

Edward T. Folliard Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 3/30/1967
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Folliard, (1899 - 1976) Journalist, Washington Post, discusses reporting on TV press conferences, the religious issue in the 1960 presidential campaign, and John F. Kennedy as a campaigner, among other issues.

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Edward T. Folliard – JFK #1

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Oral History Interview

with

ED FOLLIARD

March 30, 1967
Washington, D.C.

By William M. McHugh

For the John F. Kennedy Library

McHUGH: Mr. Folliard, do you recall when you first came to know John Kennedy?

FOLLIARD: It was 1946. My job on the Washington Post for many years was to cover the White House, but occasionally I would be detached to go out and cover a political story. 1946 we had what we call the midterm of congressional elections, and so I was sent out into the field to sort of test the political winds, so to speak. At this time, President Truman's [Harry S. Truman] political stock was very low, and the Republicans had great hopes of capturing control of Congress.

Well, I happened to mention around the White House one day that I was going up to Boston to make a survey of the political situation in Massachusetts, and a fellow named Bill Hillman, who was then with Collier's magazine but who had formerly been chief correspondent for the Hearst newspapers in Europe, overheard me say that I was going to Boston, and he said, "Well, Eddie, perhaps I can help you." He said, "I'll ask Jack Kennedy to talk to you." I should explain that Bill Hillman [William Hillman], as the chief correspondent for the Hearst newspapers in Europe, had made his base in London and had come to know Jack Kennedy's father, Joseph P. Kennedy, when he was ambassador to Great Britain, and had come to know all the members of the Kennedy family. He said he would call up Jack Kennedy and ask him to help me in any way he

could. Well, I knew Joseph P. Kennedy (I had come to know him when he was chairman of the Maritime Commission here in Washington), but I didn't know Jack Kennedy.

McHUGH: Could I interrupt you just a moment?

FOLLIARD: Yes, indeed.

McHUGH: You were speaking about Joseph Kennedy?

FOLLIARD: I knew Joseph P. Kennedy, the Ambassador, as we later called him, when he was chairman of the Maritime Commission in Washington. I didn't know Jack Kennedy. In fact, I didn't know anything about him although I should've known something about him. John Hersey had written a great piece about him, about his adventure in the Pacific when his PT boat was cut in half by a Japanese destroyer and somehow I'd missed it. In any event, I went on up to Boston. I think I was in the Statler Hotel up there, and I got a telephone call that said it was Jack Kennedy calling. He told me that Hillman had called him, and he offered to help me in any way he could. So he suggested I meet him at, I think it was, the Ritz-Carlton hotel in Boston.

McHUGH: Yes. That would be the one.

FOLLIARD: So I met him there in the afternoon. I met him in a sort of a tea room. Looking back on it, I wasn't greatly impressed by young Kennedy's appearance.

McHUGH: Why was that?

FOLLIARD: He was very thin and sort of a yellow complexion, I suppose from malaria that he'd picked up in the Pacific. But I did notice one thing: There

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were some young girls in this dining room, and they all swung around to look at him when he came in. And to get ahead of my story, when we were leaving, several of the girls just happened to be going out to the elevator at the same time. So they saw something in Jack Kennedy that I didn't see. [Laughter]

Well, the big political contest, from my standpoint, in Massachusetts that year was the battle for the seat in the United States Senate. That seat was then held by Senator David I. Walsh; I think it was David I. Walsh.

McHUGH: Yes, that's correct.

FOLLIARD: And Walsh's Republican opponent was Henry Cabot Lodge. And, of course, I was interested in House seats, the governorship, but primarily, I thought the readers of the Washington Post would be most concerned about the battle between Senator David I. Walsh and Henry Cabot Lodge, whose grandfather had represented Massachusetts in the United States Senate. So Jack Kennedy was very helpful to me. He said without any quibbling that Lodge was going to beat Senator Walsh. He said that was the judgment of his grandfather, Honey Fitz. What was it, John F. Fitzgerald [John Francis Fitzgerald], his grandfather?

McHUGH: Yes, that's right.

FOLLIARD: Who was still living, of course. And apparently he – Jack was very young at this time. What would he have been in 1946? He was born in 1917. Late twenties?

McHUGH: Yes, that's right. He would have been late twenties.

FOLLIARD: So, well, when you're covering politics, if a Republican tells you that a Republican is going to win, well, you're not much impressed. You say, "Well, the guy, he's biased." Certainly, he tells you the Republican....But when a Democrat tell you that a Republican is going to win, well, it's worth listening to.

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Then Jack Kennedy told me that he expected to win the House seat himself. That wasn't surprising; it was a seat that had been held, I think, by his grandfather at one time and then by Curley [James Michael Curley], Mr. Skeffington of The Last Hurrah. And he gave me a rundown on all the House seats in Massachusetts and gave me a judgment on the governorship; I've forgotten what that was now. But I did some further checking, then I wrote a story predicting that Henry Cabot Lodge would beat the incumbent, Senator David I. Walsh, and that is the way it turned out. So that was my first meeting with Jack Kennedy. I was very grateful to him, and when he came to the House – the election was '46 – in the spring of '47, I invited him to the annual dinner of the White House Correspondents' Association.

I was never on intimate terms with John F. Kennedy, but knew him reasonably well. And I have a book here, his Profiles in Courage. After he was elected President, I took this book down to Palm Beach and asked him to autograph it. He wrote something that's real blarney. I don't know whether you can read it or not. By the way, the rain hit that book and spoiled it.

McHUGH: Yes, I see.

FOLLIARD: His writing is atrocious, of course. Can you read that?

McHUGH: Well, he says, “To Ed Folliard, who has traveled the road from....”
Where?

FOLLIARD: ...the New Deal.

McHUGH: “...the New Deal...”

FOLLIARD: “...through....” He started to say, “fair deal,” but struck it out.
“...through the New Frontier, and has led my steps between...” Let’s
see, is that...

McHUGH: “...with regards and esteem.”

FOLLIARD: Yes. [Laughter] I never led his steps anywhere.

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It was a very nice thing for him to write.

McHUGH: That seems to be an “i.” I don’t know what it could be.

FOLLIARD: Well, you can’t even make out his signature, for that matter.

McHUGH: Yes.

FOLLIARD: His signature got worse as the years went on. The way I see this is,
“For Ed Folliard, who has traveled the road from the New Deal
through the New Frontier and led our steps between. With regards and
esteem, Jack Kennedy.” And it looks like January 2, 1961. He was President-elect. This
was almost three weeks before he was inaugurated.

McHUGH: Oh, yes. I see.

