

William G. Hundley Oral History Interview – RFK#3, 2/22/71
Administrative Information

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Biographical Note

Hundley, (1924-2006) Chief, Organized Crime and Racketeering Section, Department of Justice. Department of Justice (1958-1966), and also briefly served as Robert F. Kennedy's special assistant. In this interview, he discusses the Joseph Valachi televised hearings, significant cases in the Kennedy administration, and tensions between the Justice Department and J. Edgar Hoover, among other issues.

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William G. Hundley – RFK #3

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Oral History Interview

with

William G. Hundley

February 22, 1971
Washington, D.C.

By James A. Oesterle

For the Robert F. Kennedy Oral History Program
of the Kennedy Library

OESTERLE: Mr. Hundley, when did you first hear about Valachi [Joseph M. Valachi]?

HUNDLEY: Well, it was sometime...I believe it was early 1962. Valachi was in the Atlanta prison on a narcotic conviction, and while he was down there—and I had heard this; it didn't make any particular impact on me at the time—he had killed another inmate down there. He was charged with, I believe, murder in connection with that. Then I heard that he was cooperating with the Federal Bureau of Narcotics.

The first really direct contact I had with the case was this: I remember that a group of FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] agents came over to see me when I was chief of the [Organized Crime and Racketeering Section] section. It was sometime in early '62, I guess. They told me that this fellow, Valachi, was cooperating with the government and he was cooperating with the Federal Bureau of Narcotics. They really made a strong pitch that they wanted Valachi. They indicated to me that Valachi had very good information about the Cosa Nostra or the Mafia or whatever you want to call it.

This made an impression on me, that the bureau, the FBI, would come over and say, "We want this fellow. We want to talk to him." And they made a very strong pitch to me to take him away from the Federal Bureau of Narcotics and turn him over to them. So I began to realize then that if the FBI was that interested in this fellow, he must be pretty good. So I got in touch with Henry Giordano [Henry L. Giordano]. At that time he was the commissioner of the Federal

Bureau of Narcotics, and a very fine fellow and very cooperative. I asked him about Valachi, and he told me that they had Valachi up in New York and that he was cooperating with them. I asked Henry if he would give me the substance of what Valachi was telling them, and he said he would.

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He then began to submit to me the written reports of the information they were getting from Valachi. And it's true. Valachi was talking about the various families in the structure of the Cosa Nostra and of his own personal associations with people like Vito Genovese and whatnot. And what I did, then I would give copies of these reports to the FBI. And, they continually I guess you'd have to say "pressured" me to give them Valachi. They said that the type of information that Valachi had far transcended the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Narcotics and that they wanted him.

I told this to Giordano, that the bureau wanted him, and he agreed. He said that as soon as they finished up with Valachi as to what he knew about the narcotics business, they would agree. That's the way they were; they were always very cooperative. Had the shoe been on the other foot, I'm sure it wouldn't have worked this simply. But in any event, when it came time for the FBI to take over Valachi, I must say they did an outstanding job.

Valachi was not happy. I think the Bureau of Narcotics had him up in Westchester jail in New York. It's well known in the underworld that Westchester is where you put all the stool pigeons. He wasn't happy up there because he felt that marked him as a stool pigeon. So the bureau went in, and somehow they worked out an arrangement with Fort Monmouth. He had the whole stockade to himself. The bureau worked out an arrangement with the military there, so they assumed the responsibility of protecting him and guarding him and everything else.

And then the FBI sent an agent in there who was really an excellent agent. His name was Jim Flynn [James P. Flynn]. And Flynn literally lived with Valachi for about eight months. He'd go over to Fort Monmouth almost every day and work with him and win his confidence. He really brought him around to where they did get an awful lot of very good intelligence information for the bureau.

Now, it's funny; I mean in hindsight. I could not understand then why the FBI was so terribly interested in Valachi. I mean to me Valachi was a fellow who had been in the mob all his life, but his principal value was that he was a contract man. You want somebody killed, you get Valachi, and he goes out and kills him. And why they would be that terribly interested in a fellow like that always puzzled me. But I think I know the answer now. The information that Valachi was giving to the Bureau of Narcotics originally about Cosa Nostra and the family and everything like that which I was giving to the FBI, this was being corroborated. The truth of it was being corroborated by what the FBI was picking up on all these bugs, so they knew that the fellow was telling a reliable story. Here they were going to get a live witness to what they had been picking up on the bugs. And they did; they did an outstanding job. They got him over to Fort Monmouth. They put their best agents on him. They ran out all the

leads and they really—made a 100 percent effort. There wasn't any question about it.

