EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH SEAN O'HUIGINN

November 8, 2010

Dublin, Ireland

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To cite an interview, please use the following general format: [name of interviewee] Interview, [date of interview], Edward M. Kennedy Oral History Project, Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia.

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TRANSCRIPT

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Young: I don't need to tell you this, I'm sure, but I had three interviews with Ted Kennedy about Ireland. One of them occurred after he had come back from the Stormont power-sharing ceremony, and two were before that but after the Gerry Adams visa situation was finished, and the continuing process, the peace process, was going on. The role that he played from very early times, going back to Jimmy Carter's Presidency, is not well known, except among the people in the know, in the United States. A lot of his work in international and foreign affairs, with refugees and other things, is just not well known. One of the reasons we want to talk with people about his role on both sides of the Atlantic, is to help people understand, in this very complicated situation, how an American Senator whose name was Kennedy, happened to work into the peace process in Ireland, while people in the United look to the Executive. So when [William J.] Clinton is here and the visa comes and he comes onboard with this, well that's what he's doing, and so Kennedy's doing, and he did not try to make—

O'Huiginn: I saw *Charlie Wilson's War* on television. The Executive doesn't have quite the monopoly you imply.

Young: No, it doesn't. However, Ted is known for other things besides the Ireland thing, and historically, it's such a fascinating subject, and the complexity of the negotiation and the accomplishment, which is still being accomplished, of course.

O'Huiginn: Just by way of context for myself, I was a career diplomat in the Irish Diplomatic Service. I retired just over a year ago. I had various postings, but I had a number of points where I was really heavily involved in Northern Ireland, most significantly perhaps between '87 and about '91, when I was Joint Secretary of the British-Irish Secretariat in Belfast.

Young: Yes.

O'Huiginn: And then from '91 to '97, I was in charge of the Anglo-Irish Diplomacy of the Foreign Ministry in Dublin. I also had two postings in the United States. I spent ten years of my life there, once as Consul General. . .

Young: That was in New York.

O'Huiginn: . . . between '79 and '83, and then as Ambassador in Washington between '97 and 2002. So obviously, I've had a reasonable opportunity to see at first hand the role of the United States in general and of Senator Kennedy in particular. I think any assessment of either role

needs a certain degree of context. You take as your departure point that, first of all, it's a very unequal relationship, naturally enough, between Great Britain and Ireland, between London and Dublin. That's in the nature of things and nobody objects to it, but the British, from time immemorial, have always been rather worried about their Irish flank, because they knew quite rightly that any chance that the Nationalist Irish had to revolt would be immediately availed of. So they had a permanent sense of vulnerability regarding this disaffected island on their flank. There were various attempts, including by the French, to invade. There was also the complicated dimension that Britain was preeminently and proudly a Protestant power, and had championed the Reformation which however did not make many gains with the Nationalist Irish who remained overwhelmingly Catholic. So you had this very complicated relationship.

The British were able to satisfy themselves that they had that situation more or less under control, from the 1800s onwards, by which time it was almost inconceivable, that a European power would invade through Ireland. But then something rather paradoxical happened. Because of the Great Famine and the mass migration of Irish people to the United States—Irish people who had been very diligent pupils of Daniel O'Connell's political organizing skills—the Irish began to emerge as a force in American politics. That triggered off paranoia on the part of the British political system, who felt the monster of their nightmares had escaped the confines of these islands and was flourishing and wreaking havoc potentially between the two sister "Anglo-Saxon" democracies.

Young: Right, and one of which had rebelled.

O'Huiginn: So everything about the American influence has to be prefaced by saying that this is an extraordinary neuralgic nerve, even today, for the British system. It was seen in its full glory at the time of the Adams visa, for instance. But there is a positive side to this as well. That imbalance that I spoke about, between the two islands, the two politics, naturally enough carried a temptation, a very natural temptation, for the British to use their preponderance to do things pretty much as they wanted, no matter how much that might be dangerous in terms of long-term stability. And the American dimension and the nervousness that the British had for the American dimension, was the single most powerful factor, in a peaceful democratic sense, in trying to ensure that there was some degree of balance and reflection, that they didn't simply follow their perhaps slightly atavistic instincts, which they might have liked to. From the 19th century on, the American shadow was predominently a moderating force and a force for good, in various degrees, depending on the phases. But it was nevertheless generally a force for good in the British-Irish relationship.

It also had another dimension in relation to the peace process as such, because obviously the problem with the peace process was to get people to renounce violent methods, to see that these were not just undemocratic, and wrong, and ultimately they were not going to be productive. The argument from the IRA [Irish Republican Army] would be that the imbalance between London and Dublin was so great that Dublin's attempt to steer the process would be a joke. The IRA felt the British understood only violence and the IRA should keep administering it until magic things happened and the British saw the light and withdrew from Ireland. It's not an argument that we would subscribe to, of course, but it was very convincing for the people who advocated it.

And in that sense, the American dimension became the strongest counter-argument that you could put forward as a democrat, that no, this isn't a lopsided situation where the British do exactly as they want and shrug their shoulders at the Irish, but that it is actually much more balanced, because the United States is there. Not necessarily always proactively but always implicitly there as a potential informal arbiter, not perhaps in the sense of moving in formal arbitration. But somebody in Washington would simply say to London, we don't think that's very smart, or we don't think that's very good.

The argument crystallized in the peace process, what are the alternatives to violence? The American dimension had an extraordinary importance that perhaps Americans wouldn't fully understand, but we who were involved at this end understood perfectly that it had great importance as the strongest argument why a democratic solution would not be a "con job," as some of the IRA leaders would have maintained or feared.

Young: Could I ask when the peace movement got underway? Would that be in John Hume's time, or would it have been—this is in reference to the United States coming to adopt the peace process.

O'Huiginn: Well, I think there are two separate strands. The United States' modern involvement—I mean, there had been important things in the past, but the modern involvement essentially begins in the Carter Presidency, with the "Four Horsemen," of which obviously Ted Kennedy was a heavyweight member. They produced, from President Carter, the statement denouncing violence and calling for a democratic resolution, with the promise, at least in a generic way, of American support, including financial support, if there were a peace process.

Young: Yes.

O'Huiginn: I think the American involvement really dates from that time. Ted Kennedy, as you might expect, was in on the ground floor of that also. The antecedents of the peace process in Ireland are obscure in a sense. Historians could argue for a very long time over which factor was dominant. I think what happened is that the IRA was discovering the fallacy of the idea that the British would, in exasperation, just throw in the towel in reaction to persistent terrorism and say okay, it's all yours. It would always have been an enormously irresponsible thing for any serious government to do in any case, just to throw a conflict situation into potential anarchy.

The other paradoxical thing is that because of the hunger strikes—and the deaths and emotions involved gave a political boost to Sinn Féin in Northern Ireland—they found themselves, a little unexpectedly perhaps, managing a very successful political movement in Northern Ireland. We were fortunate that the leadership of Sinn Féin, or the IRA at that time, contained rather shrewd heads in terms of political ability and good strategic sense. And I think they were beginning to see, really probably from the Anglo-Irish Agreement in '86 onwards, that perhaps the campaign of violence was becoming a very murderous and unproductive cul-de-sac, and they were looking for a way out. Clearly, they were morbidly sensitive to the idea that they had somewhat been defeated, and it was necessary, for many reasons, to find a better political construct anyway than a winner-loser scenario. But also, if you wanted to entice them out of violence, they certainly weren't going to sign up to any kind of British formula that we presented to them. They were

obviously going to need something that they could represent, at a minimum, as an honorable outcome for them, or perhaps even as a victory.

A very key moment was the dialogue with Hume, which began about 1987 or 1988. I'm a little vague on the time. It actually culminated in some kind of "theological" documents, theoretical discussion documents that were exchanged between Hume and Adams. That is a very seminal document because it suggests that Adams and his allies had moved out of the rejection of politics as an evil, a path to shameful compromise, the attitude that had characterized the IRA outlook for many decades before that, to a much more reflective sense of might be attainable. And then from '88 onwards, with the involvement of Hume, then with the informal involvement of the Irish government, then with the involvement of the formal structures of the Irish government, including myself, we came to the Downing Street Declaration in '94.

Young: Yes.

O'Huiginn: That really set up the parameters where a solution could be found. Most of what happened afterwards was really fleshing out or inking in the broad-brush provisions that were in the Downing Street Declaration. So, as I said, the roots of the Irish process are complex, but it certainly goes back to the '80s, and surfaces in a formal sense with the Downing Street Declaration. Then you had all the various other documents and developments, with the IRA cease-fire being very important obviously, and leading up to the talks, George Mitchell's appointment, the Good Friday Agreement, the various alaroms and excursions after that, to try and get the agreement implemented. Then to the situation that you have now, where unfortunately you cannot say that the last person has been killed for political reasons in Northern Ireland, because we know from every context in the world that somebody who's determined to kill almost at random has the advantage of initiative in a way that no security counter-measures can entirely take away. But I think what has been achieved is that that violence would never again get the political resonance that the violence of the IRA had in the late '60s, '70s, and '80s.

I would illustrate my point with reference to the Baader-Meinhof group, or a division of the Baader-Meinhof group in Germany. It was destructive and murderous gang and obviously had a certain echo in the media, but essentially was not capable of leveraging, in any real sense, the German political system. I would contrast that with the Provisional's record, which most certainly leveraged the political system. I don't think violence in Northern Ireland will ever have that resonance again.

Young: On the American side of the pond, it is seen that Carter was the first American President to assert an official position on Ireland and Northern Ireland policy. The story of that is rather interesting, how that was worked by Kennedy.

