

John Kenneth Galbraith Oral History Interview – JFK#3, 10/17/2002
Administrative Information

Creator: John Kenneth Galbraith

Interviewer: Vicki Daitch

Date of Interview: October 17, 2002

Place of Interview: Cambridge, Massachusetts

Length: 20 pages

Biographical Note

Galbraith was an economist, educator, author, and diplomat. During his career, he was a Professor of Economics at Harvard University (1949-1975), and served as Ambassador to India (1961-1963). In this interview, he and his wife (Catherine “Kitty” Galbraith) discuss Jacqueline B. Kennedy’s trip to India and Pakistan, her strained relationship with the press after the assassination, and their friendship with the Kennedy family, among other issues.

Access

Open.

Usage Restrictions

According to the deed of gift signed May 27, 2003, copyright of these materials has been assigned to the United States Government. Users of these materials are advised to determine the copyright status of any document from which they wish to publish.

Copyright

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be “used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research.” If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excesses of “fair use,” that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law. The copyright law extends its protection to unpublished works from the moment of creation in a tangible form. Direct your questions concerning copyright to the reference staff.

Transcript of Oral History Interview

These electronic documents were created from transcripts available in the research room of the John F. Kennedy Library. The transcripts were scanned using optical character recognition and the resulting text files were proofread against the original transcripts. Some formatting changes were made. Page numbers are noted where they would have occurred at the bottoms of the pages of the original transcripts. If researchers have any concerns about accuracy, they are encouraged to visit the Library and consult the transcripts and the interview recordings.

Suggested Citation

John Kenneth Galbraith, recorded interview by Vicki Daitch, October 17, 2002, (page number), John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.



ORAL HISTORY AGREEMENT

This will confirm my understanding and agreement with the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) with respect to my participation in an oral interview conducted by the Oral History Project of the John F. Kennedy Library.

- 1. The interview(s) will be taped and a transcript of the tapes will be made by the Library. A copy of the tape and a transcript (collectively called the "Work"), will be maintained by the Library and made available to the public in accordance with its rules and general policies for research and other scholarly purposes.
2. As soon as the transcription is complete, the Work will be made available to researchers as part of the JFK Oral History Project.
3. I hereby grant, assign, and transfer to NARA all rights, title, and interest in the Work, including literary rights and the copyright, except that I shall retain the right to copy, use, and publish the Work in part or in full until the earlier of my death or until the year 20...
4. This agreement contains our entire and complete understanding.

Name John Kenneth Galbraith

Address 30 Francis Avenue
Camb. MA 02138

Signature [Handwritten Signature]

Date 4/24/03

Signed: [Handwritten Signature]
JOHN W. CARLIN, Archivist of the United States

Date: 5-27-03

John Kenneth Galbraith—JFK #3

Table of Contents

<u>Page</u>	<u>Topic</u>
36-45	Jacqueline B. Kennedy's trip to India and Pakistan
40	Catherine A. Galbraith's memory of the India fashion show
43	Jawaharlal Nehru's banquet in honor of Jacqueline Kennedy
46	The Galbraith's friendship with Princess Lee Radziwill
48	Jackie's personality
49	Jackie's relationship with the press after John F. Kennedy's [JFK] death
51	Vacationing with Jackie in Switzerland
53	John Kenneth Galbraith awarded the Medal of Freedom
54	Working with Joseph Kennedy, Sr., on JFK's campaign

Third Oral History Interview

with

JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH

October 17, 2002
Cambridge, Massachusetts

by Vicki Daitch

For the John F. Kennedy Library

DAITCH: Okay. It is Thursday, October 17th, and I'm speaking with Professor John Kenneth Galbraith and his wife, Catherine.... Kitty, right?

KITTY: That's right.

GALBRAITH: Kitty's particularly important because in India, if Jackie was in another car, Kitty was with me. And a good percentage of the crowd thought she was Mrs. Kennedy.

KITTY: Oh, that's nonsense. I doubt it. I don't think that was the way it was at all.

DAITCH: But there's some similarity with the dark hair and, you know, slender and that sort of thing, attractive woman. They probably wouldn't have known the difference necessarily.

GALBRAITH: She has a certain appreciation of being the focus of attention. And while Kitty always denied it, she did have a secret life.

DAITCH: Are you willing to talk to the tape about your secret life?

KITTY: I don't know what he means.

DAITCH: What secret life are you talking about?

GALBRAITH: How much she enjoyed...

KITTY: Oh, I had a lovely time.

GALBRAITH: ...the public celebration of the time, as I did.

KITTY: Oh, yes. Well, you know, if you meant things I had to do.

GALBRAITH: It was a lovely visit, of great interest to India, and no problems.

