

William F. Buckley, Jr.
Hodding Carter, Guest

Mr. Buckley: Mr. Hodding Carter is probably the most famous independent newspaper editor in the South. He founded and continues to publish the "Delta Democrat Times" in Greenville, Mississippi. He was born here in Louisiana where he attended public schools. He took a B.A. from Bowdoin College in Maine, a journalism degree from Columbia, and honorary degrees from just about everywhere else. When he isn't receiving a degree he is writing a book -- history, fiction, poetry, juveniles -- everything. His other hang-up is writing for the "New York Times" Sunday Magazine, which he does with something approaching incontinence. He is a most active and talented gentleman and a most influential one. He is and has been for years the voice of Southern liberalism. For decades he has been hailed as giving the other side of the situation in the South -- the South which, it is generally thought, is on the march -- notwithstanding such occasional recidivisms as George Wallace. Occasionally, Mr. Carter poignantly reminds the North that there was an aspect or two of the old South worth cherishing -- aspects that have been totally overlooked in the rhetoric of some of the militants. Mostly, Mr. Carter can be counted upon to take the liberal position of the hour and, indeed, he is here today to defend the ambitions of Senator Robert F. Kennedy. I should have said that Mr. Carter is a courageous man. (Laughter) Now, I should like to begin by asking Mr. Carter why it is that Senator Kennedy is ill-thought of in most of the South. You will have to pause for just a minute for your answer.

Mr. Buckley: (After station break) Mr. Carter, --

Mr. Carter: I would answer that by saying it's just not simply Senator Kennedy who is ill-thought of in the South, but every Democratic Presidential candidate, to my knowledge, for the last sixteen years has been ill-thought of in the South. I think mainly because they took the word, Democratic, with the lower case "d" seriously and stood out most strong for the rights of man than perhaps some of their Republican counterparts. Senator Kennedy's

brother was not well-thought of; Lyndon Johnson is not well-thought of -- and there will

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please be no hissing at the mention of some of these names. I think it is just part of 2.
the Southern reaction to those who seek a change in political -- thinking and social
thinking.

Mr. Buckley: But -- but isn't it so -- well, it is so -- that the polls show that Mr. Kennedy runs conspicuously below even such old arch fiends as Hubert Humphrey and even less than Lyndon Johnson who was actually the man who, if not promulgated, at least got passed most of this obnoxious legislation so that there seems to be an extra political factor at work here, and you, as a shrewd, human observer, I wish you wouldn't duck that question but tell us why.

Mr. Carter: I suppose there is a resentment against the slugging tactics of Senator Kennedy. He did confront very forthrightly Governor Wallace, Governor --

Mr. Buckley: Barnett.

Mr. Carter: -- Barnett. I wasn't -- I had a better word for him than that (Laughter) --, Governor Patterson. He came into this State and confronted Barnett about three years after men who murdered on the University of Mississippi campus in the riots over the admission of a Negro at the University -- he came and received the greatest ovation in the memory of any person on that campus to whom I talked. This was from the students. His strength is mostly among the younger people. So -- and I also understand from our city editor up in Greenville -- we just got back this morning -- that the next Gallup report on the Presidential hopefuls will show that he has the greatest popular support -- perhaps not in Mississippi. I don't either, but he has the greatest popular support of any of the Democratic hopefuls.

Mr. Buckley: In the South at large.

Mr. Carter: In the country at large.

Mr. Buckley: Oh, in the country at large, yeah, but you're not talking about the South, eh?

Mr. Carter: No.

Mr. Buckley: Well, I was, yeah.

Mr. Carter: Oh.

Mr. Buckley: Aha. Now, the -- you don't set much store by these ovations from the youth though, do you -- at least I --

Mr. Carter: I respond to them (laughing) more kindly than I do to boos --

Mr. Buckley: Yeah.

Mr. Carter: Er -- yes, I set store by ovations from students -- young people of voting age.

Mr. Buckley: Umm.

Mr. Carter: I'm sure he does.

Mr. Buckley: Well, let me advance -- let me advance the thesis which I gather you're going to resist -- and that is that the South which has taken, as far as I can judge, a considerable amount of punishment during the past ten years, some of which you, yourself, considered to be unjust, seems to detect a -- a quality of mercilessness in Mr. Kennedy that causes many members of the South to respond differently to him than, for instance, they do to Humbert Humphrey or, say, Lyndon Johnson. Even though one would think the temptation to be anti-Johnson would be greater on the grounds that it might be said of him that he was an apostate from his own region, as is often said of you. But, do you or do you not consider this is a point about Mr. Kennedy which is going to weigh in the political councils of the future in determining his political viability?

Mr. Carter: I don't think so for this reason -- that the South is not going to go -- the deep South, some five or six states, -- will not go for any Democratic candidate. So, the hatred that is felt in many quarters of the South for Senator Kennedy is not going to be a factor because the South is not going for Hubert Humphrey. It's not going for any other Democratic possibility.