O'Huiginn: No disrespect to Kennedy, but I think Tip O'Neill was probably even more important there.

Young: Oh yes, very much so.

O'Huiginn: He reigns as the lead dog of that particular stretch.

Young: That's right.

O'Huiginn: But Kennedy, going forward, essentially rules.

Young: The Four Horsemen.

O'Huiginn: But Ted, as I said, was probably the fulcrum of that particular issue.

Young: But one of the concerns, I think, of O'Neill and the Four Horsemen and the Friends of Ireland, which were formed in the U.S. Congress by then, was to turn Irish American sentiment toward the peace process and away from the support of funds and arms for the IRA. Although the American official position was moderating, there was a body of feeling among Irish Americans, so we understood it, that had be moved in favor. Did you? You were there.

O'Huiginn: Well, absolutely. I wasn't there at the time of the Carter Presidency.

Young: No, but you saw it.

O'Huiginn: Oh, most certainly. That was always a very serious factor. The Irish diaspora of the States had taken with them pretty dark memories of the British role in Ireland.

Young: Of course, the monster had moved.

O'Huiginn: They thought of only one thing, which was getting back at it, if at all possible. And naturally enough, throwing ten dollars into a hat, into a collection, or going to a concert or whatever, with the sense that we're getting back at those so and sos who oppressed us in Ireland. It was very tempting and humanly understandable. If you accepted, however, as all democrats did in Ireland, that the violence was not just wrong but ultimately counterproductive, then anything that fed that issue was also wrong and counterproductive. No serious democrat could say, well, I'm a democrat six days a week but on Saturday I take a holiday from democratic methods to get at the British, and I'll be back again. So you're either a democrat or you're not, and it is true that we spent a huge amount of effort trying to get the non-violent message across to the Irish Americans: support Ireland, support change for progress, support the Nationalist cause, but don't do it through a campaign of violence. It was very uphill, because we were running against the grain of something that had obviously been bred in the bone, and entrenched in Irish-American folk memory.

Young: Right.

O'Huiginn: Not just because of the circumstances of immigration from Ireland, but also the experience of the Irish in the States. They did very well but they had also rough passages. And when they saw the WASPs [white Anglo-Saxon Protestants] as the surrogates for the British, all of that coalesced into sort of an anger, and it was very easy to tap, by pushing the right buttons. It was the type of a paradox that the politicians closest to Ireland, like the Four Horsemen, were the most careful in terms of any support for violence; whereas many politicians that were at a greater remove from Irish realities had no such scruples and they just thought to please the activists—this is the button to press, and here, press it. So the ambiguity on violence is not just played out through the pubs of South Boston or New York, but also played out to some extent in Congress.

Young: Oh, yes.

O'Huiginn: This made it difficult, and in some cases impossible, to persuade Representatives, or indeed Senators also, that this ambiguity really was a dangerous path. The Four Horsemen had a record of absolute consistency, and it's good to reflect that that strain—which indeed, as we could see at the time and as we now know from hindsight also—the nonviolent strain was the one that was going to be productive. And in that sense, the Four Horsemen, and Senator Kennedy in particular, have an entirely consistent and honorable record in backing the strand of policy that became the fruitful one.

Young: That became the other voice for peace for Irish America.

O'Huiginn: They became—probably at some minor cost. One of the clichés in the British newspapers was that Kennedy was shamelessly massaging the Irish American vote. Nothing could be further from the truth. I doubt if Ireland got him a single one of those irredentist votes. You know, there were other things as well. But it's grotesquely untrue that Kennedy's position was a vote chase. It was quite the contrary, and that was true indeed of all of the four men. They were fortunately established enough for that not to be a career-breaker, but I think there's a very simplistic view, particularly in some British circles, of what this involved in terms of American politics.

Kennedy, from the Carter Presidency onwards, is really central to every single initiative that had happened. Going back to the point I made about that imbalance between Britain and Ireland that we always had to struggle with, you cannot exaggerate the importance of having someone, whether as a minority or majority figure, who is extremely close to the very center, the very apex of American power; one who is generously and disinterestedly in support of Ireland. As I said, he got few votes on his Irish stance and probably lost thousands, but he had a sense of what was right, and it meant—he operated, really, on two levels. I think one was that he was a constant presence there, at the apex of power, which meant that at any juncture where the Irish government needed counsel or wanted to get a point across, perhaps, to the British, filtered through the medium that they did respect, the medium of the United States. Kennedy was there to help, and as I said, his record is entirely consistent. There is one single point in all of that period since Carter where the Irish government had any sense of distance from Ted Kennedy, and that was in the immediate aftermath of Bloody Sunday, where he said that Northern Ireland was Britain's Vietnam, and they should just get out.

Young: Yes.

O'Huiginn: I think the emotions that followed Bloody Sunday were extraordinarily high everywhere. The British Embassy in Dublin was burned down.

Young: Possibly his emotions too.

O'Huiginn: So I think he was not immune to these emotions. Poets were weighing in with blistering poems about what had happened. I mean, Bloody Sunday raised the traditional specter in the Irish psyche of the British simply using their military preponderance to ruthlessly suppress any impulses from Nationalist Ireland. It was a traumatic event, and I think Kennedy reflected that. It wasn't an open disagreement with the Irish government, but there was perhaps—because

there was a point where, really, there wasn't a full identity of views between Kennedy's position and that of the Irish government.

Young: Could you clarify once more, his view being—when he made his statements about Blood Sunday, as against the Irish government's preferred approach.

O'Huiginn: Well, I think the Irish government had a pretty realistic sense that a British withdrawal was a very dangerous option. You could imagine scenarios where they would withdraw orderly and gradually, but actually in practice, the perspective of a British withdrawal would have brought the house down, since the Unionists would have run to their barricades, the Nationalists to theirs, and even the most thoughtful sort of answer to the British withdrawal would probably have precipitated convulsion and have been a catalyst, at a minimum, to the loss of control of the situation in Northern Ireland.

Young: And Kennedy's position statements.

O'Huiginn: Well, Kennedy's statements were fairly categorical.

Young: Brits out.

O'Huiginn: Brits out. [*laughter*]

Young: As Charlie Haughey said, when he was asked about jostling, he said, enlighten us about the position, and so forth. Ted was telling me the story and when he got finished, Haughey said, "Brits out. How are you down at the end of the table?" So that was Ted's reaction at that time. Okay, I just wanted to clarify the difference.

O'Huiginn: I think one of the best things that happened in terms of Ted's position on Northern Ireland was that he linked up with John Hume. Hume has been probably the most significant character in Irish politics in the second half of the twentieth century. His health is now pretty much shot to pieces.

Young: Yes.

O'Huiginn: He's, unfortunately, a shadow of his former self. Hume found that Nationalist community in Northern Ireland had essentially broken into two tendencies, which I could maybe summarize as "flight or fight." Flight would have been the old Nationalist Party, which said that this partition is an utter con job, changing the goalposts during the game. It sets us up as a permanent ethnic minority in a purposely designed entity where all the forms of democracy are decided by a permanent unionist majority, effectively a formula for permanent power by the majority created. So the Nationalist Party said we will have nothing to do with this, we boycott it, we refuse to recognize it. And that political flight wasn't hugely effective. I think that their opponents delighted they were so obliging as to withdraw from the field.

The "fight" would have been the IRA instinct that these people understand only one thing, namely physical force, and we will give it to them, more bombs please. So Hume was the first to think through a kind of a different approach, to think through what would make it honorable for

Nationalists to operate the system in Northern Ireland, even if it wasn't their first preference in terms of the flag or the prevailing ethos.

Young: Yes, of course.

O'Huiginn: And with great consistency, he forged a kind of concept that essentially could be summarized as equal rights and power sharing, and with great skill and doggedness, fought that through. All of the subsequent documents that were produced on Northern Ireland essentially reflect Hume's strategic insight or his strategic capacity to carve out a third way, which enabled the Nationalists to work honorably the system in Northern Ireland. Hume would be on the whole conservative. I think he was very aware of the dangers of the whole body of Nationists refusing to operate the institutions of government, and would be a partisan of an orderly—I won't say normal, because it couldn't be quite normal given the conditions in Northern Ireland, but an orderly respect for administration of institutions. Hume wasn't a details man. He didn't sit down and write 500 pages of drafts, but his strategic insights were paramount.

Young: Did Kennedy ever talk with you about Hume?

O'Huiginn: Oh, yes, a lot. They met in Bonn.

Young: In '72 I believe.

O'Huiginn: I don't know the dates but that sounds about right. Kennedy was in Europe.

Young: It was in '72 or '74.

O'Huiginn: Yes. Anyway, it's on the record somewhere. He rang up Hume and asked if they could meet. So my colleague, who was the Ambassador in Bonn at that time, Sean Ronan, set up a dinner in the Embassy. That was the beginning of the relationship with Hume, which essentially was enormously significant for the peace process as a whole; for Hume, because it gave him leverage and a role in the United States. And for Kennedy as well, because it meant that he had the best possible guide to Northern Ireland—with the very good instinct that Kennedy always had, of finding the right person to go to. I think the record of his staffers shows that one of his great skills was finding the right person for the right purpose.

Young: I don't know how that meeting came about. He didn't remember too clearly when I asked him about it.

O'Huiginn: I think it came about because it was regarded as too risky for Kennedy to go to Northern Ireland and to meet Hume at the time.

Young: So they had to find neutral ground.

O'Huiginn: I suppose, and to link in with Kennedy's schedule in a less disruptive way than a trip to Ireland.