DAITCH: None?

GALBRAITH: And no problems.

DAITCH: Right.

KITTY: I don't know about that.

GALBRAITH: About the only thing we encountered was the slight tendency of Jackie to do too much.

DAITCH: Really!

GALBRAITH: And to slightly tone down the amount of travel around that she was doing. This was partly because that was an instruction from JFK to keep--that he thought she was doing too much. Then the other thing, which was very much a secret at the time, down on the west coast of India is a temple center, and the temple has the most specifically erotic statues anywhere in India. Sexual intercourse is so common that it has an almost medical aspect. And that was on Kitty's list and Jackie's list for a visit.

And the certainty was that nobody could look at those statues without a raft of cameramen from behind. I said it was just not possible for her to go there, and I told the president that. And he was extremely unhelpful. All he said was, "Don't you think she's old enough?" And so I was squashed.

And then it came to pass that we had to go to Pakistan a day early, and that added, to my extreme pleasure, [to it] being deleted. I didn't want everybody to think that I was a stuffy Harvard professor regulating the private life of Jackie Kennedy.

DAITCH: But on the other hand....

GALBRAITH: What was the name of the place where we didn't want her to go?

KITTY: Konarak.

GALBRAITH: Konarak, yes.

KITTY: Temple. Pretty sexy temple. K-O-N-A-R-A-K.

DAITCH: K-O-N-A-R-A-K. Konarak. That's funny because, I mean, in that situation I wonder if you would be damned if you do and damned if you don't. Because if you take her there and let her do whatever, you know, see the place, which she's entitled to do, and enjoy it, then it's your fault if she gets all these photographers published in funny places with racy comments.

GALBRAITH: It was not a matter of major importance. But you're quite right that it was one you couldn't win.

DAITCH: Right.

GALBRAITH: I had particular difficulty with the president, whose comment was simply, as I said before, "Don't you think she's old enough?"

DAITCH: Right. Apparently he thought she was. He didn't see any problem.

GALBRAITH: Beg pardon?

DAITCH: He didn't see any problem apparently.

GALBRAITH: He didn't pay any attention.

DAITCH: Did he pay much attention to what she was doing in India?

GALBRAITH: Oh, we sent him a note every night or so, as to what happened, and he was very much interested.

DAITCH: Was he?

GALBRAITH: And sent me back...

KITTY: And her.

GALBRAITH: ...amusing notes, some of which I think are in my journal as ambassador.

KITTY: Some are in the library somewhere.

GALBRAITH: What?

KITTY: Some are in the Kennedy Library, I imagine.

GALBRAITH: Yes. Commenting, not very seriously, on what was happening in India.

DAITCH: But he didn't take it all that seriously, her trip?

GALBRAITH: Beg pardon?

DAITCH: Did he not take her trip all that seriously?

KITTY: Well, he was delighted that she was doing so well.

GALBRAITH: Oh, he would have loved to have been there himself, but those were fairly tense times in Washington, and there was no chance that he could get away.

DAITCH: Right. Now, I've forgotten exactly when her trip to India was, 1962 sometime?

KITTY: March '62.

DAITCH: March, right.

GALBRAITH: Early summer of '62.

KITTY: March or early April. I can find out exactly when if you need to know it. I have it all down in my diary.

DAITCH: I'm sure we have it. Obviously we have it at the library.

GALBRAITH: Have you got my book?

DAITCH: We do. And in fact I've got it at my house right now.

GALBRAITH: There's a full description of it in that.

DAITCH: Right. So tell me what kinds of thing she did. I wore this in her honor because you talked about the fact that she wore these bright clothes.

GALBRAITH: Ask Kitty.

KITTY: Well, she had the clothes, a lot of them, in the show. She always dressed beautifully, bright colors. She had to go to a children's hospital and bring, I guess, sweets for the children, or smile at them, and she had to go to the-- it's in the film about her--what's it called? About something. Oh dear, my mind's slipping,

too. The something [Inaudible]. It's a place where they have, you know, crafts and all kinds of projects for small children, especially the poor children. They were teaching them handicrafts and reading and having pageants, lots of nice....

Then she gave a speech presenting a whole lot of things from the United States adapted for children's play and children's visual entertainment. I can't remember the name of that.... I'll have to get my diary out and tell you what it was called. But it's all in any account of her trip, it must be in.

One of the things they did for her was they showed her the arts and crafts of India and had a show of the cottage industries where they had beautiful fabrics and the weaving and everything. They had a fashion show for her. And some of the American ladies wore clothes made from Indian material, and they made beautiful clothes. And they had different styles. And they asked for an evening dress made out of a sari. And I said, "I have a very...." I have a nice one I just had made, a cotton sari, which is not the usual silk, but it's a little bit different from the normal sari. I said, "You know, anybody wants to model it, I'll give it to them." They said, "You're going to model it." I said, "Not me. Not me." And they said, "Yes, you are." And so I did it. They had a number of different things.