Well, the problem we had with Valachi from a prosecution standpoint is—you have to bear in mind, I think he was in jail since about 1956 and we're talking about 1962—practically all the information that he was giving to the FBI you couldn't use for prosecution purposes because it was barred by the statute of limitations, except the murders. And most of the murders he was talking about, they were pretty old; and it was just impossible to corroborate Valachi on these. So we really couldn't make any cases out of what Valachi had. I remember I went up to Fort Monmouth on a few occasions and talked to him, but Flynn did the bulk of the work with him.

Well, it reached a point where they had pretty well exhausted all of the intelligence information that he had. And I think this is interesting, because in those days nobody was higher on Valachi than the FBI and J. Edgar Hoover. And then, of course, you know when the sentiment began to switch and all the Italian anti-defamation leagues zeroed in on Valachi and the Appropriation Committee zeroed in on Valachi, then of course the FBI, their position changed. I remember when Hoover testified before some committee and he said, "Well, everything that Valachi told us, we knew anyway." They kind of washed their hands of the fellow.

But in any event, to take it back, the McClellan Committee [Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations] found out that Valachi was cooperating with the FBI and the Justice Department. And they wanted him. They wanted him for a public hearing, see. And quite frankly, we put them off as long as we could. There were a lot of different views within the department as to whether or not he should testify publicly before a congressional committee. But in the final analysis, we agreed that—really, we didn't have much choice. I mean we couldn't keep him away from a congressional committee so we finally agreed to let him testify before the McClellan Committee.

OESTERLE: How did it come about that these hearings were not only public, but also televised? What did it take in order to convince Valachi that he should consent to televised hearings?

HUNDLEY: Well, what happened is that when it was finally agreed—after the FBI had exhausted all of the information he had and that they wanted from him—that we would turn him over to the McClellan Committee, we agreed to move him down to the District of Columbia jail. What they did—the Bureau of Prisons had custody of him—is that we used what they called "the suite" in the D.C. jail. It's on the top floor and it's where they have the electric chair. There are different rooms around it; viewing rooms and things like that. And since they hadn't had an execution in the District of Columbia in seven years—the death penalty was dying out, fortunately—it was agreed we'd put him up there where there would be good security. He'd have the whole death chamber suite to himself. And that's what we did.

I always remember how everybody tends to overdo these things. The Army was responsible for moving him. I understand—I got all of this from him and other people later—they woke him up about three o'clock one morning. They dressed him up as Pfc. [private, first class], and they took him out and put him on a private army plane. They flew him down to Washington, and then they took him up to “the suite.” Well, fortunately I had warned him that he was.... You know, “Don't get upset when you see that electric chair. They're not going to put you in it.” So he knew that. First he was very upset about it, then he kind of adjusted to it.

Then the McClellan Committee investigators kind of took over. I think Jerry Alderman [Jerome S. Alderman] was chief counsel and La Verne Duffy. And even McClellan [John L. McClellan] himself came over and would talk to him on occasions. Actually they didn't have to do much of a job to convince Joe. I mean he kind of liked the idea that.... I don't know. But in any event, there wasn't much difficulty convincing him that he ought to testify publicly.

We didn't know in Justice that they were going to be televised hearings or anything like that. I suppose we should have anticipated that. You know, these senators like nothing better than to get on national television and get it back home. Well, they made a big production out of it. I mean as far as we were concerned in Justice, we had hoped that his testimony before the committee would stimulate more concern about the problem, would help us get legislation and things of that nature. I suppose you'd have to say, on balance, that the highly publicized hearings were—I don't know—perhaps more of a disaster than they were a success.

OESTERLE: In what way?

HUNDLEY: Well, I'm trying to think back to my reaction at the time. I just don't think they accomplished as much as we would if.... They seemed to really have a divisive effect, the highly publicized hearings about the Cosa Nostra and the Mafia. Valachi seemed to bring out all types of groups that felt very strongly about this, that this was just an attempt to publicize anti-Italian sentiment in the country, and that the function of the Justice Department was to bring cases. If Valachi had evidence to present in court, that's what we should have done; we should not have paraded him before a national television audience just to kick around a lot of people.

And I mean there were really some funny incidents. Valachi was not the most articulate fellow in the world. And as I say, you had all of these senators on national television. I used to sit next to Valachi. I was sort of like his counsel up there. And as each senator would get the mike.... He wanted to cleanse his area back home and I remember I guess it was Senator Curtis [Carl T. Curtis] from—wasn't he from Nebraska?

OESTERLE: Yes.