Mr. Buckley: Well, is that on account of Wallace, or if you would say even absent Wallace this would be the case?

Mr. Carter: Yes, I think that would be the case without Wallace.

Mr. Buckley: How do you account for the fact that many states went in 1960 for Mr. John Kennedy?

Mr. Carter: Not many Southern states.

Mr. Buckley: Well -- three, four.

Mr. Carter: Yeah.

Mr. Buckley: Do you consider that since 1960 the situation has deteriorated for the Democratic Party?

Mr. Carter: In -- in the Deep South?

Mr. Buckley: Yes sir.

Mr. Carter: Yes.

Mr. Buckley: Uh-hm, uh-hm.

Mr. Carter: I think Louisiana, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina -- at least that many states will go Republican or for a third party.

Mr. Buckley: Uh-hm.

Mr. Carter: And no matter whom the Democrats were to nominate this would be the case.

Mr. Buckley: Uh-hm. Er -- do -- do you sympathize at all or are you interested at all in the -- the -- some of the general questions that have been raised and are going to be raised about Senator Kennedy's fitness to be President -- there are charges about his toughness, his techniques, his capacity to mechanize the political process, to de-humanize it, his rather cynical reliance on his brother's reputation, cynicism, ambition, power lust -- all that kind of business? Or do you assume that this is simply the way politics is, and there is nothing distinctive about his reliance on these qualities?

Mr. Carter: Well, you are saying those things, not me.

Mr. Buckley: Uh-hm.

Mr. Carter: I would add this -- that, speaking of political cynicism, I remember a man named Nixon answered an ad in the paper in California --

Mr. Buckley: Uh-hmm.

Mr. Carter: -- because the Republicans couldn't find a Congressional candidate. And so he -- I don't know whether he was in law practice, which wasn't so good at the time, but he certainly answered the ad. And I consider that then and I consider it now that's a cynical approach.

Mr. Buckley: Why?

Mr. Carter: In politics.

Mr. Buckley: Why -- why? He didn't say I have an older brother who's President and vote for me and you'll have a closer contact with Washington. Do -- do you consider it cynical

to recruit people for public service -- after all most of the universities and public 5.
schools of England were founded for exactly that purpose. And several of them here in
the United States including, I think, your alma mater.

Mr. Carter: That's true enough, but founding a school to recruit your leadership -- your
best leadership is one thing, and putting an ad saying, will somebody for God's sake run
for Congress because we need a body --

Mr. Buckley: They can say for God's sakes -- it is done. (Laughter)

Mr. Carter: Sure enough.

Mr. Buckley: Or maybe it was providential. (Laughter -- Mr. Carter, et al)/I shouldn't
have said that God and man (blurred word) sitting here, but --

Mr. Buckley: Of course, that was a tu quoque for you to say -- for you to answer a
question about the cynicism of Mr. Kennedy by saying, so did Nixon. It's a sort of
so's your old man answer -- but there seems to be -- put it this way: in any national
election, to ask the question -- vote for the most ruthless candidate, Mr. Kennedy would
easily win, wouldn't he? You -- you don't deny this, do you?

Mr. Carter: How -- how do you define ruthlessness?

Mr. Buckley: Weeell, (pause) let's bat that around a little bit. I got here a little
collection from which I excluded any Conservative because, of course, Conservatives are
suspect and so I -- I collected quotations about Senator Kennedy from Liberals. For in-
stance, an editor of "Look" magazine, a Liberal, said that Kennedy has a reputation of
being quotes a Puritan moralizer, whose early heroes were Douglas MacArthur and J. Edgar
Hoover -- he obviously peaked early, (Laughter) a red-baiting aid to Senator Joe McCarthy,
a vendetta-bent Attorney General who bully-ragged Jimmy Hoffa into jail. Now that's -
you know -- that's/^{what}one guy thinks. And so on. Mr. Murray Kempton, who is a Socialist,
commented recently, after listening to the announcement speech by Bobby Kennedy, in which
Bobby Kennedy almost exactly duplicated his brother's rhetoric -- you may remember, he said
quotes there is such a thing as the evocation of the great dead and there is also such a
thing as the exploitation of corpses. Senator Kennedy seems appalling, far from recognizing
the difference. You know, that kind of business. You don't hear thatkind of thing said
about the other people, do you, about Humphrey --

Mr. Carter: No.

Mr. Buckley: Or Lyndon Johnson, Senator McCarthy -- and I wonder why since you are pro-Kennedy. I wonder if you would give your explanation as to why he has accumulated that reputation.

Mr. Carter: I think it came out of the period when he was counsel for the McClellan Committee and managed to make angry both the teamsters -- very angry -- and a good many of the business community. I think that's where he got his name for ruthlessness. It took bully-ragger to put Jimmy Hoffa in jail. I think the good Lord he's a bully-ragger.

Mr. Buckley: Uh-hm.

