

Frank Mankiewicz Oral History Interview – RFK #7, 11/25/1969
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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. This interview focuses on Robert Kennedy's decision to run in the 1968 campaign, entering primary races, campaign funding and staff, among other issues.

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FRANK MANKIEWICZ
RFK #7

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Seventh Oral History Interview

With

FRANK MANKIEWICZ

November 25, 1969
Bethesda, Maryland

By Larry J. Hackman

For the John F. Kennedy Library

HACKMAN: This is the seventh interview with Frank Mankiewicz. The date is November 25th, 1969. The interview is taking place at his home at 5408 Duvall in Bethesda, Maryland. Okay.

MANKIEWICZ: Now, what the problem was with the *Post* [*Washington Post*], I don't know, that we didn't know about, and it maybe that.... But see immediately after that thing happened, why the next morning, Ben Bradlee [Benjamin C. Bradlee] was on the phone and wanted to make sure what had happened. And Andy Glass [Andrew J. Glass] was very contrite. And Ben Bradlee said that there had been other problems with him, and I must say that there had been problems with us too. And I can't remember whether the *Post* knew about both of them or whether they

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only knew about one and they asked about the other one. But once in San Francisco he did – I don't know, I suppose it's a trick that reporters do, but I must say I didn't like it and I have never heard of anyone else doing it, have you?

HACKMAN: What?

MANKIEWICZ: We were out there and we had scheduled a breakfast meeting for the State Committee. The California State Committee had asked me if I'd get him to a breakfast meeting of an advisory council they had, which was really just contributors, but they liked to get together every once in awhile, you know, and meet somebody. And so we had the meeting, and then we came out and Andy Glass and some other reporters were outside. And Andy said to me, "What kind of meeting was that?" And I said, "Well, it's their advisory council to the State Central Committee." And he said, "Well, I guess even Robert Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy] has to get together with the "fat cats" every once in awhile." And I kind of smiled, or you know, said, "Well" – laughed. I didn't denounce him. And the next morning his story

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was in the *Washington Post* quoting a Kennedy aide as saying, "Yes, even Robert Kennedy has to get together with the "fat cats" once in awhile", which was god damned annoying because it was insulting to those people and didn't help anything.

The other occasion is rather more serious and it also demonstrated our central problem with the press. I forget when it was he went out to Chicago and made that China policy speech.

HACKMAN: I don't know the exact date. [February 8, 1967]

MANKIEWICZ: My feeling is that it would be around March of '67. And Andy Glass was around the office in the afternoon and he was going to go with us to Chicago – there were four or five press guys who went along. And we thought we'd have an early text but we didn't. And by about 4 o'clock it was quite apparent that we weren't going to have the text until just before we left because he was fiddling with the drafts, and we were probably going to have to change two or three pages even from the mimeographed text that he finally approved in the afternoon. So I told Andy that, that we wouldn't have a

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text, and he said, "Well, look, I have this early deadline and we're going to leave at 5. We're going to leave the office at 5 and we're going to go to Dulles and fly to Chicago. And by the time we get there and I can file, I will have missed my first edition. So can you give me the text now even though it isn't finally approved – I mean, you must know the 90 per cent of it that's going to be used – and I'll stick to that for the opening edition." And I said, "Fine." So I gave him a copy of, it turned out to be, the penultimate draft and that was fine. And then just before we left – about twenty minutes before we left – we had a final text, and I gave him that.

And we had made one change, at least one change, and that was this little thing that he checked and I particularly checked every once in awhile in the speeches, which was to stick in somewhere along the line – because it was obvious that that's what he was talking about – that this was not the Johnson China policy that he was attacking, but that it was the

policy of twenty years standing. And it really didn't need to be said except

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by Robert Kennedy because there was no Johnson China policy. It was one of the few policies which was just an absolute flat continuation of Kennedy [John F. Kennedy] and Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] and Truman [Harry S. Truman] and – well, I guess that's it. And so he [Robert F. Kennedy] stuck in a sentence about, "This is not a failure of any one administration or any one party," and said, "it's been an error of the United States for twenty years or twenty-five years" or something. And Andy Glass, just before we left for Dulles, stopped somewhere and phoned in to the *Washington Post* that Kennedy had changed his draft and that in the final draft he had softened some references to Johnson, that he had changed his draft at the last minute in order to withdraw an attack on Johnson or something. Well, that was really dirty pool I thought. And somehow these things sort of came up when the McNamara [Robert S. McNamara] thing happened. And I suspect that it was more than just the McNamara story that caused Andy to leave the *Post*.

HACKMAN: Did anyone in the Kennedy office ever communicate that to Bradlee or to other people at the *Post*?

MANKIEWICZ: Yes. Yes. Yes, apparently someone else had

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talked to someone at the *Post* about it because they knew about it.

HACKMAN: Would Robert Kennedy have talked to people at the *Post* about something like this? Did he on occasion, because of his friendship with Ben Bradlee, make those kinds of complaints?

MANKIEWICZ: I don't think so. Oh, it's possible socially he might have, but I doubt it. I doubt it because he never liked to.... First of all, he didn't like to "get" anybody that was in an inferior position. And secondly, once the thing was done there wasn't much point in doing anything about it. I mean he'd get very mad that night. And I certainly conveyed to Andy a couple of times his and my displeasure. But I don't think we ever went to Bradlee or anyone else. But then when it came out, I know Bradlee came over talk talked to Bob for a very long time about it. But I think it was only about precisely the way the McNamara incident happened. He wanted to be sure that indeed he hadn't told him anything in the parking lot, and in fact, he hadn't; Andy had conceded as much.

HACKMAN: Okay. The last time was the morning you...

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MANKIEWICZ: Andy is now Chuck Percy's [Charles H. Percy] press secretary.

HACKMAN: Really? I didn't hear that.

MANKIEWICZ: Yes. He worked for Javits [Jacob K. Javits] for about a year. Now he's with Percy.

HACKMAN: Last time was the morning the Haynsworth [Clement F. Haynsworth] thing had come out in the *Post*, you remember, your story, so we did a lot of skipping around. So I'm going to have to go back and skip around again to sort of catch up.

MANKIEWICZ: All right.

HACKMAN: We talked about the October meetings and the New York meetings. You said basically no one told you much of what went on. What about the December meetings, any difference on that?

MANKIEWICZ: No, no.

HACKMAN: You didn't find out a lot more about that?

MANKIEWICZ: December meetings were where? Here?

HACKMAN: No, there were two December meetings.... There were two meetings one day in December in different places in New York. One was at vanden Heuvel's [William vanden Heuvel] suite that Robert Kennedy attended, and then there was a meeting of a group of people afterwards at some shipping firm, of a client of Vanden Heuvel's firm or something.

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MANKIEWICZ: Shipping?

HACKMAN: A shipping firm of some kind. I can't remember what the name of it is.

MANKIEWICZ: No, I wasn't at either.

HACKMAN: You talked about Joe Dolan [Joseph F. Dolan] and yourself doing some work on primary laws.

MANKIEWICZ: Yes. Mike Schwartz [Michael W. Schwartz] was doing a lot of research on that under Joe's direction, checking every state: when do you have to file, when do you get put in against your will if you don't

want to file, so forth. We did a lot of work on delegate selection also, not just primaries but how states pick their delegates.

HACKMAN: This would also be Schwartz primarily?

MANKIEWICZ: Yes, yes. No, I think he finally wound up with a pretty good book on every state.

HACKMAN: Okay, it's also been written and I've heard, that Dolan ran some sort of phoning operation at one point. He went down to Gwirtzman [Milton Gwirtzman] and Dutton's [Frederick G. Dutton] office for awhile – do you remember that – and phoned some people around the country. And I heard that Bruno [Gerald J. Bruno] did something on the same idea. Can you remember any feedback from that operation in terms of a report to Robert Kennedy?

MANKIEWICZ: I assume that Joe Dolan was reporting. And every

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once in awhile Joe and I would be in the office at the same time and Joe would say, "I talked to so and so in Arizona. Should I go on with that?" you know.

HACKMAN: He would say this to Robert Kennedy?

MANKIEWICZ: Yes. And every once in awhile he'd ask me for names.

HACKMAN: For instance, take California, would he be talking to many other people other than Unruh [Jesse M. Unruh], or was anyone talking to people on down the line?

MANKIEWICZ: California may have been a little special...

HACKMAN: Because of Unruh.

MANKIEWICZ: ...because of Jess. He may have figured, "Well, we ought not to waste any time in California." But he did talk to some people out there, sure, but probably not as much and not as directly. Yes, he was gone for about three months, more or less, down there. He'd come back late in the afternoon.

