



EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT HEALY

August 10, 2005
Scituate, Massachusetts

Interviewer

Stephen F. Knott

Attending

Mary Healy
Beatriz Swerdlow

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TRANSCRIPT

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Knott: Thank you very much for having us in your home.

Healy: Yes, you're welcome.

Knott: You know I appreciate it.

Healy: I hope I can help you.

Knott: What will happen is in about three or four months you'll get a transcript of this interview and you can make any changes to the transcript at that time.

Healy: Yes, put it in English.

Knott: If there's something you remember—don't clean it up too much. We like the local color you know.

Healy: Don't worry, I won't.

Knott: If you have second thoughts about anything you said, you also can retract it at that point. Nothing will be open without your permission. That's the bottom line.

Healy: I just—a couple of things just for your background. With Teddy, I'd like to give you the official version. There's nine versions of the cheating story and everybody has a part in it, but you know, I'd like to get that squared away—

Knott: That will be fantastic.

Healy: —formally, and the other thing would be on the judgeship, the Pulitzer—the one on [Frank] Morrissey.

Knott: Great, great.

Healy: You know, I was the central figure in the Morrissey thing and it involved Teddy, Bobby [Kennedy], and Jack [Kennedy] too, who told me before it happened that it wouldn't happen. But the old man put the screws on the two kids, you know.

Knott: I see, OK. Well, could we start? Perhaps if you could just give us some background as to how you first came—you mentioned earlier that you were close to John Kennedy.

Healy: Yes, well we were both—I've got some notes. My wife is much more diligent than I am about notes. I was in the Eighth Air Force. In fact, I served with Kenny O'Donnell, who became the White House Chief of Staff, not officially, but that's the function he served for Jack. I met Jack. I had a very close friend of mine, a fellow by the name of Jack Fallon, who's dead but who was very close to Teddy. He was CEO of R.M. Bradley. He introduced me to him at the—Joe Kennedy had set up in '46 or so—right after we both got out of the service—the Veterans of Foreign Wars post, believe it or not in the old Hotel Vendôme, which is at the corner of Dartmouth and Commonwealth Avenue—

Knott: The one that burned?

Healy: —and probably the only hotel VFW in the world. That's where they met. And that's how I met him. I was not a very big stick in the globe at that time. I mean, you know, I was covering—it was a hello-and-goodbye job. I mean I wasn't—I really didn't have any close relationship to him other than when I went to Washington and he, by that time, was in the Senate. Before he was killed I started a book with which he was very cooperative—on the making of a President. It was a [Theodore] Teddy White job but it was a different slant and Teddy hadn't done it. I was going to take him from him campaigning in Charlestown and East Boston through to the point where he got elected, but not anything in the Presidency.

Knott: Yes.

Healy: Then when he got shot, McGraw-Hill pulled the book on me because [Theodore] Sorensen came out, another on [James] Schlesinger came out—and mine looked like a nickel-and-dime job. So I said the hell with it, and it died on the vine.

Knott: Have you held on to that manuscript?

Healy: Yes, I have it.

Knott: You should.

Mrs. Healy: You gave it to Doris [Kearns Goodwin]. You gave it to Doris.

Healy: Oh yes, but I can get it, yes. Anyway it's about, I don't know, probably half finished. But it's all finished vis-à-vis the legwork in it.

Knott: Yes, yes.

Healy: And it's kind of interesting because—well, it brought a different light to the guy. Anyway, that's how I got to know him at that point. Life was different. That's the biggest part of it too. I mean, here I go now with my problem about telling you why I'm important—

Knott: [laughs] That's OK.

Healy: —but you asked for it. Mary and I have gone over some stuff and one of the things was that the White House—I mean, he used to call me from the President's office and say to me, "I haven't seen you." Well, things have changed a little but on the other hand, in the campaign process, nobody thought he was going to be President of the United States, quite frankly, with Lyndon [Johnson] running against him. For us it was a pretty—I was in Washington at that point. I went to Washington in '57 and at that point he was a big story for us, you know.

Knott: Yes, that's right.

Healy: He had gotten his ass handed to him in the convention in '56, which I'm sure you have, and we would go out and I'd frankly be the only guy covering him.

Knott: Yes.

Healy: I'm talking about '57, '58. I made the first trip out that really was a Presidential trip in '58 to California and Oregon and so forth, and then in the primaries, the primary states that he was hitting. I always remember one night—this is just an anecdotal thing. We were in Superior, Wisconsin, and he had been over at the copper range there—what did they call it? Masabe? No, not Masabe, [Mesaba] but anyway, the big copper range in Minnesota.

Knott: Right.

Healy: He was coming back to Wisconsin in Superior and frequently we'd go out to supper together, you know. He sat on the edge of the bed while I was finishing the piece I was writing, and when it was all through he said to me, "Do you think I can be President of the United States?" And I said, "Jesus, Jack, I can't imagine anybody I know as well as I know you being President of the United States. I've covered [Dwight] Eisenhower in the White House you know, and he was a majestic figure to me in World War II."

Knott: Sure.

Healy: I flew in the Eighth Air Force and he was a majestic figure then and he was a majestic figure as the President.

Knott: Right.

Healy: We used to call him "Bubblehead," because when he'd get pissed off his bald head would shine red. But anyway, Jack said, "Well, thanks a lot." And then we went out to dinner. I tell you that just so—that was the relationship and it was so different from what anybody has or could have in today's world.

Knott: Yes, right.

Healy: It all changed, I think, with the assassination, really. It began to change anyway, the association. Anyway, that would be my relationship with him and it sort of led to—I think that's all you need from that, I mean in terms of how I knew him.

Knott: You said you went to D.C. in '57. You were a reporter for the [*Boston*] *Globe*.

Healy: Right.

Knott: Yes, yes. You're not the chief of the—

Healy: I was the bureau chief.

Knott: You were the bureau chief at that time?

Healy: And there was no other help. [laughs]

Knott: OK, you were it.

Mrs. Healy: He was a one-man bureau.

Healy: [laughs] I was a one-man bureau, yes, yes.

Knott: OK.

Healy: Actually, I was sent there to fix the television license, which I did do.

Mrs. Healy: Also, about the ambassador asking you to write the book.

Healy: Oh yes, this is kind of interesting. Joe [Kennedy] used to call when—Jack was always in the tub at the end of the day soaking his back because his back was always sore and Joe would call almost every day of his life, you know, when he was out in the campaign, I mean the only time I saw it at least. Frequently, Jack would say, “That’s the old man calling.” If I was in his room he’d say, “Talk to him.” So I’d tell him—you know, the questions were always the same. “What kind of a day did you have?” “Gee, it was pretty good,” and then it always ended up, “Is Jack behaving himself? And I’d say, “Sure, oh yes.”

Anyway, when Jack got elected, he wanted me to do the PT 109 book—Joe did. Joe said to me, “I’ll handle the agency business for you free, and we’ll probably get a movie out of it.” At the time, we now had a three-man bureau in Washington and I was a Bureau Chief and I couldn’t do it. I mean I just didn’t want to. First of all, I had to have—believe it or not, I did keep some credentials with [Richard] Nixon and people like that. And what I wrote was probably not as reflective as it might have been, being a pal of his. I mean I never used any of the closeness that—you know, we covered him pretty straight.

Knott: Was he a good source? Would he feed you things?

Healy: Oh yes. One of the things I always get a bang out of is declassification, you know, and this current thing. The President of the United States can declassify anything he wants. I mean literally. I mean he can take top secret stuff and—at one point, I was out playing golf up here. I was on vacation and I got a call. The President calls Evelyn Lincoln and says, “Get me Bob Healy,” and they don’t know where you are. You could be in Washington or you could be in Vancouver, but anyway, I was out on the golf course. They came charging out and told me the President wanted to talk to me, and I came back to the pro shop.

Kennedy, you know, would pick up a phone and he’d never say, “This is the President.” He’d never say anything like that. He’d begin talking, and he said to me—I’ll never forget it—he said to me, “Did you see what Cushing said to the—” meaning Archbishop [Richard] Cushing. He was the head of—Pope John named him head of St. James Society, but he was sort of the policeman of the cardinals for South America and so forth. Cushing had gone down there and just chewed the ass off the cardinals about owning property and their wealth and that they weren’t very holy people for where they had a lot of poor people. It was a pretty good speech and Cushing could be tough as hell.

Knott: Yes.

Healy: So Jack’s reading from the transcript of this session that was a private session that Cushing had, and I finally said to him, “What are you reading from?” And he said, “Oh, I’ve got a CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] report here.” And I said, “Well how the hell did you expect me to get it?”

Knott: [laughs]

Healy: So he said, “I’ll send it to you.” [laughs] That was the kind of thing that he would do.

Knott: Yes, yes.

Healy: You know? And, and it wasn’t unusual either. I mean there would be times when he’d be kind of cheesed off at me. I remember once with Bobby, and I think this was true of [Benjamin] Bradlee and all these people. Ben and I were good pals. As a matter of fact he tried to hire me for *Newsweek*, he and the publisher. But anyway, Jack would call you up.

When he was President-elect I had a background group called the Healy Group that I formed because I couldn’t get into the better one that was run by the *Newsweek* guy down there—I forget his name now—a very distinguished guy. They were all old timers and I was in my thirties and they were swapping what they used to call black sheets among them and I wasn’t going to get any of their black sheets anyway, not that I wanted them and not that I needed them.

But I had access to these people, and we had Bobby in for a background and it was pure background, and I policed it very tough. Bobby said that Jack was going to appoint blacks to the

Cabinet. Now that may not sound like a hell of a story today, but that was a big story and we almost all dropped our cookies in the room because, you know, this was a hell of a story. But if you—you had to either get it confirmed someplace else, or—

Knott: I see.

Healy: You know, the background rule. I mean it was deep background. So I went with the story in a column that I could write myself without attributing it to anybody and I got a call from Jack. He knew where I got it because—I don't know how he knew but he said to me, "You've got to keep in mind who the President of the United States is. It's not Bobby Kennedy." He was bullshit that it got out. He never did appoint—he did appoint one later, but the original Cabinet did not contain—

Knott: Right, yes.