FOLLIARD: Then after this meeting – the one I told you about having him as a
guest at the White House Correspondents dinner – then I’d meet him
from time to time. I was traveling with Adlai Stevenson in the 1952
presidential campaign, and I remember seeing Kennedy, probably at the airport.

McHUGH: Did he express any opinions about Kennedy at that time? Did
Stevenson express any opinions about Kennedy?

FOLLIARD: I don’t remember that, no.

McHUGH: Kennedy did campaign for him in Massachusetts.

FOLLIARD: In '52, Jack Kennedy was running for the Senate.

McHUGH: He attempted to help him campaign in Massachusetts, I believe. He attempted to help Stevenson campaign in Massachusetts.

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FOLLIARD: Oh, I'm sure he did, yes. But I'm reasonably certain that Stevenson lost Massachusetts. I'm positive of it.

McHUGH: Yes.

FOLLIARD: And I asked Jack what... Perhaps you think I sound terribly familiar calling this fellow Jack, but that's what we did call him before he was President and I think of him as Jack and I revere his memory. I perhaps should say the President, but I don't think it makes any difference.

McHUGH: I think that that is quite understandable.

FOLLIARD: But he – I think he was pulling my leg. He told me that when I met him up there, when I was with Stevenson, he said Stevenson had a good chance to carry Massachusetts. I said, "Well, I've talked to Boston political reporters, and they say you have a good chance to win, but that Eisenhower's [Dwight D. Eisenhower] going to whip Stevenson here." And he just laughed. Then I saw him from time to time. But, as I say, I was never an intimate. And then, of course, he... I was at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in '56 when he almost was nominated for the vice presidency, and luckily for him, the honor, so called, went to Estes Kefauver. It probably would have hurt him had he been on that losing ticket in '56.

McHUGH: Did you have any other opportunities, or any opportunities to observe his effectiveness as a Congressman or a Senator?

FOLLIARD: No, no. I saw him occasionally at... My job, as I say, was to cover the White House. I didn't cover Congress.

McHUGH: I see. I understand.

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FOLLIARD: But I did cover some of the meetings of the so-called Racket Committee – the committee headed by Senator McClellan [John L. McClellan] of which Bobby Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy] was counsel – when that committee was investigating Hoff [Jimmy Hoffa] and others, and Jack Kennedy would occasionally ask questions and all, but he was not a prominent figure in that thing.

McHUGH: He was not a prominent figure?

FOLLIARD: No. I think, by this time, his eyes were on the White House, and he was doing a great deal of traveling at the time, making speeches all over the country.

McHUGH: I see. He had many friends who were newspapermen. Do you know, do you have any idea why this was so?

FOLLIARD: Well, he'd been a newspaperman himself for a time. He worked for the International News Service. I didn't meet him as a reporter. I know he covered the founding of the United Nations out in San Francisco and later went over to England to cover the election there and predicted, I've been told, predicted correctly that the Labor Party would win. That's when we were all shocked when the English voters threw out dear old Churchill [Winston Churchill]. I understand he predicted that outcome correctly. But I think he later said he decided he'd rather make history than write about it. But I saw quite a bit of him once he began to campaign for the Democratic nomination for President.

McHUGH: Oh, you did.

FOLLIARD: Yes, I did. I saw him, I went out to Wisconsin and covered the primary campaign there.

McHUGH: Do you have any memories of any significant events in the Wisconsin primary?

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FOLLIARD: I remember the cold; it was awfully cold. They started campaigning there in the winter. And I remember what a great appeal he had for young people. And by young, I mean school children, grammar school. And he liked to talk to young people, and I wish I could think of it, something he said about Bismarck, that Bismarck said about students. One-third would become drunkards, one-third this, and the other third would rule Germany. I can't remember it now. He was very effective as a campaigner.

What I would do...His opponent, of course, in the Wisconsin primary was Hubert Humphrey. The Washington Post was playing no favorites, and I would travel, let's say, with Jack Kennedy one day and then switch and travel with Hubert Humphrey. We'd travel by buses. And I remember Humphrey said something to Charlie Lucey [Charles T. Lucey] of the Scripps-Howard Newspapers and me one day – this is sort of a confidential talk; I see no harm in telling about it here. Humphrey said that he could – I don't know just what language he used – but he could do better talking about the farm problem than Kennedy could, that he could take Kennedy when it came to questions of organized labor, he said. But

in one respect, he said, he simply could not compete with Kennedy, and he said that that was in the field of celebrity. He didn't use the word glamour; he used the word celebrity. By this time, Jack Kennedy's picture had been on the covers of magazines, and there had been feature stories.

This is maybe not relevant, as they say, but there was some silly talk about that time about Papa Joe Kennedy buying publicity for Jack Kennedy, buying... Well, you can't buy Life magazine or Look magazine or Time or Newsweek or the Washington Post. You just can't buy that kind. People wrote about Jack Kennedy because he was a very interesting fellow.

Well, at any rate, Jack Kennedy won the primary election in Wisconsin. I remember his saying something out there. We were in a ... I was part of a panel in a TV or radio show, I've forgotten which. And he said he not only had to win the primary election in Wisconsin, he had to win them all, meaning all seven primaries in which he was entered. He couldn't afford to lose one of them. And he did win them all. So he went to the Los Angeles Convention with almost enough

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delegates to put him over, and out there the bandwagon started rolling. Of course, you know the rest.

McHUGH: Were there significant differences in the style of campaigning between Humphrey and Kennedy in Wisconsin, do you recall?

FOLLIARD: Yes, I think – God, I hate comparisons, but Kennedy talked in a rather low-key.

McHUGH: Do you think he was an effective speaker at that time?

FOLLIARD: Oh, yes, and got better as time went on. And he told little jokes at his own expense. That was one of his great characteristics. And even then he would quote poets or philosophers; his talks had quite an impact on his audience, no matter whether his audience was made up of youngsters or adults. We hadn't seen what we later called the jumpers as he passed along. That came later after the nomination when he was running against Vice President Nixon [Richard M. Nixon].

McHUGH: Did you cover the campaign in West Virginia?

FOLLIARD: No, I didn't. I think I was given a rest about that time.

Oh, one thing. I went to West Virginia after the primary election. Some charges were made that Kennedy bought his victory in West Virginia, and I was sent to West Virginia to check on that. And I don't mind telling you if I had found that he had bought his victory, I would have written it, naturally. That was my job.

McHUGH: Who did you talk to down there?

