

ABSTRACT

The 1960 Democratic Party presidential primary in West Virginia, May 10, 1960, is one of the most important as well as one of the most discussed and controversial presidential primaries in American history. And the 1960 Democratic Party presidential primary in West Virginia is known as the political contest that paved the way for America's first Catholic president. With West Virginia being an overwhelmingly Protestant state, and with religion being the "burning issue" of the contest, if Kennedy, who was Catholic, defeated his only opponent, Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D-MN), who was a Protestant, it would show that religion was no longer a defeating handicap in a presidential contest. The religious issue was "buried here in the soil of West Virginia," Kennedy stated the day after winning the primary.

ARTICLE

The 1960 Democratic Party presidential primary in West Virginia, May 10, 1960, is one of the most important as well as one of the most discussed and controversial presidential primaries in American history.¹ The 1960 West Virginia primary is best known as the political contest that made John F. Kennedy the presidential nominee of the Democratic Party. "Kennedy won the Democratic Presidential nomination in West Virginia, rather than at the national convention in Los Angeles," wrote longtime Kennedy aides Kenneth O'Donnell and Dave Powers.² West Virginia "is the state which sent me out into the world, and you are the people who made me the Democratic candidate for President of the United States," President Kennedy told a gathering in West Virginia in 1962.³

And the 1960 Democratic Party presidential primary in West Virginia is known as the political contest that paved the way for America's first Catholic president. With West Virginia being an overwhelmingly Protestant state, and with religion being the "burning issue" of the contest, if Kennedy, who was Catholic, defeated his only opponent, Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D-MN), who was a Protestant, it would show that religion was no longer a defeating handicap in a presidential contest. The religious issue was "buried here in the soil of West Virginia," Kennedy stated the day after winning the primary.

Overlooked in the discussions of the significance of the West Virginia primary is that it was the Kennedy forces who made religion the "burning issue" of the campaign. By doing so, they transformed the primary from a simple political contest between Kennedy and Humphrey into a turning point in the life of a nation—a defining moment in the history of the America. And they turned a local "beauty contest" (the primary was nonbinding) into a struggle of national and international consequence. Also missed is why the Kennedy forces played the religious card. They did it in order to counter the combined opposition of JFK's opponents who had targeted West Virginia as the state where they could block the Kennedy nomination. Fearing that if Kennedy won the West Virginia

primary "there would be no stopping him," many of the power players in the Democratic Party rallied behind Humphrey in an effort to defeat Kennedy. Thus, the stage was set for the showdown that would lead to the other historic happenings of that contest.

Also overlooked is that the 1960 West Virginia primary can be argued to have been the first modern political campaign. Two months before announcing his candidacy for the Democratic nomination, Senator Kennedy wrote in TV Guide of how the "wonders of science and technology" had "revolutionized political campaigns." Carefully conducted polls, jet planes, computers, and "automatic typewriters [that] prepare thousands of personally addressed letters individually signed by automatic pens" were the instruments of that revolution. Most importantly, was television; what Kennedy called "a force that has changed the political scene." "[N]othing," he wrote, "compares with the revolutionary impact of television," which would make political contests vulnerable to "manipulation, exploitation, and gimmicks . . . and public relations experts," "TV costs," he explained, would turn elections into items of "financial costs" and make candidates even more beholden to the "big financial contributors." Foremost, party leaders would be "less willing to run rough-shod over the voters' wishes and hand pick an unknown, unappealing, or unpopular candidate in the traditional 'smoke-filled room' when millions of voters are watching, comparing, and remembering."7

In the West Virginia primary Kennedy implemented these "wonders of science and technology" and, in effect, helped transform American politics by making that contest a pivotal political event and, in turn, making primary elections the focal point of presidential nominations. Furthermore, this political contest helped mark the emergence of political campaigns as we know them today, featuring extensive polling, political spin, big money, and television.

When Kennedy began his bid for the presidency in January 1960, many of the powerful members of the Democratic Party opposed his nomination. Some, like former Democratic president nominee Adlai Stevenson, were still hoping to capture the nomination for themselves. Others, like speaker of the US House of Representatives

Sam Rayburn, were supporting other candidates. Former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt opposed Kennedy for political reasons. Others, like former Democratic national chairman Paul Butler and former secretary of state Dean Acheson, considered Kennedy too young, too inexperienced, too Catholic, and too new and different.⁸ Former president Harry Truman contended that Kennedy was "not ready for the country" and the country was "not ready" for him.⁹