I never saw the show because I was with her in a motorcade, and she didn't know it, and I dropped out, and I went back, and I got dressed. When I came, I was told just for a turn. But I was a little bit nervous because I'd never modeled anything before. But I managed to get through it all right without tripping or anything. It's on the film now. I did a pretty good job. My dress swirled very nicely. Jackie applauding. Indira Ghandi knew I was going to be doing this, but Jackie didn't know. So it was a surprise when I was the last model. It was a surprise to me, too, because the thought that I would model a dress for Mrs. Kennedy was so ridiculous.

DAITCH: How fun!

KITTY: So if you see that film of her trip to India.... You probably have it, haven't you?

DAITCH: It's in the museum.

KITTY: Yes. That's what I thought. That was the film.

DAITCH: That was you?

KITTY: In that last dress, yes. The last pretty blue dress, the skirt swirled out very nicely, and I didn't trip. When I got there, I got through all right. But if I really.... I knew it was being televised, but if I could see the camera, I probably would have fallen.

GALBRAITH: But there were all sorts of things in which Jackie asserted herself in preference to what had been worked out.

DAITCH: Oh, really!

GALBRAITH: At that time, just down the street from our house, was another house of which we had control, where our children stayed because a new residence was being built.

KITTY: But this was not our house.

GALBRAITH: We were farmed out to what had been a big residential house, but it wasn't big enough for all the people that showed up. And so this other house was not quite so grand, but Jackie had it all to herself. Except that after she moved in, Nehru found out where she was staying and said, with no diplomatic restraint, that "That house is not fit for Mrs. Kennedy!" And moved her to his house.

KITTY: Oh, Kenneth, now wait a minute. That house was....

GALBRAITH: And her sister [Lee Bouvier Radziwill].

KITTY: It was a nice little house for Lee and Jackie to be by themselves and have a place where they could rest away from everything. And they were there for two or three nights, I think, at least--three or four nights. But then Nehru invited them to stay at his house, and they moved over; they couldn't resist that. When the embassy, when the staff, my wives, were working on her visit and how she'd be comfortable, one of the things they wanted to know was what she'd like to eat when she was quietly resting away from--and they discovered she liked cheese sandwiches. So they didn't know what kind of cheese, so they practiced trying different kinds of cheese. And they weren't satisfied 'til they found something that tasted exactly like a cheese sandwich in a drugstore in the United States, you know, getting the right amount of flavor of American cheese. They were very good sandwiches. But they were nothing but good old American cheese sandwiches. But they were so....

GALBRAITH: There were some times when, quite surprisingly, Jackie got quite out of line. We took her into the Indian Medical Center on a well-publicized visit in Old Dehli. And it was known that she was taking the main road down. The schools let out the children, and they were just a solid mass for a mile or two. I don't think I ever saw so many children. And Jackie saw them, saw the cheering, listened to it, until nearly the end of the trip, when she turned to me, quite honestly, and said, "I just heard that the Indians have closed their birth control clinic." And she wanted to know whether I was doing anything about it, which I wasn't.

DAITCH: You should've jumped on that right away.

KITTY: I thought.... When we went into Udaipur, she said, "You know, just because Jack and I are Catholics, don't think we don't believe in birth control."

GALBRAITH: Beg pardon? What was that, Kitty?

KITTY: She said, "Just because Jack and I are Catholics, don't think we don't believe in family planning."

GALBRAITH: Yes.

KITTY: The idea was....

GALBRAITH: Yeah, that was it. She said that, "I hope you're not being influenced in your duty by the fact that we're Catholic."

KITTY: Something like that, yes.

DAITCH: Really! Wow!

KITTY: I remember especially when we drove into Udaipur at night from the airport.

GALBRAITH: Louder, Kitty.

KITTY: I thought.... You remember when we landed from Benares into Udaipur at night, and we drove in from the airport? It was several miles, and that was lined with children. Just millions of them. It was as if the whole population of India was all going to be under, a whole country of people under twenty at least. An amazing sight.

GALBRAITH: At that stage in history, Kitty and I had a considerable flow of visitors from abroad. But all of them, high or low, were second to the wonderful excitement of Jackie's visit. There was nothing like it. When the war came to an end in the Himalayas with China, the next day two senators showed up to find out what was happening. And there was still great tension in India, and it was very bad to interrupt Nehru in parliamentary affairs, which he was stuck with. So I took them to see Radhakrishnan, the.... Did I tell you about this?

