

RFK vs LBJ
(Muckster)
LIFE 11/18/66

The great thing
about the Hoover
Portable vacuum cleaner
is that everything
fits inside the case.





LIFE

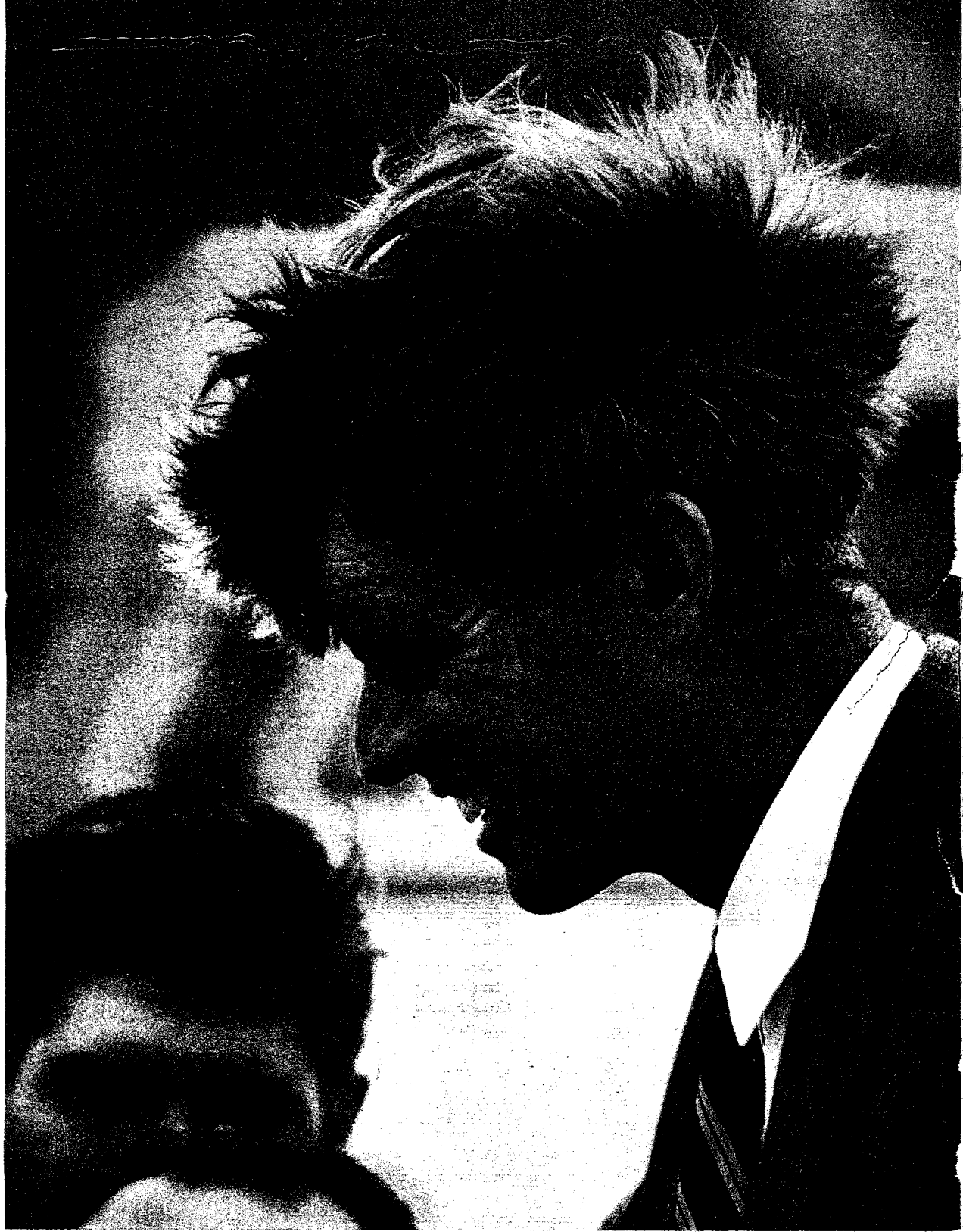
Vol. 61, No. 21 Nov. 18, 1966

In California, Berkeley students fill the stadium to overflowing to hear Robert Kennedy talk on dissent, extremism and Vietnam.

WHAT IS



ROBERT KENNEDY UP TO?