Surveys revealed that the majority of state Democratic Party chairmen and the majority of Democrats in the US House of Representatives favored Senator Stuart Symington (D-MO) and the majority of Democratic senators favored Senate Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson (D-TX), whereas the liberal wing of the party, especially minorities and Americans for Democratic Action, preferred Senator Hubert Humphrey. An informal survey by New York Times columnist James Reston found the "old pros" of the Democratic Party favored Senate Majority Leader Johnson. They predicted that at the Democratic Convention, Stevenson, Symington, and Johnson would emerge to block Kennedy, and out of the deadlock, the nomination would go to Johnson. But, noted Reston, Kennedy "could upset this calculation by a series of spectacular victories in the 1960 primaries." That's exactly what Kennedy did: he outmaneuvered the established leaders of the Democratic Party by going outside the traditional political channels to round up votes in the state primaries.¹¹

The first significant primary that year came in Wisconsin, where the son of a wealthy eastern patrician family needed to demonstrate that he could win a farm-belt state. This primary was won in typical Kennedy style, which featured long and thorough preparation. Senator Kennedy had already spent three years of intense campaigning in the state in preparation for the primary, including five visits to the state in less than six months. And the Wisconsin campaign featured plenty of excitement and plenty of Kennedys, as JFK's visits to the state were not only political events, they were happenings. In typical Kennedy campaign style, the Kennedy clan moved into the state. For weeks, the state was crawling with Kennedys: his wife, his mother, three sisters, two

brothers, a brother-in-law, and two cousins. "The Kennedy operation is largely a family affair," reported *The Progressive*. "His sisters and brothers have been extremely active. The teas and coffee hours with a member of the family present, which have worked so successively in Massachusetts, have been transplanted to Wisconsin on a massive scale."12 Football and baseball stars were brought in to help bring out the people in the athletic-enamored state. In addition to the regular campaign buttons, Kennedy supporters handed out JFK memorabilia, such as PT-109 tie clips, while every Kennedy appearance was preceded by a recording of Frank Sinatra's "High Hopes" as the candidate approached and a recording of "Anchors Aweigh" in recognition of his navy record. Even the Republican head of the Wisconsin Press Association became infatuated with the Kennedy frenzy, as he exclaimed: "It's been absolutely fabulous. The publicity these Kennedys are getting is the most outstanding, tremendous thing I've ever seen."13

As Kennedy's popularity grew and his victory became more likely, his only opponent in the contest, Humphrey, became more desperate and his attacks became more personal and bitter. He attacked Kennedy for being too much like Richard Nixon. He attacked JFK's father, Joseph Kennedy, for being too friendly with Senator Joe McCarthy (R-WI) and the Kennedy political machine for being too much like "one of the best organized societies of our times, Nazi Germany." Humphrey "has been working Kennedy over at every opportunity," wrote James Reston. The *New York Times* columnist then noted, "In the face of this [Humphrey's assaults], Kennedy has remained remarkably self-possessed. . . . He has made no charges against Humphrey, either on the local shows or from the stump. . . . And at no time has he lost his self-possession." 15

Kennedy won Wisconsin by obtaining 56 percent of the votes. This was a comfortable victory, but not a conclusive one, given the large percentage of Catholic voters in the state. Consequently, Kennedy backers believed JFK needed a convincing victory in an overwhelmingly Protestant state to enable him to capture the nomination.¹⁶

West Virginia looked to be a most important state for Kennedy.

At the time, the mountain state was approximately 95 percent Protestant. And a victory in Protestant West Virginia coming shortly after his primary victory in agricultural Wisconsin would show that Kennedy appealed to a variety of voters, which would give him the momentum to capture the Democratic nomination.

West Virginia looked to be an easy state for him. Confidential polling by the Kennedy forces in late 1958 and early 1959 indicated that Kennedy had tremendous appeal among the state's rank-andfile voters and a commanding lead over any potential challenger, including Humphrey and Nixon.¹⁷ A private poll by Kennedy pollster Lou Harris in December 1959 that factored in the religious issue showed Kennedy soundly thumping Humphrey by a margin of 70 to 30 percent. Harris's polling indicated that Kennedy's Catholicism "would be a problem in some sections of the border state where hard-shell Protestantism makes for strong religious sentiments," but, overall, he "pull[ed] strongly among Protestant voters (67 to 33 percent)" while making a "tremendous showing among Catholics (92 to 8 percent)." According to the report: "West Virginia sizes up as a safety valve state for Jack Kennedy. He has a comfortable lead at the present which Humphrey will have difficulty cutting down." The report concluded: "A concentrated effort here can result in a handsome victory and a powerful weapon against those who raise the 'Catholic can't win' bit." 18 Kennedy aide and strategist Kenneth O'Donnell met with county and political leaders who reassured him that the state was solidly for Kennedy: "There's nothing to worry about.... Jack will murder Hubert [in West Virginia]," O'Donnell reported.19

So solid was Kennedy's appeal and so strong was his lead over potential challengers that the Kennedy headquarters feared that other Democrats, especially Humphrey, might not enter the primary, thus rendering an unchallenged Kennedy victory meaningless.²⁰ "While Hubert Humphrey was in the state, he met with the state leaders (the pros) and they all advised him to stay out of the primary," Bob Wallace wrote Robert Kennedy in early January 1960. "[A]t this moment, this is his plan, although I understand that it might be possible to bait him into filing against us."²¹