FOLLIARD: Well, first, I tried to get at the bottom of it: Who started this talk about Kennedy or any of the Kennedy camp buying the victory? I had to

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find some starting point, and I found it. A newspaper man in Charleston, the capital of West Virginia, writing for a pro-Republican paper there, wrote a column in which he said the Kennedy people had given a man named Christie [Sidney L. Christie] – later a judge, had given Judge Christie, the Democratic leader of McDowell County – had given him fifty thousand dollars to get his support for Kennedy. I went and read that column, and I noticed that there was something lacking there that was glaring from my standpoint. The fellow hadn't given Christie a chance to comment on this. Nothing. He had just made the flat statement that the Kennedy people had given Judge Christie fifty thousand dollars.

So I put in a telephone call to Welch, West Virginia, down in the coal mine area, and got hold of Judge Christie and told him I'd like to talk to him; I didn't want to talk to him on the phone; I wanted to sit across the desk from him. So he said he'd be happy to see me. And I went down. I had to travel by bus; there was no air service down there. And I got down there, and Judge Christie, I asked him about the fifty thousand dollars, and he said, "I didn't get any fifty thousand dollars." He said, "I never asked for any money." He said, "It was this way. Down here, we didn't think Humphrey could be elected President even if he won the primary election in West Virginia. We didn't think he could be nominated. We thought Kennedy could be nominated, and we thought he could be elected President. And we thought if he was elected President of the United States, he would help West Virginia which, God knows, is greatly in need of help." He says, "That's the reason we were for him." He said, "Nobody had to pay us anything. We didn't ask for anything and didn't get anything." So that was just one man.

I did some further checking, and, as I should have, as any reporter should have, I went, talked to the governor of West Virginia, who was a Republican. I think his name is Underwood [Cecil H. Underwood]. And, well, I thought, "Here's a Republican governor. Let's see, he would certainly like to help Dick Nixon if he could make it appear that Jack Kennedy bought a political victory down there." So I went around to see the governor. And the governor said so far as he knew there had been no buying of votes by the Kennedy people. So I got some further quotes of that kind and wrote a story saying that the talk about Kennedy buying his victory was nonsense. So much for that.

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McHUGH: There was nothing more; no one attempted to refute it?

FOLLIARD: No, no. That's the last I heard of it.

McHUGH: Kennedy delivered a speech in April of 1960 before the American Society of Newspaper Editors. I don't know whether you...

FOLLIARD: I covered that.

McHUGH: Yes, and he was for...

FOLLIARD: The religious question. Excellent speech.

McHUGH: Exactly, he really delivered a very strong speech where he criticized the press for, he felt – well, he discussed the farm problem and other issues which he thought were substantive, and he said the only thing the press commented on was his haircut, the theme song, and, inevitably, the religious issue. Do you think there was any justice in that?

FOLLIARD: Well, I thought it was, the editors themselves all thought – I say all, at least, those I talked to thought it was a fine speech. And, of course, it was the lead story in our paper the next morning. What he asked for, really, was a fair shake from the editors of America. And all the top newspaper editors were at this meeting of the American Society of Newspapers Editors. That wasn't the end of it, of course.

I thought that Kennedy's greatest achievement, perhaps, in the 1960 campaign was at Houston when he talked before these Protestant ministers there. I had been with him. I had traveled across the country with him and got to Los Angeles, and I got orders from the Post to drop out of his entourage at that point and make a survey up the Pacific Coast. And another Post reporter, Bob Albright [Robert C. Albright], was to pick Kennedy up in Houston. I'd love to have been there. That must have been a very impressive meeting, but what he said before, I thought the most impressive thing he said before those ministers in Houston was, "I am not the Catholic candidate for President of the United States. I am

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the candidate of the Democratic party who happens to be a Catholic." There was quite a distinction between those two, and he wanted to make that clear. And I think he did.

McHUGH: Did you ever have the impression that when he was campaigning he tried to appeal to Catholics in a different way than he did to Protestants?

FOLLIARD: Good God, no, no, no. After the election, I won't mention his name, but a very prominent columnist said that Catholics elected Kennedy President. Good heavens, there are simply not enough Catholics to elect anybody President. Frankly, I'm a Catholic; and I did not expect Kennedy to... First, I didn't think he could be nominated, and I didn't think he could be elected President if he were nominated. And I think the reason for that is my age. I'm now 67, and I remember

vividly the 1928 campaign in which Al Smith [Alfred E. Smith] ran against Hoover [Herbert Hoover]. In fact, that was the first campaign I covered. I traveled with Hoover in that campaign, and I remember what a vicious campaign it was and how distressed I was, as a Catholic, to see the things that were said, not only about Al Smith but about the Catholic Church and about the Pope coming over and moving into the White House and all that nonsense. It was because of my age, because I remember the Al Smith campaign, that I had this doubt that Kennedy could make it. Well, the country had changed, and I wasn't aware of the change.

No, it wasn't Catholics that elected Kennedy President; it was Protestants, Jews, unbelievers. It's not generally realized, but about a third of Americans belong to no church. I didn't realize that until I just ran into it one time. And the Catholics, as a matter of fact, were pretty sharply divided in the 1960 election. Nixon got a rather substantial Catholic vote, and the observation was made at the time that well-to-do Catholics, for the most part, voted Republican, and those not so well-to-do voted Democratic.

McHUGH: Do you think Kennedy's statements on the religious issue amounted to a virtual disavowal of his church, as some of his co-religionists thought?

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FOLLIARD: No, I don't have any basis for that. There's something in Ted Sorensen's [Theodore C. Sorensen] book that's worth reading. I happen to have the quote. I'll give it to you in just a second. Theodore Sorensen, in his book called Kennedy, had this to say about Jack Kennedy: "He was a Catholic – by heritage, habit and conviction – and a friend of Cardinals. I was a Unitarian, a denomination...at the opposite end of the religious spectrum.... [He did not] believe that all non-Catholics would (or should) go to hell. He felt neither self-conscious nor superior about his religion but simply accepted it as part of his life. He resented the attempt [BEGIN SIDE II TAPE I] of an earlier biographer to label him as 'not deeply religious'; [for] he faithfully attended Mass each Sunday, even in the midst of fatiguing out-of-state travels when no voter would know whether he attended service or not." And so on. I never knew....Your question was, did he disavow his faith?

McHUGH: Some Catholics felt that in his efforts to indicate that he would be free of ecclesiastical pressures, he went too far, and it amounted to disavowing his religion.

