



EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH MELODY MILLER

July 15, 2008
Washington, D.C.

Interviewer

Janet Heininger

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TRANSCRIPT

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Heininger: This is an interview with Melody Miller, on July 15, 2008, in Washington, D.C. Why don't we start at the beginning?

Miller: Sounds good.

Heininger: Why don't you just talk a little about your long association with the Kennedy family? How did you first get to know them?

Miller: I was fortunate enough to be invited to meet President [John F.] Kennedy, on May 3, 1963, in the White House. That was one of the most treasured 20 minutes of my life. I then was 18 years old. I had planned to be a gym teacher because I was a jock, but when he became President and during his campaign, I started watching him on television and started reading the paper regularly, and I got turned on to politics and to public service. I wanted to be able to defend him in class, because I started working for his Presidential campaign. To be able to meet him later was an extraordinary thrill.

I had been working for Congressman [Joseph] Montoya of New Mexico my senior year, on Saturdays, 9:00 to 5:00. He was gearing up to run for the Senate, and I was a Girl Friday on Saturdays. There was a human-interest story in the *Washington Post* about me, about a bust that I had done of the President; it had exploded in the kiln and I had put it back together. I had done it in my art class at Yorktown High School, right out here in Northern Virginia. They sent the article, and a more than complimentary letter about all my activities in school and what I was doing in the community, and asked if I could get an autographed picture of President Kennedy, because I was a great admirer. Montoya must have had a vote that the President needed or something, because the word came back that Melody was invited to the White House, to have her come and meet the President.

I was in my journalism class and a runner came in with a note from the office saying, "Your mother has called and President Kennedy is planning to meet you in the near future." [*laughing*] I was thinking, *What? Wow! How did this happen?* I went to my English class, because there wasn't enough time to get to the other side of the school and phone home, then another runner came from the office, with another pink slip. My English teacher just looked at it, read it, looked at me, and put it on the desk. I suffered for 45 minutes, waiting to read that second note. It was then May first, and the note said, "Your mother called again and it's going to be May third, at 12:30." Then I phoned home when it was lunch hour, and we all whooped and hollered.

I ran out and bought a new suit; I got a purse big enough to hold my copy of *Profiles in Courage*; and we went down to the White House. Then I hoped that nothing went wrong, that I'd still be able to meet him. The head of the Secret Service detail for the children, Lynn Meredith, who was a student of my father's at one time, joined us, because my dad was on a business trip and was not able to come. He carried the bust, which I had brought along, into the White House. We didn't know whether I'd be able to see him, because there was a crisis in Haiti—there's always a crisis in Haiti, it seems, and there was one that day—but they said, "Go down there, through that door." We went in and it was the Cabinet Room, so we put this bust on the table. Lynn was explaining to us that the President might not be able to come in, and that Evelyn Lincoln would come and let us know.

The door opened and there was President Kennedy. *Incandescent* was the only word I could use for him. There was a glow all around him, the summer tan, the chestnut hair, the wonderful gliding way he moved. He came over and shook hands, went over and patted the head of the bust, and said, "Very fine." I said, "No, it's not, but it got me here." He had been briefed by Montoya's office on me, and spent 20 minutes chatting with me about whether I ever wanted to run for Congress, and how he helped redo the design of the Rose Garden, that Bunny [Rachel] Mellon had been very instrumental in designing. Then he said, "Let's get a picture." He went out and called for Cecil Stoughton, the White House photographer, who has since become a personal friend. We had our photograph taken, then he said, "Wait here." He went out and came back in, and he had a *PT-109* bracelet, which he gave me by dropping in my upturned hand. It is a cherished gift I still treasure.

Heininger: Oh, my.

Miller: I had asked him if I'd be able to work for him in '64, on his campaign, and he said, "Absolutely." Then I asked him if he would be kind enough to autograph my copy of *Profiles in Courage*, and reached into my purse. It was stuck at an angle and I couldn't quite get it out, and he came over, reached in, and tried to get it. He probably thought, *Well, gee, maybe the President of the United States shouldn't have his hand down in the purse of a young, 18-year-old girl*, and backed off. I was able to get it out and handed it to him. He went over to the Cabinet table, bent over, and wrote, "For Melody Miller, with warmest personal regards, John Kennedy, May 3, 1963."

It was a tremendous experience and a happy memory. When he died, it was just devastating, probably the greatest grief I've ever known in my life, and a shock, because at 18, when things like that happen, life is all before you and everybody is invincible. That this extraordinary human being, who had made such a difference and had asked us what we could do for our country and whom I was following, that he could be taken from us by one weird individual just didn't compute, and I was devastated.

It was only *after* I retired that the JFK Library sent me a copy of the 1963 letter Congressman Montoya's office sent to Evelyn Lincoln! On it, in President Kennedy's handwriting, was the note at the top corner saying, "Have Melody come and visit me at the White House." I was thunderstruck! All these years later, I discovered that President Kennedy *himself* had suggested my visit to meet him. In a wonderful way, it verified and reaffirmed my life's work in public service on the Senate staffs of his brothers. Words can't express how much this discovery meant

to me, for now I knew *for sure* that John F. Kennedy *really did* take time out to encourage young people towards public service. He could just as easily have sent a picture, but he made the extra effort. It was something I saw Robert and Edward Kennedy do time and time again too.

The following summer, I was working at the Democratic National Committee, and I was asked if I would like to come and be interviewed to work with Evelyn Lincoln in the White House office that had been established for her on the third floor, and then in the one below on the first floor, in the EOB [Eisenhower Executive Office Building], for Jackie [Bouvier Kennedy]. They were utilizing those offices to cope with the huge, worldwide, enormous avalanche of mail that was coming in, sympathy mail, as well as to organize the papers of the President and get them archived. I went over for an interview and Evelyn Lincoln was ill that day, so Nancy Tuckerman, Jacqueline Kennedy's Chief of Staff, interviewed me, and she ended up keeping me.

I worked for Jackie, in her office, in the summer of '64, and about every two or three weeks I'd go up to the third floor and help Evelyn with sorting and packing and doing things there. Then I went to the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City that summer. There, at the touring John F. Kennedy Library exhibit that we had, I was introduced by Liz Stevens—Mrs. George Stevens, Jr., who was also volunteering to work in the Jackie office—to Robert Kennedy, who was running for the Senate at the time.

When I came back, I went back to college. I was a sophomore at Penn State University, and transferred to Robert Kennedy's U. S. Senate office the following summer, because Jackie had moved to New York and I had applied and been accepted in his intern program. They told me at the time that they expected me to be coming back. I was a different category of intern because I had worked for Jackie, lived near D.C. and was, they could see, such a loyalist.

My junior and my senior year at Penn State, every Christmas vacation, every Thanksgiving, every spring break and every summer, I worked in Robert Kennedy's office. I would come home, would drop my bags and be at the office the next day, or I'd be out at Hickory Hill helping the Kennedy children prepare for Christmas, because they would have Christmas early and then all go skiing somewhere. I'd be helping Joe [Joseph Patrick Kennedy II] and [Mary] Kerry [Kennedy] and [Mary] Courtney [Kennedy] wrap presents for their mom and dad, and untangle mobiles and with stuff that they were doing. Then the personal secretary at the house and I would help set up Christmas, after all the kids had gone up to bed.

They would put sheets over all the furniture in the main living room. Each child would have a designated chair, and some of the presents would be wrapped on that chair. We'd bring presents out that would be hidden in the closets, and some of the presents would be unwrapped and some wrapped. The big tree had been decorated, but there would be secret stuff that they would save. For instance, one of the grounds men helped get a jukebox that had been hidden down in the barn up into the living room, so that the kids would have a jukebox in the pool house for their parties, because they were becoming teenagers and that was something that would be fun for them to entertain with. The effect, on going into the living room, was, Oh wow, look what I've gotten! Gee, I wonder what else there is?

I remember one night before their early Christmas morning, it was about 11:30 PM, and the door opened. Robert Kennedy had come back from New York on the shuttle and walked in. He gave

us all a hug, and handed me a slot car racing set and said, “Here. I think David [Anthony Kennedy] got gypped last year. Put this around his chair, please.” I said, “Okay, fine,” and he said, “Now where is Ethel [Skakel Kennedy]?” I said, “She’s gone up to bed and the kids are all asleep.” He said, “Well, thank you so much for helping out.”

I was down on my hands and knees putting the slotcar tracks together, about midnight. I was going to make a little circle around one chair leg, and then I was going to head home, because it was late and I was tired. All of a sudden, I heard this voice, in the Kennedy accent, saying, “You’re going to use *all* the track, aren’t you?” I looked over to my left, and saw some bare feet; I looked a little higher and there were some hairy legs; I looked a little higher, and there was Robert Kennedy standing there in a blue, flowered Polynesian nightshirt, [*laughing*] wandering around, looking at everything that had been put out.

It was the era of silver lingerie, and somebody had given Ethel some silver lingerie. He held up this silver bra, and made some funny crack, “Well, this is interesting!” [*laughing*] and put it back. Then he looked at a coat that was sitting on young Joe’s chair; he liked that and thought that was great. Of course, we knew that there was a matching coat, for a father-and-son outfit, wrapped up on his couch. We knew what he was getting. Later I saw a news photo of them both wearing the matching coats.

I’ve thought to myself for all these years that that epitomized the attitude of how you do things. You never do a half-assed job; you use *all* the track. So I said, “Oh, of course I’m using all the track,” and I got everything out and made a big figure eight, instead of just a quick little circle. That’s been the attitude of the Kennedy family. You strive for excellence and you do the best, and you don’t, as I said, do a half-assed job. It was a vital lesson to learn about life.

Before and after I graduated from Penn State I had wonderful summers playing out at Hickory Hill—Robert Kennedy would open Hickory Hill to the staff in the summer, so we had our own private country club. I met Ted Sorensen in the shallow end of the pool at Hickory Hill and played football with Walter Sheridan and a bunch of other folks from Justice who had worked with Robert Kennedy. John Seigenthaler, and everybody who was a person that I was honored to meet, seemed to be out there playing razzle-dazzle football or tennis or whatever, as well as our Senate staff. In the first weekend of the summer, we’d all go out there and play and swim, and just kill ourselves having a good time at football. Then we’d come in on Mondays absolutely dragging and full of aches and pains, because we were a little out of shape, but by the end of the summer we were in pretty good shape. Robert Kennedy also always invited us out to his house for a Christmas party. Edward Kennedy did that, too, in the early days for his staff before we grew too large.

When I graduated, I went full time on Robert Kennedy’s staff. When he was running for the Presidency, I was a press assistant at Kennedy headquarters, and when he died, I spent the first two days out at Hickory Hill, helping with the children, and we had a Mass out there. Father [Richard] McSorley came out for that. We were getting the children back from the various schools. John Glenn and I were there, with Lem [K. LeMoyné] Billings. Lemmy and I took Bobby Jr. to a pet store, to try to get his mind off things. He loved animals, so we went, and the pet store owner came up to me and said, “Does he know?” We said, “Yes, just let him be,” but we needed to give him a diversion. We also played touch football—I think Tommy Corcoran

was there, not “Tommy the Cork,” but the one who owned a ski resort up in New England—Glenn and I and Michael [LeMoyne Kennedy] and Bobby.

It was one of those ethereal games, where you ran and your feet barely touched the ground, and you collected a pass you would normally never catch—it just kept hitting your fingertips and then you’d gather it in as Michael zigged and zagged like quicksilver. You couldn’t touch him he was so fast and elusive. It was probably the most extraordinary game I’ve ever played in my life, because Robert Kennedy was on the operating table. You would never have bet, or thought in your lifetime, that you would be able to play a football game while Robert Kennedy was being operated on, but we were doing it to provide a diversion for the children, and it was an ethereal dream-like trance of a game. It was unlike anything I’ve ever experienced in my life. Then I went back to headquarters the last two days—of those four days—because I was not from New York. I said, “I don’t need to go up to St. Patrick’s.” I volunteered to just stay and help hold the fort, and let those people who were from New York go up because I could see it would mean so much more to them.

Bill Moyers, in the meantime, had called and said, “I will do anything. I will help in any way I can. I will make coffee.” They asked him to come down and help in the press office as well, so Bill and I then sat all night in the press headquarters, at the main Kennedy headquarters, and talked about how this could have happened again. Bill’s an ordained Baptist minister. We couldn’t come to any satisfactory understanding of how it had happened again, but we had an extraordinary exchange of talk and philosophy. Bill Moyers is one of the people for whom I have the greatest affection and admiration as well.

Then the train came down. There was this huge outpouring along the entire route, which surprised people and slowed the train down. Our advance people had to get candles for everyone to have on the hillside. We went out then, to the gravesite, and in the dark the casket came up the hill, with Jim Whittaker, who has since become a pal, and John Glenn and the children all carrying it. All of us were holding candles because it was so dark. We have since had, and I’ve been involved in the planning and organizing of, Masses on key anniversaries of his loss. We had the first Mass out at the cemetery, at twilight, and we passed out candles, as had been done for his funeral.

I was getting all these calls, “Is there going to be something on this tenth anniversary?” I went to Senator Kennedy, Edward Kennedy, for whom I was then working, and said, “Everybody’s wondering what’s going to happen.” He said, “You’ll have to talk to Ethel and see if she wants to do something.” I called and told her everything that I was getting in the way of questions and suggestions, and asked whether there’d be a Mass and said I hoped there would be. A few days later, the Senator came to me and said, “It looks like they *are* going to do something. If you want to do it, you’re going to be in charge of making it happen.” *[laughing]*

Of course, I wasn’t in charge of the whole thing, but I went out to Hickory Hill and joined in meetings with Ethel and about five or six other people we gathered in, to worry about programs and the Mass, invitations, getting the word out, and I was handling the press then. The question was whether anybody was going to show up. We thought there would be the staff and a lot of family and friends. As that afternoon approached, and that evening, we went out to Arlington

Cemetery and got set up, and *10,000* people came! The whole hillside was alight with candles. It was one of the more moving experiences in my life.

When Robert Kennedy died, I went and packed up the headquarters, and came back and helped pack up the Senate office. We watched his desk and his big blue chair that he sat in get carted down the hall, and that was just gut-wrenching. People came in to sign the guest book like you would a sympathy book, calls of sympathy came constantly, and it was just an extraordinary, moving time. I happened to be the last person in the Senate office on the last day, and I turned out the lights, closed the door, and locked the office for the last time. I was the last one to leave. I took a month off to let my nerve endings heal; David Burke had asked me to join Senator Edward Kennedy's staff, and I was terribly grateful.

