

**Joseph F. Dolan Oral History Interview – JFK #1, 12/1/1964**  
Administrative Information

**Creators:** Joseph F. Dolan  
**Interviewer:** Charles T. Morrissey  
**Date of Interview:** December 1, 1964  
**Place of Interview:** Washington D.C.  
**Length:** 50 pages

**Biographical Note**

Dolan, Assistant Deputy Attorney General (1961-1965), discusses John F. Kennedy's (JFK) pre-1960 convention Colorado visits, the Colorado Democratic Party's dislike of JFK, and the 1960 Democratic National Convention, among other issues.

**Access**

Open.

**Usage Restrictions**

According to the deed of gift signed April 14, 1970, copyright of these materials has been assigned to the United States Government. Users of these materials are advised to determine the copyright status of any document from which they wish to publish.

**Copyright**

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excesses of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law. The copyright law extends its protection to unpublished works from the moment of creation in a tangible form. Direct your questions concerning copyright to the reference staff.

**Transcript of Oral History Interview**

These electronic documents were created from transcripts available in the research room of the John F. Kennedy Library. The transcripts were scanned using optical character recognition and the resulting text files were proofread against the original transcripts. Some formatting changes were made. Page numbers are noted where they would have occurred at the bottoms of the pages of the original transcripts. If researchers have any concerns about accuracy, they are encouraged to visit the Library and consult the transcripts and the interview recordings.

**Suggested Citation**

Joseph F. Dolan, recorded interview by Charles T. Morrissey, December 1, 1964, (page number), John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION  
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE

Gift of Personal Statement

By Joseph Delan

to the

John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library

In accordance with Sec. 507 of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended (44 U.S.C. 397) and regulations issued thereunder (41 CFR 101-10), I, Joseph Delan, hereinafter referred to as the donor, hereby give, donate, and convey to the United States of America for deposit in the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library, and for administration therein by the authorities thereof, the tape(s) and transcript of a personal statement approved by me and prepared for the purpose of deposit in the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library. The gift of this material is made subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. Title to the material transferred hereunder, and all literary property rights, will pass to the United States as of the date of the delivery of this material into the physical custody of the Archivist of the United States.
2. It is the donor's wish to make the material donated to the United States of America by terms of this instrument available for research as soon as it has been deposited in the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library.
3. A revision of this stipulation governing access to the material for research may be entered into between the donor and the Archivist of the United States, or his designee, if it appears desirable.
4. The material donated to the United States pursuant to the foregoing shall be kept intact permanently in the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library.

Signed

Joseph Delan

Date

April 10, 1970

Accepted

James B. Rhoads

Archivist of the United States

Date

April 14, 1970

Joseph F. Dolan—JFK #1

Table of Contents

<u>Page</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1	Beginning of relationship with John F. Kennedy (JFK)
4	1956 Democratic National Convention
7	JFK's 1957 Colorado visits
9	JFK's University of Denver's Social Science Foundation speech: February 2, 1958
14, 24	Forming a Colorado Kennedy organization and Bryon R. White
15	JFK's June 1958 Wyoming and Montana visits
17	Dolan's 1958 Colorado state legislature run
18	Colorado's Democratic Party's dislike of JFK
21	JFK's typical campaign trips
22	1959 JFK staff Colorado visits
24	Eugene Cervi
26	Garnering Colorado support for JFK's presidential nomination
29, 34	JFK's November 1959 Colorado visit
31	Pueblo, New Mexico Democratic National Committee Meeting: November, 1959
35	Wyoming Senator Wayne N. Aspinall
36	JFK's June 1960 Colorado visit: Colorado Democratic State Convention
41	JFK's Colorado success
42	1960 Democratic National Convention



First of Two Oral History Interviews

with

Joseph F. Dolan

December 1, 1964  
Washington, DC

By Charles T. Morrissey

For the John F. Kennedy Library

MORRISSEY: Could you tell me how your relationship with John Kennedy [John F. Kennedy] and the Kennedy entourage started?

DOLAN: In 1956, Senator Kennedy was a member of the Senate Government Operations Committee and he was chairman of the Legislative Reorganization Subcommittee. This was the subcommittee to which legislative proposals relating to the federal regulations of the Lobbying Act became assigned. He became interested in the Federal Lobbying Act which was passed in 1946, held as constitutional by the Supreme Court in 1954, and which had always needed and still does need amendment. The Senator made inquiry of a good number of people to suggest amendments to the Lobbying Act and I was one of the persons he asked to comment. Before I had time to complete the comments, Lee White [Lee C. White] called up. Lee White was then a Legislative Assistant to Senator Kennedy. Lee said the Senator was a going to conduct a study of about three month's duration of Lobbying Act proposals, and he said the Senator wanted me to serve as counsel to the Subcommittee. I had never met either Lee or the Senator at the time.

We negotiated on the phone over a period of a day or two and I made arrangements with my law partners in Denver for an absence of ninety days, and then I came back to Washington. We had had some differences as to whether we should wait for the appropriation; whether I should wait in Denver until we got the appropriation, or come on. The Senator wanted me to come on, in typical Kennedy fashion—well, just get here, and we'll work that out—and that's about the only time I differed with a Kennedy and turned out to be right. Well, I got there and we didn't get the money. While I was *en route*, President Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] vetoed the Natural Gas Bill, this was in February 1956, and in his veto message, he referred to the arrogant lobbying tactics of the natural gas lobby. This immediately changed the entire picture in the Senate, and the Senate voted a \$250,000 investigation by an eight-man committee. It was only the third time in the history of the Senate up to that time that a committee had been created that was equally divided by party—four Democrats and four Republicans. This overshadowed and completely eliminated Senator Kennedy's proposal for legislative hearings which were not to be an investigative character but were to be concerned just with legislative proposals to try to improve the Lobbying Act.

[-2-]

The investigation that was voted took a while to get going. It took them a month to select a chairman. Ultimately, they selected Senator John McClellan [John L. McClellan]. In the interim, Senator Kennedy put me on his payroll as a legislative assistant, and I worked with White and Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen] on nickel and dime stuff, the dribs and drabs that they couldn't get to in the office which they would pass on to a new fellow who was just going to be there for two or three weeks. The only things that I got to work on of any significance or interest was the proposal to change the method of electing a president, the Electoral College reform proposals which came to the floor. During this period, Senator Kennedy played a very active role in the debate.

The Senator wanted legislative improvements both in the campaign practices statute, reporting of campaign contributions, and the Lobbying Act but he didn't have any great desire—he didn't have any desire at all—to have a public washing of linen about practices that had gone on, that probably would be improved about reporting. It was generally known then, and it is generally known now, that there is money spent on political campaigns that isn't reported. This is not necessarily illegal, but the statute does not catch all the expenditures or all the contributions. He was interested in seeing that

[-3-]

changed. He was interested, however, in seeing it changed without going through case study after case study showing that Senator So-and-So did this and Congressman So-and-So did that. He felt that we all knew what was going on and we could just change it.

The Committee conducted hearings over a considerable period of time and ultimately made recommendations. My participation was limited. I was an assistant counsel and I couldn't stay for the whole investigation because I had a commitment to my law firm to come back in ninety days and the investigation lasted for more than a year, but it did provide

an opportunity for me to get acquainted with the members of his staff and the Senator himself. That was the first part of the year in 1956, and in the spring of 1957, I returned and once again participated as assistant counsel and participated in writing a report.