Young: When his brother was President, Kennedy had a visit over here. He was very young at the time, and he made a rousing speech.

O'Huiginn: Was that the '64 visit?

Young: His brother was President so it was an earlier speech. I think this was before—his brother was still President, and it got a great play. I don't know where it was. It was rousing. When he got back he got a note from his brother, from the White House, saying, "I was interested to see that you have your own foreign policy." [*laughter*] And then at some point, he wasn't speechified, but he became serious about it, and Hume was just a very important figure to him.

O'Huiginn: But also in fairness, let us give credit to Ted's own commitment, which we tend to take for granted. We ask: why wouldn't he? A better question is, why would he? I mean, he had plenty on his plate and he could have been forgiven if he said look, this is too complicated; it has only down sides in terms of my American politics; let's leave, maybe I'll catch up later. He never did. He had a most generously committed attitude all along.

He was in Ireland some time in the early '70s. The reason I know this is that I remember seeing him in a slightly surrealistic circumstance. I had just joined the Department of Foreign Affairs as a young diplomat in probably the very early '70s. To know the focus of my story, you should know that the Irish Foreign Ministry, Iveagh House, had been the townhouse of the Guinness "royal family," and they sold it to the Irish government about 1940, and then it became the Foreign Ministry. But as a condition of sale, one of the Guinness ancient retainers, who was retired even in 1940, a man called Jackson, had to be given a life tenancy and a little apartment in the basement.

So that's how I happened to be among officials welcoming a great member of the Kennedy family, when suddenly from the basement, the ancient Jackson emerged to discharge his duties as the butler. The poor man looked every inch his age, with red-rimmed eyes and a truly spectral mien. I always remember Kennedy's gobsmacked expression as he saw this apparition advancing by to take his coat. Kennedy never had a poker face, and his jaw just dropped . it's an incongruous vignette I can never forget.

Young: Yes.

O'Huiginn: When he had visited earlier—well, I suppose with all the sad glamor of the dead President clinging to him, he was practically mobbed in Dublin, at the Pro-Cathedral.

Young: Yes.

O'Huiginn: So he had several visits, but from then on, his role can be summed up really in one sentence: that he was associated with all of the different strands in what became the peace process. And it is also true that from the very early days that he was associated with very few of the strands that were problematic. As I said, he was a constant presence there, a constant resource—that's not a derogatory term—for our search for progress. He was that also for the British government as well, except they tended to be more chary of availing of his services. That support for reconciliation in Northern Ireland lasted right through his career, really.

Then there were a number of points where his intervention was more focused and to the point. The Adams visa is certainly one of them. His appointment of Jean [Kennedy Smith], I think is

probably another—is it legitimate to speak of his appointment of Jean as Ambassador? His role was certainly crucial. It turned out, in retrospect, to have been a very inspired move and did an immense amount of good to the process. It was seen as, perhaps at the beginning, as an act of family patronage. Jean herself was the subject of condescending or withering remarks from—I'm truly sorry to say this as a professional diplomat myself—from quite a number of American professional diplomats.

Young: Well, the American State Department was adopting more or less the British position.

O'Huiginn: Well, they were. The great irony in the situation is that this woman who's patronized effectively as a poor little homemaker, who would be shortly and drastically out of her depth, was the one who, with absolute acumen, read the situation in Ireland. Whereas Ambassador [Raymond] Seitz and the like were just into conventional thinking and were incapable of seeing what was unfolding before their eyes. As I said, it's a humbling effect for a professional diplomat that this amateur turned out to be far more perceptive and effective than the condescending professional.

Young: I had not known, and I'm kind of a student of politics, but in studying up for these interviews on Ireland, for the Kennedy project, I had not realized what a key person Jean was, even with Ted, at that time. One of the extraordinary things that I see is, here's a brother and a sister involved at a crucial juncture in getting the United States, the President of the United States, to make a critical move on the visa. When Ted came over to visit her, he was not in favor of a visa. I'm telling you what you already know, but Jean arranged his day and arranged his exposure. By then, of course, she had been well educated by you throughout; I mean, she said this. She said, "I couldn't have done all this without Sean O'Huiginn."

O'Huiginn: She's very kind on that. I had known Jean.

Young: Did you know her before?

O'Huiginn: I knew her from New York and I had met her as one would at the occasional function. We had had a very difficult passage of arms at my time as Consul General because the St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee nominated an old war-horse called Mike Flannery as Grand Marshal of the parade. He was, at that stage, in his eighties; an old IRA man from Tipperary who had been at the center of many of the gun-running and fund-raising episodes. As a person, he was a dignified old gentleman, but as a representative of a political tendency, you literally could not have got from central casting a more dyed-in-the-wool IRA man.

When he had been made Grand Marshal, we had a dilemma. Do you go along and say, well, it doesn't much matter anyway? Or do you say that we cannot be part of honoring someone whose demeanor is so absolutely contrary to everything that we believe in? So as Consul General I boycotted the St. Patrick's Day Parade, to underline our opposition to violence. The media took up the story. It became notorious and very controversial and we got death threats and what have you.

But then Jean very kindly rang up when the conflict was over and said, "Look, you probably need a break. Why don't you take my cottage in the Hamptons for a few days?" So I thought of it

and thought, *Oh, it's cold this time of year; there's probably going to be wind coming through the floorboards* and things like that. But I thought, *Oh, let's do it anyway.* I was curious. I can never forget the utter shock as we opened the door. The first thing that faced my wife and myself was a Picasso about twice the size of the mirrors, hanging over the mantelpiece. It went up from there, so it dramatically altered my notions of what a cottage in the Hamptons is. [*laughter*]

So yes, we had known each other then, but again, even though I always liked and admired her, and knew her for her very sharp mind, it still wasn't clear how she would discharge the daily functions of Ambassador. Almost immediately you could see that she had a formidable instinct. Arthur Schlesinger opined once that she had the best political brain of all the Kennedys. Maybe a bit of an exaggeration, but certainly she was not left short when political acumen was being doled out among the siblings; she got a full measure. I mean, she reminded me of William Yeats' line about [Isabella Augusta] Lady Gregory, she "Could keep a swallow to its first intent."

Young: What was that again?

O'Huiginn: She could keep a swallow to its first intent. That is, she had a resolute persistence in bringing people to do her will. I think Ted resigned himself to that force of nature as well.

Young: Do you have any comment on the notion that she went over there sort of as his alter ego, or with his instructions or to do his bidding?

O'Huiginn: I think Jean had certain immunity from bureaucratic instructions, in the best sense. She followed her instinct. There never really was a conflict, because obviously they had a very close bond. I think this happens in families, where you can get two siblings who had a particular mutual solidarity. That's the impression I had of the relationship between the two. Obviously, all the siblings would have been affectionate, but I always thought that there was an extra dimension, if you like, between Ted and Jean. As to who did whose bidding, I would think they were pretty much *ad idem* in their views. But I have the impression Ted was doing Jean's bidding at least as often as the other way round!

Young: She was her own person.

O'Huiginn: First of all, she took her mission extremely seriously. She focused on the peace process with laser-like accuracy. She got to know all the players, including significant Sinn Féin people. Now, you get various opinions as to whether Sinn Féin was too greatly indulged or too little indulged in the process. I think we collectively got it about right. As a democracy, obviously there was a delicacy in dealing with people whose democratic record was spotty, shall we say? On the other hand, it wasn't quite the uneven negotiation some people thought, because the IRA were putting something on the table that was as crucial to them as any democratic value would have been to us—namely the myth that they had built up over decades. It was a myth that couldn't really survive a normal negotiating process, and to some extent, I always had a degree of sympathy for the dilemmas that Adams and [Martin] McGuinness faced, trying to bring their movement along. Clearly, any mistake could have terminated with extreme prejudices, as they say in Washington. So they had to be extraordinarily careful. They were naturally almost paranoiac about the dangers of being double-crossed.

When I was having a significant influence in policy, I was always scrupulously careful to tell the entire truth—not even the whitest of diplomatic lies, because I had a sense that any deception however small could destabilize parts of the Republican base. Jean, I don't know if she analyzed it, but her demeanor is very candid and straightforward anyway, perhaps even to a fault. She generated the same confidence that she wasn't going to deceive—that what she said was her true belief, and that was in a position where the IRA people were understandably very nervous about who to trust, who not to trust—and she was very important in that confidence-building role.

She was also important in the sense that she was not just the remote United States Ambassador, but she was a presence here on the ground. In other words, instead of the United States dimension, being 3,000 miles away, available certainly, but at a distance. Jean incorporated that concretely and immediately here on the ground in Ireland with great impact on people who associated with her. She was very direct. But she had a sense of knowing exactly how to handle people on serious issues. She was a constant presence, there was the feedback, and it meant at a time when Albert Reynolds or Gerry Adams or whoever needed a favor, there was a very significant immediate channel that, to put it mildly, had no inhibitions about ringing Mr. President or ringing the Senator or ringing any other person in the United States who could be harnessed to the particular cause.

Young: Yes.

O'Huiginn: She was pretty important because of the intelligence that she brought to bear, and because of the sense she gave that there was an American dimension that wasn't in the pocket of anybody, not really Dublin, certainly not London, it created an enhanced climate of confidence that the negotiations would in fact be able to play through with some degree of fairness, as opposed to being Republican nightmare as a kind of con job where the predominant British partner and its hundred of years of practice as an empire would get up to old statecraft tricks again.

Young: So I'm gathering that if she had not been here at that historical moment, more things could have gone wrong. Shall I put it that way?