HACKMAN: Is there a file that's put together then that is used in the '60 campaign, or do you know how it's used?

MANKIEWICZ: You mean the '68!

HACKMAN: Yes, in the '68 campaign as far as people's attitudes,

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that comes out of the Dolan operation.

MANKIEWICZ: Now, that would have to be Joe's. I never saw it and I would suspect that it's illegible. He probably kept it.

HACKMAN: Okay, skipping to something else, we talked about the McNamara resignation. Any impression of Robert Kennedy's feelings about Clifford [Clark Clifford] as the appointment?

MANKIEWICZ: Yes, he was unhappy about the Clifford appointment, but he liked Clifford, or at least he'd gotten along with Clifford. You remember that Clifford had handled the transitions. And I remember that I was quoted in *Newsweek* in a rather unfortunate way. *Newsweek* said, "Said one Kennedy aid, 'If they wanted a crony why didn't they appoint Zephyr Wright [Zephyr B. Wright].'"

HACKMAN: The maid.

MANKIEWICZ: Yes. Adam [Adam Walinsky], I think it was – although he wasn't identified as a Kennedy aid – said, "You know, it could have been worse; it could have been Attila." I mean everyone thought of Clifford, really, as a super hawk, and that was the way that appointment was received. And I remember the Senator laughed when he saw what I had said but he said, "It doesn't do very much good, you

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know, because I like to think I can get along with Clifford. I hope he doesn't think it was me" or something like that, you know, just in passing. But it was clear that he would have preferred to keep those lines absolutely open. But I think he also saw that it was rather difficult if one assumed – as I think he did – that Clifford and Fortas [Abe Fortas] were pretty strong hawk advisors. But I must say he had much more respect for Clark Clifford than I did. I thought at the time that Clifford was kind of a high class Washington fixer and not much else, and an extremely corrupt man. I'm not sure that that's not an accurate judgment, but he apparently performed a very valuable service in the war.

HACKMAN: Okay, the Tet offensive. Can you remember any discussions with Robert Kennedy or discussion within the office of how you respond? Is there any big question of how to respond to this, what it means?

MANKIEWICZ: No, I think he saw it very early. See, it began the day he told those journalists that he wasn't going to run under "any foreseeable

circumstances” – what did he say – “conceivable circumstances”?

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HACKMAN: Yes. And then, well, I’ve read that you ...

MANKIEWICZ: I changed it.

HACKMAN: ... urged him to change it to “foreseeable”.

MANKIEWICZ: I did. I did right there in front of everybody. But while we were talking with those guys, Lisagor [Peter Lisagor] and others had come in with wire copy that seemed to show that something very serious was going on. We went from that meeting with those journalists up to the Italian Embassy, and he had his picture taken with the Italian Ambassador because he’d done something about Florentine relief or something. I mean there was always these kind of insane comic interludes in the middle of high drama. You know, we didn’t know where the Italian Embassy was; I was driving, and it was on 16th Street. And he didn’t really know where 16th Street was, and I figured it had to come after 15th, and anyway, I would up on Vermont Avenue, and he was getting annoyed. But he didn’t care much because he was thinking about what he had told those guys. Finally, we found the Embassy and we couldn’t park, and, I don’t know.... And the Italian Ambassador wasn’t quite sure what was supposed to happen and there were a lot of photographers there,

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and he hadn’t let them in and they were mad. And it was cold! Then he got his picture taken and then we went back to the office. And by that time the Tet news was coming in pretty hard. And I think by the end of the day there was that business where they had taken part of the embassy and the evening news was pretty strong. And I would think that from the second or third day, he saw what was going on and began, I guess, to write – let’s see...

HACKMAN: February 8th is the Chicago speech.

MANKIEWICZ: That’s right, you see, so he didn’t have much time. He had about a week. I’m wondering if he had a statement before that. I think he did. I think he had a short statement on the third or fourth day of Tet that we put out in the press gallery.

HACKMAN: I don’t have anything here.

MANKIEWICZ: Well, I’ll look and see. But, in any event, he saw that this was a disaster and, of course, the more Bunker [Ellsworth Bunker] and the President and others would say it was a great victory, the more he saw how much of a disaster it was. I have a feeling he may very well have

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made up his mind to run right there in those ten days. Certainly his speech in Chicago was very uncompromising, tough.

HACKMAN: That sort of leads into the next question, when did you really know he was going to run?

MANKIEWICZ: Well, I really thought he was going to run by, I guess, around the middle of February – I'd say somewhere around the 15th, 20th of February because we began to talk about McCarthy [Eugene G. McCarthy] in New Hampshire. And it was clear that he was going to do something up there – 20 per cent, 25 per cent, 30 per cent. We began to talk about what percentage of the vote McCarthy could get that would be good for Kennedy, that is, was there an ideal percentage of the vote at which he could enter the race and not appear to be coat tailing on McCarthy? And yet, if McCarthy got 5 per cent, obviously then it would be the same problem of splitting the Party and having a personal fight with Johnson. And we decided that was probably around 25-30 per cent, he would have had pretty much the same problem he would have had in November. And if it was much over 30 per cent, he'd have a terrible

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problem with McCarthy because it would appear opportunistic. But it was clear to me from those discussions that...

HACKMAN: These are with him?

MANKIEWICZ: Yes. And it was clear to me from those discussions whatever number it was, he was going to run – I mean, not clear, but I felt that he would be able to live with any number, that we weren't talking about the one that would permit him to run but rather the one that would look the best. And I guess it was in February, wasn't it, that the business took place with the Californians.

HACKMAN: The filing thing?

MANKIEWICZ: Yes.

HACKMAN: That's very early March, March 4th that it's being set up early?

MANKIEWICZ: Well, and then working with Joe late in February. There was an extraordinary response to the Chicago speech, which I think pleased him. And it got very good play in the papers and some good television. And the *New York Times* ran large excerpts of it and we got an awful lot of telegrams. They'd barely stopped coming in – we hadn't begun to answer them – by

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the time he announced he was going to run. I mean the number of telegrams was up in the thousands, all urging him to run and many assuming that because of that speech he was going to run. And I said to him I thought that after that speech he had to run. I said, "I don't know how you can say those things about the major enterprise in which your country's engaged and then continue to support that leadership." And, he just simply could not support McCarthy.

HACKMAN: Are there points in late February then or early March or up to the time he announces, when he really appears to be backing off then or something comes up that really...

MANKIEWICZ: Well, I think there were a lot of people still telling him not to. And at that point I think he then shifted. Before, the previous winter, the previous November, December, he was getting advice from the hawks to run and turning to the people who didn't want him to run for reassurance that he was right and he shouldn't run. I think it had shifted by February and he was getting told that he shouldn't run and coming to those of us who wanted him to run for reassurance that he should. He'd

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say, "Well, so and so says that I shouldn't run because I'll only be doing this and that." And we'd say, "Well, do you think you'll do it anyway?" And, of course, I never got into any of those intricacies really because I just always took the position that he couldn't do anything else and that there was no other satisfactory course for him that year and he might as well run. I mean I didn't think he had a very good chance of winning, but I thought that he'd lose his constituency if he didn't run and that, in any event, it was physically and mentally and emotionally impossible for him not to. I mean I'd keep saying to him, "What are you going to do all year? Where do you see yourself in May and June and August? What are you doing? Are you leading the fight for the Merchant Marine Construction Act, or are you at the conference of interested Latin Americanists in _____?" And he'd laugh. And I'd say, "How do you see May the 18th or July 9th? Where are you? You Skiing?" And he'd laugh and say, "Yes, I guess you're right." And he had a couple more

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meetings then somewhere in there. I remember there was that Jack Newfield thing and I called him up to tell him to watch TV on Sunday.

HACKMAN: March 4th that is, I found out.

MANKIEWICZ: What is it?

HACKMAN: I believe that's March 4th.

MANKIEWICZ: March 4th. Well, he said to me, "Well, there's another meeting going on out here." And I said, "Oh, what kind of meeting?" And he said, "Oh, about my political future." And I said, "Well, do you want my opinion?" And he said, "Yes." And then we talked for about twenty minutes on the phone, and I told him I thought he ought to enter the primaries. I guess he still had an option then to enter Wisconsin. I said he shouldn't enter Wisconsin but should enter the rest of them. In other words, don't enter anything that McCarthy's in already; let him have New Hampshire and Wisconsin and then go with the rest of them. And then by March – well, of course, when the New Hampshire primary came along, which was the 12th – well, then that must have been the third. It was Sunday I know.