FOLLIARD: I think all he was ever saying is what the Book says, "Render, therefore, unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's." He felt very strongly about separation of church and state. But in all the time I covered him, I never knew him to miss Mass. There's a minimum requirement as to the Catholic, and that is that he go to Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligations. And I never – maybe Jack Kennedy, because of illness or something, did miss Mass. I never, in all my travels with him, I never knew him to miss

Mass on a Sunday or holy day of obligation, Easter or....

McHUGH: Did you attempt to find out about appointments during the transitional period? Did you get any scoops on prospective appointments to the new Administration?

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FOLLIARD: No, but the president of the Washington Post Company, Philip L. Graham, who has since died, got a smashing scoop, and he found out that Dean Rusk was going to be Secretary of State. And when the story appeared in the Washington Post, Kennedy demanded an investigation to find out where the leak had come from. He told Pierre Salinger to check and find out who had leaked this. Salinger checked and called Kennedy back and said, "You leaked it. You told Phil Graham about it." Then Kennedy remembered having told Graham.

McHUGH: If we could go back just a minute. You mentioned Philip Graham. There were conflicting stories about his influence in the selection of Lyndon Johnson as Vice President. Were you at the Convention? Do you remember, or were you aware of, any influence that he had?

FOLLIARD: All I know is that the Post, far ahead of any other newspaper, carried a story saying that Lyndon Johnson was going to be the vice presidential nominee. Then later Graham showed me a memorandum he had prepared about the part he played in bringing about this formation of the ticket, getting Jack Kennedy to agree to Lyndon, getting Lyndon to agree to be Jack's running mate.

McHUGH: Do you remember what the memo said?

FOLLIARD: Well, it was later printed in Theodore White's book, The Making of the President.

McHUGH: Do you remember approximately how long before other papers that the Post made that announcement?

FOLLIARD: One day, which is – that's a terrific scoop. It appeared on a Tuesday, I think, and the....Let's see, I'm a little confused. But it was a day ahead of any other paper. And by that time, Graham knew.

McHUGH: Well, if we could move on to another subject: Rather early in his Administration, you were quoted as saying that the TV press conference was being turned into a side show. Can you say what made you

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feel that way?

FOLLIARD: No, I think that's in Pierre Salinger's book that I warned him that he would turn it into a side show. I've forgotten what proposal....As I say, when Kennedy was President-elect, Salinger got together with some of us to ask our advice about how he should handle his job as White House press secretary. And, frankly, I don't remember saying that. I saw that in Pierre's book, but if I did say it, I don't know what he said that prompted me to say that, if I did say it.

McHUGH: Do you think that the TV press conference tended to reduce the effectiveness of the reporter and, perhaps, some said, to make him just a prop in a television show? Do you think there was truth in that?

FOLLIARD: No, I see no....As an old newspaperman, I don't regard TV as an enemy. One reason for that is the Washington Post company, which pays me a pretty good pension, owns not only the Washington Post but it owns two TV stations and a radio station. It's not generally known, but radio, first, and then TV, far from hurting newspapers have helped newspapers, at least from the standpoint of circulation. I remember back in the 1920's when radio first started broadcasting news some newspaper publishers were so fearful that radio would run them out of business that they refused to carry the radio programs. Well, gradually, as broadcasting news over radio went on and was stepped up, improved – you got people like Ed Murrow [Edward R. Murrow] and others in it – newspaper circulation kept growing, and it's growing to this day. And it's not because the population is growing, it's growing in proportion.

No, I never felt that I was a prop. And I've never been satisfied with a TV broadcasting of the news, neither has Walter Cronkite, who is a good friend of mine. He said, "Anybody who thinks he can keep up with the events of the world by TV is nuts," or words to that effect. And David Brinkley has said the same thing. He said, "It's silly to regard the TV as a competitor of a newspaper. It just cannot..." Well, they discovered in the newspaper strike in New York, which went on for weeks, the TV and radio

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poured out news, but the one thing it didn't give, which it never has given, you can't get obituaries over the air. And after that strike, many a person had found out some dear friend had died, and he knew nothing about it. Newspapers are important even from the standpoint of printing the television programs.

McHUGH: Were you ever asked to plant a question at a news conference?

FOLLIARD: Yes, I did and I refused. What was his name? Andy Hatcher [Andrew T. Hatcher] asked me to ask a question. Well, I already had in mind asking him one. I wouldn't be averse to that.

I was asked by Johnson to ask a question. I asked it because I had... This is getting away from our story, but right after the Republican Convention in San Francisco in 1964, I went down to Arizona with Senator Goldwater [Barry M. Goldwater], the Republican nominee for President. We were on our way from Phoenix to Washington; we stopped off in Chicago and had a press conference with Goldwater, and I said something like, "Senator," I said, "this might be crazy, but what would you think of the idea of you getting together with President Johnson and trying to discourage the rioting?" There had been riots in Harlem or some place, I've forgotten. At any rate, that was quite a problem at the time. And Goldwater said sure, it'd be okay with him if the President wanted to talk it over with him.

Well, having done that, I couldn't turn down Johnson when Johnson sent me a question he wanted me to ask. He wanted me to ask it in a certain way; and it made a good story. After I asked the question, he said sure, he'd be glad to meet with Goldwater. They did meet, and I don't know whether it was just luck or what, for the remainder of 1964 there was no racial trouble at all.

McHUGH: Who asked you to ask the question?

FOLLIARD: What was his name?

McHUGH: Was it Bill Moyers [William D. Moyers]?

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FOLLIARD: No, Kilduff [Malcolm M. Kilduff]. He was a holdover from the Kennedy Administration. We called him Mac Kilduff. I know why I refused to ask the question Hatcher wanted me to ask. It was dull for one thing. It was something that Kennedy wanted, but I think that particular day I had another question in mind, and it was the lulu.

To show you how forthright Kennedy could be, during the steel strike, perhaps it was after the steel strike was over, the New York Times wrote a sort of a wrap-up story, and they quoted Kennedy as saying that his father was right when he said that all businessmen were sons of bitches. Well, at the Kennedy press conferences I used to sit right next to the New York Times man, and I thought he might ask this question. I thought somebody would ask the question. Certainly, it had to be asked, even though it might be embarrassing. Well, nobody asked it, and when it came my turn, I got up and I asked Kennedy if – I said, "You've been quoted," well, I think the way I put it, "You've been quoted as making a harsh statement about businessmen during the steel strike. Would you care to comment on it?" Well, there was this laughter, and Kennedy laughed and said, "Would you want to explain what I said?" And I said, "You know what you said, what you were supposed to have said." And I always kicked myself later. I should have said, "It's a word that the heroes in the old Westerns used to say, 'Smile when you say that stranger.'" But it didn't come to me at the time. I always think of the right thing to say just as I'm going to sleep at night. But he answered it forthrightly. He said that the story was true – wasn't true as printed, but he had said not that all businessmen were sons of bitches, he didn't use that word, that he had implied the epithet to the leaders of the steel industry. And it was a very forthright answer.

