

THE KENNEDY I KNEW BY THEODORE C. SORENSEN

THE FIRST TIME I met John Kennedy, I was immediately impressed by his "ordinary" demeanor—a quality that in itself is extraordinary among politicians. He spoke easily, but almost shyly, without the customary verbosity and pomposity. The tailor-made suit that clothed a tall, lean frame was quietly stylish. A tatch of chestnut hair was not as bushy as cartoonists had portrayed it. He did not try to impress me, as officeholders so often do on first meetings, with the strength of his handshake, or the importance of his office, or the sound of his voice.

We talked briefly on that morning in early January, 1953, about my application for a job in his new Senate office. I had come to that meeting with more hope than expectation. A month earlier, when I reviewed with a knowledgeable Washington attorney the list of new senators for whom I might work, he had snorted at the name of Kennedy. "Jack Kennedy," he said, "wouldn't hire anyone Joe Kennedy wouldn't tell him to hire—and, with the exception of Jim Landis, Joe Kennedy hasn't hired a non-Catholic in 50 years!"

Both of these suppositions turned out to be false. But it was true that Congressman Kennedy's election to the Senate from Massachusetts, after three elections to the House, had not inspired any predictions of greatness in the national press or in Democratic party circles. The intellectual journals of opinion had doubts about his credentials as a liberal, about his religion and, above all, about his father. The more popular press emphasized the financial cost of his campaign, the participation of his family, his new tea-party technique of electioneering and the sympathy evoked in female hearts by his tousled hair and boyish looks. No one stopped to think that more than tea and sympathy must have been required for Kennedy, in the face of Eisenhower's sweep of Massachusetts, to oust Eisenhower's campaign manager, the well-known Henry Cabot Lodge, who had first been elected to the Senate when Kennedy was a freshman in college.

Except for the Palm Beach tan on a handsome, youthful face, I saw few signs of glamour and glitter in the Senator-elect that winter morning. His Senate offices were not yet available. A new congressman was moving into his old House suite, and it was in the congressman's outer office, sitting almost in the doorway amidst the clutter and confusion of two staffs, that we talked very briefly about the salary, my experience and his needs in the office. He listened attentively and promised an early decision about the job. The occasional tapping of his fingers on his teeth and knee, I later learned, was a habitual sign of his restless energy—not impatient irritation.

A few days later, we talked briefly again. This time, I presumptuously raised a few questions of my own to satisfy myself as to his convictions and my role. Then, on the basis of these two hurried conversations of some five minutes each, he offered me the position of No. 2 legislative assistant in his Senate office—for a temporary "trial" period of one year. I accepted.

The Kennedy campaign slogan in 1952 had been "He can do more for Massachusetts," and he wanted a man to help him translate the slogan into a legislative program to help the New England economy. Having never been to New England or studied much economics, but sharing his concern for the unemployed, I started to work.

I cannot single out any one day as the time I began to understand John Kennedy as a human being. The freshman Senator from Massachusetts, with all of his "ordinary" ways, was an enormously complex and extraordinarily competent man. I came to marvel at his ability to look at his strengths and weaknesses with utter detachment, his candid and objective responses to all public questions, and his insistence on cutting through prevailing bias and myths to the heart of a problem. He hated no enemy, he wept at no adversity. He was neither willing nor able to be flamboyant or melodramatic. But I also learned in time that the cool, analytical mind was stimulated by a warm, compassionate heart. Beneath the careful

pragmatic approach lay increasingly deep convictions on basic goals and unusual determination to achieve them. "Once you say you're going to settle for second," he said in 1960 regarding the Vice-Presidency, "that's what happens to you in life, I find." Jack Kennedy never settled for second if first was available.

Many who knew him only casually mistook his refusal to display emotion as a lack of concern or commitment. James MacGregor Burns, whose pre-Presidential Kennedy biography and subsequent public statements made much of this point, irritated the Senator (and his wife) considerably. "Burns seems to feel," he told me, "that unless somebody overstates or shouts at the top of his voice, he is not concerned about a matter." Those of us who came to know him well, though we rarely heard him discuss his personal feelings, came to know the strength and warmth of his dedication as well as his logic. As John Buchan wrote of a friend in John Kennedy's favorite book: "He disliked emotion, not because he felt lightly, but because he felt deeply." Beneath that seemingly fortunate and gay exterior lay an acute awareness of the most sobering kinds of tragedy. He lived with the memory of a much-admired older brother killed in the war, and the memory of a sister killed in a plane crash overseas. Add to this a history of illness, pain and injury since childhood, and the fact that another sister was confined to a home for the mentally retarded, and one understands his human sensitivity. No mention was ever made of any of these subjects by the Senator. But his familiarity with tragedy had produced in him both a desire to enjoy the world and a desire to improve it; and these two desires, particularly in the years preceding 1953, had sometimes been in conflict.

His mental processes—so direct and clear-cut in conversation—were not uncomplicated either. He was at that time considered with some disdain to be an intellectual by most Massachusetts politicians, and considered with equal disdain to be a politician by most Massachusetts intel-
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tuals. As an undergraduate at Harvard, particularly during his early years, he was thought by one of his tutors (Professor, later Ambassador, John Kenneth Galbraith) to be "gay, charming, irreverent, good-looking and far from diligent." Yet he graduated *cum laude*. At the age of 23, he had expanded his highly regarded senior thesis into a distinguished book, *Why England Slept*. At the age of 35, he continued to be widely read in history, biography and politics. But he had little interest in abstract theories. He primarily sought truths upon which he could act.

His reasons for seeking political office were mixed. In subsequent years, he would scoff at the magazine writers who explained his career in terms of some single psychological motivation—to prove himself to his father, or to outdo his late older brother, or to preserve an old family custom, or to be the instrument of Irish revenge. He had in fact assumed as a youth that politics was barred to him as long as his older brother Joe—more robust and extroverted and nearer to the traditional image of a Massachusetts politician—aspired to that profession. Early in our acquaintance, he told me that he had considered a career as a lawyer, a journalist or possibly a professor of history or political science or an officer in the Foreign Service. But after Joe's death, he entered the political arena—not to take Joe's place, as has

often been alleged, not to compete subconsciously with him, but as an expression of his own ideals and interests.

His entry was neither involuntary nor illogical. "Everything seemed to point to it in 1946," he said. As a boy, he had accompanied his grandfather Fitzgerald to political rallies. Old-time Boston chronicler Clem Norron believes young Jack's first speech was to a group of Fitzgerald's cronies at a Parker House hotel gathering. After the boy had been waiting outside for an hour or so, he was brought in, and old John F. picked him up and placed him on a table with the words: "Here's my grandson, here's the finest grandson in the world." To which young John F. responded: "My grandpa is the finest grandpa in the world." And the crowd cheered Jack Kennedy's first public speech.

At Harvard, he had spent a year reading every utterance of an obscure Republican congressman. ("The thought," he later wrote, "that some zealous and critical sophomore is now dissecting my own record in a similar class often causes me some concern.") As a student and assistant to his father, he had met politicians in England, France and elsewhere. And in a brief fling at journalism, he had observed power politics at Potsdam and the San Francisco United Nations Conference and covered the British elections.