Edward Kennedy had been extraordinary in helping Robert Kennedy's staff try to find jobs. He had put together a master list of all the people who volunteered to hire any of the Robert Kennedy staff. There were offers from law firms downtown for secretarial jobs and NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] and other Senate offices. It was legal page after legal page, an inch thick. It was a very flattering recognition of the quality that they felt that Robert Kennedy's staff had, that everybody and their cousin was willing to hire anybody on our staff. Edward Kennedy took me and one other person to help with that effort, so I started in Edward Kennedy's office on September 17, 1968, and I retired in 2005, technically at the end of June, but I was still packing up on July fourth. That weekend I came into the office to finish up, and at about 12:30 into the morning of July fourth, I declared my independence and closed the door for the last time as a staffer. It was an incredible run, an incredible run for which I feel eternally blessed, especially since I had the honor to work for truly remarkable people who were genuine. Real heroes.

If you want, I can go into the early days with Edward Kennedy. Everybody was wonderfully supportive. They came to me—like Dick Drayne, who was our press secretary at the time and died way too early, of prostate cancer, when he was just 49—and were telling me about the various key people that Senator Kennedy was friends with, so that if I got phone calls from them, I'd know who to put through and that kind of thing.

In those days, every single phone call came through the front desk, and I had to transfer all the calls to everybody else's phone. There were no direct personal lines, so I had to make a lot of judgments as to what to deal with. I also had to handle all the general public that called in, explanations of his votes, defending him on any position, explaining anything people didn't understand, as well as dealing with everybody who came into the office.

We had a small office at that time. We were in Room 431 on the fourth floor of Russell. We looked out over the city, and in the winter, when all the leaves were off the trees, you could see President Kennedy's flame on the hillside. That was very meaningful to all of us.

The Senator was the oldest person in the office at 36 or 37. I was 24; David Burke, our chief of staff, was 35 or 36. Everybody was growing up together, so we were very close and very tight. We socialized together, and when we had softball games, the Senator would come. When it would rain on everybody in the softball game, and everybody would then go to a restaurant and sit, dry off, and have a drink, someplace like the Dubliner, he'd come too and would sit with us.

He'd tell us wonderful stories about his first cases when he was an assistant DA [district attorney] for Suffolk County, and had all of us in stitches. We have pictures of all of us, just drenched and our hair plastered against our faces, and him too, all wet. There was this great fellowship and bonding among those of us who were with him from the earliest days.

Barbara Souliotis, at that time, was the scheduler. She had worked for his '62 campaign and then went on to become the scheduler. She was the first person he ever hired, and she is still on his staff as the chief of staff in our Boston office. That tells you a little bit about the loyalty and the love that the staff has for him. I don't think there's a man, in all the 40 years that I was there, who didn't say he was proud to work for him, but the men also said they loved working for him and they loved *him*. And men didn't say, in those early days, that they loved another man that easily, but we all just loved him, as we did JFK and RFK. And said it openly.

He gave us many reasons to do so, not only because of the positions that we believed in and for fighting the good fight for the causes that we cared about, but he also said thank you. You'd get little notes saying, "You did a great job on this, keep up the good work." For some of the fellows who helped write legislation that would get passed—especially if they'd had a big fight on the floor and it was a real big effort—he'd get copies of the bill and would write across it, "For Jim. I couldn't have done this without you." Those would be framed; you would go into various parts of the office and the committee, and you'd see various thank-you things that he'd done for people up on the wall or over their desks, or there would be photographs, where they'd been at some event together; he'd make sure he had a photograph taken with his staff.

He got the voting tally sheet—the long tally sheet, where you mark off all of the yeas and nays—when there was a very special vote. Carey Parker was our legislative director, and everybody who's ever worked for Senator Kennedy utterly *reveres* him. Carey was the "chief justice of the decision court" within our office. We'd go to him for judgment calls. He also edited our work, any speeches or remarks that we'd written, after we did the original draft. Carey got the tally sheet on something that had to do with Ireland, because Carey has been very involved in Irish issues. The Senator had it framed and wrote to Carey, "You're the best," or "We did it," something to that effect, and Carey had that up on his wall.

One time I was working late and all of the African-American staff members were quietly told to stay late, and nobody knew why. I lucked into being there, because at about 8:45 we were all asked to come into the conference room near the Senator's private office. We were all milling around there, and Ranny [Cooper] and I were the only two folks who were not African-American. The Senator said, "Just a minute," and walked up and opened the door, and there were Nelson Mandela and Winnie Mandela. I'm getting goose bumps just telling you about it. He knew this would be so extraordinarily meaningful to the staff. He also knew he couldn't overwhelm Mandela with everybody, but he knew his African-American staff needed to have this incredible thrill and honor.

Mandela is one of the few people that I've ever had the honor of shaking hands with who also had that same glow that President Kennedy had. You knew that this was *somebody* and this was a *remarkable* somebody. The Senator had a picture taken of all of us. Ranny and I are the only two white faces in it. [*laughing*] He had the picture blown up to eight by ten, had copies made for every one of us, and he wrote, "To Melody, End apartheid now, Ted." He did that for every

single person in the room. That's in my library, framed, and it's just one of the examples of the kind of things that he would do to thank his staff.

Nelson Mandela said that Senator Kennedy's office was the only personal office he was visiting, of everybody on Capitol Hill, and that was because he credited Edward Kennedy with the greatest effort to get him out of prison. Bishop [Desmond] Tutu, the same way, had said the same thing, and wrote the Senator a letter saying that it was because of him that they were able to end apartheid.

The Senator went over and retraced Robert Kennedy's steps in South Africa, and whenever he did anything, it allowed us to shine a klieg light on that problem, because the press followed him. Then he came back and for a year and a half worked to aid apartheid by imposing sanctions on South Africa. He'd go on *Nightline*, and he introduced sanction legislation. He did everything to keep South Africa on the front burner and not forgotten on the back burner, where it had languished for many, many years. A year and a half later, he got the sanction legislation through the House and Senate. Then President [Ronald] Reagan vetoed it after all that effort, and the Senator went and rounded up the votes to overturn that veto, which was incredibly difficult to do, but he pulled it off. And Nelson Mandela knew it. He had come to a reception up on Capitol Hill that all the members of the House and Senate went to, then he had come privately to Edward Kennedy's office, the only one he showed that kind of honor and respect for, of everyone, and we were all very proud of that too.

One day, before he was freed, the Senator had had a big conference in the Russell caucus room on apartheid. I had been working with Randall Robinson, of Trans Africa, about the set-up, the arrangement of the table and the press coverage. Bishop Tutu and Beyers Naudé and Maurice Tempelsman—a whole lot of people, as well as people from think tanks downtown, and anybody who had any impact, members of the Black Caucus, anybody who was caring about apartheid was invited. The Senator was keeping the drumbeat going, and all of that helped, and Mandela was made aware of it by Bishop Tutu.

But on this one day, the Senator said Bishop Tutu was coming in, and asked if we could get a photograph, maybe the news might help. I called up to the press gallery and said, "Bishop Tutu is coming in. Can you all come over?" Well, nobody knew who Bishop Tutu was at the time. It was still very much low-key, and hadn't exploded quite yet. "Please, can I have one of you come over? Please, somebody?" With the photographer from *Time Magazine*, I called in a chit and just begged him, and he said, "All right, I will do you a personal favor and come over. I'll make the photograph so that Tutu can feel important and the Senator can show that he's gotten him some press."

I brought him in, and we took two pictures. We went back out in the hall and I escorted the photographer out and thanked him profusely. He took his camera, rolled up the film, opened it up, and handed me the roll. He said, "This was just for show. You can keep the film." I knew it wasn't going to make any news. Two days later, Bishop Tutu was given the Nobel Peace Prize. The phone rang. "Hi, do you still have that roll of film?" [*laughing*] I said, "I told you he was special." He said, "Yes, but you didn't tell us that he was going to win." I said, "We didn't know either." Those are the kinds of funny moments you remember.

Going back to those early days, one of the things that was quite extraordinary in the Senator's transition and growth was his recognition that the women on his staff could be more than just secretaries and receptionists. Like Hubert Humphrey [Jr.], though, he recognized that the front desk was where you won and lost votes. That was one of the reasons why he wanted me to stay there for a while. I don't mean to be tooting my own horn, but I did know how to defend him on the issues, explain his issues, juggle 628 phone calls a day coming through, and put people on hold and get back to them and pick up on the conversation where I had been before. I kept up to speed on current events, so that when Nobel scientists—and we had everybody and their cousin come into our office—came through our door. I could talk about the nuclear linear accelerator at Stanford with the guy who had built it and become a laureate. Got to ask lots of questions of amazing people.

I was terribly flattered that the Sergeant-at-Arms' office had me come and speak to all incoming new Senators' receptionists about how to do the job and how crucial a position it really was. Senator Phil Hart would send his new receptionist down to sit with me during a day, and watch how I did it, which meant a lot. As a result, I probably didn't leave that desk as soon as I might otherwise have left it, because Carey and the Senator, as I later discovered, kept saying, "Well, I don't know who we could get to replace Melody. She knows all your friends; she knows all your family; she knows how to do this, all your positions; and she can juggle pretty well," so I stayed there a lot longer than I might otherwise have. I liked it because I did have a great impact in those days, since everything came through me, and I had to make a lot of judgment calls, including on his security. And I was flattered that the Senator was pleased with my efforts.

There was opportunity for advancement in his office, and when Jacob Javits, bless his heart, appointed Pat [Patricia Connell] Shakow as the very first female legislative assistant to walk on the Senate floor, that was the breakthrough. We would go over on our lunch hour to sit in the gallery, just to watch Pat walk on the floor. Of course, umpteen years later, when [George] Mitchell and [Robert] Dole were the two leaders on the floor, their key assistants and floor deputies were both women. When I had my turn to work legislation and to walk on to the Senate floor, I remember looking around—being able to stand on it in session, and not just watch from up above—and saying to myself, "Thank you, Gloria Steinem. Thank you, Pat Shakow. Thank you, Jack Javits. Thank you for all of the shoulders I'm standing on to be here now."

Edward Kennedy gave us a chance within his office. I remember Mary Murtaugh volunteered in the mailroom. Eventually she was hired and was doing some local Massachusetts issues, and going to law school at night. The Senator gave her a chance to handle national seashore legislation, and she did a brilliant job. She walked on the Senate floor and did a tremendous job. He saw that the women he started giving power and responsibility to were doing well. Therefore, I moved on to be a press spokesperson; Barbara Souliotis moved on up, running his Boston office, and Mary Frackleton before her. Ranny Cooper became our first female chief of staff, and pretty soon women were running his subcommittees and writing legislation.

You never would have thought it, because I remember him talking to us in those early days—because we all were lobbying him for the ERA [Equal Rights Amendment]—and he said, "But I go up to Massachusetts and walk through the shoe factories, and all of these women say, 'Look, we don't want the ERA. We don't want to be using the same bathrooms. We don't want the men coming in,'" all those scare tactics that were used to defeat ERA. These women in the shoe

factories, I remember vividly, were telling him that they didn't want ERA, and he said, "My constituents don't want me to vote for ERA." *We* said, "But they don't understand that this is all scare tactics" and we'd give him all our reasons why we would have him vote for ERA. He, to his credit, was supportive of women.

Many people think that he was a user of women or a womanizer, but he was so much different from that. He dated. He had many different relationships, but not one of them ever said an unkind word about him, in any *National Enquirer* or anything like that. He was always a gentleman. There was never any whisper of abuse or molesting. He was not somebody who pinched women in the elevators, the way I was pinched by John Tower and grabbed by Strom Thurmond. There was none of that. When Newt Gingrich made a nasty comment once about the Senator and women, I wrote him a letter about literally being chased by women, which Edward Kennedy was. When he and Joan [Bennett Kennedy] got divorced, there was one woman who arrived with a box under her arm that contained a wedding dress. She stood outside the office [laughing] for hours that afternoon, because she was determined to meet him and marry him. He was a rock star. He was not a typical Senator, so we had women who stalked him literally.

That's very different from John Tower, who I came to know from firsthand experience, and also from women I knew who told me their stories. John Tower molested women,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I remember Strom Thurmond in the early days. [laughing] He used to bring all of the beauty queens who came from South Carolina, or anywhere in the South, who would visit him, down to meet Ted Kennedy, because they all wanted to meet Ted Kennedy. The Senator would roll his eyes when I'd go in and say, "Strom's here. He has another beauty queen." He'd say, "Oh, Jesus, just make sure there are no pictures." I would say I was sorry but he was out or busy or in a meeting, but we'd be happy to send them an autographed photo or something, or he would come out if he really felt that he just couldn't snub Strom. He'd shake hands and say hello, and pray to God she didn't have a camera. And I knew not to volunteer to use the Polaroid.

I remember coming in one time when Kathleen Turner, the actress, came in, who had been so fabulous in *Prizzi's Honor* and *Body Heat*. I went in to him and said, "She really wants to see you; she's popped in." And he said, "Okay, but no pictures." I knew to make sure that didn't happen. Then we'd have Jack Nicholson come in, too, and that killer smile is for real.

The one picture that I knew my life depended on was when I was with him at the White House Correspondents [Association] dinner. I was invited by the *Herald*, I think, and he was invited by the *Globe*—but if you're going the same place he is, you end up staffing it, whether you're a guest or not. We were in the *Globe* reception, before going in to the main Hilton ballroom for the dinner, and there was Fawn Hall. This was in the middle of the Ollie [Oliver] North mess. The photographers were moving to try to get the two of them in a picture together. The Senator grabbed me by the elbow, pulled me over, and said, "If my picture ends up on the front page of the *Washington Post* tomorrow with Fawn Hall, it's your ass." [laughing] Then he grinned and I

said, “It will not happen.” He said, “Good.” I made sure that I kept moving him so that she could not get anywhere near him. I also enlisted a number of other friends in that room to make sure that they did not bring her over. I got a “Well done” after that, and we laughed and laughed about how crazy that was.

But the end of that story came at the Christmas party. He always dresses up as a character like Superman or Rocky [Balboa]—I think I suggested Beauty and the Beast for the first Christmas party after he married Vicki [Reggie Kennedy]—and does something funny and a skit that’s off the record, that Carey writes. Everybody is always surprised that Carey can write humor as well as brilliant speeches. Here is a guy who’s extraordinary—Princeton, law school, Harvard, clerk to the Supreme Court, Ph.D. from the Rockefeller Institute—everything you’d ever want in anybody who was a top aide.

Anyway, it was the ultimate Christmas party, as far as I’m concerned. Here’s the scene. Everybody goes into the committee room, and then he will sneak over in an elevator, come around the back way, and come out through the anteroom in the back to make his entrance. Joe Kennedy was a Congressman then, and dressed up as Ollie North, in an [Dwight D.] Eisenhower jacket and hat—I think he blackened one tooth, though, in the front, to make it really funny when he smiled—and the Senator dressed up as Fawn Hall! He had on a short skirt, tights, a frilly blouse—which of course had been stuffed, to have him be a size 40D or something—lipstick, makeup, a wig.