DAITCH: I don't think so.

GALBRAITH: So I took them to see Radhakrishnan, the then president of India, the ceremonial post, but a very intelligent man, a former tutor at Oxford. We came into this lovely huge building, the main hall, and he came down the stairs, very straight, very well-polished, and Indian in dress. One of the senators opened the discussion on an unfortunate note. The Indian armed forces contending with the Chinese were less than effective, and that had got into the papers. And there was criticism of the general who was in charge, whose name is off the tip of my tongue at the moment. And as soon as we sat down, one of the senators, as I said.... Kitty, what was the name of the general

that Radhakrishnan mentioned?

KITTY: General Kaul?

GALBRAITH: Yes.

KITTY: But this is after Jackie left.

GALBRAITH: He said, "I hear--we have just heard on the radio that your General Kahl has been captured by the Chinese." Radhakrishnan said, "Unfortunately, untrue." I've never seen two men so shocked as that at encountering honesty.

DAITCH: Right.

KITTY: I'll tell you about the banquet that--I mean Nehru gave her a big party. The last night we were giving her a party and inviting the president and the Prime Minister of India and so forth. And we had no place to do it except the embassy itself, which had no kitchen or anything. So in order to give that dinner, all the wives got together, and they got all the bearers and people who do all the serving and so forth and the cooking. They tried to get the best cooks that were available--not our cook, but other cooks that would know some good French cooking and so forth. And they also improvised the kitchen to get the hot things hot and the cold things cold. And then about a week before she came, they had a dress rehearsal. They had the bearers all dressed up in their uniforms and turbans and all that. And they had the practice of cooking the dinner and serving it.

The embassy is a sort of rectangle. On the ground floor there were little--had little places where, courtyards where there were little platforms. And there was water there for birds to come to. And you could walk across, walking from stone to stone into the middle of the pool. And the dinner was on a balcony on the top for forty people with steps going up each side. And there's the stone open work stuff, stone, that was on the outside. You've seen pictures of the work.

DAITCH: Right. It sounds beautiful.

KITTY: [CONVERSATION ON PHONE] [BREAK]

GALBRAITH: She was [Inaudible].

DAITCH: Kitty was?

GALBRAITH: She has a natural talent for languages. And by the end of our tour there, she could speak quite effectively in Hindi.

KITTY: Not really.

GALBRAITH: So I had the wonderful idea, which she accepted, of having the farewell address...

KITTY: Nobody told me.

GALBRAITH: ...at the great banquet in our honor given by Kitty in Hindi. The banquet was given to us by the minister of finance, with whom I obviously had much to do. And Kitty spoke in perfect Hindi, except that the minister of finance, coming from the south of India, spoke no word of Hindi.

DAITCH: Oh!

KITTY: He couldn't understand me, so it had to be translated.

GALBRAITH: They had to have somebody translate Kitty.

KITTY: You'd think it was a great disaster, but it was very funny.

DAITCH: Gee, it was funny.

GALBRAITH: It was a wonderfully designed embarrassment for everybody.

DAITCH: It was a nice idea. It just turned out funny.

KITTY: I was telling you about the dinner. Where was I? Oh, the rehearsal. So we found the menu, and they tried out all the food and how they get the.... We had everything for the dinner except the champagne. We didn't need to sample that. But we also had the wines to be shown: white wine was cool, red wine wasn't. And had all the food. At that party the people all tasted it and criticized what was wrong with it, the wives. And the profiteroles were melted, and the soup was cold for the rehearsal, or whatever. But by the time the party came, it went off perfectly, for forty people.

And, oh, then the problem was that there were two or three wives that were allowed to come to the dinner. At the last minute, one of Nehru's sisters.... Mrs. Pandit [Madame V. L. Pandit] had been invited; but his younger sister, they hadn't known she'd be there, and she decided she wanted to come. So there wasn't room for everybody. So one or two of the wives who were supposed to be there got bumped. It was too bad. I felt very sorry, but what can you do?

DAITCH: Diplomacy.

KITTY: That's right. And, oh, that evening Nehru wore a white jacket with a red rose in his buttonhole. And Jackie had a beautiful--I think it was a red top and a white skirt, or the other way. Yes, a red top and a white skirt. And they sat together. After the dinner, they came out, and they sat on the stairway coming.... We went down below with the pool here and the birds and the trees and stuff. We were, all the

rest of us, down there having coffee. But they came down, and they sat on the stairs. And they were just talking together and laughing. And they looked like really two children almost. They had a great.... Dr. Radhakrishnan was down with me, and we had a good.... And it got to be late because Jackie was leaving the next morning to go to Pakistan.