Healy: It was supposed to be the guy from Cleveland who was—I forget his name now. He was a housing guy, I think, who was a real jerk.

Knott: When does Edward Kennedy appear on your radar?

Healy: Well, I was just going to say. Yes, we get to Edward. I didn't know him really. I didn't know him until—I think I was introduced to him on the floor of the '60 convention in LA. I beg your pardon. No, I had met him—

Mrs. Healy: Wisconsin.

Healy: —in Wisconsin. I met him on the ski trip.

Knott: OK.

Healy: It was the one where he jumped off the—he was in the gin mill one night and somebody challenged him and—Teddy was a really bold figure, you know.

Knott: Yes.

Healy: I mean you really have to understand he was—first of all, he was unlike the Kennedys. Bobby was kind of a tough guy, but Teddy was a big physical presence too. He was strong as hell and he was a pretty fair football player although he didn't—he got screwed up in Harvard.

Knott: Right.

Healy: And of course we'll get to that, but he was big and he was daring and he went off—that's where I met him. I can't think of the town, either, but I'm sure it's in somebody's notes. I met him the night that he was challenged. I was with him and I think there were a couple of other news guys there but I don't—I may have been alone, I don't know. He was pasting it up—what was that story? He was pasting it up. Who was the other guy? Was it [John] Culver?

Mrs. Healy: I think it's in your notes that we wrote down.

Healy: Oh, is it? Anyway, he did the jump. He went off the damn thing. I thought he'd kill himself. He wasn't a jumper. At the time, I was a pretty good skier because I skied with the mountain troops out in Aspen, the Tenth Mountain Division. I wasn't in the division but I was—He was not a bad skier, but he had more guts than he had brains, you know.

Knott: But he survived the jump.

Healy: He survived the jump and he took the—yes, there it is. The guy said to him, “You won't do the jump,” and he said, “Yes I will, if you'll vote for my brother.”

Knott: [laughs]

Healy: So that's how it was. The same night he was getting bitten by dogs. Instead of putting the Kennedy stickers on the back of cars, he would put them on the windows inside and a dog attacked him. Then, I really didn't see much of him during the campaign. And I wouldn't, because he went west.

Knott: Yes.

Healy: Yes, he went west and he delivered Wyoming, if you remember, which was the big casino in '60. My assignment there was I was with Jack out to that guy's house who lost his voice who was a movie actor, where they hid Jack for three days. I spent those three days at the house with him in LA.

Knott: This is during the convention?

Healy: This is during the convention and then the night he got the—he went down to the convention hall and then I met Teddy again that night. So that would be—you know, these are just hello-and-goodbye because—

Knott: Sure, sure.

Healy: And he wasn't a heavy, as they say.

Knott: Do you recall when you first heard whether he might make a run for the Senate seat that JFK vacated? Was that in the air at all?

Healy: Oh yes, well, that's another thing. That kind of coincided with this period. Jack said to me, “Are you doing some stuff on people who are out here from Massachusetts?” And I said, “Yes, if I run into something,” you know, in Wisconsin. This was in Wisconsin.

Ben Smith was out there working for him. Ben was this quiet guy who had been a classmate of Jack's at Harvard, and he wasn't a gofer, if you know what I mean. Jack had two styles of friends

and some of them were gofers, making sure his coat never touched the floor, as they say, and the others would be guys like Ben Smith, who would be on the same level as he was with Harvard. Ben was a pretty good football player and everything. Anyway, that's how I met Ben. As I recall—and my memory is not too sharp on this—Jack suggested Ben, and I didn't know him from a hole in the wall. When I went back, they then asked me what I thought of Ben. Ben was a nice guy but didn't come on very impressively and was the last guy in the world I would think would be eligible to be a Senator.

Knott: Right.

Healy: Or even thinking about being a Senator. And I don't think he was. But anyway, Jack made some comment to me about that time about Ben succeeding him in the Senate if he got elected. It was the first time I had ever seen him and the minute I—the thing that went through my mind immediately was, a seat warmer.

Knott: OK.

Healy: Because I would describe Ben—Jack was a dog about getting descriptions of people, what you thought of them, and he was asking, do you think this guy could do a political job and my answer was no. I mean how does he get elected? Jack would kind of slough that off as—and all of a sudden I realized that he'd be a seat warmer. So Jack was thinking about the seat warming operation as early as—and that whole [Foster] Furcolo fight. They didn't like each other and—

Knott: Right, right.

Healy: [Thomas] Tip O'Neill refereed that for Jack because the father asked him to.

Knott: The father asked Tip?

Healy: The father asked Tip to referee that, yes, and Tip wasn't that hot about doing it but did it for the old man.

Knott: Right.

Healy: That was the first time you got the notion that maybe they were thinking about who they would appoint if Jack got elected.

Knott: Yes.

Healy: And it came to me, as I say, through the business of—and at that time Teddy wasn't even old enough to serve in the Senate.

Knott: Right, right, right.

Healy: So you know, the old man was all over everything.

Knott: Yes, I was going to ask you about that.

Healy: The old man was over in those days, and then of course the stroke was devastating for those guys because the old man kept calling them all the time. I don't know this firsthand but I know he called all of them, including Teddy. He would call all of them every day and then when he had the stroke, you know, he couldn't talk but he still called them.

Knott: Oh, he did?

Healy: Yes. He would call them and Jack told me that some of the conversations were brutal, because he knew what he wanted to say and he couldn't say it.

Knott: Yes.

Healy: I mean because of the stroke. He had a very serious stroke and lost his ability—I think he lost some of his marbles too but I don't know. I mean he certainly didn't have it all together after the stroke. But he also was very determined about what he wanted, on the other hand. I'm talking about with Jack. Like he wanted the Morrissey thing and he wanted—

Knott: The father wanted this?

Healy: The father wanted the Morrissey thing. We had a party at Duke Zeibert's when Dick Donahue—Dick was the Congressional guy for him, a guy from Lowell. Dick's old man told him he either had to come home—He had served as a Congressional Liaison guy for Jack. We had a party and it was days before Jack went to Texas where he got killed. At the party, I was in the back room with Bobby, arguing with Bobby Kennedy over the Morrissey appointment. I was going back to be executive editor at that point and—

Knott: So you were going back to Boston?

Healy: To the *Globe*.

Knott: Yes.

Healy: I was kind of a policy guy, even at the level that I was at, and because I was about to leave, they made a deal with me. But I told him we'd be against it and—

Knott: What was that? What were the problems with Judge Morrissey?

Healy: Well, he was a dented-fender guy, a judge. I mean that's all he ever—and for him to sit on a Federal Court on cases of antitrust, that was incredible, which I'll get into in the Morrissey case. Secondly, he never went to law school. I mean that whole Georgia thing was a fake.

Knott: Some mail-order law degree?

Healy: Yes. It was a mail-order job, you know, and it was not unusual, by the way, down there. They had these setups and the guy just wasn't qualified to be a Federal Judge. I mean he wasn't going to do any damage, as they say, deciding who hit who in the rumble seat of a car, but if you were going to put him on the Federal bench—Jesus. Anyway, that night, Jack walked into this sort of standoff between me and Bobby in the back room at Duke Zeibert's and he said to me, he grabbed me aside, took me away from Bobby and he said, "It ain't gonna happen."

Knott: Really?

Healy: And as I'll tell you later—well, I can tell you now. The thing was, the way the story actually broke was I knew he didn't go to law school but you had to prove it, and at one point—and I can't remember who was there but I know Kenny O'Donnell was there. This is when Jack was President and we were out at Frank Sinatra's house. Morrissey I think was there, or he may not have been.

Knott: Yes.

Healy: And Jack used to berate him. I mean Jack actually put him out in the street on a trip from Worcester to Boston one time, stopped the car and said to Frank, "Get out." And that's no joke. I mean, that's a fact. And we're out in the boonies in those days.

Knott: That's right.

Healy: Morrissey is standing there in the street saying, "What do I do now, coach?" [laughs] He said, "Well, put your thumb out." Anyway, that's what happened. I mean that was his take on Morrissey. He knew he was the old man's guy. I know personally he resented Morrissey's role, meaning he was a spy for the old man, even with Jack.

Knott: Oh, OK.

Healy: And at that thing there—and as I say I'm a little hazy now on precisely who said—I do remember exactly what it was though, because it all came from Jack. Jack was talking to Morrissey about, "Frank, why doesn't the popular—" They were all having drinks, you know, and Jack was having his one daiquiri and the rest of them were swilling down some beers, and he said to Morrissey, "Why didn't you ever run for office in Massachusetts, since you're a popular guy?" It was all a put-on, and I remember the words, too, because Frank said, "Well, a lot of people have asked me to run for the State House and State Rep and so forth." And Jack looked at him very coldly and said, "Frank, you're a fucking liar. You ran in 1932. You finished seventh in a field of eleven," and you had, you know, 640 votes. In the Morrissey case, when Jack was now dead, he testified before the Senate. You know, they have to put in a blue slip.

Knott: Yes, right.

Healy: [Leverett] Saltonstall has to put in a—the guy who's the Republican Senator has to put what they call a blue slip, which means a no objection. You don't endorse the candidate from Massachusetts for the Federal Bench but neither do you oppose it. [Everett M.] Dirksen was hot

on the trail of Morrissey and he used to call me, Dirksen being the Minority Leader in the Senate. I got a call in the Morrissey case from Kenny O'Donnell. Kenny and I served in the Eighth Air Force together. He was in my bomb group so we were kind of pals, you know. I mean we weren't that close over there because you weren't close to anybody except your air crew. The guys next to you didn't last long so you didn't get friendly with them.

But Kenny called me when Frank had testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee, getting into great detail about his experience at this Georgia law school. Kenny called me and he said to me, "I'm going to just tell you this once and then I'm going to hang up. Remember the story of Jack Kennedy facing down Morrissey on running for office?" And I didn't know what the hell he was talking about, to be honest with you, and then I said to myself, 1932. Have you ever seen the clips on this?

Knott: Yes, we've got a few of them in here.

