

Frank Mankiewicz Oral History Interview – RFK #5, 10/2/1969
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Biographical Note

Mankiewicz was director of the Peace Corps in Lima, Peru from 1962 to 1964, Latin America regional director from 1964 to 1966 and then press secretary to Senator Robert F. Kennedy from 1966 to 1968. In the interview Mankiewicz discusses the work on Robert Kennedy's book *To Seek a Newer World*, the William Manchester controversy, and Robert Kennedy's personal relationships, among other issues.

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FRANK MANKIEWICZ
RFK #5

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Fifth Oral History Interview

With

FRANK MANKIEWICZ

October 2, 1969
Bethesda, Maryland

By Larry J. Hackman

HACKMAN: We were talking about *To Seek a Newer World*, putting that together. And you'd gone over a little bit of the tie-in with the Manchester [William R. Manchester] thing, talking to Evan Thomas [Evan W. Thomas] and it having been decided not to do it. How was Doubleday chosen then? How did that I come about, or do you remember?

MANKIEWICZ: I think Ted Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen] had a hand in that. We had some bidding actually, rather informal, and somebody complained because they hadn't had an opportunity to bid on it, but they did it was much lower anyway. I think Ted Sorensen probably made the initial contact with Doubleday. Ken

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McCormick [Kenneth D. McCormick] was the editor up there. And the whole notion from the beginning was to get the thing done as quickly as possible because we'd already had a lot of stuff in type anyway although a lot of it had to be updated. It was done almost all over the summer. I think they almost printed it as they got the chapters. We began to see galleys very quickly.

HACKMAN: Was there any thought then to, as '68 approached, to maybe just calling the whole thing off and delaying it to '69? You'd mentioned last time that there was some feeling that, if you didn't get it out early, you

had to wait till '69 or something.

MANKIEWICZ: No, no, because it was out fairly quickly. We got it out, I guess, by the middle--well, August or so of '67. And then we started talking about the paperback which had been done with Bantam. They wanted a heavy promotional campaign and the senator agreed to go around to a number of colleges or to coincide

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some of his 1968 speaking dates with the book in paperback but, of course, we never got to that. And then, of course, the paperback was in preparation when he decided to enter the presidential race, and they rushed it out, I think, a week later, adding the Chicago...

HACKMAN: Vietnam speech.

MANKIEWICZ: ...Vietnam speech. But there was a book and author luncheon for the book so I guess Doubleday was still promoting the book as late as January.

HACKMAN: That was February 8th; I think it was, in Chicago.

MANKIEWICZ: Or February of '68. But those are annual and I suppose even though the book had been out several months they still had him there.

HACKMAN: Yes. How concerned was he with proceeds and how the proceeds would be handled? What kind of feelings did he have about his share of the money?

MANKIEWICZ: He was anxious that the book sell, although I think he wasn't particularly concerned about

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the money. But he was always very curious as to what the sales reports were, how it was doing, was it going to get on the best seller lists. And I'm not sure where the money went. I think Adam [Adam Walinsky] got some of it and I assume Peter [Peter B. Edelman] did. There was a guarantee--I suppose, in effect, an advance--I'm trying to remember how much it was. I have a feeling it may have been 150 thousand dollars. And I would assume that it probably went to some charity but I don't know.

HACKMAN: Did things usually work like that when something went out over his name that other people had worked a great deal on and proceeds usually go to the writer, or how was that usually handled?

MANKIEWICZ: Well, some of the proceeds went, you know, to the people who had worked the hardest on it. I don't see....There wasn't anything except this book during the time I was there. But I assume that that was a frequent pattern.

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HACKMAN: Were there any rules or just unspoken assumptions whether people wrote anything over their own name – Edelman, Walinsky, or yourself--during this period, or would time have prevented that?

MANKIEWICZ: Time pretty much prevented it although occasionally we did things on our own. And when we did we just checked them, told him what we were doing. The only objection would have been time. I remember once in, I guess it was '67, I had an invitation to go out to Los Angeles to the state college there to participate in some values symposium--that was the big thing in 1967--on urban values in a [Interruption].

HACKMAN: You were talking about the values symposium.

MANKIEWICZ: Yes, it was one of those things on urban values in a revolutionary world or revolutionary values in an urban world, one of those things. And I was going to be with Ron Karenga [Maulana Ron Karenga] and somebody, and they offered me \$1000 and expenses. So I asked the senator about that. I said, "Can I take off for Los Angeles for

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three days? I'm going to be in this symposium" And he'd look and say, "Oh, you don't want to do anything like that. They're dull, you'll just get into an argument with somebody." And I said, "Well, there is one other feature, which is that they want to pay \$1000 for it." And he said, "Oh, well, that makes a major difference. There's no question about that. Go ahead and do it." So that's the kind of thing would come up. Somebody'd ask Adam to write a piece for his collection or something like that and usually we'd find the time to do it, but mostly we'd turn them down because there just wasn't time to but, I think, probably once a year, on an average....

HACKMAN: Do you think he, since he had grown up with wealth, had a good feeling for what money meant to people or how much money was a motive in different people's actions? Do you think he misjudged people because he thought they were interested in profit and sometimes they weren't?

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MANKIEWICZ: No, I think maybe the other way around. I think if there was anything, he tended to underestimate the extent to which money played a role in people's actions. I think he felt much more that people did things politically for power reasons rather than for money. I think sometimes the simplest explanation which was that they were doing it for money, didn't occur to him first. I think he had a very great consciousness of what lack of money had done to the poor. But I think he did have the feeling that everybody who was with him sort of had pretty much the same situation he did with respect to money, that is, it can't have been a serious problem. You know, if you had a car and you sort of moved around and were well-dressed and looked all right, why, money couldn't possibly be a problem. And he certainly wasn't parsimonious but it just never occurred to him that it was a serious matter. I mean, remember once I

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succeeded in a very offhand way in negotiating a substantial raise, and then having done it and he said, "Fine, sure, gosh, yes, you're certainly entitled to that. Talk to Steve." So I called Steve and told him and Steve said, "Great," and we fixed on the number and the salary that I would be getting and that was that. And then it went on for three months and I never got a nickel of it. And, you know, it got kind of embarrassing; I'd call and say, "Hey, look..." "Oh, yes," he said, "that's right." And eventually, of course, it came in, and it was all back to the date it was supposed to be. But they were always rather casual about that. And I think not in an effort to save money, but simply a lack of recognition that even people making \$25,000 a year could worry about money and not only could worry about money but that sudden travel imposed certain strains even on a substantial annual budget. But I think in terms of judging people, I think, if there was anything, he

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tended to include most political figures in his own ambit as well, that is, people to whom money could not be a motivating, or would not be a motivating factor. Of course, often it was. He was often rather surprised having discovered that somebody had done something for money.

HACKMAN: Okay, getting back to the book, you talked last time about it was assumed that you would put in the youth speech and you put in the Vietnam chapter. Can you remember any discussion or differences on what other kinds of things should be put in?

MANKIEWICZ: My recollection is that Doubleday wanted rather more hortatory things than we wanted harder stuff. That is, they were not particularly enchanted with the idea of getting down to legislative proposals and things like that. It was a serious argument, but, I think, really what they were selling was a book by Robert Kennedy and they didn't much care what was in it. But Ken McCormick is a sensitive fellow

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and had his notions of what ought to be there. But, you know, there was a thought that this was this year's book and probably two or three years from now there would be another book. So it wasn't the idea of collected works and it certainly wasn't a campaign document, so they didn't care too much. I'm trying to think what finally, what else did go into it.