HACKMAN: Okay.

MANKIEWICZ: Because it was the night of that silly Public

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Broadcast Laboratory thing and that was only on Sundays. I know it was a Sunday. The New Hampshire primary – I think I've told you this – remember how we got out a statement at midnight.

HACKMAN: No.

MANKIEWICZ: Well, that caused a little trouble in the McCarthy camp because along about 11 or 12 o'clock when it was clear that McCarthy had done very well, I talked to him and we agreed that he should get out a statement. So we worked one out over the phone, rather routine thing congratulating McCarthy, talking about how it demonstrated the existence in the Democratic Party of a strong peace sentiment and so forth. It wasn't that sloganeering, but it was that change in divisive policies and so forth. And I called the news services with that statement and I also called the *New York Times*, the *Post*, anybody else I could catch around 11, 11:30 for their morning edition. And I think I sent a telegram to McCarthy – I'm not sure of that... But I called some of them. And, of course, a lot of the political editors I knew were up in New Hampshire, so I called them up there.

And then the Senator was in New York that night.

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Then he came back from New York that next morning, the 13th, Wednesday morning, and called me from the airport and said that he had made this statement at the airport to Clark [Robert E. Clark] of ABC and told me what he had said, which was that he had been "reassessing his position" – he apparently wrote this out on the airplane coming down – and

“for four reasons he was reassessing his position.” He said, “I don’t want ABC to have it all by themselves and it’s going to be all over the place anyway. So why don’t you put out the same statement right now while I’m coming in from the airport.” So I did. And I reminded him that he had to go to a meeting in the Senate auditorium in the Office Building and that undoubtedly all the TV people and so forth would be laying for him when he went it, so why didn’t he just – why didn’t I put out the statement and then he could amplify it personally around 12 o’clock when he went to the auditorium. And I said, “Or do you want to call it off?” And he said, no, he thought that was a good idea.

So we did that and I put out the statement again, the same thing he’d made to

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ABC, substantially. And then it was obvious then, of course, I think, that he was going to run. And then he did the thing himself in front of the cameras. And then I happened to go upstairs back to the office and there was Gene McCarthy. And it was clear from what he said to me that he was firmly convinced that we had put this statement out, that this was the statement that I had put out at midnight. And I think he still believes that, that Kennedy put out that “reassessment” and so forth statement at midnight. I’ve heard a number of McCarthy people saying, “A guy named Mankiewicz was phoning that statement around at midnight”, because some of the press people evidently said that I had called them around midnight. Well, I had, but with a very routine sort of comment on the election. And that was unfortunate. I don’t know where they got that idea, but I can see where in the confusion they may have thought that was the same statement.

HACKMAN: Yes. Let me just ask you – I think this is sort of an important indicator of his attitude. Some people have said that when he came down and talked to Bob Clark that he blurted this out.

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And the way you’re explaining it and the way at least one other person has said, he thought about this and he does this very much...

MANKIEWICZ: Well, he told me he thought about it on the plane. The reason I think he wrote it out is because he remembered very well a half an hour after talking to Bob Clark exactly what the four points were and almost the language of them when he was talking to me over the phone. I don’t think he was reading them, but he was probably looking at some notes because the language held up all the way through and that is not typical of him. If he’d just blurted it out, then he would have called me and said, “Well, I said to Bob Clark something about how I was thinking it over or reassessing or something.” But he remembered all the language and the remembered the four reasons. And one was about Tet and one was about the reaction of the Johnson Administration to the Kerner Commission report and I forget what the others were. But it was clear that he had spent the time coming down from New York thinking about it.

HACKMAN: Why do you think he had...

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MANKIEWICZ: It was quite early. I think he got to the airport at 9 maybe.

HACKMAN: Why though so soon after McCarthy's victory, really the next day? Why does he say this? Is this an emotional response or is this a move to take the limelight away from McCarthy or is it a practical political response?

MANKIEWICZ: I think it was partly an emotional response, partly a political response. I don't think he was attempting to take the play away from McCarthy. I'm not sure he ever realized quite the capacity he had to take the play away from anybody because Johnson was always taking it from him. I think if he'd thought about that he wouldn't have done it because he realized later that it was, that he should have sort of given McCarthy a day or two to savor his showing in New Hampshire. No, I think he felt that, "Well, damn it, I'm in and New Hampshire demonstrates that I should be in" so he just felt – I'm not sure he thought he was going to be hit at the airport. He may very well have written this out with the idea of maybe talking it over and issuing it late in the day. But suddenly, there

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was Bob Clark and the crew and then he had to have something to say and, after all this was what he thought, so he said it. I suspect it was no more archful than that.

HACKMAN: What are the things then that you have to do the rest of the 13th really? Was there anything you had to get underway?

MANKIEWICZ: Well, I had to give that statement a lot of times and read it back and forth and set something up. And then I talked to him too about what he was going to do. Now that was Wednesday. Thursday night we had another one of those manic interludes. We had those upstate New York weekly editors out at the house. I think I've probably told you about that – maybe not.

HACKMAN: What

MANKIEWICZ: That was a funny group. That was an outgrowth of all my activities with the New York press. He'd spoken at their convention a few months before. And the head of it is an interesting guy. They're all Republicans, terrible reactionaries, but the president of it was a good fellow and he liked him. And he said that the National Association of Weekly Newspapers, whatever the hell it's called, was meeting in Washington on

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March whatever it was, and that several of the New York delegates were going to come. And Bob said, "Well, why don't you come out to the house for dinner? We'll set something up." So I set it up. And then suddenly here it is the Wednesday after the New Hampshire primary and I said, "By the way, all those guys are coming to dinner tomorrow night." So he had it. And he invited a lot of people to sort of liven it up a little bit. Fred Harris [Fred R. Harris] was there, Roger Mudd [Roger H. Mudd], Jack Newfield and Sylvia Wright had been covering him all week and they were there. And it was a funny dinner because nobody knew anybody, nobody liked anybody very much but they were rather impressed with the house and all. And I remember one of the great political jokes of Jack Newfield's that night. I was at a table with him and there were some of these upstate weekly editors around. And one of them said to Jack Newfield – they didn't know who Newfield was either – and they said, "Who's going to run for the Senate against Javits?" And Newfield said, "Well, I think probably Percy Sutton [Percy E. Sutton]" – that's what it looked like then. And the guy said,

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"Who's Percy Sutton?" And Jack said, "Well, he's a Negro, he's the borough president of Manhattan; he's a very popular fellow." And the guy said, "Well, he's not going to beat Javits, is he?" And Newfield thought for a minute and he said, "Well, only if the Jews riot all summer." And then as those guys started to go home, he [Robert F. Kennedy] began to talk again. Apparently he took Holly [Holly Mankiewicz] aside that night, which was Thursday night, and took her into one of the little drawing rooms and said, "Well, what do you think I should do?" And she told him he ought to run. And he worried about getting in with McCarthy and she said to him, "You know, it's not like running for president of the junior class if your friend is running." Then he came back and he talked to Sylvia and Jack and me and Holly for quite awhile – I don't think we left until around 1 o'clock. And I think it was pretty good. Holly said to him, "You've got to make up your mind because my stomach hurts." And he said to her, "Well, I think tomorrow your stomach won't hurt anymore." And it was, you know, quite obvious, I guess, that he was

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going to run. And I was supposed to meet him early the next morning because we were going up to New York. That was Friday. He had like a Saints and Sinners luncheon up in New York. I don't know how the hell we got into these things. Jack English [John F. English] – it was always a favor to somebody – Jack English was having a fund raiser in Nassau County. And they always have a thing where they kid some central guest. And it was him and Leonard Hall [Leonard W. Hall]. And what had happened was that – how the hell did it work – somebody, Jack English, I guess, or somebody at the dinner was supposed to say funny kidding things about Kennedy and then he was going to answer funny. And Jack English had gotten my brother Don, who is very active in Nassau County Democratic Party affairs to write the funny lines attacking Kennedy. And I was writing the replies. So it was kind of funny, here was this great kind of political thing going on up there and New York, and what it was my brother and me talking to each other. And Don [Don Mankiewicz] had given me

the lines in advance so that I knew how to answer, and the whole thing was all set up. And he had a couple of other

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speeches that day. And I was going to go along, so I met him down at the shuttle at, I don't know, 7:30, something like that. I guess we were going to take the 8 o'clock shuttle, maybe the 9. And he came and we talked a little bit and then just as he was about to leave he said, "You better stay here. You better get the Caucus Room for tomorrow" or "Get a room for tomorrow." So I stayed and got the Caucus Room, got that reserved by the middle of the day and went over and, you know, checked out things. Of course, by then I guess the story was.... No, I said, "When I start reserving that room, everybody's going to know." And he said, "Well, they're going to know anyway."

