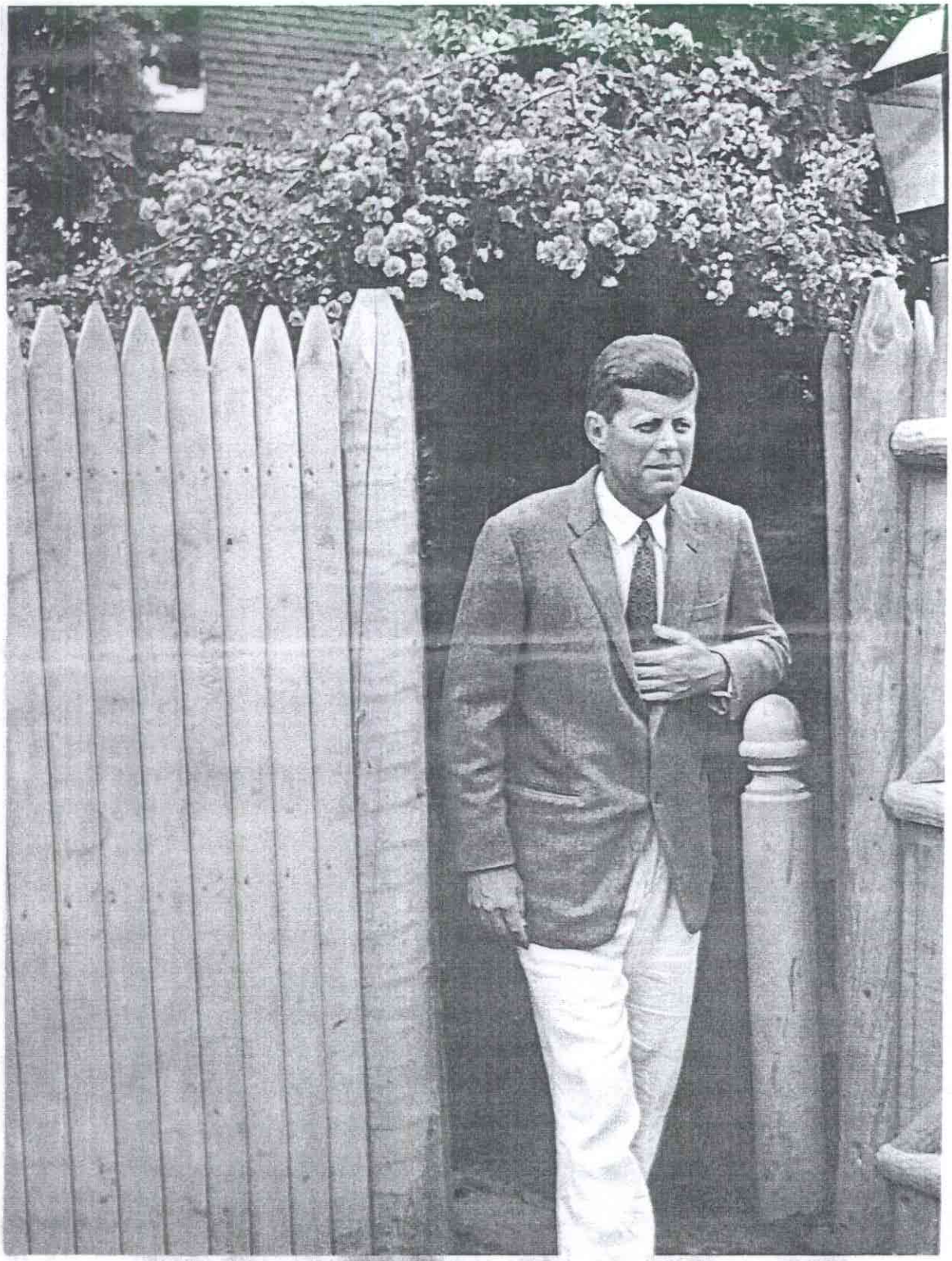

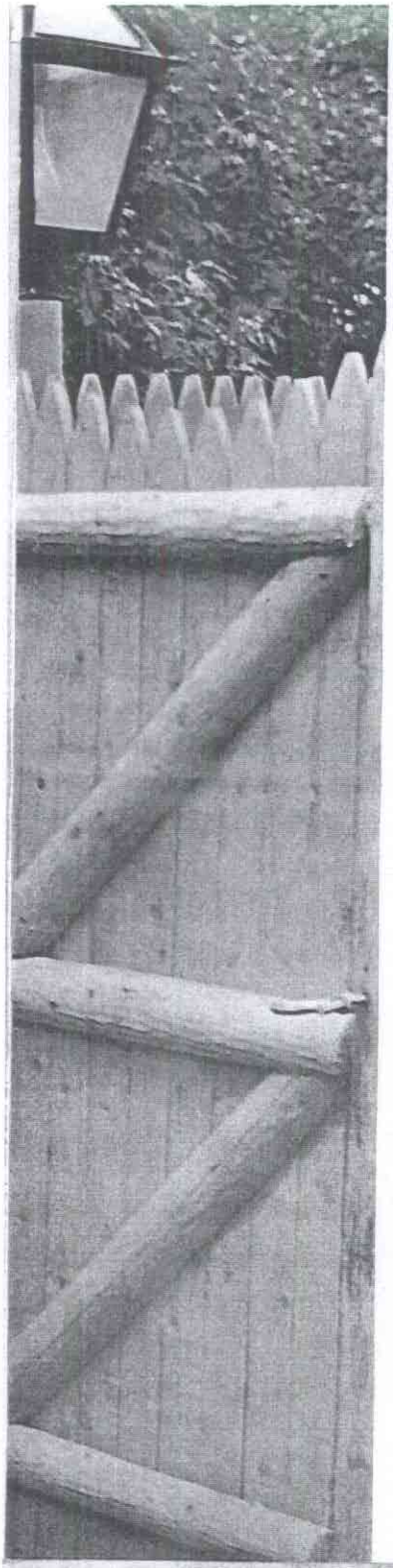

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FROM J.F.K.'s INNER CIRCLE,
THE HISTORY OF 'A THOUSAND DAYS'

The First Close Portrait of John Kennedy

by ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER JR.

This is the first of a series of articles, appearing exclusively in LIFE, *taken from Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr.'s book,* A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House, *which will be published this fall by Houghton Mifflin Co. Mr. Schlesinger, an eminent Harvard historian and Pulitzer prize winner, served the late President as special assistant and brings to his book knowledge gained as a member of the White House inner circle.*

My first knowledge of John F. Kennedy went back to undergraduate days at Harvard 25 years before. His older brother, Joseph P. Kennedy Jr., was one of my classmates. His younger brother John arrived in Cambridge as a freshman when Joe and I were in our third years. In those days the freshman class put on a smoker each spring; and the Freshman Smoker of 1937 shamed the older classes with its prodigies of entertainment talent imported from Broadway and Hollywood. One learned that young Jack Kennedy was responsible for this triumph. I saw him from time to time in the Yard but do not recall that I ever exchanged a word with him. Joe and I finished Harvard in 1938, Jack two years later.