HUNDLEY: And he got the mike and he started asking him some questions about Nebraska. He said to him, “What is the extent of Mafia influence in Omaha?” Lo and behold, Valachi said, “I want to talk to Mr. Hundley. I want to talk to my lawyer about that.” So, you know, everybody thought this was a big deal. He leaned over to me, and what he said was, he says, “Where the hell is Omaha?” He didn’t know where Omaha...He’d never been west of the Hudson River. So, I said, “Well, we’ll talk about that in executive session.” So everybody thought there was something real big going on in Omaha. That was just one example.

Another time the FBI got some information—and this was interesting—that a fellow was going to come into the hearing, into the public hearings. What he was going to do was pose as a cameraman and he was going to have credentials to get into the hearing. And what would happen whenever they would have a break in the hearing, all of the cameramen and newspapermen would crowd around the table, and they’d all take pictures of Joe, and ask him questions. It was a highly publicized thing. Well, the information the bureau had is some fellow was going to get credentials as a cameraman. He was going to come into the hearing. At one of the breaks he was going to come with his camera and what he was going to do when the break ended, he was just going to leave his camera there, which some of them would do near the end. The camera ostensibly had a bomb in it, so you’re going to blow up the whole courtroom.

Well, we didn’t take it that seriously, but you know, it sounded rather credible. If you wanted to do it, this wouldn’t be a bad way to do it because this is how they were operating. So as I say, I used to sit next to him or sort of directly in back of him; and then Jim McShane [James J.P. McShane], who was the marshal, would sit next to me. So they set up certain security precautions that day. We didn’t want to say anything about it publicly because the hearings weren’t going too well anyway. If this got out publicly everybody would say, well, we’re just doing this to try and rescue this disaster. So we didn’t say anything about it. We just set up arrangements where they’d check the press credentials a little more carefully and whatnot.

So, we went through the hearing that day and were sitting. In the afternoon I leaned over to Jim McShane and I said to him, I said, “Jim, have you noticed that we’re not sitting as close to Valachi as we used to?” And we had; we’d actually kept sliding back from him.

OESTERLE: But there was no incident?

HUNDLEY: Oh, no. No, nothing, nothing.

OESTERLE: Security must have been something of a problem though during this period.

HUNDLEY: Oh, that was one of the problems. That’s where we got roasted by the Appropriations committee later on about how much money we’d spent to guard this fellow. Of course, they weren’t using the

top of the D.C. jail anyway, but they did have to have about nine fellows from the Federal Bureau of Prisons. They had to get sent down here to take care of him. Then we'd bring him from the jail to the committee hearings and things of that nature. So I guess it was quite an expense.

OESTERLE: In your first interview you'd indicated that the bureau had not played a very significant role in the organized crime area...

HUNDLEY: That's right.

OESTERLE: ...that their primary interest had been in internal security matters.

HUNDLEY: Yes.

OESTERLE: And, of course, you've indicated that the bureau is very much interested in Valachi, and then after a while when they were questioned about it, said that, well, everything that he mentioned, they already knew. What was the outcome of the information that had been acquired by the Justice Department, including the bureau, in regard to Valachi and the syndicate?

HUNDLEY: Well, they always told me then, principally the agents, that he was able to structure at least the Italian group for them, that he knew who the members were and he knew who the leaders were. Even though Valachi never rose very high in the organization, he was in it a long time. And as I say, he got to know a lot of the top people: you know, Vito Genovese and Jimmy Blue Eyes [Vincent Alo]. He knew them all, because he did one thing and he did it well. If you wanted somebody knocked off, Valachi could do it for you. So he did know the family structures pretty well. Actually, he had a very good recollection. And he wasn't...He was a very truthful fellow. I mean the bureau would come in endlessly and show him pictures and names, and if he didn't know them, or if he didn't know they were members, he would say so. Many, many times they'd bring in pictures and they'd have a name and he would say, "You've got the wrong name. He's really known as such-and-such and such-and-such." They'd check it out and find out he was right.

The only thing, in my judgment, that Valachi ever fudged on was his own physical participation in the murders. He always used to take the position that he was the getaway guy see that he used to drive the getaway car. Quite frankly, I never quite swallowed that. I think he actually was the boom-boom guy. But other than that, I think his information was quite accurate, and it was valuable, from an intelligence standpoint principally.

But getting back to my saying the bureau wasn't very interested: That was true, but this was during the period when they were desperately trying to catch up. This is when they had all their bugs in. As soon as they found out about Valachi and they found out what he was saying, then they knew that was checking out with what they were getting on their listening

devices. I mean they moved right in to take him right away from the Bureau of Narcotics; I helped them do it. But as a result of the hearings and the fact that we couldn't make any cases directly from what he gave us, then a sort of an adverse reaction set in.