Healy: Anyway, that blew the—so what happened was, I put the two and two together that he had to sign an affidavit that he had lived in the district to run for state office, at the same time he said he was in Georgia going to law school. So I went up—I was in Washington during the thing because I had told Bobby and Teddy, which is where Teddy comes in, that we were going to oppose it and that I hoped that they'd play it square and I'd play it square, but that I didn't think he was qualified and if I came upon something like this—and I, at that time vaguely suggested to Bobby that this guy never went to law school and that I would look into it.

Knott: So Bobby was irritated with you, I think you said.

Healy: Oh, right away, yes.

Knott: How was Ted? Do you recall Ted's reaction to any of this stuff?

Healy: Well, I had spoken to both of them, and I don't think I had done it together but I think I had done it separately, that we were going to oppose it. Bobby was very aggressive about it but he knew, you know, and it kind of frosted my ass because the guy knew he was a dented-fender judge and he didn't belong on the Federal Bench. But the old man wanted it and that was it.

Knott: Yes, yes.

Healy: So I went up to the State House and sure enough he had a sign. I dug out the affidavit and then I went to Dirksen and to Teddy and I told them I was going to write the story. Dirksen knew we had him beat and he made that famous speech—it's a pretty good speech—on the floor of the Senate. Teddy then came in and did the withdrawal of the nomination. And of course Johnson was tickled shit at the whole event because he went through for them and was glad that they got embarrassed. He wasn't worried about Teddy's future, although he liked Teddy.

Knott: Johnson liked Teddy?

Healy: He liked Teddy a hell of a lot better than he liked Bobby.

Knott: Yes, sure.

Healy: They kind of hit it off. I think he bounced Bobby around on the issue, you know what I mean?

Knott: Yes.

Healy:—with Teddy and Bobby, you know, like two brothers. “I like you but I don’t like your brother,” like Gene McCarthy. Gene did the same—played the same game with Teddy in Chicago in ’68.

Knott: Saying, “I like you, Ted, but not—”

Healy: “But I wouldn’t support your brother,” who was dead.

Knott: He told him this after Bobby was killed?

Healy: Yes.

Knott: Wow.

Healy: Yes. Gene was a mean bastard but you know it’s funny, I never had—Gene asked me to run his campaign.

Knott: Yes, we noticed that, yes.

Healy: Yes. In 1968 at the—I mean, he didn’t win New Hampshire but he was going to win Wisconsin. He always had—he thought he should have been the first Catholic President. That’s where it all starts with Gene McCarthy. And we helped him in New Hampshire, mostly because of the war. I had been to Vietnam and I went over there as a hawk. When I came back I was going to be executive editor. I was writing editorials and we were one of the first papers in the country to come out against the war.

Knott: Yes.

Healy: It was a result of, well, it was a result of a lot of things, but in ’64 before we put the troops in there, you knew it wasn’t going to be successful if you—I lived in the Mekong Delta with the Ninth ARVN [Army of the Republic of Vietnam] Division. I got a good look at it because [Paul D.] Harkins—General Harkins was the commanding officer and he was very nice to me. In those days, you could call Harkins and he’d send a helicopter for you wherever you wanted to go. There was some—they had good troops. This was the best ARVN group in the Delta. It was an indigenous war then, too.

So, we helped McCarthy in ’68. That was four years later and Gene got me at the Pfister Hotel there in Milwaukee. We both finished a bottle of scotch, and we were both pretty drunk at about

5:00 in the morning. All night long he was typing things on my typewriter, the portable. I remember him sitting on the side of the bed with my typewriter, making promises about giving me the whole show, and the big tall guy, Blair Clark—you know Blair?

Knott: Yes.

Healy: Blair was rich, you know. He was a white-sneaker guy and a pretty good fellow, but he couldn't run a two-car funeral when it came to—and Gene and I departed—I quit. I actually quit to run it.

Knott: You did?

Healy: Yes, I did. And the old man [Laurence L.] Winship was running the paper and he said, "I'd like you to take a leave for a couple of weeks. You work on the campaign, do anything you want and then make up your mind." We had a funny—this is irrelevant. Now here I am talking about myself.

Knott: No, no, that's fine, that's fine.

Healy: Anyway, Gene said to me—I remember the night in Wausau, Wisconsin. We were in the hall Sunday night, the night Johnson makes a speech with a snap-line at the end about—

Knott: About withdrawing?

Healy: About withdrawing. And at that point I'm working for him. And Gene had a problem with women, Gene McCarthy I mean. He would—they'd romance him and I don't think there was anything going on, by the way, but he loved to have a whole crowd of women around him telling him what a hell of a guy he was. Shana Alexander was there. At that point, my relationship with him had already changed [laughs] because I said to him—we're coming in a car from Wausau to Milwaukee—I said, "Gene, this is the worst thing that could have happened to you." You know, they're all—the kids are going bananas because they've accomplished their mission.

Knott: Yes, right.

Healy: Their mission was to cream Johnson, and I said to him, "You needed this victory because you've never had the victory." Then he said, "What the hell, are you crazy? I drove this guy out." I said, "But it doesn't mean you won. It doesn't mean you're going to be President, and in fact I don't think you are going to be President now." And he said, "Well, what do I do?" And I said, "Well, I'll get up at 6:30 in the morning and I'll have a list of people, including the Senator from Georgia and all these freckle-bellies and right-wing guys in the Democratic Party you have some appeal for." You know, he was kind of a conservative guy economically, on his economics. I mean a lot of people thought he was in the tank, to be honest with you.

Knott: Really?

Healy: To some of the big interests, yes. I said, “I want you to get on the phone and I want you to call these Senators and tell them why you are going to win this fight. That’s why Johnson got out, not because of any other reason.” Johnson was going to get—he *was*, too. He was going to get murdered.

Knott: He was going to get beat in Wisconsin.

Healy: Oh, he was going to get murdered in Wisconsin, yes. Well, Wisconsin, you know. If you’ve been—I’ve been there about five times on primaries and it’s a pretty liberal state.

Knott: Yes, true.

Healy: And then it has some good old-fashioned Democrats. Anyway, he agreed to do it. And the next morning I got up at 6:30 and he said, “I’ve rethought that and I’m not going to do it.”

Knott: Really?

Healy: So I said, “See you later.” But we always remained pretty good friends; that was the funny part. Because he made a mistake.

Knott: Right.

Healy: And maybe, I mean Gene would never admit that he made a mistake in a hundred years, but he did.

Knott: Yes. Can I get you to dial back to the—you mentioned earlier there are nine different versions of this Harvard expulsion.

Healy: Oh, the cheating story?

Knott: The cheating story.

Healy: Yes, yes.

Knott: We’re taking it out of context here. I apologize, but—

Healy: I’ll tell you, I just want to get it all straight because I’ve thought about it and refreshed some of my memory with some clips and the like. We knew about the story about Teddy being bounced out of Harvard.

Knott: Were his opponents spreading this story?

Healy: No. We always had pretty good connections at Harvard, you know what I mean?

Knott: OK.

Healy: You know what I mean. I ran a study group over there for eight years, too, so you'd have faculty, and the faculty guys knew about it.

Knott: OK.

Healy: But you couldn't get them to talk about it and these were days when you didn't run a story just because somebody told you.

Knott: Sure.

Healy: You had to get some evidence, and we made a rule that until Harvard gave us a shot at what happened, which they would not give us until they got permission from the Kennedys to do it—I'm sorry. I'm a little obscure there. What I meant was you had to get—Teddy had to—the Kennedys had to call Harvard and say, "Look, give him the story."

Knott: I see.

Healy: So I was up negotiating my own thing to come back to Boston. I was going to jump. We had all 80-year-old editors in those days and it was a big deal for a guy who was young to even penetrate that. And I was not a white-sneaker guy, although I did a fellowship to Harvard. But it was a WASP operation and I was a Catholic.

Knott: Right, right.

Healy: So the whole notion was pretty radical, if you know what I mean, and I was well aware of it. My father was a socialist police striker so I was well aware of those kinds of things, growing up.

But anyway, Harvard just resisted it. I had pretty good contacts over there, and I was up negotiating my return, which would have been two years hence, to become three years hence, to become executive editor. I was at the *Globe*. I was stationed in Washington but I was at the *Globe*, and I had had a meeting with the publisher and he was outlining what the deal was for me.

I got a call from Dick Maguire. He's dead. He was the treasurer of the Democratic National Committee. He said to me, "I'd like to talk to you." I always got stories from him and so it wasn't unusual, and I said, "I'm up here doing some business now. I'll give you a ring." He said, "No, I'm in Boston." And I said, "Where are you?" And he said, "I'm at the Parker House." So I said, "Well, we'll do it." He said, "No. Why don't you come down? You might be—I want to talk to you if you've got time." So I said, "Sure."

Anyway, I finished my business and went down there and Dick was kind of uncomfortable, you know. You could tell he wasn't giving me anything—nothing that I was interested in—and then all of a sudden he said to me, "What do you know about Teddy?" It came just like that, right out, changed the subject, and I said, "What do you mean? The cheating story?" And he said, "Yes. What do you know about it?" And I said, "Not a whole lot. We know there was an exam

involved. Someone took it for him and we don't know—we know that much but we can't confirm it. Harvard won't confirm it. Our guys aren't going to run it." And he said, "OK."

Then he left and the next thing I know, he came back to the room. He excused himself. I thought he was going to the bathroom. He came back and he said to me, "I got a phone call for you." Like I said before, Jack would get on the phone with you and he never introduced himself. I mean he just began talking, and so it was the President on the phone and he said to me, "So you just told Maguire about how much you knew about the cheating story." And I told him what I just told Maguire. And he said, "Well, we could sit on this thing." And I said, "Yes, and Eddie McCormack will blow you out of the water in the first debate." He laughed and he said, "Yes, you've got it."

Knott: [laughs]

Healy: Anyway, he said, "Come on over to see me," and I said, "Hey, I'm in Boston. I'm negotiating my future." He said, "When are you coming back?" I said tomorrow morning and he said, "Come over to see me." I went over and he was in the room—well, I met with him first and we just went over the details.

Knott: The two of you one-on-one?