The election last week was a surprising and stirring victory for Republicans, bringing the party a roster of new winners (pp. 44-44B) that clearly promises a real presidential horse race in 1968 (see Editorial). Even more clearly, the victory showed up the disarray in the Democratic party. Democrats were diminished by the election, but one man—in the process of the campaign—rallied to himself new sources of power within the party. He is, of course, the man opposite whose hair is in equal disarray. On these pages LIFE examines Robert Kennedy—his political position, his tactics and his complex personality.

Amid Disorder in the Democratic Party

He Drives To Bring About 'The Restoration'

In the councils of the Kennedy family they speak with easy good humor of "the Restoration." What they mean is the return of the Kennedy banner to the White House. The President-designate, of course, is the eldest surviving son, Robert Francis. Millions of Americans have the same idea in mind.

The off-year returns left a few wounds on Robert Kennedy. Men he supported were licked by Republicans. But Kennedy had campaigned tirelessly from one end of the country to the other, drawing record crowds and acquiring political IOUs. The gratitude of state and national Democratic organizations was the more profound for their bitterness toward President Johnson. Party professionals feel the President confused issues, made generally limp endorsements (or none), failed to show up where and when he was needed most and widened the credibility gap within his own party.

In the face of such a default by the President, 1968 looks to many like more than a wild wish for Bob Kennedy. Kennedy has three options for that year: he can try for the Presidency, he can try for the Vice Presidency or he can sit secure in his Senate seat awaiting a better opportunity.

The glum outcome of the '66 elections, coupled with party workers' L.B.J. gripes, has revived talk of Kennedy going all the way in '68. But the hard calculus of politics says otherwise—and Bob Kennedy is far too shrewd a political mathematician not to take note. Assuming Lyndon Johnson's continued good health, the senator

from New York will *not* be nominated at the 1968 convention, whatever the personal sentiments of the delegates. Any surreptitious effort by Kennedy to line up advance commitments would be out of the question. The bosses and kingmakers who once were capable of swinging such maneuvers are long gone. And anyway, as one Kennedy aide said, "Bobby has become too big for secrets."

Openly running, on the other hand, in any of the 15 state preferential primaries, Kennedy might well beat L.B.J.—but only at great risk. "What would it look like?" asks a leading Democratic strategist. "People would say, 'Why can't he wait?' It would revive all that old talk about being ruthless."

Beyond this, an open fight would shatter the party. Only a struggle of epic proportions could persuade a convention to abandon an incumbent President. Deeply felt pro-Kennedy and anti-Johnson sympathies will be inevitable. Yet the delegates, whatever their personal feelings, will hardly be prepared to smash tradition, let alone the party itself, in Kennedy's behalf.

There remains the more plausible target of the Vice Presidency in 1968. Two years ago, in the spring of 1964, Johnson told one of his political advisers "I hate that kid. But if I thought for one minute that I needed him, I'd take him." He also said: "If I don't need him, he'll never get the job." In 1964, Johnson did not need Kennedy; in 1968, he might. John-

son's stock could continue to slide, especially if Vietnam drags on and the economy wobbles.

"Lyndon and Bobby could live together," says a Kennedy man. "The government is full of guys who despise each other."

Johnson has been comfortable with Hubert Humphrey. But he has both the nerve and means to trip the chute on Hubert if he's convinced Kennedy is the man he needs. Humphrey could do little more than swallow his tears, as Henry Wallace had to when F.D.R. stepped back from him in 1944.