When he came on stage with Joe, the roar of laughter was overwhelming. It’s the first and the last time he’s ever been in drag, but who else could he be in current-event world—which is usually what they use to make the decision as to how he’s going to dress for the Christmas party—than Fawn Hall, with the cowboy boots, in which she had hidden the papers to take them out of the White House? I saw Howard Metzenbaum and Chris Dodd, among other Senators, I think [Orrin] Hatch. They all doubled over and they didn’t stand back up. They couldn’t straighten up. They were laughing so hard that they literally could not stand up. The skit couldn’t start, because everybody was screaming, and tears were running down people’s faces. Finally, they did the skit as people calmed down a little bit. It was a gigantic success!

On the way back, the Senator got on the elevator, and Strom Thurmond was on the elevator. The Senator said, “Hi, Strom,” and Strom nodded, never blinked. [*laughing*] To this day, we don’t know whether he recognized that it was Edward Kennedy, or thought it was another woman. After he got off, we all just roared that he had not reacted. That was an absolute hoot, just an absolute hoot.

With regard to women, the Senator’s a guy who has always been a gentleman. He had problems in his marriage with Joan—I think probably the two of them did the best they could to work out as much as they could. I love Joan Kennedy; she is one of the sweetest women. When I first met her, it was like having an old girlfriend that you had a reunion with. She had an ability to immediately have a bond with you, as if she were a sorority sister, practically. She was sweet and warm, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

When I was chatting with her, she once said to me, “You know, I was Miss Bermuda.” I said, “Yes, I heard. I thought that was really terrific.” She said, “And that was before I was a Kennedy.” I knew immediately that she clung to that because it was an accomplishment that was not reflected glory in any way. She could hold on to that as something *she* did, that the Kennedys didn’t have any association with, [REDACTED]

The Senator loved her. I have talked with him about how his three children were conceived in love. Those children have been told that they were conceived in love, but the marriage was just not workable. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

He and Joan essentially led separate lives, to a degree, and then they did separate, I think around ’77, ’78, and she moved to Boston. For all practical purposes they were separated, if not legally; they lived separate lives.

She did the best she could in Boston, and I think it helped her a bit, to be out from under the pressure of being a Senate wife. She was able to get another degree, I think in music, and be involved in the Boston Symphony and other charitable things in Boston. They did not see each other on weekends; she did not come to Washington. I think the kids went and saw her. The two oldest, Kara [Kennedy] and Teddy, were at school and Patrick [Kennedy] was still at the house for part of that time, then he went off to school as well. Then, before the ’80 campaign, he knew that he couldn’t run if Joan wasn’t going to be up to it, and they had a reconciliation.

A lot of the lead-up to his run for the Presidency was twofold, and it's where I have gone toe-to-toe with Roger Mudd. Edward Kennedy's decision to run for the Presidency in 1980 was a decision of life or death. His brothers had both died, one on the campaign trail. He had to get permission from his family to run. He did not want to run, that I could imagine, but he was the younger son who throughout his entire life had done his duty. He was 17 points up on a sitting President, and the press corps was camped in front of our office. Everybody in the party was demanding that he run, including the media.

He had turned it down in '68, when they called him and told him that [Richard J.] Daley could swing the convention for him in Chicago. He said he wasn't ready to be President, and turned down the nomination. Not everybody would have done that. He was also still filled with grief, after Robert Kennedy's loss. In '72 it was still too soon, and '74 he had an ill son, with cancer. One thing after another precluded anything in the '70s that would allow him to go, and Chappaquiddick had happened in '69. I'll talk about that at another point in this interview.

Senator Kennedy wasn't like others, deciding *when* they were going to run. For him it was *whether* he should even run at all. He had to go talk with Joan, and I think she said yes, it was okay, and that they would try for a reconciliation. They made a good-faith effort. I once was talking to him before he announced, and he turned his head, looked out the window, and was lost in thought, and I said, "Where are you? What are you thinking?" He said, "I'm somewhere between happiness and sadness, and life and death." I've always remembered that, "somewhere between happiness and sadness, and life and death." This was his mindset before he announced for the Presidency in 1980. He knew what was expected of him. He knew, reluctantly, that he probably had to go forward and do this, but he knew too it was dangerous. He loved the Senate and would have much preferred to be able to stay in the Senate, I believe.

Before he announced, the Secret Service came on, and Tom Quinn, the head of the major detail, came into the office. The Senator took him around and introduced him to various members of the staff, on the different desks. I was in the press office at that time, and I happened to be in, standing by the chief of staff's desk, discussing something, when he brought Tom in and introduced him to us. He knew that I had said, "I don't want you to run." He'd asked a number of us about whether he should run or not, and I had begged him not to.

When he introduced me to Tom Quinn, the look in his eye was, *Well, now we'll see what happens. I know you are fearful of my safety.* It was all in his eyes [*sighing*], *Well, here we go.* I told Tom Quinn I was very happy to meet him and I was depending on him to take good care of Edward Kennedy. Thank God, Tom did. When he went into his private business later, when he left the Secret Service, I took good care of Tom and sent him my friend's client, Julia Roberts; he helped her with all her security, here and abroad. I paid him back, and loved being able to do so.

The actual interview with Roger Mudd was an interesting situation. Roger had asked to do that interview and we turned it down. Then he came back and put it on a personal friendship basis, because he'd been a social friend of the Kennedy family and out at the RFK [Robert F. Kennedy] house for all the big pet shows that they would have once a year to help underprivileged children and juvenile delinquent children who needed assistance. He would help, with the Redskins, in the paddock, where they'd set up all kinds of obstacle courses that the kids would run. His son Dan had been an intern in our office. EMK'd see Roger socially, there and other places, and of

course he covered Capitol Hill for CBS [Columbia Broadcasting System] for a long time. Roger and his producer begged, so we finally said okay. He said, “Look, it’s just going to be a friendly interview, casual,” and that we could just do it up at the compound.

The upshot was that Roger went up to the compound, I think as a houseguest. If he wasn’t a houseguest, he was then at one of the close-by hotels, and no press secretary went. Tom Southwick didn’t go up. When they sat down, the Senator was thinking he was doing Roger a favor—and had not made the definite decision to run yet, either. The first question out of Roger’s mouth was something about Kara using drugs, like, “What do you think about kids these days? I understand that maybe one of your children has a drug problem.”

The Senator was so angry at that first question—first of all, for it not being on the subject of him and running for the Presidency, and then involving his family and the private life of his daughter—that he went ballistic inside. He thought to himself—and he later told us this—I’m just going to clam up and not give him a very good interview at all. I’m just going to be monosyllabic. I’m going to say yes/no. I’m going to show *him*, because this is outrageous, that he would do something like this, when I have been doing him a favor and here he backstabs like this.

When Roger asked, “Why do you want to be President?” he couldn’t answer *why* he wanted to be President, because he hadn’t decided *whether* he was going to run yet. He couldn’t make that statement because there were a lot of ducks that had to get in a row first, plus a lot of people who would have to have been informed first and would have gotten their noses out of joint if it was suddenly on television: “You’re running? And you haven’t told me?” or “You haven’t passed it by me,” or “Have you done the appropriate consulting within the family?”

I’ve gone toe-to-toe with Roger on this and we’re all friends again, but at the time, Roger made a lot of excuses. I said to him, “That was unacceptable, Roger, and you know what I mean and you know why.” He also went to the bridge at Chappaquiddick. By then, of course, it had railings, a sidebar, all the aspects of safety that it didn’t have the night the Senator’s car went over. As a result of that interview, we had problems in the campaign; everybody said he doesn’t know why he wants to be President. But he called, immediately after that interview, to Southwick and said, “I’ve just blown the whole thing because I got so mad at Roger, I didn’t answer.” That was the reason behind the inadequate performance of that particular interview.

The key thing that happened next was that he lost in Iowa, and then he decided, Okay, if I’m going to lose this thing, I’m going to do it my way and I’m going to be myself. I’m not going to get involved in all of this strategy that everybody did in the beginning, and how you had to do this, that, and the other thing, and follow everybody’s suggestions. I’m just going to follow my gut. Then he gave what we call the Georgetown speech, where he just laid it all out.

Part of the first part of his campaign was that initial reluctance for him to go forward. He ran on needing a change of leadership from the “malaise President.” He probably wouldn’t have run if Jimmy Carter had worked with him more closely on health insurance, because that was the key thing that was disillusioning for the Senator. Promises had been made and, he felt, broken. Then Carter had everybody and their cousin up to Camp David for his thinking sessions, except Edward Kennedy, who would have been somebody worth having, so it was a real snub, but it

was mainly on health insurance that he finally decided that it was worth running against a sitting President.

Heininger: Who on the staff wanted him to run?

Miller: Oh, most people, just like I wanted Robert Kennedy to run. It's an exciting thing. We had top notch people lined up out the door to work for him, for decades. Part of that is because they knew somebody was possibly going to run for President, which gives them an opportunity to utilize themselves at the highest possible level and to maybe be part of the White House staff. There's nobody in politics who doesn't want to try that. I certainly did, in Robert Kennedy's office, and I understand where it comes from, but then you start to realize there are more important things in life than working in the White House, and it's not something you really need to do. There are many other ways to find fulfillment and to do good work.

Edward Kennedy was the one who did *not* want Robert Kennedy to run in 1968, but once he made the decision, he rolled up his sleeves. That was the same way it was for us in 1980. Once he made that decision, I rolled up my sleeves, and so did everybody else.

I essentially put my life on hold for a year. I was tossed the keys to the Cadillac dealership over on L Street, which we rented to be the headquarters, and told that we were going to have a press conference there in three days, get it ready. [*laughing*] I took the keys and went over and walked around this old Cadillac place. We gathered the supporters and the troops of volunteers, and had a cleaning crew come in. We had posters painted, and all kinds of signs put up on all the windows, and got the mult box and the whole thing decorated and set up for Steve Smith to announce an exploratory committee, which was the first step. Then that headquarters slowly was turned into better offices upstairs and places for each area of need throughout the two-story building. I was in the press section. I became the assistant press secretary for the '80 campaign.

But yes, there were, I'm sure, certain people in the family who were very apprehensive, but they also were worried about the country, and they also knew Edward Kennedy would be a tremendous President and leader. He understood government. He knows how to get things done. With his recent diagnosis, there's been an outpouring of appreciation, of awareness, from both sides of the aisle, that he is probably one of the greatest legislators of the last century.

He knew how to do things that other people wouldn't even think of. An example would be sitting in his car at the Boston airport knowing, from a report from one of the health staff, that the volunteer aid people going into Guatemala after a huge earthquake didn't have enough gamma globulin, and it was holding everything up. The aid workers needed to be vaccinated, as well as other people who were injured, so he called the head of a drug company and said, "If I can get a plane to take gamma globulin down to Guatemala, to help the Red Cross and everybody else who is down there working, would you donate the gamma globulin?" And they didn't say no to Edward Kennedy. He put it in a way that they couldn't say no, because it was doing the right thing. Then he called the head of a private airline, and got somebody's private plane to haul it all down there.

Nobody knows about things like that. He does stuff like that all the time. It's how Robert Kennedy—When Robert Kennedy came back from Mississippi, I remember him walking into his

office. He'd seen people living in tar-paper shacks and little black children with swollen bellies, and nobody having correct nutrition, and the threadbare existences inside those houses. It's where Peter Edelman met Marian Wright [Edelman], but that's another story. He came back and he started pulling—I was standing at the doorway and I watched him pulling pieces of paper out of his pockets and laying them out on his desk, and he picked up the phone and started calling all his rich friends in New York. He said, "Could you send a box of blankets to this address? Can you send a box of soup to this address? Can you send canned goods and blankets to this address?" He said, "I'm going to put legislation in, but it's never going to happen fast enough. I'm going to do all I can to get more aid, talk to the agencies. We have starving people in the United States of America; we have to do something. This is unacceptable."

I should imagine that everybody you interview will tell you that the worst possible thing a Kennedy can say about something is that it's "unacceptable." That is a curse word beyond all curse words in our circle. If a memo went in and came back with "Unacceptable," you would go right through the floor. That was—You never, ever, let that happen. The only other times when things would be unacceptable were injustices like Robert Kennedy saw in Mississippi, like Edward Kennedy saw in emergency rooms in rural hospitals—where they were overrun and didn't have enough staff and medical supplies—and like in the refugee camps around the world where he visited. He took his children so that they would know what he was doing and why it was important.

I can digress a moment. As the children were growing up, he would include them in meetings. We'd all go out to the house, sit in the library, and have meetings, and the children would be allowed to come into these meetings and listen. They were never shut out of anything. He'd turn to Patrick and say, "Well, what do you think, Patrick?" and Patrick would say, "Gosh, Dad, I don't know," but a few more years would go by and he'd say, "What do you think, Patrick?" and Patrick would say, "Well, I think—" such and such.

He also had all of his nieces and nephews who wanted to come and be interns in our office, including Caroline [Kennedy Schlossberg]. They all worked for free. Especially those whose father—all the RFKs—had been a Senator; they got a chance to see what their father had done all day and what a Senate office was like. They worked. They did casework and filing and press work; they helped set up press conferences and handed out press releases. They all worked. He would take them to committee hearings, and they would sit and watch and listen. Then they would go to the various lectures that the Library of Congress would have for interns in the summer, and they would play on the "Boston Ted Sox" softball team. They would open mail and answer the phones. They would hear John Q. Public calling in with constituent problems.

They all had this opportunity to understand the work being done. Then when he would have meetings he'd call and say, "Tell Chris [Christopher Kennedy Lawford] to come on in," or "Tell Caroline to come on in." He'd have various experts having a meeting, or there would be a briefing by the staff on something. He'd let them sit in on the briefings and they'd listen and get a chance to understand what he did all day, and why it was important. Unlike other politicians' children, who oftentimes felt neglected or left out, Kennedy kids never did.

The other thing he would do, with his own children and his stepchildren—I saw that back on the calendar, back on his schedule when he married Vicki and he had Curran [Raclin] and Caroline

[Raclin], and he treated them exactly the same as he did his own children—you would have “7:00 a.m., teachers meeting.” He would go with Vicki, and he would go without Joan, or with Joan, if she could make it, to parent/teacher meetings for his children.

He would go to *every* recital and every sporting event and everything. He would be there. He might be there for only two innings, but he would get there. You would see “4:00, leave for St. Albans, go watch Teddy play” or “Curran, play at Maret School,” and he’d then turn around and come back. On days when there were late nights at the Senate, the children and Joan would come down and have a picnic under the old tree over by what used to be the swamp, in front of the Senate steps. They’d put out a blanket and they’d eat and have a picnic with the kids, so they could all have dinner together, before he went back to the Senate floor for late-night sessions.