In 1946 I heard that Jack Kennedy had gone back to Boston to run for Congress. He and I must have renewed, or begun, our acquaintance the following winter in Washington. A note from him in January 1948 started "Dear Arthur"; but my first distinct recollection of a conversation goes back to a political meeting in Harvard Yard during the presidential election that October, where we sat together and chatted while Congressman Kennedy waited his turn to go to the platform.

By 1950 he was plainly preparing to run for senator or governor in 1952. Which it would be depended on whether Paul Dever, the incumbent governor, chose to seek reelection or to challenge Senator Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. Kennedy's preference for the Senate was clear. As he said one day, gesturing at the State House, "I hate to think of myself up in that corner office deciding on sewer contracts." When Dever announced, in April 1952, that he planned to run again for the

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At Hyannis Port, run and hit, the candidate strides into history.

Jackie had 'an all-seeing eye, ruthless

By mid-1959 Kennedy was fighting openly for the nomination. Between forays across the country he came home to his summer house in Hyannis Port—to Caroline, who was still in diapers, and to Jackie who, says Schlesinger, hid a sharp intelligence "underneath a veil of lovely inconsequence."

judgment'

Thousand Days

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governorship, Kennedy promptly declared his candidacy for the Senate. He beat Lodge by 70,000 votes.

In 1958 he came up for his second term in the Senate. His hope was to return to Washington by the largest possible vote in order to lay the basis for a presidential try two years later. His wife remembered it as "the hardest campaign ever . . . just running, running." He won by 875,000 votes, the greatest margin up to that point in Massachusetts history. (His younger brother Edward exceeded it in 1964.)

One morning in mid-July 1959, as I was sitting in the sun at Wellfleet on Cape Cod, Kennedy called from Hyannis Port to invite me for dinner that night. This was my first visit to the Kennedy compound; and, though I had met Jacqueline Kennedy several times since their marriage, it was really the first occasion for a leisurely chat with her. My wife was not able to come, and there were only the three of us. Jacqueline was reading *Remembrance of Things Past* when I arrived. In the course of the evening I realized that, underneath a veil of lovely inconsequence, she concealed tremendous awareness, an all-seeing eye and a ruthless judgment. As for Kennedy, our relations had hitherto been more political than personal; this was also my first session with him in a mood of total relaxation.

My notes on the evening suggest this—"the freest, as well as the longest, talk I have ever had with him. As usual, he was impersonal in his remarks, quite prepared to see the views of others. He showed more animation and humor than usual and indeed was rather funny in some of his assessments of people and situations." The note of surprise in this last observation only reveals my own limited acquaintance with him. I now began to understand that the easy and casual wit, turned incisively and impartially on himself and his rivals, was one of his most beguiling qualities.

When I asked about the Republicans, he spoke with enthusiasm of John Sherman Cooper of Kentucky and Jacob Javits of New York. He was caustic about Eisenhower: "I could understand it if he played golf all the time with old Army friends, but no man is less loyal to his old friends than Eisenhower. He is a terribly cold man. All his golfing pals are rich men he has met since 1945." He spoke with scorn of Senators Capehart, Curtis and Mundt, who seemed, he thought, to care about labor corruption mostly as a way of compromising the trade union movement. He thought Barry Goldwater was a man of decency and character.

In December 1959 a handwritten letter arrived from Kennedy in Palm Beach. He said he was coming to Cambridge on Jan. 2, 1960 to do a television program with Eleanor Roosevelt. (This had been arranged by J. Kenneth Galbraith with considerable ingenuity and effort in order to advance Kennedy's rapprochement with the liberals.) "I shall be finished around 7:30 or 8," he wrote. "Is there any chance you both might be free that evening for dinner? Perhaps we could get the Galbraiths and anyone else you think of and go to Locke-Ober's."

This turned out to be the day that he announced his candidacy. The Galbraiths joined us in an upstairs room in the old Boston restaurant. I noted of Kennedy later, "He was, as usual, spirited and charming, but he also conveyed an intangible feeling of depression. I had the sense that he feels himself increasingly hemmed in as a result of a circumstance over which he has no control—his religion. . . ." The religious issue, he said, left him no choice but to go into Wisconsin. A victory over Hubert Humphrey in Wisconsin would make his case irresistible. He said that obviously there were no important differences between Humphrey and himself on issues; it came down to a difference in personalities: "Hubert is too intense for the present mood of the people." He went on ironically: "What they want today is a more boring, monotonous personality—like me."

In late March the Democrats of the Middle West held a conference in Detroit at which I had been invited to speak. After the Jefferson-Jackson dinner that night, I drove back to the hotel with Sam Rayburn, who reminisced about the House with great charm. He had begun his service in Congress, he noted, before Jack Kennedy was born. When I got back to the hotel, Kennedy and John Bailey, his senior professional adviser, were just coming in. Bailey signaled me to come up to the Kennedy suite.

Kennedy, though tired, was in excellent spirits. Again one was delighted by a total lack of front. When phones rang, he answered them himself, and when a message was required, he sat down and wrote it out. Someone called on behalf of a Knights of Columbus bowling team, whose members wanted to shake his hand. Kennedy, who did not answer the phone this time, whispered to Bailey, "Tell them I've gone out. If I don't have *their* votes, I might as well give up." He smiled a good deal about Senator Wayne Morse, who had been affable toward him at the banquet. "Half the time," he said, "Wayne claps me on the shoulder and congratulates me; the other half, he denounces me as a traitor to liberalism and an enemy of the working class. It reminds me of *City Lights* and the millionaire who, when he is drunk, loads Charlie Chaplin with gifts and insists that he spend the night, but when he is sober can't recognize him and throws him out of the house."

After being defeated by Kennedy in the Wisconsin and West Virginia

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By mid-1960, the nomination his, Kennedy came home to Hyannis Port to slip out to sea with Jackie. Once he discussed Nixon with Schlesinger. "He has no taste," Kennedy said contemptuously. Another time he remarked, "Do you realize the responsibility I carry? I'm the only person standing between Nixon and the White House." Then, at election time, he came back to Hyannis Port and met the press with Jackie and Caroline. Jackie was pregnant—John Jr. was to be born in a few weeks. Schlesinger recalls Cape Cod as "never more poignant than in the last still blue and gold of autumn."

A rough

The campaign swept over the nation (above, New York). *"The kind of society we build," Schlesinger recalls he said, "the kind of power we generate, the kind of enthusiasm we incite, all this will tell whether, in the long run, darkness or light overtakes the world."*

At Hyannis (below) *on the day after election, Kennedy told "all Americans . . . that the next four years are going to be difficult and challenging . . ." Then he went home and his family gathered around, seeing him now with new delight. On chair at left are Eunice Shriver and Mr. and Mrs. Joseph P. Kennedy, on the sofa at right, Jackie and Ted Kennedy. In back* (from left) *are Ethel Kennedy, Stephen Smith, Jean Smith, the President-elect, Bob Kennedy, Pat Lawford, Sargent Shriver, Joan Kennedy and Peter Lawford.*

Thousand Days

CONTINUED

primaries, Humphrey withdrew, Lyndon Johnson was now in the race for nomination; Adlai Stevenson was apparently half in and half out of it.