An awful lot of groups felt that this was grandstanding and was just defamatory of the entire Italian race. The chairman of the Appropriations Committee, John Rooney [John J. Rooney], who's a very powerful man in Washington—he decides how much money you get and he decides how much money Justice gets and how much money the FBI gets—has a lot of Italian constituents up in his district in Brooklyn. And when he became very anti-Valachi, I mean we lost the FBI. They just became anti-Valachi too, notwithstanding the interest they had shown, the money they spent cleaning out the Fort Monmouth jail for him, assigning him the best agents. They went all out, but they just switched.

OESTERLE: Apart from this, did the hearings assist Justice in passing some much needed legislation?

HUNDLEY: I don't know. We had gotten most of the legislation we were going to get before then, actually.

OESTERLE: Of course, there was quite a bit of legislation pending...

HUNDLEY: Yeah.

OESTERLE: ...in '63.

HUNDLEY: Yeah. It didn't do any harm. Valachi at best was....It was a mixed bag. As I look back on it now, I think we just should have said to the McClellan Committee that—I don't know if we could have made it stick because we didn't run the McClellan Committee—"You want this fellow in executive session, all right. We'll turn him over." Certainly, all of the hoopla that they put in, the television cameras—you know, some of the networks were carrying it every day—I mean that doesn't help.

OESTERLE: What's your impression of the efforts of the McClellan Committee over the long haul?

HUNDLEY: Oh, I think they have accomplished a lot. I suppose where most of us in Justice differed with all congressional committees, including the McClellan Committee, is that most of those committees feel that they have some higher right of exposure for the sake of exposure. I mean legally they don't; there isn't any question about that. And to that extent where they publicize hearings, allegations, and accusations where people are hurt and nothing ever comes out of it....I'm sure their attitude would be, "Well, that's unfortunate. We don't do it intentionally but when a fellow like Valachi comes along who has information on the Mafia, we have an obligation to bring all of this out publicly." I'm not too sure.

I think there is some validity to the argument that we were faced with. We were accused of turning him over to the McClellan Committee: we couldn't make any cases out of it, so we figured we'd get all the publicity. That isn't exactly true, but I think there is some validity to the argument: you get a guy like that and you make cases. You make cases, and you bring them in courts of law where you have all the protections of the defense counsel, the Constitution, the judge. I mean that's the way to do it, not just tear some guy to ribbons before some televised national audience.

OESTERLE: Do you recall any conversations with the Attorney General [Robert F. Kennedy] during this period in regard to Valachi?

HUNDLEY: Yeah. Yeah, actually the Attorney General was really very reluctant to turn him over to the McClellan Committee. We stalled, and we stalled, and we kept saying: "We're not through with him yet." And I think that what finally...I think there were two factors, and I explained these to him. I said, "Number one, we can't hold them off forever. They can go ahead and subpoena him up there." And of course, he had a prior relationship up there and, you know, I'm sure he had conversations with John McClellan. He finally agreed. And when we agreed, of course, to do it, we cooperated with them as much as we could in the hope that we could make it a productive hearing with as little of the sensationalism as possible. But we lost control then. Once we brought him down here and turned him over to them, I think we found out maybe two days before the hearing that they were going to be televised. We didn't know, and nobody asked us our view on it. They just went ahead and did it.

OESTERLE: One of the other fairly sensational public hearings, if you will, during the Kennedy administration was the film that CBS [Columbia Broadcasting System] ran entitled "Biography of a Bookie Joint." What do you recall about that? That was at Swartz Key Shop.

HUNDLEY: I don't have really any personal knowledge of that. I was up in New York on either the Keogh [J. Vincent Keogh] case or up in Boston on Goldfine [Bernard Goldfine]. But my recollection is that the information did come directly to the Attorney General from CBS news and that the Justice Department did cooperate. Since they had gotten the original lead from CBS, they did cooperate in filming a bookie raid and actually taking pictures of runners with the bets and things of that nature, all of which went into some show, as I remember it.

OESTERLE: I guess there was some criticism leveled against the Justice Department.

HUNDLEY: There was. There again, it was the same type of criticism that we got on Valachi, that this type of investigation should not be conducted in a fish bowl. I don't know what his thinking processes were on that; I never spoke with him. But it was a bit of a different situation, because I do remember that we got all of the leads from CBS. And my guess is they probably would have gone out and filmed it on

their own in any event; I don't know. So we did cooperate with them. Valachi was a little different. We had Valachi, and a congressional committee finds out about it. It would have been almost impossible for us to have said to a congressional committee "We won't cooperate with you." We could have told CBS, you know, "We just will not cooperate."