You asked if I had any recollection of the '56 convention. The only recollection of any significance concerning Senator Kennedy that I have is that there was no indication in Colorado that he would be a candidate, no sentiment one way, or the other. He was pretty much unknown there—he had never appeared there as a Senator—he had been scheduled once for an appearance at a luncheon club of which I happened to be chairman at the time. That was in 1954, and he had to cancel that because of illness.

[ -4 - ]

Most of the sentiment in Colorado, I would say, was for Kefauver [Estes Kefauver]. There was one Colorado delegate, prior to leaving Denver to go to the '56 convention, who announced that he was for John Kennedy for vice president, which got in the paper because it was so startling, and it was sort of odd that he should mention it and that he should be there. The man was Lawrence Henry [Lawrence M. Henry], who was at that time the Denver County Democratic chairman. He was my law partner, and we had chatted a number of times about Senator Kennedy. He had never met him but he had become convinced by what he had read and what he heard that he was the best man. Not more than three people in the Colorado delegation voted for Senator Kennedy in 1956, which gave him about a vote and a half.

MORRISSEY: Let me go back a bit. If you had never met Lee White or Senator Kennedy, why do you suppose they asked you to come on from Denver to Washington, sight unseen, to take this job you described?

MR. DOLAN: I had been associated with an investigation of lobbying by the House of Representative in 1950 and another investigation of lobbying by the Department of Justice in 1947 and 1948.

Senator Kennedy's candidacy in '56, while not entirely unanticipated was—based on my impression of it as a result of chats with Ted Sorensen before the

[ -5 - ]

Convention—was that everyone was surprised by the manner in which Governor Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson] handled it by putting it on the floor. We had assumed, prior to the convention, that the vice presidential candidate would be selected by the Convention on the recommendation of the presidential candidate, and I can remember talking to Ted the day before I left Washington to go back to Denver. We were talking about whether I would be at the Convention, which was only about eight days away. I said I could be there, and could I be of any use? We agreed that I couldn't be of any use, because he said there were only going to be five people in the room when the candidate was picked. Maybe I said five and he said six or he said seven and I said five then we named them: the Presidential candidate, the Speaker of the House, etc. We were all quite surprised. As a matter of fact, when I next saw Senator Kennedy, the next February, 1957, when I walked in the door of this office he greeted me

with a big smile and said, “Where were you when I needed you?” I said I was in Denver where I was supposed to be. He laughed and used that line that he used on many other occasions: “Well, just think, if you had been there—it was so close we just don’t know. Any little thing might have made a difference. You might have made the difference my career would have been finished, so it’s all right.”

[-6-]

In 1957—do you want to talk about his trips, the visits he made to Colorado? I think that’s about the best area I could tell you about—his pre-1960 convention activities. In May of 1957, Senator Kennedy was scheduled to appear in Colorado Springs, Colorado, before a national convention of gastroenterologists (I’m not sure I’ve said that word since 1957, so maybe I’m garbling it). Nobody knows how that happened. I heard that the president of the society or the out-going president of the society was from Boston, and he had gotten hold of Senator Kennedy and said, “Now look, I’ll be president of this association but only if you’ll come and address our convention next year.” So he had an hour in Denver between planes on the way to Colorado Springs, which is seventy-five miles south of Denver. That was on a Saturday afternoon, I guess, and he had an hour or less on Sunday night about 11:00 o’clock on the way back. I arranged a reception at the airport for him, to which we invited the editors and publishers of the two Denver newspapers and a representative group of Denver Democrats, and Colorado Democrats. I’d say a group of fifty people altogether. This was a sort of get acquainted, say hello, type of party, and it was a better thing to do than spend the hour in a coffee shop. I had suggested that he have a reception. I had gotten back to town about three days

[-7-]

before the reception. Before I left Washington I said, “You’re coming through Denver. Why don’t I have a reception at the airport?” and Ted Sorensen said, “That’s a good idea. Why don’t we have a little reception?” Nothing was ever said about why, who we would invite, then or later. I never had any doubt as to why I was doing it.

He made a very good impression personally. We didn’t do anything on the way back. All I remember is we had scrambled eggs for breakfast before he got on the airplane. We sat there in the restaurant, and there wasn’t a soul there that recognized him although he was a nationally known figure. He had been in that convention in ’56—he was so young and boyish looking, slender, and unobtrusive, but we just sat there quietly and people didn’t recognize him. That was the last time *that* happened. On all his other visits, he was surrounded by quite a few people. He was recognized as a national figure.

The next time he came back to Denver was about six months later. I might say he came to Colorado about every six months or so from the period of the ’56 convention to 1960, and that was pretty much at my suggestion. He would talk about it when he was there and he would say, “When do you think I should come back?” and I would say, “Six or eight months from now. Don’t push

[-8-]

it. You've got quite a few more places and we just have a few electoral votes. You spend your time in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, and California." He felt that way too.

In November of 1957, he came in early in the morning, coming up from Oklahoma City en route to somewhere else, and I can't recall what we did. He was probably not there for more than an hour. I think we had a press conference. I know we didn't have any meeting with Denver Democrats or anything else like that.

Then about three months later, Senator Kennedy was making a trip to Arizona to speak at a political gathering in Phoenix or Tucson. The plane scheduling was such that he would come up to Denver in the early evening and go out on what we called at the time "The Red Eye Special," which was a non-stop plane that left about midnight and got into Washington about 5:00 or 6:00 in the morning. It was suggested to me that we try to employ his time to the greatest advantage at some sort of meeting.

We finally settled on an appearance before the Social Science Foundation of the University of Denver, which was a lecture series the University conducted each winter. They had people like Harrison Salisbury [Harrison Evans Salisbury]—they would have a foreign ambassador if he happened to be

[ -9 - ]

passing through town. An interesting aspect was that, although it was free, it was by subscription in the sense that you had to send in a stamped, self-addressed envelope to get tickets. The meetings were usually held out at the University, which is in the southern part of Denver in a hall that held about eight hundred people. The then head of the Social Science Foundation, which is the name given to the Political Science or Foreign Relations Department of the University (it's not really a foundation, it's a department of the University but it was endowed by a foundation and the foundation said it should be called that), thought we needed a bigger auditorium, so we took one downtown that held somewhere around two thousand people, and I thought we could fill that. They sent out their notices. There was no publicity in the paper, except maybe for a little squib in the society pages that on a certain day in February Senator John Kennedy would come to speak about foreign policy. After the first day's return on the letters that went out—they had a mailing list, they sent them out to several thousand people—after the first day's mail, they hired another auditorium. They said they needed the large arena where basketball games were played, and this seated eighty three hundred people. This just absolutely petrified me. I was just so in awe of the prospects of

[ -10 - ]

trying to fill the place that I didn't have the nerve to call Sorensen and tell him that they had changed it. I tried to leave it ambiguous with this fellow—you know—you hold on to the other auditorium and let's ride with it, and I was trying to ride both horses at once. No, he said, we've given up the other auditorium. We're stuck, got to fill it. We were busy conjuring up ways of handling the situation. We could put drapes down at the one end so there wouldn't be pictures of an empty auditorium, etc.