Every day made Stevenson more crucial to Kennedy's hopes. Returning from the Oregon primaries, Kennedy stopped off to see Stevenson at Libertyville, Ill. Kennedy reviewed his situation, pointing out how much Stevenson could help him. Stevenson replied that he wanted to be consistent and therefore could not declare for Kennedy

fight all the way for the '42-year-old kid'

now, but that he would not be a party to any stop-Kennedy movement.

Stevenson, who had met with Lyndon Johnson a few days before, then mentioned the importance of Johnson's cooperation if Kennedy were elected. Kennedy, who knew of the meeting, feared, as he later put it, that Stevenson had been "snowed" into thinking that if he stayed neutral, he would be Johnson's second choice. (Kennedy's conjecture was right. Johnson had told Stevenson that he could not stand to be pushed around by a 42-year-old kid, and that he favored Adlai next to himself.) Kennedy told Stevenson, as he later described it to me, that there was only one way to treat Johnson; that was to beat him. "Everyone will come around the day after the convention, and anyone who doesn't come around will be left out and won't matter. The support of leaders is much overrated anyway."

Stevenson retained, in any case, the loyalty of my wife Marian, who told the newspapers [after it had been learned that a group of liberals, including Mr. Schlesinger, planned to endorse Kennedy] that she was still for Stevenson. A few days later I received a letter from Robert Kennedy with a scrawled postscript: "Can't you control your own wife—or are you like me?"

Kennedy was looking forward to Los Angeles and the Democratic convention with apparent confidence. Johnson, it now seemed to him, was his most serious opponent. Kennedy compared him to British politicians who were omnipotent in Parliament but had no popularity in the country. He talked of Johnson with mingled admiration and despair, calling him the "riverboat gambler." He added musingly, "It really wouldn't be worthwhile being President if Johnson were majority leader."

Much of the discussion was concerned with organization. Ken Galbraith and I urged Kennedy to build his own staff and to avoid people like ourselves who had been identified with Stevenson. The civil rights question was much on Kennedy's mind, and we discussed that at some length. Galbraith, seeking some way by which Kennedy might dramatize his commitment to the issue, suggested an announcement that, if elected, he would try to prevent James Eastland of Mississippi from continuing as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Kennedy said, "It wouldn't be in character for me to do that. After all, the Senate is a body where you have to get along with people regardless of how much you disagree. I've always got along pretty well with old Eastland."

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The 'gaiety and unpredictability'

Thousand Days

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We talked a bit about Massachusetts politics and the anticipated senatorial contest between Leverett Saltonstall, the Republican incumbent, and Governor Foster Furcolo, whom Kennedy had detested for many years. When Galbraith said that he would probably vote for Furcolo, Kennedy said, "The thing I like about professors is their party regularity." He then asked me how I planned to vote. When I hesitated, he said, "Say it, say it—of course you're going to vote for Saltonstall. Sometimes party loyalty asks too much."

The Democratic voters of Massachusetts apparently agreed, because Furcolo was denied the nomination in the primaries in September. Kennedy spoke gloomily about the Massachusetts Democratic party: "Nothing can be done until it is beaten—badly beaten. Then there will be a chance of rebuilding."

At the convention in Los Angeles, Bobby Kennedy concluded his exhortation to the troops: "We can't miss a trick in the next 12 hours. If we don't win tonight, we're dead."

Then on to the Sports Arena, surrounded by lines of men and women chanting for Stevenson. The nominations began. The Stevenson demonstration was sustained and riotous. The balloting began. By Washington, Kennedy had 710 votes. In a moment Wyoming made him the nominee.

The next morning I started to urge on Robert Kennedy the importance of doing something to conciliate the Stevenson people. He listened patiently for a moment, then put his hand on my knee and said, "Arthur, human nature requires that you allow us 48 hours. Adlai has given us a rough time over the last three days."

Early in August my wife and I were asked to luncheon at Hyannis Port. It was a shining summer Saturday—sunny, clear and still. But the once placid Cape Cod village had lost its wistful tranquillity. Everywhere were roadblocks, cordons of policemen, children selling souvenirs, tourists in flashy shirts and shorts waiting expectantly, as if for a revelation.

Eventually we made our way past tourists, children and roadblocks and approached the house. The first courtyard contained newspapermen, lounging in the sun. We passed on to the terrace of the Senator's house. Here we encountered a delegation from the Foreign Nationalities Branch of the Democratic National Committee. The delegates carried dolls dressed in vivid native dresses as gifts for Caroline Kennedy. Kennedy, smiling and tan, was shaking their hands; he waved us on into the house. In the first room we ran into Frank Morrissey, a devoted Kennedy retainer, waiting with a potential contributor for a word with the nominee. On we went into the living room, dark behind long curtains. I did not at first make out the figure sitting patiently in the shadows. It was Norman Mailer.

The total astonishment of going through this sequence and finding Norman Mailer at the end summed up, it seemed to me, the gaiety and unpredictability of the household. Jacqueline Kennedy came in from the terrace. It was then that the nominee told Mailer he had enjoyed his books, saying, "I've read *The Deer Park* and . . . the others," a remark which startled an author who had heard people in similar situations say a hundred times, "I've read *The Naked and the Dead* . . . and the others."

About 1 o'clock six of us—the Kennedys, Jackie's sister Lee Radziwill and her husband, and ourselves—took off on the cabin cruiser *Marlin*. The waters of the Sound glittered in the sun. We swam off the stern of the boat. Afterwards Bloody Marys were served, followed by luncheon. We cruised for several hours, returning to the Kennedy pier at the end of the day.

Conversation filled in the interstices of the afternoon. Kennedy talked a good deal about Nixon, who had just been making imprudent statements in Honolulu. This pleased Kennedy; he said he was sure he could count on Nixon's capacity to make mistakes. But he

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Kennedy spent most of the 10 weeks between election and inauguration in Palm Beach, Fla. Missal in hand, he went to church. He played golf with his father. He began to search for Cabinet officers—and it was difficult to find and to judge job candidates. "People," he exclaimed to Schlesinger, "I don't know any people. I only know voters."

of Jack Kennedy's household

His joy

Thousand Days

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He took the presidential oath," says Schlesinger, "in the freezing cold" and then went on to his office (below) and new duties. Later the camera caught a prophetic shot (right) with Secretary of Navy Connally, and behind them, Vice President Johnson, moving in the order that they held on that terrible day in Dallas when John F. Kennedy's administration came to an end.

was irritated over a rather brilliant column by Eric Sevareid in that morning's Boston Globe. Sevareid had argued that there were no real differences between the two candidates. Kennedy considered that there was no one he resembled less than Nixon. He scorned the way Nixon opened his speeches with the "Pat and I" greeting. "He has no taste," Kennedy said with contempt. On issues, he added with disarming candor, "Nixon is about as far advanced as I was 10 years ago."