HACKMAN: Want to just run down the....

MANKIEWICZ: Yes. China. That's right. They put that China thing in.

HACKMAN: "Youth, Race and the City. The Slums and Community." That's one chapter.

MANKIEWICZ: It was all new for the book.

HACKMAN: How about the "Alliance for Progress?" What can you remember about putting that together?

MANKIEWICZ: Well, that was based on that long, long two part speech that he made in 1966 when he got back from Latin America. Adam and I had done a lot of work on that at the time and he, Senator Kennedy, had revised that for the earlier book,

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for the Harper and Row book. And it was there and it was in type and it was a good solid chapter and it's always good, and so we just left it. And that was always so you've got to have something about Latin America. And he really felt very keenly about Latin America – not so much because of the problems there, because he tended to equate them pretty much with the problems in the rest of the underdeveloped world, but it bothered him that nobody cared. You know, and every once in awhile I'd come to him with some problem about Latin America and he'd say, "Fine, let's do it." And then we'd always exchange a few jokes about the fact that nobody was going to care, why it was that, as somebody said, the Americans will do anything for Latin America except read about it. His feeling – and I think he's right – is that because we have no powerful group of people in this country whose origins are there or whose culture we share. The only

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Latins we have in this country in any substantial numbers are Mexican-Americans. It's a special kind of Latin America anyway and, anyhow, they have no power. We certainly don't set out cultural values by them. Most Americans look to Europe because that's where their parents and their grandparents come from and where their traditions come from. And Latins have sort of _____. We've never really liked them. So we read about Latin America, he used to say, you know, if these people would only have a good, you know, bus accident, they

could get in the papers but otherwise nothing happened.

HACKMAN: Well, in putting together like this chapter, you said you had it ready for the Harper and Row book. But between the time he'd given the speeches, did he then go back for another round of discussions with anybody to get updating Bill Rogers [William D. Rogers] or Pedro Sanjuan or someone like this?

MANKIEWICZ: No. He did.... Well, he talked about it

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you know, from time to time with all kinds of people. Bill Rogers would come in every now and then. I talked to him a lot about Latin America regularly. And every year, of course, at the time of the appropriations for the Alliance for Progress he'd get involved, other issues that would come up from time to time. There was hardly a week that went by that some visiting Latin dignitary didn't come in to see him or visiting collection of union leaders or students or something. So that he kept up. He knew the emerging problems and Adam kept up too so that when he revised the chapter in '67, or '66, it was pretty much ready to go later for the book.

HACKMAN: Okay. What about the China chapter then?

MANKIEWICZ: He did a preface for a book of Bill Rogers which brought him once again into that, into this thing, for *The Twilight Struggle*.

HACKMAN: *The Twilight Struggle*. Yes, I read that. The China chapter you were talking about.

MANKIEWICZ: Well, always used to argue about that because

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I felt that even more than Latin America nobody really cared about China, and if they did care, they cared on the other side, you know, they thought about Red China and that was all they thought about. But he had given this rather long and thoughtful speech which was the result of considerable conversations with lots and lots of China hands, Far East experts, and guys like Roger Hilsman and John Fairbanks and all these others. I was at a major sort of scholarly conference out in Chicago and he felt that it was damned important. He always used to say, "None of you people.... You're all crazy, you don't see the importance of China." A third of the people in the world – or whatever it is – and he really insisted that that go in there. But that was based on the speech he had given earlier in the year in Chicago. No, I think Doubleday would have preferred that that not be in there.

HACKMAN: The other one is “Nuclear Control”.

MANKIEWICZ: Yes. Well, that.... He had a concern about that issue because President Kennedy had. And it was, I think, his maiden speech in the Senate

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was on that subject. And it touched a lot of things that touched him – children, President Kennedy’s foreign policy ideas in terms of American University speech and the other things. He wanted that in too. And that was a recurring theme of his. I mean, you’re really not in small towns in Indiana talking about the need to end racial divisions in our cities and the need to bring nuclear weapons under control. I mean I think in some of those little towns in Indiana, they must have been surprised to hear him talk as much about that. There was hardly an extemporaneous speech that he ever gave that he didn’t return to that theme, that if we didn’t bring nuclear weapons under control our children are all going to die.

HACKMAN: Can you remember on the Vietnam chapter in that book any.... Was there a lot of pressure on him from the staff to go further at that point or do you think most people were satisfied with what he said?

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MANKIEWICZ: No, I think we were satisfied with what he said because it gave him an opportunity to sum up what he had been sort of clipping away at in day to day statements during the year, which was that the Johnson Administration had thrown away any chance for peace back in the spring. And he wanted very much to put that all in one place. That was all his. It’s all very carefully reasoned in there. It all now seems a little sterile and archaic. I mean you try to think, “My god, who cares whether Kosygin [Aleksi N. Kosygin] was in Hanoi on March the 12th and how long it took the message to get there”. But it was damned important then because it was quite obvious that the Johnson Administration didn’t want to make peace but wanted an elaborate front that would enable them to say that they had. Now, Dave Kraslow [David Kraslow] and Stuart Loory exposed an awful lot of that in their book, much of which they got from Robert Kennedy. Indeed, they called me earlier last year and had a nice check from their royalties which they wanted to

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give to some charity that he would have wanted them to. So we sent it on to Cesar Chavez [Cesar Estrada Chavez] as a sort of acknowledgement of the help he had given them on that book. But at the time this came out, this was very powerful stuff. And, indeed, when the book was published, this was the lead in the newspaper stories. You know, “In a book to be published September such and such, Senator Robert Kennedy said the Johnson Administration this and that.” It was all that business about how we could have had peace

during those few days there when Harold Wilson and Kosygin were at the point of reaching an agreement with the Russians and then we went ahead and bombed without waiting for an answer. So he very much wanted to get that in. That's really what that peace was about. The rest of it was largely taken from his earlier speeches on the sort of general morality of the Vietnam war. And then when he went back, you see.... From the book, we sold the "Youth"

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chapter intact to, I think, to *Ladies Home Journal*. And the only problem there was a question of title. I remember going round and round with Peter and Wyden...

HACKMAN: Wydler?

MANKIEWICZ: ...Wyden, I think, on what we were going to call the chapter. And they had some jazzy thing, you know, like "How to Talk to Your Teenager," or something, you know. I said "No, we can't have that." And then they wanted to have Robert Kennedy on the cover of the *Journal* with all kinds of buttons, you know, and I said, "No, I don't think we can do that." But they took that article intact. But *Look* wanted the Vietnam piece, and they paid a lot of money for it, and they really hustled. And the only problem is the chapter was 18,000 words and they only wanted eight. It turned out, it finally had to be like 7,200. And we just fought and fought with them over things like cartoons. I mean, wouldn't they take out one cartoon which would give us another 450 words

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or something. I think Adam and I stayed up all one night working with Warren Rogers [Warren J. Rogers, Jr.] on a suitable draft of eight thousand words out of those eighteen, and then we spend the day with the Senator figuring out would that be wise and putting stuff in and taking other.... And he'd say, "No, I want this in." And then we stayed up all the next night just poor Warren and me, I think, finally hacking it out. And it was quite clear from that exercise that what the Senator wanted out of the Vietnam thing was that intensive day to day stuff on that peace making effort plus a clear picture of the Thieu Government, which, of course, now has become very relevant. Back in 1967, I think it was shortly before the book was published he denounced the elections out there, said they were a fraud which, of course, they were, and which now everyone recognizes they were. But an awful lot of people who are now quite ready to denounce General Thieu [Nguyen Van Thieu] were jumping

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all over him at that time for saying the elections were fraudulent. But he wanted that in the book, the notion of the regime there and the peace efforts. And he got it, and he got it in the *Look* piece, too.