HACKMAN: Were there other things at that point that you could go ahead and do in terms of the campaign, any of the early trips, or nothing like that goes on?

MANKIEWICZ: No. Well, we'd been working – that's right. Now, we had spent the day, spent the week, trying to figure out whether to keep or rearrange those two speeches in Kansas on Monday. They had reset four or five

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times because of Senate votes and he didn't get out there. And finally we figured, well, let's go with those – that's right. That's one thing we did the day after New Hampshire was to send Jerry out to Kansas, in other words, not to treat that as a lecture, as the Alfred M. Landum Lecture at Kansas but to get Jerry going on it. And we had Jim Tolan [James Tolan] out there, I think, very quickly. And then we did, I think, line up a couple other speaking dates for the following week. We had on in V...

HACKMAN: Vanderbilt.

MANKIEWICZ: ...Vanderbilt and the other one in the South.

HACKMAN: Yes, it's at the University of what – Alabama?

MANKIEWICZ: University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, yes, right. Right.

HACKMAN: Okay, let me skip back to a couple things then.

MANKIEWICZ: And then there was a New York thing. There was a thing at...

HACKMAN: The John Burns...

MANKIEWICZ: Yes.

HACKMAN: Binghamton.

MANKIEWICZ: ...in Binghamton the following Saturday – yes, something right in there before. And then by that

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time we'd set up a trip to California.

HACKMAN: Yes. Okay, Let me just ask you, what's he think of Burns [Frank Burns] and English? How does he get along with them?

MANKIEWICZ: Well, he liked Burns very much. He was very loyal and he could always count on Burns. I don't think he rated his political judgment very high, but he didn't rate it low. But he liked John and he was always there and he could get things done. He liked Jack English. He had a lot of respect for English's judgment. And he liked Joe Crangle [Joseph F. Crangle].

HACKMAN: Okay, skipping back to one other thing. There apparently was quite a bit of discussion of a trip, a foreign trip, in late '67 or early '68. Do you remember that.

MANKIEWICZ: That's right. Yes, I remember it very well. He was going to go to Eastern Europe, I guess, in November, October or November, and take Ethel and maybe a couple of the kids. And he had in mind that he would get a car and just go to places like Bucharest and Prague. And we started talking to the ambassadors of those countries, all of them. I don't think he was going to go to all of them, but we got them all in the act. But then it leaked out

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through one of the embassies, I think, and the press coverage just started to be enormous. You know, every day I'd come in to him and say, "Well, not we've got five television crews and thirty-eight reporters." And I think that was the reason he finally called it off and decided he'd go in the spring and do it somehow some other way. But it got to be quite a big thing for awhile. And we'd gone so far as to get visas and get it lined up. Angie [Angela M. Novello] would know a lot about those arrangements because she made a lot of them.

HACKMAN: From what you can remember Eastern Europe was really the place seriously considered.

MANKIEWICZ: That was where he wanted to go. That's right.

HACKMAN: Nothing else.

MANKIEWICZ: No, he wasn't going to go to Vietnam.

HACKMAN: I was looking a couple of weeks ago through some of Dutton's memos to Robert Kennedy where he's suggesting all kinds of trips – a kibbutz in Israel and Outer Mongolia and a whole string of places. Can you remember any of them that Can you remember his reaction to those Dutton memos at all on things like this?

MANKIEWICZ: He didn't want to go. He thought he might want

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to go to the Middle East, but he was afraid of it because it was such an obvious political thing, particularly for a New York senator – kind of like wearing an Indian bonnet. The way they all go.... You know, what is it, the three "i" trip: Ireland, Italy and Israel and he just didn't want to get involved in that. Eastern Europe was really on his mind. That's really what he wanted to do and I think partly because Ethel wanted to go. He didn't want to go to Greece and he didn't particularly want to go to northern Africa. I never heard about Outer Mongolia, but I'll bet if that had been seriously pressed, he would have gone.

HACKMAN: Why Eastern Europe, because the trip to Poland previously had been a good one or....

MANKIEWICZ: No, I think Adam, among others, had fascinated him with the idea that the youth upheaval was going on there as well and he wanted to see it. He suspected they had a great deal in common with young people here. I think that was really

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what he wanted to see was the kids in Prague and in Yugoslavia and maybe Rumania. There was a little talk then about Rumania. He didn't really care very much, I think, about going to Russia or even about going to Poland again, but he did want to go to Prague and Yugoslavia and Rumania.

HACKMAN: Okay. The other thing was this Vietnam commission and how.... I guess first, when did you find out about it, and how do you explain it, and how did he explain it, if ever?

MANKIEWICZ: I found out about it the day he announced his candidacy, because George Christian leaked it that afternoon. And I started getting calls from Hugh Sidey and Mel Elfin and I didn't know anything about it and so I went

and asked Ted Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen]. And he said, “Yeah, that’s substantially correct.” And then Sorensen and I worked out a statement on it. But it was clear that Johnson was putting it out. And then, let’s see, where was the Senator by then? I guess he was up in those

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Saint Patrick day parades. Then he came back. I finally met him where? At the New York, at La Guardia? New York Airport, Kennedy? Where were we going?

HACKMAN: He went from New York to Boston, didn’t he?

MANKIEWICZ: Yeah, and then what?

HACKMAN: And then he comes back and goes to Kansas.

MANKIEWICZ: Did we go to Kansas that night, Sunday night? Yes, we did. Yes, we did. And that’s where I met him. At, I guess, at Kennedy, La Guardia. I’m trying to think what the place looked like. La Guardia, I guess. But there was something that had happened. He was mad at me, because somebody had read him the first paragraph of a UPI story and not the second. By the time he got to the second paragraph it was okay. What the hell had I done? Put out some kind of story – it turned out to be absolutely correct – and it had to do with Daley [Richard J. Daley]. Damn, I’m going to go back and think about that. But what had happened was that the White House

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had leaked the story and then he’d put out a statement. He worked one up in New York, I think with Pierre. Somebody – Sorensen. No, Sorensen was down in Washington with us.

HACKMAN: I’ve heard that vanden Heuvel got in on it.

MANKIEWICZ: Probably. Quite probably. About why it was done.

HACKMAN: No, but what I’ve read is that you and Sorensen and vanden Heuvel worked out a story. That’s not correct then?

MANKIEWICZ: No. No. No, I don’t think vanden Heuvel was here.

HACKMAN: Maybe he was at the other end.

MANKIEWICZ: I think he was at the other end. Sorensen and I – I mean we didn’t work out a story – I talked to Ted to find out what the hell happened and then I wrote something out and said, “Is this correct?” and he changed a few words here and there, because he knew all about it. I didn’t know anything about it. But then

I began to see ways in which it could be developed, and I was also trying to

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establish all along the line that leaks had come from the White House and not from us. That seemed pretty clear.

HACKMAN: How?

MANKIEWICZ: Well, because Hugh Sidey told me he got it from George Christian and Roger Mudd told me he got it from somebody at the White House. Mel Elfin wouldn't tell me where he got it, but it turned out he got it from somebody who Christian had given it to. I mean what they did was to give that story to *Time* and *Newsweek* late Saturday so that they wouldn't have time to check it but had to use it, and then Sunday they gave it to the networks so that the networks would have it Sunday night and the news magazines Monday morning. That's right, we left Sunday night. And apparently the story was quite straight forward. I mean it comes down to the meeting with Daley. He had breakfast with Daley the day he made that speech in Chicago, February eighth. Apparently Daley suggested the possibility and he said, "Fine, if it can be done." And then

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Sorensen.... I remember.... Let's see now, I did have a hand in it because Ted was in town for the Gridiron dinner, which was the tenth or the ninth. It was the Saturday before the New Hampshire primary. Now who was it? Some friend of his in the White House.

HACKMAN: DeVier Pierson.

MANKIEWICZ: It was DeVier Pierson. Yeah. Now how did it get to me?

HACKMAN: He talked to the Senator before he went over to that meeting at the White House.

MANKIEWICZ: On Monday.

HACKMAN: Sorensen stopped by the office on Monday.

MANKIEWICZ: Yeah, but somebody told me that the President wanted to see Sorensen the next time he came to town. I saw Ted at the Gridiron dinner and told him that somebody at the White House whom he knew but I didn't – I'd forgotten the name – wanted to see him and wanted him to call the next time he got to town.