The Senator came in from Phoenix that night on a small private plane. He had been tossed around quite a bit in a bad snowstorm coming over the mountains. He wasn't in a real happy frame of mind—he wasn't complaining, but he just wasn't smiling. When we got in the car and started downtown, he wanted to know where we were going. I told him we were going to such and such. He wanted to know what was the program. I told him what the program was. He had a prepared speech. We had a reception arranged afterwards in the same building for the Denver District Captains, Democratic leaders equivalent to ward leaders in a city like Chicago, or assembly district leaders in a city like New York. He said, "Joe, how many people will be there?" I said, "Well, Senator I don't know. There'll be a good crowd, I'm

[-11-]

sure. It's a pretty clear night, too." But I wasn't sure. He said "Well, how many? How many does it hold?" I said, "About eight thousand." "Eight thousand!" He didn't think we would fill it either.

We got down there—they had an arrangement whereby you drove the car right into the basement of the building. We drove right in, and then we walked up a ramp and walked into the arena and looked up, and there were eighty three hundred people. The place was filled to the rafters. He was about an hour late, because of the airplane and the storm. The crowd was very polite about it, and they were just beginning to get a little restless when he walked in. They gave him a good reception. I felt that night that, for first time, he was going to be elected president. Anyone that can pull eighty three hundred people who have to send in self-addressed stamped envelopes in the city of Denver in February is going to be president.

His speech was delivered sort of listlessly. It had a lot of content to it, but he hurried through it which he did with all his speeches about that period. He would work on his speeches quite a bit himself. He would go over three and four drafts I guess, and he always gave me the impression that he thought everyone in the audience had heard the speech as much as he had, and it was just a question of getting through it in a

[-12-]

hurry. Everybody would say, "No Senator, you should slow down." He'd say, "Yes, yes, yes," and go right on.

The saving grace in this appearance—the appearance wouldn't have been too good if he had just had the prepared speech—the saving grace was that they had a custom of having cards submitted by members of the audience with questions on them, which were to be answered by the Senator if he wanted to. He knocked about three or four home runs right out of the park and the tougher the question, the better the answer, in his usual fashion.

So it ended up as a very successful appearance. We had the reception afterwards, and that went off quite well also. He stopped by county chairman Henry's house on the way out to the airport, and Mrs. Henry fed the Senator—and that's the night we decided Lawrence was going to stay hitched all the way through the Convention no matter how many ballots.

Pressure in the Democratic Party in Colorado was mostly Stevenson. There was a little for other candidates, Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey], I guess Kefauver too, but Kennedy sentiment at that time seemed to be non-existent. It wasn't that there weren't people around who were for Kennedy, but we simply hadn't found them yet. That night on the way to the airport, the Senator talked to Larry and myself about organization—if we ever decided

[-13-]

to organize in Colorado. Two names were mentioned as possibilities to head up a pre-convention organization. The first I mentioned is someone I suspected would have come to him from another source, and I wanted to knock it down. I gave all the reasons why that fellow, although he looked good on paper, would not be very helpful and the Senator very quickly agreed. The other man—I said I didn't know whether you would be able to get the fellow, everybody is after him to do everything. I just have never talked to him about it, and I hardly know him, but it would certainly be a ten-strike if we could get him and that's Bryon White [Byron R. White]. The President said "Oh, Whizzer? I know him. How is he?" We talked then about Byron White. By coincidence Bryon had been sitting in the front row that night—he was member of the board of the Social Science Foundation of the University, and he had been sitting in the front row of the seats on the floor of the arena when the Senator walked in to make his speech that evening. The Senator went right up on the platform—there were a number of people on the platform and there were two seats down on the edge of the floor—Ted Sorensen and myself were not on the platform. The empty seats were right next to Bryon White, and as we sat down I reached across and introduced Ted and Byron, but we didn't talk to him afterwards. We

[-14-]

left the situation that way as far as Byron was concerned, as far as convention organization was concerned. This was February 1958, pretty far away from the convention, but there were some tacit assumptions that maybe there might be a decision to go for the nomination, and if there was, what would we do?

Then the Senator didn't come back—this shows September, 1958, but he came back before that, he had another visit there. I know because I ran for the legislature in '58 in Colorado—the Primary, the designating assembly was in June '58. Here it is—in June of '58, he had a Montana trip. That's right. The next time he came out to the west to my knowledge was in June of 1958. He made no appearances in Colorado. He came in on the *Caroline* to Denver about 7:00 o'clock on a Sunday morning, and I was invited to go to Wyoming and Montana with him. I got on the airplane, and went up to Casper to a statewide luncheon of the Democratic Party there. It was prior to their primary. They had the senatorial aspirants of the Democratic Party there—Gale McGee [Gale William McGee], and a fellow named Hep Armstrong.

It was a welcome opportunity for me, because I was trying to talk about reclamation, and the Senator was not regarded in Colorado as God's gift to the west.

[-15-]

They tended to think of him as an Easterner—he dressed like an easterner and the western-oriented Democrats, who didn't like him anyway, harped and carped about this, the fact that he didn't talk about western issues, and they said he didn't vote right on western issues. We were able to see from the airplane the dividing line of the Northern Colorado Water Conservation District, I remember. It was a very clear line from the air. The Colorado Big Thompson Reclamation Project was developed in the 1930's, and as you go north from Denver and come to the edge of that district it just turns from green to brown, just right there, and it is impressive from the air.

He was well received in Casper, and he went on from there up to Billings, where there was a statewide Democratic dinner. Ted and Camilla Sorensen [Camilla Palmer] were along on that trip. On none of his Colorado trips did Mrs. Kennedy [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy] come along. She was scheduled to come on one but at the last minute wasn't able to. Camilla and Ted were especially good on that trip, because they had quite a few Scandinavians up there in Montana, and they "ohhed and ahhed" over the name Sorensen and the fact that an Irishman—Irish names go pretty well in Montana too—would have a Sorensen on his staff and with him. On these trips Ted worked very hard in Montana and Wyoming,

[-16-]

and I tried to help him on this occasion, but I didn't expect to go back in there. You'd try to pick up names, the state chairman, the county chairman and the vice-chairman and get the face with the name, and find out who they are, chat with them. Later on, after every Colorado appearance, we would try to generate a little correspondence, drop notes and say it was nice to meet you and stimulate a reply that would set up a dialogue by letter, and if this person came to Washington for something or other, he would feel very welcome to drop into the Senator's office to see him or to see Ted Sorensen, and we would try to make friends wherever we could.

In June, when the Senator was in Denver, he was in an incident, which, at least to me, was amusing. I was about to come before the designating assembly for the state legislature. In Colorado, we have a direct primary election in September, and you go to the ballot in the order of the vote in the designating assembly, and when people vote in the primary there is a tendency to vote for the first man first, then the second name because, they think, they are the Democrats who are organization Democrats rated—this fellow first so he must be better—some people will say that. There is a great fight to try to get the top position on the ballot.

[-17-]

When the Senator came to Colorado, he wanted to endorse me. He said, "Now why don't you put out a statement. Say what you want and quote me or, give me a quote and I'll say it." I changed the subject on him, and he brought the conversation back to it, and I changed the subject again, and finally a sort of quizzical look came over his face and he looked me in the eye and said, "You think I'd hurt you, don't you?," and I was forced to say, "Senator you'd hurt me in the designating assembly and in the primary, I think, but in the general election, if

I get by the primary, I will welcome your support,” and he laughed and said, “All right.” The day after the designating assembly, I had a telegram from him—I did fairly well in the designating assembly—and he sent me a wire the next day saying: “Congratulations, I knew that guilt by association would be rejected by such an enlightened city as Denver,” which made me sort of ashamed of myself.