HACKMAN: No problem in working with *Look* particularly in this period because

of the Manchester thing you can see?

MANKIEWICZ: No, none at all, none at all. It was interesting. Warren Rogers called and said, "Listen, this may seem odd, but are you guys interested in working with *Look*?" And I talked with the Senator and said, "Listen, they want to run that chapter" He said, "Hell, why not?" You know we can't.... No point in fighting with them forever. We've settled our case."

HACKMAN: Can you remember any reactions that the Senator had to the reception that the book as a whole got or the sales?

MANKIEWICZ: I think he was a little disappointed. I think he was a little disappointed although things

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began happening so fast then that he certainly didn't have very much time to worry about it. I mean he never looked back at that sort of thing. We never, never, never – I mean, in the whole time I knew him on thing that really struck me was that he would never, never, never say, "Well, if only we'd done this or if you hadn't done that." You know, the things just move on.

HACKMAN: Well, maybe you'd start on Manchester then. And I guess the best way is just to have you explain what did you do.

MANKIEWICZ: Well, I came into that office in May of 1966 and all I really knew about Manchester was that there was a fellow named William Manchester who had written a biography of Mencken [H.L. Mencken] and had written a book about President Kennedy which I hadn't read, and that he had been selected as the sort of official chronicle of the assassination. And then I began seeing him in the office now and then. And Evan Thomas, who I was working with then on the

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first book, Harper and Row, alluded now and then to problems. Every once and a while he'd call me up with a message. He'd say, "Tell Bob that Manchester agrees to such and such." And I wouldn't know what the hell he's talking about, but I'd go in and deliver the message later that day or something. And he'd say, "Tell Angie to have Bob call me at such and such a number before 5 o'clock because that's the deadline." I don't know what the hell it was. There was a lot of talk going on but I never got into it and I wasn't even really aware that there was a major controversy although I did see that famous television program. I can't even remember now what it was all about. But there was a telegram that he sent to Manchester about the Kennedy family won't object to such and such, which he later used in the lawsuit as the basis for an approval. And I remember Angie showed me that telegram and said, "Do you think it's okay to send it?" I said, "Well I have no idea if it is okay to send it because I

don't know any

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of the background.” So I assume that somebody did tell her it was okay. And then, I knew that things were getting a little tense, began seeing little things in the press here and there. And finally, I guess it was December sometime, probably round the tenth of December....

HACKMAN: That's the day of the press conference in New York that you went up for, I believe, if that's what your taking about.

MANKIEWICZ: Whose press conference was it?

HACKMAN: Well, it was the day that you, John Seigenthaler, Burke Marshall.... You, Marshall, Goodwin [Richard N. Goodwin], Seigenthaler gave a background – I mean, you were there; I don't know how much you were in on – gave a background for the press in Jackie Kennedy's [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy] Park Avenue office. Do you recall that?

MANKIEWICZ: Yes.

HACKMAN: That the first day you really got...

MANKIEWICZ: But had the lawsuit been filed?

HACKMAN: Yes. That's a background on the decision to sue.

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MANKIEWICZ: That's right. Well, then the lawsuit must have been filed the day before. So I must have gone up two three days before that. I went up the day before the lawsuit was filed.

HACKMAN: Well, I think the announcement was made that she was going to sue and then my impression was that materials were still being put together for the suit.

MANKIEWICZ: Yes. Well, I'll tell you what, in New York a lawsuit is commenced by the serving of a summons. In most other states, at lease in California, the practice I'm familiar with, lawsuits commence by the filing of a complaint. But in New York you file a complaint, and then if you never serve nothing happens. The suit is not commenced and times don't run, statute of limitations isn't cut off. And we filed the complaint a couple of days before we made service. That's what happened. At the time we had that briefing I think the complaint had been filed but it hadn't been served.

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HACKMAN: That's probably it.

MANKIEWICZ: But I went up there a day or so before the complaint was filed. And I remember the Senator called me into his office, it was around 1 o'clock. He said "I think you better take the 2 o'clock shuttle up to New York. My sister-in-law is suing *Look* magazine." "Oh," I said, "that's interesting. What is it all about?" He said, "Well, you'll find out. I don't want to go into it." I said, "My god, I think that's a terrible mistake." He said, "yes, it is a terrible mistake but nothing can be done about it."

HACKMAN: Meaning that the decision to sue was a terrible mistake, or the way the whole thing had been handled?

MANKIEWICZ: Well, the way it had happened and, I think, even the lawsuit. I don't think he was very happy about the lawsuit, but I think he either was convinced that it had to be done, or in any event Jackie wanted to do it and he was going to go along with her. It certainly wasn't

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his idea. And he said to me then that he hadn't told me about any of the background because he didn't want me to get involved in it, didn't want.... He wanted people to be able to ask me what about it and he wanted me to be able to say I didn't know anything. And he said to go up and see Judge Rifkind [Simon H. Rifkind]. He said, "I think Jackie" [Interruption] He said, "You better go up and help Jackie." Is that what we were on?

HACKMAN: Yes.

MANKIEWICZ: And so I said, "Where am I going to find out about it?" And he said, "Well, go up and see Sy Rifkin." Judge Rifkind was the attorney. And he said, "Think about, when you're on your way up, think about whether I should be a plaintiff." And I said, "Well, I don't have to think about that. You shouldn't be." Because I knew a little bit about the thing by then from stuff I'd been reading. And he said, "Well, I think that's right but think some more about it and look at the

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complaint and tell me." So I went up and I guess I must have stayed about ten days and then came back for Christmas and went back up again until the thing was over. It was funny, I went in to see Judge Rifkind who I think was not very happy to see me because he thought I was some kind of flak who was going to wreck this thing from a legal point of view. And the Judge was always very careful about the law. He's a nice man and a fine lawyer. But he

quickly understood that I wasn't that and that, indeed, I was, among other things, a lawyer and had practiced and tried this kind of case. And he said to me, "Ah, you're a lawyer, Mr. Mankiewicz." He called me Mr. Mankiewicz throughout. And I said, "That's right." And he said, "Well, let me show you first of all the contract on which this action is based." And this was the original agreement between Manchester and.... Well, it's not clear who it was between. It describes it as an agreement between Manchester and Jacqueline Kennedy, but

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it's signed by Robert Kennedy, and which is to be one of the problems. But it's all about Jackie and it gives her.... The only rights that are granted in the contract are given to her, that is rights of control and approval and so on. So I read the contract and I got through and he said, "Now, Mr. Mankiewicz, I want you to understand one thing. In this law firm, we would not dispose of used furniture on a contract like that." And then he told me the history of the litigation and he said, "This is an absolute classic history of how to require messy litigation." And he's quite right. At every step the wrong step was taken for all kinds of reasons, mostly shock and unhappiness and diffidence and unwillingness to face some rather messy problems. Then I think I met with [Interruption] talked to Goodwin. And then that night I read the manuscript. And then, I guess, the next day Dick Goodwin told me what the portions.... See, I read the manuscript which included the portions that she