O'Huiginn: I think that's right. Obviously, if you look at your motor, you know that it turns because you've got a mixture of vapors in some exact proportion. And if it's a different proportion, your car won't drive. In politics, you can never have that degree of precision, so it's very hard to make a judgment on what would or would not have happened. But what is certainly true is that she was an enormous influence for good and for progress, and certainly without her it would have been different, probably a more messy and more protected process.

Young: No.

O'Huiginn: No one can say whether it would have gone terribly off the rails if she hadn't been here. But her role—when I say it was an extension of Kennedy's role, I don't mean in her personal demeanor, but I mean she was part of a nexus that involved President Clinton, that involved Senator Kennedy, that involved herself, obviously, and other players as well. And that it was entirely benign and positive in terms of what became the peace process and a crucial

influence which enabled us to turn the page, hopefully permanently, on violence in Northern Ireland.

The other thing, she was actually a wonderful Ambassador of the United States, leaving aside the peace process. I mean, her invitations were worth gold dust. And she reached out to all kinds of constituencies that more conventional diplomats—I mean conventional in the bad sense—would not be involved with. As I said, it really was a very inspired choice both for the peace process and I honestly think for the United States and Ireland more widely.

Young: She was reprimanded.

O'Huiginn: The State Department, for reasons best known to itself, had a pattern of taking diplomats from Central America and posting them to Dublin. And they came here, perhaps having been shot at or something in the Latin posting, but they'd come here and a hostile letter would appear in the *Irish Times*, let's say. And instead of seeing it as, well, that's the Irish letting off steam, they would see it as the printed harbinger of a wave of disaffection, certainly anti-American, misjudging the very complex, but fundamentally benign if maybe occasionally presumptuous Irish attitude to the U.S.

But she had a most independent mindset and I don't blame her for having switched some personnel or for using her prerogative to get a deputy head of mission that she was comfortable with. I know she got a reprimand from the State Department. In her defense—I guess I would admit that I'd be rather biased from what I've just said—but her defense, which I've never heard anyone refute, was that of the four people who had opposed her vehemently on the Adams visa, she had indeed given a black mark to two of them, but she had recommended the other two warmly for promotion. And actually, as I said, I've never asked her—I've never bothered really, it's not a big deal—but from everything I know of her, she wasn't in any way a petty or a vindictive person. I really think if she acted against any subordinate, it would have been from conviction on the merits and never spite.

Young: She seems a Kennedy, in this respect at least. Maybe not all Kennedys, but both she and her brother, it seems to me, are remarkable for not bearing grudges.

O'Huiginn: I think that's right.

Young: I mean, you get on with the work.

O'Huiginn: Kennedy was conspicuously forgiving in terms of people who had crossed him or had thwarted him. There are many instances of that. Jean was probably a demanding boss; I wouldn't doubt that for a moment. Because once she made up her mind, it was probably a rather forlorn process to try and change it, for she held to her convictions. But I actually never heard her say anything that was petty or spiteful about anyone whatsoever.

Young: No, it wasn't.

O'Huiginn: And I would be surprised if she sat down and in a bloody-minded way and said, I should punish these guys. I think she genuinely made a judgment, rightly or wrongly, as to what

she thought of their competence. Much was made of it, obviously, by people who wanted to get after her.

Young: She was known in Ireland before she became Ambassador, wasn't she? She had done a lot of work in the arts.

O'Huiginn: I don't know how often she had been over, but she was obviously on John F. Kennedy's famous trip.

Young: Yes.

O'Huiginn: It's having a bit of a rerun or revival. She's been all over the place on our TVs recently, and she certainly would have come on the special arts and things, at various times. She obviously did not have then the profile Ted had.

Young: Oh no, no.

O'Huiginn: She would have come in and out rather quietly.

Young: It wasn't in politics, it was—

O'Huiginn: And she had been in contact with John Hume long before Teddy. I would assume that she probably had some influence in pointing Teddy towards Hume as a compass for Northern Ireland.

Young: Her arrangement of his trip when Ted and Vicki [Reggie Kennedy] came over to visit her at Christmas was—I'm not sure Ted ever knew what hit him. [*laughs*]

O'Huiginn: I think Ted also indulged in Christmas cheer. He might not have known what hit him in any case.

Young: Yes, and he said this wasn't on my schedule, going to—Jean's telling him, you're going to see the Taoiseach, Albert Reynolds, and then you're going… And then there was Tim Pat Coogan and then there was—he said, "That was not on my schedule."

O'Huiginn: I think he learned fatalism in trying to resist Jean's suggestions.

Young: There was a gathering at Phoenix House one night during that visit. Were you there? It was one of Jean's dinners and I'm trying to find out who all was there, after having arranged his exposure to all these people. I'll ask him next week, but was Gerry Adams there? She mentioned his visiting her at—or coming down to see her at Phoenix House.

O'Huiginn: I can't remember, and I'm not being evasive. The functions that Ted was at are kind of a blur at this stage, and I can't pick out one individual presence clearly in my mind. Certainly, I was at a number of functions where Ted was, but this was the Christmas one. I don't think Adams would have been there but I'm sorry. The chronology has become a little bit blurred in my mind at this stage.

Young: Also among the people she arranged for him to meet on that trip was Father [Alec] Reid, and it was quite a formal visit.

O'Huiginn: Jean didn't believe in slacking either.

Young: Can you speak a little bit about the [Joseph] Cahill visa? Everybody focuses on the Adams visa, that's the big story in the United States. The Cahill visa is almost an unknown footnote in the newspapers, and yet, wasn't that a very important part of the strategy?

O'Huiginn: It was. It was rightly seen as kind of a subset of the Adams visa, but you're also right that it was actually more problematic in the sense, whatever was the reality of Gerry Adams' past, he clearly had made a very long journey into the normal political process, whether it was complete or not at that point. But if he wasn't fully embedded in democratic policy, he was certainly, on all analysis, on his way there. To some extent, the Adams visa was part of confirming the process towards exclusively political engagement—it became disproportionately emotional because of that reflex that the British have to worry about any distance between London and Washington. It became kind of a silly test case of who do the Americans love most, London or Dublin?

I suppose London would have seen itself as the legitimate wife and rather resented that a new hussy had appeared on the scene. I exaggerate, but there is no doubt that the British, in their treatment of Adams, went into the realm of absurdity on several occasions. For several years, there was the convention that his voice couldn't be heard on the British media. So there's a whole bunch of actors making a nice little earning from doing Gerry Adams' voice.

Young: That's right.

O'Huiginn: At pretty regular intervals, as you can imagine. Nobody seems to have stood back and said look, this is getting very absurd, because probably, if anything, it enhanced Adams' elocution, instead of being gruff or pragmatic, as he might have been left to himself. It was as if he had hired a skilled professional actor to incorporate his thoughts. Secondly, to shake hand with Gerry Adams became an enormous deed, to which every conceivable symbolism was attached. The point I'm making is that sometimes the British dug themselves into holes that were—in my view anyway—disproportionate and counterproductive for the values they were trying to protect. I think the Adams visa became, as I said, a kind of a test case where, in the tug-of-war between Hume, Adams, Jean Kennedy, and the State Department, probably the Pentagon was in on it, you know, the people who were worried about endorsing terrorism were understandably hostile.

Young: The Department of Justice as well.

O'Huiginn: Obviously. But anyone can understand where they were coming from, but I think Clinton rightly analyzed it, that this was more or less win-win. In other words, if he did business and Adams continued on the trajectory towards a peaceful solution, it hadn't really cost very much, to put it mildly. If there were not good faith on Adams' part, then a sad lesson had been learned, but again the damage—apart from some finger-pointing, obviously in the British media—the damage was not significant in terms of real American interests.

The Cahill visa was more problematic in the sense that Joe Cahill, like Michael Flannery from the St. Patrick's Day Parade, again was an elderly man who was absolutely a linchpin of the Provisionals as a senior statesman or generalissimo. Certainly, no one could pretend that he had much in the way of a democratic record, shall we say. He was involved in most of the IRA campaigns and actions, so there was no pretence that this was anything other than a warlord from the IRA, coming out to the States to do some important business in lining up various interests there that could have been troublesome for the peace process. It was a case of using Cahill's prestige as the elder statesman, to come out and persuade these people that "Look, this is okay, because I, Joe Cahill, the incorruptible IRA man, endorse it." So it was very important for the internal dynamics of the Provisionals, but there were no fig leaves in terms of the kind of person who was being invited out.

Young: Well, in part, that was the reason for his being invited.

O'Huiginn: They just took refuge, as they had to do, and a purely pragmatic thing, that this is a means to an end. So they weren't pretending that this was a man who met the criteria for an American visa. They were saying let's make an exception because of the significant contribution he can make, to get us where we want to. So I suppose in a sense, the first shock, horror, had been dissipated with Adams.

Young: There was no time to regroup.

O'Huiginn: I suppose the Adams visa was the first crossing of the boundaries, the difficult one, and eventually the Cahill visa went through. All of this goes on against the background where the IRA leadership were talking to their recalcitrants, I mean the ones that are known, emerging shadowy in small ways around Northern Ireland. They were talking to those, trying to bring them onboard, and to be able to invoke the enormous power and influence of the United States as leverage was a very important show-and-tell, so to speak, for Adams and company, McGuinness and so on, as they tried to bring those people onboard. So it wasn't just an indulgence, his being granted a visa. It actually had quite a real and important political purpose in terms of bringing that whole cohort into the peace process.

Young: Oh, yes.

O'Huiginn: And it was entirely the right decision.

Young: That was crucial.

O'Huiginn: Although there were people who saw it as problematic against the general background of U.S. principles and these things.