By mid-September Kennedy's intelligence and intensity were beginning to command the attention of the electorate—and then the debates began. In retrospect, Sept. 26, 1960 was surely the turning point. My wife watched the first television debate with Jacqueline in Hyannis Port. I had hoped to join them, but I had to go to New York that afternoon. By the time I caught the plane back to Boston, the Cape was lying deep in fog and the Hyannis airport was closed down. Marian told me later that Kennedy, calling Jacqueline after the broadcast, could not suppress his delight. The issue of his immaturity had been eliminated from the campaign in one stroke.

By October I was embarked on a speaking schedule on behalf of the Kennedy-Johnson ticket. This brought me back to New York to talk before university groups and reform clubs. Kennedy had also returned to New York to give his marvelous joshing speech at Cardinal Spellman's Al Smith dinner. The audience had been strongly pro-Nixon, and Kennedy was ironically entertained by the fact that the wealthy Catholics obviously preferred a conservative Quaker to a liberal of their own faith. "It all goes to show," he said to me later, "that, when the chips are down, money counts more than religion."

On election eve Kennedy spoke at the Boston Garden. A chapter of American history was spread out in the hall that evening: Kennedy, cool, poised, masterful, a son of Ireland and of Harvard, surrounded by a conventionally seedy Massachusetts state ticket—which he dutifully endorsed with breakneck speed and evident indifference—and confronting an audience of his supporters, from South Boston to Harvard Yard, shouting their hearts out.

On Tuesday the people, by an alarmingly narrow margin in the popular vote, chose John Fitzgerald Kennedy of Massachusetts as the 35th President of the United States.

How had it all come about? Part of the answer, of course, lay in Kennedy's upbringing. He was born into a family that was large, warm and spirited. Moreover, it was an Irish family. In most respects, Kennedy departed considerably from the Irish-American stereotype. He was reticent, patrician, bookish, urbane. Yet the Irishness remained a vital element in his constitution. It came out in so many ways—in the quizzical wit, the eruptions of boisterous humor, the relish for politics, the love of language, the romantic sense of history, the admiration for physical daring, the toughness, the joy in living, the view of life as comedy and as tragedy.

The father, Joseph P. Kennedy, regarding money as a means and not an end, forbade its discussion at the dinner table. He confronted the children with large questions,

in living—and sense of life as tragedy

demanded that their opinions make sense and instilled convictions of purpose and possibility. As Jack Kennedy put it one night at the White House: "My father wasn't around as much as some fathers when I was young; but whether he was there or not, he made his children feel that they were the most important things in the world to him. He was so terribly interested in everything we were doing. He held up standards for us, and he was very tough when we failed to meet those standards. The toughness was important. If it hadn't been for that, Teddy might be just a playboy today. But my father cracked down on him at a crucial time in his life [the reference was to the cheating incident in Teddy's freshman year at Harvard], and this brought out in Teddy the discipline and seriousness which can make him an important political figure."

It is hard to judge how much John Fitzgerald Kennedy's formal education mattered. He spent only one year at a Catholic school, Canterbury in Connecticut. He then went on to Choate, which he disliked heartily. He finished only slightly above the middle of his class. His father sent him to the London School of Economics, hoping to expose him to Harold Laski. Instead Kennedy exposed himself to jaundice and had to drop out at London and delay his planned entry into Princeton. After a few weeks at Princeton a recurrence of jaundice sent him back to bed. Princeton had not greatly impressed him, and the next fall [1936] he entered Harvard.

In 1937 his father became ambassador to Britain and Jack began spending his holidays whenever possible in London. He was

TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 64A

SCHLESINGER TEXT CONTINUED FROM PAGE 37

He said his best quality was curiosity, his worst, irritability

Thousand Days

CONTINUED

fascinated by English political society, with its casual combination of wit, knowledge and concern. The intelligent young Englishmen of his own age, like David Ormsby Gore (later ambassador to the U.S., now Lord Harlech), seemed more confident and sophisticated than his Harvard friends. London gave him a sense of the tone in which politics might be approached. It also gave him a rather appalling look at the way democracy responded to crisis. Kennedy was in and out of England in the months when Churchill was calling on his fellow countrymen with such slight effect to rouse themselves against the menace of Nazism.

As war came closer to America, Kennedy, having been rejected by the Army because of an old football injury to his back, succeeded in 1941 in persuading the Navy to let him join up. In due course there followed the Pacific, PT-109, the Solomon Islands campaign, Talagi and Rendova, and the incredible night in August 1943 when the Japanese destroyer *Amagiri* sliced his boat in half and plunged Kennedy and his crew into the waters of Ferguson Passage, aflame with burning gasoline. Exactly a year later, he learned that his brother Joe had been killed during an air mission against Nazi submarine bases in western Europe. In another month his English brother-in-law, the Marquis of Hartington, the husband of his sister "Kick" (Kathleen), was killed in France.

In a looseleaf notebook of 1945, filled with fragments about Joe and Billy Hartington—Joe's posthumous citations, a Washington *Post* editorial on Joe's death, Kick's letter about her husband's death, and letters from Billy Hartington's fellow officers in the Coldstream Guards—Kennedy inserted two quotations on the death of Raymond Asquith in France in 1916. One was from Churchill's *Great Contemporaries*:

"The war which found the measure of so many men never got to the bottom of him, and when the Grenadiers strode into the crash and thunder of the Somme, he went to his fate, cool, poised, resolute, matter-of-fact, debonair."

The other was from one of his favorite books, John Buchan's *Pilgrim's Way*:

"He loved his youth, and his youth has become eternal. Debonair and brilliant and brave, he is now part of that immortal England which knows not age or weariness or defeat."

Jacqueline Kennedy later said of her husband: "The poignancy of men dying young haunted him."

The war hardened Kennedy, and politics hardened him more, but his political friends were not to possess Kennedy any more than his college friends, his social friends or his intellectual friends. The Irish Mafia were his instruments in politics. He admired them because he admired virtuosity in performance—"the ability," as he once put it, "to do things well, and to do them with precision and with modesty." He had an instinctive appreciation of excellence.

But in the postwar years Kennedy himself was still undefined. He was a Harvard man, a naval hero, an Irishman, a politician, a *bon vivant*, a man of unusual intelligence, charm, wit and ambition, but his deeper meaning was still in process of crystallization.

Then, in 1951, he met Jacqueline Bouvier at a dinner party at the house of Charles Bartlett, a Washington journalist, and leaned across the asparagus to ask her for a date. She was a girl of great beauty, at once wistful and luminous, and also of acute intelligence and exacting expectations. Kennedy was a new experience for Jacqueline Bouvier. He pursued her with penetrating questions of a sort she had not heard before and, in self-defense, she began to ask questions back.