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was objecting to. And then I talked to Dick. And then I guess we did have that briefing for the press. And I talked to Mrs. Kennedy. And I must say I never understood the whole controversy. I thought the press acted very badly on it. They all took the position there's a freedom of the press issue involved here and the freedom of an author to write and so forth – that's fine, but he signed a contract. I could never get away from that. If a man wants to write a book about the assassination of President Kennedy, as Jim Bishop [James Alonzo Bishop] did and others, he's absolutely free to do so and the Kennedy family would never have tried to stop them. I mean, maybe it would have said, "Listen, don't you think it would be better taste if you can do it?" But that's, you know, conversation. But here this fellow had signed a contract and the contract said that Mrs. Kennedy had approval of the final manuscript, and he had given her that. Well, that seemed to me very clear. We had some good

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go-arounds on that. I made the point in one press release up there that here was *Look* and Manchester and all these people talking about freedom of the press and what was involved was millions of dollars – the argument was about money. And we made the point that, you know, John Peter Zenger didn't get \$400,000 for the magazine rights. I mean, if Mr. Manchester wanted to make it look like freedom of the press, then let him forego his money, and *Look*, too. *Look* raised their newsstand prices to fifty cents with that issue and never came back. I think their price was twenty-five cents and they raised it to fifty cents for the Manchester issues and kept it there. And, you know, Elijah Lovejoy never had that problem.

So it got quite bitter. I remember we had conversations every couple of days with the Senator, who by then was out in Sun Valley. They were going to go ahead with the lawsuit. We did make service and there was a lot of press stuff; I was

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really very busy there. And I must say that the passages that were kept out were quite properly kept out. They were just grisly. I mean there wasn't any, nothing in there I think could possibly have had interest to the historian. I mean the section on the way the body looked and the way the head looked and how the body was prepared for embalming. You know, the one terrible scene which I think Arthur Schlesinger and one other person.... The question was whether the casket should be open in the rotunda and Arthur and someone else went to look and Manchester apparently talked to them because included in the book is Arthur and whoever this other person was – it may have been...

HACKMAN: Charles Spalding for one.

MANKIEWICZ: Was it Chuck Spalding?

HACKMAN: I don't know if it was someone else, too, but he...

MANKIEWICZ: I guess, then maybe it was Burke Marshall too, or Sorensen I'm not sure. But their descriptions

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are in the book and they're clearly not intended.... I mean, it just shouldn't be there, discussion of how his eyes and ears, you know, just terrible. And there was another section about how she took that wedding ring off and how the guy had to give her Vaseline or some kind of special undertaker's oil to slide the thing off his finger. I mean, I don't understand the [Interruption]

HACKMAN: ...all of the details that Manchester had in the book.

MANKIEWICZ: Yes, I don't remember all of them – I've got them written down somewhere – but that's the kind of thing they were. I don't believe there was one single event that he wanted changed in any way. But, you know, all of this thing had come about because nobody took it seriously. The document, the contract was hopeless, drafted, I think by Pierre [Pierre E.G. Salinger] unfortunately, however, signed by the Attorney General of the United States, and not a very legal document. And I think what happened, obviously, is that

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Mrs. Kennedy and the Attorney General and the rest of the family were just besieged by a lot

of reporters.... I think, frankly, that it was Jim Bishop who really scared them. And they felt that there'd be a lot of prying and a lot of sensational stuff in it and somehow they had the idea – and I suppose it was a reasonable idea then – that if they could just get one person, pick on one person and agree that he's the only one that anybody would talk to, that then they could avoid having to talk about it. I suppose it was a mistake to pick Manchester but he'd written one good book or, at least, a book they all liked about President Kennedy, and he was a real writer and he'd done a good work on Mencken. I think if they'd thought about it a little bit they would have picked a real historian, you know, a Bruce Catton or somebody like that, Burns [James MacGregor Burns], but they didn't and that was it. And, of course, there were two things that they just never considered then in the spring of 1964

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that really haunted them. One was that Robert Kennedy by the time the book came out would be a major political figure on his own, which I don't think occurred to them, at least they certainly didn't foresee all that happening. And the other thing was – I'm sure it didn't occur to them – that the assassination of John Kennedy would become in three years the second most important question on everybody's mind. (The first being whatever preoccupied you as an individual.) It's funny the assassination of Robert Kennedy has pretty well done away with all that, but.... I mean, that became quite an industry and quite a You recall what percentage of the American people said they didn't believe the Warren Report as late as spring of 1967? I can remember Robert Kennedy campaigning, particularly in California, and getting questions from student audiences like, "If you're elected, will you open the archives?" and not knowing what they were talking about, you know, and people talking about all these

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things that were supposed to be concealed. And, of course, he really stayed resolutely away from all of that. At one point I remember when I guess it was Garrison [James Garrison] was starting to make a lot of noise he asked me if I would sort of keep up on all of that. He asked me if I knew anything about it and I said, well I'd read a couple of the books. And he said, "Well, why don't you read them and sort of stay up on it so that if anything happens you can tell me what's going on." So I did and, I must say, that was quite an intellectual underworld. And nobody knew when they made this deal with Manchester that that was going to happen. And so they just kind of lurched along and poor Jackie didn't pay an awful lot of attention to it. And I'm sure Manchester became really terribly engrossed in the thing and one hears all kinds of stories about his own emotional involvement with John Kennedy and even a kind of classical psychological transference. And whether it's true or not is unimportant. The fact is he clearly became

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immensely involved emotionally in the project and I can see why. Dick Goodwin – I'm sure somebody who talks to Dick Goodwin will get a lot out of this period because he and

Manchester were neighbors in Middletown. And the whole episode was terribly unpleasant but it was quite clear, it seemed to me, that not only did we have the law on our side but we were probably going to win at law and lose heavily to the public. And there was just no way to stem that because if you talked about the contract than you were taking the bread out of his mouth, and if you talked about anything else you were stamping on freedom of the press. And guys like Murray Kempton [James Murray Kempton] and even Jimmy Breslin [James Breslin] and a lot of others were just hopeless. They just couldn't grasp the notion that writers could enter into business arrangements that restricted their freedom and that they then ought to be obliged to live up to their contracts particularly if there were several million dollars involved. And all that was

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involved here was Jackie's unwillingness to have her children and her children's children forever read about how shattered her husband's head was at the time when they were embalming him, that kind of thing. And there were other sorts of things about how he fixed up the – something about the bed that they slept on the night before and what kind of nightgown she slept in and was the bed at an angle, I mean, you know, that really wasn't any...

HACKMAN: There's enough of that kind of stuff in there now even without....

MANKIEWICZ: In the book?

HACKMAN: Yes.