Young: Going back to the [Margaret] Thatcher, the declaration. This was Ronald Reagan's second term here. It was said in his first term—I guess Sean Donlon said that he discovered his Irish roots in his second term.

O'Huiginn: I think we have to discuss that part.

Young: I know.

O'Huiginn: It must be proper to all Irish American Presidents.

Young: I know, you look for the roots.

O'Huiginn: The most recent for President Clinton, I think, is 1770s, alas!

Young: Yes, you are very thorough on your genealogical research.

O'Huiginn: We try to be. Reagan's influence was actually very important, because I think when history becomes viewed in the long perspective, there will be seen a continuity in the policy of certainly successive Irish governments, maybe successive American governments as well, going back to the '70s really. I mean, we were pretty much in despair in the early '70s, because the campaign of violence was unremitting. We were very conscious that while it's almost impossible to imagine Britain being destabilized by events in Northern Ireland. It was all too possible, in a nightmare scenario, to imagine Dublin being destabilized by chaos in Northern Ireland. In fact, it would have been probable if that catastrophe had happened.

So there were very many desperate efforts to try, through successive approximations, to get back to some kind of deal. And one of the things we did, we set up a forum in Dublin, essentially to bring in all of the political participants, (except Sinn Féin, obviously, at that point,) and civil society generally, and to try and work out scenarios that might possibly be the kernel of a new accommodation. And they came up with three options, and Mrs. Thatcher, in an attack of dogmatic assertiveness for which she was famous, listed all three options and declared, "That's out, that's out, that's out." She literally left Garret FitzGerald politically naked in terms of his credibility on Anglo-Irish matters.

I think Reagan and some people around him, including Judge [William] Clark, who is now kind of forgotten, but I think he had a role in that as well. Reagan in his folksy way kept a focus on Ireland. Margaret Thatcher would have pressed him on great global issues and making the future safe for capitalism. And then he'd come up to her and say, "Tell me what's happening in Ireland." I think this almost drove her berserk, though, because of going back to that deeply ingrained British attitude about the U.S. Here they were, as Mrs. Thatcher would have certainly have believed, the two most significant politicians in the whole globe, wanting to sort out the problems in the globe, and this tin-pot Irish problem was being put on the table. Eventually, I think the exasperation that she felt led her to reflect, and perhaps also, she was obviously more thoughtful than her public outbursts would lead you to believe. She probably began to understand that she really had made things very difficult for the Irish government too, and for better or worse, that had to be repaired. But Reagan gave an important impetus in that direction.

So that led to the Anglo-Irish Agreement, which was very dramatic for the Unionists because for the first time, the British formally abandoned the pretense that Northern Ireland had as much or as little to do with Dublin as Bulgaria. The agreement was a major step out of denial for us also, in that we accepted that the Unionists were not just Irish people with a false consciousness, but that they had a perfectly coherent, and in many ways rational, response to the situation they were in. There was a kind of elaborate compromise put together whereby the two governments would meet regularly. The Irish government—

Young: That's when the Secretariat was formed.

O'Huiginn: That's when the Secretariat was formed. Obviously, the Unionist reaction was very vehement, and the British also have an inveterate habit, a lot like the Russians and for the same reason, that when you do an agreement, the letter of the agreement is the high-water mark of what you get, and the implementation of the agreement has subtle, pragmatic drawbacks reflecting the tactical preponderance of the more powerful partner.

Young: Yes.

O'Huiginn: As I said, it's exactly the same as the Russians in that how do you keep the vassal states behaving themselves if you don't have an absolute insistence on the importance of agreements and treaties? How do you keep your initiative as the superpower if you have to abide by these, in a depressingly literal-minded way? So there is a natural tendency that the text is a high-water mark and the implementation very often slips down from the text, in spirit anyway. Partly because of that reflex and partly because of the vehemence of the Unionist reaction, the British operated on a terribly minimalist basis while it was in operation. I can remember that very vividly.

One of the useful things that we achieved when I was in the Secretariat was that we got very good legislation on fair employment in Northern Ireland. There had been quite a discriminatory legacy, which was easing a bit at that stage but was still there, at least in latency terms. I remember I had a colleague who was the specialist in that area, and we were making extremely good progress towards getting worthwhile legislation. At one stage, another colleague who was dealing with security issues fell sick, so I asked the woman who was dealing with fair employment to take a couple of meetings on security.

At these meetings she was aghast at the extent the British were giving her the runaround on security. I explained to her that the reason we were making very good progress on fair employment was that the American leverage was active and present, and the British knew that they basically had to improve their act; whereas on security, that was a different matter. It was a very instructive contrast; the difference between British diplomacy with an American lever in play and British diplomacy without that. But nevertheless, the Anglo-Irish Agreement was a very significant step.

Going back to the question about the peace process, I think it must have occasioned at least some reflections in the Provisional leadership, that a significant step that perhaps they hadn't anticipated had been taken. And that became sort of the basis on which all the things were built, and you had successive approximations leading to the Good Friday Agreement and beyond. The 1986 agreement still remains a pivotal development, although supplemented by many subsequent developments, innovation to policing, and things like that. So Reagan, in his "aw-shucks" way, and perhaps by getting under Mrs. Thatcher's skin, was actually quite a positive stimulus in terms of just getting the British to improve their Irish policy and calibrate it a bit better to the political realities of the island.

Young: Did you know Bill Clark, Judge Clark?

O'Huiginn: No, I didn't. Sean Donlon would have been the person who dealt with him most. But I'm told, mostly by Sean, that he was actually a significant counselor for President Reagan on that issue.

Young: Oh, he's a personal friend too.

O'Huiginn: Of?

Young: Of Reagan's. Bill Clark was in the State Department, then he was in the National Security Council, then he was in the Department of the Interior. He also had Irish roots, and I believe a residence over here.

O'Huiginn: I didn't know that actually.

Young: I think he had property.

Riley: You said there was a continuing momentum?

O'Huiginn: No, not a continuing momentum, a continuity.

Riley: A continuity. Did that continue through the [George H. W.] Bush '41 Presidency?

O'Huiginn: Well, it did in the sense that it wasn't derailed.

Young: But we see very little Presidential—this happening in the [George W.] Bush Presidency. A lot is going on but not in the Bush camp.

O'Huiginn: Well, I think that's—I mean, George H. W. Bush obviously came from a different background, he had different interests.

Riley: Sure.

O'Huiginn: He was one of the Presidents who baffled us in terms of Irish ancestry. I can't resist mentioning an incident that happened at one meeting when I was Ambassador in Washington. Our Foreign Minister had just called on Dick Cheney, and we were standing around afterwards waiting for the cars to pull up, so Cheney was making small talk for a couple of minutes. There was a rumor in Kerry at the time that Cheney had Kerry ancestry, so I said, "Mr. Vice President, did you know there's a rumor in Ireland that you might have Irish ancestry?" "No," he said, "English since 1608 as far as I know." In the light of subsequent events, I rather cherish that statement. [*laughter*]

Young: I have two other things, but one is, was Kennedy doing anything to help move the Unionists or [Ian] Paisley's people or those opposition—the parties for the green?

O'Huiginn: He tried very hard.

Young: Or did that have to fall to others, a lot of it, most of it?

O'Huiginn: Ted Kennedy was hampered by a reputation that, as I mean to emphasize, he hadn't actually earned, as being someone who's playing the populist card on Irish issues. So he would have been, to some extent, a hate figure for the Unionists, as he most certainly was for the hard Tory right in Britain.

But again, as the emollient effects of the peace process increased, Kennedy himself tried quite hard to balance these things out. If you read his Tip O'Neill lecture in 1998, it's a very thoughtful attempt to give both sides an honorable record, an honorable role, a sense of equal respect in terms of United States or Kennedy's own attitudes. And at a later stage, when the protagonists began to go to the White House and Kennedy obviously was a fixture there, he got to know the Unionists, had a good relationship with Paisley. There was an occasion in Stormont, I'm told, where Eileen Paisley beckoned him over and patted the chair beside her and sat him down beside her, which is an astonishing development if you think what the attitude would have been ten years earlier. So he did try hard for an outreach to the Unionist tradition.

You can debate to what extent he had a role in George Mitchell's appointment, but I think it certainly wouldn't have happened if he had been opposed, or if he wasn't a good friend of Mitchell's on Irish issues. They would have been fixtures when George Mitchell was a Senator, so I surmise, but I haven't any inside knowledge about it, that Kennedy probably had a role in Mitchell's selection as well. I think it would have been Kennedy trying to pick someone who he knew would be eminently qualified and balanced as between the two traditions. His office was open for the Loyalists, and indeed for all who might have a role in peace building, who were traveling in considerable numbers to Washington after the peace process consolidated, which was kind of awesome to behold the time he devoted to this agenda.

Some of these visitors seemed to think that everyone from the President on down had been sitting around idly, waiting for their arrival with absolutely nothing else to do, other than listen to the minutiae of their particular counties. But Kennedy was very open and did all the right things in relation to that, so he tried, but it was only later in the process that he was able to overcome the perception of him as a predominantly "green" personality in the Irish Nationalist sense, which his actual record shows really wasn't the case.

Young: Well, the occasions on which he would refuse to meet Gerry Adams on—there were at least two occasions, when Gerry Adams was coming to the United States, that he refused to meet him, usually after a violent outbreak.

O'Huiginn: Again, my memory has telescoped a lot of events, but he didn't meet Gerry Adams before the peace process had produced the cease-fire, as far as I know, even privately. I think the occasions when he had refused to meet after that would have been after the Canary Wharf bomb, when the cease-fire broke down and there was a general refusal to deal with Sinn Féin on the old terms while that state of affairs remained. And then finally there was, in 2005. . . .