On weekends, it would be the soccer games. I used to get all kinds of mentions from various members of the press corps who also had young kids who played on the same team or opposite team. I’d be walking through the Capitol and they’d say, “Hey, I saw the Senator. I saw your boss Saturday. He and Vicki were on the sidelines at the soccer game for Curran, and my kid was there too.” It would be Tim Russert; it would be Chris Wallace. There was a lot of that kind of thing, and it always impressed them that he was always there for the kids.

He was also the one who would call the children and say, “Do you have a summer job yet? You go out and find one that you really like, and if you don’t, I’ll get one for you,” because none of the Kennedy kids were allowed to just lollygag over the summer; you had to do something constructive, something that helped others, ideally. If you were going to come work for him, that was great, but you were going to do *something*—

That’s how John Kennedy, Jr., and Timothy Shriver ended up in Guatemala, helping after the earthquake. Number one, it was a good thing to do; two, it let them both see how the other half lived; and number three, it helped them with their Spanish that they were taking in school. They lived in tents, walked in the muck, helped distribute food and water, and did whatever they could. Those were the kinds of things the kids did in the summer, and he made sure that they did them.

He has a calendar with all the children’s names—and of course these children have grown up and have children of their own—and *all* their birthdays. He called every single one on their birthdays, and he, as the surrogate father for not only John Kennedy’s children, but then Robert Kennedy’s children—There were the two JFKs [John F. Kennedy] and the eleven RFKs, plus his own three. That was a full-time job right there, and he was also helping both the widows, Jackie and Ethel, being there for all the memorial services, being there for everything that the John F. Kennedy Library needed done. Every time he had to show up for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, everything for the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial, and then he walked those daughters down the aisle who didn’t have a father. He went to all their graduations; he spoke at their graduations. He went to all of the christenings of any of their children. He was there for them in a way that was so extraordinary. You talk to any one of them. . . they adore him.

I’ve been to a lot of their weddings—I’ve done the press at a number of them, and for some I’ve been a guest. Without exception, the kids would stand up and toast him and thank him for getting them through life, and then turn to Teddy and Kara and Patrick and thank them for sharing their

father with them, because they really had to. It was an extraordinary responsibility and he did it without fail and with great love.

Heininger: Was he especially close to any of them?

Miller: Yes. He was very close to Caroline, *very* close to Caroline—she’s almost like another daughter—and he was terribly close to John. When we lost John, it was like losing his own son. John’s loss knocked the pins out from under the whole family. That was just as devastating as anything could possibly be. Losing Michael was also devastating. Michael was an extraordinary person, and Michael was *the one*, as Bobby said in his eulogy. His first line was “Michael was Mummy’s favorite,” but “that was okay. He was our favorite too.” Michael was the liaison for all the kids to their mother, almost. She talked to him every day. Michael was the one who ran Citizens Energy when Joe went to Congress. Michael was the closest to being like Robert Kennedy, and he looked like him; it was spooky. His loss was devastating.

John’s loss was, again, one of those “all that might have been” situations, because John was remarkable. He was kind, sweet, thoughtful, considerate. I handled his press at the ’88 convention in Atlanta. Everybody wanted a piece of him. We didn’t want to have one-on-one interviews, so I helped him get prepared for off-the-rostrum stuff, but everybody was calling me. I had a complete list of everyone—Diane Sawyer, Connie Chung, anybody who was anybody then—they were all ringing my phone off the hook.

In the morning, I was getting ready for a staff meeting, and the phone rang. It was John and he said, “Melody, Diane Sawyer has found out where I’m staying, and I have seven messages. What am I going to do?” I said, “You have all these others calling as well. Don’t worry, I’ll call her back and I’ll take care of this for you.” Then we were talking about his speech—how it was going to go and what to expect afterward—and he said, “Can you hold on a minute?” His other phone started ringing and I said, “Fine,” so I held and I held and I held. Pretty soon, I had to finish getting ready or I was not going to be on time for Edward Kennedy’s staff meeting, so I hung up on John Kennedy, Jr., and got ready. I was just about ready to walk out the door and the phone rang again. I picked it up and it was John, and he said, “Melody, I want to apologize for keeping you on hold so long, and say good-bye properly.” That’s the kind of guy he was. His mother brought him up right.

One day, the Senator called me into his private office and said, “John has called me and asked if he can borrow you to handle the press for his wedding, and I told him yes.” I said, “Well, thanks for asking me.” [*laughing*] He said, “Well, I knew you’d want to,” and I said, “Yes, fine.” He said, “What’s happening is that you can’t tell anybody else, because he’s only having a few people.” I couldn’t tell the rest of the family, because he was having one representative of each family within the Kennedy family; if I told, the family would all gossip and it would get out, and then he’d be overrun and they wouldn’t be able to pull it off. I had to keep the secret of John Kennedy’s wedding for a month and a half, and was on the phone with John a lot. He had, earlier, had me be his unofficial press secretary. He called me up and said, “Look, if you do not hear me tell you that I’m running off to get married, you can deny all of these rumors that have been going around that I’m marrying Madonna [Louise Ciccone] or that I’m marrying Daryl Hannah.” And he said, “And you don’t need to check with me.”

People were calling me from Italy saying, “We are getting on a plane tomorrow because we hear he’s marrying Daryl Hannah, out at the [Caroline Lee Bouvier] Radziwills’ in Southampton,” and I was saying to them, “Don’t get on the plane.” But everybody was going; everybody was arriving; people were hiring helicopters and all this other stuff. I was saying, “I can tell you, it’s not happening.” I did an awful lot of that, for three or four years there, when he was the hottest bachelor in the world.

Anyway, before his wedding, the Senator, of course, went, and different close, close people within the family went. He wanted me to come down too, “But,” he said, “we have a problem. We don’t have any place to sleep. You’re going to have to be in a tent and use your cell phone.” [laughing] I said, “John, I think probably it’s best that I do not come to your wedding, and that you let me work it from the office, where I have all the equipment I need and all the lists and telephone numbers. My tent days are over. I like hot water and bathtubs and those things.” So he said, “Well, I’ll call you right after the service, and tell you all the things that happened, so you can do the ‘color commentary,’” as I told him I would.

The upshot was that the Senator and Vicki called me, because, as I knew—“John,” I had said, “you’re not going to have time to do it. You have to be the groom. You have to pay attention to your bride! Vicki and I will work it out.” Vicki called and the Senator was giving her ideas as well, all the different little special moments that happened, and I was able, then, to put out the release, get the picture out, and have that all taken care of. But losing John, that was as bad as it got.

Heininger: Was Carolyn [Bessette-Kennedy] warmly accepted by the family?

Miller: Yes, yes. She was a lovely, sweet gal. They would go up to the compound and—As a matter of fact, before John died they had a reunion at the compound over July fourth. The word went out from Senator Kennedy that this was a mandatory command performance; everybody had to arrive. He did it because he realized that we now had grandchildren and great-grandchildren, some of whom had not met each other, in the great-grandchildren level, because the kids are spread out all over the country, so he organized a big family reunion. He’d been reading something about family reunions and just decided it was time that they had one. They all get together over Labor Day, at the end of the summer, as many as possible, but you have Smiths out in the Hamptons, and other people in California and in Maine and in different places.

The Senator had a big tent put up, and they had face painting for the little kids and tours of President Kennedy’s house and his house. The sisters all gave explanations of the history that had happened in the house and pointed out who was in all these pictures on the wall and which chair the cardinal, who later became Pope, sat in, which his mother had saved—all of the linkage between the generations. They had a big sail out on a boat that they rented that could hold everybody, and then they had a group picture taken on the lawn, in front of the house that was his father and mother’s house, which the Senator now owns. It was an array of people, including Rosemary [Kennedy], who was brought in from St. Colleta’s. John and Carolyn were right there in the front. Everybody loved her. They thought that she was just the sweetest gal, and really nice and fun and so beautiful and fashionable, and she had this beautiful, long blonde hair.

She and John came to the office for the inauguration, because we have the balcony, and after the inauguration you can go out and see the inaugural parade form on the front steps, the east front of the Capitol. They go right around the corner there to head down Pennsylvania Avenue, so you can all wave. We were all out on the balcony, watching.

For anything that's going to become historic, the Senator has a great sense of history. He always wanted to include his family, so they would come and see that which he knew was memorable and important for them to not only see, but also to appreciate the significance of it. That's why the kids would be invited to come and watch an important speech. Robert Kennedy had all of his children come to watch his maiden speech on the Senate floor, on nuclear proliferation. I remember him lining them up and tucking in Joe's shirttail. When they started out the door, he said, "Just a minute. I will have something for the person who behaves the best. And I will also have something for the person who behaves the worst." Those kids—He really was a hands-on father.

Heininger: So who won the two prizes?

Miller: I don't remember; that would have been taken care of at home. But I think everybody was on their best behavior, because you didn't—Robert Kennedy could just look at you with those steely blues, and you didn't want that to happen. I remember coming home from college, and being out at the house for the Christmas party. He came up to me and said, "What do all the students think of Lyndon Johnson?" I said, "They're not that enamored of him. They're not that crazy about the southern accent." He said, "That's unacceptable. You do not judge somebody by their accent. I don't think that's something that they should be proud of at all." I thought, *Wow, that's quite interesting, defending the reason why you're allowed to or not allowed to like LBJ.* It had to be about policy, not his accent.

Both of them, Edward Kennedy and Robert Kennedy, had it—what a television cameraman described to Frank Mankiewicz during the California campaign in '68—When Robert Kennedy was being interviewed, Frank was standing by him and said to the cameraman, "How do you think it went? What do you think of Robert Kennedy?" And the cameraman said, "You know what I like about him? His perpetual sense of outrage against injustice." Edward Kennedy has exactly the same thing. Any time he sees an injustice, there has to be action taken. You can't just stand there and not do something about it, whether it was the refugee crisis, when he came back and fought for funding for the refugees, civil rights, or South Africa. He was compelled to act.

He took Teddy and Kara into the refugee camps in Ethiopia. There's that famous picture of Teddy standing there crying, because he couldn't give his shirt to one child because he couldn't give his shirt to all, and the Senator feeding this emaciated child in his arms. Then his children came back and testified before Congress about what they had seen, through their eyes. They've never forgotten those kinds of things, and they have in turn tried to do something with their lives to better the quality of life for our fellow human beings here in the United States and around the world.

That's essentially what public service is. That's what we all do all day long on Capitol Hill. We did it, I did it, in our own ways, trying to better the quality of life of our fellow citizens and make progress in those areas. We all may not have the same policy ideas about how to do it best, but

that's essentially what we're there for, and we take great pride in that. I know I do and I know the Kennedy staff does, and we always felt, as Adam Walinsky said, "We were not just a piece of the action, but a piece of the *right* action."

With regard to that perpetual sense of outrage against injustice, it's why he has fought so hard for healthcare. When he would take Teddy up to Boston Children's [Children's Hospital Boston] every three weeks for his chemotherapy, he would see other parents on that same wing, with *their* kids having chemotherapy. They would talk, and he would discover that they had a choice between paying the mortgage or paying for another round of chemotherapy to keep their child alive; that one parent couldn't stay with the child because they had to go to work and they couldn't take any time off, no parental leave for a terminally ill child. It just touched his heart, so he came back and he fought for parental leave, and then he's been fighting for health insurance since the beginning of his career.

Civil rights—He's not only Mister Healthcare, but he's also Mister Civil Rights. All the leaders came in: Aaron Henry. I used to get a big smack, a kiss from Aaron Henry. [*laughing*] I always used to think, *Uh oh, Aaron's coming, I'm going to get grabbed*. Charles Evers. I remember the Senator walking Charles Evers through the office—because Charles had complained once when he'd come a couple of years earlier, "You don't have enough African-Americans on your staff, Ted"—so the Senator took that to heart and the next time Charles Evers came in, he walked him through the office and made sure that he saw that we'd hired a more diverse staff.

He was not only giving women an opportunity to go upwards within his staff, but he was also giving minorities an opportunity to progress upward on his staff. We hired one of the first black pages. We chose Glenn Harden, who later became Atif Harden and a great advance man for Edward Kennedy for a whole lot of different events. He has done all kinds of work for Presidents, and is now helping with the Democratic Convention. I knew him when he was 14 and a kid off the streets. We took a chance on him and he's turned out to be fantastically wonderful.

Title IX for women—He was a lead on that. I remember the Olympians coming, the wonderful young woman, Flo Hyman. She was a very tall Olympian in volleyball who died too young from cancer, I think. We had all the different swimmers, all the different athletes, everybody helping with Title IX.

We had everybody on voting rights. All the leadership of the world crossed our doorstep, and that was the extraordinary thing. A normal day was, for instance, Robert Redford walking in. A normal day was chatting with Paul Newman. A normal day was Margaret Mead coming in, or all the different Governors, all the different Senators, all the members of the House, all of the celebrities from abroad. I got to shake hands with Willy Brandt, with the Dalai Lama. I got to meet cardinals and other heads of state. I remember the various leaders of Israel coming in, and the funny stories told to me. I think it was Simcha Dinitz who told me that he was at the King David Hotel when Liz Taylor and Richard Burton came, and was asked to move out of the suite that they always wanted, so he thought he would. He said, "Because now I can always tell everybody that Liz Taylor slept in my bed." [*laughing*]

Liz Taylor came in, wearing the big rocks. Everybody had been cautioned that she was always *Elizabeth* Taylor, and that it was *Miss* Taylor, and we weren't to get overly familiar in any way.

She was very nice. I couldn't see how she could even *lift* her hands, these gigantic diamonds on each finger were so huge, and sparkling away. The door opened, the Senator walked in, and he said, "Hi, Liz." It was just longtime, old friends. He's probably one of the few people that she lets call her Liz.

With regard to funny moments with beautiful women, Henry Allen, I think his name was, was a financier, a mover and shaker on Wall Street, and he used to come in and bring one of the top, most beautiful actresses on his arm every time he visited Edward Kennedy. It was, I think, a little *mano a mano* game they were playing. He walked in with Candy [Candice] Bergen one day, and she was lovely. I really liked her. Another year he walked in with Jennifer O'Neill, who had just come off of *Summer of '42*, which was at the height of her beauty. She is probably the most beautiful woman who ever walked in our office. It was about 5:30.

What the Senator would do was when somebody would come through the administrative part of the office, and then into his private office, he would usher the people in if they were VIPs [very important persons]. He'd come out into the reception room and greet them, and then bring them in. He would send them into his private office first, and before he closed the door he would turn to the room and his personal secretary or his scheduler, and would make a hand signal like "five" or "ten." That meant, Interrupt me in ten minutes so that this doesn't go on too long, because I have other things I have to do. I'll tell you more on that in a minute.

It was 5:30. The office closed, technically, at 6:00—when you worked on the Hill, nobody went home at 6:00, but you were allowed to, and we shut the door. He brought Allen and O'Neill through; they went in; and he turned to the whole room, looked up at the clock, and said, "See you all tomorrow." [*laughing*] We all got a kick out of that, because meetings lasting a half-hour were very rare. Too much was on his schedule, and he had to work fast.