Healy: One-on-one, yes. And then he invites in Kenny O'Donnell and Mac [McGeorge] Bundy. I got a great line here for you. Jack is going over this whole thing about the play, and of course initially he wants—this is just the two of us. He wants it in a biographical sketch of Teddy. I said, "Christ, you've got to be kidding. I'd write that story, put it in the tenth paragraph and the AP [Associated Press] would lead with it all over the country that Teddy got caught cheating at Harvard. No way am I going to do that." Then Jack got involved with the play of the story and so forth.

Knott: Did he get irritated with you at all during that meeting?

Healy: No. I mean the Oval Office is still the Oval Office but I had been there enough and I had known him well enough so that—I've watched guys go in that Oval Office, you know, and they're shaking.

Knott: Yes.

Healy: But I wasn't shaking. I mean, not that I was so bold, but I was accustomed to him.

Knott: Sure.

Healy: And also, he knew I was telling him the truth. I wasn't the first one to think about the debate, I'm sure. The only reason they did it was for that reason, you know, to blunt the possibility of McCormack. I said McCormack is coming out and he's going to be tough.

Jack then brings in Bundy, and somebody else was in there too but I can't remember who. But Bundy was there, and O'Donnell. I remember when Jack brings them in. I knew Mac Bundy pretty well and I knew Kenny, a pal. Jack could swear like a pirate, as you probably know. He says, "We're talking about the cheating story at Harvard." And he said, "I'm having more fucking trouble with this than I had with the Bay of Pigs."

Knott: [laughs]

Healy: And Bundy, I'll never forget Bundy. Bundy says, "And with about the same results."

Knott: [laughs]

Healy: So that was the way—so I got the deal that I wanted, basically. They opened the gates. Bundy was instructed at that meeting to call Harvard. He had been the Dean at Harvard and he called somebody and when I called, they knew exactly what they had to—they gave me the whole record. And I told them, I told Jack—and he wanted to know what day it would run, too. Kind of interesting. I hadn't even thought of that. They were going to hold up the Harvard transmission so that the news magazines would be out for the week. Are you following me?

Knott: Yes, I got you.

Healy: We got the story on Monday so that by next Friday—

Knott: It was old news.

Healy: It was kind of old news and you've got to consider that the news magazines in those days were terribly important—*Life* magazine, *Newsweek*, and *Time*, and particularly out in the Middle West. It was a big story. And I wrote it pretty straight. You've got copies of it so there's no point—

Knott: Sure.

Healy: It led with the cheating. I mean there was no question about—and they didn't have—I had a guy then who was sort of our executive editor. He was Winship's assistant. Not Tom's, but Laurence Winship, the old man, who was my mentor. He was tough. Victor Jones, his name was. He was executive editor of the paper, whose job I took. He had a little trouble with the sauce but he was smart as hell. He was very watchful of my copy on this thing and properly so. You know, I welcomed it because I didn't want to—

Knott: What were the concerns?

Healy: Well, he didn't want me to go in the tank for the Kennedys.

Knott: Oh I see, sure.

Healy: That was the main concern and that it be straight and that it be complete. And they also gave me—they also threw into the package Teddy’s record at the University of Virginia, which was a plus of course for him because he had done his work pretty well. It was good. It was as close as you could come to a one-day-wonder story as you could have. It ran quite lengthy and it was pretty complete with comments on—the only thing they didn’t give me—Harvard would not give me the name of the other student.

Knott: Oh yes.

Healy: —who was from Connecticut.

Knott: The person who took the exam?

Healy: Yes. But that’s how it happened. There’s nine versions of it but, you know, everybody gets the idea that Healy was a Kennedy guy in private, and obviously I was, but the stuff that I wrote was pretty straight, if you read the stuff. And pretty complete. But in those days, Nixon had his guys who wrote a—what was that guy’s name there? Do you remember? You weren’t born, but—I mean you were only a kid but—

Mrs. Healy: A reporter? Are we looking for a reporter?

Healy: Yes, a reporter. He worked for the *Herald Trib.* [*Herald Tribune*]

Knott: Big Nixon guy?

Healy: Big Nixon guy. He wrote the first book on Nixon.

Knott: Ray Price?

Healy: No, although Ray was pretty much in the bag for—

Knott: [William L.] Safire?

Healy: This guy worked for the *Herald Trib.*

Knott: Yes, OK.

Healy: No, Safire was in the bag for years. I mean, you know, I worked that Sherman Adams story.

Knott: Oh yes, right.

Healy: I got screwed out of a Pulitzer that year, too. Went to the finals and the guy at the *Herald Traveler* who’s a—well, I got the stuff—[Bernard] Goldfine—that got Adams fired.

Knott: Yes.

Healy: Wonderful story too. I look back at that story and think of this current job. I remember old Bubblehead Eisenhower gets up there one day and he's all over the map. He could be incoherent almost.

Knott: Right.

Healy: He says in the middle of a—they're asking him why, pressing him why doesn't he fire Adams. Adams went in the tank for this guy. We were on the verge, I was on the verge of getting the story that he had gotten a free house on Martha's Vineyard, and they knew it. The White House knew it because [James] Haggerty was a pal of mine. He was the Press Secretary and he was feeding me stuff because he didn't like Adams. But they didn't want that kind of—you know. I mean they wanted me to stay in Washington to do the Kennedy—that was the deal I had with them, that I would be the bureau chief as long as Kennedy was President.

Knott: Yes, yes.

Healy: And they wanted me to have my skirts clean. Anybody in those days, like Bradlee and Hugh Sidey and those guys, in terms of the press in those days you had to have some kind—I mean, the President would talk to me. He wouldn't tell me everything I wanted to know, but he would also tell me when I was wrong.

Knott: Sure.

Healy: And he wouldn't lie to me about that, and that's big casino. That's the trouble with these guys nowadays. Everything is spin and you never—I sat next to [Karl] Rove recently at the Gridiron Dinner.

Knott: Karl Rove?

Healy: Yes, and he's a born hooker. I mean he doesn't even understand there's an interplay here between reporters and sources, which is critical.

Knott: Did Ted Kennedy ever speak to you at that time or years later? Did he ever talk to you about this whole Harvard thing and your story, your role?

Healy: Oh yes, yes. That's another item that is not very complimentary to old Ted but that became—as I was going out the door after this long session with the President, Jack said to me, “Jesus, we ought to call Teddy. Will you call him?” Which I did, and he's quoted in there. He didn't say much.

Knott: Right. He's never said anything to you even years later, maybe in a joking manner?

Healy: No. Well, he's made a few cracks at parties about nailing him a couple of times on the Morrissey case.

Knott: Yes.

Healy: Although Bobby, on the night of the Pulitzer—the Pulitzers—they send it to you in the mail, and the night we won—we won at the 75th anniversary of the Pulitzers and they had a dinner in New York at the—What's the name of that hotel, Mary?

Mrs. Healy: Pierre, was it the Pierre?

Healy: Pierre—no, not the Pierre.

Mrs. Healy: The Plaza?

Healy: At the Plaza, and Bobby walked across the entire hall to shake my hand.

Knott: Really?

Healy: Yes.

Knott: That's interesting.

Healy: Well, it had been a done deal. A lot of water had gone under the bridge by that time. I'm talking about between the time we did the stories and it was eight or nine months later that the Pulitzers went out. But the only reason—it was the 75th anniversary. Normally, as I said—but they awarded the Pulitzers in person that year. But anyway he walked across the hall to congratulate me. Ted wasn't there.

Knott: Yes. Is there a point where you really—you mentioned again that you were much closer to Jack. He's killed in November of '63. Bobby—you said there was always some friction of sorts between the two of you. Is there a point where you become close to Ted Kennedy or did that never happen?

Healy: Yes.

Knott: Could you tell us about how that relationship evolved over time?

Healy: Well, as I say, you know him. He knows my relationship with Jack and Bobby at that point, which is good. My relationship with Bobby changed dramatically after the assassination.

Knott: Yes, that's right. OK, yes, right.

Healy: We would see each other socially occasionally and in one of the first sort of encounters that we had, which was friendly, we were in the back room of Paul Young's restaurant at a dinner for somebody. I don't know who the hell it was, and it was during the Louise Day Hicks thing in Boston.

Knott: The whole busing stuff?

Healy: Yes, the busing stuff. Teddy was laughing about his ability to argue cases and so forth, and he said something on the order—I don't remember the exact words—but something on the order of, "I could argue the case for Louise Day Hicks." This was very early in the Louise Day Hicks thing because the President was still alive, and she wasn't—I forget the issue. I think she ran for Mayor like in '67 or something like that.

Knott: That sounds right, yes.

Healy: This was quite a bit before it, but she had made her ground statement of, "Never—" one of the bywords there. Teddy got up and just for the hell of it we did a point and counterpoint kind of debate. My point was Louise was a disaster for Boston as a Mayor and would throw a—would hurt the town and everything, and he did the counter business. Then we went back to his house and had a drink.

The next morning I got a call from the President. It didn't surprise me, because there were a lot of White House guys there that night, but it was a closed party. There were not a whole lot of people there. He said, "I understand you got my brother talking about defending Louise Day Hicks," whom he hated, you know. So that was—he was—and then I'd have to jump a long way. I'd have to jump by Bobby, actually. I'd have to jump to '68, really.

Knott: OK, yes.

Healy: One of the cruelest things I think I ever saw was when McCarthy was—McCarthy and I still maintained a pretty close friendship and the guys who were doing the Secret Service stuff around him, which is kind of critical to a news guy, knew me because I had sat in on—with him.

Knott: Yes.

Healy: So I went up to the Conrad Hilton Hotel where he had a suite, when they were beating the hell out of the students down on the avenue there in Chicago. I went up on Tuesday night—I guess it was before the thing—and said to McCarthy, I said, "Jesus, those kids are getting beat up because of you. Why don't you do something for them and go down and save the peace plank?" Remember they had the—and Robert Lowell was there and Jesus, it was a weird night because Robert Lowell—I knew Lowell pretty well—the poet, you know.

Knott: Yes, yes.

Healy: Lowell could be a little cracker—I mean he was in and out. Then the two of them started—as a put off for me—started talking about a—they made a contest out of it: early sounds in the morning, the opening of a flower, the drying out of a barn, a horse getting up off the ground. They would go back and forth.