McHUGH: Did Kennedy use the device of planting questions very often?

FOLLIARD: Yes, but I really see nothing wrong with that if a good story results. I would never hesitate to be the instrument of a planted question if I thought it would bring out something that the American people ought to know. That's our job: to tell them how the government is functioning, what the President's thinking about.

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McHUGH: Do you think this could lead to making the press sort of a tool for propaganda rather than getting hard news?

FOLLIARD: Oh, we would be quick to spot propaganda. We would... No, I told you about the question that was planted with me by President Johnson. I was the guy who had asked Goldwater a question, and he wanted to say he was willing to meet with Goldwater. And I see nothing wrong with that.

McHUGH: Do you think the formality of the TV press conference worked against critical follow-up questions?

FOLLIARD: Well, Kennedy was asked if he thought that the format of the presidential news conference should be changed, and he said he had heard suggestions of it, suggestions for change, but he didn't think he would change it. He said that a President is the bull's-eye, something like that, and he thought that was all right and it should continue. In other words, let everybody have a crack at him. I wish President Johnson held more such conferences; I wish he did as Kennedy used to do. I've forgotten how often Kennedy saw us, but President Roosevelt [Franklin D. Roosevelt] saw us twice a week; and President Truman, once a week and hardly ever missed; Eisenhower, once a week.

McHUGH: Well, John Kennedy was a great admirer of Franklin Roosevelt's, but he eschewed his [Roosevelt's] form of the press conference. Do you know why that was so, that he avoided using the form of the press conference that Roosevelt used?

FOLLIARD: Oh, the whole world of communications had changed. There was no TV in Roosevelt's day. This was a great chance – let's use the word "education" – this was a great chance to educate the American people, keep the American people abreast of what the government was doing, what the President was doing, what he was thinking, he was hoping.

McHUGH: Do you think that Kennedy used television as effectively as Roosevelt used radio?

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FOLLIARD: Yes, I do. My admiration of Kennedy is just without limit. I just think he was probably the most brilliant President of our time.

McHUGH: Do you think he showed much favoritism in his press conferences?

FOLLIARD: No, although he was more likely to answer questions of a hostile reporter than he was of a friendly reporter.

McHUGH: Why was that so?

FOLLIARD: Well, he had his own reason. [Laughter] Maybe a chance to win over a hostile reporter.

McHUGH: Did mutual admiration between Kennedy and the press keep them from asking the difficult questions?

FOLLIARD: I don't think so. I asked him if he called businessmen sons of bitches. I just don't know how tougher you can get than that, unless you can suggest something.

McHUGH: Early in 1963...

FOLLIARD: Oh, he was asked all about the disaster at the Bay of Pigs and everything. I know of no questions that should have been asked that were not asked, unless you can suggest some. I can't think of any.

McHUGH: Early in 1963 there were some complaints of news management. Do you have any comment on this?

FOLLIARD: No, except I've heard that ever since I've been a newspaper reporter.

McHUGH: Is that so?

FOLLIARD: Yes, and there is news management, naturally not only at present but ever. Every public official wants, as the saying goes, wants the best image possible. But now management, it all depends on how you...Newspapers, newspapermen are the link between government and the great mass rank and file of Americans. That's the way I've always thought of myself. Eugene Meyer, who bought the Washington Post in 1933, always said he bought it to do a public service. And he made me

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think, and made all reporters on the Post feel, that we were public servants in a way. And he would back us to the limit. No threat from a President or a Cabinet officer could ever intimidate a reporter on the Washington Post. I think that goes for most newspapers.

McHUGH: How well do you think Pierre Salinger functioned as a press secretary?

FOLLIARD: I think he was first-rate.

McHUGH: Do you think he was as well informed as, say, George Reedy or other press secretaries?

FOLLIARD: Better informed, better informed.

McHUGH: Why do you say so?

FOLLIARD: Well, I covered the White House when Salinger was press secretary, and I covered the White House when George Reedy was press secretary.

McHUGH: This was just a general impression that you had.

FOLLIARD: Oh, yes. I'm sure he was better posted. And I don't think he was in awe of the President; I don't think Kennedy wanted anybody to be in awe of him.

McHUGH: How would you compare his information or extent of being informed with Jim Hagerty [James C. Hagerty]? Could you compare?

FOLLIARD: Well, Hagerty was well informed, but there was not as much action in the Eisenhower Administration as there was in the Kennedy Administration.

McHUGH: Do you think there was relatively less news given out during the....

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FOLLIARD: Less news to give out, unless a U-2 plane fell on Russian soil or Sherman Adams got caught with his hand in the cookie jar or something like that. Those things happen.

McHUGH: Do you think there was much attempt to manufacture news during the Kennedy Administration?

FOLLIARD: I know of no instance like that. What happened, I think Kennedy continued something that started in the Eisenhower Administration. I never liked it. I don't know just how to describe it. Let's see. Oh, let's say that a United States submarine, one of these Polaris nuclear-powered submarines – I've forgotten the name of it – went under the North Pole for the first time. Hagerty withheld the news of that until the President's naval aide had flown up to somewhere near the North Pole and picked up the captain of the submarine – the Nautilus, I think it was – had flown the captain of the Nautilus back to Washington, brought him to the White House, and there President Eisenhower with a certain amount of fanfare announced that the U.S. submarine Nautilus had cruised under the North Pole. Now, I don't think....Just to go back one Administration, nothing like that was ever done in the Truman Administration. President Truman would have let the Secretary of the Navy make the announcement or, at least, the Secretary of Defense. Hagerty wanted Eisenhower to be...

McHUGH: ...the focus.

FOLLIARD: ...associated with all achievements of any kind. And you say, well, what's wrong with that? Maybe there's nothing wrong with it, but it just....Mr. Truman simply didn't do it, and this sort of thing continued with Kennedy and has continued with President Johnson. I think it's kind of silly myself.

McHUGH: Kennedy was quoted at one time as believing that Republican publishers deliberately asked their reporters to put hostile questions to him. Were you ever aware of this being done on your paper?

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FOLLIARD: My paper was favorable to Kennedy. It didn't endorse him. The Post, the Washington Post, is an independent newspaper.

McHUGH: You didn't feel that your...