GALBRAITH: Kitty, can I leave the two of you to talk while I go to the bathroom?

KITTY: You certainly could. [ASIDE CONVERSATION] After the dinner Nehru and Jackie were sitting on the, I guess it was a step, maybe a little platform; it was on a level of some kind. Anyway, I just remember them sitting there laughing and having a great time. And it was getting later and later. Since Jackie was going to Pakistan the next morning, Kenneth had promised her the party wouldn't be too late.

So Kenneth said to me, "You know, we've got to tell them that it's time to leave, tell the president that it was time for him to go so that the party--you know, the most ranking person has to leave. I didn't want to go tell Dr. Radhakrishnan it was time to go home. I was very fond of him. I was sitting talking to him, and I said, "You know...." I explained the problem. "She has to go so somebody has to start going." He said, "Well, I'm not sure whether I'm supposed to go or the prime minister's supposed to go first." A little discussion. I said, "Well, I can't solve that problem. One of you has to go first." I forget now which one did.

DAITCH: But to have to tell the president or the prime minister they have to go home.

KITTY: Go home so Jackie could go to bed. It was pretty embarrassing, I thought.

DAITCH: But what a beautiful picture of Jackie and Nehru.

KITTY: It was lovely. I just remember them. I think it must have been with the white skirt [Inaudible]. It had to be a white skirt. She wasn't.... But it was just bright red here, and the prime minister in his white jacket and red rose. It was a lovely picture of them.

DAITCH: Right, right.

KITTY: It was all sort of relaxed and as though they were just having fun.

DAITCH: Oh, how nice. Was she like that? Was she generally sort of relaxed with people?

KITTY: Yes. Well, she had a very gracious manner with people, and very quick thinking. I think she could also be, you know, if she didn't want to be bothered or be annoyed by people, she could be--but she did it nicely. If she didn't want to do something and she wasn't going to do it, and she managed to wiggle out of it. And she did a lot of--on the trip, the whole time, she would refuse many invitations, but

the ones that accepted. In between she wasn't sleeping, though. She was signing autographs, she was sort of.... Sometimes she had to rest a bit. And also just thinking about what she was going to say. And, of course, she was with Lee a lot. Always together, the two of them.

DAITCH: They were good friends, weren't they, the sisters?

KITTY: Well, I guess at the times they were. They also, you know, two complicated lives, both of them. I was very fond of both of them.

DAITCH: Did you keep in touch with them?

KITTY: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. I'm still in touch with Lee. She's in Paris right now. But she'll call once in a while. When Anthony [Anthony Radziwill], her son, was married, John Kennedy, Jr., was the best man. The wedding was on Long Island, in the Hamptons, and she invited us. Kenneth wasn't going to go. I said, "Oh, let's. We must go." And we were getting in touch to find out how to get there and where we could stay. And Lee arranged all that. And it was nice. And when we came to leave and were ready to pay the bill, we were told it was all taken care of. And she had us met and looked after very nicely. And when we came to being at the wedding, we were in the row just behind Lee--just behind the family.

DAITCH: Right. Wow!

KITTY: So I realized then really how much we sort of represent the older generation. At the dinner we were at Lee's table. So we were right in there. And it's so sad, poor Anthony. He died of cancer, you know.

DAITCH: Oh, I didn't know that.

KITTY: Yes, he was with ABC and doing very well. He was only forty.

DAITCH: Oh, my gosh!

KITTY: Terrible. But when he was a child he was short for a little while, so we knew him, and then he was as big as his sister. Then I saw them at the wedding. Well, I saw them in between also. But he was going to college, so he went to BU [Boston University], and we helped arrange that, and stayed in touch. And he was a sweet boy--man, boy. Terrible.

DAITCH: Right. He was so young. That whole family is just riddled with tragedy.

KITTY: Absolutely.

DAITCH: Awful things.

KITTY: And John. That was so unnecessary, that trip.

DAITCH: It's hard to imagine. It's hard to imagine for Caroline [Caroline Kennedy Schlossburg], I thought. It's hard to imagine for the whole family, but for Caroline now....

KITTY: She's just so wonderful.

DAITCH: Yes.

KITTY: Very brave.

DAITCH: I would imagine so. But getting back to the India trip with Jackie, I talked to Cecil Stoughton, the photographer. He had been the White House photographer, I think.

KITTY: Who was it?

DAITCH: Cecil Stoughton. Captain Stoughton, I guess he was at the time. He was a captain in the Army. But he said he went with Jackie for that trip, and he did the photography. He said that he would be two or three cars behind, and the cars in between had luggage and clothes and all of that in there.

GALBRAITH: He had a terrible time getting what?