Knott: This was while the kids are getting—

Healy: This is while they're getting their brains knocked in. At that meeting, at that session when Gene started that crap, I knew I was out of business. I knew he wasn't going to do anything. At that meeting he told me, Gene did, that he had told Teddy that he could support him. Now, Bobby's dead at that point, just got killed, and Teddy doesn't run because of Bobby's death, and Gene McCarthy says that he told Teddy that he could never support Bobby but he could support Teddy for President. He didn't go into detail but the context of it was that he described Bobby as a mean shit and Teddy was really upset about it.

He told me later and it was sort of, I don't know what, but I think that kind of broke the ice for us, too, because I told him—I'm talking about between me and—not that I'm important to him but the point was that it sort of leapfrogged what I was talking about, this relationship between Jack and then Bobby and then—and they all kept very separate friends. Then Mary and I became very friendly with John Culver, who was going through a midlife crisis—a great guy, just a super guy, Culver was. I think that kind of helped a little too, don't you?

Mrs. Healy: Well, at that point, too, you were back as bureau chief in Washington and we were seeing Ted socially and we were invited to the house.

Healy: That's true. It was later on, yes.

Mrs. Healy: That was after the run in '80. Bob went back to Washington.

Healy: Yes.

Mrs. Healy: And that was when we began to see him socially more.

Healy: Yes, and then we began seeing a lot of him. I mean we made the trip to South Africa with him and that was interesting too because they had a—[Ronald] Reagan had this hooker of—

Mrs. Healy: [Chief Mangosuthu] Buthelezi?

Healy: —of an ambassador who had been involved in the Nestle scandal in Switzerland.

Mrs. Healy: Oh, right.

Healy: It was the end of the era. [Nelson] Mandela was still in the slammer over in Robbins Island. Teddy had made a speech that was a real pistol and the guys from Pretoria, the S.A. PM [Frederik Willem] de Klerk's outfit, had gotten this U.S. Ambassador to actually do the—it was a business group that Teddy had been invited to and the Pretoria guys had insisted that the U.S. Ambassador be given a spot to answer.

Knott: OK, yes.

Healy: This you probably haven't seen before. It was kind of interesting because we were traveling with him, Mary and I with Teddy, and so when this guy gets up, he's not even on the program, the U.S. Ambassador, but he's a Reagan guy. He gives his speech, cutting Teddy's ribs

out and when it was all over, the press—this was in Joburg, Johannesburg—I said to one of the guys who used to be a stringer for us—I was executive editor at that time. No I wasn't; I was back in Washington. But it doesn't matter where I was.

The point was that I said to this guy who had worked for us in South Africa—He had been a stringer for us. He worked for the Rand *Daily Mail*. I said to him, “That speech was written in the White House, I'll bet,” and he said something like, “We'll never know.” I said, “Well goddammit, I'll go up and ask them.” And he said, “You can't do that,” and I said, “Bullshit, I can't. I'll go ask him.” So I walked up and of course this guy who had been one of the money guys for Reagan virtually admitted that it had been. First I asked him—I led into it. I said, “Did you talk to the White House?” He said, “Oh, yes.” Which I knew anyway because Ambassadors don't go to the men's room without clearing it with the White House.

Knott: Right.

Healy: Secondly, I said to him, “Did they write something for you?” And he admitted that, too, so I had a good story and I gave it to all these guys, because they asked me what the hell I said. That was a good trip for us because it showed how Teddy was blossoming as a Senator, I think.

Knott: Yes, yes.

Healy: You know, I think he had gotten—he had shed the presidential thing, although the Jimmy Carter period was interesting. I was involved a little bit there. In fact, Mary and I were at the—what's the name of the hotel in LA? Where were we? Were we in San Francisco or LA?

Mrs. Healy: I don't know what you're referring to.

Healy: When I met the lawyer, Carter's guy. He asked me to pull Teddy off the race. What's German's pal there? They go to the racetrack together. The old guy.

Mrs. Healy: Oh, from Texas. [Robert] Strauss.

Healy: Yes, Bob Strauss.

Knott: Strauss asked you to—

Healy: Strauss called me up when we were—I think we were in San Francisco, as a matter of fact. Yes, we were. Strauss called me up and asked me to have breakfast with him and I went down and it was during the California primary.

Knott: Yes, OK. I see.

Healy: He said, “He's going to lose it.” Strauss made the case that Teddy was going to lose it, and would I get him out of the race? I said, “Jesus, I don't have any—I wouldn't ask him, number one, and number two, I couldn't do it if I did.” But he was committed to it. Strauss sort

of gives you the wink, you know, *Well you could do it. You could ask him.* But anyway, I never asked him.

Knott: You didn't pass that on to anybody?

Healy: No.

Knott: Any of the Kennedys?

Healy: No. I wrote it later.

Knott: Oh, you wrote it.

Healy: Yes, that Strauss was playing the field and looking for somebody to—

Mrs. Healy: The Cliff. The Cliff in San Francisco.

Healy: Cliff Hotel, yes, in San Francisco.

Knott: Can I ask you, did the *Globe* pursue the Chappaquiddick story?

Healy: The *what* story?

Mrs. Healy: Chappaquiddick.

Knott: —the whole Chappaquiddick story aggressively? I mean, were you involved in that? Let's start there.

Healy: Yes, I was, yes. We had a team of about three or four guys who were on it and there wasn't—let me describe the shape of the thing from our standpoint at least. It was an extraordinary story. If you remember the play on the night of the thing, it was a case of somebody on the moon, I think it was. The moon shot.

Knott: The moon landing, yes.

Healy: Yes, and I was executive editor but we had a funny—I don't mean to get into this but the reason I'm getting into it is that one of us had to pass on the Sunday paper and you had to decide whether you'll lead with the moonwalk or Chappaquiddick. We did a dual job that night. If you remember the page, it's kind of interesting.

Knott: Split right in half.

Healy: Yes. Well, it was sort of a split job with Chappaquiddick and the moon story, but I'm saying that if there was a big story we would decide for the managing editor of the Sunday paper. We'd listen to what he wanted but we might change it [laughs], and one of us was in charge of it

because the publisher had a rule that he didn't want to talk to city editors or managing editors. If he wanted to chew someone's ass out, it would be either me or Winship.

Knott: OK.

Healy: Which was good management.

Knott: Yes, yes.

Healy: But we also ran the editorial page, too, which was unusual. We both ran the—and I wrote a lot of editorials. At any rate—so we basically set up the rules of engagement on Chappaquiddick. You knew you weren't going to get anything from the Kennedys, number one, but you had a guy down there doing the story who was coming to see him, and you had the Washington end of it, and then—My recollection is a little flimsy on this but my recollection is that we pressed the police chief pretty hard but he was clearly a pal of the Kennedys. That's a bad phrase. He wasn't a pal but he knew them and he had a relationship with them. I don't know what his relationship—I mean I don't think he was a—I think he was being careful about dealing with the United States Senator from Massachusetts.

Knott: Yes.

Healy: He was a pretty good guy, by the way. I've since—

Knott: Is this Dominick Arena?

Healy: Yes, Arena, and I think he tried to do a pretty good job but there were constraints put on him that some people, in retrospect, wanted him to break.

Knott: Yes.

Healy: And maybe he should have. I'm not judging that one way or the other. Was he tough enough? You know, you had a homicide, or you had a homicide investigation I should say, and what happened? The answers weren't quite fulfilling in the statement, certainly, that they made. We had at that time what we call a spotlight team in business, which we stole from—Mary and I got to be pretty good friends of Harry Evans before he got fired by the *Times of London* when Bozo [Rupert Murdoch] took over the ownership of the *Times* and—

Knott: [laughs]

Healy: So he started that and he won world acclaim with the thalidomide story. The way it was set up was you would take these—whoever was on the team—you would take them out of the run-of-the-mill stories, and we put the spotlight team on it and they did a pretty good job. I'm talking about taking them out from underneath the city editor and putting a separate team on it with no time element factor.

Knott: Yes, yes.

Healy: That was the thalidomide story. You know what thalidomide is?

Knott: Yes, yes.

Healy: On the thalidomide story in London, they hired chemists and experts to do wonderful stuff. Their libel laws are much more brutal than ours, you know. He was a giant on that story, the editor, Harry. We picked up basically the same formula, which we used in Chappaquiddick. You ought to talk sometime to Steve Kurkjian. Steve and Gerard O'Neill.

Knott: These were the reporters on the spotlight team?

Healy: Reporters on the spotlight—They never used a byline on their stories but the names of everybody who contributed were on there.

Knott: Do you recall, was there a feeling that things were being covered up?

Healy: Well, they weren't very forthcoming.

Knott: They were not forthcoming.

Healy: I mean they weren't going to give you anything.

Knott: Yes, yes.

Healy: And you knew that going in because they brought in the lawyers. In fact, [Joseph] Gargan could tell you every bit of it. And he might be more forthcoming now about that than you think. When are you going to see him, tomorrow?

Knott: Tomorrow, yes.

Healy: Really? Down the Cape?

Knott: Yes. We're heading to Hyannis tonight.

Healy: Oh are you? Yes, well that's good, a good night to go down there. So Joe had—we never got anything from Joe. And I talked to [Theodore] Sorensen, who came up here. Who else did I talk to?

Knott: Did you ever hear any reports as to whether Senator Kennedy thought of resigning at the time? Or was that not—

Healy: Oh, I think it definitely was.

Knott: He was.

Healy: Now, I have no firsthand knowledge of that. But was it rumored? Yes.

Knott: Right, yes.

Healy: In fact locally there was talk about who would take his place, but that's Boston politics, too. You know, it could be a very thin reed. [laughs] Everybody's available, if you know what I mean.

Knott: Yes, yes.

Healy: But here was a guy who was prepped to be President. That was the impact of the story. Not that Mary Jo's [Kopechne] death wasn't—but here was a guy who probably would have been President of the United States.

I'll tell you another thing that was fascinating to me, and again, Mary's going to criticize me for talking about myself too much, but it happens to be relevant. I used to get invited to San Clemente by Nixon. I remember at one dinner up there he said—Nixon always gave speeches at dinners, like he wore black socks on the beach. [laughs] Nixon was a weird son of a bitch. But anyway, Nixon says, "We've got the entire spectrum of the American press here." This was out for dinner. There were ten to fourteen editors and of course, who was I with? I was there with the guy from the *Arizona Republic*. I was there with all the right-wing papers. The *Washington Star* was there. The *Post* wasn't, and the *Times* wasn't there.