CHAPTER TWO

By the time we met in 1953, he had achieved considerable success as a politician, but he had no grandiose picture of himself as a chosen savior of mankind. Herecognized, with his customary objectivity that put both modesty and ego aside, that he possessed abilities, ideals and public appeal that could be combined to help the nation with whatever problems it faced.

When I first began to work for him, it seemed we had nothing in common. He was worth an estimated ten million dollars and had been accustomed to the social circles of Palm Beach, New York and the French Riviera. My own background was typical of a middle-income family in a Middle Western city, Lincoln, Nebr.

I had never been out of the United States. But the Senator, as a student, tourist, assistant to his Ambassador father (1938), naval officer (1941-1945), journalist (1941 and 1945) and Congressman (1947-1953), had traveled to every major continent and talked with the presidents and prime ministers, the shopkeepers and scholars, of 37 countries.

I had been 17 years old when the Second World War ended. He had been one of its genuine combat heroes.

He had attended Choate Preparatory School for boys, graduated with honors from Harvard and studied briefly at Princeton, Stanford and the London School of Economics. My total tuition in six years at the University of Nebraska could not

have paid for a single year at Harvard.

He was a Catholic—by heritage, habit and conviction—and a friend of cardinals. I was a Unitarian, a denomination at the opposite end of the religious spectrum.

His father had gained fame and power through skillful, sometimes cynical, operations in the worlds of finance and commerce; and Joseph Kennedy's 1940 break with Franklin Roosevelt, after holding a series of appointive offices under him, had been followed by an increasingly outspoken conservatism, although he remained a registered Democrat. My father, on the other hand, had been a crusading lawyer and reformer.

As a Congressman and candidate for the Senate, Jack Kennedy had been privately scornful of what he called the "real liberals," and he knew and cared comparatively little about the problems of civil rights and civil liberties. I had helped organize a chapter of the ADA and a local race-relations organization and had lobbied in Nebraska for a Fair Employment Practices bill.

Yet all these differences made very little difference in his attitude. He was not simply a sum of all the elements in his background—a Catholic war veteran from a wealthy Boston family who had graduated from Harvard. His most important qualities he had acquired and developed on his own; and those who attempted to pigeonhole him according to the categories in his case history were sadly mistaken.

Clearly he was proud of his Purple Heart and

his Navy and Marine Corps Medal, but he never boasted or even reminisced about his wartime experiences or complained about his wounds. When a flippant high-school youth asked him, as we walked down a street in Ashland, Wis., in 1959, how he came to be a hero, he gaily replied, "It was easy—they sank my boat."

He was unawed by generals and admirals (even more so as President) and had grave doubts about military indoctrination. When still hospitalized by the Navy in 1944, he had written to a friend concerning the "superhuman ability of the Navy to screw up everything they touch.

"Even the simple delivery of a letter frequently overburdens this heaving puffing war machine of ours. God save this country of ours from those patriots whose war cry is, 'What this country needs is to be run with military efficiency.'"

He did not believe that all non-Catholics would (or should) go to hell. He felt neither self-conscious nor superior about his religion, but simply accepted it as part of his life. He resented the attempt of an earlier biographer to label him as "not deeply religious," for he faithfully attended Mass each Sunday, even in the midst of fatiguing out-of-state travels when no voter would know whether he attended services or not. But not once in 11 years—despite all our discussions of church-state affairs—did he ever disclose his personal views on man's relation to God.

He did not require or prefer Catholics on his staff, and neither knew nor cared about our religious beliefs. Many of his close friends were not Catholics. He cared not a whit for theology, sprinkled quotations from the Protestant version of the Bible throughout his speeches, and once amused his wife by reading his favorite passage from Ecclesiastes ("... a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance ...") with his own irreverent addition from the political world: "a time to fish and a time to cut bait." I never heard him pray aloud in the presence of others, never saw him kiss a bishop's ring, and never knew him to alter his religious practices for political convenience. "There is an old saying in Boston," he said, "that 'we get our religion from Rome and our politics at home.'"

He was born to money and did not hesitate to spend it, but he had no special interest in accumulating more of it. He had nothing in common with those wealthy individuals who were indifferent to the needs of others. He consistently voted—on oil and gas issues, for example—against his own (and his father's) pocketbook. His father had never pressed him or any of the Kennedy brothers to follow in his financial footsteps. Having never had to think about money, the Senator often left Washington without it, and would reimburse me for tabs I picked up in our travels. It is said that in his first campaign for Congress, his mother, after relating her son's talents to a cabdriver, found herself presented with a request for payment of a \$1.85 fare he had run up in that very cab earlier in the campaign.

Although he once expressed astonishment that I would ride a streetcar home, he never drove

the most expensive car and returned, with regrets to the dealer, a flashy white Jaguar his wife gave him for Christmas in 1957. They lived in a fashionable but unpretentious house and avoided the Washington cocktail circuit.

He never owned a house in Boston. As a Congressman and Senator, he maintained a voting residence in a somewhat plain and faded apartment building at 122 Bowdoin Street, across from the Massachusetts State House, but he was rarely there when not campaigning. The fact that several other Kennedys and their families for a time claimed the same three-room apartment (No. 36) as their voting address was a source of some amusement and some irritation to local politicians. "If he's elected President," one was reported to have said, "he'll be the first carpet-bagger voter to get to the White House." From time to time, prior to his 1958 reelection, the Senator considered buying a house in Boston—but since his winters were spent in Washington, New York and Palm Beach, he settled instead for a summer home on Cape Cod.

As a Senator from Massachusetts, he did not insist that his professional staff members come from the state they would be serving and studying. In fact, he preferred that they did not. "That way," he told me, "if they don't work out, I'm under no political pressure or obligation to retain them." He was, however, amused that his assistant on New England's economic problems came from Nebraska.

He entered Congress, he freely admitted, with little or no political philosophy. The aggressive attitudes of many "professional liberals" made him "uncomfortable." But he was not opposed, as he wrote me in the fall of 1959, "to the liberal credo as it is generally assumed. You are certainly regarded as a liberal, and I hope I am in the general sense, but we both speak disparagingly of those doctrinaire 'liberals' . . . who are so opposed to me. . . . The word 'conservative' has many implications with which I do not want to be identified. 'Restrained' is more exact. I know too many conservatives in politics with whom I have nothing in common." When asked which kind of President he hoped to be, liberal or conservative, he replied, "I hope to be responsible." Perhaps his wife summed him up best: "an idealist without illusions." As Senator, candidate and President, his tests were: Can it work? Can it help? And, often but not always: Can it pass?

He could grasp the essence of a complex subject with amazing speed, and his natural instincts were almost always on the progressive side of an issue. But his natural caution required him to test those instincts against evidence and experience. He was a pragmatist with a strong streak of idealism and optimism. To be reminded by daily disappointments that he lived in an imperfect world did not surprise or depress him—but he cared enough about the future of that world never to be satisfied with the present.

For the most part, all of the foregoing would serve to describe him in 1963 as well as 1953. But he was not the same man. For no attribute

he possessed in 1953 was more pronounced or more important than his capacity for growth; his determination to profit by experience. He had a limitless curiosity about nearly everything—people, places, the past, the future. Those who had nothing to say made him impatient. He hated to bore or be bored. But he enjoyed listening at length to anyone with new information or ideas on almost any subject; and he never forgot what he heard. He read constantly and rapidly—magazines, newspapers, biography and history (as well as fiction both good and bad). And more astonishing was the accuracy with which he remembered and applied what he read.