Heininger: Who was that with?

Miller: That was with Jennifer O'Neill and Henry Allen. She was the date of the other guy, but the Senator knew that he could get a big laugh out of all of us by indicating, Don't interrupt me in ten minutes with this one!

One of the things about his schedule, I don't know how much you've already learned about it, but we ran a Presidential office, a Presidential schedule. He was scheduled every 15 minutes, every 10 minutes almost, with so many demands on his time. He was not just a Senator from Massachusetts; he was a Senator from the United States of America; he was a Senator from the entire world. I say that because from all corners came demands for him to take leadership on various issues.

He tried to do the best he could, to lead on those things in which he felt he could get deeply involved. He didn't want to do anything halfway, so he couldn't do everything, but he had a huge plate full of issues. The committees that he was on—Labor and Public Welfare, now called HELP [Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions], had probably a third of all legislation referred to it, because it's all of the domestic key legislation on human welfare and labor issues and health and everything. Then he was on Armed Services, which covered the whole gamut, and he was on

the Joint Economic Committee, and Judiciary, where he was the chairman for a good bit of the time. Those are all considered “A” committees.

There are A, B, and C committees. When the Democratic Caucus allots new members to the committees, they place new members on not just always the committee they want, but one where they can plug in and counteract which Republican is going to come on that committee. They also try to spread it out so that they get an A committee and a B committee, and maybe a C committee if they’re a freshman. Then as you move up in seniority and people leave, you get a chance to get not only a higher seniority on the committee you’re on, but you also have a chance to move to other committees that have open seats.

There was a situation in the Democratic Caucus where Edward Kennedy was placed on his third A committee, and there was a protest by one of the Democratic Senators: “How come Ted Kennedy gets to be on three A committees?” There was a chorus answer that said, “When you can put out as much as he does, you can be on three A committees.” His own colleagues recognized that he is a workhorse and not a show horse, and that he’s such a natural leader on everything and makes things happen. That he was a gifted legislator.

Heininger: Which of the Senators has he been really close to through the years?

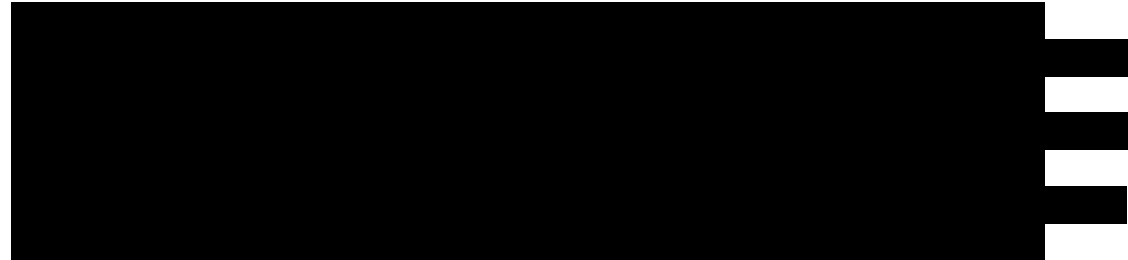
Miller: Well, Chris Dodd’s his closest friend in the Senate, and is almost like a little brother. He very much liked [James] Sasser. He was *very* close to John Tunney and John Culver, who were classmates. It was quite something when you had both of them in the Senate with him. John Culver had worked on the staff at one time, and had been a football player with him at Harvard. John Kerry he’s become closer to since helping him run for President. John Tunney is his closest pal. They were friends in law school.

He’s also cultivated Republicans. He kind of took [John] Warner under his wing in an interesting way, on Armed Services, and mentored him and helped groom him into becoming, I think, the better Senator that Warner has become. Warner was invited to the birthday parties, so you’d see John there. We had costumed birthday parties and I’ll tell you more about that.

He called me in and said, “I’ve just found out that John Warner has a bummed-up knee and he’s having real problems.” He had brought in a cane that was used by his father and by President Kennedy, and had me put a big red bow on it. He wrote a note to Warner and said, “I’m lending you the family cane until you feel better.” I took it up and Warner was blown away that he was giving him the cane used by his father and President Kennedy, and was trusting him with keeping that safe. Warner just couldn’t believe it, and said, “I’m not going to use this.” He kept it safe. He didn’t use it, but he kept it until his knee got better, and then he returned it to the Senator, as was expected, as a loaner. But he told *everybody* that Ted Kennedy had made this extraordinary gesture.

This is the thing you’ve probably already heard. He’s the one who went to the bedsides of the Senators who were dying. The Church family will tell you how he came and talked to Frank Church. He didn’t just go once and pay his respects. He went every week, and he sat there and talked to Frank. He would tell him what was happening in the Senate, or he’d read to him. He did the same thing with Phil Hart, and Phil Hart was, as you know, known as “the conscience of the

Senate.” The Senator decided that he needed to have really special recognition, and rounded up the votes to name the Hart Building after Philip Hart, and was able to go to him and tell him, before he died, that they had named that building after him. This was an exception to all the rules, because Phil Hart was the only person who was not a chairman or a Speaker or a majority leader or a minority leader who got a building named after him in the Senate.



The Senator would be very creative. We would have forums and the press would all cover them, because you couldn't set the agenda when the Republicans had the majority, and they wouldn't discuss things at hearings. They wouldn't have hearings on vital, important issues like apartheid or nuclear winter, so the Senator did in the forums, and he did it because he could get people to come and testify no one else could. We had [Evgeny] Velikhov, who was the number one scientist to the Soviet Union's premiers, come, and we had Roald Sagdeev, the other one. I drove both of them out to the Senator's house, and had them to myself for 45 minutes to an hour, because there was a huge rainstorm and it slowed down all the traffic, so I had this extraordinary discussion with these two amazing Soviet scientists. Roald Sagdeev then went on to marry Susan Eisenhower and is living in the United States now. Although Susan tells me they have since divorced.

They both told me that you must not accept the idea of the laser beam technology that is supposed to shoot down satellites, and the reasoning about how this laser can be helpful in medicine as well and have spin-off capabilities if you go forward with this research. They felt it was a destabilizing weapons program. They said it's two different kinds of lasers. They said, "They won't tell you that, but you can't use that kind of laser for medical use." They also told me that they were very impressed with Al Gore [Jr.], how he'd come to visit the USSR, didn't know a whole lot about nuclear materials, bombs, all of the issues, but went back and two years later came over again and knew as much as the scientists. They really, really were impressed with Albert Gore, because they were talking to me about who was maybe going to run for President. Did I like [William] Bradley? Did I like [Mario] Cuomo? They thought he was good.

They were very open, especially Sagdeev. I can see why he ended up leaving and marrying Susan Eisenhower. He was very open and very critical of his own country, in a way that I thought was quite amazing. These kinds of people would come and testify at forums, before Edward Kennedy, but they wouldn't come for anybody else.

[Leonid] Brezhnev used to tell people, "How do I get Ted Kennedy to come to Russia? I need Ted Kennedy to come to Russia." [Fidel] Castro told a friend of mine who was down there with [George] McGovern, "I can't let McGovern have all of the prisoners. I have to keep some for Ted Kennedy, if only he'll come down to visit me." *[laughing]* It was how to get Ted Kennedy to come; the Senator would not go to see Brezhnev unless Brezhnev gave him [Mstislav]

Rostropovich. Edward Kennedy got people out of the Soviet Union by literally making a deal; they had to give him something for him to come, and they wanted him to come because they knew that he was so important, and that the Republicans also knew.

This will come out years from now, that Edward Kennedy did a lot of back-channel work for Republican Presidents, in meetings on nuclear matters, with Russian premiers, because Republicans knew that if Edward Kennedy went over and said, “You cannot divide and conquer on this. The Democrats are going to stand with Republicans on this foreign policy issue,” the Russians would believe it. He did a lot of that. I remember he’d come back from Russia, etc., and would get off the plane and go straight to the White House to debrief there, or directly to the State Department, but mostly it was directly to the White House. He’d debrief for [Ronald] Reagan a lot. Nobody ever knew about that. He never spoke about it, and a lot of conservative Republicans are going to be very chagrined when they find out how much he helped to smooth the waters, or deliver policy messages and make the case about things, and to keep the Soviets from misunderstanding anything or going down the wrong path. He was a very secret, effective diplomat as well as Senator. There was a lot of that that went on.

Heininger: Talk a little bit about Vicki, and the influence she’s had on his life and his work.

Miller: He dated a lot of people, but I knew this was special because she had children, and he was very alone in that house. He really enjoyed going over to her house and helping the kids with their homework. It was normalcy for him. Her parents, Judge [Edmund] Reggie and Doris, he’d known since 1956. I knew this one was going to be it, because not only was Vicki a terrific, warm, and bright woman, but he also wasn’t going to not be serious with her, with Judge Reggie being her father. *[laughing]*

Before ’94, we had the terrible night in Palm Beach and had to go through the drip, drip, drip of Willie’s [William Kennedy Smith] trial, with Patrick and the Senator, and people saying things that were misconstrued. Then there were the political cartoons of the Senator in undershirts, rather than his normal nightshirt, like the one I saw Robert Kennedy in—The Senator said, “I was wearing a nightshirt, just like my father always did,” when he went in to say goodnight to Patrick down at Palm Beach, and this girl said “undershirt” rather than “nightshirt”—long, down to his knees. They had all those jokes about him running around in something inappropriate. That was not true.

Vicki was dating him, I think, during those last months before the trial and during the trial and afterward, and then they got married July 3, 1992, because I spent that weekend in the office announcing their wedding, so I remember my fourth of July was in the office and I didn’t mind at all it was so wonderful. I think she was an incredible refuge for him during those very terrible months of harassment.

Before he went down to testify in Palm Beach, Ranny Cooper, Carey Parker, Greg Craig, and I went to Williams & Connolly’s conference room with the Senator, and spent the entire day throwing every question we could think of at him, including the kitchen sink. I told him that one of the things people don’t understand is how tough it is for him to be Ted Kennedy sometimes, and that he had to allow people to understand his emotions and what he felt, rather than just being stoic. They can’t empathize with you if they don’t understand.

That particular evening in Palm Beach, he had been talking with Jean [Kennedy Smith] and Bill Barry, who had been the bodyguard for Robert Kennedy. It was an anniversary of his loss, and whenever Bill Barry would be there, Robert Kennedy's name would come up, so the Senator had been having a very emotional discussion with Jean, a lot of reminiscing about his brothers, and Steve Smith, who had recently died. He has what he calls his "blocking mechanism." He will block things out and not think about them, and that's the way he gets through painful memories of grief. He says he takes one day at a time and he keeps busy and going, so that he doesn't have to stop and have all of this wash over him, all this tragedy, all this horror, all these sad, sad things that he carries with him.

Patrick Kennedy once said to a friend, "My dad has just led a tortured life," and part of the way the Senator keeps that torture at bay is by not slowing down, and the other way is with distractions. That night in Palm Beach, he couldn't get to sleep. It was one of those nights where, you know, there are pictures all over the house; you get overwhelmed by the grief that you have tamped down as best you could for many months, many years, and every now and then it hits you. That night it hit him, from all of the conversations that he had with Jean and Bill.

He got up and went to Patrick's and Will's room and said, "I've just got to get out of here. Do you want to go out and have a drink?" These are not children anymore; these are men. I think Will was in his 30s; Patrick was 28 or 29. They knew instantly, just by looking at him, that he was in distress, and they knew pretty much why. With Bill Barry being there, and Jean, there had been a lot of reminiscing going on and a lot of memories had welled up, so they went out and then they came back. Edward Kennedy didn't do anything wrong that evening. *[laughing]* Patrick did manage to find a young woman that he invited back with him, who was not too bright it turned out.

Will brought a girl back who—It could not be admitted in court, but we got information from somebody who said that she had said she wanted to get to Kennedy and that she wanted to latch on to a Kennedy. In the upstairs level of the restaurant, she'd already been caught having sex under a table with some other guy who had been there, not that same night. This is a gal who played pretty fast and loose with her life. So she and Will were together out on the lawn.

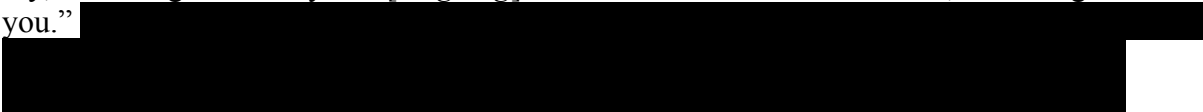
I believe what Will said with additional certainly because of one key thing, and that is that Bill Barry was there sleeping with a window open to the lawn. If he had heard a woman screaming for help, as she said she did, Bill would have been through that window so fast, because he would have thought—The only women he knew were there were Jean Kennedy Smith and Amanda [Kennedy] Smith, Kennedy family members he would have done anything to protect. He would have gone through the screen! That's Bill Barry, because he has still, to this day, never forgiven himself for Robert Kennedy's death. There was no way Bill was ever going to let that happen again. Bill never heard a thing, and he hadn't taken any sleeping medications or anything like that. He wasn't the kind of guy who would not have been awakened by a scream.


I think this was a terribly sad and unfortunate situation, that somebody saw an easy mark and went for it, and then maybe had to explain it to somebody else and had to claim rape, because of various aspects of her own life and family. I don't know all of that, but I do know that, in this case, it could not have happened the way she said it happened. For all of it then to backlash all over the Senator and Patrick and everything else, had just been horrendous. Vicki was

instrumental in helping him cope. I think he, in our prep meeting, recognized that he did need to allow people to see a little bit behind the Guard-All shield that he keeps up to protect himself. He had to let them know that, yes, it was a hard night and he wished he hadn't gone out, and wished he'd just gone for a walk on the beach, but in this case he didn't do that.

After we got past the trial, I think it was in March, he asked Vicki to marry him, at *La Bohème*, which they go to every year to commemorate their engagement. He called me in and a couple of the others, and told us that he had gotten engaged, so I had to help announce that to the press. We had to pull together a whole lot of information about Vicki, because everybody was going to want to know who she was. It was a very joyful thing because, as I told him, "Now I know you're going to have a happy ever after. This is just the right thing to do. I think it's terrific." He came out of the door—We were in the hallway at the end of the evening after we'd been doing a lot of this prep—and I said, "Congratulations again. This is happy, happy news." He gave me a big hug and said, "Actually, I'm really scared," and I said, "Of course you're scared. You've been a bachelor for some time here, but you know this is the right thing to do. This is the right thing to do. You're going to have the children and Vicki, and you have great in-laws. You're going to go forward and this is going to make a huge difference in your life," and it has. He now can come home to a house with children's laughter in it. He wasn't going to live in an empty house anymore.

