all creeds, not just Catholic. Everywhere the churches were full all day long here in Ireland, all through that time. There was tremendous sadness and I think a sense of loss, a personal loss, too, because we thought that Ireland had lost a friend as well as you losing your President. I think that is one of the things that a lot of Americans perhaps don't understand. I've traveled quite a bit on the continent too, all over Europe, and I think the one thing he did as president was create this wonderful image for America.

O'CONNOR: An image that has...

TUBRIDY: Everywhere.

O'CONNOR: Long needed repairing.

TUBRIDY: Yes, yes. I think a lot of people think that the American people, compared with them, are loud, maybe--you know, compared with the

kind of lives we lead here--or they're a bit flamboyant or that you have too much in your country. But I think he just created this wonderful image of culture and education and reserve. And then he was such a wonderful family man. I think this endeared him so much. He was so devoted to his wife and children. Really, I think people all over the world began to look at America differently, everywhere. This is one thing that maybe it's hard for Americans to realize at home. I found, anyway, traveling around America at various times, I always like to discuss him with taxi men and things like that. I used to do that just to see the reaction, particularly when you were campaigning. Everybody, you said, "Are you going to vote for Kennedy?" And you got an immediate reaction whatever way it was. But they were always so busy talking about, "Oh, he didn't get that bill

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through about this and he didn't get that aid through and what he did about..." But to us and the rest of the world he was bigger than that. We regarded your internal problems as being--you could solve them. But how can you solve the threat of war to the whole world? I think in America the people on the street they feel maybe so secure in their own country because you're such a rich country and you can produce enough food and enough mineral wealth that probably you feel secure, that you're not involved with the outside world. I found this campaigning, that most people they weren't interested in outside things whereas, particularly here in Ireland, we're in the center of Europe. Our trade with England and Germany and all over Europe is terribly important to our whole living. So we're more aware, I suppose, of what happens all around the world, and if it does happen, we're right in the middle of it, you know, and we're endangered, I think that people began to respect America much more because of the image he created all over.

O'CONNOR: It's amazing what that one man could do to change the image.

TUBRIDY: What one person could do, you see. And not just that, but he behaved himself so well everywhere. It's not just easy always somehow to do the right thing when you're an important person like that. It's so easy to let down and be yourself and not do the thing that's expected of you. It's so trying if you're four or five days somewhere, and you're all day long at receptions and being nice to somebody. For the average that would be terribly difficult--to be polite.... But he had this capacity. He always did the right thing somehow and behaved with manner. He had terrific politeness about him. He was a naturally polite person, a naturally good-mannered person, which I think created a wonderful impression everywhere in the world that I have been for America.

O'CONNOR: When you were talking to him before he came over here about what he should do or where he should go and things of this sort, did you notice at any time during that little period when he was thinking of doing something or other and you would think yourself, "Perhaps that's not the thing to do. That wouldn't be well accepted by the people"

or anything like that? Did you ever have to correct him or change his ideas about some of the things he intended to do?

TUBRIDY: Oh, well, this was the fantastic thing about him. He listened to everything everybody had to say. As I said, if he had a particular problem or a plan about anything and he asked you to discuss whatever it was, and like I said, "I don't think you should stay in Dublin. I think the rest of the country would like to see you." And he said, "Yes, yes, perhaps I should. I'd better think about that." He had this tremendous capacity for listening to what everybody had to say. That's why even during those television debates, coming back to that, and during the campaign I often heard particularly the whole group of newspapermen, columnists, people like that, contradicting him or perhaps criticizing what he had to say. He never got angry. You know the way sometimes if you're criticized yourself, you get very cross and very mad and start to defend yourself. He listened to them. He listened to everything they had to say. That's why he always got a little out of whatever they had to say. He learned something every time, just the same as Richard Nixon or anybody that he opposed. He listened to every word they said about everything, to their ideas about it. I think that's how he accumulated so much knowledge. Of course, he was a tremendously intelligent person. He had the most alert mind. I've never known anybody in my lifetime with such an alert mind. He was so alert that if you were talking to him, he knew, he sort of had your sentence almost finished. He had the capacity for knowing what you were going to say. He grasped the situation immediately. He was a terribly alert mind.