Kennedy's lead was a result of his appeal to grassroots voters and to the usual long and thorough Kennedy preparation. After the 1956 Democratic Convention, Kennedy had spent considerable time in West Virginia campaigning for Democratic congressional candidates, speaking at fundraisers, addressing various audiences on different issues, and captivating the people of the state. ²² Two years before the West Virginia primary, following a visit by Kennedy, the local newspaper in Morgantown, West Virginia, noted:

This fellow Kennedy is it. He has that intangible something. This Kennedy fellow was worth waiting for. He not only said something but his voice has the ring of sincerity. . . . He surprised everyone by hanging around and being available to shake the hand of the 500 people who jammed the hotel ballroom.²³

Each visit was followed by letters from Kennedy to all those who made the visit possible and successful. A year before the primary, the Kennedy people were already in regular consultation with the state's chief public opinion makers like Harry Hoffman, political editor of the state's largest newspaper, the *Charleston Gazette*, and with the state's key political figures like Congressman Ken Hechler. And Kennedy himself was constantly flying into the state for private meetings with the state's power figures, like the president of the West Virginia AFL-CIO, Miles Stanley.

The Kennedy forces had set up a comprehensive, omnipresent organization in West Virginia three months before Humphrey had even set foot in the state. A powerful state steering committee had been established more than a year before the primary. Kennedy had eight campaign headquarters across the state, whereas Humphrey had only one, and Kennedy political groups were organized in fifty-one of the state's fifty-five counties. The young and aggressive local political operative, Matthew A. Reese Jr., a leader in the West Virginia Young Democrats, was put on the Kennedy payroll to organize Kennedy clubs in every county in the state. Hundreds of volunteers distributed Kennedy literature. A letter-writing campaign constantly sent out personal letters from Kennedy to all state and

local party leaders, to the 120 Veterans of Foreign War Posts in the state, and to thousands of Democratic voters. Hundreds of additional Kennedy volunteers placed phone calls to every house in the state. West Virginia State Democratic officials spoke in awe of the highly-organized, well-financed political organization the Kennedy forces had put together. ²⁶ The *Wall Street Journal* wrote of the "smooth as silk Kennedy campaign organization [in West Virginia] which left few stones unturned even in the mountainous nooks and hollows" of the state. ²⁷

JFK's brother Robert was a superb campaign manager and organizer. His other brother Edward, in the words of *Charleston Gazette* reporter Don Marsh, "distinguished himself" during the campaign. His specialty was in personal contact with blue-collar voters, which he accomplished by appearing at community functions, visiting steel plants, and descending into coal mines, but most of all by drinking with coal miners and steelworkers in local beer joints. "He [Ted Kennedy] is friendly and willing to buy a beer and talk politics" with anyone, according to news reports.²⁸

Franklin D. Roosevelt Jr., whose father was still revered in West Virginia, was imported to give the campaign even more of a boost. Everywhere the son of the great FDR went, he was promptly surrounded by dozens of coal miners saying that they had his father's picture in their houses. More importantly, everywhere he spoke, FDR Jr. proclaimed that "John F. Kennedy is the only candidate for president who can do for West Virginia in the 1960s what my father did for West Virginia in the 1930s."²⁹

Initially, the Kennedy women who had played large roles in all of JFK's previous campaigns were planned to be kept out of West Virginia. It was feared that they were too well dressed and too wealthy to be paraded before the people of a state that was in the midst of a severe economic crisis because automation and the increased use of natural gas and cheap foreign oil had wiped out tens of thousands of coal mining jobs.³⁰ As a consequence, unemployment, hunger, and poverty were rampant, and it was awkward enough for a wealthy, aristocratic easterner to be in West Virginia asking the people for their votes. (Several of the Kennedy

women, on their own, eventually came to West Virginia and participated in the primary. JFK's wife, Jacqueline ("Jackie"), had a major impact on the people of West Virginia, as she not only traveled with her husband but also went out on her own to meet with and talk to the people of the state. They liked her and she liked them; "The people were really friendly," she said in an interview a few years later: "I never met one person in West Virginia I didn't like."³¹)

With their understanding of the power of television, especially the ability of this new form of mass communication to make the connection between the candidate and the audience, the Kennedy forces poured money into this modern technology. They saturated the West Virginia airwaves with Kennedy advertising, Kennedy speeches, and interviews with Kennedy. "Over and over again," wrote Theodore White, "there was the handsome, open-faced candidate on the TV screen." A short documentary, a biographical film of JFK, highlighted his wartime exploits and showed him receiving the Pulitzer Prize for his book, *Profiles in Courage*. One telecast, which White called the "finest TV broadcast I have ever heard any political candidate make," featured Franklin Roosevelt Jr. interviewing the candidate.³²