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HACKMAN: He said that's DeVier Pierson.

MANKIEWICZ: Yeah. Yeah, and he called him. And I guess Ted.... Oh that's right. Sorensen told me that story and said, "They want to see me Monday. I wonder what it's about." But he said, "Tell Bob I'm going over Monday, but I'll stop by before I go." So he came Monday before he went over there. But that's right. I knew he was going. And he was a little worried, he was curious. By Friday night he was curious as to why the President would want to see him, why the White House had made such an effort to get him. And I guess that's when they began talking about it.

HACKMAN: He told you he was going to the White House, but he didn't tell you he was going to suggest the Vietnam thing?

MANKIEWICZ: No, he didn't know. I'm convinced that he didn't know. No, I'm absolutely certain that he didn't know because he spent some time just saying he couldn't figure out why the White House would want him to come over. You know, he believed

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himself to be in rather ill-favor there. So I think it was the White House that initiated that.

HACKMAN: You know some other people have sort of questioned Sorensen's motives in this whole episode, but in your own mind – there's no doubt in your mind that he didn't know...

MANKIEWICZ: You mean you think he was trying to do it as a last ditch way to keep Robert Kennedy from running.

HACKMAN: Yeah, some people read it that way.

MANKIEWICZ: Well, I don't think so as of Friday night, because I really don't think he knew what it was going to be about at the White House. Now by Monday he may have decided on that approach. I don't know. I don't know. But that must have gone on most of the week. But I had the feeling that Robert Kennedy, at least, never thought that much would come of it, because as I look back on that week now there was certainly no slackening or notion that maybe this is going to work and he's not going to run.

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HACKMAN: Did he ever talk later then about the meeting with Clifford and...

MANKIEWICZ: Not much.

HACKMAN: ...what he was trying to do by going through this thing.

MANKIEWICZ: No well, we talked about it in putting out that statement that he wrote and never went much beyond that. Clifford seemed interested, but then the President said “No”, hung up on who the people were going to be.

HACKMAN: Did he ever comment later about what he thought the White House or Johnson’s motives were in carrying this on? Whether he thought he’d been played for a sucker?

MANKIEWICZ: No. No. No, he didn’t. He thought maybe Clifford was genuine in it. It gave us a chance for a good joke that week though. I remember we were talking, I heard him say in Kansas that he was proposed a commission. He and the President had agreed that there would be a commission to study the war. The only question

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was the personalities. Remember that?

HACKMAN: Martha Raye?

MANKIEWICZ: Yeah.

HACKMAN: Yeah, that’s a good one. [Laughter]

MANKIEWICZ: He wanted Reischauer [Edwin O. Reischauer], Mansfield [Michael J. Mansfield] and Maxwell Taylor. And Johnson wanted William Westmoreland, John Wayne, and Martha Raye.

HACKMAN: Okay, let’s see. You and Dolan had done some work on primaries. Can you remember getting involved in any discussions of which ones you’d go in? You’d mentioned the Wisconsin thing.

MANKIEWICZ: Well, they were pretty obvious really because there only were certain states with primaries that we could get into. Indiana we talked about; Oregon we knew was going to have to be. And there was a little problem with Nebraska having to do with the closing date. Apparently the secretary of state felt that he had the power – because the thing had closed on Friday. In other words, he had to put into the race, into the

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primary, anybody who was of Friday, March 16th, he felt was a candidate. Well, there was no way he could feel by Friday the 16th that Robert Kennedy was a candidate because he didn’t

announce till Saturday, the 17th, but it didn't bother the secretary of state. And I think his interpretation was anybody who announced on the 17th must have been a candidate by the 16th. But whatever it was, he put him in and we didn't think there was any way to stay out of that, although we didn't want to get into Nebraska.

HACKMAN: You didn't want to?

MANKIEWICZ: No.

HACKMAN: I'd heard that Sorensen was pushing for Nebraska.

MANKIEWICZ: Probably.

HACKMAN: New Jersey, can you remember New Jersey being discussed seriously?

MANKIEWICZ: Yeah. We were talking about New Jersey. Kenny O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell] thought there were possibilities there, but finally it was decided to sort of negotiate

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New Jersey rather than to compete. O'Donnell's feeling was if you into a primary, you lost any chance of getting support from the regular organization and would probably lose. And his thought was you could get half the delegates at least, by working with Hughes [Richard J. Hughes]. I think he was wrong. I think all those guys were wrong in every case. I think he could have won any primary he went into and should have gone into them all. But we didn't know that then. And we really, sitting there in March, we just had no idea how weak Lyndon Johnson was and by the time we found it out not only was it too late to do anything about it, but he was gone. Kansas was the real tip off. Everybody was talking about what hawk colleges and universities these were and that he had to be very soft there and talk about some domestic thing – don't talk about the war. My God, I never saw such roaring crowds in my life. I had fifteen...

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HACKMAN: Who was giving that kind of advice, do you remember?

MANKIEWICZ: Well, Jerry got it and I suspect he got it from Sorensen. Vanden Heuvel felt that way. And Jim Tolan had been told that the one university was more hawkish than the other.

HACKMAN: This is the information they're gathering then in the field?

MANKIEWICZ: Yeah. Yeah.

HACKMAN: Is it from Docking [Robert B. Docking] or do you know if it's from other people?

MANKIEWICZ: Some of it might have been from Docking or Paul Pendergast, who worked with Docking, but a lot of it came from New York. There wasn't any difference in the two campuses, and they were both on fire – whatever those enormous field houses hold.

HACKMAN: Fogg Allen Field House.

MANKIEWICZ: Huh?

HACKMAN: The one field house, Fogg Allen Field House. It's a gigantic thing. It holds something like 23 thousand.

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MANKIEWICZ: Yeah. Well, you see, they not only filled those field houses, but they filled the floor. In other words, it wasn't just like at a basketball game, but was whatever the basketball attendance was plus however many you can get on the floor. It was just incredible. At one of them they didn't have the floor; they had kids sitting on the floor but not with chairs, and there was quite a large blank space. And he was a little bit late. And I heard that the tension was so great that kids were throwing paper airplanes from the balcony and as each one would go down if it hit anywhere in the open area, they'd all cheer. You know and really cheer. Fantastic day. Both of those audiences! The night before, I guess, we went to a reception for the Kansas Democratic Party. He spent the night at the Governor's Mansion in Topeka.

HACKMAN: Can you remember anything at all about.... There was a big airport rally when he got off the airplane and he tried to get to

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the.... There wasn't a rally, but there was a big crowd at the Kansas City Airport.

MANKIEWICZ: It wasn't Kansas City, was it?

HACKMAN: Yeah, at Kansas City Municipal he changes planes.

MANKIEWICZ: Yeah. Was it in Kansas City, Kansas or Missouri?

HACKMAN: Missouri.

MANKIEWICZ: Yeah. That's right we changed planes there to the Governor's plane.

HACKMAN: I just wondered if you could remember whether there was any advancing of that trip...

MANKIEWICZ: No.

HACKMAN: ...because I've got a couple of friends from Kansas City who say they put the crowd together. I was just curious.

MANKIEWICZ: There were a couple of colleges that had come in busses, so it's possible. But I don't think there was much.

HACKMAN: When did you sort of discuss with him or with other people, what your own role would be in the campaign? How did that really work out?

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MANKIEWICZ: I don't think I ever did talk to him about it. We sat around Saturday afternoon, late Saturday morning with Steve [Steven E. Smith] over at, I guess, at Teddy's [Edward M. Kennedy] office. Everybody sort of went there. And Steve came in and everybody was sitting around the table I remember Steve threw a bunch of Kennedy pins on the table, which I guess were left over from Teddy's campaign or maybe the '64 campaign in New York, but they just said, "Kennedy". They were those little fold over pins; that was all we had. And we began to talk about campaign responsibilities there, about where Joe would go and where we could get a headquarters. And I didn't notice if Pierre [Pierre Salinger] was there or not.

HACKMAN: I don't think he was back down.

MANKIEWICZ: I don't think he was, but it didn't seem to matter. Everybody sort of assumed that that's what I was going to do. Steve said, "You know, you'll be working with the press, doing whatever you're doing now." There was some talk that I might go to California, but that was postponed – you know, "Let's wait and see how that goes."