OESTERLE: You were not directly involved in the Hoffa [James R. Hoffa] cases, but I guess you're really quite familiar with the strategy and the development of these various cases along with some of the frustrations. What are some of your impressions and memories of the efforts regarding Hoffa and the Teamsters [International Brotherhood of Teamsters]?

HUNDLEY: Yeah. What happened was this—well, as I've already told you, when Bobby Kennedy came in, originally I went out. They had brought this fellow Silberling [Edwyn Silberling] in, and so a lot of this I have to reconstruct. But what Bob Kennedy did when he came in is he set up a special group to handle all of the Teamster investigations and prosecutions. That group was headed up by Walter Sheridan [Walter J. Sheridan], and although they were in the Organized Crime Section for administrative purposes, they reported directly to Jack Miller [Herbert J. Miller, Jr.] who was the head of the [Criminal] Division. When I came back as head of the Section in—was it 1962—'62, they were in existence. It was a special group you might call them.

OESTERLE: "The Terrible Ten" or "The Terrible Twenty?"

HUNDLEY: All sorts of nicknames. "The Terrible Ten." They became "The Terrible Twenty." This is usually what the defense lawyers used to call them. But they reported directly to Jack Miller. They had jurisdiction over all Teamster investigations—they coordinated those—and principally, of course, Mr. Hoffa I don't have really any direct knowledge of those investigations. I just don't.

OESTERLE: Was the Frank Zizzo case significant in terms of anti-racketeering legislation?

HUNDLEY: If I'm not mistaken, this was one of the first prosecutions that was brought under the interstate gambling statutes. Those were bills that the Kennedy administration was able to get enacted by the Congress, which for the first time made interstate gambling a federal violation and gave the FBI jurisdiction in that area. If my recollection serves me correctly, and I think it does, this was probably the first or one of the very first cases that was ever brought under that new statute. And so it is significant from that standpoint where the courts passed on the validity of the interstate gambling statutes and upheld their constitutionality.

OESTERLE: I realize that there were so many cases, but are there any other cases that stand out in your mind as being significant or that you might point out to future researchers as being cases that

they might look into as being milestones or otherwise interesting?

HUNDLEY: Yeah, I think the interesting ones and the significant ones would be more in the area of political corruption, because those are always the most difficult cases for the Attorney General to bring, principally when they're members of their own party, which always seemed to be Bobby Kennedy's fate. He always had to end up indicting Democrats, as I remember it. The Congressman Johnson's [Thomas F. Johnson] case in Baltimore where he was a codefendant with Boykin [Frank W. Boykin], who was a congressman from Alabama, is a very significant case. They were both convicted. Johnson did some time in prison. Boykin did not because of his illness. He's since deceased.

Another significant case in that regard was the tax prosecution of Mayor Chacharis [George Chacharis] out in Gary, Indiana. There again, Bobby had to indict and convict a fellow who was, as I understand it, very, very helpful in the campaign for his brother [John F. Kennedy] when his brother was running for president.

OESTERLE: Do you recall the case against Paul John Carbo?

HUNDLEY: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

OESTERLE: That case, I think, was noteworthy in that it was an unusual application of the Hobbs Act.

HUNDLEY: That's right. It was. It really was an extension, I guess, of the Hobbs Act to a fight situation out on the West Coast. Let me see. Yeah, they used the interstate extortion provisions of the Hobbs Act to apply to a situation in the boxing, should I call it, industry out on the West Coast where there were extortions and shakedowns in connection with I think it was a couple of light heavyweight championship fights out there.

So anyway, what actually happened out there—and I can't remember the names of the two fighters. But this fellow, Carbo, who had a lot of control over the boxing business at that time, had a fellow in there who was the champion. And he worked out a corrupt arrangement whereby he was going to let his champion fight a challenger. Otherwise, if he didn't say okay, the challenger doesn't get the fight. So the ground rules that they laid down is that they let the challenger fight the champion, and further, they're going to let the challenger win the first fight. Then they have a contract that in the eventuality that the champion loses to this challenger, then he gets an immediate rematch within thirty, sixty, or ninety days. Then their plan is that in the rematch the champion dispatches the challenger, so Carbo's still got the champion. In the meantime, they've built up a big gate for the second fight.