MANKIEWICZ: That's right. That's right. Well, as I recall, she wanted to take out something like a total of three thousand words – not a hell of a lot. And it was just messy as hell, and, of course, complicated by the fact that she'd given him all the information. I mean that was an initial error, was the tremendous confidence that they all had, in particularly Jackie at least, had in Manchester. I mean I don't know what's on those tapes, but I can't

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believe that she ever spoke as freely and frankly to anyone about it ever again. And he put it all in. I guess she says, and I suppose she's right, that she said, well, better to get it all out – she'd never talked to anyone about it – better to get it all out and then since she had the right of approval, she could keep most of the more unpleasant stuff on the tape. Nobody ever talked about what was going to happen to the tapes and I don't know to this day where those tapes are or who has them or legally whose property they are. I suspect maybe – I guess in the settlement they went back to Mrs. Kennedy, I think. But, in any event, it then became a question of the settlement. We had lost of negotiations on that and going over the settlement agreement and I was sort of half lawering and half public relationsing. But it was hopeless. The lawyering was easy. The lawyers had the easiest job because they knew they had the

better of the lawsuit – there's not question of it. Rifkind

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never quite understood the public relations problems involved. I mean he figured he had a client and he had a good lawsuit and, by god, he wanted to win it and I think he was quite willing to go to trial. *Look* had good attorneys and, of course, they kept appealing to emotion, which was pretty much on their side. And it was an ugly period.

HACKMAN: Was there anyone at all on the Kennedy side....

MANKIEWICZ: Wait a minute. December tenth. You said December tenth was the date of the briefing up there?

HACKMAN: I think I got this from just running through that John Corry book, *The Manchester Affair*. I might have that a couple of days wrong I can check it.

MANKIEWICZ: Well, December tenth was a J. Edgar Hoover day. December tenth and eleventh are the dates on those Hoover releases.

HACKMAN: Then I'm probably wrong.

MANKIEWICZ: And I could not have been in New York then. In fact, I didn't get involved in Manchester

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until after Hoover. And I think my recollection is that I was in New York for about a week before Christmas and came back the day before. So I would think Corry may be his dates off a week. It may have been December 17th, that seems to me more likely. Because I remember that from the minute I got to New York it was Christmas. I mean it was within ten days of Christmas.

HACKMAN: Well, how soon after you went to New York, can you remember, did the Senator leave for Sun Valley, for instance.

MANKIEWICZ: Well, he went to Sun Valley for Christmas.

HACKMAN: Right. But was it right away, a couple of days...

MANKIEWICZ: No, it would have been four or five days, I think. My guess is that I probably went up there around the 15th or 16th, and he probably left for Sun Valley around the 22nd. I think you can check it on the school vacation because I'm sure he left with Ethel [Ethel Skakel Kennedy] either Friday night or

Saturday, whenever the kids got out of school, because they went right out there.

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And we didn't have a lot of conversations with him until after Christmas, until we got into the question of a settlement.

HACKMAN: Were there any disagreements among the people involved on the Kennedy side, including Seigenthaler and Burke Marshall and all these people about the objectionable parts of the book?

MANKIEWICZ: No. No, I looked at most of the.... Let's see, who read the book? Seigenthaler read it and Ed Guthman [Edwin O. Guthman] read it. Somebody else, did Burke read it? Maybe.

HACKMAN: Goodwin read it certainly.

MANKIEWICZ: Yes, but Goodwin was different. Goodwin read it, in a sense, with Jackie. But I've seen the markings that these guys put on and they almost all agree. But at that point there was no disagreement because they never proposed any changes. We simply told Jackie what they thought – or told Bob, I guess, and then he told Jackie – what they thought was wrong and whatever she wanted was fine with them.

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HACKMAN: Had the Senator read it at that point?

MANKIEWICZ: I don't think he ever read it. I don't think he's read it up to this day. I have no reason to think that he has. I started to tell him a couple of times what the objectionable portions were and he didn't want to hear it.

HACKMAN: Do you know if in the changes that you saw that Seigenthaler and Guthman and other might have suggested, were there political things that they were upset about and was that communicated to Robert Kennedy?

MANKIEWICZ: Yes. Guthman and Seigenthaler had some comments on the stuff on the flight back. And I'm sure they communicated them to Robert Kennedy because they sent him the drafts. But I'm not sure they read them. In other words, they communicated to him but whether they got through or not, I don't know. I don't think so. I think he really could not face any of that, did not want to read it and did not read it. And Goodwin, you see, was with that manuscript from the first draft, which I don't think Seigenthaler and

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Guthman ever saw, when it was called *Death of Lancer* and it had that insane first chapter about killing the deer. That was all.... And the whole book, as a matter of fact, I gather in the first draft, I read only that first chapter, had a much more psychoanalytic orientation than the final sort of bare bones kind of history or historical journalism, so that Goodwin's objections often went to the kind of book it was and the approach of the book and the terrible things that it said about Lyndon Johnson rather than Guthman and Seigenthaler who were concerned with specific portions of specific events.

HACKMAN: Did Robert Kennedy ever explain to you or did Seigenthaler and Guthman ever tell you any instructions Senator Kennedy had given to them on kinds of things that he was concerned with? Was it just as a "take care of Jackie" thing?

MANKIEWICZ: No, I don't think. Eddie and John Seigenthaler both felt when it was over – in fact, Ed said at one point, I think publicly, "We let him

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down on the book," because they didn't ride him enough. Everybody was so solicitous of his terrible concern and grief and unwillingness to face this. And Eddie [Edwin O. Guthman] he told me that we should have just stuck his note in it, we should have said, "Look you've got to look at this or there's going to be trouble down the line." And they didn't. They just read it and marked their things in the margin and assumed that somebody would take it up. And, of course, it was terribly unpleasant for all of them too. There again you see, I think he made a mistake in picking those fellows to do it. He should have picked, oh, Scotty Campbell [Alan Keith Campbell] or Jim Loeb [James I. Loeb] or some friend who was out of it, you know, somebody who wasn't so intimately involved with all of those events and who didn't share that grief, somebody who wasn't close to him, somebody he trusted but who wasn't close to him. I mean I would have been much better to do it because, you know, my guts weren't involved in the thing; I wasn't in the country.

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Of course, he didn't know me then. But, you know, somebody, some respected newspaper editor, somebody like that. Well, when he gave it to Guthman and Seigenthaler, I mean they were very reluctant to talk to him and say, "Listen, this is all wrong. What this fellow is doing is dramatizing this when he should be talking about that." And they just didn't do it. They just went.... They accepted the manuscript and just took specific point in it and nobody said "The whole thing's wrong," or "Bob you've got to stop this now," or "Why don't we put this off ten years." And then, of course, the decision to speed it up was unfortunate but by that time.... It was between the time they decided to speed it up and the time that it was going to be published that his own political prominence had become an issue. And then there's a question of whether it was Kennedy effort to get Lyndon Johnson. It got all

involved in that.

HACKMAN: Did he ever make comments on where the responsibility

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was for the whole thing?

MANKIEWICZ: Yes. He knew it. When I got back, I talked to him about it. I showed him all the headlines in New York papers and said, "Well, it all looks very good, but it isn't, you know." And he said, "Yes, I know it's pretty bad." And he said, "It's really mostly my fault. I just never wanted to spend the time on that. There wasn't very much time anyway and I certainly didn't want to spend it on that. We'll just have to move on." And I think it turned out finally not to be all that damaging. A lot of people, you know, they made a lot out of his drop in the public opinion polls at that time, but I suspect that was not the major reason for it. I think probably the main reason he sort of dropped in public opinion esteem from the fall of '66 until the late spring of '67 was because people began to be told that he was a serious political possibility and a serious presidential possibility and that backed a lot of people off who had sort have

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liked him but didn't want to face that. And then during that time, of course, he was emerging as himself rather than John Kennedy's brother and a lot of people who liked John Kennedy decided they didn't like him, particularly a lot of politicians. So when the Manchester thing was over, we looked ahead. And the next day the guy sued Ethel for stealing his horse. That's a terrible winter, terrible winter.