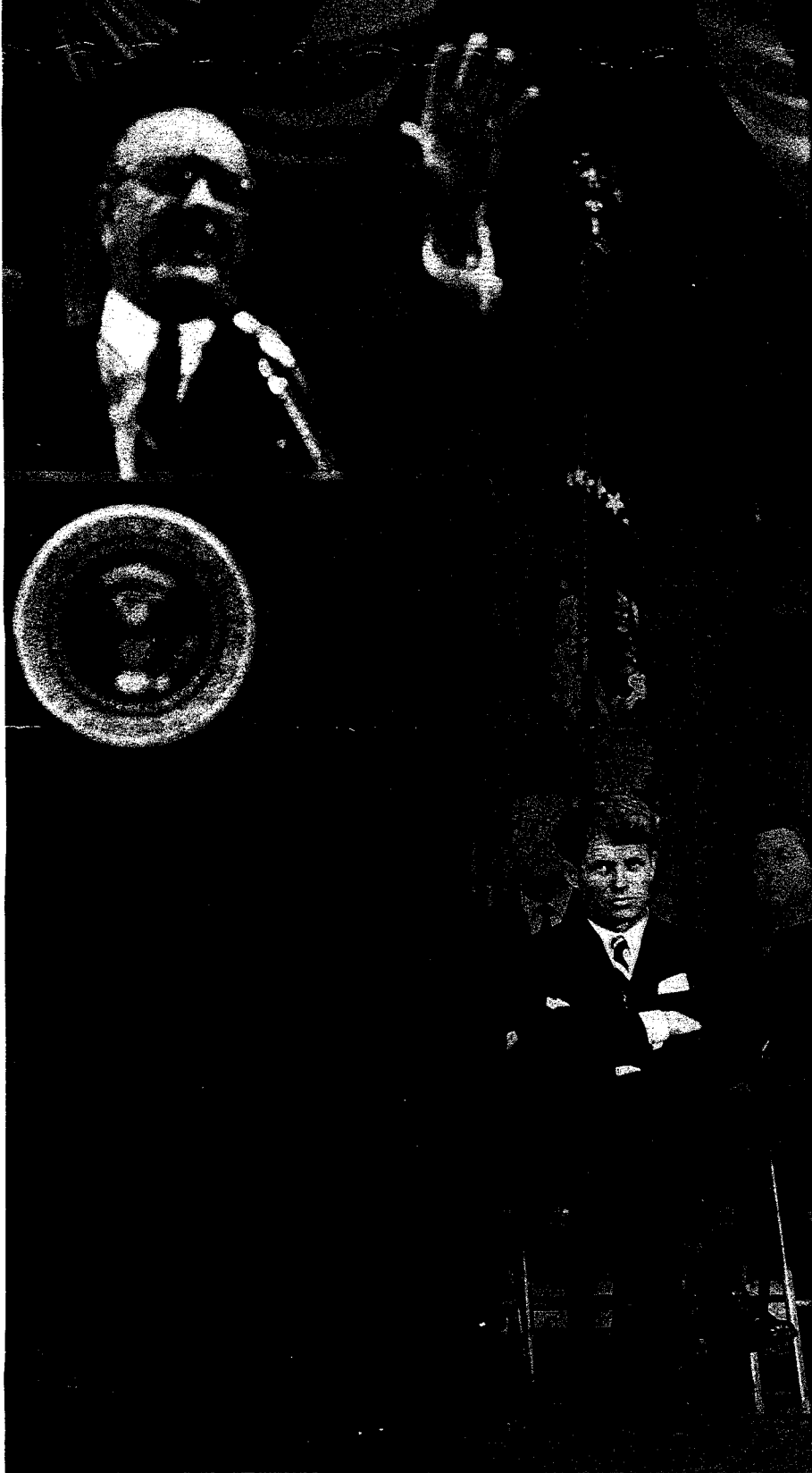
Kennedy has stated repeatedly that he does not want what L.B.J. himself once called "that lousy job." He is well off right now; his Senate seat gives him prominence without restricting him. Yet he would find it hard to turn down the vice presidential spot in the event that Lyndon Johnson were driven to offer it to him. He wanted it in 1964; the reasons seem more compelling in 1968.

As Vice President, Kennedy might still be reasonably independent. He is tougher and more resourceful than Hubert Humphrey. And Johnson as a lame duck would have far less purchase on him. Moreover, Kennedy would be assuring himself a straight run into the White House in 1972.

Beyond this there is always the dark chance that Johnson might die in office. The elevation of Humphrey or any other Vice President would mean a new incumbent with a prior claim to the nomination in 1972—and still more years of waiting for Kennedy. ◀

Wind-ravaged mane flutter, Kennedy campaigns in Iowa.

CONTINUED 37



He makes

Instead of his usual column, The Presidency, Hugh Sidey writes on the Kennedy-Johnson relationship.

by HUGH SIDEY

Robert Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson stare at each other uncomprehendingly across a generational and cultural chasm that gets wider each month. Yet the volcanic personal bitterness which characterized their relationship—or perhaps their nonrelationship—from 1959 until after John F. Kennedy's assassination has been locked away now by both men.

The two came close to hating each other back in 1959 and 1960 when the Kennedy brothers maneuvered against Lyndon Johnson for the Democratic nomination. Johnson in private called John Kennedy a sickly "kid" with "rickety little legs" and worse. His epithets for Bob Kennedy, the campaign manager, were unprintable. When he became Vice President, Johnson contained himself but the Kennedys did not always do as well. A month before Dallas some of the Hickory Hill gang gave Kennedy an L.B.J. voodoo doll in which to stick pins. The merriment was overwhelming.