MORRISEY: Why did you feel that his support would hurt you in the designating assembly?

DOLAN: Nobody liked him. They thought he was an Easterner and that he represented the East and if they wanted an Easterner they’d pick Stevenson. At that point, the Colorado Democratic Party was firmly in the control of the liberals. The liberals at that time, and until he

[-18-]

became President, always regarded John Kennedy as quite a conservative. I would argue with them at great lengths that the most conservative candidate to come before the Convention was going to be Stevenson, which was my opinion, and that Senator Kennedy was as liberal as Hubert Humphrey, which we were always trying to persuade people—that he had a voting record as liberal as Hubert Humphrey. They’d hop on one vote—his voting record in the Senate. It had been an educational process and a broadening process, which has occurred in many, many people who have served in Congress. People, naturally, who did not want him to be nominated, it’s fair game, went back to the old votes. It’s the oldest game in the world. While we would try to offset it, it took time, and you could offset it with what he would say when he was in Colorado, how he would act towards people, how he would react towards questions, but it was a process that took time and a lot of work. You had to cultivate the grassroots quite a bit, which he was willing to do and at which he was very good.

MORRISSEY: Were some of these Stevenson people especially dubious about Kennedy’s stand on McCarthyism?

DOLAN: Yes, you heard about that. They would say that he hadn’t voted on the McCarthy [Joseph R. McCarthy] resolution and we’d always go out for something similar—I can’t think of anything

[-19-]

on McCarthyism, but usually you could find something similar about some other candidate and they’d say, “Well, he did thus and so,” and you’d come back with So-and-So did thus and so, and they would say, “Oh, that’s different.” I always thought it was more emotional than logical. You couldn’t analyze it, you couldn’t reason with people—they just weren’t ready for him. It was a phenomenon that has presented itself too, I think, to John Kennedy, to Robert Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy] and to Teddy Kennedy [Edward M. Kennedy]. The country seems to be full of people who like the Kennedys, but in the future tense, not now,

but some time in the future. They thought John Kennedy should do a few things more before he ran for the House, then they thought he ought to take three more terms in the House, then they thought he ought to take three more terms in the House before he ran for Senator. They thought Teddy's candidacy was the most outrageous thing of all, running for the Senate from being Assistant District Attorney, and Bobby should try cases for ten years before he was Attorney General, and he ought to live in New York for ten years before running for Senator. That's the way it's been, but it has seemed to work out all right.

He came back to Colorado in September of 1958. That was immediately following the Primary, which was

[-20-]

held on the second Tuesday. The occasion was an invitation to a third congressional district dinner in Colorado Springs. At that time, the third congressional district covered the southern portion of the state east of the continental divide. It was the Sunday night following the Primary. There was a reception on the terrace of the Antlers Hotel there, attended by just about everybody that went to the dinner, and the dinner was attended by a capacity crowd. I'd say there were four hundred or five hundred people. The Senator was received quite well and made a few new friends. After the dinner he went up to Denver where he cut, sometime after midnight or 1:00am, a fifteen minute tape for the Democratic Congressional candidate from the second congressional district, Bryon Johnson [Byron Lindberg Johnson]. The second district at that time covered the Denver suburbs and northeastern Colorado. On that trip, he had come in from somewhere else, some other part of the west, and on Monday morning, he went off to Laramie and from there to Kansas City and from there to Tulsa. I happened to know that because I notice in the file here that a package arrived late and I had to track him down to find out where to send it, and they were moving. Most of their trips were like that. When I'm telling you about Colorado, it is just a visit of eight hour or ten hours. Seven or eight states probably were covered in the same fashion that they did Colorado.

[-21-]

Senator Kennedy didn't come back to Colorado, according to my recollection, until November 1959. However, we did have visits from time to time from other people on his behalf. Although I don't have the dates or the sequence of it at my fingertips, I can remember a trip by Larry O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien]. I can remember Bob Wallace [Robert Ash Wallace] being in Colorado on at least two occasions prior to the Convention, and Teddy about three times. In June of 1959, the Democratic National Committee met in Denver. That meeting was attended by Ted Sorensen and Bob Wallace on behalf of Senator Kennedy. One of the times Bob Wallace visited Denver I remember we had a brunch on Sunday morning for a group of 20 to 25 people who indicated some sentiment for Senator Kennedy. It was an occasion where Wallace would get up and talk about how well they were doing elsewhere. I guess when he was in Montana he talked about how well they were doing in Colorado. We didn't have any rigid security checks to get into the room; spies would have been welcomed. It was sort of a get-together to encourage the people to encourage one another. You know,

“Yes, you’re not the only one who is for Senator Kennedy.” Ted Sorensen did one or two of those also. We didn’t have any trouble finding enough people to come to breakfast, or to come to lunch

[-22-]

who were interested in John Kennedy for President, even in 1959, but it was quite a problem to find three or four who had the potential of being delegates, even at a half vote each.

There was some Irish sentiment. Some of the people in the Denver, political organization would just be for any Irishman for anything. There were others, who had read articles that Senator Kennedy had written and had become persuaded that Stevenson would not be successful if he were nominated again, and they were somewhat reluctantly and gradually looking for someone else, someone who had some intellectual appeal, and we were wooing them.

In early spring, in about April of 1959, when the legislature was in session, I can recall the Senator telephoning me and asking me if I had seen a poll that some Chicago paper had. Some Chicago daily newspaper had mailed a poll to all the delegates to the 1956 Convention asking them if they were delegates in 1960 who would they prefer for President of the United States. I think, of the Colorado delegates, ten of them had returned their cards, and it showed John Kennedy with a vote and a half— three people. He said, “That’s terrible. What do you think of that?” I said, “I think it’s pretty high.” He didn’t laugh, but it *was* high. We had

[-23-]

about a half a vote at that point, of the 1956 delegates. But you could see if you looked ahead to 1960, that you were going to have more than a half a vote in 1960, and it was just a question of when you harvest it. He thought that we should move into a phase of open activity within the state—formation of an organization to advance his candidacy. We agreed that I would chat with Bryon White about it, and see whether or not he was interested.