HACKMAN: What can you see about...

MANKIEWICZ: He went away, that's right he went away. He went to Ditchley. The whole peace feeler thing came right after Manchester. And then when he got back and the peace feeler was over then Ethel was up for horse thievery.

HACKMAN: What can you see about his relationship with Mrs. Kennedy through this whole thing, Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy?

MANKIEWICZ: Absolute loyalty. Absolute loyalty and not nearly as much control as the magazines and then some of the newspapers like to suggest. I suspect it may often have been the other way, that he did what she wanted rather than the other way

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around. I mean he felt an absolute loyalty to her and desire to help her in any way he could once she'd made up her mind. He certainly gave her a lot of counsel and advice which she asked for, but when she decided to sue and that that was the way it was going to be.... And I gather that all through the end of 1966 he kept sort of trying some way to keep this thing from erupting. At one point he thought he had an agreement with Manchester and Evan Thomas that they would take some of this stuff out. But he was obviously quite willing to risk a lot of his own political capital in order to do that. And if she'd wanted him.... I think if she wanted him to be a party, he would have been a party. But he wasn't; he didn't become a plaintiff and there really was no reason for him to be. The contract was.... Although he had signed the contract it was for her benefit, and as they say in the law, a third party beneficiary can sue for breach of contract just as easily as the contracting party. But he

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took a lot of abuse on that. But I would say the relationship was close. He always referred to her as Mrs. John Kennedy and it made him a little annoyed when people would call her Jackie. I mean not to her face but when they'd refer, "Well, Jackie says..." And, you know, he'd sort of look at them, and then the first chance he'd get he'd say, "Well, why don't you ask Mrs. John Kennedy what..." She's a remarkable woman. Sometime I spent with her during that business, I must say she impressed me greatly. "Very simple," she said, "I just don't want those things in the book and it seems to me I have the right to keep them out." And she was quite right, she did. I guess a lot of them finally ran in that German edition, didn't they?

HACKMAN: Yes, I was going to ask you if you got involved on that side of it in trying to...

MANKIEWICZ: No, Bill vanden Heuvel [William J. vanden Heuvel] went over on that. I guess he did that at the time he went to – was that the same time? Was that the peace feeler trip that

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he was over...

HACKMAN: He was along but...

MANKIEWICZ: ...Dealing with that unpleasant little fellow, Nannen [Henri Nannen]. I talked to him a lot on the phone.

HACKMAN: It must have been about the same time.

MANKIEWICZ: I think so. I think so. No, I worked mostly, in fact almost entirely on the *Look* phase of it, went over galleys and checked that the galleys indeed had taken out the material, and did some things on the settlement with

Judge Rifkind.

HACKMAN: What was his feeling about Manchester as the whole thing developed? Did he feel bitter or did he feel...

MANKIEWICZ: Yes. Yes. He felt bitter and then he felt, as he always did for people that he didn't like, kind of a sadness and almost pity. He never got really very mad at Manchester. I think who he was really mad at was Harper and Row. He got kind of mad at Cass Canfield and he got mad at Mike Cowles [Gardner Mike Cowles], although I think he later calmed down as far as Coles was concerned. But he really was annoyed that

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people were willing to make such a big thing out of what was essentially a desire to squeeze a few more dollars out of John Kennedy's death. He found that enormously offensive. And that's really what it was. That's really what was involved. I mean when you got down to what the hell was really going on, what was going on was that the magazine had been printed and was already baled, you know, or wasn't but would be if the injunction weren't in or all of these things. I mean they'd start talking about freedom of the press, but after fifteen or twenty minutes, it was quite clear that they were worried about paying overtime to the pressmen. And it's very hard to have a very lofty discussion when you're talking about that sort of thing, when the stakes are whether the whole world is going to see in cold type forever what the nature of President Kennedy's wounds were. Oh, you know what it was, it was a jeweler's thing. The undertaker had a kind of jeweler's wax and there's two or three pages about this

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jeweler's wax and how it was used to get the ring off his finger. Why?

HACKMAN: Did you have any contact through this whole period while this was going on with Moyers [William D. Moyers] or anybody at the White House...

MANKIEWICZ: On the book?

HACKMAN: Yes. Getting a feedback from the President's view of this or anything?

MANKIEWICZ: No. No. No, only what I read.

HACKMAN: William S. White?

MANKIEWICZ: Did he have a lot to say about it?

HACKMAN: He wrote one really wide column on that.

MANKIEWICZ: Yes, that's right. I guess that's right. John Corry, that was kind of.... All we really wanted to do with John Corry was sort of let the *New York Times* know our side. And he had the feeling he was being fed into some giant maw. I suppose it may have looked that way. But his account is by and large pretty accurate. But you see there again it was so stale, I mean, nobody cared. There's a book – I understand Corry has a book on it.

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HACKMAN: He has. A book called *The Manchester Affair*.

MANKIEWICZ: Well, I can't believe that it sold 150 copies.

HACKMAN: No, I don't imagine.... I couldn't tell you of anyone except me who has probably read the thing.

MANKIEWICZ: Yes. I mean right in the middle of it, sure, but six weeks later I can't believe anybody'd care.

HACKMAN: And this was at lease a year, a year and a half later.

MANKIEWICZ: That's right. That's right. I just can't believe anybody cared.

HACKMAN: I can remember being angry at the time when that book came out.

MANKIEWICZ: Yes.

HACKMAN: Did you get at all involved then in discussion of the possibility of the paperback edition coming out?

MANKIEWICZ: Yes. I can't remember what it was all about. We did have some discussions. That was part of the settlement. And you know, the tapes were part of the settlement; it now occurs to me

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that they were. I don't know if you can look at that settlement or not. I would think you can if Rifkind has it. I think those tapes are sequestered, her tapes. [Interruption] Was there a paperback of Manchester's?

HACKMAN: There is one with same blue cover and printing. I'm trying to remember who put the thing out. I can't.

MANKIEWICZ: Bantam probably. It sold a lot of copies.

HACKMAN: Bantam. I believe it was Bantam.

MANKIEWICZ: That book did not sell what they thought it was going to sell.

HACKMAN: Everyone had read what they wanted to hear...

MANKIEWICZ: That's right. Or more.

HACKMAN: ...before the book came out. Was Burke Marshall deeply involved in the legal side of this? What exactly is his role in this?

MANKIEWICZ: No. I don't think so, no. He was initially but I think once the Rifkind firm took it over for the lawsuit I don't think Burke was that much involved.

HACKMAN: His would have been through like August, September.

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MANKIEWICZ: Yes. Yes. Right. Right. And then more as a sort of legal advisor to Jackie. But I don't recall his being present at a lot of these things. Ted Sorensen, who was by that time a member of Rifkind's firm, was involved. Ed Costikyan [Edward N. Costikyan] was, I think, the lawyer who was going to try the case if it ever got around to that.

HACKMAN: Who of the people around Robert Kennedy.... People have remarked that a lot of people around Robert Kennedy, Jacqueline Kennedy had no use for or just didn't have much in common with. Who of the people around him did she get along with well?

MANKIEWICZ: Gee, I'm surprised to hear that. It's certainly not true of the staff.