FOLLIARD: But I know that Phil Graham was very much pro-Kennedy, pro-Johnson, but that doesn't concern us. We never were told – we never slanted stories. The paper has its say on the editorial page, and should have its say. The owner should have – any opinions it may have should be on the editorial page. But the news columns should be as objective as one can humanly make them. And they're not always objective; that's an ideal; you don't always achieve it. I always tried to write, and all my colleagues tried to write, objective news stories.

McHUGH: Were you aware of the President's opinion of the Washington Post?

FOLLIARD: Well, I know he read it, along with...

McHUGH: Did he ever criticize any of the stories that you wrote?

FOLLIARD: No, but that wouldn't have bothered me if he had. President Johnson called me in one time to criticize an editorial in the Washington Post, something about the time there was some rioting down in Panama.

And the result of that was the lunch. The President gave a lunch for the Mrs. Katharine Graham [Katharine Meyer Graham], president of the Washington Post Company, editorial writers, our cartoonist, Herblock [Herbert Block], several reporters. Nothing – he didn't try to sell us on anything; it was just a lunch.

McHUGH: Did the Kennedy staff provide adequate background sessions for the press, did you feel? Backgrounding?

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FOLLIARD: Yes, my – I guess we all had different ways of going about getting information. My favorite was the then Attorney General Robert Kennedy. I frequently went to him to ask him about the background of situations. He was always very helpful.

McHUGH: How did you happen to be friendly with him?

FOLLIARD: I met him, I met Bobby in the 1956 presidential campaign. I was traveling with Adlai Stevenson, and Bobby was along, and it was the first time, his first experience in a Presidential campaign. I didn't realize at the time he was prepping, so to speak, for the 1960 campaign when his big brother would be running. But I got to know Bobby pretty well and also saw quite a bit of him. I used to cover the – I was detached from the White House occasionally to cover the so-called Rackets Committee that I was telling you about.

McHUGH: Some accounts of Bobby picture him as being extremely aggressive and a difficult person. Did you have that impression of him?

FOLLIARD: No, I've heard others describe him that way, about being ruthless. He never pushed me into a swimming pool or anything like that, so I just don't know. I always found him very helpful and amiable.

McHUGH: Did you have other sources for news stories?

FOLLIARD: Oh, yes. Sorensen, in the White House, Sorensen and... But usually Pierre Salinger was the fellow we talked to. You'd see him at what they call briefings. We used to call those press conferences; they became briefings in the Kennedy Administration. Of course, I was a war correspondent over in Europe in '44 and '45, and when the commanding general was preparing for a push, why, he'd go up to a blackboard and describe how it was going to come off. That was called a briefing. But I'd never heard that applied to a gathering in the White House until Kennedy

became President. They're still called briefings down there.

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McHUGH: Did you have any impressions about the press coverage of the war in Vietnam or the political turmoil in Vietnam during Kennedy's Administration?

FOLLIARD: Very little, very little talk about it. Laos, he seemed to be concerned mostly about Laos. I say he seemed to be mostly concerned about Laos, that's what he talked about most at press conferences until he brought about some sort of a settlement over there. It may not have been ideal, but it was some sort of a settlement. What was in his mind and in his heart about Vietnam, I don't know. But there wasn't as much talk about Vietnam at that time as there was about Laos, although it was at that period that the Washington Post first sent a correspondent to Vietnam. So it was building up. It began to build up in the Kennedy Administration, but nothing compared to what it is now, nowhere near. Oh, I don't know, probably five thousand, ten thousand troops, or less.

McHUGH: Do you have any other comments you would make as a newsman of the Kennedy Administration?

FOLLIARD: Well, I thought Kennedy was a brilliant campaigner. I think that 1960 campaign....I traveled with both Kennedy and Nixon, mostly with Kennedy, and for a while I traveled with President Eisenhower. It was sort of a farewell tour. It's a remarkable thing, but I think Kennedy believed that Eisenhower, although he was 70 years old, could have won a third term had the Constitution permitted it and had Eisenhower been willing to run. And, I remember, this affection for Eisenhower was just something, you just had to see it manifested to appreciate it. Whereas in 1952 and 1956, the signs, the placards that people had held up were usually, "I like Ike," in 1960 we went out across the country, went to San Francisco and then down, I guess we went to Los Angeles, the signs had changed, the placards I mean. You saw such placards, such inscriptions as, "Bless you, Ike." "Thank you, Ike." But to get back to Kennedy, he was a marvelous campaigner, may have been the best I ever saw. I always thought that Harry Truman deserved the most credit for his campaign in 1948.

BEGIN SIDE I TAPE II

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McHUGH: You were speaking of Truman's campaign.

FOLLIARD: Well, I always, when I think of 1948, I think of Harry Truman's gallantry. Everybody, almost everybody, with the exception of himself, looked upon him as a loser. The polls said he was going to

lose; the gamblers were giving odds at 15-1 that he was going to lose; and we thought he was going to lose, I mean the reporters traveling with him, although we liked him, but we all got caught up in some kind of a crazy chain delusion and we thought that Tom Dewey [Thomas E. Dewey] was going to beat him. But the old guy kept on slugging and won the election. But Kennedy was just...Can you cut that off? [Interruption]

FOLLIARD: I was talking about Kennedy as a campaigner, I think. I must say, Mr. McHugh, I think Kennedy was one of the most brilliant campaigners I ever saw in action, perhaps the most brilliant. He had ghost writers, of course, but he frequently threw away the prepared speeches, spoke off the cuff. I remember early in the campaign, it must have been September, not long after he started out in 1960, after he'd won the nomination, he made a speech somewhere in the Midwest, I think it was Des Moines, Iowa. And it was a speech that probably had been prepared for him about the farm problem. And was it dull! I couldn't find anything in it, not knowing much about the farm problem anyway. Well, then he put aside this prepared text, and he said, "It's time for America to start moving again." Well, sir, there was a burst of applause. I don't know whether he had planned to say that or whether it just came out, but that was the first time I ever heard him use that expression. I think he used it thereafter in almost every speech he made. And it had a very great appeal. All of us are proud of our country, and you could say something like that without indicting Eisenhower. Kennedy was very careful never to criticize Eisenhower if he could avoid it. But you say, "It's time for our country to start moving again." I don't know, it's something you'd say, "Yes, it is time." It was very effective and he...