When not on the airwaves, Kennedy was touring nearly every town and community, addressing the wants and needs of the rank-and-file voter of the impoverished state. In Beckley, he called for "another New Deal—a New Deal for West Virginia."³³ In Wayne, West Virginia, he announced a "Ten Point Program for West Virginia."³⁴ In Huntington, he addressed the need for federal aid to depressed areas.³⁵ In Wheeling, he labeled West Virginia the "state which the Pentagon forgot" because it received less defense money than any other state in the nation, and this, he explained, was an important reason for the state's economic woes. "No state in the country has suffered more from the neglect of the federal government than West Virginia," Kennedy charged.³⁶

In Charleston, Kennedy addressed the state's economic conditions with a message that contained the powerful, rhythmic refrain that he would use three years later in Berlin:

We hear much in Washington about Republican prosperity and Republican abundance. And we have a president who travels throughout the world telling of the richness of America. *Let him come to West Virginia*. *Let them see*, at first hand, the hardship, poverty, and the despair, which their failures of vision and leadership have helped to create. *Let them see*, a strong, resourceful state with a courageous and determined people—where almost a hundred thousand able-body men are out of work. *Let them see* a West Virginia which has contributed much to America's rise to greatness, which wants to continue to contribute to America's strength, and which is being denied the right to contribute.³⁷

State Democratic Party leaders, like Chairman (and future WV governor) Hulett C. Smith, were openly predicting a Kennedy victory.³⁸ Furthermore, national polls were showing JFK's growing strength across the country during the West Virginia primary. As a result, the anti-Kennedy forces came to a fundamental determination: in West Virginia Kennedy had to be stopped. The consensus was, reported the *Washington Post*, "if they (West Virginia voters) give Kennedy one more vote than they give Humphrey, the Massachusetts Senator will be well on the way to winning the Democratic presidential nomination."³⁹ Vice President Nixon, who was certain to be the Republican nominee for president, acknowledged that if Kennedy wins in West Virginia, "he will surely be nominated for President."⁴⁰

On the other hand, as Evans and Novak pointed out, "A Humphrey victory would open up the party to a whole series of new arrangements and deals." Consequently, Humphrey became a "front man" for a "stop-Kennedy conspiracy." Labeling it a "gang up," Kennedy claimed that Humphrey had become the "hatchet man" who was being used by "everybody who does not want me for president." 42

To win the West Virginia primary, Kennedy now had to overcome the opposition of not only Humphrey, but Senators Symington and Johnson, and Governor Stevenson from the Democratic side (all of whom still entertained hopes of winning the Democratic nomination), and Republican vice president Nixon (who was most fearful of a one-on-one match up against the charismatic Democrat). ⁴³ If that weren't enough, opposing Kennedy in West Virginia was US senator Robert C. Byrd (D-WV), who was working behind the scenes for Johnson. At that time, West Virginia was one of the most heavily unionized states in the nation, and the heads of the two largest labor unions in the state both opposed Kennedy. The president of the United Mine Workers, John L. Lewis, favored Symington. ⁴⁴ Teamster president, James R. "Jimmy" Hoffa, simply hated the Kennedys: "We don't support spoiled millionaires," Hoffa snarled. ⁴⁵ The West Virginia primary, wrote O'Donnell and Powers, "became a blatantly open effort on the part of all the other contenders to stop Kennedy."

Anti-Kennedy forces, including Senate Majority Leader Johnson, traveled to the state to campaign for their stand-in, Humphrey, and to defeat Kennedy. Johnson also sent a number of his agents, like US senator Earl Clements of Kentucky, into the state to work on behalf of Humphrey. Supporters of

Kennedy opponents filled important staff positions in the Humphrey campaign. William Jacobs, an admitted Stevenson supporter, for example, served as cochairman of Humphrey's campaign organization in West Virginia.⁴⁷

In mid-April, Senator Byrd returned to the state to urge his fellow West Virginians to vote for Humphrey. Byrd, however, "made no qualms, [that] he was for Johnson," noted a newspaper. He distributed Johnson literature throughout the state, claiming that Johnson had a better chance of winning in the general election than Kennedy, while urging his fellow West Virginians to vote for Humphrey. "If you are for Adlai E. Stevenson, Senator Stuart Symington, Senator Johnson or John Doe," Byrd declared, this primary "may be your last chance" to stop Kennedy. 48 So determined was Byrd to block Kennedy that the press declared that Byrd's "popularity or lack of it, has become a factor in the Kennedy-Humphrey contest." Given the strength of his opposition to Kennedy,

political pundits claimed that if Kennedy won the West Virginia primary, Byrd's future in West Virginia politics was over.⁴⁹