I approached Byron, and he was interested. He is a man who can ask many and searching questions, and he did. He had to fit this activity into the context of a full-time law practice in a very busy law firm. He had to consult with his partners about it, and he took a few days to decide for himself whether he could be useful. He got some information from me as to how I thought he could be useful by asking me rather searching questions, like “How could somebody that doesn’t know anything about politics possibly help you fellows who know all about it?” At that time, the only people who were publicly associated with the Kennedy candidacy in Colorado were myself and the Denver Democratic chairman, Larry Henry, my law partner. We were generally regarded as being in his pocket. A weekly newspaper, called the *Cervi Journal*, edited by a strong Democrat named Eugene Cervi, who had been Democrat state chairman at one point

[-24-]

and who had run for United States Senate against Ed Johnson [Edwin C. Johnson] and had been defeated in the primary, took digs at Senator Kennedy with a fair degree of frequency, about once a month. He'd talk about "this brash young man." That was about the most publicity that Senator Kennedy got in Colorado, these knocks that we were getting in the *Cervi Journal*, which we thought were not all lost. We would circulate them on a selective basis to people who didn't like Gene Cervi, and he was not unanimously popular within the State. So to get the backlash, we'd say, "Look what Gene Cervi says about him." Cervi developed an interesting theory that I had come to Colorado from Boston, which I hadn't, and that Ambassador Kennedy [Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr.] had sent me out with a satchel to buy votes. I kept sending clippings to Ted Sorensen saying that we might as well be hung for sheep as a lamb—"If you've got the name you might as well have the game. We would organize this a lot better if we had a little money. They say we've got the money—send it." Ted always said, "You've got a great sense of humor. Keep up the good work!" Anyway, Byron decided that he would be helpful, that he wanted to be helpful. He formed an impression of Senator Kennedy when he knew him in the service, and he had known him casually to some extent when Bryon was in Europe as a Rhodes Scholar and the Senator was

[-25-]

with his dad over in England, and on the Continent. They had spent some time together in the summer of 1959. They traveled together for a while, about a week.

Once Bryon got with us we really started moving. He was quite methodical and his football approach paid off. He'd say, "Well, somebody is going to get knocked on his rear end, probably us. Let's see." Then he'd just go right in. He started off by approaching then National Committeeman, George Rock [George F. Rock], who died in January of 1960. He told him that we were going to try to get some support for John Kennedy in Colorado, and we would like to have his help. George said there's no sentiment for Kennedy in Colorado. I remember that George said, "Joe Dolan is the only one in Colorado for John Kennedy." Byron said, "Oh, no, I am too and there are others," and named the others. George was for Stevenson, and although he was a personal friend of Bryon's, and good friend of mine, and a former boss of mine, we just weren't able to budge him a bit. We also went to visit the democratic governor, Steve McNichols [Steven L.R. McNichols], to announce our intentions. He had been mentioned at that time as a possible favorite son from Colorado. This phenomenon was beginning to appear in various parts of the country, and Catholic office holders were being mentioned as favorite sons or vice presidential

[-26-]

possibilities, and I think it was pretty well recognized that John Kennedy would go all the way, go for broke, but he wasn't running for vice president. There seemed to be any number of people who thought, "well, if a Catholic can't make it for president, maybe we should put on up for vice president." So Steve was not willing to commit himself at that particular point for any candidate. He said that he thought the West should organize as a region, so that they would have a stronger voice on the issues with the new president. We quickly pointed out to him that they couldn't organize as a region. You didn't nominate a region at the Democratic

Convention, you nominated a man, and you had to pick a man, and who was going to be that man? He was later mentioned as a regional vice presidential candidate, and in a sense for a period became an antagonist, from my point of view. He wasn't with us, so he had to be against us. He, I'm sure, didn't regard himself as such. He was doing his job as governor in saying that Colorado should not be committed that early. George Rock felt the same way. From the standpoint of the party the prevailing attitude was that we're a small state, let's not get committed this early, let's wait and see. The argument we used was that, the smaller a state, the earlier you commit. Get

[-27-]

yourself a horse and go! We thought they ought to go for John Kennedy.

Byron started to make trips out around the state, over on the western slope and up into northern Colorado. He would drop in on the county chairman, and he would try to find somebody, some soul somewhere, who liked John Kennedy, and it was less difficult every trip, and we started to try to find our guy, try to find somebody in each county who was a potential delegate because he was county chairman—or if the county chairman was dead against us, we would try to find a fellow who couldn't be turned down, a good contributor, or he had run for office in a trying election and lost, and people owed him something and we wanted to collect. That was the game. Find that fellow that the people can't run down, even though you don't have a majority of the votes in the area—if you found the right person you could get them on as a delegate anyway.

Throughout this period from 1957 on, each year in March the party had its annual statewide meeting, its annual Jackson Day dinner, which was always held in Denver. We had a fight each year to try to get Senator Kennedy invited, and we never succeeded. We never could get the state organization to ask him to the Jackson Day

[-28-]

dinner or to any statewide function. It reached the point in November, 1959, when John Kennedy said through Sorensen: "I want to appear at some kind of a party function out there. Now let's get on going." We couldn't get the Denver county chairman, who was for Stevenson, to invite Kennedy. We couldn't get the State chairman, who was for Hubert I guess. Finally, we decided to invent a committee, so we invented a "Metropolitan Democratic Dinner Committee." We wrote to each of the five-county chairmen. We said that Senator Kennedy wanted to come to Colorado to speak to a dinner. Could we ask the Democrats in their county and would they have any objection to serving on the committee? They all said "yes." Although they would sponsor it, not one of those five county chairmen was for John Kennedy. It was sort of interesting, although they wouldn't sponsor it themselves, they were willing to be part of the Committee. We immediately slapped out a letter with the names of the five people on it as co-chairmen, and then organized the dinner ourselves. On the Monday before the dinner, the dinner was to be held on a Saturday, I can remember we had less than ten tickets sold. You had two very scared little boys I think in Byron White and Joe Dolan with John Kennedy coming into town in November 1959 and we knew we better fill up the house or we'd have a new

[-29-]

organizing committee in Colorado, and we did. Actually he did when the publicity got out that he was coming. The dinner was priced low, just to pay the cost of the dinner and get exposure, and fill the house (the hotel held about eight hundred people).

That November appearance was for another reason. The Senator was coming to address a Monday luncheon of a National Convention of Municipal officials, I guess it was American Municipal Association. We had him come out on a Saturday morning to Denver, get in the car, and we picked people to ride in the car with him, somebody to drive and somebody to ride and they were people who we wanted to give an hour's exposure to him. Byron didn't ride with him and I didn't ride with him. This was a general procedure that we followed on *all* his appearances. We would stay in the background and try to expose him to people so that he could work on them himself. He went up to Boulder, where there was a reception at the University to meet the University Young Democrats. He spoke to the, answered questions. All members of the Boulder Democratic Central Committee were invited to that reception. He went down to a football game for a while, then went back into Denver. The Denver Democratic District Captains, who were then about seventy-two in number, were invited up to his room on a

[-30-]

staggered basis so that there would never be more than about eight in the room, although some of them came right in the beginning and stayed right through. But he was able to meet them in small groups, and talk to them individually as separate persons. The dinner was on a Saturday night in Denver. He had the *Caroline* on that trip too.