Mr. Carter: Er -- he got him, and he needed to be gotten for the good of this country -- and for the good of all of us. I was never conscious that he --

Mr. Buckley: Well, why didn't Tom Dewey get that reputation?

Mr. Carter: Tom Dewey?

Mr. Buckley: Yeah -- yah -- he was pretty ruthless -- (blurred in overlap)

Mr. Carter: I don't think that this is the best reputation to have if you are seeking the Presidency to be known as the little man on the wedding cake -- which they said about Tom Dewey. And, incidentally, this will surprise you, but I supported him. And -- to be known as a ruthless man, I don't know/^{but} what ruthlessness is not a proper quality, if it's honestly employed. You've got to be ruthless to be President of this country, to be the leader of the country that dominates the world. I do know that that reputation --

Mr. Buckley: Do you really mean ruthless?

Mr. Carter: Well --

Mr. Buckley: Or do you mean resolute?

Mr. Carter: Well -- I'll say resolute then.

Mr. Buckley: Yeah.

Mr. Carter: And forget ruthless. I'm glad you're dropping it.

Mr. Buckley: (Unclear statement) (Laughter)

Mr. Carter: I do know there's an image in the rest of the world that's not of a ruthless man. I do know that he received two great ovations in Japan after his first visit --

Mr. Buckley: Tojo got three. (Laughter)

Mr. Carter: Mr. Eisenhower -- General Eisenhower couldn't even get off the boat, but they certainly don't think he's ruthless there. They didn't think he was ruthless on his Latin-American tour.

Mr. Buckley: I think -- Mr. Carter, I think you're being naive. Knowing how sophisticated you are, I think you are being intentionally --

Mr. Carter: I'm a country boy from the backwoods of Louisiana.

Mr. Buckley: Yeah, because a lot of people like ruthlessness, you know. Mussolini was certainly ruthless.

Mr. Carter: He got the trains to run on time.

Mr. Buckley: Sure. He got probably the biggest sustained crowd responses in the 20th Century, to say nothing of the obvious ones Hitler, Peron, so on and so forth. So, I don't think it's -- it's particularly illuminating to say that Mr. Kennedy gets a good crowd reaction from people who are not as practiced as perhaps one ought to be in the ways of democracy, right?

Mr. Carter: I'll buy that.

Mr. Buckley: Yeah.

Mr. Carter: He's also got that same reaction, and has been getting it in this country. You can't dismiss all the favorable response to him by saying it's either the young or the foreign citizens in the countries he's visited. There is certainly bound to be someone who really likes him, who believes in him -- I, among them, and I'm not frightened by this word, ruthless.

Mr. Buckley: Well, I think that there are two points before the house: one of them is, where does Bobby Kennedy fit in the spectrum of American politics -- anybody who occupies a certain arc in that spectrum is going to have a natural following, whether it's on the extreme right or on the extreme left, or in the center, or just right of center or just left of center, there are these natural gravitational accumulations that go there. Now, Mr. Kennedy, after he was elected Senator, - correct me if I'm wrong -- ended up in Washington as the only other Democrat with a National following. The other one being the President of the United States, Lyndon Johnson. Now, he, it seems to me, waits to see which direction Lyndon Johnson is going to go, and when Lyndon Johnson reacted strongly in Vietnam, reacted strongly in defense of the series of commitments that we had there, Kennedy went the other way. Now, if you grant that -- having opposed Lyndon Johnson, from his left in foreign policy, he would naturally attract a great following -- what is it that

obtrudes in the light of that that causes so many men of the left to feel terribly uneasy about him?

Mr. Carter: Because he is not of the left for one reason.

Mr. Buckley: Uh-hm.

Mr. Carter: He's of the center, I think. I think you should, nomatter what you feel about the man, give him credit for some sincerity which you haven't done.

Mr. Buckley: Well, can you document it? Where did you find it?

Mr. Carter: Can you prove that he's not sincere about anything?

Mr. Buckley: Oh, well, it seems to me that his oscillations on every issue touched every point of every graph. And, under the circumstances, the burden is on you to find some cosmic consistency in a position that has taken every position there is to take on Vietnam, on Lyndon Johnson, on Joe McCarthy, on liberalism, on Chiang Kai-shek. For all I know -- on you.

Mr. Carter: I'm afraid to get cosmic but I think he has been consistent in his reaction against labor racketeering, his reaction against the Mafia, -- they've gone underground, Hoffa went to jail and Ross Barnett went back to private life. And I think in every case it has been in great part because of his unswerving determination to -- huh -- to do these people in.

Mr. Buckley: Well, why doesn't his unswerving determination cause him to back some legislation in Washington which would remove some of these powers of the labor unions -- for instance, to force people into their union against their will? (After pause) If he is consistently concerned for -- for the little man and the rights of the individual against that of the entrenched labor union leader. Why doesn't he back the Right to Work laws?

Mr. Carter: (Pause) I'd have to ask him. I don't know.