Once when Teddy was messing around, being talked about recovering from Chappaquiddick and how far he had come and was he thinking about running for President, he sent—You would go to the tarmac in LA where—I was coming from Boston in those days—and Nixon would pick you up in the helicopter. You know, fourteen editors and they'd all come in on the helicopter at roughly the same time, but not me. He would send the helicopter for me to bring me in early—I didn't know, I had no arrangement—because all he wanted to talk about was Ted Kennedy.

He had a fixation, Nixon did, on the Kennedys. Of course, what the hell? He was looking down the barrel of a gun at Bobby and Jack, and the guy was paranoid anyway and the Kennedys just wiped him out. But I always found that kind of interesting, you know? And the first thing he said to me—I'm there sitting on—with Alexander Haig serving us martinis. Out in San Clemente they had a deck out there. Haig was a light colonel in those days and he was a gofer. I often laugh. I reminded him of the story when he became the White House Chief of Staff. "I'm in charge, you remember?" [laughs]

Knott: Mm-hmm.

Haley: So he was serving us martinis. That's on the side. Anyway, it's just funny. Nixon was just—he wanted to know everything about him, everything about Teddy Kennedy. What was he doing? What were people saying in Massachusetts? What were people saying elsewhere? What did I pick up from the Democrats? I probably was—not probably—I wasn't as forthcoming as I could have been, but on the other hand, I'd fish around a little bit there and give him a nugget or two.

Then I remember I leaked the story to—they take you in, “in the box,” as they say, to San Clemente on the helicopter, and then they take you out the same way so that you couldn’t run into any of the guys. In those days if you were covering the White House you stayed in Santa Barbara. So they take you right back to the plane—

Knott: So you couldn’t talk to any of the other reporters?

Healy: So you wouldn’t talk to any of the other reporters. Lou Cannon was out there at the time. He was the *Post* guy and Lou and I were pals, so I told Lou, when I was going out there, I said, “This is the way they’ll do it. You give me your phone number and I’ll give you the story.” These were all off the record.

Knott: Yes, OK, right.

Healy: I gave Lou the story and they were, “Bullshit.” They probably knew who did it, because the other guys wouldn’t tell you your coat’s on fire, you know.

Knott: Right, right.

Healy: I mean those right wing, liberal press guys from the *Arizona Republic*.

Knott: [laughs]

Healy: Literally. I mean the *Times* wasn’t there, nor was the *Post*—the entire spectrum. Nixon had a thing about Teddy and it was different from the thing he had about Jack.

Knott: How would you characterize that difference?

Healy: Well, first of all he was President.

Knott: Yes, OK. Yes.

Healy: That was probably the main thing, but the second thing was that Nixon had a thing about Eisenhower and particularly the WASPS in New England, not that the Kennedys were WASPS; they weren’t, but he put Jack in that category.

Knott: Sure, sure.

Healy: Why, I don’t know, but he did. I know that because one time he told me in the ’60s that they were part of the establishment, and I told him that when I was a kid we couldn’t get into the hotels on the Cape because I was Irish, which was true. They used to have restrictive hotels down on the Cape, including the Belmont and Dennison. But anyway, he put Kennedy in that category and I don’t think he put Teddy in that category. In fact, I’ve heard him say that he thought Teddy was not a bad guy. And I think he had done business with him as President.

Knott: Yes.

Healy: So, what the hell, that gives you a leg up, definitely.

Knott: Sure, sure.

Healy: Yes, they take you out on that back porch there and they can show you the world without giving you anything. That's kind of an interesting aside on Teddy. Teddy's reaction was—Teddy, the year he ran for—I did a magazine piece. I don't think you have it either. I don't see it in the clips. Ward Just, who is a pal of mine, did a piece—some review. I did the whole magazine on Teddy. Who was the other guy that did it for the *New York Times*? The ABC guy, Mary. Your pal? The ABC television guy.

Mrs. Healy: Frank Reynolds?

Healy: ABC.

Mrs. Healy: Frank—I don't know who you're talking about. Did something with the *Times*?

Healy: Yes, he did it for the *Times*. He did a piece on Teddy the year Teddy was President, as we used to call it, 1980.

Knott: Yes, right.

Healy: What was the guy's name?

Mrs. Healy: I have no idea.

Healy: Ward Just wrote a piece comparing the two pieces—

Mrs. Healy: I don't know.

Healy: —in which he said in the piece something about you could tell Healy knew a lot more about Teddy than he didn't put in the magazine. [laughs] Anyway, he was a White House guy for ABC for many years and he did that *New York Times* piece.

I'll tell you, one of the things that struck me about Teddy was—that year I sat in the back of the car. He had this old Pontiac. Joe Kennedy used to tell his kids, "Don't ride around in new cars." So they all had these old shit cans that they used to drive around in, and Teddy had this convertible with a light on the back that was built into—it was a funny light, you know. You don't have a light in a convertible but he had it built in in the backseat. It was during the period of Carter's deregulation.

I was doing this magazine piece on Teddy and he had two guys who were—I mean this is the most arcane crap you ever saw in your life. I'm talking about the SEC [Securities and Exchange Commission] and the ICC [Interstate Commerce Commission] and dereg, and all that stuff.

You're talking about the size of a truck, how much weight they have, and all that stuff. Teddy's in the backseat preparing for one of the debates with Jimmy Carter and I'm in the— no, Teddy's in the front seat and the two guys, his staff guys who were working on this committee are on either side of me, and I'm sitting in the middle and he's literally correcting these guys.

Knott: On detail.

Healy: On detail.

Knott: Yes.

Healy: I mean, the most arcane crap you ever saw in your life. I was really impressed, because as you remember, he gave my pal [John] Chancellor that incredible response about, why do you want to be—

Knott: Oh, Roger Mudd?

Healy: Roger Mudd. I'm sorry, yes. "Why do you want to be President?"

Knott: Yes, yes. "What do you think the—"

Healy: And it made him look awful.

Knott: How do you explain that to this guy—?

Healy: I don't. That's what I'm saying. I don't have any answer for that, because first of all, the notion that he would go into a debate without preparation was crazy, was wrong.

Knott: Yes.

Healy: Those guys used to really prepare. I mean, Jack had a formula. I was around Jack at that first debate with Nixon, and he didn't do that well in that debate. I don't know if you ever read it but if you read it carefully, what saved him was Nixon hadn't shaved. [laughs]

Knott: He was sweaty and—

Healy: He was sweaty. And Nixon was sick. He had injured his foot or something.

Knott: He banged his knee on the car door.

Healy: The knee, you're right—like I am right now. And it was bandaged, yes. But the idea that they wouldn't prepare was just not the case.

Knott: Sure.

Healy: And the idea that that wouldn't be the first question you'd have to deal with, you know, with any of these.

Knott: Sure, sure.

Healy: Either that or it says something about softballs. Jack had a notion of, the tougher the guy, the better he loved them.

Knott: The tougher the questioner?

Healy: Yes, the tougher the questioner. And also, Jack had a wonderful sense of the press. I did an NBC special right after he became President, with this guy who wrote the book—he was a big, Jewish fellow who smoked cigars—I'll think of the name. Anyway, I went over there to get some information from him before I did it. This guy was a Nixon guy and he wrote a tough book on Kennedy, and Jack said to me, "Half of the stuff he uses will be from the *Congressional Record*, and three-quarters of the stuff in the *Congressional Record* is pure bullshit and isn't even accurate," which is true. You know, just because it appears in the *Congressional Record* you don't—but this is the way. So he said to me that time, "The best thing you can do when you go up against this guy is when he throws one of these *Congressional Record* stories at you on me, don't ask—just come back with one of yours. Give him the same treatment with Nixon. And don't answer the question." What the hell is his name?

Knott: Is this Victor Gold?

Healy: No, no, it wasn't Gold. I knew Gold pretty well though, yes. This guy never worked for—well, he was on the payroll I'm sure, but in those days there were a lot of guys. Anyway, at the end of the break—we taped it. It was a half-hour show and at the end of the break this guy came over to me and twirled his cigar a little bit and he said, "Hey kid, if you cut out this bullshit, I'll cut out this bullshit." [laughs]

Knott: [laughs]

Healy: I tell you that because Jack—well, first of all, Jack grew up in a much tougher world than Teddy. I'm talking about in that era. If you ever want to read something that's riveting, it's the Houston appearance before the Baptist ministers in 1960. It's absolutely riveting and he put them on—he really set them on their ass. I mean, it was really something.

Knott: Yes.

Healy: It was a tough audience and I had been—Ralph Coghlan had been the editor of that big Catholic paper that's published in St. Louis. I forget the name of it now, but anyway it was the Catholic—I don't think there is any national journal now in the Catholic—but anyway, Ralph Coghlan. No relation to Father [Charles Edward] Coughlin because Ralph was a real leftie. It was the leftie paper for the Catholic Church, and he did some of the interrogating of Kennedy. I was in the room with him.

Knott: When they were prepping him?

Healy: Before Houston.

Knott: Yes.

Healy: Jack just said, “Bring it on.” The tougher it got, the better he got.

Knott: So you don’t think Teddy had gone through a similar sort of baptism before?

Healy: I don’t think Teddy had ever gone through that baptism, no. I don’t think he had to. That was the problem.

Knott: Right, sure.

Healy: Now, the debate with Eddie McCormack was certainly a tough debate. Don’t think Eddie backed off, and Eddie made it very clear here in Boston that that’s the way it was going to be. He didn’t hold back. If your name was Edward Moore, you’d be out shoveling you-know-what. So, Teddy ran into it occasionally. You know, the George Lodge thing was—George and I covered police headquarters together and I had lunch with him in the last couple of years. He was kind of the gentleman candidate for the Republicans and not too different really with his philosophy than Teddy.

Knott: Yes, right.

Healy: So there were—and then after that—’64 was a joke.

Knott: Right.

Healy: He really never had a tough campaign, not for the Senate.

Knott: Do you know why he took on Carter? Why he would challenge an incumbent President of his own party?