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Speaking of ghost writers, of course, all Presidents have used ghost writers, beginning with George Washington. I've read that James Madison and Alexander Hamilton wrote Washington's Farewell Address. Woodrow Wilson was quite capable of writing his own speeches, and certainly Adlai Stevenson wrote better speeches than any ghosts he ever employed, and that includes Arthur Schlesinger [Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.] and all the others. Kennedy, I didn't know this until I read Pierre Salinger's book, Kennedy wrote the whole of his Inaugural Address. I knew he'd certainly contributed to it, but I had thought that Ted Sorensen had put that speech together. No, Pierre said, and Pierre ought to know, that that was 100 percent Kennedy, that Kennedy had a certain pride about that, that he wanted that to be his own. That is the best Inaugural speech I ever heard. And I heard Roosevelt's first Inaugural speech with its, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself," which wasn't terribly original. And I'd say Kennedy's Inaugural was far better than any of Roosevelt's. Certainly better than Hoover's and certainly better than Coolidge's [Calvin Coolidge], and at that point I stop.

McHUGH: We've been discussing Kennedy as a campaigner. On the occasions when you followed Nixon, can you say what his campaign was like? Do you feel he was effective? Was it well organized, as compared with the Kennedy campaign?

FOLLIARD: Oh, from the standpoint of logistics and all, yes, it was well organized. The thing that I didn't like – and Kennedy, apparently, used to scoff at it – was Nixon's habit of talking about "Pat [Patricia Ryan Nixon] and I." I don't know, somehow – I haven't anything against women; in fact, I like women – but I just don't know what Pat had to do with running for the Presidency of the United States. Kennedy thought he showed bad taste in putting in "Pat and I."

McHUGH: Did they get press releases out on time and so forth?

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FOLLIARD: With Nixon?

McHUGH: Yes.

FOLLIARD: Pretty sure, although I just traveled with him in the last week of the campaign, and there was a good deal of it off the cuff. But by this time they all had said – they had nothing new to say; they were just saying it over and over; it just rolled right out. Then you would get the transcripts, the stenographic transcripts.

McHUGH: What was the attitude of the people in Nixon's entourage at this time? Do you recall their feeling about what their chance of winning was?

FOLLIARD: By this time we all, I think, realized that it was hellishly close, very close. Nixon thought it was close; he said so. The Kennedy's thought it was close. And it was close. Good heavens! What was it, a hundred thirty some thousand votes separating the two? You can't get much closer than that in a country of two hundred million people.

McHUGH: So this was their feeling: that it could go either way at that time.

FOLLIARD: Well, I'd say everybody regarded it as close, but I think Kennedy, I think the gamblers had made Kennedy the favorite by this time. I told you about dropping out of Kennedy's entourage in Los Angeles before he went on to Houston. I'd been hearing about the betting odds on the Kennedy-Nixon race, and I thought I'd go to the source and find out just what the situation was. So I flew from Los Angeles to Las Vegas and talked to a betting commissioner there, a fellow named Schwartz. And I asked him about what the odds were, and he pointed to a blackboard. I've forgotten now, but I know Nixon was the favorite. But this was in, perhaps, late September, early October. I've forgotten just when it was, but he told me not to attach too much importance to the odds as they were on the blackboard, that the odds were made by what he called the action. It was the way the money came in. I think he said that some rich Texan had been betting on Nixon to win. He said, "Overnight a lot of Kennedy money could come

in, and

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Kennedy would be the favorite.” This fellow got a commission out of the money bet. He couldn’t lose. He wasn’t betting himself; he was just getting a commission out of it. But it was recognized at the end that it was very, very close.

By this time, I’d made up my mind that Kennedy was going to win because I’d been with him in New York, and the Herald Tribune, a Republican paper, had made a survey of New York State and it indicated that Kennedy would carry New York with its whopping electoral vote. And I thought if he had New York and picked up some states in the South, that he would very likely win, as he did, of course. But I’d been wrong on 1948. I thought certainly Dewey was going to win that year.

McHUGH: There was a lot of talk, or there has been a lot of talk, that the Nixon staff treated the press rather poorly during the campaign. Were you aware of that in any way particularly?

FOLLIARD: No, I just, I don’t...How do you expect to be treated? If you’re allowed or given a chance to cover the man, write a piece for your paper, what more do you want? You don’t expect him to have you in to dinner.

McHUGH: Well, apparently, he was not accessible.

FOLLIARD: ...or I just don’t know what....Some of my colleagues, I think, sometimes are spoiled and expect too much. I do expect when I travel with a candidate that they’ll arrange for hotel rooms and space on airplanes, trains, or whatever it may be.

McHUGH: That was done?

FOLLIARD: As far as I... I never had any difficulty there with Nixon on that. In fact, I had a nice talk with Nixon on the airplane, and with Mrs. Nixon.

McHUGH: What were your impressions of him at that time?

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FOLLIARD: I think there was sort of a smell of defeat around him, I thought. It may have been imagination. He was, as they say in golf, he was pressing. But I left him in Los Angeles. Then I think he went from there up to Alaska. He had said he was going to do all fifty states. And I think he had been to all except Alaska. Well, he went on up to Alaska, and I came back to Washington to be ready for the election.

Oh, you, to go back, you were asking if Kennedy.... What did you say about the church? Whether he...

McHUGH: ...whether he disavowed his...

FOLLIARD: ...disavowed the Church. No, Kennedy was rather light-hearted about his religious faith. He made jokes. I read about one, I didn't hear him say this, but I think during the campaign the newspaper at the Vatican, what is it?

McHUGH: The Osservatore Romano?

FOLLIARD: The Osservatore Romano came out with something that certainly, people thought, was hurtful from Kennedy's standpoint. And Kennedy is supposed to have said, "Now I know why King Henry VIII started his own church." [Laughter] But he was, he could be very gay.

And I remember one time before the Los Angeles Convention and we were traveling in his own airplane, the Caroline, and traveling up the east coast. He was making speeches; I think he spoke in Delaware, then went on to New Jersey, and I think we went on to New York. Well, a girl reporter got on the plane somewhere along the line; she represented Newsweek magazine. And Kennedy had a way of opening a conversation with young girls; I heard him do it over and over again; he'd always ask them the same question: "Where did you go to school?" He asked this very attractive young women, "Where did you go to school?" And she said, "Miami, Florida." And he said, "What school?" And she said, I can't remember exactly, something like "Queen of Heaven School." She said, "It's a Catholic school." And Kennedy said, "Don't use that word around me." [Laughter] Maybe people misunderstood him, but he, I think, was certainly as devout a Catholic as most of his fellow Catholics.

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McHUGH: Do you have any other comments you'd wish to make?

FOLLIARD: I think I've talked too long, Mr. McHugh.

McHUGH: Okay. Well, some people felt at the time that the bill for aid to elementary and secondary schools was being considered that he took the stand that he did for political reasons since in 1948 he had been for a bill that aided parochial schools.