Mr. Buckley: Oh.

Mr. Carter: I am sure he has good and sufficient reasons -- er, er, -- The Right to Work laws have their defenders as well as their opponents; I've vacillated on that over the years myself. You change -- not basic attitudes -- you change approaches. I have myself in great part over the Vietnam War. I was a complete hawk. I wouldn't call myself precisely a

dove yet. I have changed my opinion. I think a person can do that and still be 9.
honest with himself and his convictions, with his country.

Mr. Buckley: Oh, sure! I don't doubt that at all. But if there is a correspondence between that change and, let's say, Mr. Gallup's poll yesterday afternoon, and one is a politician, it seems to me that elementary worldliness causes us to wonder whether or not the change was the result of a long dark night with the soul, or whether it was simply political opportunism. Mr. -- I grant that Gore Vidal is not the best witness of anything having to do with Kennedy, although he, once again, was a great Kennedy booster for a while. He says, quotes, Bobby is not projecting a liberal image because politically it happens to be the smart thing to do. He's following a political course that could have been charted by a computer. Now, did you agree with that.

Mr. Carter: No.

Mr. Buckley: You don't. Well, what -- what --

Mr. Carter: I don't agree with Gore Vidal on a number of things.

Mr. Buckley: Yes sir. Now, what would you say Mr. Kennedy -- what is the position Mr. Kennedy is taking that is hurting him politically?

Mr. Carter: I hope very few. Er -- (Pause)

Mr. Buckley: (A little laugh) Can you give us an instance of the Kennedy courage -- you know, when it was visibly to his disadvantage to take position X -- but he took it anyway?

Mr. Carter: I think he did it with the labor unions, I think he did it with the Mafia, I think he did it with his confid-

Mr. Buckley: Wait a minute -- Hoffa had already been expelled by Meany and Reuther --

Mr. Carter: Hoffa was running the Teamsters' Union which is probably the most powerful in the country.

Mr. Buckley: Well, that's correct but isn't it also correct that that's 1,000,000, out of 17,000,000 union members in the Teamsters' Union -- and the others were overwhelmingly anti-Hoffa? Do you think, therefore, that that was very risky?

Mr. Carter: Yes, I do.

Mr. Buckley: Uh-hah. Well, in that case you have a very low opinion of American democracy, right? -- that it would be politically risky to send somebody to jail for violating a whole

lot of laws?

Mr. Carter: Well, nobody had been able to do it before then.

Mr. Buckley: Well --

Mr. Carter: I hadn't seen anybody making a serious effort. Of course, the Eisenhower Administration tried and failed three times to do anything to Hoffa. And they didn't get very far with the Mafia. And I think it takes courage to come out against that bunch of outlaws.

Mr. Buckley: I think -- I think it takes a certain amount of courage because one can never know what Hoffa personally is in a position to do or might do. But I doubt whether this will go down as such an act of courage in the light of its visibly hurting him nation-wide, considering the fact that so many people instantly acclaimed him for putting Jimmy Hoffa in jail. Isn't that so?

Mr. Carter: I'll agree with that.

Mr. Buckley: (Bells) We have to pause.

(After station break) Mr. Carter, you say that your own views have changed on Vietnam and Mr. Kennedy's have and nobody doubts the sincerity of the evolution in your thought. But suppose we meditate for a moment on a comment made by C. L. Sulzberger, another liberal, and a famous correspondent, who said, Senator Robert Kennedy proposes that Communists be included in the Saigon Government. It would be more honest to suggest abandoning Vietnam without even bothering to negotiate. Do you think that's a -- fair comment?

Mr. Carter: (Pause) Umm. I would say this, if peace is really desired in Vietnam, peace without a total destruction of that little nation, that they're going to have to take Communists into the government. That means that inevitably the Communists will take over the government, I fear. I don't know, that is my fear. That has to be a calculated risk, it seems to me. But you're not going to have peace or anything approaching peace unless part of any agreement is the acceptance of a Communist segment in the government.

Mr. Buckley: Well, how would you -- how would you, assuming that Mr. Kennedy were

President of the United States, and you were, let's say, Secretary of State, how would you counsel countries with which you wanted to sign treaties who accosted you with statements such as the following from Senator Kennedy in 1962: we're in South Vietnam to stay. We will win here. We will not collaborate in any way with this attempt at Communist imperialism to the South under any circumstances ever. Now, what would you say, let's say, if you were dealing with another country that said, but how could we trust a President of the United States who made that statement in the first instance, who now asks us to accept the word of the United States in future situations?

Mr. Carter: Well, there's precedent for it in other cases, of course. The points of view about Russia have changed not only with the (blurred word) but with individual Presidents. We see that accommodations must be made. (Pause) I don't think people are going to desert nations -- are going to desert us in any greater numbers than they have simply because our point of view toward political change -- well, political change in Vietnam comes about.

Mr. Buckley: You say, just one of those things -- sorry, boys, it's just one of those things.