Healy: Yes, I do, I think. We were down—where was that, Mary, in Memphis?

Mrs. Healy: In ’78, the midterm.

Healy: Seventy-eight, yes, the midterm election and he had supported—Well, first of all there was a tribal thing, not that there aren’t tribal things with every candidate for President, but the Carter people—and Mary worked for Jimmy—the Carter people were pretty tribal. I mean they were smart people and they were tough, but they were very tribal.

Mrs. Healy: They were very parochial.

Knott: Georgia?

Healy: Yes, they really were, and Mary worked with the top guys.

Mrs. Healy: I worked early on in the campaign. Volunteer.

Healy: And once she claimed to know me, she was dead. [laughs]

Knott: Is that true?

Mrs. Healy: Yes.

Knott: Really?

Healy: It was funny too.

Mrs. Healy: The *Boston Globe* wasn't Jimmy Carter's favorite paper. I wasn't that important. I mean I was just a volunteer, but I was a volunteer very early on when there were very few people outside of the Georgians.

Knott: OK.

Healy: Yes, she was from Tennessee. Anyway they were very tribal. They would do silly things, you know. The guy she knew pretty well was a Congressional guy who was pretty good. He was pretty good but he fought an uphill battle.

Mrs. Healy: Frank Moore. But you know, Jimmy Carter was a very ineffectual President and he was not in the Democratic tradition, certainly at that time. He looks like a liberal now.

Knott: Right, right.

Mrs. Healy: And I think—I don't think it was personal. I think it was philosophical.

Healy: Yes it was, and I think that was the difference. Tip [O'Neill] used to say that they went out of their way to stiff him.

Knott: The Carter folks?

Healy: Yes, and they did it like—

Mrs. Healy: There was a Southern chip.

Healy: The seats, remember the—

Mrs. Healy: There was a Southern chip on their shoulder.

Healy: Yes, and I know Teddy—Teddy made a speech on healthcare in Memphis that’s a pisser because it gets at his real concern, and not only that, but he really felt that they had a shot at it at that time.

Knott: To get national healthcare?

Healy: To get national healthcare. Well, not—he never believed in—that’s where he parted company with Clinton, too, Teddy did. He believed that nobody would buy the package, that you had to do it incrementally.

Knott: OK.

Healy: And that that was the way to do it, that was the proper way. You know, feed it in every year but make the commitment to it.

Knott: Yes.

Healy: He made a speech that was—geez, it was a pisser—in Memphis at that midterm convention—on healthcare. You know, when somebody does the handout on healthcare, [makes snoring noise] all the press goes to the men’s room. But it was a hell of a speech.

Knott: Yes, yes.

Healy: I think if you were to pinpoint the timing of it, Carter was bullshit at it. Instead of placating Kennedy and doing something for him, they fought him, and Teddy at that point had enough seniority. He had very great success dealing with the Republicans. He still does.

Knott: Yes, yes.

Healy: I mean I’m sure you’ve got stuff from [Orrin] Hatch.

Knott: We’re getting it.

Healy: It’s incredible, his success in dealing—and they really respect him. You know [George] Mitchell—I worked for Mitchell in the Irish thing. One day I was shooting the breeze with Mitchell, and Teddy walked by and we exchanged some pleasantries outside the Senate, and Mitchell says to me, “Jesus, I need one guy as Majority Leader to do all his legislation.” And the reason is that if you sit in on any of those morning breakfasts out in McLean when they were out there, he used to start—he’d be out half the night and he’d still be up at 7:00 in the morning with his staff guys. And in December before the session began he’d have an outline of half a dozen programs, plus he would have legislation written. I don’t know how much you know about the presses down there, but 99 percent of those guys’ staffers don’t know how to write a bill. His guys knew how to write bills and they knew how to do them.

My son worked for the Democratic study group with William Conlon. I don’t know if that name rings a bell. He died in a boating accident. But they used to write legislation and they’d have to

do the judicial rewrite of all the crime bills, and you talk about an arcane job. That's about as bad—and Teddy's guys could all do that stuff.

Mrs. Healy: But the point was, we were walking with Mitchell and Teddy came up and was all over Mitchell.

Healy: All over him, yes.

Mrs. Healy: “What are you going to do about this?” “What about this?” “What about this?”

Healy: That's right, yes.

Mrs. Healy: And he was just bombarding him with pieces of legislation about getting it on—

Healy: They were all his pieces of legislation.

Mrs. Healy: Actually George said to Ted, “Jesus, Ted, I need one staff guy just to handle you.” And he was laughing and very rueful, you know, sort of shaking his head because Teddy was just bombing him with stuff.

Knott: Yes.

Healy: But that's something that people don't see in this guy.

Knott: Yes, right.

Healy: And they don't connect—the thing that strikes me is that one statement. I go back to that one statement, “Why do you want to be President of the United States?” And he doesn't know, and yet he can tackle—if you were writing a piece on him you'd sit back and say, “Why?”

Mrs. Healy: I've never heard anyone give an explanation of that, and I think he didn't think about it because it was so obvious to him. You know, “I want to promote my brother's—”

Knott: Finish the legacy.

Mrs. Healy: Legacy, right.

Healy: He wanted the legacy.

Mrs. Healy: “I want to keep our idea of—”

Healy: But you read that—

Mrs. Healy: I think it was just so obvious to him, that he was stunned that anyone would ask him such a question like that, but I've never heard anyone give an explanation.

Healy: No.

Mrs. Healy: And never heard a news person.

Healy: Well, I don't think most people—

Mrs. Healy: A lot of the news has talked about it.

Healy: —fully appreciate him, his confidence. Do you follow me?

Knott: Yes, yes.

Healy: You talk to the press guys in Washington and—I ran a background group and I was bureau chief down there for a lot of years. A lot of them think he's a lightweight, and I don't know how you figure that. I mean I don't know how you can—Teddy Kennedy is—when he gets at something, boy, he's like a bulldog. Isn't he, Mary?

Mrs. Healy: And he has the best staff—

Healy: And he has the best staff.

Mrs. Healy: —and a devoted staff.

Healy: That's another thing.

Mrs. Healy: And he inspires that.

Healy: They inspire those guys.

Knott: Yes, yes.

Mrs. Healy: Wow, I mean they are very devoted to him.

Healy: And when I say inspire, they work their ass off.

Knott: Yes, right.

Healy: And he works them. He demands that they produce.

Mrs. Healy: And you know he supplements some of the staffers' salaries.

Knott: With his own private—

Healy: His own private funds.

Knott: I don't know if I did know that.

Healy: Yes, we know some people that—so that whole notion of what you would call Presidential quality is relevant there, that this guy is a guy of great substance and will tackle some tough issues.

Knott: Yes.

Mrs. Healy: When I met Bob I was asking about the different brothers and he said to me, “Jack was all head. Ted’s all heart.”

Healy: Yes.

Mrs. Healy: That was the description of the difference between the two.

Knott: Sure.

Mrs. Healy: And I think that’s probably true.

Knott: We’ve had some people tell us he was the most Irish of the brothers.

Mrs. Healy: Yes.

Healy: Yes, well that’s true. He is, although Jack—

Mrs. Healy: More a gut guy.

Healy: Yes. Jack changed a lot. The Irish trip just changed Jack. Teddy tells this story about—he is funny too—He tells this story about Jack coming back. We’ve heard it at dinners. You know, Teddy will tell the story about Jack showing the film of the Irish trip and that he was the only one in the family who saw it four times.

Knott: [laughs]

Healy: He’s really funny. He gets into this—But the Irish trip for Jack was a real revolution. First of all, if you look at Jack’s pals, they were all British. He knew goddamn little—he was very classically Boston-Irish. I mean particularly successful Boston-Irish who didn’t know beans about Irish history.

Knott: Yes.

Healy: And knew nothing about the—and it’s so funny, even today people who are relatively—you know, I’m doing a book on this thing, on my thing on Ireland.

[Three pages have been redacted]

Healy: Because I've got to submit the book, but I have a whole chapter on her and him in the book, and it's pretty good stuff because it begins with Jack's trip. She was, you know, after Jack got killed, Jacqueline [Kennedy] used to talk about it all the time. Of course Teddy will tell you, again, that—I told you—he had to sit through four sessions when the other members of the family would say, "Hey, we've seen that," and Jack would say, "Well, see it again." But Jack became very Irish. And Jacqueline told me that.

Knott: That's interesting.

Healy: Yes.

Knott: In the last few months of his life.

Healy: Yes. It was '63. The trip was in the spring. It was '63 and—[Gerald A.] Jerry Behn. Is he still alive, do you know?

Knott: I don't know.

Healy: You know who he is? He was the point guy in the—every Secret Service operation has their own point guy and he was Kennedy's guy to make sure he wasn't shot. Jerry said to me one day, he said, "Jesus, I never saw so many big shoulders in my life." And I said to him, "Well, my father will tell you, they're all hod carriers over there." But they loved him.

Knott: Yes, sure.

Healy: They loved him and Teddy's the same way. They love Teddy over there. They love anything Kennedy. And the Kennedys and Teddy, certainly, picks it up. Do you follow me? I mean if Nixon went to Colombia and they loved him, he wouldn't see it. You know?

Swerdlow: I am Colombian. That's the reason he looked down on me.

Healy: Oh really? Are you?

Swerdlow: [laughs] Yes.

Healy: Oh you are, yes. But you know what I mean.

Swerdlow: Yes, I do.

Healy: I'm using that place as a remote place for a presidential love affair.

Knott: Right.

Healy: But the point is that he wouldn't get it, and a lot of guys wouldn't. [George W.] Bush wouldn't get it, I don't think. The trouble with Bush is he's just a—but that's another thing.

Knott: [laughs]

Healy: I love the old man. You know, I loved the old man.

Knott: You did? Poppy [George H.W.] Bush?

Healy: He and I were good pals. And this guy, you have no idea how bad he is. Yes, I know, but I'm telling you. I used to go up there about twice a month up to the Naval—when he was Vice President. I was batching it in those days. Mary wanted to stay in Boston. [laughs] That's a lie; she stayed in Boston to educate my kids and her kids. She worked at a university, so we sent a few of them for free. But anyway, I would go up there for dinner—Mary says I threaten people sometimes but I was a boxer, you know.