In my daily contacts with him, the many changes that this growth and self-education produced rarely seemed pronounced; but looking back over the little less than 11 years in which we worked together, I can see that he changed in many ways—and that he was more than 11 years older. Least important were the outward changes. He became handsomer as he grew grayer, the full face and broad shoulders of maturity providing a more striking and appealing presence than the earlier boyishness. His face became more lined, but the ready smile, the thoughtful eyes and the lack of affectation all remained. He had his hair cut (whatever his office, by the same House Office Building barber) a little less fully in later years, but it was always more ample than anyone else's. In fact, when chided by staff members on the regular scalp massages a succession of secretaries were trained to give him—a custom acquired from his father—he observed that he was the only one in the room who received such special hair treatment "and the only one with all his hair."

His clothes continued to be expensive but always conservative and—once he became a Senator and a married man—always neat. He rarely worked in his shirt-sleeves and never with his tie loosened, though he would sometimes jerk out the tail of his monogrammed shirt to clean the glasses he occasionally wore for reading. From time to time, he would try wearing a hat or a vest to allay fears about his youth, but it never lasted. And he never tried to appear more "folksy" by wearing, in either work or play, an informal bow tie, a gaudy shirt, a light-colored suit or a multi-colored handkerchief in his breast pocket. He changed clothes frequently and knew his large wardrobe intimately. When I needed a necktie in the midst of the 1960 campaign, Dave Powers

handed me one he was sure the Senator never wore. But the candidate's first words on entering the room were: "Is that my tie you're wearing?"

These outward changes over the years were pale in comparison to the more profound changes in his personality and philosophy.

He became less shy and more poised in his public appearances. The youthful aspirant for Congress who had reluctantly toured taverns and textile mills in search of Massachusetts voters, who even as a Presidential hopeful felt he might impose upon, or be rejected by, each new group of voters, became in time the President who welcomed every opportunity to get away from his desk and get back to the people. While most of the shyness in public disappeared, a well-bred deference in private did not. No one was ever addressed as "fellow," "son," "old man" or "old boy." The wives of his associates were always addressed as "Mrs.," most officeholders, particularly his elders, by their titles or as "Mr."

He became, if not less demanding of his staff, at least more apologetic about disrupting their lives and schedules; and the same was true of the general public. In 1953, as he parked his car in front of a "No Parking" sign in downtown Washington, he smilingly told me, "This is what Hamlet means by 'the insolence of office.'" But little more than ten years later, in November, 1963, he insisted in New York on dismissing the usual Presidential police escort on his ride from the airport to the city, accepting the delays of traffic because of the inconvenience his rush-hour arrival would otherwise create for New Yorkers.

Though his mind had increasingly more with which to be preoccupied, he became less absent-minded and better organized, with an amazing ability to compartmentalize different dates and duties. Even as his schedule tightened and his burdens grew, he acquired more respect for punctuality. He was still always in a hurry and often behind in his appointments, but he less often kept other officials waiting unnecessarily, or asked airlines to hold their flights, or drove dangerously fast on public highways. In his last-minute dashes to the airport during the early Senate days, he would take me along to talk business as he drove, and aide "Muggsy" O'Leary to handle parking and luggage. Muggsy reserved the front seat on these high-speed trips, calling it the "death seat." I acceded to his preference only for fear that, if I were in the back seat, Kennedy would turn around to talk to me as he drove.

CHAPTER THREE

There was a curious dichotomy in Kennedy's attitude toward the press. He regarded reporters as his natural friends and newspapers as his natural enemies. He was more concerned about a news column read by thousands than a newscast viewed by millions. He both assisted and resented the press corps in its role

of dogging his every footstep. He had an inexhaustible capacity to take displeasure from what he read, particularly in the first half of his term, and an equally inexhaustible capacity to keep on reading more than anyone else in Washington. He always expected certain writers and publications to be inconsistent and inaccurate, but was always indignant when they were. He could

find and fret over one paragraph of criticism deep in ten paragraphs of praise. Few, if any, Presidents could have been more objective about their own faults, or objected more to seeing them in print. Few, if any, Presidents could have been so utterly frank and realistic in their private conversations with reporters, and so uncommonly candid in public, but few, on the other hand, could have been so skillful in evading or even misleading the press whenever secrecy was required. Finally, few, if any, Presidents could have been more accessible and less guarded with individual reporters and editors, or more outraged when anyone else "leaked" a story.

The President knew that the fairness, if not the favoritism, of the reporters covering his campaign had helped elect him, but he also knew that the overwhelming proportion of editors and publishers had been out to defeat him.

At the heart of it all was an attitude he had expressed to me as Senator when complimenting me on my friendships with Massachusetts reporters. "Always remember," he had added, "that their interests and ours ultimately conflict."

From 1957 through 1960 through 1963, John Kennedy's tide of favorable publicity, only some of which he stimulated, helped build his popularity. Certainly it irritated his opponents. But gradually, the conflict to which he referred, which had nothing to do with partisan loyalties or charges of a "one-party press," grew clearer to both of us, particularly in the White House.

As President, he preferred to correct his errors before they were exposed; the press preferred to expose them before they could be corrected. "We're looking for flaws," was the way one White House reporter summed up his role, "and we'll find them. There are flaws in anybody."

The President shrugged off many but by no means all critical stories with a favorite phrase: "They have to write something." Those who wrote in 1961 that he was enamored of power, he noted, were writing in 1962 that he was preoccupied with its limitations. Those who wrote in 1962 that he was not spending his popularity were writing in 1963 that he had taken on too many fights. The reporter who purported to discover "Kennedy's Grand Strategy" for an article in 1962 wrote another article, in the same magazine one year later, entitled "The Collapse of Kennedy's Grand Design."

It is not surprising that Kennedy was more disappointed by unjust errors or abuse in the columns of those newsmen or newspapers he considered fair or friendly than of those he had long since dismissed as hopelessly unfriendly.

His general rule was to say comparatively little to a reporter in confidence, even "off the record," that he could not afford to have published. Occasionally, in fact, he would confide "secrets" to a newspaperman, in the gravest of tones, with the full knowledge that this was the best way to get them published.

Occasionally one of his journalistic friends would take what the President thought was improper advantage of his familiarity with life at

the Kennedys'. His refusal to end his long-standing personal ties with these men also caused some resentment among their competitors. But when mistakenly charged with authorizing, encouraging or providing the erroneous information in a Charles Bartlett-Stewart Alsop article on the Cuban missile crisis, the President, unwilling either to repudiate his friends or to cause more damage by specifying where they erred, was equally unwilling to take responsibility for what his friends wrote. He said to me later, "I've never told Bartlett what to write—so I can't start telling him what not to write."

Kennedy's magazine reading was omnivorous, covering at least 16 periodicals including such varied fare as LOOK, the *New Yorker*, the *New Republic* and *Sports Illustrated*. But he did not read everything. He almost never read *U.S. News and World Report*, for example, on the grounds that it had little news and less to report. Yet he read *Time* and *Newsweek* faithfully and felt their condensed hindsight often influenced their readers more than daily newspaper stories. He had his disagreements with *Newsweek*, particularly on the inaccuracies in its political-gossip column in the front, but *Time* was a source of special despair. For unlike *U.S. News and World Report*, it was well-written. Unlike the *Chicago Tribune*, it gave an impression of objectivity. It was in Kennedy's opinion consistently slanted, unfair and inaccurate in its treatment of his Presidency, highly readable but highly misleading.