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But at that point I think it was generally agreed that Fred and I and at least a couple, one writer or two, would go along. I remember, the first couple of weeks we had no airplane, and it meant that I was also running the transportation department till we got more people. And I remember talking to Steve a number of times about needing an airplane, how that was going to work. But I think it was always assumed that I'd be on the road working with those guys. I was always lining up who was going to fly with us and getting the tickets for a while there. I don't know. There was some talk about what Sorensen.... And then I remember at one point Sorensen called me one morning and told me some campaign titles that I should announce,

and everybody was like the campaign director or campaign coordinator or campaign something or other. And actually it didn't sound right and I talked to Steve about it and he said, "Oh, shit, forget all that. You know,

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We don't have any titles."

HACKMAN: So that was never really taken to Robert Kennedy or do you think Smith...

MANKIEWICZ: No. Well, I know that Ted talked to him once about being the campaign manager and he told him "No".

HACKMAN: Sorensen?

MANKIEWICZ: Yeah. He told him "No", that it would be Steve Smith.

HACKMAN: That last week in New York Salinger's – before he announces – Salinger's sort of in and out of the picture. Are there any problems of what he's saying, if anything, putting out, or what you're putting out?

MANKIEWICZ: No, because Pierre always spoke for himself by then which was always helpful – "I think he's going to run" or "I think he should run." You know, "I, Pierre Salinger, not Robert Kennedy." I don't know. I never worried about Pierre. Everybody was telling me I should worry about Pierre that he was going to move in and be press secretary. I didn't. First of all I didn't care because I assumed that whatever

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I was going to do I'd enjoy doing anyway. And secondly, I never thought that made a hell of a lot of sense. The press was very worried about it. A lot of guys in the press didn't want that to happen, but ...

HACKMAN: They remembered...

MANKIEWICZ: Yeah, I guess Pierre didn't get along very well with them. But Pierre came in and somebody said, "What are you going to do?" And he said he was going to work in the campaign. And I remember the first day somebody said he was going to be press secretary. And he said, "No, Frank Mankiewicz is the press secretary." I assume he'd talked about that. So we never worried about it. I talked to Pierre very early and I always liked him. We worked out a sort of general field of responsibility where I'd be on the road and do the day to day press and he'd do the special stuff. He tried to set up some long range TV stuff, do all the foreign press and do all the sort

of major things that needed advance work, debates, that kind of thing.

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And he'd be the inside man, he'd stay in Washington. He'd get up a daily press digest and send it to us on the machine and be there to put out statements that we had to come up with on the road, and it worked out pretty well.

HACKMAN: There's no clear understanding then in the early period that you're definitely going to California later?

MANKIEWICZ: Oh, no, no. That was an emergency decision. No, no, the decision to go to California was settled right there at the beginning and was settled "No." Somebody else was going to go to California. Chuck Spalding [Charles Spalding].

HACKMAN: Tony Akers [Anthony Akers].

MANKIEWICZ: Tony Akers.

HACKMAN: John Nolan's out there for a while.

MANKIEWICZ: And John Nolan is there. And, no, it was decided I wouldn't go because I had too much to do and was needed on the other thing.

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[BEGIN SIDE II, TAPE 1]

MANKIEWICZ: The California thing was an emergency. That was decided on in, let's see, April.... I don't know. We went back to California or I went or I heard from people in California. No, I think we went there. Did we go there again after the first trip.

HACKMAN: Yeah. Yeah, you're back in California.... Let's see you go out the first trip and then you're back in California April 15th to 20th. There's a trip that goes North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Oregon, California.

MANKIEWICZ: Right. Right. It was that trip. We go to Los Angeles then to the Town Hall.

HACKMAN: Yeah, I believe that's that trip.

MANKIEWICZ: Yeah, that was a very discouraging trip to California. Enthusiasm was down, and all kinds of people began telling me about how awful the

campaign was. Well, that's where we went to the University of San Francisco and he got heckled. And the northern California guy wasn't doing anything, and they had real terrible people working

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up there. And see, there were a lot more complaints from people who weren't, in a sense, weren't even being allowed in. It turned out that was wrong, that it wasn't malevolence; it was just incompetence. People wanted to work and there weren't enough people around to give them something to do.

HACKMAN: Did people feel Unruh was keeping these people out?

MANKIEWICZ: Yeah. Yeah.

HACKMAN: That was a complaint?

MANKIEWICZ: Yeah. Yeah.

HACKMAN: Did you feel that?

MANKIEWICZ: Well, I believed it. I believed it because it was in character with his people, not him. And the trouble with Jess is that he's always – I mean whether psychologically he had a compulsion to or not, I don't know – but he had always surrounded himself with second and third rate men, which he is obviously is not. I mean his staff people are just dismal, and he had them running

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the campaign. And I suspected that a lot of them were venting some old scores, and saying, "No, you can't get into this. You want to do something, do something else." There were a lot of people who had bright ideas and advertising notions and different things that could be done. Now whether they were right or not is another question, but they weren't even being listened to, and I felt that a lot of enthusiasm was being turned off. As it turned out I was wrong, that most of that was not true. Most of it was, I think, ultimately attributable simply to.... Well, he did make a disastrous choice in northern California.

HACKMAN: This is Art Seltzer?

MANKIEWICZ: No, no. Art was in southern California.

HACKMAN: Art's in southern California.

MANKIEWICZ: Art was fine. No, he had a guy named Ray King.

HACKMAN: Ray King, right.

MANKIEWICZ: ...who was just a disaster. I mean a month into the campaign they had no switchboard because he

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wouldn't get one. He felt he could do it with phones. And I don't know; it was just awful. But it turned out to be a pretty broad based campaign. But during that trip we talked a lot, Dutton, the Senator and me, about the California situation and we decided then – what were those dates?

HACKMAN: Well, the trip is the 15th to the 20th, I believe. But let me just see if I can come up with something specific. Town Hall is April 19th.

MANKIEWICZ: Yeah. And where'd he go from there?

HACKMAN: He goes to Fresno.

MANKIEWICZ: Yeah. That was awful too.

HACKMAN: Let me give you this.

MANKIEWICZ: No, lets.... Yeah, all right.

HACKMAN: I've got all his schedules here. [Interruption] These aren't the final ones. And if you want to get....

MANKIEWICZ: Yeah. Yeah.

HACKMAN: There are more specifics, if you wanted to file back through there and ...

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MANKIEWICZ: Fargo, right.

HACKMAN: ...it has the exact stops.

MANKIEWICZ: Sioux Falls, Calico [Indian Village] Red Cloud [school], Oglala [school], I remember that day. Yeah, Rapid City. Eugene, right. Coose Bay, yeah. All of those, right. And then California, and then Nebraska, right. Hartington, yeah. Hartington he liked because of Kathleen's middle name, and his sister Kathleen's husband was Marquis of Hartington. Then Indiana. Yeah. Why does it say Kentucky 24th, Missouri 25th? We didn't do it. Oh, yes, we did. We went to Cape Girardeau.

We didn't go to Kentucky. Well, Louisville, yeah. Wyoming. Now why didn't I go to Wyoming?

HACKMAN: That's another whistle stop, isn't it? That's when they bring.... Is that when they take the train in?

MANKIEWICZ: That's the train, right. Well, that's when I went to California.

HACKMAN: Yeah, you said the last.... Is that part of the last week of Indiana or something? You said you went to California

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then.

MANKIEWICZ: Yeah. I went to California.... I must have gone to California on the 25th. [Interruption] It must have been when I went to California. It was around the 25th of April, and I stayed until.... This is April. Here we are. This May? Yeah. The primary was the seventh, wasn't it?

HACKMAN: Right. California?

MANKIEWICZ: Yeah.

HACKMAN: Sixth.

MANKIEWICZ: No, Indiana. Yeah, it was May the seventh and what I did was I stayed in California, then I went back to Washington on the fifth and then came back out to Indiana for the last two days, for Sunday and Monday, the fifth and sixth, the fourth, fifth and sixth. And then on the seventh, which is primary day, I spent the day in Indiana and then left at 5 o'clock in the morning and went out to California and stayed there from then on.

HACKMAN: What were the assumptions about how California would operate at the beginning of the campaign....

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MANKIEWICZ: I don't know.

HACKMAN: ... let's say before your first trip, second trip, I guess it was.