Young: The [Robert] McCartney?

O'Huiginn: . . . the McCartney case, sure. There was some worry that maybe Sinn Féin was under the illusion that they could do mostly democracy but a little bit of the old formula. And if there was one thing that every Irish government, every democratic personality, was utterly

insistent on, that there would never be acceptance of 95 percent democracy and 5 percent violence and militancy. So I think Kennedy went out of his way to make that point and he reached out to the McCartney sisters, again, as a way of underlining that thuggery was not an acceptable strand in the peace process. I think that was greatly resented at the time by Sinn Féin, but it was probably salutary.

Young: Was there a point at which Kennedy sort of phased down or phased out his involvement?

O'Huiginn: Not to my knowledge. Again, one of the things that from an Irish perspective is enormously to his credit is how much time he gave, very generously and without hesitation or reservation, to this issue. I think it mattered to him. I can think of no point where anybody ever came back from Washington and said look, Kennedy is going offside or Kennedy is losing interest. It never happened.

Young: It never happened.

O'Huiginn: Not only in terms of his own role but, of course, that had a knock-on effect to people like Chris Dodd. Chris would have been supportive anyway. But still, the fact that Kennedy has this exemplary interest in Ireland, I think did weigh, to a certain extent, on the contributions of other Senators as well. It meant that we probably got a little bit more commitment than if Kennedy had been indifferent in the way, let's say, Tom Foley was relatively indifferent to the issue.

Young: Yes.

O'Huiginn: There's a great contrast there.

Young: Yes. He was opposed to the visa. Well, he thought it was a bad idea, but he didn't oppose it.

O'Huiginn: I think he was very nervous of being classified as a mere Irish American politician. I mean, he saw himself in a loftier and more transcendental role, and perhaps misguidedly, as it turns out.

Young: Mr. Speaker.

O'Huiginn: Yes. He was very allergic to any ethnic classification of it and, consequently, preferred what he saw as the big league, the British Embassy in Washington, to the small boutique at the Irish Embassy.

Young: Did you have a lot of dealing with Carey Parker?

O'Huiginn: Not a huge amount personally. I met him, but most of the time it was probably Trina Vargo who had been the point person. Again, as far as I know, she was pretty much exclusively on that area, unlike when you went to Carey Parker, who might have been up to his tonsils in countering Mitt Romney or whatever, at a given time. With Trina, you had a comfort that this was essentially her trade and you were not presuming on her goodwill by keeping

contact and taking up her time. So Trina would be probably 90 percent of the routine contacts I would have had.

Young: Yes.

O'Huiginn: Although Carey was well known to us all and an important figure in all our books.

Young: He's an unknown figure in the United States, very behind the scenes.

O'Huiginn: What has become of him? Has he retired now?

Young: Kennedy's office was disbanded and I do not know what he's doing now. He may well have retired.

O'Huiginn: Or he may have gone back to a law practice group.

Young: I'm not sure.

O'Huiginn: I was just curious.

Young: I should think it would be very hard to do anything after working—Carey, it would be very hard for Carey.

O'Huiginn: I imagine so as well.

Young: He was with him almost from the beginning. He was a very unusual person in his deep, deep loyalty and very smart political calculus.

O'Huiginn: Very reticent in the good sense of the word.

Young: Very reticent but never—he would have his name excised from documents, just anti-publicity, no publicity. But Ireland was in his heart very much, and he loved Irish poetry.

O'Huiginn: Well, all of us would have known him as a very friendly and supportive figure at the kernel of Ted's operation. But just as a matter of record, I had less to do with him than I had with Trina.

Young: Surrounding the Gerry Adams visa, I get from Trina's notes that there was a lot of pulling and hauling, up and down, back and forth. Now the State Department plays its interview card and it's very difficult to follow it so close up, but it's very useful. But there was a network working here. [Niall] O'Dowd was in there and [Nancy] Soderberg was down in the White House.

O'Huiginn: Yes, Niall was very active and Soderberg had had a very important role.

Young: Could you talk about that a bit?

O'Huiginn: At the Irish end, I think the key protagonists were Hume—and in no particular order—Hume, Reynolds, and Jean Kennedy Smith. Among them they sort of lined up the formal

Irish assessment of the thing, and obviously the rest of us took our cue from that. Yes, in my case, obviously entirely with conviction because I thought it was the right thing to do, but the—it was them, really, at the rather stratospheric level of Albert and Jean and Hume, to a lesser extent. It fed into the States obviously through Kennedy. Nancy Soderberg came from the Kennedy stable too, had a very important role in the White House, and then, as you said, that push me/pull you from the State Department, the British Embassy, the government of London, and so on. I'm not good on the nitty-gritty of it because, in a way, I still regard it as much needless ado about a sensible action that should have been taken anyway. No one now questions that the President and his allies in Ireland made the right call.

Young: Yes.

O'Huiginn: It's more local color than historical relevance, what—you know, the British hysteria, John Major sulkingly refusing contact for a period. All seems a bit absurd in retrospect, but I suppose it was traumatic that Washington had made a call against London's wishes. That was of course why it enormously enhanced the credibility of the U.S. involvement in Irish eyes.

Young: That's right, it's being in hand-to-hand combat, so to speak, on this, whereas it's not going to happen or it is going to. No it's not, you've got to call, da da da. But when you stand back and look at it, as I think you were seeing it, the tide had turned probably. The tide had turned but it seems as though the Adams interview for the visa, and the use—what he would say, whether it would be to renounce, which is what the British and the State Department were insisting on, or what he would say, in drafting language for him to say—I'm not sure he had wanted any language drafted for him, but still. That seems, even in retrospect, to stand out as a major stumbling block, just the use of the language, the rhetoric?

O'Huiginn: Yes. I think it's important to understand that John Major was in very reduced circumstances politically at that time, not only because of this but also on wider issues, when he spoke about "the bastards," the bastards being his Cabinet colleagues.

Young: Yes.

O'Huiginn: Mostly. But he was very much in hock to [Robert Gascoyne-Cecil] Viscount Cranborne, the head of the Cecil family, who was his mentor and bankroller and everything else, his controller, if you like. Cranborne was a very dedicated Unionist. It's an astonishing continuity of British power systems that Cranborne, from probably the same House as the earlier Lord Cecil, under the first Elizabeth, even from the same bed for all I know, was back messing up Ireland 400 years later. I can think of no country that has that degree of extraordinary political continuity. The continuity of that powerful family is quite extraordinary. Major was very much in hock to his circumstances and to Cranborne for the last period of his premiership. And he had no capacity to negotiate anything, really, in terms of concession to Irish Nationalists. There was a kind of a tendency to find spanners to throw in the work. The decommissioning would be a very conspicuous example. Anyone who knew the situation knew that if you took this disarmament requirement out of sequence, that is to say as a culmination of the process, it was a deal breaker. But it was done anyway. Most effectively because it couldn't be easily challenged.

Young: This debate, the decommissioning, you're preconditioned for anything else.

O'Huiginn: Exactly. And decommissioning at an early point in the process was essentially a condition that could not realistically be met by Adams. I assume it was meant to protect Major's very vulnerable flank when he had—not through any fault of his own but because of circumstances—an extremely limited capacity to act. His enormous sulk after the visa event, which was really rather unworthy, I don't know how much that was intended to placate his own irredentists and how much was genuinely felt.

He was a vindictive person, actually, spending considerable effort to get his own back and things. But at any rate, the conditions were quite simply not practical—Adams could not fulfill them and maintain his role. Mary McGrory, I remember, gave him a complete grilling on this as well when she got an interview, or he was at a press conference in Washington, and she insisted that he renounce violence. This brought a rather childish answer, "Renounce, renounce, renounce! There, I've said it." That sort of increased my sense of miasma of absurdity hanging around that whole phase.

Young: It is. But the reality was, this was perhaps having lost the war, trying to win the battle. I ask the question because so very much has been made of this in the nitty-gritty memoranda. You would think this was the deal breaker, and the President would have gone either way. Of course the President's people were telling he won't, he will, and there was some pulling and hauling.

O'Huiginn: There was a lot of that. I mean, you can see from the point of view of the protagonists in Washington. Rightly or wrongly, it was seen as a kind of a Test Case with capital letters, and it needn't have been, really. I think a more matter-of-fact and positive approach might have served everyone better. It's also very difficult to know how truly significant it was in the overall process, but certainly, if Adams had been refused the visa, his prestige would have been damaged among his own people. Whether it would have been irretrievably damaged is not something you can factually say, but it would have been damaged without any doubt.

Back to the point I made earlier that the decision didn't really have that much of a down side, but obviously, for all the protagonists, it was like the Super Bowl; this was it. There would be a winner and a loser, and it was invested with high drama and high symbolism as regards turf and democratic values.

Young: I think it did get to the point of absurdity, where it was self-destructive. When you get down to the use of a word as something, I mean this is—

O'Huiginn: No, it's true.

Young: It was just too much. Did you have some questions on the Clinton—

Riley: Not specifically on that but a couple of things did come to mind that I wanted to ask about. One was, this unusual circumstance, my sense is that diplomatic bureaucracies tend to be pretty hierarchical and you're used to dealing with diplomats in other countries. You've got a very unusual situation here, where the formal diplomatic structures in the United States aren't the most important—that's not the most important interface with the country on some key issues with respect to Ireland. I'm wondering if you could comment a little bit about your own

experience then, in how you dealt with the State Department, while at the same time you've got this very powerful alternative force existing in U.S. politics.