Mrs. Healy: He does.

Healy: I was a light heavyweight champion in the Second Air Force when I was 18 years old, and I just never took any bullshit from anybody. This guy used to come in and he'd be half stiff and he'd be threatening everybody. I mean he's the weirdest bastard I ever saw, and in those days the old man had a guy, a little guy who used to be in the CIA with him, who was his keeper, literally. Our President of the United States. And you know something? He acts that way. I mean he acts that way now.

Knott: The bullying?

Healy: The bullying, yes. He's a bully and I felt like—you know, I told him once one night, "You're going to pick the wrong guy and he's going to flatten you," and I was speaking for myself. But I mean he really is, you know. I hate bullies.

Knott: Yes, sure.

Healy: I really do. If you want to be a big shot, don't do it on my territory.

Knott: Right.

Healy: But anyway, I'll give you that—

Knott: That would be terrific.

Healy: That would be interesting on the Irish thing.

Knott: Yes, because we're to pursue this Irish angle with this oral history. We're going over there in a few months.

Healy: Oh, are you really?

Knott: Next month.

Healy: See a guy by the name of [Maurice] Manning.

Knott: Manning?

Healy: Manning. He was a former State Senator.

Knott: OK.

Healy: He was a pal of mine who introduced me to my pal who was the source for—the Minister of Justice.

Mrs. Healy: I have a suggestion for someone who's very Boston, very Irish, and who actually worked for me. Then I introduced him to some of Ted's local people and he worked in one of Ted's senatorial campaigns maybe two or three times back.

Healy: But very close to him. Oh yes, you ought to talk to him.

Mrs. Healy: Close to him but close in a different way. You know, as a driver and an aide and—but I remember him telling me a story. He was from Allston-Brighton and his father died, and his was the sort of house that had the picture of Jack Kennedy and the Pope. His mother was in the kitchen and people were waking the father and Ted Kennedy walks in the door, sits down next to her in the kitchen, takes her hand at the kitchen table and sits there for four-and-a-half hours with her. That's the sort of man Ted Kennedy is.

Healy: Yes, he is.

Knott: We keep hearing these kinds of stories.

Mrs. Healy: He's a remarkable man. He's a really lovely—

Healy: He's a remarkable guy on what he does for people.

Mrs. Healy: I'll tell you another thing that—I was astonished—We used to go to his house when Bob was bureau chief, for parties, and he would be having a rollicking good time, but all of a sudden he would come over and he'd say, "Those people aren't talking over there in the corner. Go over there and talk to them." He was just aware. He's very mannered. He always writes a note. I mean he's just a very interesting—

Healy: Yes, there's a side to him that's very unknown, too, you know.

Mrs. Healy: He's an interesting man.

Knott: Yes, yes. His name?

Mrs. Healy: Oh, his name is Tom Keady. K-E-A-D-Y.

Healy: He's at Boston College.

Mrs. Healy: He's a Vice President at BC.

Knott: Oh, that's my Alma Mater.

Healy: Oh did you go to BC.?

Knott: I got my Ph.D. at BC.

Healy: Really? What year were you over there?

Knott: I was there from '85 to '91.

Healy: Timmy was over there—when?

Mrs. Healy: My son graduated from BC.

Healy: Timmy's a big *Wall Street Journal* man now. He graduated about—

Knott: He was an undergrad then?

Mrs. Healy: Yes, he was an undergrad.

Knott: I was a grad student there. But I might have—I did a lot of—

Healy: Who did you work with over there?

Knott: Well, I was in the politics department. The chair there was a guy named Marc Landy. Bob Faulkner, John Tierney—

Healy: Oh I knew Landy, yes.

Knott: We can take a break now.

[BREAK]

Healy: Ethel [Skakel Kennedy] was a horsewoman, and she was a kid. You know, she was probably sixteen—

Mrs. Healy: Eighteen.

Healy: Seventeen years old and she knew our pal, whose name was Dot [Dorothy] Tubridy. She was married to this—Captain, was it?

Mrs. Healy: He wasn't married to Dot at the time.

Healy: Oh, he wasn't?

Mrs. Healy: No.

Healy: OK. Anyway, so she later married this guy, but he was the head of the equestrian team. They were young. This is years ago. Ethel had an appointment with them through Dot. No?

Mrs. Healy: She didn't know Dot. Dot didn't know this guy.

Healy: Oh right.

Mrs. Healy: She wanted to meet him. He was her hero.

Healy: Oh yes, he was her hero—

Mrs. Healy: He was her hero and she couldn't get in to see him.

Healy: —on the equestrian team.

Mrs. Healy: Which made Ethel mad.

Healy: Mad. So Ethel painted his horse.

Mrs. Healy: Green.

Swerdlow: No way!

Mrs. Healy: [laughs]

Healy: Painted the horse.

Knott: Wow.

Mrs. Healy: And then later he married this woman, Dot Tubridy—

Healy: Then he married Dot and they laughed at the whole thing.

Mrs. Healy: —and she was widowed. Soon after, he was killed riding his horse and he was dragged. She and Dot have remained friends for, well, at least 50 years, but Ethel's very funny.

Healy: That tribe is really something. I mean they think all the crap shooters come from the Kennedy side of the family.

Healy: Yes, one of the things I think that bothers Ted—because the crazy people are not Kennedys. The crazy people are the Skakels.

Knott: Yes.

Mrs. Healy: That's the bad gene. [laughs]

Healy: Boy, you ain't kidding.

Mrs. Healy: It's the Skakels that are nuts. Good people. Fun people, but—

Healy: But, brother, off the charts.

Mrs. Healy: When they talk about, you know, a Kennedy relative, sometimes it's not a Kennedy. It's a Skakel relative.

Healy: They put everybody in the Kennedy box.

Mrs. Healy: Sometimes it's an in-law.

Healy: Ethel's old man was kind of a crap shooter. They tell this story—Ethel tells the story about—the old gent rode the caboose. You know what a caboose is? It's the back end of a freight train.

Knott: Yes, right.

Healy: They used to have a car there. They slept and they went across country, and he and his pal went by these huge slag fields in Utah where they'd mine and throw the slag on the thing. And they discovered that this stuff made terrific roads. So the old man and his buddy there hire a Cadillac convertible and go down to Texas and they sell a bank on upping some dough to buy the slag, which they in turn got for nothing, just to take it off the property, and they sold it to the government. It's perfect for building these long roads out West.

Knott: Right.

Mrs. Healy: And that's how he made his money.

Healy: That's how he made his first hit. And then of course Jack used to—

Mrs. Healy: They were far, far wealthier than the Kennedys, and Republicans.

Healy: Oh yes, than the Kennedys.

Knott: Oh, really?

Mrs. Healy: Oh, they're far—I mean I think the Skakels thought Ethel was definitely marrying down.

Healy: Jack used to laugh at the—when we were out on the lakes I remember him telling me—He said to me one time, “Ethel—the family—owns those.” These are the loaders. You ever see those loaders? They're automatic. I mean, you load coal and ore and whatever into the boats and vice versa, out of the boats. And Jack always said, “And they run 24 hours a day.” [laughs]

Swerdlow: The Senator has made a big difference from what we hear with his brother's children, Bobby's kids. He's really tried to be there for them.

Healy: Oh yes. He's been very active with them, yes. Well Bobby's into more good things now than you can shake a stick—young Bobby [Robert F. Kennedy Jr.].

Knott: Bobby Jr., yes.

Healy: He's into this mercury thing, which—

Knott: Right.

Healy: Apparently there is really something to it.

Swerdlow: The autism issue?

Healy: The autism, yes. And when he sinks his teeth into something, boy, he's a bulldog. He's like the old man.

Knott: Yes, right.

Healy: And he knows how to get publicity, which isn't bad either.

Knott: Yes, he's been on the TV a lot in the last few weeks with this issue.

Healy: He was on [Don] Imus [Imus in the Morning radio show] the other day.

Knott: Yes, right.

Healy: Yes. I don't think Imus knew what the hell he was talking about.

Mrs. Healy: [laughs]

Healy: Actually, that's not fair. Imus is a pretty good interviewer. I mean, even if he doesn't know what he's talking about, he lets the guy talk. I find him pretty interesting.

Mrs. Healy: He's had some controversy, too, Imus has.

Healy: I guess he has. What is it? I don't listen to him every day.

Mrs. Healy: Something to do with his ranch?

Knott: Yes.

Healy: Oh, the ranch.

Mrs. Healy: Yes.

Healy: Oh, I heard him railing against somebody out there.

Mrs. Healy: Yes, he was really hot about that.

Healy: Well, if it's on the level I don't blame him.

Knott: Yes.

Healy: I've often wondered, though, if it wasn't a boondoggle that he will eventually own—I mean other people have thought of that I'm sure. You know what I'm saying. He apparently raises all this dough for the kids, you know, and he uses it pretty much exclusively. Except that if he's buying into a huge ranch with a government subsidy taxation line, which I'm sure you can do, and I'm sure a lot of people have done stuff like that—I don't know. Imus drives me nuts. I hate him on the women's issue too. He's such a pig. I mean I can laugh at it—

Knott: Right. No, I know what you mean.

Mrs. Healy: Tangent.

Knott: Actually, we should shut this down.

[BREAK]

Healy: Oh, I know.

Mrs. Healy: And just such good staff.

Knott: Right.

Healy: Yes, we talked about that. I think without a question it's probably the best staff in Washington.

Knott: Yes.

Healy: And guys will tell you that—Republicans or Democrat—As I told you, my son represents all the rapid transit systems in America—Chicago, New York and the like—but he tells me that one of the big failings in a lot of Senate offices is they can't write legislation, I mean the actual bills. He said that in Kennedy's office, when they get interested in something they have the bills ready on January 1st.

Knott: Right.

Healy: That's what Mitchell said. As Mary said, that's what Mitchell said that day.

Knott: Yes.

Healy: They're all ready to go while the other guys are discussing whether they are going to hold hearings on it.

Knott: Right. That was a great story.

Mrs. Healy: Do you want to see our Hall of Shame here?

Knott: Sure.

Swerdlow: That would be great.