HACKMAN: I'm thinking of people like Hackett [David L. Hackett] and Whittaker [James W. Whittaker].

MANKIEWICZ: Oh, yes, well, I don't know. I don't know. But I do know that I had a long conversation with her.... God, I hesitate to talk about this. The night Bob Kennedy was killed, the night he

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died, she came to the hospital. I suddenly saw her there in the corridor and we had a long conversation and she commiserated with me to what a tough job I had had, which is an odd

thing to say. And then she said, "Well, now you know about death." She said, "The Church is a marvelous thing at a time like this. It's really at it's best only at the time of death. The rest of the time it's often rather silly, little men running around in their black suits. But the Catholic Church understands death. I'll tell you who else understands death are the black Churches." She said, "I remember at the funeral of Martin Luther King I was looking at those faces and I realize that they know death. They see it all the time and they're ready for it. They're prepared for it in the way in which a good Catholic is." And then she said a thing which just absolutely chilled me. She said, "Well, now we know death, don't we, you and I? As a matter of fact, if it weren't for the children, we'd welcome it." And it struck me

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then that I was so pleased – it's a funny reaction but it just crossed my mind – I was so pleased that I had never criticized her for anything and never would again. I mean she'd had enough. And you know, I always felt that she'd paid her dues for life; she was a life member and we didn't have to keep asking her to reestablish her credentials. But then the next day on the airplane flying back to New York for some reason she didn't want to talk to anybody else, I guess, on the airplane. I remember she had a little problem about getting on the plane because she thought it was the same airplane. And Pierre assured her that it wasn't. And she got on the plane and she didn't like Pierre – she made that very plain – and then she sat next to me the whole time. We talked quite a bit. And she had been up talking to Adam about what kind of thing to put on the mass card because we wanted that – Ethel wanted – that quotation from Aeschylus that he'd used impromptu in Indianapolis, and we were trying

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to figure out where to find it. She was wondering whether in her library in New York she had some Greek poets and which book should we look in, and we began talking about that. And then she told me how much she thought Bobby's staff was better than Jack's. Now this is just staff; she wasn't talking about friends and she never did get to them but she said that she just thought...

[BEGIN SIDE II TAPE I]

MANKIEWICZ: How much did we pick up?

HACKMAN: Just where you were saying the staff, that Robert Kennedy's staff was superior to John Kennedy's.

MANKIEWICZ: Yes, she.... Superior is probably the wrong word. I think what she meant was that she liked them better because.... Well, her point was that we were much more intellectual and knew much more and sort of were much more up on the things that she liked to talk about and was interested in. And it occurred to me that probably – I didn't tell her that but it

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occurred to me that that was probably true, and that the reason for it lay in the difference in their wives. Both men felt a need for a certain amount of intellectual stimulation and a certain amount of companionship and getting away from politics. And Robert Kennedy got that at home. I mean when he would come home, he would be much more likely to find Andy Williams or John Glenn or a musical comedy on the record player and kind of good light conversation; whereas when Jack Kennedy got home, he was likely to find Larry Rivers or Norman Mailer or Truman Capote or at least discussion about art and music and literature and things that I'm sure he was interested in but didn't want to dominate his life and vice versa. And so Robert Kennedy tended, I guess, to get his serious, heavy, intellectual stimulation at work and relax at home, and John Kennedy probably had it the other way because the nature of Jackie was that she would want to have a much

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intellectual seeming milieu at home, whereas Ethel felt that what you did at home was relax and get away from serious thinking. And, of course, when you have nine kids, that's more of a tendency than when you have one or two. So I think that probably accounted for it. But I think she was right. I think there certainly was a higher quantity of sort of intellectual type knowledge. But she talked about that at some length. But I just don't know how she felt about the Chuck Spaldings [Charles Spalding] and the Dave Hacketts and Well, Chuck Spalding, I guess, is a friend of Jack Kennedy's, but Hackett and Dean Markham and Jim Whittaker, John Glenn, Bill vanden Heuvel.

HACKMAN: You know, while we're on that, you'd made a comment off tape when, I think, I was leaving maybe last time or the time before that one of the things you might have found hard to understand or you found some of these relationships a little difficult to understand between Robert Kennedy and these people. Maybe you could

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talk about some of that, the Andy Williams type thing or the Whittaker or whatever exactly.

MANKIEWICZ: Well, I don't know. Obviously, there was much more to those relationships than appeared because they appeared rather superficial. Whittaker, of course, he shared the mountain with and when anyone had shared that kind of experience with him they stayed very close, whether it was a mountain or a civil rights riot or whatever. But I must say I always found most of those sort of non-political, non-staff friends when they'd get called on for political advice, would almost always be wrong and not only wrong but lightweight. And I suspect that probably he wanted their advice but never took it very seriously but wanted it anyway sort of to know what people were thinking that he liked. But, you know, guys like Lem Billings [Kirk LeMoyné Billings] and Chuck Spalding and well, even Bill vanden Heuvel I must say I've never

thought of as a very powerful thinker.

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Bill knows a lot about New York politics and he has some great ideas but... And also, I never thought Senator took him very seriously either. But a lot of these guys would suddenly find themselves, you know, with missions, roles and missions, that seemed to be quite beyond them. In fact, one of the reasons, I think we did so badly in California is that we started that campaign with Tony Akers [Anthony Akers] and Chuck Spalding in charge. You know, you don't put them in charge of a precinct where only your relatives live. Dean Markham was a very close friend. Dean's not a very distinguished fellow in many ways except that he was very loyal, very sensitive. I think that may be what accounts for a lot of this, is that a lot of these fellows are sensitive to his moods. And also they didn't make very many demands. He could relax with all of them knowing that he wasn't going to have to meet any particular standard. But I think he did confuse friends and advisors and I think he relied probably too much on the

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advice of people who were only friends. And, of course, he loved to have everybody around. I mean there was the insane scene the night before he announced his candidacy, you know, in which a couple of strategy meetings and a party were going on at the same time and gradually became sort of blended into one.

HACKMAN: What about Hackett? That's probably the longest one and maybe the deepest one, I don't know. But does he value his advice on things a lot more than he does people like Billings and Spalding?

MANKIEWICZ: Yes, but I don't think Hackett gives him very much advice. I think Hackett... I don't know. I don't think Dave ever gave him very much advice. He was willing to work when asked. They had a very special relationship, I think, at that point, as you say, it went a long way back and rather deep and I think it was almost always personal and relaxing and a sort of safety valve. And also Hackett, you see, had done a lot in the Justice Department, been involved in a lot of things and probably in those areas was giving some advice. But I wouldn't really include

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Dave Hackett with the other group. I think Dave's _____ ?

HACKMAN: I'm kind of skipping around before we move into the campaign. I've got just a couple of other things I wanted to ask you. One, just looking at the books on your shelf, can you remember him talking about the books himself?

MANKIEWICZ: Yes, well, I have them all. The ones I don't have are at the office; I'm bringing them home. Yes, well, first of all he was mystified that there would be so many. He [Robert F. Kennedy] never read them. But he looked at the picture books. He liked the Dick Schaap [Richard J. Schaap] book because it had a lot of pictures and he liked Dick Schaap because Dick Schaap was a man. You know, Schaap knew about sports and he played football and he kind of wrote in a tough way about narcotics addicts and real problems. He's a journalist. I talked to him about the books. I'd come in and tell him who was writing. He was interested in some of them. I think he would have been

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delighted to see Newfield's [Jack Newfield] book, which was going to come out in a couple of years. He was interested in a book that Victor Navasky was writing about the years as Attorney General, and I guess that book is still coming out.