He never tried to use his position to intimidate a reporter's thinking, to secure his dismissal, to withhold news privileges from opposition papers, to require the publication or suppression of timely stories, to falsify facts deliberately as a means of covering up errors, to blanket as "secret" or "private" any matters that deserved to be known, or to shift the blame for his errors to others. It is true that he informed his friends in the press corps of stories they had written that he liked and stories that he disliked, through phone calls, notes and staff relays. As a Senator, he had gone even farther, writing a letter of thanks in response to every friendly editorial and answering many of the critical ones. A Portland, Maine, editor told me his publisher had suggested to him when he was hired, "Anytime you think no one in Washington is reading you, put in a good word about Senator Kennedy, and you'll get a letter the next week."

Prior to almost every press conference, he protested privately and only half seriously that he did not feel like facing the press, that he envied de Gaulle's practice of meeting correspondents only twice a year and accepting only questions carefully planted in advance to which the answers had been carefully memorized. Yet he always returned pleased with his own performance, occasionally resentful of a nasty question, but eager to tune in to watch the rebroadcast, chuckling appreciatively at some of his own answers.

He was not unprotected and unprepared: The day before the conference, which was usually fixed publicly two or more days in advance,

Pierre Salinger met with the information officers of major departments to gather their material on current issues. The President pored over this material, much of which was not too useful, and then breakfasted at 8:45 a.m. on the day of the conference with several advisers, including the Vice-President and the Secretary of State. On the basis of our own reading, Pierre and I prepared lengthy lists of possible difficult questions, usually far more difficult than most of those asked, and the breakfast was customarily spent reviewing those questions and their answers.

On most of the questions Pierre or I read off, he simply nodded for the next one, a signal that he felt confident he could handle that subject. On others, he asked questions of those present or directed that more information be obtained. His answers were never written out or practiced; he simply wanted to feel comfortable with each possible subject. Our discussions frequently produced humorous answers, which were usually robarbed for his serious consideration but which at times I could detect him deliberating as he listened to an actual question at the conference. "It is dangerous to have them in the back of my head," he once told me; and he predicted from the tone of our discussion one morning that the press conference that evening would become "The 6 o'Clock Comedy Hour."

At times, on more serious matters, he would threaten during the breakfast to speak some harsh truth or opinion that caused shudders in the Department of State. "If I followed your advice on every topic you want me to avoid answering," he said one morning, "I would stand up there with nothing to say." Later, when it was suggested that he might be asked about a recent stream of astonishing remarks former President Harry Truman had volunteered on such subjects as taxes and racial intermarriage, President Kennedy observed: "Compared with Truman's advisers, you fellows don't have any problems."

From 3 to 3:40 p.m., we usually met with him once more as he dressed in his bedroom, reviewing last-minute changes and developments. Then he would hurry out with Salinger, muttering once again that he felt doubtful and defenseless about the whole thing.

Regular press conferences and, equally important, the preparation for them had many values. "It's like preparing for a final exam twice a month," the President commented.

On very few occasions, Kennedy received advance word, usually through Salinger, that a particular question would be asked; and on even fewer occasions, no more than a dozen in three years, he arranged to plant a pertinent question in advance. Nor did he attempt to select only friendly reporters in singling out one of the many on their feet after each answer. Many of those with whom he was most friendly asked unfriendly questions, to which he never objected. The sharper the question, the more sharply he felt he could answer. Often, he was champing to give his answer before the question was completed. Questions asked by female correspondents invariably

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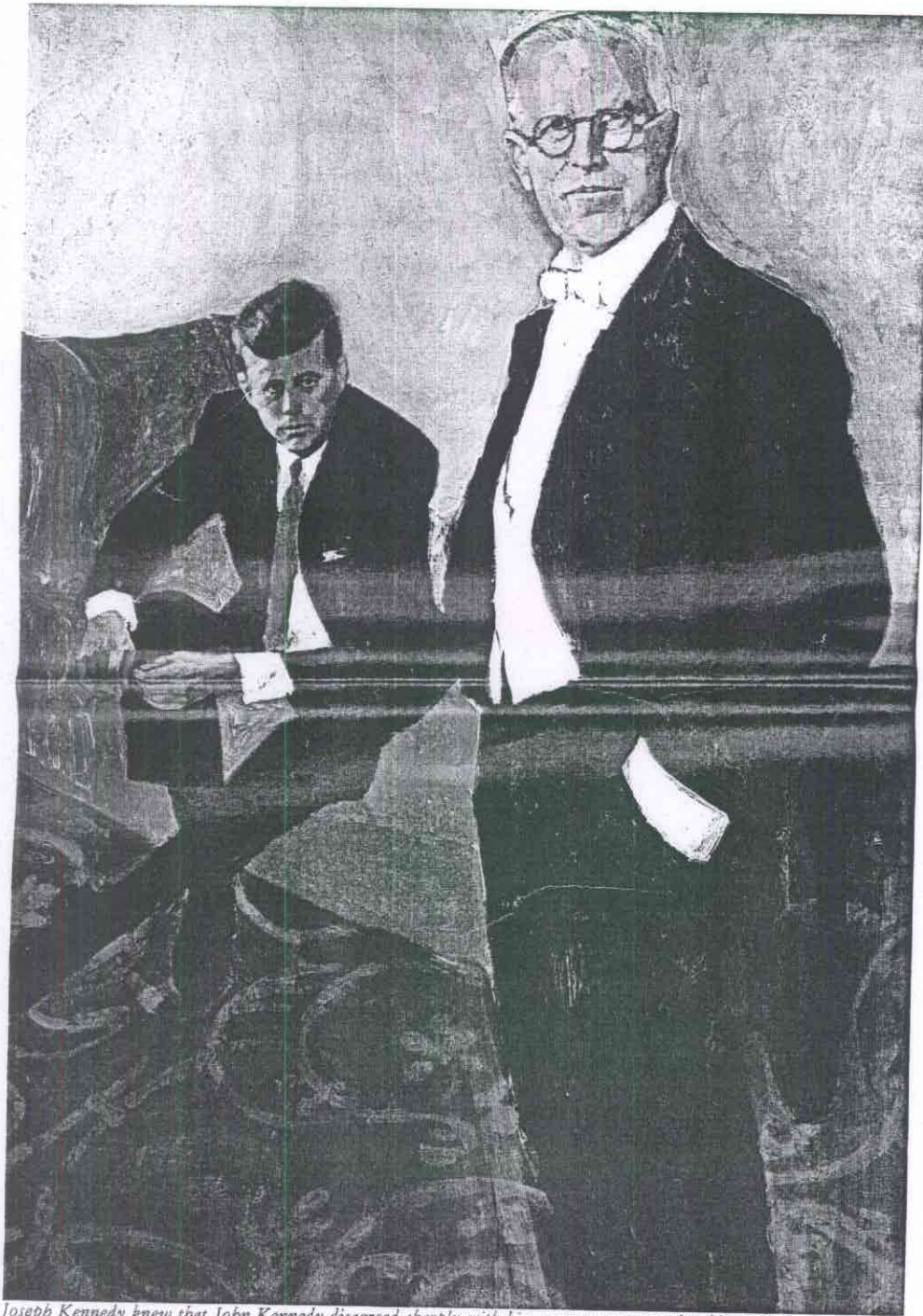


The Kennedy family gathers at the National Guard Armory in Hyannis Port the morning after the 1960 election. Front row: Joseph P. Rose,



Jacqueline, the President-elect and Eunice. Back row: Bobby, Teddy (behind Joseph), Joan, Eitel (behind Jacqueline), and Stephen Smith.

continued



Joseph Kennedy knew that John Kennedy disagreed sharply with him on most matters of public policy.

provided an element of entertainment, if not information. He knew that May Craig's questions were more likely to be puzzling than weighty; but he always shared the television viewers' curiosity about what her question would be, and he always called on her.