Sunday morning, in company of the Denver Chairman, Larry Henry, and the National Committee, George Rock, Bryon and myself, he flew down to Pueblo, which is 135 miles south of Denver. The Pueblo County chairman was a railroad worker named Philip Muhic, who had for very good reasons earned the nickname of Tiger. Tiger had probably only a grade school education, and he constantly smoked a cigar. He was one of those people who are for John Kennedy all the time. He had been for somebody else before, and he had figured out in his own mind why he couldn't support that fellow anymore, but didn't need any persuasion, he just naturally liked John Kennedy and admired him and he stayed with us all the way. He was really the boss of Pueblo. It wasn't a particularly patronage-oriented party setup, but he knew how to wiggle all those votes out. Pueblo usually voted as a unit. I think he was a pretty good man to have in your corner and we had him. On one of the early occasions when Tiger

[-31-]

was for us but weren't—once somebody was for us the next thing we wanted to know was how many ballots. If we had two people who were for us from the same area if, well suppose they have 124 ballots like in 1924 in Madison Square Garden they had more than one hundred ballots, and that was the example we'd use—they had the two-thirds rule at that time

and now I think conventions are such that you're never going to have more than three ballots again ever—but we'd look for people who would stick on ballots, who didn't have anything else to do, who would get there and stay, who had closed minds on the matter, not open to persuasion. That's the kind of fellow Tiger was, but before we were sure that Tiger was that kind of fellow there was a meeting of the National committee held down in Santa Fe, New Mexico. I didn't go down, but Byron and Larry Henry went down. Teddy was there and Senator Kennedy was to come later. Teddy played a pretty good joke on Tiger. Tiger came in without a reservation and ended up about 2:00 in the morning saying "I'm ready to go to bed and I don't have a place to go to bed." Teddy said, "Well, Tiger, I've got just the place for you. The Senator's not coming in until sometime tomorrow. Why don't you take his room? He wants you to have it." Tiger said all right, and went into the Senator's suite and got into bed and went to sleep. Teddy knew well that

[-32-]

the Senator was coming in at 4:30 or 5:00 in the morning, so Teddy went out and met the plane and brought the Senator in and told him about the joke. The Senator went into Tiger's room and shook him and woke him up, and there's Tiger sitting there staring at John Kennedy whom he worshipped. John Kennedy shook him and said, "What are you doing in my bed? What do you mean by this?" It took a while for Tiger to know it was a joke.

From then on, we never had any trouble with Tiger. He'd say, "What do you mean am I for John Kennedy? I slept in his bed down in Santa Fe!"

Well, Tiger arranged a good reception for us—coffee out at the motel near the airport in Pueblo on that Sunday morning. From there we went on down to the T.V. station and the Senator appeared on a half-hour quiz show. Then we went over to a restaurant where there was a private luncheon for a group of people who had a good potential for being delegates. From there we flew on to Cheyenne where there was a late afternoon reception. After the reception the Senator went on over to the Governor's mansion and talked to Governor Hickey [John Joseph Hickey] and National Committeeman McCracken [Tracy S. McCracken]. He went over by himself, and we met him later. Teddy was on that trip and had advanced him. We went back into Denver late that night.

[-33-]

The following morning the Senator went over to the Colorado A.F.L.-C.I.O. [The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations] state headquarters, went around from office to office, meeting all the head business agents of the local unions—spoke to some people there. Oh, Sunday night when he came into Denver, he went on to a T.V. station and did a half-hour quiz show with a fellow named Max Goldberg, and he made a very good impression and did himself quite a bit of good because it was advertised and quite a few Democrats watched it from home. He was always at his very best answering tough questions, surprises. There was always the fellow who said to himself, "Well, here's where I'm going to stick him," and comes up with that surprise question. Even if it was as surprise, he did pretty well and most of the time it wasn't a surprise because he had been asked it in three or four other towns. There are only a certain number of questions you can

ask. He always did very well if they popped a local issue question at him, although he didn't really know what the local issue was. He'd say, "Well, I don't know about that, but I can say this," and then he would say something general. He wouldn't try to bluff his way through.

On that Monday, he also went to a reception of businessmen, which Bryon set up, to which we invited some people who we thought at least had open minds and

[-34-]

might turn out to be contributors, if not delegates. I think we had only one potential delegate at that meeting, and he didn't turn out to be a delegate. Monday noon he addressed the Municipal Association—the reason he was really in Denver—all this other just extra.

In the afternoon we all flew over to Grand Junction, which is 275 miles west of Denver, to a fourth congressional district dinner. The fourth congressional district at that time included the entire western slope of Colorado west of the continental divide, and three counties on the eastern slope. The Congressman from that district since 1948 had been Wayne Aspinall [Wayne N. Aspinall], who was chairman of the Interior Committee by then. Wayne Aspinall interestingly enough, just by coincidence, had been a freshman in the House when John Kennedy was a sophomore, and chance placed their offices next to each other. As a result, they would walk over to the House together on a number of occasions, so he knew him a little better than he knew other members of Congress. Wayne Aspinall had in his office a fellow named Claude Desautels [Claude J. Desautels] from Massachusetts. Claude Desautels worshipped "Jack" and developed some rapport there, so Wayne Aspinall ended up in our corner. He didn't say anything even to us until very, very close to the Convention but we always had the feeling that he wouldn't hurt us, never hurt us. He was for Stevenson in 1956

[-35-]

and it was probably a very difficult decision for him to switch off Stevenson but he did.

He wanted a good speaker who could get a good crowd at Grand Junction, which is the largest town in that congressional district. The physical arrangements were really amazing. They handled it in the largest restaurant in town, but for the group it was small. Senator Kennedy was by this time a national figure and there were people there who weren't even democrats, who just came to hear this man because they thought maybe this man isn't going to be nominated but he's going to be in contention, quite a figure. Some people at the dinner couldn't see the speaker; it was sort of a tiered arrangement, which caused some people to have an obstructed view of the head table. I was off in a corner. We never sat at the head table. We always left it for local people, and people who might be going to the Convention. He ended up delivering a speech on top of the chair on which he sat at the dinner. I never understood why, but he did. Apparently, they couldn't hear him otherwise. Anyway, he delivered the speech under great difficulty, but he delivered a good one.

The final appearance of the Senator in Colorado prior to the Democratic National Convention was in June of 1960 in Durango at the state convention. Durango is

[-36-]

in the far western corner of the state, quite far removed from Denver. The Kennedy forces did not openly fight the selection of Durango, because we couldn't afford to alienate the delegates from that part of the state, but we were pretty unhappy about its selection because it was very difficult for a large number of people from Denver to get to the convention. You always, I think, do better when you have a large crowd, even if you don't get out votes with them there. We had proxies from the areas that were from Kennedy. Since all the delegates couldn't get there they would give their leader, their captain, a proxy, so it wasn't so much a problem of getting the votes there as keeping up the enthusiasm, and we knew the Senator was going to be the only presidential candidate at the convention. We were anxious to have a good big reception for him. We were unhappy about the choice of site, but we had to live with it.

Steve Smith [Stephen E. Smith] was handling travel arrangements at that point and he was a tough negotiator. He kept saying, "Now why should he be going out there? Why should he go all the way out to Colorado?" At the time of the state convention, delegates to the National Convention had already chosen at congressional district conventions in the first district, the second district, and the third district, so you had three-fifths of the delegates already

[-37-]

picked. One-fifth were to be picked on Friday night from the fourth congressional district, which is where Durango is located, and another one-fifth were to be picked by the convention at large in Durango. But there again you had a custom of allocating them over the whole state. We urged him to come out Friday night in time for the fourth congressional district convention at which eight and one half vote delegates were to be elected. We said if he couldn't make both that and Saturday, it would still be worthwhile to come Saturday because eight half-vote delegates would be selected at the State convention. It turned out he couldn't get in until 5:30 or 6:00 o'clock on Saturday morning. We had a breakfast for all those who had already been selected as delegates to the National Convention, and then some other selected people who had a potential as going from the eight at large. It was all business. We were open about it. People would say, "Why can't I go?" and we'd say, "We're looking for delegates and we want to get him exposed to people who might be delegates; now, are you going to be a delegate? Are you going to try to be a delegate, fight to be a delegate? Well, OK, we don't care if you are for us or against us, we want you to get to know this man." The Senator gave a rousing good speech at that breakfast, then he went on out to the Convention where he delivered the best

[-38-]

speech I had heard up to that time about why we needed a Democrat in the White House, why we needed a Democrat candidate who would fight, what he thought the Democratic standard-bearer should do. They raised the roof in the auditorium for him—we got quite a bit more self-confidence in our ability to hold our delegates against raids. We had some delegates who were this way and that way, they were for us but they were nervous, and they

were subject to a raid or a power play, and that appearance was most worthwhile from that point of view.