L.B.J. and his people could not forget the old hurts for quite a few months after he became President, and, of course, the shock of the assassination engendered deep and unreasoning hostility among the Kennedy crew.

Johnson became a "boob" to the Kennedyites. "They still don't believe that President Kennedy is dead," sneered Johnson. "Those touch football boys who used to make these decisions aren't making them anymore." Bob Kennedy used to greet visitors from the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue with, "Well, what's he saying about me today?" Nobody had to ask who "he" was. "The Kennedy babies," Johnson called Bobby and Teddy.

Loyalists on both sides escalated the war. It got so bad that Johnson became convinced that Bob Kennedy while in Latin America said Johnson wouldn't dare visit the Latins for fear he would be shot. "I'm going down there and show him," Johnson told his men before

After introducing him, Kennedy listens to the President in New York this fall. The two stumped for gubernatorial candidate Frank O'Connor.

a truce with a man he came almost to hate—L.B.J.

he left for an overnight visit to Mexico City.

The conflicts were aggravated by an almost complete incompatibility of temperament and philosophy. Lyndon Johnson, who demands fanatical personal neatness and loyalty to himself and all his causes, cannot figure out the studiously ruffled Bobby and why he evokes the adoration of the mobs with his dissents from the Great Society. Kennedy stares down from Capitol Hill in bewilderment at the President of the United States straining the nation's credulity with needless secrecy and a welter of misleading statements.

"You're lucky," Bob Kennedy once told a friend, "you've been poor." He cannot escape the self-consciousness of his massive inherited wealth. Lyndon Johnson glories in the fact that he has made himself rich.

Out campaigning, the President, whose New Deal political thinking was shaped by the Depression, explains his philosophy to the folks: "Count your blessings. No people ever had so much to be grateful for as we do." Kennedy, who has had everything all his life, calls for his Democrats to be "the party of dissatisfaction. I say this country can do better; it must do more," he shouts.

Bob Kennedy lives on the edge of excitement and danger, shooting rapids, climbing mountains—all those things which stir up young Americans. Johnson beats a steady middle-aged path between Washington and his ranch in Texas—working.

But as the post-assassination passion drained away, reason and an acceptance of their differences began to restore sensible relations between the two men. In 1964, when Kennedy left the government, he asked three things of Johnson: to make Nicholas Katzenbach acting Attorney General; to pardon the aging Frank Boykin, a congressman convicted of bribery; to name the old family friend Francis X. Morrissey a federal judge. Johnson delivered on all three counts (though the Senate rebelled against Morrissey). And in that same time the President showed deep sympathy for the shattered family. When Bob volunteered to become ambassador to Vietnam, Lyndon Johnson turned him down. "Can you imagine," he mused one night to a guest, "what would happen to that family if they lost one more mem-



At the 1960 convention, John Kennedy announced Lyndon Johnson as his choice for the vice presidency—a choice Robert Kennedy had opposed.



The President visited New York in 1964 to help Kennedy in a tough Senate race. L.B.J. carried New York by 2.6 million, Kennedy by 700,000.

ber? I couldn't send Bob Kennedy over there, although he would be the best man." A few months later Kennedy could bring himself to say sincerely about Johnson, "He's learning the job."

In the final hectic hours of the 1964 campaign, with Kennedy running a close race for the Senate in New York, Johnson took time out to cut him a special film. Whenever Johnson went to New York he made certain that he invited Kennedy to ride on his plane with him. When the President signed the voting rights bill, he stood up and scanned the room, picked out Robert Kennedy and went to the former Attorney General with the first pen. "I wonder what they'll say about us now," the President whispered to Bob as they stood smiling together at a bill-signing ceremony and the cameras clicked. When war troubles piled up on Johnson, Kennedy sent him a copy of Bruce Catton's *Never Call Retreat*, which told of Lincoln's lonely agony during the Civil War.