DAITCH: Getting his photographs, I think.

KITTY: Well, the USIS was doing a lot of it, a lot of their photographs...

DAITCH: Right. That's what he said.

KITTY: So he didn't have to cover them all.

DAITCH: Right.

KITTY: I made photographs. If you want to see them, I'll go unpack them.

DAITCH: I would love to see them. I think that would be fun. They'll probably bring back memories too of various things. Before you go, I wanted to ask you-- and then we'll look at the photographs.

GALBRAITH: I looked slightly younger when I was in India.

DAITCH: Just slightly? Before I forget, you mentioned the children, and I wanted to ask you how Jackie was with the children when you visited the children's

hospitals and so on?

KITTY: Oh, she was great.

GALBRAITH: I think she did that very well.

DAITCH: Right. I wondered. I thought she probably did because she was a mother herself.

KITTY: And she was very good at speaking at the what's it called? [Inaudible]. I have pictures of it that'll be done in the basement. Something [Inaudible].

GALBRAITH: Kitty, Jackie described any problem with children, with problem children, or they were ill or anything of that sort, as a duty. But she preferred, much preferred, conversation, discussion with adults.

KITTY: Oh, of course.

DAITCH: Right.

GALBRAITH: She gave no indication of reluctance on social duties. But there was no doubt that she preferred adult conversation. And she was enormously good at it.

DAITCH: She was? She was a good conversationalist?

KITTY: Oh, yes.

GALBRAITH: Well, she had a much sharper judgment than her husband.

DAITCH: Really!

GALBRAITH: She was much more candid about people and their shortcomings. At that time the chief-of-staff, whose name I've forgotten, of the armed services, was a tall man and a beautiful figure of a general; and, I think, it's fair to say, of quite modest intelligence.

KITTY: The medals, you know.

GALBRAITH: And I still to this day remember a comment of Jackie's about him-- fortunately I've forgotten his name. She said, "Well, you know, Jack rather thought well of the general until one Saturday morning he came into the White House in a sport jacket." And you couldn't have had a better description of a man who was held up by his job rather than by his intellectual power.

DAITCH: Right. That's funny. I didn't know that about her. I suppose you think of her with this soft voice and so very gracious.

GALBRAITH: Oh, she was in public. But when she was in relaxed and informal conversation, she could have the clearest voice of anybody I have ever known, with the possible exception of my wife.

DAITCH: That's funny.

GALBRAITH: She didn't tolerate fools and didn't feel obliged to with her friends.

DAITCH: Right. She's famous for--and, again, I talked to Stoughton about this--but she's famous for keeping the press at a distance, and she was very good at that, too, apparently.

KITTY: Yes, she was. I think I told you about her going to the theater with David--Mike Nichols, just after the president was killed. In Boston. She came up to Boston. And Mike--and there was this show opening here called *The Applecart* by Alvin [Alan Alda]--I never get his name quite right. Is it Aldo? Alvin Aldo? He's well known. Stupid me. But anyway it's called *The Applecart*. She wanted to see it before it went to New York. So she planned to fly up on the shuttle. We were going to have dinner, the three of us, dinner at the Ritz, and then go to the theater. Well, bad weather, and her shuttle was delayed, and she wasn't getting in until just about the time of curtain time.

So anyway, Mike and I had dinner together, and then we went over to the theater where she was being brought in. The plane landed about ten of eight or something, and they had to get her to the theater. They rushed her in, but the audience was already seated. The play was just a little slow in opening. People were sitting there in the dark. And she whisked into her seat maybe fifteen minutes late, when people were already....

In the intermission, we slipped backstage so people didn't see us. But somebody had caught sight of her. So she didn't want the press to know she was there. And she didn't want them to know she was with Mike Nichols because they'd talk about any dates that she might be having. But people knew by the time of the intermission, though--people had recognized her. And she knew that the press would be waiting for her outside the theater.

So she said to me, "All right, Kit, when we get out there, you see a camera, you put yourself right between me and the camera. Just push yourself and don't worry." I said, "How can I do that?" She said, "You must!" And that's exactly what I did.

DAITCH: Did you?

KITTY: And when we got in the taxi, I put my face in the.... Then there was a problem before we went out. We had to think where could she go for dinner. They would follow her for dinner, and she hadn't had anything to eat. Then I said--I couldn't think of anything to suggest that she might be.... I said, "You know, I think Emily, our cook, might have something in the house that she could fix up." So in the intermission we went and called up Emily, and she said, oh, yes, she

had some chicken. She could have some fried chicken and salad or something.