We went out after the appearance at the convention to the airport to put him on the plane. The plane wasn't ready, so we sat around and chatted for a while and then Senator got that gleam in his eye. He said, "You know, I came seventeen hundred miles. Joe, how many delegates are still to be elected this afternoon?" He said, "There are only eight, aren't there?" I said, "That's right, Senator," and he looked at me and said, "They're not full vote delegates either are they?" I said, "That's right, Senator. Eight half-votes—that's four votes." "You mean to say I came seventeen hundred miles for four votes?" I just couldn't resist, so I said, "Well if you want to put it that way it's a lot worse than that. As a matter of fact, all you came for is the difference." He said, "What do you mean the difference?" I said, "Well,

[-39-]

we would have gotten something without you here and what you came for is the difference between what we can get with you compared to what we could get without you." He laughed and said, "What am I good for, a half a vote?" I said, "We'll see, but I think you're good for more than that."

He did all right. There were eight to be elected, we ran a slate of five and we elected five so we ended up two and a half votes out of four, which was darn good. If we had run six we probably would have elected four, if we had run eight we'd have elected three. The next day the Senator was kind enough to send me a wire. He said: "Congratulations to the only campaign manager who can get me to go seventeen hundred miles for one-half vote." If he had come Friday night, we would have gotten another one-half vote out of the Fourth District and that is the way the campaign for delegates was conducted in Colorado, and I think it was conducted that way in most of the states. It was a half a vote at a time, and we ended up going to Los Angeles with thirteen and one half votes out of twenty-one. We had estimated, Bryon and I jointly, that we would get half of the votes at the Convention. Our estimate as we went into Los Angeles was twelve. We ended up with one and one-half more than we estimated to him. Senator Kennedy jokingly

[-40-]

accused us of holding back votes on him. He said, "If I needed more votes I'm sure you fellows had them. You were just holding them back to make you look good on your prediction of the year before." We had to strain for every half vote, though some of them at the very end had a bandwagon aspect. But it was all counted out; some people could count and see the handwriting on the wall.

He wouldn't have gotten anywhere in Colorado if he hadn't projected his own personality very forcefully. He looked people right in the eye and said, "I think we ought to do thus and so and here's why." He answered every tough question.

There were some people who were sincerely against him because he was a Catholic, not because they had religious prejudice, but they were thinking of themselves as practical politicians who could count. They said a Catholic can't make it, a Catholic can't be nominated, or later on, a Catholic can be nominated but a Catholic can't be elected. Some of

these people were Catholic and some of them were very, very strong Catholics and they'd say he was doing Catholicism a disservice, that he would hurt other political candidates. Prior to 1960, Denver had never had a Catholic mayor, although the population was some thirty percent Catholic. Prior to

[-41-]

1958, Colorado had never had a Catholic governor. Colorado had been one of the real strong Klan states. It hadn't had a large percentage of its population in the Klan compared to other states, but for reasons that I really don't know, the Klan got further in politics in Colorado than in any other state in the Union. Very high municipal and state officials in Colorado back in the early 20's were in the Klan, and there was this vestigial remnant. In fact, some of your strong Irish Catholics in the Democratic Party would say about somebody they didn't like in the Democratic politics—if they wanted an epithet and they ran out of reasons, they would say “that Kluxer,” and that's all there was to it. That was supposed to be the end of it. So you had that uneasy feeling that religion had been on the minds of Democratic hierarchy in Colorado more than in some other states. Maybe I think that because that's the only state in which I knew anything about the campaign.

MORRISSEY: During the Convention you served with Byron White as rules advisor to Robert Kennedy. What was involved in this job?

DOLAN: Well, Bob Kennedy asked Byron sometime between the Colorado Convention in June 1960, and the Democratic Convention, which was in July, if Byron and I could come to the Convention a week ahead of time, read up on the previous

[-42-]

Conventions precedents, the proposed rules of the Convention, and try to anticipate the parliamentary problems that might arise, floor fight problems that might arise. The Kennedy Washington headquarters at the Esso Building sent us a book about presidential nominating conventions. We dug up the rules, and they sent us the proceedings of three or four conventions and we read them. This was very helpful because the Convention is a law unto itself. It doesn't follow Roberts, it has its own method of procedure and it's—well, helpful to have that kind of precedent in mind and know in advance what is likely to happen—you can sometimes predict how the parliamentarian is going to rule. The parliamentarian was Mr. Cannon [Clarence Cannon] of Missouri, and the counsel to the Democratic National Committee was Harold Leventhal, both of whom would be consulted in connection with any problems by the chairman of the Convention.

We didn't get there a week ahead of time, but we got there a few days ahead of time and just sort of hung around. It seemed to Byron and it seemed to me that we weren't serving any useful function. We were told to stay there in that suite, 8315, which was where Bob slept. There were two parlors and a room in the center where there were about three stenographers, and Larry O'Brien was there, and groups of delegates came in to

[-43-]

see Bob. There was a meeting every morning of the liaison representatives. There was a person from the Kennedy organization assigned to each state delegation. In some cases it was a delegate, and in others it was a person from that state who was not a delegate, and in some cases it was an outsider. His role was to obtain information, answer questions, furnish intelligence back, etc., and these people would meet every morning. I'll never forget Bob. It was the only time I had ever seen him read the riot act to any extent. I guess it was the first day we were there because I really didn't know what was going on until the thing was half over. Apparently they'd looked for someone in the room who was allegedly on tap all the time and he hadn't been on tap, and he was located at Disneyland. And Bob said in a very nice way that there was a reasonably short time between now and the Convention and that if anybody had anything more important than to try to get the nomination for his brother, just to let him know, that would be all right, and he would get somebody who didn't have anything more important to do between now and the Convention, and there would be adequate time to visit Disneyland after the Convention. I don't know who he was, but that guy was looking for a hole in the floor—it made me feel like I wanted to go through a hole in the floor. Without really yelling, Bob can

[-44-]

make a fellow feel more guilty than the occasion demands really; then everybody else works harder so that they don't get themselves in that position at any time in the future.

Byron was the liaison man for Colorado, but he had some difficulty filling that role because every time he'd try to leave Bob would say, "Wait a minute Byron, stay here, stick around, stick around." So he did that to some extent, and he had people in the Colorado delegation that he could contact by telephone. I can't remember whether Bryon stayed with the delegation or not—I stayed with the Denver National committeeman from Colorado, who was in that same hotel, the Biltmore. We hung around basically until the Convention started, then we worked the floor.