Mr. Carter: We could be awful wrong, boys.

Mr. Buckley: Yeah, uh-hm, uh-hm. Okay, fine. Well, I think that's a very, very good answer. I think that's the only answer. Now, a lot of people say that Mr. Kennedy is ^{would be} very experienced, /very experienced as President in the light of his close association with his brother. And I notice recently that Mr. Kennedy alludes to the signal contributions for which he was partly responsible during the tenure of Mr. John Kennedy, and he signaled out three -- brace yourself -- the three great victories in foreign policy, according to Mr. Robert Kennedy were Laos, the Berlin wall and Cuba.

Mr. Carter: (Laughter) (also audience)

Mr. Buckley: Now, this (laughing) -- either this is sort of an Orwellian gag (Laughter) or he really thinks that these were great victories, i. e., that the dismemberment of Laos, the raising -- the doing nothing in response to the Berlin wall, and the pledging to

Cuba that, in return for removing missiles that weren't there yesterday, we promise 12.

never under any circumstances to liberate Cuba from the Communists who were there

yesterday. Now, is this the kind of thing that you, let's say, as a campaign manager for Kennedy would stress (Mr. Carter laughs) by way of showing off his credentials?

Mr. Carter: (Laughing) What do you think?

Mr. Buckley: (Laughs) (Laughter from audience)

Mr. Carter: Well, as they say, to err is human, to forgive divine, as you know.

Mr. Buckley: Well, you'll get the divine vote then. (Laughter)

Mr. Carter: You'll get the divine vote -- and the Yale vote.

Mr. Buckley: Well, what would you point to -- what would you point to as indication of

Mr. Kennedy's strength as a foreign policy maker? (Pause) Whose speech?

Mr. Carter: (Pauses -- coughs) I wish I had a researcher. I haven't had time to use him. I would point to his opponents I see.

Mr. Buckley: You mean you would say he's lousy, but everybody else is lousier?

Mr. Carter: Lousier.

Mr. Buckley: Um. Well -- what would you consider, for instance, the principal relative disabilities of Nixon? What is Nixon's Bay of Pigs? (Pause) Or his Laos?

Mr. Carter: I have --

Mr. Buckley: Or his Berlin wall.

Mr. Carter: I didn't call him a louse.

Mr. Buckley: No, no, no (Unclear remarks) (Laughs)

Mr. Carter: Er -- Well, he's never had a chance -- to prove how bad -- how badly he would have come off, or how well.

Mr. Buckley: Well, he was eight years as close -- pretty close to Eisenhower, the way

Mr. Kennedy was close to the President.

Mr. Carter: And President Eisenhower called him, "my boy," and I guess that's what he was.

But I can't see him capable of any greater political decisions than your next President is going to be capable of making.

Mr. Buckley: Uh-hm, uh-hm. In other words, as I understand your position -- yes, Kennedy is associated with some fearful failures; yes, it is extraordinary that he cites those

failures as successes; but, for all we know, anybody he runs against might have committed equally fearful failures: therefore, we should be pro-Kennedy.

Mr. Carter: Therefore --

Mr. Buckley: Is that the Carter law? (Laughs)

Mr. Carter: -- therefore, that we needn't be pro-Nixon, let's say, or pro-Rockefeller; who are you pro for?

Mr. Buckley: Whom am I pro for? (Laughter)

Mr. Carter: Yeah. Prefer.

Mr. Buckley: Well, I should think -- I should think somebody who has more^a/consistent view of the problems of foreign policy, who is -- well -- who is a little bit more intelligible. Certainly, I'm not for anybody who believes that Cuba was a great victory, or Laos or the Berlin wall because then you've got a very difficult problem. You've got a vocabulary problem. You can't understand each other. (Mr. Carter laughs). Yeah -- a couple of more victories like that --

Mr. Carter: And you've had it. (Laughter)

Mr. Buckley: -- had it, yeah. But I really -- I'm terribly interested to see what are the springs of your enthusiasm for Mr. Kennedy, because I --

Mr. Carter: I've told you. The -- I think his courage, his willingness to stand up to a fight, in a practical sense his appeal to the general public and, to be very political about it, I think he's probably the only potential Democratic candidate who could lick a Republican candidate. And I kind of like it like it is -- instead of getting either Nixon --

Mr. Buckley: Oh, well, now you're making sense. In other words, --

Mr. Carter: Sorry I hadn't before.

Mr. Buckley: (Laughs) I mean to me -- I mean to me. In other words, you're for Kennedy because you think he's the only one who can beat a Republican --

Mr. Carter: One reason.

Mr. Buckley: Uh-hm. The other --

Mr. Carter: I said, his courage, the reason he went into -- you won't admit it's courage -- but the way he stood up under domestic issues against what I consider to be domestic

menaces: racism, gangsterism, labor racketeering, or --

Mr. Buckley: Would you say that Humphrey, for instance, has a less good record than Kennedy -- on the matter of courage?