In Georgetown, Kennedy names his brother, Robert, Attorney General. Earlier he told Bobby, "Don't smile too much or they'll think we are happy."

One day she inquired how he would define himself. He said, "An idealist without illusions." And the night before they were married she asked him what he considered his best and worst qualities. He thought that his best quality was curiosity, and his worst quality irritability. By irritability he meant impatience with the boring, the commonplace and the mediocre. And by curiosity he meant a good deal more than the purely intellectual trait; he meant that hunger for experience which caused him to demand that life be concentrated, vivid and full. It was all somehow connected with the precariousness of his health. "He lived at such a pace," Jacqueline Kennedy said later, "because he wished to know it all."

He had been told that he had Addison's disease—a degeneration of the adrenal glands—and between 1946 and 1949 he went on a regimen of cortisone. One day when Joe Alsop asked about the occasional greenness of his complexion, Kennedy replied matter-of-factly, "The doctors say I've got a sort of slow-motion leukemia, but they tell me I'll probably last until I'm 45. So I seldom think about it except when I have the shots." It developed later that he did not have Addison's disease in the classic sense—that is, tuberculosis of the adrenal glands, that he had never had tuberculosis in any form and that, with modern methods of treatment, his adrenal insufficiency presented no serious problem.

But on Cape Cod, in October 1953, when he returned from his wedding trip, he had read his young wife what he said was his favorite poem. She learned it for him by heart, and he used to love to have her say it. It was Alan Seeger's "I Have a Rendezvous with Death":

It may be he shall take my hand
And lead me into his dark land
And close my eyes and quench my breath . . . But I've a rendezvous with Death.

The process of internal definition went on, and Jacqueline Kennedy made her own contribution to it. She must at first have been

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'I guess,' he said, 'I'm the only Protestant around here'

Thousand Days

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overwhelmed by the life into which marriage plunged her. Politics for her had been corny old men shouting on the Fourth of July. Now in this new world she found it hard to get used to the ground rules.

The teeming world of the Kennedys was another problem. She had to fight to preserve her identity in the family of active parents-in-law, athletic, teasing brothers-in-law, energetic, competent sisters-in-law. Like all marriages, this one had its early strains. Their life together was almost nomadic, as they shuttled back and forth from Washington to Boston, from Newport to Palm Beach, living often with parents-in-law. They did not really have a house of their own until they had been married four years and their first child was born. Jacqueline often feared that she was a political liability and that everyone considered her a snob from Newport who had bouffant hair and French clothes and hated politics. In moments of discouragement she sometimes cried, "Oh, Jack, I'm so sorry for you that I'm such a dud." He would tell her that he loved her as she was. More and more she embodied something of increasing value for him—a surcease from daily business, a standard of excellence, a symbol of privacy, a style of life.

Before they were married, he had her translate and summarize 10 or a dozen French books about Indochina. When she became interested in French furniture, he learned from her. When she was delving in 18th Century French history, he took the book away and found out about Louis XIV's mistresses before she could. When she read aloud passages from De Gaulle's memoirs, especially the introductory evocation of his image of France, he seized the idea and used it for his own speeches about America.

Kennedy was called an intellectual very seldom before 1960 and very often thereafter—a phenomenon which deserves explanation. He was a man of action who could pass over to the realm of ideas with perfect ease and confidence. His mind was not prophetic, impassioned, mystical, utopian or ideological. It was less exuberant than Theodore Roosevelt's, less scholarly than Wilson's, less adventurous than Franklin Roosevelt's. But it had its own salient qualities—it was roving, direct, open, independent, impatient, objective, critical, practical, ironic, skeptical, unfettered and insatiable.

Kennedy always wanted to know how things worked. Vague answers never contented him. This curiosity was fed by conversation but even more by reading. He was now a fanatical reader, 1,200 words a minute, not only at the normal times and places but at meals, in the bathtub, sometimes even when walking. Dressing in the morning, he would prop open a book on his bureau and read while he put on his shirt and tied his necktie. He read mostly history and biography, American and English. The first book he ever gave Jackie was Marquis James's biography of Sam Houston, *The Raven*.

Kennedy's intelligence was fundamentally secular, or so it seemed to me. Of course, this was not entirely true. He assimilated a good deal of the structure of the Catholic faith, encouraged probably by his mother and sisters. He often adopted the Catholic side in historical controversy, as in the case of Mary Queen of Scots; and he showed a certain weakness for Catholic words of art, like "prudence," and a certain aversion toward bad words for Catholics, like "liberal." He felt an immense sense of fellowship with Pope John XXIII, but this was based more on the Pope's practical character and policies than on theological considerations. Some of his Protestant advisers probably knew the encyclicals better than he did. Once, during the 1960 campaign, I handed him a draft of a speech I had done for him with the comment that it was perhaps too Catholic. He said with a smile, "You Unitarians"—meaning Ted Sorensen and myself—"keep writing Catholic speeches. I guess I am the only Protestant around here."

Cape Cod is never more poignant than in the last still blue and gold of autumn. The November sun is luminous, the sky and sea are aquamarine, and the light is the light of Greece. It was one of those translucent days on the Friday after election when my wife and I drove down from Cambridge to Hyannis Port for luncheon. The frenzy of August had gone, though people stood in quiet clusters at each end of the Kennedy block on Irving Avenue. The compound itself was tranquil and secluded in the drowsy sunlight. The Kennedys were out for a stroll on the dunes. In a moment they returned. Jack in tweed jacket, sweater and slacks, hatless and tieless, easily swinging a cane and looking fit and jaunty, and Jackie, her hair slightly blown in the breeze, glowing in beauty from the walk. One could only think, *what a wildly attractive couple*. It took another minute to remember that one was looking at the President-elect of the United States and his wife.

We sat in the living room and, except for Kennedy, sipped Bloody Marys while we chatted about the election. Jackie said, "I cast only one vote—for Jack. It is a rare thing to be able to vote for one's husband for President of the United States, and I didn't want to dilute it by voting for anyone else." Kennedy, at this stage, seemed more perplexed than bothered by the narrowness of his victory. He attributed the thin margin to the prevailing sense of prosperity and peace—people did not realize how precarious both were—and to anti-Catholic sentiment. He was particularly surprised by the result in Ohio. "Cuyahoga County [Cleveland] just didn't produce what we counted on," he said.

But the campaign did not detain him long. What concerned him as we went in for lunch was the Presidency. He brandished a collection of memoranda on the issues of transition, prepared, he said, by Clark Clifford and "Professor Neustadt of Columbia." These papers were "shrewd and helpful," he said, but the hardest problems of all would be "people" finding the right men for the right jobs. He wished Galbraith and me to collect our Cambridge ideas and send them along to Sargent Shriver, whom he had asked to take charge of recruitment.

Robert McNamara, the president of Ford, at first ducked appointment as defense secretary but after a talk he succumbed to Kennedy's persuasion.