One lady reporter provoked a rare show of anger by using a question to brand two State Department employees as "well-known security risks." The President responded immediately that he was familiar with both men, their records and their assignments, which he believed they could carry out "without detriment to the interests of the United States, and I hope without detriment to their characters by your question." But he continued to call on this reporter at every conference. "I'd like to pass her by," he once confided, "but something always draws me to recognize her."

Clearly, in later years, Kennedy was more liberal than he had been as a young Congressman who had, in his words, "just come out of my father's house." He still refused to think in terms of accepted stereotypes or to talk in terms of sweeping generalities or to act in terms of dogmatic solutions. But he cared more about ideas and ideals where once he had cared chiefly about winning. He had talked to me coolly in our first meeting about the statistics of unemployment in Lawrence, Mass. But as we drove through West Virginia in 1960, he climbed back into the car after a visit to a jobless miner's shack visibly moved. He shook his head and said nothing. Unlike those liberals who start out with all the answers, he had started out asking questions.

In the early stages of his public career, his foreign-policy speeches had a militant ring. But with increased perspective and responsibility came a renewed commitment to peace. Nothing gave him greater satisfaction in the White House than signing the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

The Senator who in 1954 paid little attention to the historic Supreme Court school-desegregation decision became, less than a decade later, the first President in history to invoke all the executive, legislative and moral powers of his office in behalf of equal rights.

The young Congressman who voted for the McCarran Internal Security Act, and who was—by his own admission—insufficiently sensitive to the ruin of reputations by McCarthyism, became the President who awarded the Enrico Fermi Award to the much abused J. Robert Oppenheimer, pardoned Communist leader Junius Scales, halted the postal interception of Communist propaganda, welcomed the controversial Linus Pauling into the White House and appointed to his Administration several of McCarthy's targets.

He was fully aware of his own growth and evolution. He was, in fact, disappointed that the Burns biography of 1959 had not emphasized "a far greater evolution than he suggests. He could contrast my indifferent record at school with my present intensity." The Senator candidly compared his political development with his scholastic performance. "The fact of the matter is," he told me, "that I fiddled around at Choate and

really didn't become interested until the end of my sophomore year at Harvard."

Some might say that he fiddled around as a Congressman and really didn't become interested until his sophomore year in the Senate. It seemed to me in 1953 that an inner struggle was being waged for the spirit of John Kennedy—a struggle between the political dilettante and the statesman, between the lure of luxury and lawmaking. His performance in the House of Representatives had been considered by most observers to be largely undistinguished—except for a record of absenteeism, which had been heightened by indifference as well as ill health and by unofficial as well as official travels.

Having won a Senate seat and a satisfactory measure of glory, he had proved his worth in his chosen profession of politics. It was six years until reelection, and the responsibilities of a freshman Democratic Senator under a Republican Congress and Administration were neither weighty nor exciting. Having borne more pain and gloom than he liked to remember, he enjoyed in his bachelor days carefree parties and companions on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. There was a natural temptation to spend the limited number of days in which he could count on enjoying full health in pursuit of pleasure as well as duty.

But gradually, the statesman won out, as his convictions deepened, his concerns broadened, and Washington and the world occupied more and more of his time. And as clear as the fact of John Kennedy's extraordinary growth is the fact that many factors contributed to it—his reading, his traveling and the widening scope of his experiences and responsibilities.

Fortunately, however, the gaiety and laughter within him never subsided. As Senator and President, in his home or on a boat, in the pool or private quarters of the White House, and particularly at Cape Cod and Palm Beach, he was always able to relax as intensively as he worked, to catch up on his sleep or his sun or his golf, and to laugh at his children and the world and himself. Nor did he, in his moments of utmost pride and solemnity, ever pretend to be free from human vices and imperfections; and he would not want me to so record him. Like Lincoln's, a hundred years earlier, his language and humor could be as coarse in private conversation as they were correct on the public platform. He followed Franklin's advice of "early to bed, early to rise" only when he could not otherwise arrange his schedule. He had no passion for cards, dice or professional gambling. But he would briefly try his luck on campaign

stops at Las Vegas, liked to bet on his golf games and did consistently well in our office World Series betting pools.

Along with the vast quantities of milk he usually drank with his campaign-plane meals, he sometimes liked a bottle of beer. He had, in fact, revealed the drinking of a bottle of beer or two when his father was about to present him with the \$1,000 check given all Kennedy boys who did not smoke or drink before the age of 21. When relaxing, he enjoyed a daiquiri, or a scotch and water, or a vodka and tomato juice before dinner and a brandy stinger afterward. He rarely drank in any quantity, and drinking rarely had any detectable effect on him. But he once told me with some gusto of his rather flippant remarks to a pompous couple one night in the West Indies, when too much sun and rum had dissolved his customary reserve. He was not free from vanity about his appearance, and he resented photographers who waited to snap him brushing perspiration from his brow. He would not pose in honorary Indian headdresses or marshal's hats—and could refuse or remove them faster than most photographers could raise their cameras.

Through all these years, as Kennedy learned and grew, it was my unique privilege to learn from him and to grow with him. In the first few years, our working together on legislation, speeches, Massachusetts politics and *Profiles in Courage* brought us closer together. Before his back flared up, we played touch football. We went to the movies in Palm Beach, in Washington and in his father's basement at Hyannis Port, the low quality of some of the films in no way diminishing his enjoyment. We swam in his pool at Palm Beach while discussing politics and personalities. In 1956, I attended my first National Convention with him. And from that summer of 1956 through November 1960, we traveled together constantly, and long hours of conversation and observation forged a bond of intimacy in which there were few secrets and no illusions. Some say that in time I talked and gestured, as well as thought and wrote, like Kennedy. I doubt that he ever thought so, but occasionally, for reasons of time more often than mischief, he would have me assume his identity on the telephone.