So we left the theater in the taxi, and we snuck around and went to Cambridge to our house. We were not bothered by them. The actor, Aldo.... You would know it if I could think of it. Anyway, he came over, and we had a wonderful evening from then on. She got there about eleven o'clock or something, and we went on 'til two or three in the morning. It was great fun.

DAITCH: How nice.

KITTY: You could see her problem, poor dear.

DAITCH: Right. I'm thinking Alan Alda maybe?

KITTY: That's it. That's right. Alan Alda.

DAITCH: What a terrible way to live your life, having to push cameras away.

KITTY: When she was skiing with us in Gstaad, for a while Kenneth arranged it so that the reporters could have a chance to take a picture, have her with the children and so forth. And then the deal was that having allowed all these photographs, they'd leave them alone for the rest of the time. Well, almost all of them did. But if anyone happened to show up, sneaking up, she began skiing with the--well, the Secret Service wasn't so good at it; they weren't very good skiers. But she got a Swiss policeman to ski with her.

DAITCH: Oh, really!

KITTY: And when a photographer would approach, go out and get his camera, he'd pick up a snowball and throw it at the camera. So the photographer would have to move on, and he didn't get pictures.

GALBRAITH: She made no secret about that skiing trip. She made it clear, both to Kitty and to me, that the reason she wanted to come to Gstaad was that she thought that there, visiting her past, she would be free of the....

KITTY: The suspicion that....

GALBRAITH: Lofty people that would otherwise occupy her whole time. She was very anxious to have a good skiing holiday and not be surrounded by people who were trying to be in her company. She didn't put it quite that way, but she didn't leave any doubt as to it.

KITTY: Have the children, have a good time. We had a great time.

DAITCH: Oh, that's good.

GALBRAITH: Both Kitty and I wondered, and admired ourselves, for the eagerness with which she came across on that trip to Switzerland. And the deeper truth was that we were the kind of relatively insignificant people that wouldn't be surrounded with too many of her official...

KITTY: *Glamour Magazine* would not want us.

GALBRAITH: ...stated admirers.

KITTY: Or whatever magazine.

GALBRAITH: But they did show up. We had one day when Jackie agreed that the photographers and everybody else could come on the slope and see her ski provided they would never bother her again. And the slope was covered with some of the worst skiers.

DAITCH: Bad skiers with cameras. That's not a good combination. And that was not long after the assassination?

GALBRAITH: It was not long after his death, a year later.

KITTY: No, it was sixty-six, sixty-seven.

GALBRAITH: But because she didn't want a great ceremonial holiday at that time.

DAITCH: Was that around Christmas then?

GALBRAITH: Beg pardon?

KITTY: It was after. It was the end of January, early February, between the exam period here and before the next semester began. Oh, it was before my birthday because the first week she was there it was my birthday. And I didn't want to bother with a birthday party. Our very good friend in Switzerland who arranged, really arranged to get a house, chalet, for her through knowing people--this one person would be willing to let her have her chalet. They would stay in London and not come to Gstaad. So she'd have a private place to stay. We didn't have a chalet then, but we visited a friend nearby. And she arranged.... She said, "No, the children must have a birthday party. So you've got to let us come to your birthday party." And I said, "No, no." But all right, I'll be....

And Jackie and Jan [Jan Urey] tried to find some other children. She actually called Grace, Princess Grace, Princess Grace Ranier. So Prince Albert came to the party. It was John and Caroline and Albert. And the Ureys. Jan Urey was the person, it was her chalet, and she had four children, but I guess two of them were there. So this was an afternoon tea party. So Jackie and Princess Grace were--and I was with the birthday cake in front of me and the

children leaning at the table, watching me blow out my candles, fifty-three years old.

GALBRAITH: Gstaad, which Kitty and I happened on more or less by accident, is--and didn't discover until later--is one of the most distinguished centers in Europe. It's not the most fashionable, but it is at its own level for the elite. And I think it's fair to say that nobody has ever been so famous there as Jacqueline Kennedy. She still to this day is talked about.

KITTY: Not so much at Gstaad. She's still talked about in India, though.

DAITCH: I'll bet.

GALBRAITH: Put that off for a moment. [BREAK]

KITTY: I can't remember. It's awful being ninety-four years old and can't remember.

[END SIDE 1, TAPE 3]

[BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 3]

KITTY:Jackie said, "No. In the Kennedy Family birthday cakes are something that happen every week.

DAITCH: Right.

GALBRAITH: That was another of her memorable comments.

DAITCH: Yes.

KITTY: The hostess took a picture of me blowing out the candles and these children leaning over--it's a really wonderful picture--leaning over my shoulder. And at the bottom, with a mini-camera, she's caught, on the one side, if you look carefully, there's a profile of Grace, and on the other side a profile of Grace and Jackie. And here I am. I've got that picture upstairs.