I would go into his office and say, "This is the situation, what do you think about this? I think we should probably do thus and so," and he'd say, "Okay. Let me check with Vicki." He'd swing around in his chair and push the button on automatic dial: Hi, Vicki? We're talking about such and such. Melody thinks we should do da da da. What do you think? Then he'd turn around and say, "Vicki agrees with you." [laughing] I remember the first time he said, "Vicki agrees with you."



I saw in Vicki that he,  had a real marriage and a real partner. They would laugh and talk about the time they went on their sail up the coast of Maine, and how she had a suitcase that had too many things in it, there wasn't enough room for it, and how they got into this dustup and had a yelling match at each other. They could laugh about it, though, and talk about it as normal married folks do. I thought, *Golly, this is a healthy relationship*. I got to know his two new children and watched them grow up, and to see all of the new additions on the schedule: going to Curran's baseball game in the afternoon or a lacrosse match or the piano recitals for Caroline or the Parent Teacher Association meetings in the evening at Maret School, the early-morning teacher conferences at 7:00 a.m. He was painting with Caroline, doing all of the painting that he does, and he's actually quite a good artist.

As you know, he gave one of his paintings to Senator [Robert C.] Byrd, and Senator Byrd gave one of *his* paintings to Senator Kennedy. Isn't it fascinating? Here are the two who ran against each other for the Senate Whip job, and Byrd beat him the second time, after Chappaquiddick and him not being in the Senate very often, not often enough to do the job the way it needed to be done. Although when he went in—

This might be of interest to you. When he went into the Democratic Caucus, he had the votes. When they took the vote, he lost by two votes, so the big question was which two Senators lied and changed their vote. I was standing at the open door to his private office as he came back and sat down, and the phone was ringing off the hook. It was all these different Senators calling, to swear that they had voted for him. “Yes Birch [Bayh]. Yes, Birch, I know. I believe you. I believe you. I know you voted for me. You pulled me out of the plane, Birch. I believe you.” [laughing] We think it was probably [Thomas] McIntyre, but whoever. Anyway, it was a blessing in disguise.

Then Edward Kennedy watched Robert Byrd, and he was impressed with his parliamentary abilities; he was impressed with his devotion to the Senate. We are *all* in awe of his love of the institution and his guardianship of it. I love it when the Bush administration people come up and they dis [disrespect] the Senate and he goes ballistic. I think to myself, *Yes! Go get 'em, Bobby Byrd. Go get 'em!*

But Senator Kennedy also saw that Byrd was lonely and kind of a loner, and the Senator, being the gregarious Irishman that he is, has never been a loner, except that he's probably felt it in all of the schools that he was shifted to as a child. He always had to be able to make friends quickly and be a hail-fellow-well-met to overcome those circumstances. He adapted and was able to do it, but it was hard, so he empathized, I think, a great deal with Robert Byrd, as being somebody who was a lot different from many of these multimillionaire colleagues—people who had gone to Ivy League schools, people who had been top businessmen or other things, who come to the Senate—and he reached out to him. I think it started with writing little notes to congratulate him on things that he thought he'd done very well, or just little things here and there, and it built and built. When he had his 50th wedding anniversary, the Senator sent 50 roses to the office. I think Byrd had never had anybody send him flowers, at least not fifty!

In '88, at the Democratic Convention, there was a luncheon in honor of Senator Byrd, and he asked if Edward Kennedy would speak at that luncheon. A few of us went, and the Senator spoke and paid him a lovely tribute, and it was all meant. Senator Byrd got up and said, “I can die happy now, having heard those words about me from Edward Kennedy.” I was sitting with Teddy, Jr., and we both just looked at each other and thought, *Wow!* I've watched the relationship grow, and it's been very touching.

I know that if the time comes and Senator Byrd's still in the Senate, and is well—When John Kerry and Chris Dodd need a little help getting something named for Edward Kennedy—who probably also deserves to have a portrait in the Senate Reception Room, where his brother helped choose the first five as chair of the committee to do so—Senator Byrd would be the first person to help. I think he knows what an extraordinary Senator Edward Kennedy has been, and that he was a compassionate man toward Robert Byrd when he saw the need that this man had for some friendship and some support. Even though he beat him, he extended that gift of friendship.

When Robert Byrd cried, after the announcement of Edward Kennedy's brain cancer, it was the most moving thing I've seen on the Senate floor since I can't remember when. It was so meaningful to all of us, and touched everybody's heart. When the Senator came back last week, he positioned himself right by the door, in his wheelchair, so that he was the first person the Senator greeted when he went onto the Senate floor, before he went to vote on the Medicare bill.

I thought that was very special. We have some tremendous history together, we really do. I'm blithering on here. Do you need to straighten me into a direction you want?

Heininger: No, no. What's been most important is to let you recollect.

Miller: There's a lot more inside. I may not be able to get all of it out today, because there's—[sighing] I haven't done an awful lot yet. One of the key things I'd want to get across is the burden this man carried. He was the youngest of four brothers. Every one of them was to be in charge of the family or to be the leader, and he was the baby. Nothing was expected of him from the father or the mother to the degree that was expected of the older ones. When one sibling dies, it changes the whole dynamic of a family. When two siblings die, then three, and you are the only son left, and have to carry on the expectations of Joe [Joseph Patrick Kennedy, Jr.], John, and Robert, for all the family, and in his case, all the state, all the country, and all the *world*, that is an enormous load. They often say that great expectations are the heaviest burden anybody can manage, or the heaviest burden is great expectations. As I said earlier, he was also the surrogate father to all these children.

On top of these responsibilities, which would be a full-time job for anybody, he was also a target of death threats. I kept a person on the phone—for 45 minutes so the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] could trace it—who was going to kill him, and we caught him. I know of people who were captured on the edges of crowds during 1980, who had weapons on them and the Secret Service got them. I know of an apartment in Philadelphia that they raided and found motorcade routes and everything about getting Edward Kennedy plastered on the walls, and they disrupted that. There were people who came to his house. We had to have the Fairfax plainclothes police keep an eye on his home. We used to have to have the police car sit in the driveway until we caught the guys who were after him, tracked them down. We had vicious mail, vicious phone calls. There's nothing that I have not heard in my left ear, in terms of profanity and hate spewed at him, from jealousy or as a result of Chappaquiddick—and I do want to talk about that.

When you have been with somebody in a car and a backfire happens in a car, either the one you're in or next to it, and you see him dive down and throw his briefcase over his head, you know that he is living with fear. Every time he took a step outside of his house, he never knew whether there was going to be somebody behind a tree trying to knock off the last Kennedy brother. He fully expected it to happen. He told me once, as he told, I think, a number of people, that he didn't want to live his life looking over his shoulder, so he made a decision to simply go forward, not to be surrounded by security, because that just reminded him of this problem. Dave Burke once told me that when he's not running for President, when we get past that, then he's not so much in the bull's-eye. Whenever he was Presidential and that was being talked about—every one of those four years, from '68 on—then he was in the center of the bull's-eye, and our death threats and death mail would pick up.

I have called the Secret Service. I have turned over letters. I have talked to the FBI. I have given them chapter and verse of everything I could get out of somebody on the phone. I've sent them to various homes all over the country, where people have called and made threats against him. I have tackled a woman who went into a rage in our office and blasted through the door, even though I called the police on her and had police there.

I had a sense that she was going to come through the door into his private office from the reception room, and went around to lock it. Just as I was getting ready to lock it, the door blasted open. She broke away from the police and came tearing right through and into the Senator's private office. I caught up with her on the threshold and tackled her; we both landed on the floor, and the Senator was at his desk. The thing he did that was so extraordinary then—The police realized suddenly, *Oh my God, we've lost our defendant here*, and came roaring in, two gold badges. They happened to be out in the hallway.

One of the things that the Capitol Police knew was that I didn't cry wolf. I usually defused most situations, listened to all the mentally ill people, and essentially ran a mental health clinic: talked to them, listened to them, tried to give them an understanding ear and some empathy and maybe a sense of direction. So if I pressed the panic button, the police came running, and they told me this. They said lots of other offices just push it if there's just somebody who's annoying, and we come, always, but when we see Kennedy's button, we know you need us.

Here I was, rolling around, getting myself between this woman and the Senator. Tommy Susman, one of our staffers, was at a chair beside his desk talking to him. She was yelling, and the police were, and the Senator got up and just started talking very softly. He lowered his voice almost to a whisper, so that everybody had to be quiet to hear him. It was very smart, because he immediately defused the loud anger in the room, and quietly, quietly got this woman calmed down, because of his very soft-spoken voice. She was yelling initially that I wouldn't let her see him, that she was going to get me and get him, and that she had this plan that nobody would listen to. This woman had a mental breakdown; she was a graduate from Berkeley.

The Senator set her up with—she was an African-American—Bob Bates of our staff, who talked with her. I later found out that it was just like feathers. She had some welfare program, something to do for the underprivileged in the neighborhoods, but it wouldn't come together. It was all kind of spacey. This same woman, years later, sent death threats to me, and they were taken seriously enough because she'd been to the office a number of times and had gotten more and more volatile every time she came.

That's when I finally had to call the police and they put plainclothes on me for about a week and a half, until they found her and got her into a mental health facility. Every day the police, plainclothes, met me at my car, sat in the reception room, stayed with me all day long, lunch and dinner, so I had a sense of what it's like to be covered by the Secret Service the way the Senator was. I understand that it does give you a sense of vulnerability and it is frightening. That then stays with you and you can't live normally and think normally about life, so I could empathize even more with him.

But coming back to the fact of the burden he has carried, of all of these things, and then to have—He was at a funeral with other Senators—It may have been Everett Dirksen's funeral—and he didn't know that there were military guys behind them that were going to fire a volley of shots. When the shots went off, people said he nearly jumped into the hole of the grave—to protect himself—before he realized what it was. All the Senators who were there commented on it. You have to realize and empathize with what's in the back of his mind at all times, even though he locks it up there as best he can.

Having observed all this firsthand, having seen what he's done for the family, having seen the outreach of compassion to fellow Senators and other citizens of the country who are suffering, having seen a hands-on *personal* outreach, having seen what he did for Jackie and for Ethel and for the family, and having read the letter that Jackie sent him that said, "Dear Teddy, Because of you, we are all going to make it. Because of you, my children are going to be okay and survive. Because of you, all the rest of us are going to make it too."—I hope someday that letter comes to light, because it says so much the truth of what he did for everybody, day in and day out, even with this threat of death hanging over his head.

People say that he doesn't have character. I would like to say to anybody who would like to walk in his moccasins for one week that they would run screaming from them. I don't think I know a man who has more character than Edward Kennedy. It is a character of such strength and such compassion and such passion for the issues he cares about and the people he cares about—which includes the world's population. I don't think I have ever encountered a more remarkable human being. I think he has an extraordinary character, and courage.

He's carried an extraordinary burden, a burden that would have made anyone else crumble; they would have been crushed by it. But he not only carried it and survived, he triumphed, and that inner fortitude is absolutely extraordinary. He's done it, and now he's doing it again, with all flags flying and thumbs up, trying to manage dying in front of everybody, from a brain cancer tumor, and do it with class, like he's always tried to do everything that required courage. He's doing this with courage too. I ache for him. I ache for all of us who love him. I hope that he's going to have a few more years, because we have a lot to do still. We have this oral history to finish; we have his book to finish; and we have his Institute to build, so that we can carry on so much of what he started. If we can get health insurance legislation, if he could tie that up with a ribbon before he leaves the Senate, that would be absolutely wonderful, just wonderful.

If you have some more questions to ask me there, we ought to go to them. I have a few more things I put notes on that I want to tell you about.

Heininger: Well, we've been talking for about three hours. Let's take a break.

[BREAK]

Heininger: This is a resumption of the interview with Melody Miller, on July 15, 2008. We're back. Where do you want to start?

Miller: We left off when I was talking about his extraordinary character and his compassion. I want to get across that he didn't just think in terms of compassion at the highest levels of VIPs, going to *their* bedsides, but he was on the phone to all of the members of his staff when their parents were dying. Cassie [Catherine Patricia] Mackin, the ABC [American Broadcasting Company] correspondent, who was dying of breast cancer, he stayed in touch with her. At the end, he was the only person, outside her family, who she allowed to come to her bedside, because she didn't want to be remembered in the way she felt she looked at that time. He would

go regularly to visit with Cassie, who died of breast cancer and had been on the '80 campaign plane. He's gone to the funerals, at Arlington, of all the Massachusetts soldiers who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan. And wakes in Massachusetts.

He's the kind of person who went to our weddings, who went to our funerals. He delivered the eulogy when Mary Murtaugh, who came up from the mailroom, died of a brain embolism. He did the same at Jerry Tinker's funeral, who was our head of the refugee committee. Anyone who was close to him—Walter Sheridan, who was close to his brothers and worked for us, he spoke at his funeral. There were all these eulogies.

In fact, it was another one of his burdens, because all the JFK people and all of the RFK people depended on him to be there for any major thing that happened in their lives. He was speaking at the funerals of people who had worked for his brothers, and was attending them if he wasn't speaking at them, or he was sending flowers or writing notes or calling them when they got ill. They would call to alert us that a husband or a wife who had been involved had just had a heart attack, or whatever was going on, or had just been diagnosed with cancer, or their children had. They needed his voice in a call or letter. It gave them strength, because they knew he'd had the same level of pain and grief and worse.

We became a clearinghouse for cancer and mental retardation cases. If somebody had a new child or a grandchild who suddenly was born with Down syndrome, we got the call: "What do we do?" Special Olympics, Eunice Shriver, and the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation were resources that we would get involved to help guide them.

With cancer, I took all the calls. People from everywhere in the world would call up: "My son has just been diagnosed with bone cancer like Teddy had. What do we do? Where do we go? What do we have?" I would tell them exactly what Teddy had, exactly what medications were used, who the doctors were, how they could get in touch with them. We would always take the name and the address, and would put out what we called the "courage letters." They were letters from the Senator, on behalf of himself and Teddy, talking about how you can get through this, you can make it, and to focus on what you *have* and not what you've lost. We must have sent out thousands upon thousands of those letters over the years. I had a guy from Australia call me once. He said, "I figured if that young boy can do it, I can do it. I want you to send me an American flag, because I want to remember that Ted Kennedy and Teddy Jr. got through this cancer that I now have. That's going to give me courage."

There was something about Edward Kennedy's suffering. Everybody knew how much he'd suffered and how much he'd lost; that made him someone from whom people drew strength. He was like a national Rock of Gibraltar, to the world and to his friends, so that when people had troubles, they would often come to me, because I ended up being sort of the alumni secretary for all the JFK, RFK, and former EMK people. I was the continuity factor. I was the one who knew everybody. I was the one who had worked for the others, so I was the touchstone for an awful lot of grief and problems, to be the liaison, to let him know things. It's a miracle he wasn't drained dry, and I always marveled at his reserves of compassion.