"The people of West Virginia," Kennedy stated, "I am convinced, want no part of this gang-up." Nevertheless, he was not about to take any chances. The Kennedy forces appeared to have made a fateful decision; they decided to play the religious card. They now claimed that the West Virginia primary was not simply a contest between Kennedy and Humphrey, but a turning point in the life of a nation—a defining moment in the history of the America. This contest was more than the election of one man to be the Democrat nominee for president—it was an American moment to see whether a Catholic could win in an overwhelmingly Protestant state. ⁵¹

Kennedy advisers have acknowledged that there was a "switch in tactics," but as Sorensen explained, it was Kennedy's decision because he wanted to "meet the religious issue head on."⁵² According to O'Donnell and Powers:

At the beginning of the primary campaign in West Virginia, the religious issue was treated rather gingerly in private meetings and scarcely mentioned in public. Then Jack made the crucial decision, on his own, to speak out openly to the voters about the religious prejudice against him.⁵³

The Kennedy forces now claimed that anti-Catholicism had emerged as a powerful political issue in the state and that this religious bigotry was on the verge of defeating Kennedy. Kennedy adopted this approach although West Virginia had no legacy of religious bigotry. While the state was overwhelmingly Protestant in 1960, before the Great Depression of the 1930s and the mechanization of the coal mines in the 1940s and 1950s, West Virginia did have a sizable Catholic population. As noted in *The West Virginia Encyclopedia*, in the early twentieth century "Catholic parishes flourished in the southern coal fields as well the industrial north." In 1928, West Virginians had voted for Catholic Alfred Smith in the Democratic primary over his opponent, Protestant US senator James Reed of Missouri. Two Catholics had recently been elected to the West

Virginia Supreme Court, while others had obtained state and local offices. Furthermore, surveys and studies by pollsters and political scientists like Samuel Lubell revealed that economic discontent, not the "so-called religious issue," was the concern of West Virginians. And, as previously mentioned, Kennedy pollster Lou Harris had found that West Virginians preferred the Catholic Kennedy over the Protestant Humphrey by a margin of 70 to 30 percent.⁵⁴

It appears that Kennedy decided to counter the "gang up" factor by playing the "religious card" to create a sympathetic, underdog image of himself. If so, this was not the first time that Kennedy and his followers had played the religious card. As Doris Fleeson wrote in the *Washington Star*, "Any real account of the religious issue in the 1960 campaign must begin not in West Virginia or Wisconsin but with the Democratic National Convention of 1956."

At the 1956 Democratic National Convention, when Kennedy sought his party's nomination for the vice presidency, his aides, directed by Sorensen, had developed and distributed a twenty-two page document called "The Catholic Memo" that maintained a Catholic would be an asset, not a liability, on the national ticket. Fourteen states, the memo pointed out, had a sufficiently large Catholic population to shape the outcome of an election. A Catholic nominee would draw heavily in the big cities of these states (cities that Democrats had been losing), and this vote would swing the large electoral votes of those states.⁵⁶ "There is a Catholic vote," the memo maintained, "and it is apparent that a well-known Catholic on the Democratic ticket would allocate to that ticket an extraordinary large portion of that vote [because] Catholics constitute more than one out of five eligible voters in the country."57 The memo cited studies by political scientists that supported their position that there was a "Catholic vote" and that a high proportion of Catholics of all ages, residences, occupations, and economic statuses would vote the Democratic ticket if there were Catholic candidate. A Catholic vice-presidential nominee would help refashion and rebuild the Democratic base that Democrats were losing, the memo concluded, by luring Catholic voters back into the Democratic fold.58 "Backers of Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts are in a nationwide drive

to nominate him for vice president," reported *US News and World Report* in 1956. Among the claims of the report was that a Catholic on the ticket would win back for the Democrats key states with large Catholic populations.⁵⁹

Playing the religious card at the 1956 Democratic convention had helped JFK to almost capture the Democratic vice-presidential nomination. In 1960, he played the religious card again, and in so doing, he had suddenly and purposefully transformed what would have been a relatively meaningless contest into a national, historic moment. The issue of freedom of religion "might as well be settled right here in West Virginia," Kennedy declared: "Is anyone going to tell me that I lost this primary forty-two years ago when I was baptized?"

This became the theme of the Kennedy campaign—that his victory in West Virginia would be a victory for America because it would show the world that Americans truly believed in freedom of religion. "Nobody asked me if I was a Catholic when I joined the United States Navy," he declared, "and nobody asked my brother if he was a Catholic or a Protestant before he climbed into an American bomber plane to fly his last mission."