Mr. Carter: No.

Mr. Buckley: Uh-hah. No.

Mr. Carter: No.

Mr. Buckley: Equal?

Mr. Carter: If Humphrey is the Democratic nominee, I'll vote for him. I'm not what we call a yellow dog Democrat. But I think Humphrey is a good man also.

Mr. Buckley: But you wouldn't vote for any Democrat --

Mr. Carter: No.

Mr. Buckley: Except Tom Dewey. (Laughter)

Mr. Carter: (Laughing) Who takes up Tom Dewey?

Mr. Buckley: Didn't you say you voted for Tom Dewey?

Mr. Carter: Yeah, but he wasn't a Democrat.

Mr. Buckley: I say --

Mr. Carter: You were too young, eh?

Mr. Buckley: I say you'd vote for any Democrat unless Tom Dewey was running. Is that correct?

Mr. Carter: I wouldn't vote for Tom Dewey again.

Mr. Buckley: Ah-hah. Well --

Mr. Carter: The only Republican I think I would vote for would be Rockefeller.

Mr. Buckley: Rockefeller. Uhm--

Mr. Carter: (Laughing) Or Mayor Lindsay. (Laughter)

Mr. Buckley: Uh-hm. (Laughs) Well, I don't think you'd lose your Democratic credentials if you voted for Mayor Lindsay. (Laughter) Well, I guess it is difficult, isn't it, to put one's fingers on this sense of uneasiness -- that so many people feel about Mr. Kennedy. His biographer, for instance, Mr. Shannon, again a liberal -- and great admirer of Mr. Kennedy's in a sort of abstract way. And he says, you know, he attacks Johnson for

stiffening the negotiation terms in Vietnam, and then praises him as a man of peace. 15.

He deplores the failure to expand the war on poverty, then lauds Johnson as a man of compassion. He goes out to Kansas City and says that Johnson is appealing to the dark impulses of the American spirit. Then he turns to Johnson and asks his benediction and says what a fine President he's been. Now, at what point would you be persuaded that there had been an excess of cynicism here. What might he say that would disillusion you? Hypothetically?

Mr. Carter: (Pause) I'm afraid that you'll have to give me some ideas on that one because I don't think he can disillusion me to the extent that I wouldn't support him. I think for him to say kind words about Lyndon Johnson -- as cynical -- after the hatchet job that the Johnson group tried against the Kennedys -- this got to be a regular Donnybrook Fair, as you know.

Mr. Buckley: No sir, I don't. When was that?

Mr. Carter: That was when Senator -- President Johnson-to-be -- when Kennedy got the nomination when he and Johnson were fighting it out. And there was more dirty in-fighting I would say during that Convention than in a long, long time in this country.

Mr. Buckley: Well, who -- who was being dirty? Both, or --

Mr. Carter: I rather imagine both were.

Mr. Buckley: Well, why do you hold it against Johnson and not against Kennedy?

Mr. Carter: One was dirtier than the other. (Laughter)

Mr. Buckley: I just asked your (laughing) (blurred -- in laughing) in what sense was Johnson dirtier -- by referring to Kennedy's youth?

Mr. Carter: That's part of it.

Mr. Buckley: Uh-hmm.

Mr. Carter: By a lot of backstage maneuvering with people -- which you don't stand for -- it was bad -- I know you don't stand for -- politics -- and it's going to be bad if the Republicans mention it -- (blurred). which I look forward to attending. In politics, if you go back, I don't know of a political campaign, one in which the candidates have not been maligned and which the winner was not belabored, up to and before -- blurred words.

Washington took his lumps when he, - on grounds that were not fair -- certainly Andrew Jackson did. Certainly Abraham Lincoln did. Certainly Andrew Johnson did. And most

certainly Franklin D. Roosevelt did. About the only person who didn't that I know of was Dwight Eisenhower, and that because he was a national hero, as well as a President. They all get it.

Mr. Buckley: Yeah, but it doesn't necessarily mean that the criticism is unjust, does it?

Mr. Carter: No!

Mr. Buckley: Well, Washington, who in many ways was a very over-bearing man --

Mr. Carter: Yes, he was.

Mr. Buckley: -- and Andrew Johnson had considerable limitations, so did Franklin Roosevelt. so, hell, did most people, right? We are really trying to find out whether some of these criticisms about Kennedy are true -- not really are they generic criticisms because everybody who gets famous gets criticized. Isn't that really the point? To try to find out why it is that so many people in the United States consider that Senator Kennedy is the most divisive candidate on the American political scene with the single exception of George Wallace, which is true.

Mr. Carter: I don't think the polls will bear that out. We'll have to wait and see, but, of course, he's got to get the nomination first, but I think -- I think he'll do better in the (pause) balloting if he is a nominee than his brother did.

Mr. Buckley: Better in the election?

Mr. Carter: Yes.

Mr. Buckley: Uh-hah. Can I quotecha?