The antagonism became less a personal matter and more a disagreement on policy. Johnson, of course, does not like Kennedy's criticism of the inadequacies of the Great Society programs and the conduct of the Vietnam war. But these are almost understandable to him, as part of the political game which he has played so long

and so hard. Important Kennedy pronouncements have been courteously sent to the White House a few hours before delivery. Johnson's press secretary and confidant, Bill Moyers, keeps a line open to the senator's office and frequently dines at Hickory Hill; he and Kennedy exchange notes and telegrams humorously commenting on each other's activities. Johnson once told his aides that he didn't blame Kennedy for carving out his own political position—in fact, he really rather admired Bobby's skill. At one White House meeting of administrative leaders, popularity polls showing Kennedy ahead of Johnson were obliquely mentioned. Johnson brought himself to say, casually: "I don't know about me, but when young Democrats can show that much strength the future of the party looks good." When Johnson campaigned in New York this fall, Kennedy stayed in the background, quietly expressing his "great appreciation and affection" for the President. Today the Kennedy-Johnson relationship—purely a business relationship—is proper, and almost affable. Kennedy has observed that

L.B.J. is now a much better President than he ever thought him capable of being. He has even, he has told intimates, found the President in private moments to be charming and entertaining.

Continuing national yearning for a Kennedy in the White House cannot please the President, who covets adoration above all. Johnson seems to be drifting on an island of time between Kennedys. Kennedy, his friends feel, now regards Johnson the way his brother did—as a great natural phenomenon. But Robert Kennedy is reaching beyond the world of his brother, and Johnson hardly fits into it.

Their new rapport came about partially because both men felt that, barring unusual circumstances, they would have no reason to expect a collision. The election may prove to be just such an unusual circumstance, making Bobby less cautious about '68 and Johnson less sure he can hold Bobby off. Until they settle this in their minds, Kennedy and Johnson will go their own ways—but still keep their truce. ◀

He uses—and deeply feels—the ‘Legend’

A couple of weeks ago Robert Kennedy had occasion to go to Connecticut in support of Governor John Dempsey's successful campaign for re-election. It was a completely routine stumping trip except for one thing: the senator from New York chose to make the tour at night, and over virtually the same route, that John F. Kennedy had followed on the night of Nov. 6, 1960, two days before he was elected President.

What was at work here was more than a nice sense of history. It was an example of sustaining what has come to be called the "Kennedy Legend"—the widespread, emotion-charged legacy of love, admiration and longings connected with John Fitzgerald Kennedy, his brief but graceful reign as President and his death. It is an emotion sincerely and deeply felt by Bob Kennedy himself.

In their profound shock over the President's murder, the Kennedys began instantly to memorialize him. It was a family decision that lit the eternal flame at the grave in Arlington; it was Jackie Kennedy who assented to Theodore White's journey to Hyannisport for the poignant "Camelot" interview (LIFE, Dec. 6, 1963). The family formulated plans for the Kennedy Library in Cambridge and began raising money for it—Jackie Kennedy organized a touring exhibition of Kennedy mementos;

Bobby and other family members personally, sometimes brusquely, solicited contributions from corporations and individuals.

In the country at large, meanwhile, and in much of the world, the public quickly formed its own Kennedy Legend. There was almost a stampede to name or rename structures and geographic features, to dedicate articles, books and TV documentaries to the fallen President's memory.

Robert Kennedy today is both keeper of the Legend and its chief legate. And since he is pretender to the White House, there is constant debate—especially among politicians—over which role he is playing *vis à vis* the Legend at a given moment. Is he perpetuating it? Adding to it? Is he drawing on it for his own political gain, or his own emotional comfort?

Other politicians are both dazzled and dismayed by the Legend and by the strength it has imparted to Bob Kennedy. Cynics are quick to scoff at his reflection of familiar J.F.K. mannerisms, at his recently acquired taste for quotations (Frost, Plato, Pericles, Shaw and Tennyson), at the PT-109 tie clips which he still passes out on occasion, at his regular invocation of his brother's name in speeches. The senator's haste to make the first ascent of Canada's newly christened Mt. Kennedy (LIFE, April 2, April 9, 1965) struck many as proof

of Legend-milking—if not insanity—of a high order. But it is worth noting that people close to Bob Kennedy disagree heatedly. "Look," said one, "if you're a Kennedy male, it's just one of those things you do—Ted would have gone along if he could. If all Bob wanted to do was become President, there are ways of getting publicity without risking his neck on some damn mountain where he had no business being."

Bob Kennedy could hardly ignore the Legend even if he wanted to. Assuredly, he does not. He surrounds himself with reminders of his brother. His office in Washington, like his Virginia home and his apartment in New York, is a virtual museum of J.F.K. memorabilia—snapshots, doodles, personal notes, furniture, etc.—which the public does not see. He is deeply, at times almost ferociously, dedicated to the perpetuation of his brother's memory.