So, they go ahead and they have their first fight, and everything works out well. The challenger defeats the champion. So they get to the

rematch, and the champion is supposed to win. Now, what actually happened is that the people who were handling the challenger, principally this fellow Jackie Leonard [Leonard Blakely], who later became the principal government witness, were going along with the deal. His challenger, who was now the champion, was going to take a dive in the second fight. But what happened is the unknown challenger, who wins the first fixed fight, is all set to throw the second fight, but he gets carried away, see. The crowd's cheering. So he knocks out the champion again in the second fight.

Well, with that they go ahead and they work the fighter over, but they really worked over the fighter's manager, a guy named Jackie Leonard. They really beat him with crowbars and everything. He didn't even have any....But that was enough for him, so then he began to cooperate. We applied the Hobbs Act to it, interstate extortion, and convicted Carbo and whomever the others were. But if the unknown challenger hadn't gotten carried away, we never would have known about it. It was an interesting case. It really was.

OESTERLE: Another one that comes to mind is the *United States vs. the Turf Smoke Shop*, and the unusual thing about that case was that the defendants were accused of using the Western Union sports ticker in the conduct of their gambling operation in the city of Seattle, Washington. Does anything come to mind on that?

HUNDLEY: It really doesn't. I guess I was up in New York.

OESTERLE: I'm sure that's the answer to many of the cases.

HUNDLEY: Yeah.

OESTERLE: How about the *United States vs. Lassoff* [Benjamin Lassoff]?

HUNDLEY: I remember it. It was a, oh—it was a gambling case...

OESTERLE: Here's something more in that.

HUNDLEY: ...where these fellows had some arrangement with the telephone—not the telephone company, but what they would do is they would bribe some people in the telephone company who would permit them to make long-distance telephone calls without the calls being recorded. And the reason why bookmakers would want to do that is because usually, the way you get an interstate bookmaker is you build up your evidence, to get a search warrant, probable cause, by collecting all of his long-distance toll slips. When you find out that there have been X number of calls between him and a known gambler in another place and whatnot, you gradually make your case against him.

So, this was a device that the big time gamblers and bookmakers used so that there wouldn't be any toll slips of their long-distance calls. It was an attempt to get around the

interstate statutes. They would bribe some people in the telephone company who would let them plug in behind the board so they could make these telephone calls without there being any record of

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it. Plus the fact they'd save a lot of money because they make a lot of long-distance calls. So they were significant in that respect, that this ended that practice in any event.

OESTERLE: Were the immunity proposals of the proposed anti-crime legislation between 1961 and 1963 something that was noteworthy and that you might comment on?

HUNDLEY: Yeah. We always tried to get a general immunity bill through the Congress. We never did get that. They have it now, by the way. But we would utilize the immunity provisions of little-known statutes like, I believe, the FCC [Federal Communications Commission] Act and use that in gambling situations. Immunity statutes can be helpful, particularly in the gambling field where you're dealing with, let's say, a fellow who's a bettor and, you need his testimony against the bookmakers. He doesn't want to turn them in, yet he doesn't want to go to jail either. So if you give him immunity, you can pretty well compel his testimony. When you're dealing with very difficult and hardened criminals, the only purpose the immunity statutes serve is that you immunize them and they won't talk; you send them to jail for contempt. But it doesn't compel them to talk in that field.

OESTERLE: Do you recall anything about the case entitled: *Arthur Goldberg, Secretary of Labor, United States Department of Labor vs. Thomas Battles*?

HUNDLEY: Only, I think that was an example where they used the immunity provisions of the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959. It was tested, and it was held to be a proper application of those immunity provisions. Again, it was an example of where, because we couldn't get a general immunity statute from the Congress, we started to utilize some of these little-known immunity provisions in other acts to serve the same purpose.

OESTERLE: Late in 1963, just actually prior to the assassination—it's actually October fifth—the South Philadelphia raid was conducted, and that became lost later on. But the interesting thing about this raid is that it was accomplished without advance notice to the Philadelphia police and caused the Philadelphia mayor and chief of police and other officials to suspend ten allegedly crooked policemen. The mayor stated that he was going to complain to the President concerning the raid. I note that along with some of the clippings and the three volumes of grand jury hearings that there's a memoranda to the President from the Attorney General. Do you recall anything in particular about this? Was this indeed an embarrassment of sorts to the President?

HUNDLEY: Well, I don't recall the details of that. There are a lot of situations like that where you might take some action, some federal action, in a particular city, and the mayor wouldn't know about it, and he would get a little upset. It wouldn't make him look

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too good, I suppose.

OESTERLE: Do you recall anything about the Gotham Hotel case?