In the middle of the heated primary, Kennedy traveled back to Washington to make sure that the folks in the nation's capital understood that the local contest was actually a struggle for universal truths and justice. In remarks to newspaper editors in Washington, DC, on April 21, he proclaimed: "The American people are more concerned with a man's views and abilities than with the church to which he belongs." He further stated:

There is only one legitimate question underlying all the rest: would you, as president of the United States, be responsive in any way to ecclesiastical pressures or obligations of any kind that might in any fashion influence or interfere with your conduct of that office in the national interest? I have answered that question many times. My answer was—and is—"NO." 62

Kennedy forces began to express public pessimism about the primary because of the state's alleged anti-Catholic sentiment. 63 They released polling data (data that New York Times columnist Russell Baker later claimed was "faked")64 that showed Kennedy trailing Humphrey 40 to 60 percent. 65 According to Kennedy headquarters, when they asked their advisers in West Virginia about the shift from 70 to 30 percent in favor of Kennedy in December 1959 to the 40 to 60 percent deficit in April 1960, they were told: "But no one in West Virginia knew" Kennedy was Catholic in December. "Now they know."66

That explanation defies credibility. As mentioned earlier, Kennedy had been in the state on numerous occasions in the two previous years, so people in West Virginia certainly were aware that he was Catholic. And, as previously mentioned, the Harris poll in December 1959 did indeed factor in religion, and found Kennedy's Catholicism to be a nonfactor. Furthermore, the new Kennedy polling data met with immediate skepticism. In the New York Times, Philip Benjamin dismissed the 40 percent projection as Kennedy's "poor mouth" position to establish himself as an underdog. 67 "Few believe he [Kennedy] really expects such an outcome," read a story in the Baltimore Sun, which then explained:

He [Kennedy] has brought in a huge organization, spent money most liberally for television and radio time, newspaper space and door-to-door advertising, and, according to knowledgeable Democrats and Republicans, won the allegiance of many involved in local contests by giving their campaigns financial support.68

On a bus trip with reporters, Kennedy cited the polling data and stated: "I just don't see how we can do it." A reporter for the Boston Globe spoke up asking, "Are you sure, Jack? I've been doing some polling and you look pretty good to me." A reporter for the Charleston Gazette jumped into the discussion stating: "I agree [with the Globe reporter]"; he explained that he had family and friends in Logan County, all Protestant, and all voting for Kennedy. 69

Nevertheless, the Kennedy forces continued with their tactic,

which now included looking for signs of anti-Catholic bigotry in their opponents' behavior. The Humphrey campaign had employed a local folk singer, Jimmy Wolford, to give some spirit to his campaign. Wolford had taken the tune of a favorite mountain religious hymn, "Give Me that Old-Time Religion," to compose a Humphrey campaign song. The Kennedy forces jumped upon the juxtaposition of the two songs as evidence that the Humphrey campaign was using the music to stir up religious sentiments.⁷⁰

The Kennedy forces linked Byrd's opposition to Kennedy with his past membership in the anti-Catholic Ku Klux Klan.⁷¹ The facts were that Byrd was a Johnson supporter and did not trust Kennedy. Byrd explained that Kennedy's youth and inexperience troubled him, not his religion. "Kennedy lacks the age and experience to be president in these perilous times," he explained: "I find it difficult to be secure in the thought of his sitting down with the Adenauers, the deGaulles, the MacMillans, and the Khrushchevs, as our country wrestles with important problems in the field of international relations." At one point Byrd had remarked that he would not support Kennedy if he were "a missionary Baptist." As for being anti-Catholic, Byrd pointed out that he had spoken to Catholic audiences in Catholic Churches, employed a number of Catholics on his staff, had appointed Catholics to the US military academies, and was ready to support a person like Pennsylvania governor David Lawrence, a Catholic, for president.⁷²

The April 20 edition of *West Virginia Hillbilly*, a reputable weekly with a circulation of about twenty-five thousand, ran a satirical spoof on the religious issue in the campaign titled, "Pa Ain't Sellin' His Vote to No Catholic." The headline from this satire was printed in several northeastern newspapers, without the story, as an illustration of the anti-Catholic sentiment in the state.⁷³

The strategy worked; what had been a local beauty contest was transformed into an election of international consequence. Foreign newspapers, including the *London Times* and *Paris Le Monde*, rushed correspondents to the state to report on the campaign. The primary was covered by newspapers in Portugal and Denmark as well. Newspapers in Catholic Ireland reported that they were "swamped" with phone calls about the West Virginia election.⁷⁴

At the same time, people in West Virginia did feel some pressure to vote for a Catholic in order to show that they were not bigots. Kennedy supporters had "create[d] a climate which makes it appear unfair not to vote for Kennedy,

regardless of whether or not he is qualified," charged the cochairman of Humphrey's campaign, William Jacobs: they had created an atmosphere in which "everyone who doesn't want him to be president is a bigot." A writer in the *Charleston Gazette* wrote: "They're trying to shame us into a Kennedy vote." There have been repeated reports that the religious question is the main issue with voters in West Virginia," Senator Byrd angrily complained, "this is not the case." "Religion is a factor in the West Virginia election," Byrd explained, "but it need not have become an issue." He further declared: "Senator Kennedy has boldly but carelessly and unwisely made it an issue."