Yet the Kennedys have never been so immersed in the Legend as to lose their sense of proprietorship over it. They—notably Bobby—have read and corrected, if not actually censored, most of the principal books written by New Frontiersmen. They hired a writer, William Manchester, to do an authorized account of the assassination and its aftermath, which is scheduled for publication next spring.

Jacqueline Kennedy herself chose Manchester in 1964, and once this was done the Kennedys made it very clear that the family wished all other similar projects dropped. When writer Jim Bishop, who was attempting such a book, protested, the family put pressure on his pub-

lisher, and Jackie finally wrote to him personally that "none of the people connected with November 22 will speak to anyone but Mr. Manchester. That is my wish, and it is theirs also."

Many of Manchester's sources moreover had been assured that his book would not be released for five years. Agreeing to be interviewed by him in some instances meant turning down publishers' offers to write their own accounts of Nov. 22. This effectively foreclosed any authoritative account of the assassination other than Manchester's. Yet within two years after the doors were closed in the faces of Bishop and the other writers, Bob Kennedy jumped the publication date of the book from late 1968 to early 1967.

Then there was a modest book by Paul Fay Jr., Under Secretary of the Navy during the J.F.K. administration and cherished friend of Jack Kennedy. "Red" Fay's volume of Kennedy reminiscences was duly reviewed by Bobby, Jackie and others before publication. Fay cut his manuscript by about half. Yet even so, some of his anecdotes that remained offended the clan. Loyal old Red Fay is no longer considered a Kennedy confidant.

Added to all these instances of Kennedy goal-tending against any adverse influences on the Legend is Bob's refusal to surrender—even to the Warren Commission—the official autopsy pictures taken at Bethesda. (Two weeks ago he deposited them, under seal, in the National Archives.) The pictures, of course, were gruesome and had been viewed by Chief Justice Warren. Kennedy obviously feared tasteless publication, but his position seemed to place him again athwart freedom of information.

Whatever may be said about Bob Kennedy's handling of the Legend, as a political figure he obviously owes a great deal to it. The last two years, however, have seen him emerge gradually from its reflected glow into a clear and powerful identity of his own. The process continues. Until it is complete it will be difficult to judge fairly whether or not he can fill the role history and the Legend appear to be forcing upon him. ◀



Kennedy gives PT-109 pins to three airline stewardesses while on a nationwide swing in support of Democratic candidates last month. Pins originated as J.F.K. campaign symbols.

Kennedy, who had never climbed a mountain before and has no desire to repeat, made first ascent of Mt. Kennedy (right) in March 1965, leaving J.F.K. memorabilia at the summit.