Months before the election Kennedy had enlisted Clifford and Richard Neustadt, a political scientist who wrote Presidential Power, *to prepare these memoranda, if elected, he wanted none of the interregnal awkwardness which followed Eisenhower's election in 1952. Kennedy told Clifford, "I don't want to wake up on the morning of Nov. 9 and have to ask myself, 'What in the world do I do now?" Neustadt delivered his memorandum, which viewed the transition problem in its administrative context, on Sept. 18; Clifford delivered his, which dealt with the problem more in its policy context, the day after the election.*

Early in December, Kennedy and Eisenhower had their first formal meeting. The President-elect pre-

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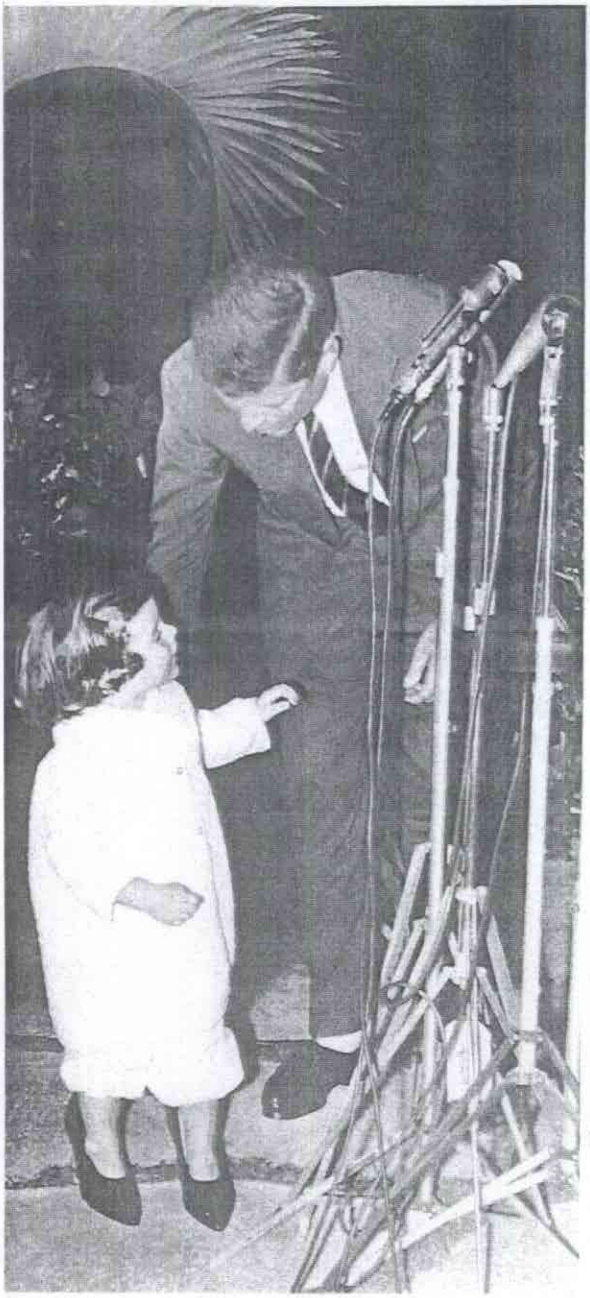
Eisenhower was impressed by J.F.K.'s depth and grasp



Thousand Days

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pared himself with great care, and the two men talked by themselves for 75 minutes before walking arm-in-arm into the Cabinet Room, where Clifford and his opposite number, General Wilton B. Persons, were waiting. Persons called Clifford later and reported that Eisenhower, who had previously called Kennedy a "young whippersnapper," was "overwhelmed by Senator Kennedy, the depth of his questions, his grasp of the issues and the keenness of his mind." The subsequent rapport between the two principals assisted the transition process.

The question of "people" became more urgent every day. Neustadt recalls Kennedy exclaiming at Palm Beach on Nov. 21, as he mixed a batch of daiquiris before dinner, "People, people, people! I don't know any people. I only know voters. How am I going to fill 1,200 jobs? . . . All I hear is the name Jim Perkins. Who in hell is Perkins?" (Perkins, who was then vice president of the Carnegie Corp. and is now president of Cornell, was a name which automatically bobbed up during the interregnum, whatever the post.)

Kennedy's acquaintance had, indeed, certain limitations. He knew relatively few bankers, industrialists, leaders of the bar, university presidents, deans, foundation officials, generals, farmers, social workers, scientists or engineers. In particular, he was little acquainted in the New York financial and legal community. The New York Establishment had looked on Kennedy with some suspicion. Now that he had been elected President, however, they were prepared to rally round; and he was prepared to receive them.

The chief agent in the negotiation was Robert Lovett, a man of great subtlety, experience and charm who had served in the Roosevelt, Truman and Eisenhower administrations. Lovett punctiliously informed Kennedy that he had voted for Nixon; but Kennedy, with the election out of the way, was losing much of his interest in how people had voted. He told Clifford, "Now, on those key jobs, I don't care whether a man is a Democrat or an Igorot. I want the best fellow I can get for the particular job."

Kennedy was prepared to offer Lovett his choice of the three top Cabinet portfolios—State, Defense and the Treasury. Lovett, while protesting how much he would like to serve, explained that he had recently gone through two bouts with bleeding ulcers and doubted his doctor would let him do it.

The President-elect talked a good deal about Cabinet problems when I saw him in Washington on Dec. 1. He told me, "It's discouraging. But I suppose that it will take a little while to develop new talent." He seemed, in general, much more on the defensive than at Hyannis Port—more oppressed by the narrowness of his victory, by the urgency of appointing people who would get along with what he was now convinced would be a "rough" and conservative Congress.

Though unable to serve himself, Lovett exerted a quiet influence on important appointments, especially Robert McNamara for Defense and Dean Rusk for State.

Robert McNamara was, indeed, an exceptional figure. A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of California in 1937, he had gone on to the Harvard Business School, where he did so well that he was appointed on graduation as an assistant professor of business administration. He was already beginning to display quiet symptoms of heterodoxy. During the 1940 election, a poll of the Business School faculty produced a vote of 92 to 2 in favor of Wendell Willkie against Franklin Roosevelt. McNamara was one of the heretics. Ending the war as a lieutenant colonel in the Air Force, McNamara then joined the Ford Motor Co., rising steadily to the top. He continued to show wayward tendencies. He declined to live with other Ford executives in Grosse Pointe, the suburb known derisively on the New Frontier as Fat

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When Caroline tottered into a Palm Beach press conference in her mother's shoes, the President-elect calmly greeted her and returned to the questions.

AUTHOR'S VIEW ON HOW JOHNSON WAS CHOSEN

J.F.K.—'I held it

This is Mr. Schlesinger's account of the circumstances surrounding President Kennedy's selection of Lyndon Johnson for Vice President. Another account was published in LIFE, June 18—a memorandum written by the late Philip Graham, publisher of the Washington Post, and incorporated in Theodore H. White's "The Making of the President—1964." In writing the account, which places less emphasis on Graham's role, Schlesinger relied not only on the publisher's memo but also on talks with a number of participants.