It took me a few years to address him as "Jack" instead of "Senator," and we agreed in 1957 that the decorum befitting a national political aspirant required that I return to calling him "Senator" in the presence of others. But "Jack" was still the accepted salutation in private until January 20, 1961:

CHAPTER FOUR

Joseph P. Kennedy played neither so large a role in his son's undertakings as he sometimes liked to claim, nor so small a role as he sometimes preferred to pretend. The usual areas of parental influence were often exaggerated by the detractors of

both father and son into a Svengali-puppet relationship. Those who knew Jack Kennedy as a self-sufficient person with drive and desire and independence since early manhood, agreed with the thoughts Jacqueline Kennedy expressed to a 1959 biographer who had overstated the influ-

continued

ence of both Joe, Sr.'s, wishes and Joe, Jr.'s, death: "No matter how many older brothers and fathers my husband had had, he would have been what he is today, or the equivalent in another field." Even in campaigns, the father concerned himself almost entirely with tactics, almost never with substance. He knew that Jack disagreed with him sharply on most matters of public policy, and that they spoke for two different generations. Although the Ambassador seldom refrained from pronouncing his own views, he rarely tried to change Jack's, and never sought to influence his vote. Jack, in turn, never in my experience argued with his father. "I don't attempt to convert him, and he doesn't attempt to convert me," he said. "You couldn't write speeches for me," Joseph Kennedy said to me at our first meeting at Hyannis Port in the fall of 1953, in tones I later learned were friendly. "You're too much of a liberal. But writing for Jack is different."

Father and son could scarcely have been more different. The "very few" members of the National Association of Manufacturers who supported his election, the President smilingly remarked to their 1961 convention, must have been "under the impression that I was my father's son." Both had a natural charm—but the father, though very emotional underneath, was often dour and gruff, while his son kept outwardly calm. Both had a winning Irish smile—but the father was capable of more angry outbursts than his infinitely patient son. Both had a tough inner core, were capable of making hard decisions and sticking to them—but the father had a more aggressive exterior compared to his son's consistently gentle composure. The father's normal conversation was often filled with hyperbole; his son's speech, in private as in public, was characterized by quiet understatement.

Both had a hatred of war, but the father leaned more to the concept of a Fortress America, while his son felt our concern must be global. On domestic matters, while preferring the simpler machinery and lower taxes of an earlier era, the father emphasized personalities as much as issues. "Do you realize," his son said to me in 1953, "that his first choice for the Presidency last year was Senator [Robert A.] Taft, and his second was Justice [William O.] Douglas?"

Father and son also had much in common: a fierce family loyalty, a concern for the state of the nation, endless vitality and a constant air of confidence, no matter how great the odds. ("I still don't know how I did," the candidate said after getting the usual cheery word by telephone from his father after the second Nixon-Kennedy debate. "If I had slipped and fallen flat on the floor out there, he would have said, 'The graceful way you picked yourself up was terrific.'")

They also admired, with good reason, each other's political judgment, and it was in this area that they most often collaborated. The senior Kennedy understood the inner workings of politics and politicians. He enjoyed talking to the older professionals, getting progress reports on his son and suggesting the right emphasis for

campaign advertising and television. During the 1958 reelection campaign, perhaps stepping over the fine line between tactics and substance, he talked to me at length about the thrust of a proposed television talk, in effect delivering such a talk to me by telephone. Finally, he subsided with the comment: "At least, that's what I would like to hear." And I, more in daring than in disagreement, said, "But, Mr. Kennedy, maybe you don't reflect what the typical voter would like to hear." "Hell," the man whose fortune ran to hundreds of millions exploded, with more feeling than logic, "I'm the only typical man around here!"

He could be, I observed, exceedingly warm and gentle, despite the legends that emphasized only a fierce temper, a curt manner and a cynical outlook. Yet Mr. Kennedy often contributed to his own legend with elaborate claims about himself and his children. Even his son Jack did on occasion. When a newspaper story on Eunice Kennedy's wedding stated that a Kennedy business associate had smilingly acknowledged that its cost would run into six figures, the Senator exclaimed, "I know that story is a phony—no one in my father's office smiles." But leaving the legend aside, the Ambassador at home was a likable man. I saw him only at his home, for he almost never came to his son's office, though they talked frequently by telephone. I had no difficulty in getting along well with him.

I admired Joseph P. Kennedy's devotion to his children, to their education, happiness and success. However domineering his manner may have seemed, he had instilled in them a will to win without ever breaking their spirits. "I grew up in a very strict house," said the Senator, "where there were no free riders." His father had sent his sons to secular public and private, not parochial, schools and taught them to learn from Harold Laski as well as Herbert Hoover. He permitted each child to choose his own career, companions and political philosophy, however they may have differed from his own. He never discussed business or money at the dinner table, but he did talk about politics and personalities. He took pride in his children's educational and literary achievements ("although," the Senator told me of this successful, well-informed man, "I've almost never seen him read a serious book").

To assist his son's fight to the top, he was willing to do anything—even stay out of the fight. He was not "banished," as rumored in the fall of 1960, but took the same summer trip to Europe he had taken for many years.

The Ambassador knew that he was a controversial figure and that, in his son's Presidential campaign, his own opinions were better left unsaid and his participation unseen. He knew he had endowed his sons with enemies as well as friends. Much of the liberal suspicion of the Ambassador was, in fact, unfounded. While it is true that his conversations at times reflected the ethnic antagonisms and epithets that had long characterized East Boston, this hardly made him an anti-Semite, and when he took a group of us to lunch at his country club in Palm Beach, he

boasted that he was the only Gentile member.

His son Jack, who was singularly immune to prejudices of any kind (although he, too, would refer in private political discussions to "the Italians" or "the Jews" or "the Irish" in the same way he talked about "the farmers" or "the veterans"), resented the manner in which his father's views on race and religion were both overstated in the press and attributed to his sons. More than one group of voters had to be reassured in 1960 that Jack Kennedy was independent of his father's policies and positions. Harris Wofford, who worked on race relations in the 1960 campaign, tells of Kennedy's reaction to the news that Negro leader Martin Luther King's father had announced his support—after the Senator's phone call to Mrs. King—stating he had previously planned to vote against Kennedy on religious grounds. "That was a hell of an intolerant statement, wasn't it?" said Kennedy. "Imagine Martin Luther King having a father like that." Then a pause, a grin and final word: "Well, we all have our fathers, don't we?"

But Jack Kennedy knew that his father was no bigot, whatever his enemies might say; and, far from regarding him as a handicap or embarrassment, had strong filial feelings of loyalty and love. Once, lunching with a noted radical's son who was involved in a complicated altercation with the Senator's father, Kennedy asked, "Do you always agree with your father? No? But you love him?" Smiling with pleasure at his companion's affirmative answer, he leaned back and said simply, "Same here." At times, he was annoyed by exaggerated statements in the press about his father's forcing him into politics or masterminding his campaign (particularly when it was the Ambassador himself who was both directly and correctly quoted). But he never disowned, disclaimed or apologized for his father or his money. At our first strategy meeting on the Presidential campaign in 1959, the Ambassador made clear that the family's full financial resources were available if needed. ("Not all of them, Dad," said Bobby in mock horror. "Don't forget Teddy and me.") Until his stroke in December, 1961, Joseph P. Kennedy was the vibrant center of Kennedy family life—a constant source of praise and criticism, advice and commands, laughter and wrath. With each successive tragedy that befell the family, he showed the others how to close ranks and march ahead—though some say he never got over the loss of his oldest son Joe.

Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr., was handsome, husky, gregarious, talented, aggressive and adored by his eight younger brothers and sisters as well as his parents. He talked openly of someday reaching the Presidency. Jack, the next oldest, often fought with him, but often sought to be his intimate and, for a time, his imitator. They attended the same schools, traveled together in Europe, participated in similar sports. Both enlisted in the Navy before Pearl Harbor, and both preferred hazardous duty. Rejecting the rotation home that two tours of combat duty and some 50 missions over European waters earned him,

Joe volunteered for an experimental mission—flying a Liberator bomber loaded with explosives, from which he would bail out once a control plane had directed it on target. With an earth-shaking blast that was never explained, his plane disintegrated in the air while still over England.

Bobby, nine years younger than Jack, was not so close to him in their youth as Joe, Jr., had been. When I first knew Bobby, in 1953, he had not yet developed the degree of patience and perspective that would later make him so valuable a member of the Cabinet. In those days, Bobby, when crossed, could be as rough and rugged as his physique. He also tended then toward the more militant views that endeared him to his father. But his absolute loyalty and hardheaded judgment made him a valuable confidant of his less argumentative older brother. As Jack's campaign manager, he could be trusted more implicitly, say "no" more emphatically and speak for the candidate more authoritatively than any professional politician. "Just as I went into politics when Joe died," said the Senator, "if anything happened to me tomorrow, my brother Bobby would run for my seat."

Jack replaced brother Joe as leader of the Kennedy offspring. He, in turn, cared more deeply about the approval of his parents and siblings than that of anyone except his wife. He also took a genuine interest in their travels, their spouses, their schooling, their careers, their appearances, their antics and ideas. He took time out in the White House, for example, to talk with sister Pat's husband Peter Lawford about his acting career and even made some efforts unknown to Peter on his behalf.

Most of their wealthy neighbors in Republican Hyannis Port—for Nixon knew two in 1960—had little to do with the Kennedys. ("They never showed such interest," Eunice observed to me sardonically the day after the 1960 election, as we watched the friendly waves of one family that lived nearby.) But the Kennedys were content with their own company. Outside companionship, when desired, was imported from among their own circle of friends. For the most part, the Senator's "social" friends had little to do with the serious side of his life, and his working associates and staff were not involved in his social life.

His closest friends differed from him and from each other in background and interests, and not all of them liked each other. But they were all normal, healthy, intelligent and affable men, and they were all loyal to Jack Kennedy. He, in turn, was loyal to them—one expressed surprise to me after the Presidential election that "Jack still has time to bother with me." But the President said later at a news conference: "The Presidency is not a very good place to make new friends. I'm going to keep my old friends."

Both friends and family volunteered (or were drafted) for Jack's political campaigns. Rose Kennedy was less outwardly combative than her husband and sons. But often, after she had watched her son on television, she would telephone me with a suggestion about some word he

had misused or mispronounced. "She's a natural politician," he remarked to me in 1957 with mingled pride and astonishment, after a long-distance call from his mother. "She wanted to know the political situation and nationalities in each of the states she's visiting this fall."

Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy, on the other hand, was not a natural politician, but she was a natural political asset. She had been an apolitical newspaper girl when they met at the home of their friends, the Charles Bartletts, "who had been shamelessly marchmaking for a year," she said. On her first visit to the Senator's office (as his fiancée) in the summer of 1953, she seemed awestruck by the complexities of his work. After their marriage on September 12 of that year, she interested him slightly in art, and he interested her slightly in politics. At first, she found little to attract her in either the profession or its practitioners. Politics kept her husband away too much. Politicians invaded their privacy too often. "It was like being married to a whirlwind," she was quoted by one reporter in speaking about their early life. "Politics was sort of my enemy as far as seeing Jack was concerned."

Campaigning, moreover, was a fatiguing experience. She was an active horse woman, water skier and swimmer, but in some ways as delicate in health as in manner. Touch football on the Kennedy Hyannis Port lawn was a novel undertaking (in one huddle, she said to me, "Just tell me one thing: When I get the ball, which way do I run?"), and she broke her ankle while being pursued across the goal by two of Teddy Kennedy's Harvard teammates. Of greater concern to both the Senator and Jacqueline (as she preferred being known, or Jackie, as everyone called her) were the miscarriage and stillbirth she suffered before Caroline's birth in 1957.

Understandably, she was slow to accept, and he was reluctant to impose, the rigors of campaigning and handshaking. In the early years of their marriage, she preferred to find quieter ways to assist the husband who was 12 years her senior: translating French works on Indochina, learning history to keep up with his reading ("He's much more serious than I thought he was before I married him," she said) and, above all, providing him with a relaxing home life in which he could shed the worries of the world.

CHAPTER FIVE

For much of their first two years of married life, home to John Kennedy meant a sickbed, and through most of the years of his life with Jacqueline, he suffered sharp physical pain. The chief cause of his hospitalization and discomfort was his back, but the cause of his near death in the fall of 1954 was the shock of a spinal operation upon his inadequate adrenal system. This same adrenal insufficiency gave rise to all the health rumors that plagued him for years. Before his nomination, politicians whispered about it. In my liaison role between reporters and doctors, I realized how concerned he was that the public not consider him too sickly for the burdens of the campaign and the Presidency, or too unlikely to live out his first term if elected. Aside from his spinal surgery, his confinements in the hospital for any cause, however minor, were never publicized during his career as a Senator, even though this often meant my offering other excuses when canceling or rearranging speaking dates (one of the tasks I disliked most). On one occasion, he checked into the New England Baptist Hospital in Boston simply as "Mr. K."—although his special back-supporting mattress was later carried by an easily recognizable brother Teddy through the crowded hospital lobby.

The Senator had no wish to falsify the facts concerning his adrenals, but he did insist that whatever had to be published be precise. Thus he avoided the term Addison's disease, which had a frightening sound to most laymen and was interpreted differently by different physicians. Originally, before the newer adrenal hormones were available, Addison's disease carried implications

wholly absent in the Senator's case—including tubercular glands, a brownish pallor, progressive anemia and, in most cases, progressive deterioration and death. (The year-round suntan which he maintained through visits to Palm Beach and a sunlamp caused one suspicious reporter to question whether this wasn't a symptom—whereupon the usually modest Senator exposed a part of his anatomy that had not been browned by the sun.)

Instead of the term Addison's disease, he preferred to refer to the "partial mild insufficiency" or "malfunctioning" of the adrenal glands that had accompanied the malaria, water exposure, shock and stress he had undergone during his wartime ordeal. He also preferred, rather than giving the impression that his life depended on cortisone (which he had taken in earlier years and to which his later drugs were related), to refer to the fact that the insufficiency was completely compensated for and controlled by "simple medication by mouth."

Though he was troubled for a time by high fevers, and any major operation was a risk, the insufficiency caused no other illness, and was regularly and routinely checked. In fact, a December, 1958, examination (ACTH stimulation test) showed satisfactory adrenal function. In 1960, however, the rumors were rampant, and two lieutenants of his chief rival for the nomination, Lyndon Johnson—Mrs. India Edwards and John Connally, later Governor of Texas—chose to highlight a press conference with statements raising doubts about Kennedy's life expectancy. Their later explanation was that Kennedy's spirited defense of his youth and vigor on television that day (in reply to a Truman attack) had by implication

cast doubt on the health of other candidates, including heart patient Johnson. Johnson disowned the attack, and, in a sense, the charge helped clear the air. A subsequent explicit statement from Kennedy headquarters and a full exposition in the press put an end to all rumors and doubts—although the Republicans, not unsurprisingly, raised the issue again 48 hours before the election with Congressman Walter Judd attempting to cast doubt on an Addisonian's, and thus Kennedy's, "physical and mental health."

