



## CONVERSATIONS WITH KENNEDY PART 2

# The First 100 Days,

This is the second excerpt of seven from "Conversations With Kennedy," appearing this week in *Style*.

By Benjamin C. Bradlee

In the First Hundred Days, we were seeing the Kennedys occasionally with some regularity, except for the time around the Bay of Pigs disaster, and Kennedy and I would talk occasionally on the telephone. Gone were the regular Saturday morning telephone calls, which he used to make to me in my office before he assumed the presidency, checking on next weeks Perspective items (in *Newsweek*) and ready to share gossip if an urgent, last-minute call for better items had come

from *Newsweek* in New York, as it so often did Saturday mornings.

When we did talk, Kennedy more often than not was preoccupied with foreign affairs, particularly Laos and Cuba. During his campaign Kennedy had not stressed foreign affairs for several reasons. First, it was not his particular field of expertise and Nixon was claiming foreign affairs as his own best balliwick. Second, there were not all that many foreign policy issues kicking around.

Quemoy and Matsu was perhaps the major foreign policy problem. Planning for the invasion of Cuba was well under way, but Kennedy didn't learn about it until after he was elected and

# The Bay of Pigs and a TV Show

Nixon couldn't bring it up during the campaign.

But after Kennedy had been in office four months, forces pushed his nose into foreign policy issues, particularly that mixture of foreign policy and military issues that ultimately forced Lyndon Johnson to leave the White House.

"In the entire first (FDR) Roosevelt campaign," the President told me at this time, "foreign affairs were mentioned only once, and then in one paragraph of one speech on the last day of the campaign." But on the anniversary of the first First Hundred Days, Kennedy expressed concern about the national capacity to solve problems like Laos and Cuba, which

he had not defined in his campaign.

"We can prevent one nation's army from moving across the border of another nation," he said. "We are strong enough for that. And we are probably strong enough to prevent one nation from unleashing nuclear weapons on another. But we can't prevent infiltration, assassination sabotage, bribery, any of the weapons of guerrilla warfare."

Kennedy said he had learned a new, discouraging, math: "One guerrilla can pin down 12 conventional soldiers, and we've got nothing equivalent." He spoke to me several times of the "the six or seven thousand guerrillas" poised in North Vietnam, ready, will-

ing and able to present him with his next foreign crisis.

The Bay of Pigs shook his confidence—almost beyond repair—in the CIA and in the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Right after the fiasco, and after he had quickly accepted responsibility, he was philosophical. "Presumably," he said, "I was going to learn these lessons some time, and maybe better sooner, than later."

Cuba taught him something else, which was probably more significant in the long run: that elevation to this high office inhibited the free-flowing informality between President Kennedy and his associates in a way that

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# 'Jackie Kennedy Show'

CONVERSATION, From B1

It never did between Sen. Kennedy and his associates. He made this point one night by telling how he once asked Dave Powers during the campaign in some jerkwater hotel to hand him his shoes. "Get them yourself, damn it," the President quoted Powers as replying. "You're not my commander-in-chief yet."

Jackie weighed in with another story about "Mugsy" O'Leary, another "Last Hurrah" type from Boston, who cut a considerable swath through fear. Jackie said she had been dawdling around one day, late for an appointment to meet her husband somewhere, when Mugsy had shouted to her: "Come on Jackie, for Chrissake move your ass." Old "Mugs" wouldn't be putting it so bluntly now, we all agreed.

Feb. 14, 1962 — We watched "The Jackie Kennedy Show" after dinner at the White House, a one-hour CBS special, produced at a cost of \$255,990 and watched by an estimated 46 million people. Jackie used a script only when describing some very old prints, as she strolled from one room to another, describing gifts and remembering donors. "Television at its best," said the Chicago Daily News. "A remarkable job," said the show's host, Charles Collingwood. The only other guests at dinner were Max Freedman, the distinguished American correspondent of The Manchester Guardian, who had been caught by bad weather in New York and made dinner only after a \$100 cab ride from



United Press International

First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy in 1962.

LaGuardia airport, and Mrs. John Randolph ("Fifi") Fell, a New York and Long Island hostess. Jackie had brought Caroline to our house to play with our children that afternoon . . . nurse Maud Shaw's day off.

At cocktails the President was in a garrulous and acerbic mood, rehashing the dance held Feb. 9 at the White House again. He was particularly irritated at a man called Watson Blair, a New York businessman, who had glowered from the dance floor sidelines all night, telling everyone he was having a miserable time. Fifi Fell asked if she could bring Blair any message and the President said, "Damn right. Tell him he's on the list and not to worry. He won't be asked again."

Peter Duchin, jetset bandleader, son of pianist Eddy Duchin, also made the list for behavior the President considered less than acceptable. He, too, had apparently been critical of something.

The gifts that King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia had left the Kennedys

that afternoon were piled on a table in the yellow Oval Room upstairs: a couple of suitcases full of some kind of filmy fowered material and some clothes. The clothes were had to believe: a small jacket for young John, the kind that sells for four bucks at Sears, and some pullover jackets that appeared to be made of thin camel hair . . . all of them inside out, apparently to prove that they had never been worn before.

The President obviously felt that the relief map of the United States he had given Ibn Saud was a substantially better gift.

After dinner we moved into a small sitting room next to the Lincoln Room to watch Jackie on the show that had been taped a month earlier. There had been a lot of talk at dinner about how good CBS was, what a good director they had in Frank Schaffner, but ironically the President's TV set wouldn't bring in the CBS channel, and we watched the show on NBC, and we watched it in virtual silence.

We were all impressed with Jackie's knowledge and poise. She had really thrown herself into the refurbishing of the White House with an energy and ability that had never been used before. There was one snicker when Collingwood broke off some bromide about how important the past was for the future. And there was movement in the small crowd when the President himself appeared—in what could at best be called a minor role. He was obviously not particularly pleased with that role or his performance in it, and my wife went so far as to say later that she felt the President was actually jealous of Jackie's performance and the attention she got as a result.

We teased Kennedy about calling his wife "Jackie" during the CBS special, the first time to my knowledge he had ever done so in public, and in that quizzical way of his, almost like a small child looking for approval, he asked us whether we thought "the First Lady" would have been more appropriate. (He never spoke of his wife as "Jackie" again in public, as far as I know.)

TUESDAY: TED KENNEDY IN A JAM