O'CONNOR: Would you say that Robert Kennedy has this quality also or not, or to the extent that John did?

TUBRIDY: Not completely to the extent, but he has.... Yes, I think he's terribly bright and terribly intelligent, but I think John Kennedy was unusual in this.

O'CONNOR: But I didn't mean just bright or intelligent. I meant the capacity...

TUBRIDY: To grasp a situation?

O'CONNOR: ...for understanding other people, for drawing other people out, profiting from their speeches and things.

TUBRIDY: He hasn't got it, I think, quite like the President had. I think he has more than an average capacity for this, not quite for drawing people out. As I say, he's reserved and more shy. But I do think that he has improved tremendously, put it this way--he mightn't like to hear me say this about himself.

[Laughter] But I think that naturally when you mix with more people and you become more involved in public life, you come out more. And, also, you must remember the President had that many years ahead in maturity which, I think, that when Bobby Kennedy has that many years, he will be a better person. But I think that nobody.... I have met quite a lot of people. I met Winston Churchill through my travels in England, and in Italy I met a lot of important people in government--in the various countries mainly because we were entertained as a visiting horse show team from Ireland. I don't know anybody in my lifetime that had--I think this was one of his greatest gifts that he had this capacity for drawing people out, drawing the best out in people. I think this came over all over the world, everywhere, no matter where. Even if he didn't speak their language, he had this appeal to people. I think particularly those television appearances probably, in the end, maybe won the presidency for him.

O'CONNOR: A lot of people think that.

TUBRIDY: Because I think it was obvious, it was very obvious, the sincerity that he had and his qualities.

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O'CONNOR: Okay, we can move on to a few things. You said you were in the United States several times when I talked to you the last time. You were there, for example, at the time of the Mississippi crisis, and I wondered if you had any memories of that. Specifically, I wondered this in regard to the Mississippi crisis--Robert Kennedy was very deeply involved in it, was at least as deeply involved in the Mississippi crisis as John Kennedy was; could you compare at all the reactions to the Mississippi crisis, or could you discuss at all how they talked about it when you were near them?

TUBRIDY: Yes, I was staying at Robert Kennedy's house at that time. They were both extremely worried, extremely worried. I think the President took -- I was there for the Cuban crisis, too. And I suppose you could compare both in this way, that I think they took it very, very seriously, not just as something that was going to affect them or the effect that his decisions would have on him personally, but for America. I think both Robert Kennedy—all the Kennedys, I would say, Teddy, Robert, and the President are very patriotic Americans. They're much more so than any politician I've met. Politicians, a lot of politicians, you feel, generally, they have to do their job, they have to create a good impression, they have to get votes, and to do this, to achieve this, they have to merely sometimes be a little more insincere than the average person has to do in everyday life. Well, the Kennedys go much further than that. I think they feel that they have a, that it's up to them for their country to give it everything they've got. So they were tremendously upset and worried about the whole thing. Generally, when that happened, naturally, we were all very quiet, all the girls. We didn't dare to say very much. And generally Bobby was busy all day and night, day and night. I remember, particularly during the Mississippi thing, they had a direct line to the White House, and I couldn't sleep all night either because the telephone was beside my bed, the light was flashing and they were talking

all night, the President and.... Through all that four or five whole days. I don't think they went to bed at all. Then if he wasn't at the White House all night, he was at home. Then generally, of course,

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it was very interesting for me, too, because all the reports from Mississippi kept coming in to Robert Kennedy's house. I was there when the act.... Who was representing? Katzenbach [Nicholas deB. Katzenbach]. Katzenbach?

O'CONNOR: Yes, he was there.

TUBRIDY: He's now Attorney General?

O'CONNOR: That's right.

TUBRIDY: He came up from Mississippi with the report about what was happening down there. Of course, Robert Kennedy has this particular interest in the whole colored problem, you know. I think, generally, the feeling was grave concern of what a grave situation it was and I think, from what conversations I heard, with Robert Kennedy was to avoid loss of life in any way possible, and yet to do what they really thought was the right thing. I feel, I think--I don't know about the President really because he didn't really discuss things at the dinner table after he became President--but I think from Robert Kennedy I think of course there was a lot of irritation from the reaction of--what was he, Governor?