Mr. Carter: (Laughing) Certainly.

(Bells - for station break)

Question: My question is directed primarily to Mr. Carter, although I would like for Mr. Buckley to comment as well. Mr. Buckley has pointed out what he takes to be a rather radical shift on the part of Senator Kennedy with regard to the question of Vietnam. I am wondering if Mr. Carter would be prepared to give some sort of apologia for the reasons why Senator Kennedy has veered about so abruptly in his views.

Mr. Carter: Er -- I can only say for my own reasons for doing it. I think that the war

has come to an all but hopeless standstill, that we can accomplish more by negotiation than we can by continuing to kill off that country. I think we run a greater risk of a world war by keeping on fighting than we do -- would do by negotiating. I certainly feel that Mr. Kennedy must think much the same and I hope that somewhere in this audience (laughing) there's a Kennedy man before this thing is over. But those are my only reasons.

Mr. Buckley: Well, my own comment on that would be that it is, I think, in part the fault of Lyndon Johnson for not prosecuting the war either as vigorously as he might have, or under a strategic umbrella that gave a true intelligibility. For Mr. Johnson, to have told us as he so often has, that we can expect a detente with the Communists west of that particular parallel, but we've got to kill all the others, leaves a lot of people wondering whether our presence in Vietnam is part of a resistance to an international enterprise -- or whether it's simply an eccentric war against a random enemy. If the latter, then obviously we shouldn't be there. If the former, obviously we should in pursuit of the policy of containment. Now, Mr. Kennedy's changes in position have, in fact, coincided with what turns out to be the only political position that one can take, if one still wants to have one's grip on the intellectuals and -- and the students, or many of the students and so on and so forth. But, it also corresponds I think with the general disillusion felt by such as Mr. Carter with the strategic reckonings of Lyndon Johnson.

Mr. Carter: There's one other aspect of this, I think, is the menace to our country of Communism is less, I believe, because of the split in the Communist ranks between China and Russia. If this is true, then I think our country is a great deal safer than it was when they, as far as the world was concerned, as far as we knew, united in their determination to destroy democracy. I think that could be a factor in --

Mr. Buckley: Well, they've been pretty well united in their struggle to destroy democracy in South Vietnam, let's face it.

Mr. Carter: Yes.

Mr. Buckley: To say nothing of the fact that Red China is developing a highly mobile hydrogen bomb and lots of bombast to go with it. So that I don't think this is really the time for us to be too optimistic about international developments. (To audience):

There was a question there. Yes sir --

13.

Question: I believe that some of President Kennedy's critics accused him of attempting to use sort of Catholic backlash when he was running in 1960. Now, by making some sort of religious prejudice an issue, do you agree with this analysis in '60, Mr. Buckley, and do you think there is any mileage in it for Bobby Kennedy?

Mr. Buckley: Well, I think less so. But I think -- not only do I think -- I know that it was very definitely a conscious determination in 1960. A book written by Professor Brandeis on just this subject -- a very pro-Kennedy book -- reports that there was a definite decision reached during the summer and fall of 1960 to plant the issue squarely since as to attempt to be especially seductive to which you call the Catholic backlash vote. But it seems to me that is a problem that is behind us. The general superstitions against a Catholic being President were pretty well liquidated by the experience with Mr. Kennedy. Do you agree, Mr. Carter.

Mr. Carter: I agree completely.

Mr. Buckley: Yah.

Mr. Carter: I would say that the -- from the other direction, and I speak as an Episcopalian, that the same device was used in 1928 when Al Smith was running against -- I never can remember -- Hoover or Coolidge.

Mr. Buckley: Hoover.

Mr. Carter: Hoover. (Blurred words) with great success the religious issue was injected deliberately into the campaign, especially in the South with its traditional Fundamental Protestantism. So this was nothing -- and before that the No-Nothing Vote, the Anti-Mason Vote and so on. And various earlier campaigns in this country.

Mr. Buckley: Is there another question? Yes sir.

Question: No mention has been made by either of you about Senator McCarthy vis a vis Senator Kennedy. Does this mean that Senator McCarthy is to be discounted?

Mr. Carter: Well, I think Senator McCarthy is a fine citizen.

Mr. Buckley: So much for him. (Loud laughter)

Mr. Carter: (Laughing) You wouldn't let me finish, (Laughter) and I will vote for him

if he is the nominee. But I don't think he has the organization (pause) --

Mr. Buckley: Ruthlessness. (Laughter)

Mr. Carter: (Laughing) Quit putting words in my mouth. (Laughter) The -- the organization or the national background to get the nomination. He's a fine man. (Pause) Repeat.

Mr. Buckley: (after a few seconds) Surely, that's not all. (Laughter)

Mr. Carter: I'll let you finish that one up.