O'Huiginn: Well, I think we dealt with the State—I mean very correctly, and I don't mean that as faint praise. We never short-circuited in procedural terms, to my knowledge.

Riley: Sure.

O'Huiginn: And then never breached normal protocol. As to how unusual that is, that Congress itself or that forces other than the Foreign Ministry have a role, I think actually that's a pattern not just in the United States, where the particular structure of Congress, the committee system, the lobbyists, all of these things mean that the members of Congress are exposed to certain foreign policy issues anyway. But I would say that all over the globe there's a tendency for that kind of power now to ebb away from foreign ministries, for a very simple reason, that the arrival of television and the 24-hour news cycle means that how ever much I might be convinced as a [Nicolas] Sarkozy or any statesman you care to mention, that it would be wise to keep my lofty distance and have underlings do all the petty stuff, I'm going to look very sour if my feeble subordinate at the Foreign Ministry is on the television five times more often than I am. So in every political system, there's been a gravitation of foreign policy issues to the Prime Minister's office or to other bodies. The United States is a particular case for the added reason that the separation of powers means that the division is not watertight even in constitutional theory, so the role of Congress outweighed that of the State Department.

Riley: Sure.

O'Huiginn: If the Senate advises and consents, who draws up a fine line and says well, these three points are legitimate, these three points are not? If you need the advice and consent of, say, Senator Kennedy, you're probably going to seek a direct channel to him and not engage in pedantry about the circumstances. So there's a natural wish to engage directly and it's not confined to Ireland, obviously. As a matter of fact, we were probably relatively modest practitioners of this.

The second point I would make is that things were never mutually exclusive. Maybe in the Adams visa, at a particular juncture, they seemed to be, but the State Department follows the general elections as well, and they understand the importance of going with the grain of Congress as far as they can. So, outside a few very unusual junctures, it wouldn't have been my experience that there were two separate and opposing avenues into the American political power—they were more complementary than your question implies. But it is true that, at the same time, if we had been relying on the State Department for initiatives related to Northern Ireland, I think there would have been a certain state of stasis, shall we say, over the last couple of decades, and an immemorial habit of deferring to London which would probably have been unabated.

Riley: We might not be sitting here.

O'Huiginn: I don't think we would.

Riley: The other question was about your own assessment of the critical U.S. actors in the Good Friday Agreement, and your own sense, in looking back, about who was relatively more important in that role. And then maybe your general assessment about the role of the United States in making that agreement happen, for either up or down.

O'Huiginn: Well, to answer the first part of your question is to start with George Mitchell, because he was an exemplary chairman, saintly in the patience and forbearance that he brought to this. Before going to Washington in '97, I had sat in on protracted periods of talks where George, with great forbearance, dignity, and the sense of procedure you might have expected from a skillful Senator—excuse me, ex-Senator—kept the show on the road. His decision, coming up at the beginning of, say, the two months' run-up to Good Friday, his decision then to force the pace, in other words, kind of blow a whistle and tell everybody to stop the musical chairs and get down to business. It was risky but it worked and it did force people to confront a moment where they either called for or against an agreement, and they all called for the agreement at the end of the day.

So his role is important; it can hardly be exaggerated in that, first of all, to get any chairman that could be acceptable or broadly acceptable to the protagonists was very difficult. There had been an experience in an earlier set of talks that didn't come to very much, where the former Governor-General of Australia, Sir Ninian Stephen, had come in and he was absolutely supine—he took his instructions from British government. I mean, he was in cahoots with them basically, which left a very sour taste on the Irish side and served as a kind of warning.

George, in contrast, was exemplary from the point of view of objectivity, exemplary from the point of view of skills, and he took the rather risky decision to force the pace. Mind you, after the pace had been unforced for what seemed like an abominable amount of time, he brought that across the line. It was an extraordinary achievement actually, an extraordinary achievement, and one that somebody who didn't have George's personal skills probably could not have brought off. So he gets great credit.

President Clinton at that point was, I think it's fair to say, in high excitement at the fact that something that had been wished for so long seemed on the point of realization. He was very much involved there, and indeed Kennedy's office was in pretty permanent contact. And Sinn Féin would also have had their own outreach to various Congressmen who might have been closer to them than they would have been to Kennedy. Really at that latter stage, it was almost like a floating conference call. People were telephoning every which way and obviously, Senator Kennedy was a key protagonist as well. It was a cooperative effort for which we in Ireland owe a debt of gratitude to many dedicated and influential American friends.

Riley: Sure.

O'Huiginn: But they were simply the most prominent in what I said was almost like a floating conference call in the final run-up to the Good Friday Agreement.

Young: When was the last time you saw or talked with Senator Kennedy?

O'Huiginn: I think it would have been on my departure from Washington in 2002. He was always very friendly and we were neighbors in Washington—we were almost in the same street, and he was just around the corner.

Young: Tracy Place.

O'Huiginn: Tracy Place. He was very generous in including me in invitations and things like that, which I really wouldn't have had much aspiration to get to without Ted's friendship. He came around to the house on occasions. There was one occasion, I remember he rang up at about half past ten in the morning and said that he had 11 guests staying in the house that would be around for lunch. I recovered the use of my knees and went down to the kitchen; fortunately, I had a brilliant chef. I actually had two chefs, and one of them turned out to later become head chef at the French Embassy and one has opened a successful restaurant, so they were good. I was never as proud as anything that Ted turned up with—I think his guests might have been driving him berserk from boredom. I couldn't quite analyze their relevance, but I think they were ones—how can I put it?—that he was dealing with from necessity rather than choice. Very nice people, but if you knew him well, you could detect a slight hunted look in his eye.

So anyway, we served up an absolutely superb lunch as if we'd been preparing for a week and they all left glowing and purring with satisfaction, satiated appetites. It was that kind of relationship. But sometimes he'd come around alone for a night-cap and we had conversations that were very thoughtful. Now I'm sorry, in a way, that I didn't make notes of them, but they wouldn't have surprised people who knew him, and I knew he had personal depth of reflection which didn't always appear in the necessarily more simplified public statements.

The Iraq War, I think, showed how absolutely perceptive and courageous he was in analyzing in advance that this was a very foolish move. There would have been areas like that, where he was actually deeply thoughtful. People had the impression that he was a headlines man, with good instinct for what he wanted to do but not necessarily as a result of analytic reflection. I found that not to be true. I thought, in his own inner forum, so to speak, when he wasn't naturally editing himself for political defense or political effect, I found him very thoughtful.

He was immensely kind to me. When I was going away, he gave me a print of one of his watercolors of the boat, with a lovely dedication on it. I was touched after reading the *True Compass* book, where he writes rather movingly that after Bobby's death, the only solace he had was going out to sea in the boat. It's actually quite a decorative and nice piece and I value the dedication to me. It has an extra dimension, now that I've read how much his escape to sea, so to speak, meant to him in what was a very difficult career. I don't think I ever came across him since then, because then I went to Germany and then to Rome. I came across Jean a couple of times, but to the best of my recollection, I didn't meet Ted since I left Washington.

Obviously, it is devastating that his career ended the way it did when he had still so much to offer, but I suppose, on the other hand, he had an extraordinary, fulfilled career. On the Irish issue, as I said, he did nothing that was a negative. He anticipated and supported every current that eventually fed into and crystallized the peace process. He was most generous and unstinting of his time and influence. Bertie Ahern said it wouldn't have happened without Ted, and that is an important testimony. You probably cannot say that with certainty, but what you can say is that

Ted's influence was deep, persistent, and enormously positive and we owe him a great debt of gratitude. I'm glad to see that there's a peace institute being named after him in Maynooth. And I think there's also a chair at UCD [University College Dublin], as far as I know.

Young: Yes.

O'Huiginn: In health care, I think. . .

Young: Yes. [The Edward Kennedy Chair in Health Policy and Management]

O'Huiginn: . . . which commemorates his role. They're doing a monument to him down in New Ross. So people are very conscious of the debt that he's owed. I suppose of all the Kennedys, he was the one who did most for Ireland in a proactive sense. President Kennedy did a lot in terms of the morale boost that his role and personality gave. Bobby, unfortunately, never lived to develop that dimension very much, but Ted more than supplied any deficiency that the family might have had, and his time was most generous.

Young: I think your comment about the public bombastic or passionate speaker is not the whole Kennedy, it's a part of him. I did not know him at all when I began this project. We were total strangers, and over the years since 2005, when I first interviewed him, I came to know him just by sitting down and doing oral history. It was his decision to do an oral history and to make it not all about himself. As he told me, "Jim, it's not all about me, it's about what I've seen and the history of my time." He was very dedicated to historical presence. I began to know him and understand him and see him in a way that the public rarely did. You know, he's the fire-eating liberal, the spender, the hedonist, not the person who masters the issues and studies and works and arrives at a very responsible position. This is his reputation in the Senate. It's not his reputation in the public image. It's interesting.

O'Huiginn: You mean the more thoughtful Kennedy would have been understood by his fellow Senators.

Young: Yes.

O'Huiginn: I would hope so. He was capable, obviously, of the barnstorming side also.

Young: Sure.

O'Huiginn: Sometimes—

Young: Excessive.

O'Huiginn: Sometimes also, magnificent recoveries, times when you thought, *Oh, he's going to lose it,* and then some resource is mobilized from somewhere within.

Young: That's right.