On Sunday these coordinators or liaison people went out to the Convention by bus, went onto the floor and went around and saw where the various delegations were going to sit—the telephone system was explained to us. There were five or six phone lines within delegations that connected to the house outside the convention floor. There were two houses outside the convention arena that had been used for a housing exhibit. I think the three leading candidates had drawn straws to see who got the houses and who got convention space somewhere else. We

[-45-]

got one of the houses. I don't know who got the other house even or where the other candidate was. There were other floor telephone systems. The Symington [Stuart Symington II] people had one and the Stevenson people had one.

The Stevenson people, as a matter of fact, had a telephone within the Colorado delegation which they weren't able to use the first night of the Convention because we found out what it was and when the Stevenson man who was supposed to man the phone arrived—he arrived fashionably late—he found Tiger Muhic sitting on one side of the phone and Mike Soldren [Michael J. Soldren] on the other. Mike was another labor leader from Pueblo who was all the way for John Kennedy, and they quietly told the fellow who wanted to use the phone that he couldn't lean over them, and why didn't he go away. The Stevenson floor forces were very perturbed about this and we finally worked it out. The following night we worked it out. I guess they arrived early and got the phone and we didn't race them for it or fight them for it, but we didn't cooperate with them, which they seemed to think we should have done as a matter of course. They wanted Byron and I to tell delegates, Byron was a delegate, I was not a delegate and they wanted me, who was not a delegate, to go and tell some delegates to get up out of their seats and move to other seats. I didn't have any power

[-46-]

to tell delegates where to sit. They thought that if we told Tiger to move, he'd move. We told Tiger to make himself comfortable and what ever he wanted to do was all right, and Tiger didn't move, naturally.

One or two problems did come up in Kansas and Delaware and Iowa, I do recall. You had the unit rule—at some state conventions, resolutions were passed saying they would vote for so and so on the first ballot, then they're free, and then the question is—does that mean they are free at the end of the first ballot to switch, or does that mean they have to wait until the second ballot? Are you entitled to a roll call vote on whether there shall be a secret ballot, and things like that. No parliamentary questions went to the floor. All were resolved within the delegations or by some informal indication by the parliamentarian. Delegates often consult the parliamentarian, "If such and such comes up, what do you think will happen?" and the parliamentarian will say, "The parliamentarian will rule when the chairman asks me to. However, you might be interested in knowing that in 1948 such and such happened." That gives you some indication. So we were able to be a little bit help, a teeny, weeny bit of help in that regard.

[-47-]

Because that didn't occupy all of our time, Robert asked Byron and I to do some other things. One was a project where we tried to link up outstanding scholars who were publicly for John Kennedy and were at the convention—I'm talking about people like Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. [Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.], and John Galbraith [John Kenneth Galbraith], two who come to mind—with delegates who were on the fence. The liaison people and other friends of John Kennedy within the delegations had been giving estimates continuously who was for who—why—who was not for Kennedy—why? Who might be able to persuade him? How? In some cases we ran into, through the Midwest, the mountain states, and the far west, and unorganized group, they probably didn't know about one another, but there were forty or fifty people you could identify and isolate and say, this is an issue-oriented farmer from Montana who supports Stevenson, but he's perturbed about it. He's for Stevenson, but he

doesn't think Stevenson is going to get elected, but he can't figure out in his own mind why he should go to Kennedy. He thinks maybe this is disloyal of him. He doesn't know what John Kennedy stands for. There were guys Bob couldn't persuade because, "Well, you're his brother." Or if it was somebody from Colorado I couldn't—"Joe, you can't persuade me to vote for John Kennedy. You're just blind on that man. You don't

[-48-]

reason when you talk about John Kennedy. You're just for him." I'd have to admit there was something to it. So these people who had apparently come to support John Kennedy on a gradual basis, and who had exposed their thought processes in magazine articles maybe, they were very, very good at talking to delegates. We were part of the link-up of trying to find the name and trying to find Galbraith and others and get them exposed to the delegates so they could talk to them.

On the floor, we had station assignments. We were supposed to cover various states. You were a runner, really. There were five or six radio phones in addition to the telephones, and information was supposed to get to Bob and to the House and downtown to the Senator— if there were fights on the floor or trouble on the floor and if the fellow who finds out about the trouble has to leave right away to report it, he can't be a reporter anyway. So the thing was to get the signal, as soon as you saw a huddle, somebody was sticking his nose in there and trying to find out what the huddle was about, and if it was something, anybody could do something about. It would just be a bubble up, something could bubble up on the floor. While you had an assigned area, I can remember something developed one time while I was worming my way. There was a big crowd in Kansas

[-49-]

or something like that and I happened to walk by and I said, "Oops, here I'll get this fire right away, first one at the fire, you know first fire company," and I wormed my way through and I got in where I could just about begin to hear and I saw Kenny O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell] on one side and Sarge Shriver [R. Sargent Shriver, Jr.] over on the other.

I wasn't in on any of the strategy conferences. I was just being a messenger, but Sarge handled a number of states through there and in addition to the people who were assigned one to a state then there was another echelon, you know Larry O'Brien, Kenny and Sarge who could deal with a group of states, entire delegations. So we were, I might say, very interested and nervous and did some messenger work on the floor.

[-50-]

[END OF INTERVIEW #1]

**Joseph F. Dolan Oral History Transcript – JFK #1  
Name List**

**A**

Armstrong, Hep, 15  
Aspinall, Wayne N., 35

**C**

Cannon, Clarence, 43  
Cervi, Eugene, 24, 25

**D**

Desautels, Claude J., 35

**E**

Eisenhower, Dwight D., 2

**G**

Galbraith, John Kenneth, 48, 49  
Goldberg, Max, 34

**H**

Henry, Lawrence M., 5, 13, 24, 31, 32  
Henry, Mrs., 13  
Hickey, John Joseph, 33  
Humphrey, Hubert H., 13, 19, 29

**J**

Johnson, Byron Lindberg, 21  
Johnson, Edwin C., 25

**K**

Kefauver, Estes, 5, 13  
Kennedy, Edward M., 20, 22, 32, 33  
Kennedy, Jacqueline Bouvier, 16  
Kennedy, John F., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14,  
15, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28,  
29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40,  
43, 44, 46, 48, 49  
Kennedy, Joseph P., Sr., 25, 26  
Kennedy, Robert F., 7, 20, 42, 43, 44, 45, 48, 49

**L**

Leventhal, Harold, 43

**M**

McCarthy, Joseph R., 19  
McClellan, John L., 3  
McCracken, Tracy S., 33  
McGee, Gale William, 15  
McNichols, Steven L.R., 26, 27  
Muhic, Philip, 31, 32, 33, 46, 47

**O**

O'Brien, Lawrence F., 22, 43, 50  
O'Donnell, Kenneth P., 50

**P**

Palmer, Camilla, 16

**R**

Rock, George F., 26, 27, 31

**S**

Salisbury, Harrison Evans, 9  
Schlesinger, Arthur M., Jr., 48  
Shriver, R. Sargent, Jr., 50  
Smith, Stephen E., 37  
Soldren, Michael J., 46  
Sorensen, Theodore C., 3, 5, 6, 8, 11, 14, 16, 17,  
22, 25, 29  
Stevenson, Adlai E., 6, 13, 18, 19, 23, 26, 29, 35,  
36, 46, 48  
Symington, Stuart, II, 46

**W**

Wallace, Robert Ash, 22  
White, Byron R., 14, 15, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31,  
32, 34, 40, 42, 43, 45, 46, 48  
White, Lee, C., 1, 3, 5