HACKMAN: Should be out next year now.

MANKIEWICZ: It could be an enormously valuable book because.... I mean that's a story that really has to be written because that was an incredible couple of years. And the only thing I know about it are the people and, you know, they're just an extraordinary collection of men. Every once in a while at one of these parties or at a meeting of the board of the Memorial Foundation or something I'll just take a look at, you know, Burke Marshall and John Doar and Lou Oberdorfer [Louis F. Oberdorfer] and John Douglas and then think about Ramsey Clark and Nick Katzenbach [Nicholas deB. Katzenbach] and Whizzer White [Byron R. White]....

HACKMAN: Seigenthaler.

MANKIEWICZ: ...Seigenthaler and John Nolan and Walter Sheridan [Walter James Sheridan] and Bill Hundley [William G. Hundley], really, and Jack Miller,

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I mean just extraordinary collection of men. So most of the books he didn't care about. We had a little fun with that book by Margaret Laing from a story she'd written. She came over and begged and begged and begged and finally spent a day, morning with him by the pool at home. And then she took the shuttle up to New York to one of those things, to follow him around with a campaign platoon and then flew back on the plane and then wrote this absolutely sappy kind of women's thing for one of the women's publications in England, about the golden hair on his arm, you know. And he was very unhappy about that because there again she had said that she'd show him the copy first, and she did. She sent us the copy and we made some changes because there were some things in there that were just dead wrong. I mean she had a couple of the kids' names wrong and she had him saying something

about Adlai Stevenson that was almost right but it wasn't right. Oh, I know what it was. She'd said that

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he had said that he wasn't very comfortable with liberals, the kind of people who thought it was enough to be for Adlai Stevenson and for divorce reform, something like that, or abortion reform, I guess. And it came out that liberals were the kind of people who were for Adlai Stevenson because he was for abortion reform. Well, you know, I think here the guy was dead and it's wrong! And we tried to get her to change it and she wouldn't change anything. We had a big fight with her and nothing came of it. But then she finished up the book, and I must say of all the books it's in many ways the best. She really caught a lot in the book that she didn't catch in the article. She's rather perceptive. I don't think it's as good as Newfield's but it is good. It's much better than Shannon's [William V. Shannon], for instance, which is kind of a flaxen, dull, sort of *New York Times* editorial. Ralph De Toledano's book kind of amused him and he would keep asking me, "Why do they do that?"

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And I'd say, "well, to sell books and because they hate you." He said, "But why?" Hard to answer. I don't know. What other books.... That book of Penn Kimball's *Bobby Kennedy and the New Politics* he never....

HACKMAN: How about the *RFK at Forty* that – who was it – Nick Thimmesch [Nicholas Thimmesch] and Johnson [William Johnson] or whatever?

MANKIEWICZ: Yes. He didn't think much of that. He thought it had been hastily put together. They wrote an other one, you know, called *The Bobby Kennedy Nobody Knows* under another name.

HACKMAN: Would any of these people get access to any of the office files? Would they request?

MANKIEWICZ: They'd request and we'd always give them speeches, anything we had on a speech, you know, all the speeches he'd made.

HACKMAN: Nobody came in and used correspondence and memos in the sense that James MacGregor Burns did for his early John F. Kennedy Book?

MANKIEWICZ: No. No. The most you would ever give these people was personal access. In other words, Shannon could sit for hours and talk to everybody

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in the office; Schaap followed him around for four or five days on different occasions. But nobody had access to the files, nobody really asked for those. That was a little presumptuous. What the hell he was 39 years old or something, you know, 40. There'd be plenty of time for that was always the theory, you know. Angie always kept that stuff. One understood that sooner or later somebody'd write that.

HACKMAN: What about the John Kennedy books? Did he ever talk about those? Schlesinger [*A Thousand Days*], Sorensen [*Kennedy*], other than the Manchester thing which we discussed?

MANKIEWICZ: No, no. As I say, he did talk about the assassination books with me a couple of times. He asked me once if I thought Garrison had anything at all, what that whole thing was about. And I started to tell him and he said, "Well, I don't think I want to know." We did discuss once some astonishing Drew Pearson column about how he had really been responsible for John Kennedy's assassination because he had.... I don't know, it was about

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Cubans. When he was Attorney General, he had hired a bunch of Cubans to go and assassinate Castro [Fidel Castro] and – how was it? – that Castro was so mad that he'd sent people back. I can't remember what it was, but at any rate, I commented to him about how absurd it was and he said to me, "Well, it's not that absurd in this sense..." And then he told me that there was some crazy CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] plan at one time for sending some Cubans in to get Castro which he had called off. "So," he said, "there is a germ of something in there." I remember that. And then when we talked a little bit about the assassination but only obliquely. He always referred to it as the events of November, 1963. He could never see any of those days.

HACKMAN: How much did you see of Paul Corbin around? How do you explain that one?

MANKIEWICZ: I have never to the best of my knowledge seen Paul Corbin in real life. I've talked to him on the phone a couple of times.

HACKMAN:

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MANKIEWICZ: I never really knew where he was, except during the campaign he was around California. I knew that.

HACKMAN: Operating under a different name I thought I heard.

MANKIEWICZ: Well, Steve Smith [Steven Smith] always used to refer to him as Colonel

something.

HACKMAN: Colonel Sanders, because of the chicken. He's in on the chicken thing.

MANKIEWICZ: No. No, he called him Colonel – oh, it was like Colonel Beauregard or something, obviously a fictitious name. The only thing I think Paul Corbin did that I knew during the campaign was that he organized some hippies to cheer for Gene McCarthy [Eugene G. McCarthy] at the debate in San Francisco.

HACKMAN: Sounds like a _____ .

MANKIEWICZ: Yes, but it wasn't. It was.... I think it was the colonel. Just vile looking people. I mean they were so awful that it was clear that it was some kind of put-on, you know, extra long hair and very dirty and saying things to the cops like, "We're not going to take a bath until

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McCarthy wins" you know, and things like that. And there were guys with stringy hair and smeared faces getting their faces in front of the camera and saying, "We hate Kennedy" and I kind of felt it was kind of silly. But it came to nothing. It was like a movie crowd. There were only about five of them, you know, kind of moving around trying to make a large crowd. But that's the only thing I think Corbin – the only thing that I know that Corbin did. I never saw him.

HACKMAN: Well, what about people like Rosey Grier [Roosevelt Grier] and Rafer Johnson? What would he talk to people like that about?

MANKIEWICZ: But he didn't talk to them very much. Didn't talk to them very much at all. He'd come to parties and things like that and talk football with them because they were usually with him when he was in motion, you know, in a car or in a crowd. He'd just kind of joke with them. But I don't think he ever had any substantial conversations with them. He used to talk to John

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Glenn a lot.

HACKMAN: Well, we've got the campaign. You want to start on the campaign?

MANKIEWICZ: No, let's do the campaign next Tuesday.

HACKMAN: No.

MANKIEWICZ: No?

HACKMAN: I'm out of town next week.

MANKIEWICZ: Well, the week after. Call me when you get back. We'll do it either on Tuesday or Thursday morning and I'll be here.

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