The religious issue had become the focal point of the national media, as several national journalists supported Kennedy's charges of religious bigotry in West Virginia. The most prolific national writer on the West Virginia primary, W. H. Lawrence of the New York Times, claimed that "a large anti-Catholic sentiment" was evident in the state and that the "religious issue came up at every stop." 78 In another article, Lawrence claimed that, "Senator Humphrey's main advantage" is a "strong anti-Catholic vote directed against Senator Kennedy, a Catholic, because of fear that his official acts would be influenced by the Vatican."79 Polls made clear, according to Lawrence, that "anti-Catholicism would be the primary reason [people in West Virginia werel for voting against Senator Kennedy and for Senator Humphrey."80 Lawrence wrote, "There is abundant, indisputable evidence that anti-Catholic sentiment is a strong factor with many Democrats in the mountains and valleys of this state."81 The day before the election, Lawrence again stated that Humphrey would win because of the religious issue. 82 On the day of the election, he noted that Humphrey was considered the favorite, as "Senator Kennedy, a Roman Catholic, is faced with a large anti-Catholic vote."83

Lawrence was not alone in highlighting the state's alleged religious bigotry as the reason for a Humphrey victory should 18

he win. In the Washington Post, Carroll Kilpatrick claimed that Humphrey would win, and the reason for Kennedy's impending defeat was the "issue of religion."84 In Newsweek, Kennedy's close friend Ben Bradlee wrote that the "deck looks to be hopelessly stacked against Jack Kennedy in West Virginia. . . . This state is 95 percent Protestant, and in some areas, there is a strong note of distrust toward a Catholic candidate." As evidence he pointed out that at a homecoming rally in East Bank for the great West Virginia basketball player, Jerry West, "there were no 'Kennedy for President' stickers."85 The syndicated columnist and Kennedy's friend, Joseph Alsop, wrote a series of vicious, pejorative articles depicting West Virginians as ignorant, anti-Catholic hillbillies. "If Sen. Humphrey wins," Alsop wrote, "as he well may do, he will owe his victory to Ku Klux Klan-minded voters [in West Virginia]." Alsop said he had visited the little mining town of Slab Fork, where he learned of the "un-American prejudice" against Kennedy. If Humphrey won, Alsop wrote, it would be for "very ugly reasons." 86 Calling Alsop's article "an insult to the people of West Virginia," on the floor of the US Senate, Byrd assailed "Mr. Alsop's ridiculous insinuations and his stupid analysis of things that motivate my people." His article was, Byrd charged, a "deliberate and calculated distortion and Mr. Alsop knows it."87

There was anti-Catholic behavior in the primary, but it came from people outside the state. The nationally renowned minister and author Reverend Dr. Norman Vincent Peale traveled to Charleston on April 12, and expressed his opposition to a Catholic becoming president. Charging that under Catholic dogma Kennedy would be subject to instructions from his church officials, Peale asked: "Should any ecclesiastical authority be able to interfere with the freedom of a public official of the United States?"88 On April 29, the *Charleston Gazette* carried an anti-Catholic ad that was paid for by a retired teacher in Cambridge, Massachusetts. 89 Anti-Catholic literature was also found coming from Wisconsin, Texas, and California. 90 A bogus oath in which members of the Knights of Columbus reportedly pledged to kill Protestants that was distributed throughout the state was traced to a Baptist minister

from Tennessee.⁹¹ As an example of the state's anti-Catholicism, the *New York Times* cited Reverend Wilburn C. Campbell, the Episcopal Bishop of West Virginia, who had expressed fears that a Catholic president would be subjected to pressures from the Catholic Church. But Campbell was from New York and had served fourteen years of ministry in New York City before moving to West Virginia less than a year before.⁹²

National papers highlighting the religious bigotry in West Virginia got caught up in their own contradictions. The *Washington Post* declared that religion was the "burning issue" of the campaign. But the story went on to cite interviews with Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian ministers as well Catholic clergymen in the state, all of whom reported they knew of "no instance" in which the question of Kennedy's religion had been discussed in the pulpit of the city.⁹³

Meanwhile, those same news stories that made claims of anti-Catholicism in the state were acknowledging that Kennedy was drawing huge crowds wherever he appeared. In an article, in which he wrote "anti-Catholic sentiment remained politically strong," *New York Times* reporter Lawrence noted that "Senator Kennedy drew big and enthusiastic crowds everywhere." In other stories Lawrence even noted that at rallies, like one in Cedar Grove, Kennedy was being introduced by Protestant ministers. An another *New York Times* reporter Richard J. H. Johnston, who followed Kennedy in the southern West Virginia coal fields, wrote: "The largest and most enthusiastic crowds" turned out for Kennedy. In the northern part of the state, he attracted record-breaking crowds at his appearances. And influential Protestant ministers were quoted in newspapers as saying that Kennedy's religion would not be a factor in the primary.