FOLLIARD: Are you talking by the time he was President?

McHUGH: No this was something...

FOLLIARD: When he was a candidate?

McHUGH: Oh yes, this legislation was under consideration when...

FOLLIARD: ...when he was in the White House?

McHUGH: Yes, but when he was a Congressman, he had been supporting it.

FOLLIARD: Well, when he was President, a group of priests at the National Catholic Welfare Conference asked some newspaper reporters to come in for a conference. I was one of them. They wanted our advice on how they should go about waging a campaign to get federal aid for parochial schools, that is to say, Catholic parochial schools. (It is sometimes forgotten that there are Lutheran schools, Jewish schools, but they were concerned, of course, about Catholic parochial schools). And about that time, President Kennedy invited Merriman Smith and me to the White House, that is, up to his quarters in the mansion, to watch a prize fight on TV, Floyd Patterson and this Swedish....

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McHUGH: Ingemar Johansson.

FOLLIARD: Yes, Johansson. And before the fight started, I told him about this being called in by these priests, I think one of them was Monsignor Hochwalt [Frederick G. Hochwalt], or something like that. And Kennedy seemed to be annoyed – that is, about federal aid for parochial schools – and he says, “Why do they pick on me? They never picked on Ike.” And that was about the end of that conversation. In press conferences and all when he was asked about these things, he said he thought that federal aid for parochial schools would be unconstitutional and that it would violate the provision for separation of church and state. I have... He sounded sincere to me. If you are suggesting that he took this stance for political reasons, well, he was a politician and would like to have had a second term and hoped to have a second term – undoubtedly would have gotten a second term. But that was the only private talk I ever had with him on that subject. “Why do they pick on me? They never picked on Ike.”

Oh, there was a sequel to that. I was talking to Monsignor Hochwalt. I probably told him about what Kennedy said, and he said, “The answer is that there is a bandwagon rolling now, and we want to get aboard.” In other words, for the first time there seemed a chance to get federal aid for parochial schools, and they just didn’t want to miss the bandwagon.

McHUGH: I think you mentioned, when I first spoke to you, you mentioned you were in Dallas at the time the President was...

FOLLIARD: Yes, yes. I was in a press bus, oh, it must have been two blocks away from the car in which Kennedy was riding. And, as you probably know, we were on our way to – what do they call it?

McHUGH: The Trade Mart. Was that what it would've been?

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FOLLIARD: Trade Mart. And we knew something had happened. Our press bus stopped, or at least slowed down, probably stopped for a moment. And I was looking ahead and saw the Presidential car, which, of course, had the top down, I saw it, and then I saw it racing away.

McHUGH: You must have been on the first bus then?

FOLLIARD: First bus, yes. And then I saw a motorcycle cop racing up a hillside. There was a grassy knoll there. And I remember yelling, "Manhunt!" But, of course, I had no idea what had happened. We were under a great disadvantage there. The driver of our bus, not knowing what had happened drove up to the Trade Mart; we got to the Trade Mart instead of going to the hospital. If there had been any sort of...

McHUGH: That was your...

FOLLIARD: ...where we were supposed to go. But had there been any communications of any kind, had there been a radio on the bus, we would have gone to the Parkland Hospital.

McHUGH: So you went to the Trade Mart.

FOLLIARD: To the Trade Mart, and then we went up, they had a press room there for us up in the balcony floor. All the place was jammed; the people were at the tables. Nobody knew that anything had happened at this point.

McHUGH: When did you first hear that the President had been shot?

FOLLIARD: Well, we went up to the press room that they had set aside for us, and some of the fellows put in phone calls, and by that time, the newspapers had

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got a flash from the wire service men, UP [United Press International] and AP [Associated Press] men, who were riding a few cars behind the President, who had radio telephones. And they had a great advantage on us, these pool men. So then, when we heard, we dashed out and got in a bus and went to the Parkland Hospital. And, of course, there was utter confusion there, and I saw a priest hurrying down a corridor, and I said, "Uh oh, that's bad." But still I didn't...

McHUGH: You didn't talk to him, did you?

FOLLIARD: I couldn't believe this fellow was dead.

McHUGH: At that time it had been reported that he was dead.

FOLLIARD: There was a lot of misinformation. When we got to the hospital, we went right up to where the car was, the presidential car, and the car in which the Vice President had been riding. And with him in that car was Senator.... Who's the Senator from Texas?

McHUGH: Ralph Yarborough.

FOLLIARD: Yes, Yarborough, who was in the car with Vice President Johnson, and he was there because Kennedy had been trying – there was a feud between the two, and Kennedy had finally brought them together. That's the reason they were in the car together. And he told of hearing shots; he said, "It sounded like a deer rifle." And he said that you could smell the smoke, and the odor of the smoke from the rifle had clung to their car all the way to the hospital, which is just pure bunk. I remember the building from which those shots were fired, and no smoke drifted down from the sixth story and clung to their automobile, that's just nonsense. That's the kind of stuff you were getting there.

Then finally, at 1:30, Mac Kilduff, the assistant White House press secretary – I remember Salinger was flying across the Pacific with some Cabinet officers – Kilduff came (we all met in a room there in the hospital; it looked like some sort of a classroom, a lot of little desks and all) and made this sad announcement that the President was dead, that he was killed by a bullet that went through his right

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temple, as I remember it. I had....

This is something – I'm not going to boast about this; I'll be honest about it. I think my heart may have skipped a beat when he said the President was dead, but otherwise I was just the professional. I figured how am I going to get all the details, how much time have I got to get this, where do I find Western Union to get the story in, how do I... Phones, all the phones were tied up, of course. And I didn't go around, as I later heard some people cried and all that. There was nothing like that among us. But after it was all over – we were traveling in a Pan American Airways chartered plane. After we had all filed our stories – I wrote my story sitting in a bus out at the airport. There had been a pool reporter who was in at the swearing in of Johnson aboard the Air Force One who'd come and gave us a fill-in. Other reporters gave us a fill-in. We knew nothing about the assassin; that was another story. And I wrote the story; every big story I've ever covered, I've written under difficulty. I had to write this with typewriter in my lap, sitting in this press bus at the airport. Well, finally we filed it, and, as I say, I'd had no emotional upset except for when Kilduff said Kennedy was

dead. I felt a chill race up and down my spine, but otherwise, no, no emotional....

McHUGH: Well, thank you very much.

FOLLIARD: Well, I'd say that's one story I just wish to God none of us had ever had to cover. I think you can understand why.

McHUGH: Thank you very much for your time, Mr. Folliard.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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