We had our 25th reunion party up at the Cape, which was fabulous. All the chiefs of staff came, and each one talked about what had happened in their decade, and then we had a skit that we

didn't tell him about, which Barb Souliotis and Dickie Gallagher did—who does an extraordinary impression of Edward Kennedy. It brought down the house. They had chairs set up like a car. There was the driver and Dickie playing the Senator and Barb sitting in the backseat. They were picking him up and getting him ready to do the rounds of his schedule in Boston. “Did you get the coffee from Dunkin Donuts?” says Barbs. “No, I didn’t have time to get the coffee from Dunkin Donuts, but I got a cup from Dunkin Donuts and I put coffee in it. I hope he won’t know the difference.” He loved the coffee from Dunkin Donuts. Dickie Gallagher, playing Edward Kennedy, got into the “car,” took the coffee cup, “Oh, this is the *best* coffee. Dunkin Donuts is the *only* coffee.” Of course everybody was howling and the Senator was howling that they were making fun of him like that. They did all of his idiosyncrasies and everybody just howled with laughter.

Later on, though, after we left the compound, we went back to the motel where we were all staying. Everybody was having this big reunion and quiet discussions all over the lounge. One of the former staff members who had been very close to him in the early days and I were talking. The next thing I knew, he had his head on my shoulder and was just crying. His wife had become an alcoholic, and he was scared to death because she was driving their eight-year-old son. He was so frightened that there was going to be an accident and he was going to lose his child in a wreck. He’d done everything he could and didn’t know what else to do or how he was going to function. He asked me, “Do you think the Senator would be willing to talk to me?” And I said, “Absolutely.”

I went to the Senator when we got back to Washington and told him that this former staff member really needed to talk to him about what was happening with his wife. The Senator had me set up a private meeting with him to come to the house early in the morning, before work, and they had breakfast together at the house. The Senator bucked him up and told him what to expect and what to do, and how he ought to go about doing it. They talked out the whole thing. Afterward, this man was uplifted, because he finally had a sounding board who had been there and knew what to expect and how he had to function and how he had to save his son. It gave him the hope, courage, and fortitude to forge ahead and do what he needed to do. Eventually, they got divorced, and his son went on to be my intern, and then went on to law school, after [The College of] William and Mary, and is doing wonderfully well. To this day, he is grateful for the Senator taking his time in the morning to have that private discussion.

Things like that I would set up throughout the years, and people would draw strength from the Senator. It’s a miracle he had any strength left, because so many people were drawing on him as this Rock of Gibraltar. Somehow families, when he would write or he’d call when they were going through some horror, drew strength from him, because they knew that he had felt as terrible about something in *his* life as they were feeling now, and had suffered as much. They immediately knew that he really *did* empathize, and when he would tell them, “You will get through this,” that made them believe that they could. It gave them courage.

When Eric Clapton lost his baby boy—he fell out of the apartment—I went to the Senator and said, “You don’t know Eric Clapton, but I think a letter from you would really make a difference.” He said, “Okay, draft it,” so I did, as I knew what he’d want to say. I said to him—and it was one of letters I was most proud of writing—that the pain is so searing that you can’t even catch your breath when you lose a child, and that the Senator knew from personal

experience that, with time, he'd be able to remember the happy times that he'd spent with that child, and maybe even use his creativity to write a song in his honor. I took it in and the Senator liked it and wrote some personal additions on the bottom, that he was keeping him and his family in his prayers, and signed it, and we sent it off. A year or so later, there was an article in *Rolling Stone*, and Eric Clapton mentioned the letter he'd gotten from Ted Kennedy and how much it had meant to him and helped him get through that very difficult time of the loss of his son. I felt very good about that. It was one of the times *I* initiated something, but Edward Kennedy immediately said yes.

Most of the times, *he* initiated the action and we followed through, but he set such an example that we started initiating stuff ourselves and responding to those kinds of things. You would think, *What would Robert Kennedy do?* or *What would Edward Kennedy do?* in these kinds of cases, and then you'd try to do the best you could as well. There was that amazing outreach, and impact in our personal lives that happened from his example.

When my father died, it was Presidents' Day weekend. My father died on a Friday, which was February 14, 1992. The office knew that I was at his bedside, and I called in and said that he had passed away. Twenty minutes later, the Senator called. He was up in Hyannis Port for the long weekend. It was just so sweet of him to interrupt everything he was doing up there and call me.

On Sunday we had the wake. I call it a wake because I have been surrounded by this Catholic family and adopted their terminology. [*laughing*] I've probably gone to more Masses—I'm a Protestant myself. In Robert Kennedy's office, there was a time I was the token Protestant; everybody else was Catholic or Jewish. But I became very familiar with the Catholic Church and learned how to spell "monsignor," all those important things. Anyway, I guess Protestants call it a viewing, but I don't like open caskets, so a closed casket, but it was our wake. A huge bouquet of flowers came from the Senator, for my father, and I was so touched.

On Monday, which was a holiday, out in Virginia, an hour from town, we had a small service before my brother and I took him out to the state of Washington, where he was from and where he would be buried next to my stepmother, who predeceased him, and where he had lived before we had to bring him here to take care of him. I got up to give my eulogy, and looked out and there was Edward Kennedy. He had flown back, with a bad back aching, and had had someone drive him out to Dad's funeral. Ranny Cooper came, and Dave Smith, her significant other, and maybe one other person, I can't remember, but there was Edward Kennedy. You don't forget something like that, that kind of effort. I was overwhelmed.

He went to Pittsburgh for Jeff Blattner's father's funeral, and he went to wherever in Massachusetts for Barbara Souliotis's father's funeral. For those of us who had been with him a long time and were like extended staff family, he showed up. I've never, ever, forgotten that. When my stepmother died, he sent flowers and called. It was really just extraordinary, and he has done that for everybody. I often think that it's quite remarkable that he has anything left to give, because so many people have drawn down his reserves, and he has given so much strength to so many. That's why I say he has the most extraordinary character and strength of character, which most people cannot even begin to fathom.

Part of the burden on him makes him very conscious of time. If there's one thing he gets upset about, it is a waste of time, a misuse of time, or being kept waiting. If he's going to get huffy and puffy and grumpy, it's going to be because somebody didn't show up for an appointment, for whatever reason; somebody on the staff didn't get something to him when he needed it; the airplane didn't take off and he was stuck in it, on the tarmac.

Heininger: A common occurrence these days.

Miller: You don't want to be with him when those things happen. He has a temper, but it's one of those tempers that erupts and then is gone. He doesn't hold grudges. I once went in to him and said, "I know you don't hold grudges, but would you mind if I held one for you?" [*laughing*] I was really mad at Roosevelt Grier, who had been with Robert Kennedy and had been in the kitchen, and had then endorsed Carter in 1980. I remember going in there and saying, "Do you mind if I hold a grudge against Roosevelt Grier? Rosie Grier should be on our team and I'm mad at him." He laughed and said, "No, you can hold that grudge."

If he got mad at anybody on the staff, it was at somebody who was at a high level, maybe Nick Littlefield, the staff director who was running the subcommittee and who is a close friend of his now. He would only get loud and angry with somebody who could take it, and who understood that it was not at them *personally*, but was at the circumstances. I've been with him in the Capitol, where he didn't get mad at *me*, but would raise his voice about the fact that so and so wasn't showing up: "Here I am and what's going to happen? I have things to do and there are all these other meetings. I have to wait, and people are waiting for *me*. Now when is this guy going to show up? Where is he? Why don't you know where he is? Why can't you find him?" It was those kinds of minor explosions.

He never, ever yelled at me in particular. He probably knew that if he did, I'd be like a little puppy dog and go under the table; I would be so wounded. I tried to never give him cause, either. But to the people he would yell at, he would then, the next day or later, say, "You know, I didn't mean to get on your back." He'd always apologize. There would always be some sort of a way. He just would say he was sorry. He's not anybody who's a nasty guy.

There's a famous story about when he went down to the White House and was in the Cabinet Room, sitting with a number of Senators and [John] Sununu, who was then Chief of Staff for the President. They were going over, I think, the Americans with Disabilities Act legislation, because the Senator had gone down and had gone toe-to-toe with Sununu over and over again on behalf of that legislation. Sununu started yelling, in the Cabinet Room, at one of the staffers who had accompanied another Senator. He was taking this person's head off, and that Senator was not defending his staffer. Edward Kennedy had finally had enough. He *slammed* his hand down on the table, which startled everybody and stopped Sununu, and said to Sununu, "Don't you ever yell at a member of our Senate staffs in that fashion. If you want to yell at somebody, you yell at me or you yell at another Senator, but don't you *ever* abuse a member of our staff." Well, if you think that didn't resonate. [*laughing*] All those staffers came back and it went all over the Hill that it was Kennedy who had defended them, and not the Senator whose staff member was being yelled at.

After that, I found it fascinating when, after [George H. W.] Bush 41 was out of the White House, they asked him what legislation he was most proud of in his time in the White House, and he said the Americans with Disabilities Act was one of the great things he was proud to have signed into law and had worked to make happen. I thought Edward Kennedy had really rammed it down their throats, but he was now taking credit for it. [*laughing*] Then Sununu went on with Larry King, after he'd been out a number of years. He asked Sununu, "Who did you think were impressive people that you worked with during your time in that administration?" The first name out of Sununu's mouth was "Edward Kennedy."

[William] Frist. I heard this story just recently. Frist, when he was majority leader, was trying to recruit a number of people to run against Democrats in the upcoming election. One of them was a very smart businessman, and he was really trying to talk him into the fact that he was going to have a wonderful opportunity to really set his mind on great issues, to work on them, and interact with all of these interesting Senators. The businessman, trying to make up his mind whether he was going to run or not, said, "Well, who am I going to really enjoy working with in the Senate? Who is going to be the most interesting person, the person that I will enjoy helping to work on policy with?" And Frist said, "Edward Kennedy." He didn't have a Republican he could name; it was Edward Kennedy.

Frist came up and talked to me when we were at some social thing—he was speaking, and I happened to be there—something at the Smithsonian, I think. He was talking about how much he enjoyed working with the Senator on medical matters and biodiversity issues, and in his speech he bragged about what he and Senator Kennedy had done together. I thought that was fascinating.

And then Orrin Hatch, who came to Washington a right-wing Republican, got here and was planning to really fight against Edward Kennedy. They were both on the Labor and Human Resources, the HELP Committee now. Orrin discovered that Edward Kennedy was the *work* horse and not the *show* horse he'd been led to believe, that this was a man who knew how to get things done, not this ogre that he thought he was, and how he reached out to him and said, "Let's work together, we can get a lot more done."

When Orrin was the chairman and Edward Kennedy was ranking, or vice versa, they worked on a lot of legislation, and got it passed. As a result, Orrin Hatch has, now, quite a good legislative legacy, not that he wouldn't have gotten a few things through himself. The stuff he did with Edward Kennedy, where they could find common ground—A lot of people have never understood that Edward Kennedy was very much in support of the idea that you can compromise position without compromising principle. He was able to do that and was able to bring Orrin closer to him. He was able to make deals.

I was at the White House Correspondents dinner once, when we were up in the CBS suite—We went to a lot of those dinners. Orrin was at one end, and Kennedy came in. I walked with him down to see Orrin. He threw his arm around Orrin Hatch's shoulders and they start taking pictures. The Senator was teasing Orrin and saying, "You're not going to let this one be on the front page of the newspapers out in Salt Lake City, are you, Orrin? Don't you want this to be on the front page out in Salt Lake City?" Orrin was laughing and saying, "No, he's just my friend in Washington. I don't want the people in Utah to know that we're pals." The Senator, after a whole

bunch of this hoo-hawing, was going out and I was following along. Orrin Hatch came up beside me, threw his arm around me, and said, “You take good care of him, because he is *very* special.” I said, “I know, and we will. I’m so glad that the two of you are able to work so well together.”

I’d see him around the Hill and we’d always say hi. There were a number of times when he talked about how much he valued Ted Kennedy as his friend. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I’m trying to think of a couple of other Senators who fit those descriptions. He used his friendships with those who had known him for a long time, like John Tunney and John Culver, as resources for institutional memory about himself. He was asked to write an essay about his life at Harvard, for the issue of the *Crimson* that they put out at the end of the year, so he called me and said, “I’d like you to do the first draft.” I said “Okay. Do you want to sit down and tell me about your life at Harvard? Because I know that there is all of three pages in Burton Hersh’s book about your life at Harvard. That’s it, nothing, and there’s very little about what you did on a day-to-day basis or what you thought or who you hung out with.” He said, “Well, why don’t you call John Culver? He’ll tell you what I did at Harvard.” [*laughing*] He really didn’t have the time and I think he also enjoys challenging us to see what we’d come up with. He got a kick out of that.

I called John Culver and we went over stuff he remembered, and then I figured out what I wanted to say, or what I thought the Senator would want to say, and what I would put in his voice, but I needed to know if it was accurate. I’d say to John, “Tell me about Widener Library, what the stacks were like. Did you guys go into it? What kind of trees grew in Harvard Yard? If he’s walking through the leaves, what kind of leaves are his feet crunching?” I needed to get all of the atmospherics and color commentary, because I had only been walking that yard a couple of times and I needed to know a lot more to write this. John would give me that, then I’d call John Tunney and would find out a little bit more from him. So then I wrote the essay draft, and then took it in to him and said, “Okay, here you are. This is from me, who didn’t go to Harvard, pretending I’m you.” He laughed and read the whole thing and liked it very much. There was only one thing he wanted me to add, where I had talked about the friendships that he had made that had been kept throughout his life. He wanted me to add the name of the guy who took the Spanish test in his place.

Heininger: Oh, my.

Miller: I thought, *Wow, that is really extraordinary, that he wants him mentioned.* Really classy. His name was William Frate. Senator Kennedy told me a lot of things because I did so much

family stuff and wrote so much about his life. He said, “You know, we were just sitting around the dorm room, and I had a C in Spanish, but I was really worried about the test. I was worried I was going to get kicked off the football team. We were all just laughing and goofing around, and one of the guys said, ‘Why don’t I take the test for you?’ or ‘Why don’t you have so and so take the test for you?’ And I said no. Then one of the other guys piped up, ‘Well, that might work. Who’s going to know? That way you can keep on the football team.’ And,” he said, “to my everlasting regret, it just caught—It escalated to the guys all saying, ‘Hey, why not? Let’s do it.’ It was almost like a prank.” Then he did it and got caught, and he said, “We got tossed out for a sabbatical time, and I went into the Army for two years;” and that’s a whole other story. I think his father helped the boy with his expenses as a result of taking the test for his son.