Mr. Buckley: Aren't you going to say anything about the fact that he beat Lyndon Johnson in New Hampshire and did as well in Wisconsin? And that 75% of the animus against Robert Kennedy at this moment has to do with his stepping into a situation which the pros conceded could, with Kennedy's support, have lead very easily to the nomination for him? Senator McCarthy.

Mr. Carter: Well, you said it so now I don't have to --

Mr. Buckley: Did it distress you at all? Did you write an editorial about that in your paper? In other words, you were completely unimpressed by the sudden attempt by Mr. Kennedy to profiteer from the experience of Mr. McCarthy in New Hampshire. You just didn't find that interesting. I found it very interesting. I found it political. It didn't detract from my high opinion of Senator McCarthy or my high opinion also of Senator Kennedy. I think you have to realize that politics is an odd game.

Mr. Buckley: I don't see how it could detract from your opinion of Mr. McCarthy. Mr. McCarthy didn't do anything during this -- except confess that he had rather a low esteem for Mr. Kennedy.

Mr. Carter: That wasn't my (cut off in overlap)

Mr. Buckley: Did that detract from your opinion of Mr. McCarthy that Mr. McCarthy had a low esteem for Mr. Kennedy?

Mr. Carter: (Laughing) No.

Mr. Buckley: (Laughing) Well --

Mr. Carter: It doesn't affect my opinion of you (Laughing) -- I mean -- we both like to sail.

Mr. Buckley: (Laughs) Well, let me see now, is there another question? Yes sir.

Question: I would like to ask about -- both of you gentlemen, particularly Mr. 20.

Carter, I detected a very distinct affinity for Senator Kennedy politically and at the same time a rather deep dislike for Mr. Nixon. I am most curious to know, politically, what the difference is between the two? And I would like to hear Mr. Buckley's opinion on that, too.

Mr. Carter: (Laughing) I would like to hear, too, whom Mr. Buckley is going to be for. He knows whom I'm going to be for, but I think turn about is fair play. I guess it's just instinctive that I don't like Nixon. I didn't like him from the word go. I don't like him now. I think he's going to get the nomination. He could very well be President of the United States.

Mr. Buckley: And you'll dislike him then. (Laughter)

Mr. Carter: I'm loyal to my Commander-in-Chief, Sir. (Laughter) It's -- subjective as all get out. I am sure Mr. Buckley has better reasons than that. I would like to hear his.

Mr. Buckley: Well, I certainly do. (Laughing) (Laughter) Well, I think that Mr. -- well, let's say, the obvious. I think Mr. Nixon is highly experienced. But I also think that Mr. Nixon, in addition to his competency, is a person who, from time to time, has taken extremely unpopular views. For instance, he was for civil rights legislation at a time when most of the Republican Party was against it. This is not true of Mr. Kennedy. And he was opposed -- this doesn't necessarily mean he took ^{positions} that I liked -- that happened to be identical with my own. I simply say he took certain positions that were manifestly unpopular with his own party. The position he ended up taking on Joe McCarthy was unpopular with the majority of Republicans. Ditto on foreign aid. Ditto on the Consular Treaty. Ditto on the atomic treaty with the Soviet Union. This -- there's a string of those that seem to be, to suggest a certain adamance when he believes that he is correct. But beyond that I think that any man who successfully resists that Harvard gang (Laughter) -- you know, any man who gets Arthur Schlesinger sore at him is presumptively okay. (Laughter)

Mr. Carter: (Laughing) You're bragging now, aren't you? (Laughter)

Mr. Buckley: Yeah. That's right. And I think that Mr. Nixon's -- if you like -- is a sort of fundamentalist of pro-Americanism. It's something we tremendously need at a time

when anti-Americanism is sort of the raging chic. And that Mr. Kennedy's close association with people who feel as poorly as Mr. Galbraith and some of those people feel about America is disquieting. So, I think Mr. Nixon is wedded to the ideals of this country, however he might go about implementing the law administering^{them}. That's my feeling about Mr. Nixon. I don't think he's terribly successful charismatically. I don't doubt the possibility that he would lose. I simply think that he would be a very good President. I rather wish he were a Democrat, The reason I say that is that I think he would make the best President -- the best President -- the next President, perhaps, ought to be a Democrat because we are going to be -- we are face to face with certain convulsions that ^{are} primarily the makings of the Democratic Party, and I think it would be much better for the Democrats, I think, if they faced up to their consequences. See what I mean?

Mr. Carter: I see what you mean. I don't agree with you.

Mr. Buckley: And Nixon is incapable of saying, as Robert Kennedy did a few weeks ago, the more riots that come on college campuses, the better the world for tomorrow. You know, that's the kind of thing that makes people just deliriously pleased the night before they broke down a window or sat in the Dean's toilet for twenty-four hours, or whatever. But in an age when, above all, we've got to resist violence, it seems to me a pretty reckless type thing to say. Nixon wouldn't have said it. Don't you agree?

Mr. Carter: I don't think he would.

Mr. Buckley: Yah.

(Bells for station break)

(Theme music ending program)

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