DAITCH: Oh, how nice! So what were you saying about Jackie didn't find Grace's company....

KITTY: She didn't find Grace a great intellect, I'd say.

DAITCH: Okay.

KITTY: She made some remark about that she hadn't really had a stimulating conversation, but okay.

DAITCH: Oh, that's funny.

KITTY: I think for the children, you know.

KITTY: They were not on the same.... She had a better time, a wonderful time, with David Niven [J. David G. Niven] while she was there. That's where I got to know David Niven, too.

DAITCH: Oh, really! Oh, that's neat. Now, did you meet him through her?

KITTY: Sorry?

DAITCH: He was a friend of hers? You know, I want to....

KITTY: I mean he invited us all for dinner at his... That's all. [BREAK]

DAITCH: Okay, I'm sorry.

GALBRAITH: By the end of the war, the Armed Services, particularly the Air Force, ran out of people of sufficient rank for the jobs they were supposed to do. So a whole bunch of us, a few dozen, were commissioned as lieutenant colonels or colonels, which were called "assimilated colonels." And we were all at the end awarded a medal, and that was invented for the occasion, called the Medal of Freedom.

DAITCH: Is that where the Medal of Freedom came from?

GALBRAITH: Some years later Kennedy had it reconstituted as the medal of primary presidential distinction. I was in Washington, and I got an invitation to the White House at the time of the presentation of the real ones, and I wore mine. And it produced a comment from JFK that I have had in my mind ever since. He said, "Who gave you that?" And I thought I would make a little more of it. He didn't know about it. I said, "President Truman." "Oh," he said, "yes, that's when they were handed out at random." Then time passed, and the president....

KITTY: Clinton, Bill Clinton [William J. Clinton]. You mean when you got the real one?

GALBRAITH: Yes.

KITTY: Or when you got the next one?

GALBRAITH: Yes.

KITTY: That was after....

GALBRAITH: I called the White House to say that I already had one of these early ones called the Medal of Freedom. They checked with the president and called me back and said I should have a real one. So Kitty and I got on the plane.

KITTY: The last time you did that.

GALBRAITH: And I had a certain distinction. I was the only one getting a medal that night in a wheelchair. I was the only wounded.

KITTY: Well, you walked up onto the platform.

GALBRAITH: I walked to the platform, yes.

KITTY: You weren't photographed.... You had the wheelchair until.... You got out of the wheelchair when you walked....

GALBRAITH: At the reception afterwards, I took the wheelchair.

KITTY: That's right. You did.

DAITCH: That's interesting. I didn't know that that's where the Medal of Freedom came from, the original. That's funny. I'm a little concerned about this....

GALBRAITH: Do you have anything more?

DAITCH: Actually I think--why don't we look at those pictures if you have a moment. Mrs. Galbraith was going to get some pictures for me to look at, and then I should probably be going because I'm so late--I'm holding you so late anyway.

KITTY: Probably because it is late.

GALBRAITH: Well, I think you've got almost everything we know. [BREAK] His father [Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr.] and I made comments on what should be done with economic issues in the campaign, which was underway. And that had been one of the places where things weren't going well. I made a statement, which must have been quite long because I was the economist. And then a little later, Joe Senior, came in with a statement, and Jack Kennedy was quite furious. He said, "How in the hell did you get such a hold on my old man?"

DAITCH: See, I wouldn't have thought that Joe Kennedy would agree with anything you had to say economically. Am I wrong about that?

GALBRAITH: Well, that was what surprised Kennedy. We were both a little bit more liberal than he for campaign purposes.

DAITCH: That's funny. Well....

[END OF INTERVIEW – JFK #3, 10/17/2003]

John Kenneth Galbraith Oral History Transcript – JFK #3
Name List

A

Alda, Alan, 49, 50

C

Clinton, William J., 53, 54

G

Ghandi, Indira, 40

K

Kaul, Lt. General B.M., 43

Kennedy, Caroline Schlossburg, 47, 51

Kennedy, Jacqueline B., 36-53

Kennedy, Joseph P, Sr., 54, 55

Kennedy, John F., 37-39, 41, 42, 48, 49, 51, 53-55

Kennedy, John F., Jr., 46, 47, 51

N

Nehru, Jawaharlal, 41-45

Nichols, Mike, 49

Niven, J. David G., 53

P

Pandit, Madame V. L., 44

R

Radhakrishnan, Sarvepalli, 42, 43, 45

Radziwill, Anthony, 46

Radziwill, Lee Bouvier, 41, 46

Rainier, Grace, Princess of Monaco, 51-53

S

Stoughton, Cecil, 47, 49

U

Urey, Jan, 51