I know that his father certainly helped to pay for the needs of *PT-109* shipmates and the sons to go to college, of the two sailors who died after *PT-109* went down. But I thought to myself, *How extraordinary, that he wants to be sure that this man is included as one of his friends, and that he doesn’t hide from this Spanish test, and how it was not one of those venal kinds of cheating things.* It was being caught up in the moment and making a mistake of judgment when you’re 18 or 19. He fully admits to it and doesn’t hide from it. How many of the rest of the population may have done something like that in their youth? They don’t have it follow them until they’re 76 years old. It’s mind boggling that there’s no statute of limitations on something that was a youthful indiscretion, and for which he paid mightily and continues to pay. You would think it would have, at some point, finally, been compassionately put to rest.

He would have me call various people. He was asked to write a piece for the Boston Celtics’ magazine, and asked me to do the draft on that, and I did. It was all about how the Celtics had taken care of Teddy when Teddy had had his leg amputated. When he went up to Boston Children’s for the chemo, he would also, at some times, take him to a Celtics game, and Red [Arnold Jacob] Auerbach had made it possible for them to sit behind the bench, close up, and they were able to watch, which was such a treat for Teddy when he was so sick.

He remembered when they were playing California and Kareem [Abdul-Jabbar]. The Celtics were just getting clobbered in the first half of the game. Red, he said, wasn’t worried at all, just was not worried at all, so Teddy said, “Why aren’t you worried?” And Red said, “Well, next half, the air conditioning is not real good in here and these guys are going to get really hot and bothered. They don’t have the stamina the Celtics do, and by the fourth quarter, you’re going to see them just run out of juice.” And that’s exactly what happened; the Celtics came along and won. They took Teddy into the locker room, and the Senator was so touched that Red and the Celtics had done all of these wonderful things for him. And they helped with civil rights issues and different things, when he needed athletes to have some sparkly moments at events on issues they cared about.

John Havlicek and Bill Russell came into the office, and Bill Russell’s daughter worked for the Robert Kennedy Memorial. Red Auerbach told me Bill Russell was the best of all his players. Red gave me a lift back to my apartment on a day when we were both at the same garage, and he was picking up his car and I was dropping mine off. I remember how special Russell was. I remember he came up beside my chair, and I looked over to the right, and his belt buckle was above my head, he’s so tall. He bent over, in an “L” over my head, to look at something on the wall, to read my bulletin board, and then he turned his head, looked down, winked at me, and

said, “Let me take you away from all this.” [*laughing*] I got a great charge out of being flirted with by Bill Russell, the greatest Celtic of all time.

I was a jock before I got into public service, and basketball was my sport, so when we had the Title IX civil rights press conference, Cheryl Miller came, who was UCLA’s [University of California at Los Angeles] great woman basketball player and an Olympian, and was the number one female basketball player in the nation. I had the opportunity to talk to her and tell her that I’d played basketball at Penn State before there was Title IX, Olympics, or universal rules, so I loved living vicariously through her, and that if it couldn’t be me, I was thrilled that the top basketball player in the nation was also named Miller. We had a good laugh about it. These memories have special meaning for me.

I guess other Senators come next. He did immigration with Simpson and got the biggest kick out of him, with his wonderful wit. He really liked Simpson, and Simpson’s wife, Ann, was a marvelous person. There was a real closeness there. Others—You know, there have been so many, I’d almost have to have a list in front of me to look at the names.

Heininger: Was he close to Don Riegle?

Miller: Yes, he was close to Riegle. He was close to many of the progressive Democrats. If you have any other names that you want to throw out. . . .

I know Riegle. I’d see him down in the Senate buffet a lot, and we’d talk over the salad bar as we were getting our food, and josh back and forth about what the latest news and gossip was and things the Senator was doing. But I didn’t really know as much about Riegle as I do about some of the others.

We always played softball with John Kerry’s team. There was lots of rivalry there, with Kerry, and a lot of fun back and forth. I have to say, there were some things that our staff did not understand about Kerry. I kind of did, only because I’d helped John when he came in, in his fatigues, as head of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War. He bivouacked in our reception room and I got to know him a little bit. He was back and forth and using our extra phone when all of the Vietnam veterans were here. I helped him Xerox the speech that he gave before the Foreign Relations Committee, so we developed a little bit of a friendship early on, and then we stayed friends all these years.

When you are the junior Senator to Edward Kennedy, you are in a *gigantic* shadow. And when that Senator has three A committees, then he is the lead man on the issues before those committees. That leaves, in the case of Edward Kennedy’s committees—Labor and Human Resources, Armed Services, Judiciary, Joint Economic—not a hell of a lot for the junior Senator from Massachusetts to claim as his own, where he can not get slammed for stepping on Edward Kennedy’s turf. I always felt for John, because it was tough to carve out something that was his own, and to find something that was of universal interest that Edward Kennedy hadn’t already appropriated.

To a degree, John gets a bum rap for not being able to do as much as Edward Kennedy did. I don’t think *anybody* could do as much as Edward Kennedy did, because he is a unique individual from a unique family and unique historical background. It would have been tough for anybody to

be the junior Senator. You look back at those who were, and you can't come up with a ton of stuff that [Paul] Tsongas did, a ton of stuff that [Edward] Brooke did, a ton of stuff that anybody did, with a few exceptions here and there.

There was always tension between the staffs. I sometimes had to defuse and be a diplomatic emissary and calm things down now and then, or remind our staff that this is the situation, so you have to be a little bit more empathetic. We have to work with them and make sure we inform them when we're doing something for the state that will affect John and his staff. Every now and then, some people on their staff wouldn't do it and sometimes people on our staff wouldn't do it for them, and we went through a little pulling and hauling here and there, but it all got straightened out.

I remember John coming to me once. He said, "When I first got here, I didn't know quite what to expect of the Senate and all the other Senators, but I just kind of watched. I went to the execs [executive session], and I soon discovered we'd be in exec, and would be discussing things for two hours and not making a lot of headway. Then Ted would come in. He had already been to two other execs in the morning, before he got to ours. He would sit down, listen for a few minutes as to what had happened, and then he would say, 'Okay, I'll tell you what I'll do. I will do such and such if you'll do thus and so. I will have my staff have a memo on your desks tomorrow to do this. If we can agree here, I can bring so and so on, and I think we can make it happen this way.'" He said, "He would do, in ten minutes, what the rest of us couldn't pull together in an hour and a half of bickering. Then he'd get up and leave, and would go to the next one and do the same thing, and those memos would be on our desks the next day, as he said they would be.

"And if he shook hands on something or promised something, it was done. He knew how to make a deal and how to negotiate, and he could do it like I've never seen anybody else be able to do." He said, "It just makes your jaw drop, puts the rest of us to shame that we couldn't pull it all together, but he's the one who is this natural leader, and he's so respected that he makes it happen. So much has happened because he has made it happen." I've never forgotten John telling me that story of his awareness in the Senate, as he looked around and watched. That's pretty much been EMK's modus operandi.

One of the times where Edward Kennedy was really shocked was when he went down and negotiated with George W. Bush, 43, on No Child Left Behind. He brought along the Democrats, because he always gives a President a honeymoon, even a Republican, to help work together. He's one of these people who really does believe in working together and finding common ground, because he knows that then you make progress for the country. He really made a lot of agreements on No Child Left Behind, and got a handshake and a promise on the funding that was supposed to come with it, on the things that mattered to him. Then he went with Bush, after it was signed into law, and did that tour and press conferences with him and everything that anybody could ever wish for, and Bush still brags about it. But then the White House reneged on the funding, and there was a piece on the front page of the *Washington Post* about how they gloated about it and how they say, "Well, Ted Kennedy's been around a long time; you figure he would have known better."

That said so much about *them* rather than *him*, because if you are not negotiating in good faith from the beginning, we can't legislate. You cannot function as a legislative body if the Executive Branch you're negotiating with is going to lie to you and not agree with what you've compromised on and follow through. It stops government in its tracks, and that's essentially what happened afterward. I remember the Senator saying that this had never happened in his *entire* career, that he had been lied to, and that they'd gone back on a handshake. How was he ever supposed to work with them again?

It's what cautioned him on Medicare and prescription drugs. He got just so far with them, and then he saw that they were going off on another tangent, and he then fought against it, to eventually change it down the road a piece, maybe, if we get a Democratic President. I remember thinking what idiots the White House had to be to cross Ted Kennedy, who could have been their friend on so much legislation that they might have worked together on, just as he did with Hatch. I was told, when the Republicans were still in power and Bush was President, that the Republican Caucus told Hatch that they no longer wanted him to cosponsor legislation with Ted Kennedy, and that they felt that that was consorting with the enemy.

As you know, the Senate tenor changed when Gingrich became the Speaker of the House, and all those people came in with him on that "Contract with America" takeover of the House. Many people don't know that the new freshmen Republicans were not allowed to speak to the Democrats for 60 to 90 days, or they were considered to be traitors, consorting with the enemy. They considered their fellow Americans and Democrats the enemy, not just political adversaries. That was unheard of. Many of those guys who came in with the Gingrich freshman class then were elected to the Senate. They brought that same attitude to the Senate, and it resulted in a level of animosity in the Senate that we'd never seen the likes of before. If you scratch the surface a little bit, tempers got really heated on the floor, as they rarely did in the past. From time to time, people would raise their voices and get upset at something, but it wasn't a spark that could happen every day of the week, the way it started to happen. I know that the Senator was very upset with the way the tenor of the Senate changed.

I remember Sam Nunn telling me, when he retired, that he was glad to get out of it, because he just couldn't stand it anymore. It's been sad, because not only has there been that, but the Senator has been very upset about the way money played a part in politics. He would love to have public financing of Senatorial and all elections, so that you level the playing field and everybody makes a decision on policy and merit, and you don't have people buying elections. It's true that some people with great fortunes have tried to buy elections and have not succeeded, but for the most part the people who have had the money to put the television ads on have often carried the day. He's always been very upset about the way the Senate has changed in that regard. I hope someday we'll get it back.

There's one more thing, as I was talking about his character and empathy and compassion for people. I was at the front desk and an old fellow who was probably in his sixties came in and was very upset that Carter was giving amnesty to the people who had gone to Canada to avoid the Vietnam War. I calmed him down and tried to talk to him and explain to him. We went through the whole thing, all the issues, and had a good discussion, in between a number of phone calls. He got up and said, "You're good. You're really good, but you're not as good as you think you are, and I'm going to show you." And he slugged me across the face with the back of his hand. It

knocked me off my chair and into the wall—and you really do see stars. I almost blacked out, but not quite. He had a ring on, which fortunately did not cut my face. Then he turned and walked out. The person who was over to the side, sitting there, my colleague, was *stunned* and immediately picked up the phone and called the Capitol Police.

He didn't take the elevator; he took the stairs, so they caught him before he got out of the building. In the meantime, the chief of staff, Eddie Martin at the time, came running, and other staff came running with a compress. They called up and said they caught him, so Eddie and I went downstairs. Eddie said, "I don't want you to see this guy again. I don't want him anywhere near you." I said, "I want to know why he hit me." My whole cheek, the whole side of my face, was red and I had a cold compress on it. Eddie had been a drill sergeant in the Marine Corps, and Eddie went in to read this guy the riot act. I sat outside to wait for Eddie to come out and tell me what was going on, so I was sitting there in the reception area of the police office.

All of a sudden, the Senator came roaring into the police office headquarters. He had just come back from lunch with Furio Colombo, his good friend in from Italy. I was sitting there and he was saying, "What happened? What happened?" He'd heard and had come roaring down. He said, "Well, I don't want you seeing this guy. We will take care of this." The fellow, because he was an old soldier and had obviously had some difficulties, lived at the Old Soldiers' Home. They told him that if he ever came back to the Senate he'd be arrested, that he had to go home, that this must never happen again, and that it was only through the grace of God that we weren't pressing charges. They scared the living daylights out of him. I said, "Okay, I guess I can go back to my desk," and the Senator said, "Absolutely not. You've just been through a real trauma, come with me."

He escorted me out the door, down the steps, and out of the office building. He walked me across to the Monocle and we went upstairs and sat at a table. It was just after the lunch hour, so very few people were there. He ordered up a bottle of Pouilly-Fuissé and two glasses, and he had me tell him everything that had happened. We had a glass of wine and he calmed me down, and we just talked about family and other kinds of stuff and bantered back and forth. It was one of the most thoughtful, considerate things to do, because I had never had anybody attack me violently before. Then he walked me back—I guess he must have spent 45 minutes, a half hour—and I went back to my desk, but that considerate thoughtfulness I've never forgotten.

He also was there for Sarah Milam. Sarah Milam went out to her car and was kidnapped at her car and taken and raped, and then brought back to the Senate parking lot. He immediately had Sarah's parking spot moved inside the garage.

My parking spot was moved to inside of the garage after I'd gained enough seniority to have it and somebody else had left, because I worked late a lot. After I'd had people burn out my motor and my electrical wiring from leaving the key on in the wrong position in my car; had my car totaled outside on the street, where a car ran into it; and been jumped by somebody else who had gotten a spot before me, I went to Ken Feinberg and said, "I'm at the end of my tether." He said, "Well, we can't have Melody at the end of her tether," and I finally got my inside spot, which probably added about ten years to my life and my stay at the Senate.

He immediately moved Sarah inside, so that helped when Sarah was able to come back to the staff—She was a very strong woman, but she was pregnant at the time and it was very scary for her on that score as well as a traumatic violence.

Heininger: Oh, my God, that's awful.

Miller: She knew that when she went to her car from that point on, she was in the security of the garage and the police were always right there. There was no question; he immediately acted.

In the old days, we received Christmas gifts. Robert Kennedy gave us a little pill, because there was a blurb in *Parade Magazine* about Kennedy's staff women being so loyal that they never go to lunch, they just munch loyalty pills. He gave us all little gold pills that said, "RFK" and "one a day" on them, for a charm bracelet. The Senator gave us the Senate seal bracelet once, back in the '70s. We were all standing around and thanking him, and Sarah said, "Oh, what a surprise! I've never had a surprise like this before," and the Senator looked at her and said, "Oh, yes you have, Sarah," and then smiled slightly. He diffused and healed with the jest.

We all laughed and Sarah laughed, and it was at that point where he could be light, just a touch. He just looked at us, meaning, *You've been surprised*. It was just enough of a light way that Sarah could laugh and we could all see how he handled that, because he knew Sarah from her first husband. They had gone to college together, so she had socialized with him because her husband was his classmate. I've always remembered that moment, because Sarah blushed a little bit, then laughed and acknowledged that there had been some stuff that had happened to her.

Heininger: We have been going for more than four hours. What do you want to do at this point?

Miller: Let's call it a day, because there's quite a lot of other stuff that I probably do need to get down for posterity. There's stuff about his bad back, his health, and how he's functioned. There's stuff about interaction with the press, the natives who saved President Kennedy in the Solomon Islands, his Profile in Courage Award stuff with his colleagues, things with Vicki, Dallas. Yes, there's quite a bit left.

Heininger: Okay. That's fine. We'll do it next time.