HUNDLEY: That was a big gambling raid out in Detroit. My recollection is that it was significant at the time because of the size of the operation out there. It was a multimillion dollar numbers business where they actually ran it—took over the whole Gotham Hotel to run it.

OESTERLE: Was the Attorney General involved in any way directly with that case?

HUNDLEY: I don't think he was involved directly. I'm sure he knew about it, but I don't believe he was directly involved. [Interruption]

OESTERLE: One more case that I'd like to ask you about is the *United States vs. Harold Simon and Saul Birnbaum*, B-I-R-N-B-A-U-M. That was United States District Court for the Southern District of New York. Does anything come to mind in particular about that case?

HUNDLEY: I don't recall the specific case because it was handled by the United States attorney in the Southern District of New York. Alexander Guterma [Alexander L. Guterma] was the defendant in that case. And I do know that subsequently Guterma became a government witness and testified in, oh, several big stock fraud cases up in New York. He was quite a manipulator himself. He began to cooperate and made several cases for the government up there.

OESTERLE: You've mentioned that there were a number of occasion when you've been invited to visit Hickory Hill for the purpose of meetings and perhaps luncheons and so forth. Can you recall some of those occasions?

HUNDLEY: Well, the only occasions I would go out there would be, number one, if there were some party where they were having people at Justice there. I was out at several of those. They were always big blasts, lots of people, and very enjoyable parties. Other occasions I might go out there, if he wanted to discuss business at a lunch or on a Sunday or something like that. He might call up and tell you to come out to his house. Sometimes we'd adjourn a meeting on the fifth floor and go out there and have lunch and continue the meeting out there.

OESTERLE: Do you recall anything about the security arrangements for the Attorney General, including Hickory Hill?

HUNDLEY: Well, I never really was aware of really any security provisions out there. When he would travel I don't believe we ever traveled with any security guards at all. I understand that even during the campaign that I was on in Indiana, that Bill Barry [William Barry],

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who was in charge of security, used to try and get him to be a little more concerned about that, but he just wouldn't. It just wasn't his way. I mean he never seemed to ...I mean when he traveled, he traveled with the people he wanted to travel with for either business or social connections. I never recall seeing any guards or stray FBI agents or Secret Service guys around.

OESTERLE: What was the atmosphere at Hickory Hill? How would you describe it? Always lots of kids around? Were they usually at school when you were there?

HUNDLEY: Oh, a lot of occasions there'd be a lot of his—children would be around. There were always people out there. It was always a case of being introduced to somebody you'd never met before. I can't ever recall being out there when there wasn't people coming in or out or phones ringing or things of that nature. Usually if you went out there for lunch you were expected to take a swim in the pool. Bobby was sort of a nut about physical exercise and whatnot. I can remember that—I don't know if it ever bothered him, but I would never get involved in those Hickory Hill football games. I used to think they were all crazy. Go out there, break....They really used to play for keeps. He was very competitive. And I didn't. I was a golfer, still am. But I'd swim in the pool, and I remember once I think I ended up with Pierre Salinger's bathing trunks. I could hardly keep them up. But that would be about it. The parties were always very big parties that I would be invited to.

OESTERLE: Did you meet any of the other members of the Kennedy family on any of these occasions?

HUNDLEY: I met President Kennedy. I was invited, through Bobby I'm sure, to a couple of White House parties for the judiciary and I met him then. I met him once when he came over to address some type of big meeting of Internal Revenue [Internal Revenue Service] people. But really those were the only contacts I had with the President. I met Ted Kennedy [Edward M. Kennedy], I guess, on more occasions. I met him on the campaign in Indiana. Guess I met him around the office. I met him out there a couple of times too, because he lived somewhere near there. But I didn't know either one of them very well.

OESTERLE: Do you now anything about the resignation of Bill Barry from the bureau, the FBI, and how it came about?

HUNDLEY: Only what I heard, that there was....I guess it's no secret that the Director [J. Edgar Hoover] and Bob Kennedy never got along. It would pretty much be Barry's job when he was in the FBI to pick up the Attorney General if he was coming to town or something like that and drive him around. They got to be pretty good friends. I remember Bill Barry was his security fellow on the campaign. And I am certain, without knowing any of the facts, that after Kennedy left, Barry was in trouble only because he was too friendly with the Attorney General.