O'Huiginn: But I would never subscribe to him as kind of a hedonist man. He let his hair down on occasion, but I think he was a very thoughtful person. I think it is really to his credit that his

commitment to liberal causes—"liberal" is almost a term of abuse now, but the honor of the record he had in terms of Chile, in terms of Nelson Mandela, in terms of Ireland, Iraq, has few parallels in U.S. politics, and probably none at his level of influence. You can run through the big international issues and there are very few where one would not now say he went a bit against the mainstream, but he was right. And that didn't come from harebrained, top-of-the-head reflexes. It came from a man who had a private internal forum that was actually very thoughtful. On Irish issues, again, to repeat myself, he certainly didn't do them as a vote catcher. Quite the contrary; he did it because he wanted to make a contribution, even if his stance lost him some "green" votes.

Young: That's right. I was going to ask what you saw his legacy as being. He was kind of an extraordinary politician.

O'Huiginn: It's one that's very difficult to answer because American politics are going through a transitional phase at the moment. Where that transition is leading to is anyone's guess. Perhaps it's old age, but I sometimes feel very pessimistic about where that will lead. If there's a Kennedy legacy, obviously the legislation; his record of that is fairly formal and honorable and right there in the books. I would hope there would be secondary legacies that set an example; that he was a man who was from extremely affluent circumstances who nevertheless took up as a public service obligation the cause of the less fortunate, who went against the grain of a rather misguided American consensus on Iraq and Afghanistan, for example. It seems on a highway to nowhere. I mean, there is no conceivably good outcome from an American point of view that can be attained in either of these initiatives.

I remember being extraordinarily depressed when I was serving in Washington because the drumbeat for Iraq invasion had started, and it wasn't just the Bushites. You had people like ex-Clinton staff, people like Jim Steinberg and so on. I remember having a discussion with him at one stage. I said, "Jim, you spend X-billion dollars a year on intelligence, and for three and a half dollars, I'll get you better intelligence. We'll go down to the Irish bar and each buy a beer and ask the barman." That's only half facetious because anybody from Ireland knew the truth, that war is easy—I mean, you can do that from Florida, but occupation is exactly what it was in the Roman Empire; you have the legion on the street corner, hopefully, still holding onto his spear. I said to Jim, "Has nobody thought through what an occupation actually means?" and citing figures for effective occupation that military people had developed in Northern Ireland and so on. And Jim's attitude was that Saddam [Hussein] is so evil that we take him out first and we see what happens afterwards. And I thought, privately, what an incredibly irresponsible attitude for a great power to take a (globally significant and unpredictable) step based on the great obnoxiousness of a particular individual and then we work out the details later.

Kennedy, I think—people will look back and if better times come and people go back to a more thoughtful form of policy and politics in the United States, he may be looked up to as someone who justifies going against the grain. I would hope that it won't just be his actual legislative record, but also a certain example in the way that people look back at powerful figures from the past and see them as examples that continue in relevance.

Young: And part of that was finding, even with one's adversaries, what we can work together on. This is sort of his signature work in the Senate, that always the parties would be divided, but

practically every legislation he initiated he had a sponsor on the other side of the aisle. He was really very good in finding out, well, what can we do? We can't do this or do that—and he could speak to both sides. He could speak to the hotheads on the liberal side and say, that can't be done, we're not going to get that; you'll have to accept this. And you see that just running through all of his public service, while not yielding basically on principle.

O'Huiginn: He was a very pragmatic politician. There were critics that he was over-pragmatic at times probably on certain issues, but generally speaking, he produced results. I think he's generally accepted as having been one of the most productive Senators in the history of the institution.

Young: Almost Presidential in his—

O'Huiginn: I was in New York in 1980 so I know about that.

Young: You were.

O'Huiginn: Oh, I was at the convention as well.

Young: So he lost but was not defeated.

O'Huiginn: There's a great Latin saying, which is, "The victorious causes were pleasing to the gods but the defeated ones were pleasing to Cato." I think there was a little touch of Cato in Kennedy.

Young: Yes. He talked a lot about his Presidential aspirations in these past several years. I think he really wanted to be President, but all kinds of circumstances prevented it.

O'Huiginn: Well, I think he did but he understood himself that there were liabilities.

Young: Oh, yes.

O'Huiginn: I think it took him a very long time to decide to mobilize against Carter but it was an honorable try. Indeed, in many ways I think it was a positive battle, because he got that out of his system and then settled down to the next best thing, which he did, as it turned out, rather brilliantly, which was to be an extraordinarily influential United States Senator. If he hadn't tested the waters in '80 and he was looking at '84, I think he would have had a running distraction in his career, which might have made him less good than he was in terms of the Senate.

Young: Yes. And attracting others who would think they're there because this man is going to be President, rather than for the better reasons.

O'Huiginn: Yes, I think that's right, and he had a great record in recruiting brilliant staffers.

Young: Well, he was certainly an extraordinary person.

O'Huiginn: Did the raw material for the *True Compass* book—is that a resource for you also? Does he have a lot of notes and recordings?

Young: Actually, he—

Riley: Don't be modest, Jim.

Young: Well, no. Let me see, how should I put this? He said some very nice things about me in the acknowledgment and he talks about the importance of—he's not easy to interview. I mean, he had to learn and I had to learn how to interview him, and finally it all came together over the course of the years. But he said that I, in this oral history, got him used to thinking of himself in historical terms. Well, that's sort of a way of putting it, but it was the experience. I could see the change in him and when he became at ease. After a while we became friends, but all very professional. You had to be a professional to gain his respect, but he came to talk about a lot of the things he talks about in the book, and some of these things were very difficult for him because Kennedys have emotions but they don't show them.

O'Huiginn: That was very much my experience also, on occasions when he dropped around just for a night-cap, and mused over things in a relaxed private way. And the whole relationship with his father in the book was probably more fraught than he presents. It's kind of serene and sweet in the book but I think it was probably more turbulent in reality.

Young: It was that way in the interviews, too, but then there'd be a story.

O'Huiginn: I took the point you made about him being difficult to interview, because he had a quirk, which I suppose many powerful people have, that he would throw out the first word or two of a sentence and expect the environment to supply all the rest. You know, his mind, in a good sense, tended to jump and get away from logical sequencing towards free association.

Young: Ahead of his mouth.

O'Huiginn: From topic to topic. There was one occasion, and I hope I'm not being indiscreet, it might even have been the famous Christmas when you say Jean ran him into the ground, but he and I were sitting together at one of the tables in the U.S. embassy. Ted was probably tired and he probably had stoked up a little bit too much. But anyway, this quirk that I mentioned, of almost free association of words, he would throw out a gnomic sentence that I guarantee was utterly indecipherable to the other eight or ten Irish guests at the table. Partly out of loyalty and partly because I had some idea of the way his thoughts would run, I took it upon myself to give the most coherent response to even the most darkly impenetrable senatorial utterance. The entire table was agog. How can this man decipher this Volapük that is coming out of the Senator? Several of them came up to me afterwards to express their wonderment. Knowing his knack of mental shorthand I had been able to pick cues from what seemed to others a baffling set of remarks and make plausible replies. People who experienced only that slightly "automatic pilot" side of his conversation underestimated the quality of his mind. But when he relaxed in a trusted private setting, it was in the reflective mood. He was not just very coherent, but an extremely thoughtful person in the way that he looked at things.

Young: Yes.

O'Huiginn: And you were talking about it's being very hard not to like him when you got to know him. It was really very hard not to like him.

Young: He was a very warm person actually. I didn't have so much trouble with free-associated words, but he would interrupt himself and get another thought. I learned to just let him talk for a long time before I would sort of interrupt him, just to get him used to talking. Because, you see, as so many—and you've seen this too, with many politicians, the oral history interview is basically like a press conference, and to get them used to you not talking—you're talking for the future, you're talking, you're going to help people in the future understand you and your time. It's difficult sometimes to get people who are active in public life, and Senator Kennedy was very active during the whole time I was interviewing him, to get them to switch off the quiz, the quiz.

Riley: Or in the Clinton case, it was depositions.

Young: Depositions, this is like a deposition, so you don't want to say.… And so then he came to understand that I wasn't blabbing, I'm not going to write an article about it. He became at ease in the process. Vicki helped a great deal. She was very supportive of this project from the beginning and I invited her to participate in a lot of the interviews.

O'Huiginn: A very good idea. And anyway, he himself is most generous in acknowledging his own truth, that she really did transform the last period of his life. I don't mean after his illness, but I mean from his marriage to her onwards, I think she really did transform the quality of his life.

Young: Yes.

O'Huiginn: In a most admirable way.

Young: Yes. It was an extraordinary romance, it really was.

O'Huiginn: I wasn't familiar with the early stages but it was clearly a most affectionate marriage, and Vicky showed a lovely tact in creating an environment that was happy and emotionally supportive for him.

Young: Yes, it was. Thank you very much.

Riley: Yes, thank you.

O'Huiginn: I would like to conclude with the general point that we in Ireland are very proud of the contribution which Irish people from both traditions made to shaping American democracy and pluralist values, and there is a pleasing historical symmetry in the fact that these values could be reflected back to assist us in resolving conflict on the island. The American role in the Irish peace process was fundamental to its success. The list of Irish-Americans and Americans who played important roles—sometimes insufficiently acknowledged roles—is very extensive. Taking in not just the political sphere, but the business world, the private arena and American society generally, Ireland owes them an incalculable debt of gratitude. Of course certain individuals stand out more than others for the particular importance of their contribution. If I

imagine an Irish Mount Rushmore for these key supporters of Irish peace it is certain that on every analysis, a very prominent profile, perhaps the most prominent profile, in that select group of friends of Ireland would be that of Senator Edward Kennedy.