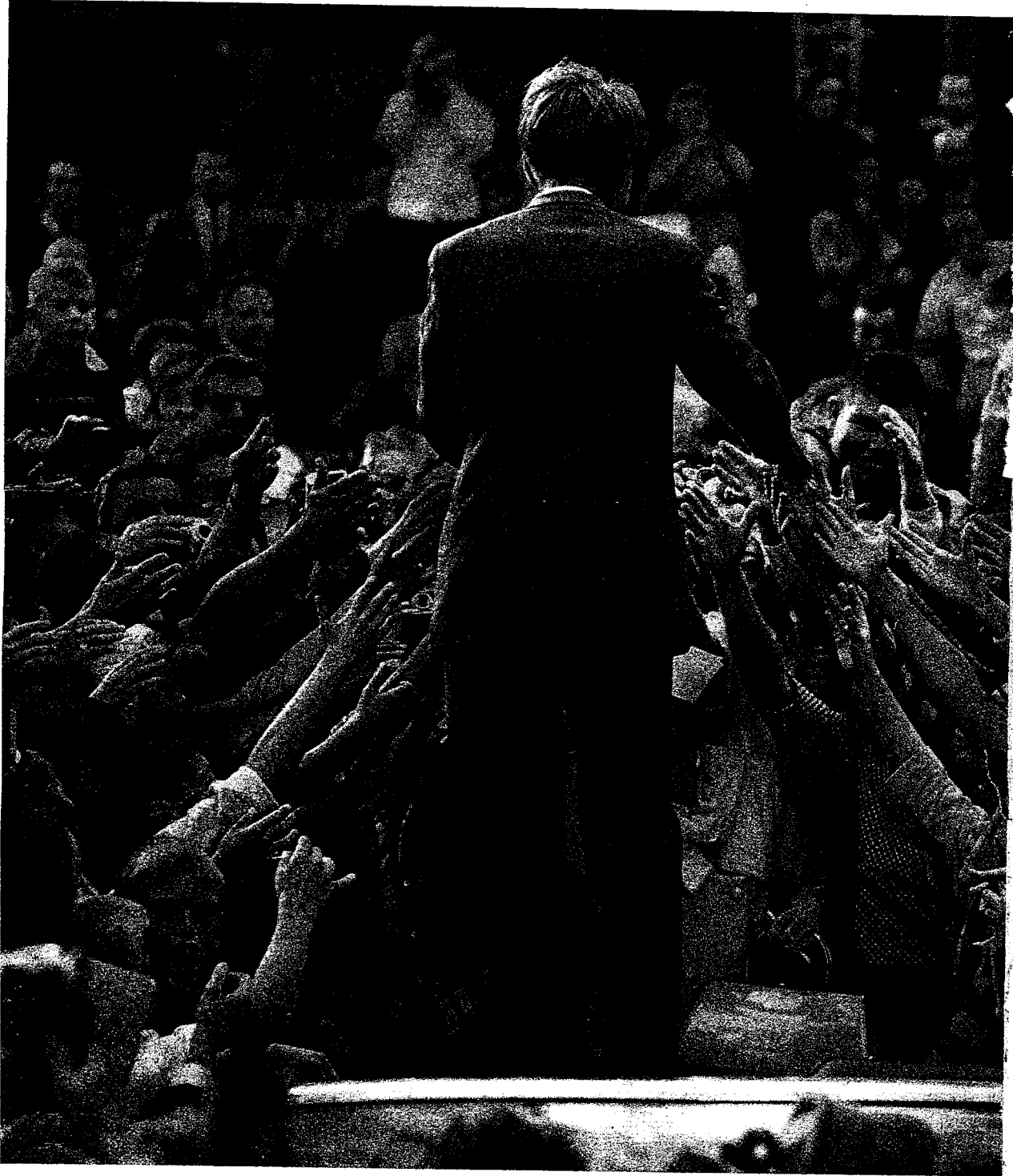


Bob and Jacqueline Kennedy, closely allied in trusteeship of the Legend, inspect a model of a J.F.K. exhibit which toured the U.S. in 1964 to raise money for the Kennedy Library.



He Builds His Own Kennedy

The Kennedy charisma yields up a harvest of hands in Marion, Iowa.



Identity and the Power Flows Freely to Him

by **PENN KIMBALL**

The author, a student of politics, is a professor at Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism.

"I don't hate Bobby Kennedy. I simply don't trust him. Bobby, to me, is the epitome of the smart maneuverer. . . . I agree with him on almost every important issue—Vietnam, the intervention in the Dominican Republic, civil rights. And yet I can't get over the feeling that he's not a man to be trusted with power."

—a New York newspaperman

"If he offered to help an old woman across the street, someone would want to know what his motives were."

—a friend of Robert F. Kennedy

Robert Francis Kennedy is a hard man to see whole. His character seems particularly susceptible to selective perception: the filters of the mind interpret new data on him in light of preconceptions from the past. A terribly complex human being, he is not one but many personalities. In both private and public, he casts his reflection on a variety of planes. "People attribute to him," says Connecticut Senator Abe Ribicoff, one of the Kennedy family's early political allies, "the qualities—good or bad—they came looking for."

Physically and mentally, Bobby Kennedy, still a young man, is changing, as part of the natural process of growth, as a result of the pressures of responsibility and tragedy, and as an act of his own will. And as he is changing, the public's image of him changes, too.

To any politician—and Bobby is a politician to his fingertips—the matter of image is always crucial, whether the goal is to become President of the United States or something more modest. But Bobby's present and his future are to an astonishing degree bound up with the past. Most of the major criticisms directed against him today were first leveled five to 10 years ago. He has been called ruthless, vindictive and arrogant; and from those who feel he is the old leopard in a new skin comes the charge that these characteristics persist today. Eggheads still begrudge his past association with the McCarthy committee. Lawyers criticize his excesses as a prosecutor for the Senate rackets committee. Businessmen resent his strong-arm activities during the Kennedy administration's fight over steel prices. Politicians remember the arm-twisting during his service

CONTINUED ON PAGE 129