The week of the Democratic convention in Los Angeles had been too tense and chancy to give Kennedy time for serious thought about selecting his running mate. During the victory celebrations Wednesday night, Kennedy observed a little wistfully how terrible it was to have only 24 hours in which to make so fateful a choice. But he came that night to a quiet decision to make the first offer to Lyndon Johnson.

He decided to do this because he thought it imperative to restore relations with the Senate leader. News of this offer, Kennedy hoped, would reunite the Democrats, please the older generation of professionals, improve the ticket's chances in the South and lay the basis for future collaboration with Johnson. He was certain that there was practically no chance that Johnson would accept.

Accordingly he called Johnson's suite at 8:45 on Thursday morning. Johnson was still sleeping, and his wife answered the phone. Kennedy said that he would like to come down and see the majority leader. Lady Bird awakened her husband, who nodded assent. As she put down the phone, she burst out, "Honey, I know he's going to offer the Vice Presidency, and I hope you won't take it."

This was not Johnson's first intimation that the question might be raised. After the balloting the night before, Sam Rayburn had telephoned Johnson and said, "They are going to try to get you to go on the ticket. You mustn't do it. It would be a terrible thing to do." Johnson expressed great doubt that he would be asked, but said he would do nothing without checking with Rayburn.

Kennedy's call now made it highly likely that an offer would be forthcoming and Johnson began the telephone calls he customarily made with large decisions impending. He first alerted Rayburn, who repeated his dour warnings of the night before. He called a Texas intimate, Congressman Homer Thornberry, whom he caught shaving. Lather on his cheek, Thornberry emphatically advised Johnson not to touch the Vice Presidency. Johnson finally said, "But what will I say to Senator Kennedy?" A few minutes later Thornberry began to wonder what right he had to tell anyone that he should not become Vice President of the United States. He returned to the telephone and reported his change of mind to Johnson, who listened silently and finally said, "But what will I say to Mr. Sam?" Another adviser, Jim Rowe, started out by opposing the Vice Presidency on the ground that Johnson had more power as majority leader. When Johnson seemed not a little resistant to this argument, there flashed through Rowe's mind the astonishing thought that Johnson might be considering the idea seriously.

This was, indeed, the case. Whoever won the election, the post of Senate leader would be very different under Kennedy or Nixon from what it had been under Eisenhower. Johnson could hardly expect to retain the power he had exerted with such relish and skill in the late 1950s. Beyond this, Johnson had long wanted to be a national and not a sectional political figure. Now he saw what might be a last chance to break out of the Texas trap and become a national leader. He doubtless saw, too, a chance to save the South from growing bitterness and isolation by leading it back into the Democratic party and the national consensus.

Such considerations were probably in his mind when Kennedy arrived around 10 o'clock, and the two men sat together on a couch in the living room of the Johnson suite. Kennedy began by telling Johnson, as Johnson later recalled the incident, "that he had said many times that he thought I was the best qualified for the Presidency by experience, but that as a Southerner I could not be nominated. He said he felt that I should be the one who would succeed if anything happened to him."

Then, to Kennedy's astonishment, Johnson showed every interest in the project. "I didn't offer the Vice Presidency to him," Kennedy told a friend later. "I just held it out like this"—here he simulated taking an object out of his pocket and holding it close to his body—"and he grabbed at it." Finally Johnson asked time to think the matter over. Kennedy left, saying, "I'll call you back in two or three hours."

Kennedy returned to his own suite in a state of considerable bafflement. "You just won't believe it," he said. "... He wants it!"

Having started on the Johnson road, Kennedy had no immediate choice but to follow it a little further. He went to Rayburn and told him he wanted to be the candidate of a united party and that he planned to give the Vice President significant assignments. Rayburn called Johnson and told him he had to go on the ticket: "I'm a wiser man this morning than I was last night." Then the trouble began.

Back in his own suite, Kennedy began to review the situation. Contrary to every expectation, Johnson evidently wanted the Vice Presidency. Kennedy's problem now was whether this was the result he himself, as presidential nominee, wanted, and if not, whether he could get out of it.

As he discussed the matter with his brother Bobby, they saw strong arguments for taking Johnson. He would probably help the ticket more than anyone else because Johnson could bring with him states which Kennedy might not otherwise carry. Moreover, Johnson, as Kennedy often acknowledged, was a man of force and decision to whom, if anything happened, the government could be responsibly consigned. On the other hand, the designation of Johnson would outrage the liberal wing of the party. Kennedy began his own process of consultations. The older professionals were of course delighted at the prospect of Johnson. But most of Kennedy's own staff were in a state of shock. The labor-liberal group [which had called to discuss the Vice Presidency] doubted whether they could hold their own people in line if Johnson were chosen and predicted mutiny in the convention. Kennedy asked Arthur Goldberg to try to calm down George Meany, president of the A.F.L.-C.I.O.

The obvious next step was to find out how really interested Johnson was. Shortly after 1 o'clock, John Kennedy sent his brother to the Johnson suite to test the atmosphere. Bobby was ushered in to see Rayburn.

A few moments later, Phil Graham, unaware of the spectacular developments of the morning, wandered into the Johnson suite. Johnson seized him and took him into the bedroom along with Lady Bird. Bobby Kennedy, Johnson said, was in another part of the suite with Rayburn, presumably offering the Vice Presidency. He kept asking Graham what he thought, and Graham finally said that he had to take the Vice Presidency.

At this point Rayburn entered to report that Robert Kennedy wanted to see Johnson. Finally it was agreed that Johnson should talk only to the principal; and Graham was instructed to pass this word. Graham dragged Jim Rowe along as a witness, and the two went to a vacant bedroom.

Telephoning is always an ordeal at conventions; reaching the suite of the nominee is almost an impossibility. This was Phil Graham's signal contribution to the events of that wild afternoon. He had everyone's private phone number; and in a situation where each of the principals was surrounded by people urging him to back away from the deal, Graham alone was able to force them into contact with each other. He reached Kennedy about 2:30 and told him that Johnson was expecting word directly from him. Kennedy replied that he was in a mess because some of the liberals were against Johnson. He asked Graham to call back for a decision "in three minutes."

Graham and Rowe agreed that in these circumstances "three minutes" meant 10, and about 2:45 Graham called back. Kennedy said that it was all set. "Tell Lyndon I want him and will have David Lawrence nominate him."

Graham returned to the main Johnson suite about 3:20 and found Johnson "considerably on edge." No call had come; what was up? Graham, noting the private phone numbers in Johnson's bedroom (the Johnson switchboard had broken down), said that he would get in touch with Kennedy. When he reached Kennedy 10 minutes later, Kennedy said that he had supposed that his earlier word to Graham would suffice. But he brought up the liberal protests again. Phil replied that Southern gains would more than offset liberal losses and added that it was too late for mind-changing: "You ain't no Adlai."