O'CONNOR: Governor Ross Barnett [Ross Robert Barnett], yes

TUBRIDY: Yes. He would phone to Robert Kennedy saying he was going to do one thing, and then Robert Kennedy would converse with the President about it. Then by the time they had phoned back this man had changed his mind and would have done something completely different, which was very irritating if you were trying to solve the situation from that distance.

O'CONNOR: Did you notice whether Robert Kennedy reacted any differently in that situation than John Kennedy did? From what you hear of Robert Kennedy's personality, you would think that Robert Kennedy would have gotten much more angry at this than John Kennedy would have.

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TUBRIDY: No, he didn't, no. I think they were both.... I didn't see any indication of anger really. Irritation, I would say, about the situation, but to me it was just a time in the house of.... As I say, we all kept very quiet because everybody was very worried, and we all knew the President was very worried. It was

just a time of great concern and tremendous worry to all of them. I think the President, I think he kept it quite a lot to himself. He was very worried looking and wasn't his bright self, but I think he kept a lot of all this within himself. I think he discussed every single thing openly with Robert Kennedy and with his advisors, but generally he was very sad, I thought, and very preoccupied and very upset about the whole thing all through both times. Afterwards there was no such thing as sort of jubilation that either the right or the wrong thing had been done. There was still just a seriousness about the whole thing. I think this is the way he took all the problems, the many problems that he had. He was very serious-minded about these things, about everything really, I suppose. Robert Kennedy is, too, very serious-minded and takes it all rather seriously--a grave concern, just, you know.

O'CONNOR: You mentioned and you've been speaking somewhat about the missile crisis as well. That was all very, very top secret, of course, what was going on at the time, and nobody knew really until the President spoke on television in October of 1962 that there was a missile crisis, that it was involving Soviet missiles. Did you know about that before he went on television? Had you any inkling of that before he went on television?

TUBRIDY: No.

O'CONNOR: You didn't.

TUBRIDY: No.

O'CONNOR: I thought maybe this was something that he had talked about in the family and perhaps...

TUBRIDY: Well, you see, we didn't see him for all those days. Normally they all visited each other every day. He might come up to swim or something

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there. But nobody saw him. I think any time there was any problem, Bobby Kennedy went to the White House. As I said, things like that weren't really discussed, you know, serious things like that. Afterwards, he was the kind of man, if you wanted to ask him a question about anything--if you dared [Laughed]--he'd answer you very simply and explain it to you. When you're that close to the President of America or when you're there when these things are going on, naturally you're terribly tempted to ask this and that and the other. I regret now, of course, that I didn't ask more questions, to know how he felt about everything. But the thing is that you felt you were bothering him, of course, a little person like me, and you didn't want to upset him or bother him or be a nuisance to him. But generally he was very good about it. If you asked anything, he just very simply told you the exact thing. I was also in Washington--not quite as serious a thing--for our Prime Minister's visit.

O'CONNOR: Your Prime Minister, yes. Prime Minister Lemass [Sean F. Lemass].

TUBRIDY: Prime Minister Lemass, which was the last state visit.

O'CONNOR: State visit before his death.

TUBRIDY: Yes, and that was very, for Ireland and for Mr. Lemass, that was very exciting really. It was a lovely evening. We had all Irish music all through dinner. They had twelve violins. I think they were from the Marines somehow or other. I didn't know Marines had violins, but there you are. They played lovely Irish songs all the way. After his visit here he talked an awful lot about Ireland, when he went back, all the time. They had lots of film that they showed. One of his friends explained that they got so sick of hearing about--much as they loved Ireland, they got so tired because all they ever heard about was his Irish visit. Night after night they showed movies. There was one particular tune, "The Boys of Wexford," which was....

O'CONNOR: Yes, he liked that. I've heard that before.

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TUBRIDY: He liked that tremendously. The children down in Wexford sang this when he arrived at the airfield. It was touching, all these little children singing, and also, of course, it's a rebel Irish song. This became his sort of favorite. That night at the Irish dinner, it was very moving really, all these violins played "The Boys of Wexford." In fact, that was the last time I saw the President really, when I think of it. Afterwards the family went upstairs to where they lived, you know, the private quarters, and he brought up the violins again, and he had them play Irish songs and "The Boys of Wexford."