MANKIEWICZ: I couldn't believe it that they really thought Tony Akers and Chuck Spalding were going to do something. I guess they figured Jess would do it. But see the problem was in Indiana and Nebraska we had the whole

state organization against us so that we could go in and do it all ourselves. It's a little bit like the United States in Vietnam. Well, we didn't worry about Indiana. You know we had one of our own people everywhere – same thing with Nebraska. Oregon had a problem because of Edith Green; she had a veto over who we could bring in. And in California we had a problem with Jess – I mean not a problem. I mean it wasn't necessarily worse, although I think, in fact, it was, because his people were really not at all that good. But so nobody was quite clear what kind of authority Chuck Spalding

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had or Tony Akers. They didn't know California very well. They were forever discovering people who had sort of been long gone and it really was going very badly. I mean I think by along towards the end of April we were behind in California and the whole thing had run out of gas.

HACKMAN: Now someone says that there's an early understanding between O'Donnell and Unruh or that O'Donnell has assured Unruh that he's going to have it that nobody else is going to come in. Is that your impression?

MANKIEWICZ: Yeah. Yeah, well, I'm not sure someone made that understanding, yeah. Yeah. But then there was the thought – it was on this trip, this last trip to California in April – that somebody was going to have to go there, straighten that out, and it should be either Fred or me. We talked about it for a couple of days. Finally, it was decided that I would because Fred had been there too recently, and people would think that he had some ax of his own to grind because he wasn't really on the Kennedy staff, and so people

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would figure – well, he's just pushing his way around. He wants to run for governor or something like that. The feeling was that they could probably trust me more on the theory that I'd stay with Robert Kennedy.

HACKMAN: Where does Seigenthaler [John L Seigenthaler] fit into this, then?

MANKIEWICZ: Well, he comes late. I went out there and spent some time looking around and talking to Steve and told him that we had to have somebody in northern California. And I think at that point it was decided to get John to come out there. I think it was not because of any particular expertise he had about northern California or anything else, but just because he was damn smart and available.

HACKMAN: Now there's some discussion from what I understand as to how you recognize California, whether you do it county by county or whether you do it north-south as traditionally was done.

MANKIEWICZ: Well, I think we did it north-south and then within north and south did some counties.

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HACKMAN: Hadn't Unruh or Unruh's people though attempted to do it the non-traditional way, so to speak, by doing.... Hadn't they planned to do it county by county, early, or do you remember that?

MANKIEWICZ: I think they probably planned to do it by Assembly district.

HACKMAN: By Assembly district. Okay. District by district.

MANKIEWICZ: Yeah. I think that's right. But they weren't getting very far with it and there were a lot of districts where they didn't have anybody. Yeah, they were doing it. They only were doing it by county. They were doing it by county, because they had coordinators in the counties and all, but they were terrible people. I mean in some counties they were great and in others they just weren't doing anything. And his youth operation was very bad. You know, he had a lot of kind of fake youths, people who wanted to be on letterheads and weren't doing anything. He had no kids working at all.

HACKMAN: There's also then, I presume, some debates as to what

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voters you really try to appeal to, whether you try to go the minority route...

MANKIEWICZ: Yup.

HACKMAN: ...or whether you go the suburbs. And can you remember...

MANKIEWICZ: Well, that was always the argument with Art Seltzer, "Where do we go?" Art's feeling was that if we went to our strength, why, that would alienate everybody else. Art believes that.... Well, Art is kind of a bright Dick Scammon [Richard M. Scammon]. I mean he has this firm belief that the average voter is 45 years old and hates kids and he's probably right, but it doesn't make any difference. I could never explain that to him. I'm not saying I'm right, but I mean I could never get across to him my point of view that the intensity of participation is important. And one guy willing to work 12 hours is better than five people who will probably vote. And that argument really was unresolved right up to the end. They didn't want a lot of

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pictures on television of screaming crowds. They wanted him to go to the suburbs and pick up the, what in the East is the blue collar vote. I don't know what it is out there – the Hawaiian sport short vote, I guess. Then we wound up doing a little bit of both. You know, Jerry'd lay out schedules for the day and they'd look at it and they'd say, "My God, you're not going anywhere where anybody lives except blacks". And Jerry'd say, "Well, what should we do?" And they'd say, "Well, go to Pomona. Don't go here. Go there." We'd work out a kind of patchwork schedule that would sort of accommodate everybody.

HACKMAN: You're saying Art Seltzer. Does Unruh ever get down to this level?

MANKIEWICZ: I don't think so. I don't think so. Jesse wasn't very active day to day.

HACKMAN: Why do you think that's so?

MANKIEWICZ: I don't know. I don't know. Well, of course, he traveled a lot with the Senator, but I don't

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really know what he was doing.

HACKMAN: Some people said he was also out, completely out of the state a lot. Do you remember that being so?

MANKIEWICZ: I don't know. I don't know. Was there a legislative session going on? Probably.

HACKMAN: I don't know that. I've just heard some people complain that he was giving speeches around the country, not always on behalf of Robert Kennedy either.

MANKIEWICZ: He was not very much in evidence day to day. But that's his way anyway. Seltzer, Steve Smith [Stephen Smith] – Steve Smith west – and... Who are the other guys? There was another fellow who really was not very competent.

HACKMAN: Was Frank Burns in the campaign much?

MANKIEWICZ: Not much. Not much. There's another guy.

HACKMAN: Tony Vacca's not around yet, is he?

MANKIEWICZ: No. Frank Vacca [Francis Vacca].

HACKMAN: Frank Vacca.

MANKIEWICZ: Yeah.

HACKMAN: Right.

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MANKIEWICZ: No. Well, anyway, Steve Smith is a pleasant enough guy and he takes polls, but I had the feeling that those guys didn't really grasp what was going on. Art Seltzer is a sensible fellow and can run most any campaign but I think not that one.

HACKMAN: Is it likely that it's Unruh's approach to go to the suburbs and to tell his people to basically go to the suburbs as opposed to minority groups – looking forward to maybe a governor's race or something like this?

MANKIEWICZ: No. No, I think that was Steve Smith and Art Seltzer. And Jess is very taken with polls and surveys and probably believed that. It was certainly in Jess's interest that we get as big a majority as possible in California.

HACKMAN: Is there ever a point where there's a confrontation of sorts with Unruh, a meeting or something that breaks things loose or does Steve Smith East and you just sort of bypass.

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MANKIEWICZ: Yeah, more like that. I had a couple of meetings with Seltzer and Smith that got a little confrontationally, but not really, and I think when Steve came out and saw the pictures he just kind of figured, "Well, we'll just work around these guys." And Steve gradually began to flood California with our people and, finally the last week or two we must have had a hundred people out there. He brought a lot of young lawyers out, a lot of guys from New York and from Washington who were taking counties, areas, areas with new cities, coordinating and pulling everybody together and getting out the vote – the whole business. We swamped them ultimately, I think is what happened.

HACKMAN: Swamped the Unruh people?

MANKIEWICZ: Yeah, without any confrontation at all. They went ahead and did their jobs and, as a matter of fact, in terms of getting out the black vote, they did damn well.

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HACKMAN: How much of a problem is money by California time, late California

time, and how does money work in the California campaign?

MANKIEWICZ: Well, it wasn't too much of a problem. We were raising money in California. We had those two galas. I don't think they raised a hell of a lot of money, but there was thought for a while that they would. Those were disasters in terms of the planning and all the people they got mad. I don't think they raised a lot of dough. There was a thought that we'd raise a lot of money in California, so that it wasn't much of a problem. We were spending it. Radio. I remember no one got mad at me because I was spending a lot of extra radio money the last couple of weeks and nobody, you know, nobody even talked about a budget.

HACKMAN: This is money basically coming from Steve Smith. How does it work? How do you spend money?

MANKIEWICZ: It comes from Steve and from.... Well, Fred Papert [Frederick Papert].... I guess Fred had

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the radio and TV money, so there wasn't much of a problem. You know, I'd raise some money and give it to Steve, so I guess he was handling it, but nobody ever talked about, "You've got to watch it because you're getting close to your budget," because we didn't spend a hell of a lot of money on anything except radio and TV.

HACKMAN: Had it been that way earlier in the campaign at any points?

MANKIEWICZ: Periodically, but by California we had it all printed. You see, we had all the posters and the leaflets and the – what do you need – labor and education and farm and all the rest of it. Headquarters was one big barn; so we weren't spending a lot of money especially in California.

HACKMAN: Does Unruh or his people get any money for organizational purposes, or are they using completely what they can raise there or how does that work?

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MANKIEWICZ: No, I think it's all working out of the same pot. In other words, I think Seltzer is getting election day money from Steve.

HACKMAN: Some people have said that one of the reasons Unruh's people weren't more active is because they didn't have any money and they weren't getting any support.

MANKIEWICZ: Well, they didn't for a long time. It's true. It's true. That's one of the

reasons they didn't do very much before I got out there is because they didn't have any money. That's absolutely correct. It turned out that what frustrated a lot of people was merely either Steve not wanting them to have the money or not having been able to give it to them.