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that Robert Kennedy should make one more attempt to talk directly to Johnson and, if he were still in doubt, offer the gathering liberal revolt as an excuse for his withdrawal. Bobby went over sometime between 3 and 4 and came quickly to the point. He said that he was there to report that an ugly floor fight was in prospect. If Senator Johnson did not want to subject himself to this kind of unpleasantness, Senator Kennedy would fully understand. Should Johnson prefer to withdraw, the candidate would wish to make him chairman of the Democratic National Committee. Johnson said with great and mournful emotion, "I want to be Vice President and, if the candidate will have me, I'll join with him in making a fight for it." Robert Kennedy said cryptically, "He wants you to be Vice President if you want to be Vice President."

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John Connally and Bobby Baker, the secretary of the Democratic majority of the Senate, joined them. Johnson, greatly agitated, shouted to Graham that Bobby Kennedy had just said that the opposition was too great and that he should withdraw for the sake of the party. When Johnson finished, everyone started to speak. Someone's voice—either Rayburn's or Rowe's—pierced the uproar, saying, "Phil, call Jack."

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Thousand Days

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He slept in Lincoln's bed and tried the buttons on his desk

Thousand Days

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Georgetown house some morning about 2 a.m., look up and down the street, and if there's no one there, I'll whisper, 'It's Bobby.' "

When the moment finally came, and the brothers started out the door to face the press, Kennedy said, "Damn it, Bobby, comb your hair." Then: "Don't smile too much or they'll think we are happy about the appointment."

I had luncheon with Bobby in Washington the day before his appointment was announced. He seemed both rueful and fatalistic about his prospective eminence. He asked whether it would be agreeable if he suggested to his brother that I come down as a special assistant to the President and serve as a sort of roving reporter and troubleshooter. I told him I would be delighted to take the job.

While Kennedy was choosing the members of his Administration, he was engagnd in still another, and quite separate, effort to chart the main directions of policy. For this purpose, he set up a series of task forces. In addition to the seven set up during the campaign, 19 more were at work by mid-December—11 in foreign policy and eight in domestic policy. Three additional domestic policy groups were added in January. By Inauguration Day, 24 of the 29 groups had turned in their reports. Kennedy did not read every word of every report, but he looked at them all and studied some with care. Though he sent along most of the reports to the Cabinet or agency head who would become responsible after Jan. 20, he clearly considered the task force effort as, above all, a service for himself.

So the transition proceeded, with Kennedy presiding benignly over this diversity of activities and making sure that every thread was securely in his own hands. His second child, John Jr., had been born at the end of November. The birth was difficult, and Jacqueline was making a slow recovery. This meant that she had to stay in Palm Beach, and it meant too that the President-elect spent as much time as he could there in the days between the election and the inauguration. The time passed placidly in Florida, punctuated by visitations from political dignitaries, press conferences (with Caroline teetering into the room in her mother's shoes), meetings with the new Cabinet members and with the staff, swimming and golf.

The placidity was not complete. One Sunday morning in December, a man named Richard P. Pavlick parked his car in front of the Kennedy house to wait for the President-elect to drive to Mass. He had loaded the car with seven sticks of dynamite, and his idea was to ram the Kennedy automobile and pull the switch that would set off the explosion. As Kennedy prepared to leave his house, Jacqueline and Caroline came to the door with him to say goodby. Pavlick suddenly thought that he did not wish to kill Kennedy in front of his wife or children and decided instead to try again later. Though the Secret Service had received word that Pavlick had been uttering threats against the President-elect, they did not know until the following Wednesday that he was actually in Palm Beach. They immediately searched the town and the following day took him into custody.

On Jan. 9 Kennedy came to Cambridge to address the Massachusetts legislature and attend a meeting of the Harvard Board of Overseers. After luncheon he set up headquarters in my house on Irving Street. It was a gray, chilly day. He received a stream of visitors through the afternoon. At some point between interviews the President-elect turned to me, mentioned my conversation with Bobby in December and asked whether I was ready to work at the White House. I said, "I am not sure what I would be doing as special assistant, but if you think I can help, I would like very much to come." He said, "Well, I am not sure what I will be doing as President either, but I am sure there will be enough at the White House to keep us both busy." I then asked whether this was firm enough in his mind for me to request leave from Harvard. He said, "Yes—but we won't say anything about this until Chester Bowles is confirmed [as Under Secretary of State]. I don't want the Senate to think that I am bringing down the whole A.D.A."

He went south that evening and in the next few days began work on his Inaugural Address. Jacqueline still had to spend much of her time in bed, and the President-elect would come to her room after breakfast, puffing his cigar, a yellow legal-sized pad of lined paper in his hand, and sit on the edge of the bed. They would chat, and often he would read her sentences and paragraphs from his notes, then scribble a few lines, cross out others and put the sheets of paper on his already overflowing desk. Jackie never heard the speech as a whole until Inauguration Day, but she had heard most of it in snatches in the small bedroom at Palm Beach.

On Jan. 19 Kennedy held a final meeting with Eisenhower. The discussion concentrated on points of crisis, and especially on the mounting difficulties in Laos. Eisenhower said that Laos was the key to all Southeast Asia. Laos, he said with solemnity, was so important that if it reached the state where we could not persuade others to act with us, then he would be willing, "as a last desperate hope, to intervene unilaterally." Kennedy, listening quietly, asked how long it would take to put an American combat division into Laos. Secretary Gates replied 12 to 17 days from the United States, and less if we used troops already stationed in the Pacific.

Secretary of the Treasury Anderson spoke about the balance-of-payments crisis. The erosion of the gold position, he said, was continuing unabated.

The *tour d'horizon* reached Cuba. On Nov. 18 Kennedy had learned for the first time from Allen Dulles and Richard Bissell of the CIA that on March 17, 1960 the Eisenhower administration had decided to equip and drill Cuban exiles for possible action against the Castro regime. The outgoing President now said that it was "the policy of this government" to aid anti-Castro guerrilla forces "to the utmost." Eisenhower recommended that "this effort be continued and accelerated."

On Jan. 20, as he took the presidential oath in the freezing cold, these became John F. Kennedy's problems.

That night he slept tranquilly in Lincoln's bed and woke very early the next morning. Jacqueline joined him and they sat for a time on the bed together while the morning sun streamed through the windows. Soon he was off with springy step to the presidential office in the West Wing. He tried out the buttons on his desk and explored the West Wing, seeking out the offices of his staff.

President Truman stopped by to pay his respects; it was his first visit to the White House since he had left it himself eight years before. After a few moments, Kennedy took him back to the mansion to make a call on Jackie. They burst into her room without warning to find her flat on her back in bed while Dr. Janet Travell worked to take a kink out of a muscle. Truman blushed and the men quickly retreated. Then Kennedy put his head in the door and said, "Now can I bring him in?" They returned and had a gay talk, the old and the new President and the young wife.

It was a happy day.

NEXT WEEK: PART II

Kennedy and the Disaster at the Bay of Pigs

Schlesinger gives an insider's account of the controversial attempt to overthrow Castro—what the CIA and Joint Chiefs advised, how Kennedy gave the fateful go-ahead.

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