O'CONNOR: That was very thoughtful of him.

TUBRIDY: It was very thoughtful because there were a few Irish people there. I remember Gene Kelly, the dancer; he's of Irish descent and a few other visitors. It was very nice to hear all those Irish tunes in the White House. It made me personally feel that again it was very proud for Ireland to take her place among nations and have our Mr. Lemass entertained there. It was a very nice thing for him to do really.

O'CONNOR: Did you know Ambassador Kiernan [Thomas J. Kiernan] very well when you--did you see him very often?

TUBRIDY: Yes, I knew him. Yes, I saw him every time I visited Washington

O'CONNOR: Well, I knew you had seen him. I didn't know whether you had seen him very often or not, but I remember the last time I was here your mentioning something, talking to the President about the possibility of his seeing Ambassador Kiernan alone or something like that. I wondered if you'd repeat that

for the....

TUBRIDY: Yes, Ambassador Kiernan, I think, previously on Patrick's Day--as you know, it's a very big day for us in the middle of March--usually

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the Ambassador brought the President a shamrock on that day. Naturally when President Kennedy became president, it was much more exciting to visit the White House with the shamrock. I think we still.... We always do it no matter what president is there, present the shamrock that day. But there were always various politicians who came along. Everybody, naturally, wanted to get a little visit to the White House. I think the Ambassador was always accompanied by one or two or three of these people. For Ireland it was rather important that the Ambassador could talk with the President because you know how much red tape there is about anything, any trade relations or anything that you have to discuss. It takes months and days to even get through secretaries, and normally you write everything, and then it takes so long. I felt personally that it was quite important for our Ambassador to have a good relationship, or a good liaison, with the President so I mentioned. I think the Ambassador also, of course, was dying to get to see the President on his own. I said, very timidly, to the President, how nice it would be if our Ambassador could see him alone because it would give him an opportunity if there was any very important little thing about Ireland that he could even mention it to him then. I said also, "I think Ambassador Kiernan would really love to see you alone, even while he's just presenting the shamrock." So he didn't say anything. He just nodded yes, yes. But I knew he'd do something about it. He was that thoughtful kind of person. Also, I suppose he realized that it would be a good idea if he had that interest in Ireland. Very often when you're an important person like the President, people around you, you get all sorts of reports about things, and very often you don't get to the actual person that knows the real truth about something. And this was one thing President Kennedy loved to get to. He hated all the razzmatazz and the people around him that.... He loved to discover somebody that knew the exact situation and deal directly with something without wasting a lot of time. So I think after that he received the Ambassador on his own, for a short time anyway, every Patrick's Day which was another indication of the thoughtful kind of person he was. So everybody was very happy about that.

O'CONNOR: Okay, we can close this off now unless you've got some other notes. I see you've got some other notes written down. I don't know whether

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we've covered everything or not, but if we haven't covered everything, I'd like to hear you mention a few things.

TUBRIDY: Well, I suppose it's.... I don't know if I really have covered everything over ten years of being familiar with the family.

O'CONNOR: It would be pretty difficult to cover everything over ten years.

TUBRIDY: It's hard to cover everything and it's also difficult, I suppose really, to describe as a friend of all the family's what a really wonderful person the President was. He had so many great characteristics about him that I suppose it would be hard to put it all into one in a few minutes or a few seconds. I think that my relationship with them, thinking of them as a family, I feel they are quite extraordinary as a group of people in or out of politics or having any say in American life. I think they are quite extraordinary, and I feel that both Robert and Teddy Kennedy will.... I think the President was an inspiration to them just as his brother was an inspiration to him before him. I feel that they will contribute.... I think they will contribute an awful lot to public life in America in the future years. I wish I could just think of all the things I've forgotten to say.

O'CONNOR: I'll tell you what, when I send this tape back to you, when I send the transcript back to you, you can edit or add or delete anything you like. If you think of anything then, you might add on, you might tack it on.

TUBRIDY: I'd be glad to.

O'CONNOR: Okay.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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