HACKMAN: Does this apply on things like the switchboards or anything? That doesn't enter...

MANKIEWICZ: I don't think that does, but in terms of hiring, getting ad people and the rest of it, billboards and so forth, that may have had something to do with it.

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HACKMAN: Do you have any idea of why Smith would feel this way? Is it because he thinks it's too early to spend that much money?

MANKIEWICZ: That may be. That may be. I don't know. I don't know. Or it may be that he didn't have it and didn't want to spend it there until we were beyond Indiana and Nebraska. I don't know. And then he had a lot of funny business with the television because you had Dick Goodwin [Richard N. Goodwin] and John Frankenheimer out there making television films and Fred Papert doing things and everybody arguing, arguing about billboards – A lot of overlapping jurisdiction.

HACKMAN: Well, then I guess there are problems on every side, not just side.

MANKIEWICZ: Yeah, that's right.

HACKMAN: How much of a problem is it for you and, from what you can see, for other people as the campaign develops because of Sorensen, O'Donnell, Steve Smith...

MANKIEWICZ: Out in California we didn't feel it very much.

HACKMAN: In Indiana?

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MANKIEWICZ: Adam used to complain about it. I was never aware of it. I mean I think those guys screwed up some of the other states, but maybe they could have been retrieved. And I couldn't believe what was going on in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. I thought there was just far too much reliance on the establishment, that I was absolutely convinced were not going to give us anything when it came right down to it because Johnson would order them not to give us anything. That would be the end of that. And I didn't think that Richard Hughes would do anything Lyndon Johnson didn't want

him to do – I don't care what the hell he told Kenny O'Donnell – the same for Mayor Tate [James N. Tate]. But out in California I didn't get those vibrations.

HACKMAN: What about after Johnson withdraws? How does that...

MANKIEWICZ: Same. It didn't matter. Johnson's still running it all in the sense that he would have said to them, "You're for Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey]." I mean it just didn't matter that

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much, but I could never get Seltzer to understand the whole question of commitment which I thought was important. He would say, "Well, you're worrying too much about the west side liberals." Well, that's true. You know, there again you got this kind of uptown Dick Scammon approach. The uptown liberals don't amount to a hell of a lot, but you start looking at it in terms of numbers and you get a different picture. I mean I used to say to Seltzer that we had to spend some time and energy there, that we were losing those people, that they represented maybe four per cent of the people in the state, that they were roughly comparable to – in numbers – to the (oh, by no means a hundred per cent overlapping) to, let's say, the number of Jews in California – four per cent or something like that that means roughly eight per cent of the Democrats because they're all Democrats. And they're older so they don't have a lot of children. If Mexicans are eight per cent of the Democrats, that means

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a smaller percentage of voters, but with these people eight per cent means probably a higher percentage of voters, in addition to which it's more than eight per cent because they all vote all the time. And what I finally worked out was that it amounted to about, really about sixteen, seventeen per cent and that was about half of what we were looking at or a third anyway. So we made a determined effort, sort of on the side. That's when we started bringing in all these specialists to speak to different groups and just to be around, to let people know that Moynihan [Daniel P. Moynihan], Harrington [Michael Harrington], and Schlesinger [Arthur M. Schlesinger] and Coles [Dr. Robert Coles] and all these lawyers and law school deans and congressmen, senators, Charles Evers [James Charles Evers], Percy Sutton.... Harry Golden we brought in from out of state and trotted him around to synagogues for a while; Alexander Bickel....Sorensen came out. And I think that was all very helpful. I think you cut into that McCarthy solidity in that camp. But that was the kind of thing I.... because Seltzer and Steve Smith would look at these

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numbers and they'd say, "Well, there's not point in wasting time with 6 per cent of the population." Well, 6 per cent of the population is likely to be about a third of our vote, and we never quite worked out, never quite got agreement on it.

HACKMAN: Who is, if anyone, really in charge of the minority side of the campaign in California? I know Walter Sheridan did a lot of work in Los Angeles. Is there any one person that you people had who was in charge of that side or was it dispersed?

MANKIEWICZ: It was dispersed. Earl Graves came out at the end and did a fair amount. Walter Sheridan [Walter James Sheridan], I would say, probably more than anybody else.

HACKMAN: How is Graves at working with black...

MANKIEWICZ: Not very good. He's all right. He's obviously better than any white, but he's.... I didn't think he was very politically aware. He's all right. He worked hard.

HACKMAN: Any talk about taking any other black people into

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the campaign and putting them in a....

MANKIEWICZ: Well, Charles Evers came out with about three weeks to go or two weeks to go. He came out just for three or four days to give some speeches and go down to the black areas of Los Angeles. And we asked him to stay. And he stuck around for the last two weeks and did some good work. But there was no thought of bringing somebody in like Earl.

HACKMAN: Like Louis Martin was in '60.

MANKIEWICZ: No. No. No. The main trouble with the whole campaign was that it began on the 17th of March where you just.... That's very rare. You usually have about a year to get the organization together and figure who you've got in the different states and where you're going to get the money; you've got the printing down and the buttons are made; you've decided which photo of the candidate you're going to put on the poster and.... None of these things have been done! We didn't have anything. Nothing! You can't

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start a presidential campaign from scratch like that. And a lot of retreads, a lot of 1960 retreads were used and they weren't very good. Chuck Spalding and Tony Akers were just hopeless. Hopeless! I don't know what they were doing.

HACKMAN: What happened to them after you came in?

MANKIEWICZ: Well, they sort of stuck around and did things. I'm not sure quite what they did. Everybody was nice to them. Chuck got married.

HACKMAN: Yeah.

MANKIEWICZ: But there were a lot of mistakes like that.

HACKMAN: Indiana's probably longer than you're going to have time to go into today.

MANKIEWICZ: Yeah.

HACKMAN: Let me just pick up a couple of minor things. How well did the research, the Edelman [Peter M. Edelman]-Gwartzman operation, work in terms of feeding information to the...

MANKIEWICZ: I thought it was very good. The only trouble was that they could feed it in, but we couldn't get decisions rapidly enough. I remember the

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whole last two weeks were spent trying to get some kind of clearance for a tax package or an economic development thing, and I remember going back....The problem was that the Senator himself had to make that decision and I guess he wasn't ready to give the time to it. So there was that problem. There was nobody sort of in charge of getting their material into the campaign – nobody who could say, "All right. That's good. We'll use that," and pass it along and get it done.

HACKMAN: Dutton couldn't say those kind of things.

MANKIEWICZ: Well, he could but he couldn't say them.... He couldn't approve it, no. Un uh.

HACKMAN: Is that a problem on many other things all the way through, getting Robert Kennedy to focus...

MANKIEWICZ: Yeah, because I think he was never clear whether he was the candidate or the campaign manager, because he'd been both. And it was very tough for him to, as it is I guess for a lot of candidates, but particularly for him, that you have to let somebody decide

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what you're going to say. You know he'd never really reconciled himself to that; not only what you're going to say but where you're going to go and so forth. But I thought it was a

good operation.

HACKMAN: What kinds of nuts and bolts was he particularly likely to want to stay in on.

MANKIEWICZ: Well, issues, research, taxes – that kind of thing – and scheduling. Very conscious of scheduling, you know, “Don’t put me in this.” “I don’t want to do that. Yesterday I had five things I didn’t like” – that sort of thing. And the media too, you know, “What good does it do to give a speech at six o’clock in the evening? Nobody’s going to see it.”

HACKMAN: Is there discussion early in the campaign of how you’re going to use media or, let’s just say, how much you’re going to use media versus how much you’re going to campaign in person?

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MANKIEWICZ: No. No, I never got to that. There was never any time for any of that. That was what was so unfortunate. But we would work out that idea that you should ideally be in three media markets a day or at least two, that it was important to do some visual thing in the morning if you were in the West, and how hard it was to move news from West to East. But there was really no planning. There just wasn’t time. I mean how can you plan when he’s got seven speeches that day in Indiana? And he’s exhausted at the end of a day. Fred and I would sit up and talk about a lot of that, but somehow you could never get it translated into decisions. And Adam was always trying to get a decision on how to use the kids and that never quite was resolved. There was all that fighting and arguing about the debate. There was nobody who could say, “All right, we will debate.” You know, it had to be Robert Kennedy, and he either hadn’t made up his mind or decided

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he didn’t want to.

HACKMAN: You want to call time?

MANKIEWICZ: Yeah.

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