Addison's disease sounds ominous, but a bad back is commonplace. Consequently, John Kennedy's chronically painful back caused him less trouble politically, though it continued to cause him more trouble physically. Injured in 1939 while playing football at Harvard, and re-injured when his PT boat was rammed, he underwent a disc operation on his back by Naval surgeons in 1944, which had no lasting benefit. He frequently needed crutches to ease the pain during the 1952 campaign. When the crutches re-appeared in the summer of 1954, he complained to me about their awkwardness, but not about his agonizing pain. When he then decided that undergoing an extremely dangerous double spinal-fusion operation in October would be better than life as a cripple, he did not hint at the risks of which he had been warned, and made plans with me for resuming work in November. But the effect of surgery on his adrenal shortage caused, as he had been told might happen, severe post-operative complications. Twice, he was placed on the critical list, and his family was summoned. Twice, the last rites of his Church were administered. Twice, he fought his way back to life, as he had once before in the Pacific.

But he obviously could do no work, in November or for weeks thereafter. He was totally out of touch with our office from mid-September, 1954 to mid-January, 1955, having in the meantime been taken by stretcher to Palm Beach for Christmas. In February, 1955, suffering from a nearly fatal infection, he underwent still another dangerous operation to remove a metal plate that had been inserted during a previous operation, and he worked on *Profiles in Courage*, bedridden most of the time. He was finally able to return to Washington in May, 1955. Even then, he was required for some months to be in bed as much as possible. And always thereafter, he kept a rocking chair in his office, wore a cloth brace and corrective shoes, and slept with a bedboard under his mattress, no matter where he traveled. In hotels where no board was available, we would move his mattress onto the floor.

Still hobbled by pain until the novocain injections and other treatments of Dr. Janet Travell gave him new hope for a life free from crutches, if not from backache, he bitterly doubted the value of the operation that had nearly ended his life. With several individual exceptions—such as Dr. Travell and the Lahey Clinic's Sara Jordan, who had treated him since he was 11—he had never been impressed by the medical profession, remaining skeptical of its skills and critical of its

fees. After his health had been shattered during the war, he wrote his brother Bobby: "... Keep in contact with your old broken-down brother. ... Out here, if you can breathe, you're One A and 'good for active duty anywhere'; and by anywhere they don't mean El Morocco or the Bath and Tennis Club." After his first back operation in 1944, he had written to an inquiring friend: "In regard to the fascinating subject of my operation, I should naturally like to go on for several pages ... but will confine myself to saying that I think the doc should have read just one more book before picking up the saw." After his 1954-55 operations, he once showed me the gaping hole in his back—not to complain about the pain, but to curse a job that he found wholly unsatisfactory.

When my own back went bad in the midst of the 1956 campaign, he recommended a series of steps to relieve and remedy the discomfort. And when I replied that I would follow his recommendations as soon as a "medical back expert" so advised me, he said ruefully, "Let me tell you, on the basis of 14 years' experience, that there is no such thing!"

He knew the medical profession well. For all his vitality and endurance, John Kennedy had suffered since childhood from a multitude of physical ailments. "We used to laugh," his brother Bob has written, "about the great risk a mosquito took in biting Jack Kennedy—with some of his blood the mosquito was almost sure to die." Never complaining about his pains or imagining new ones, he used (and carried with him about the country) more pills, potions, poultices and other paraphernalia than would be found in a small dispensary. As a boy, he had required 28 stitches after a bike collision with Joe. He had serious cases of scarlet fever and appendicitis and almost died of diphtheria. He had to stop school temporarily when he was 14 on account of illness, and underwent the same experience at Princeton and the London School of Economics. In the Navy, he apparently suffered from malaria, and spent considerable time in the Chelsea, Mass., Naval Hospital because of his back.

As a Congressman, he was so pale and thin that his colleagues feared for his life, and during a round-the-world trip in 1951, he was taken to a military hospital in Okinawa with a temperature of over 106 degrees and little hope for his survival. Looking back, it is impossible to say which of these bouts was due to his adrenals, which to jaundice, hepatitis or malaria, or which of these may have helped bring on the other.

His eyes required glasses for heavy reading, but he wore them rarely for published pictures and never in public appearances. (In the fall of 1963, he told me his eyesight was weaker, and that the use of large type was all the more important for his prepared speech texts.) The state of his hearing required him to request me, during one debate on the Senate floor, to feed facts and figures into his right ear instead of his left.

His stomach was always sensitive—at one point, it was suspected he had an ulcer—and though he did not faithfully follow his diet, he

usually ate carefully and often. In the Senate, his lunches were for a time prepared at home and brought by Jacqueline or Muggsy O'Leary to his office. On the campaign circuit, he avoided the mass cooking at most banquets and ate in his hotel room or elsewhere. To keep something in his stomach, he ate frequently during the day—on the plane, at airport stops, before and after a speech, every meal and between meals—great quantities of milk, creamed soups or chowder, sirloin steak, baked potatoes, ice cream and hot chocolate made with milk. (In early 1955, he joshed Jacqueline that her expensive course in French cooking had taught her some imaginative recipes, but not how to make him hot chocolate.)

But it would be wrong to assume that he was a sick or sickly man. He had astounding vitality and endurance, and this made him resent all the more the fact that he had to give up tennis and touch football and at times proceed gingerly with his children and golf. Many reporters and staff members fell weary or ill at his campaign pace, and he invited all those who had doubts about his health to accompany him on his grueling travels. He made no pretense of ever having been a star athlete, despite his prowess in many sports. "Politics is an astonishing profession," he told a banquet crowd as President. "It has enabled me to go from being an obscure member of the Junior Varsity at Harvard to being an honorary member of the Football Hall of Fame."

But he had a strong, agile and nimble physique for a man over 35 years old, 6 feet tall and over 165 pounds. He rarely had a cold and never a headache. Though he drove himself too hard for too long, he looked out for his health in most other ways ("better than 99 percent of my patients," said Dr. Travell in 1960). He took his pills, watched his posture (after his operation, for previously he had been a sprawler), exercised regularly and bathed at least three times a day to relax his aching back muscles. He managed to nap under the severest pressures and on the shortest notice, in planes, in cars and in his hotel room before a speech. He was never a confirmed hunter or fisherman, but he liked to be outdoors, and he inevitably seemed to feel better in good weather.

Yet the pain was almost always with him—"at least one half of the days that he spent on this earth," according to his brother. "Those who knew him well," said Bob Kennedy, "would know he was suffering only because his face was a little whiter, the lines around his eyes were a little deeper, his words a little sharper. Those who did not know him well detected nothing." But Kennedy accepted it all with grace. His philosophy was summed up midway in his Presidential term in a news conference answer on the Reservoirs: "... There is always inequity in life. Some men are killed in a war, and some men are wounded, and some men never leave the country. ... It's very hard in military or in personal life to assure complete equality. Life is unfair. Some people are sick and others are well. ... Life was unfair in many ways to John Kennedy. But he never complained. He loved life too much.