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Pretty much the same thing happened to Courtney Evans [Courtney A. Evans]. What the Director did, and I personally viewed this. When Bobby Kennedy became Attorney General, Courtney Evans at that time was about on my level in the department. I was the chief of the Organized Crime Section and he was sort of the chief of their investigative organized crime group. He had a pretty good relationship with Kennedy when Kennedy was committee counsel because Courtney always used to tell Kennedy that it was Hundley who was turning those cases down. So in any event....I used to, not kid, but I used to mention it to Bobby later on when we became pretty friendly. I said, "You came in, and I get fired, and Courtney Evans gets elevated to the sky." Well, he had nothing to do with Evans' elevation. But the Director, being a very astute politician, when he knew that Kennedy was coming in, just reached down for Courtney Evans and lifted him way up into the hierarchy, because he knew Kennedy liked him and he'd be a good liason man. He was; he was very good. And he was never disloyal to the Director.

Well, as soon as the bullet hit the back of Jack Kennedy's head, the Director then took Courtney and dropped him. Then he was through. He looked around, and he foud a fellow named DeLoach [Cartha D. DeLoach] who at that time, I think, was their PR [public relations] man. He knew that DeLoach was very friendly with Lyndon Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson], so then he just took DeLoach and lifted him up. So with the one hand he drops Courtney; with the other hand he pulls up DeLoach. Of course, as soon as Johnson goes, although DeLoach hung on a little longer, he was through for all practical purposes. So much the same was true with Barry. While Kennedy was around he was all right. As soon as Bob Kennedy was gone, I'm sure they made his life miserable.

OESTERLE: Do you recall any discussions during your tenure in the Justice Department in regard to the new building that's going up right now that's going to house the bureau?

HUNDLEY: Well, the story was, and I believe this to be true, the situation between the Director and Bob Kennedy really broke down 100 percent when the Director found out that what the Kennedys were going to do—retire him when he hit seventy. I think Bobby Kennedy made the mistake—its not a mistake, but he old too many people. I mean he all but told me. When I would go up and perhaps complain about something that the bureau didn't do or did do, he would say, "Now, just wait." And it became very clear to me that what we were waiting for was for the Director to be seventy. Well, I think that got back to the Director, and he had no intention of retiring.

Well, the only stories I ever heard about the building is that he wanted to stay until the building was completed and until he had an opportunity to set it up and be in it. He would like to stay until then. That was the story.

OESTERLE: There was never a question about the appropriations representing a part of the overall budget of the Justice Department?

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HUNDLEY: I don't know, but it wouldn't surprise me. No, the talk was that that was going to be Hoover's mausoleum and for God's sake hurry up and build it so he'll retire. Those were the only stories I ever heard about it, that he wanted to stay on in the job until he could set that building up. And the stories were that he was personally going over the architectural plans and supervising every last detail of, you know, what desk is going to be here and everything like that. Very interested in it.

OESTERLE: This raises a question which I don't know that...It's a difficult question to answer. But the bureau, of course, is structurally a part of the Justice Department, and yet the bureau operates in what might be considered somewhat of an autonomous and independent manner.

HUNDLEY: Very.

OESTERLE: How did you, as a member of the Justice Department, deal with this philosophically?

HUNDLEY: You just pretty well had to accept it. They were very independent, very autonomous. Even I remember Judge Walsh [Lawrence E. Walsh]—he used to be deputy attorney general under Brownell [Herbert Brownell, Jr.]; he's now the head of the ABA [American Bar Association] committee that selects judges, a very able fellow—even him saying that we're just loosely associated. It was just a fact of life. And what you're faced with as far as the Justice side is concerned is if the Director was interested in a particular thing, he did a tremendous job. If he wasn't, he didn't. The only one I ever saw try to move him was Kennedy, and he had some success—just some.

When I was in the Internal Security Division, they did an outstanding job, the bureau. I mean they were very interested in that, ferreting out domestic Communists. And when I used to go out on Smith Act cases back in those days, God, they'd have an agent assigned to every defendant. You could sit around and think of things that maybe you wanted done, they'd go ahead and do them. They'd go up and interview people in Canada. I thought they were terrific.

I was amazed when I went from Internal Security over to Organized Crime. It was like night and day. It was 1958. I was so used to them doing everything, overdoing it, you know. And then you get into a new field, which I thought was more of a problem, they wouldn't do anything in those days. And even with the urging of the Kennedys and the fact that they are in organized crime today, you know, I think their first love is still chasing domestic Communists. They're

very interested in that. As I say, they get interested in something. But I mean they make the decision. When Ramsey Clark said they were ideological and no investigative agency should be ideological, I think he pretty well hit the nail on the head. That's the problem. It's only when it suits their convenience that they say, "Well, we're only part of the Justice Department, and all we do is gather

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facts. We do what we're told." I mean that was just never true in the seventeen years I was in the Justice Department.

OESTERLE: We're just about the end of this side.

HUNDLEY: Yes.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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