Kennedy's opponents were furious with JFK for playing the religious card. Denouncing the Kennedy tactic on the Senate floor, Byrd said he "deplore[ed] the effort being made upon part of some persons to make it appear that a victory for Senator Humphrey would be a victory for religious prejudice." Responding to a constituent's letter about his opposition to Kennedy, Byrd denounced

what he called the "vicious pressure tactics being used against any individual who happens to favor anyone else in preference to Senator Kennedy for the Presidency." "If an individual happens to prefer someone else over Senator Kennedy, that individual is immediately branded as anti-Catholic." 100

As Kennedy's support became stronger and stronger, the anti-Kennedy forces began to fade, leaving Humphrey on his own. He was even losing his volunteer workers to the Kennedy campaign. Humphrey, however, had gone too far and invested too much to give up. He cut his staff by a half, began writing personal checks to pay for radio time, and took out loans to continue his campaign.¹⁰¹

Becoming desperate, as in Wisconsin, Humphrey again indulged in vicious, personal attacks on Kennedy. 102 "Poor little Jack, . . . I wish he would grow up and stop acting like a boy," Humphrey howled. 103 "Politics is a serious business," he declared, it is "not a boy's game where you can pick up your ball and run home if thing don't go according to your idea of who should win." 104 "Kennedy is the spoiled candidate and he and that young, emotional, juvenile Bobby are spending with wild abandon," Humphrey shouted at a rally: "Anyone who gets in the way of papa's pet is going to be destroyed." 105 And he characterized Kennedy's campaign speeches as "baby-talk." 106

Humphrey now made another fateful decision in his campaign: he attacked Kennedy for using his family's wealth to influence the state's voters. He denounced Kennedy for running a "checkbook campaign," while claiming, "I'm being ganged up on by wealth." "I don't have unlimited financial resources," he whined, "I have less than \$1,200 for radio and television time in West Virginia." "I don't have any daddy who can pay the bills." 107

A few days before the primary, Humphrey went even further—he began accusing Kennedy of trying to "buy" the election with his "extravagant use of unlimited wealth." He outright accused Kennedy of "political payola." Kennedy money, he charged, was being spent in "lavish quantities" to "buy" a victory. Kennedy aides, Humphrey charged, had been seen roaming the southern West Virginia coal fields, visibly carrying "black bags," a statement which, according to

Goodwin, presumed that they were "full of cash to bribe voters and local chieftains."¹¹⁰ To an audience in Phillipi he shouted, "I don't think elections should be bought.¹¹¹ At another gathering Humphrey bellowed to his listeners: "I can't afford to run through this state with a little black bag and a checkbook."¹¹²

Now Kennedy was enraged. In the Wisconsin primary Kennedy had largely ignored Humphrey's personal attacks; this time, he hit back.113 "First in Wisconsin, now in West Virginia," Kennedy fumed, Humphrey "has distorted my record, attacked my integrity, and played fast and loose with smears and innuendos. . . . He is conducting a gutter campaign against me here in West Virginia."114 "In fourteen years of public life, in three campaigns for the House of Representatives and two for the United States Senate, I have never been subject to such personal abuse." "I do not intend to reply in kind," Kennedy explained, "because no Democrat is ever going to win by impersonating Richard Nixon. . . . [But] I do not intend to take this kind of abuse indefinitely." "I could not turn the other cheek indefinitely," Kennedy said in explaining why he finally attacked Humphrey. 115 According to Goodwin, this is when Kennedy decided to allow Roosevelt to attack Humphrey as a "draft dodger" during World War II.116

The campaign became so bitter and the personal assaults so negative that Democratic Party leaders expressed alarm. They complained that the two candidates were "doing Nixon's work for him." Senate Democrat Whip Mike Mansfield (D-MT) publicly urged the two candidates to stop attacking each other and to attack the Republican record.¹¹⁷

One of the calmest events of the primary came when the two candidates met face-to-face in a televised debate in Charleston the week before the election. Given the intensity of the primary, reporters expected a bloodletting. As it turned out, most of them were disappointed by the calmness of the contest. The *New York Times* complained that the exchange "generated little controversy except over their individual aspirations" for the nomination. Newsmen wanted blood, the *Washington Post* reported, and none was spilled. In that paper, Chalmers Roberts referred to it as a

"tweedledum-tweedledee affair if ever there was one." As a result, the debate received little notice.

On the other hand, West Virginians "liked the debate," as they liked what they heard. The two candidates had expressed their concern with the economic plight of the state and displayed good knowledge of the troubles in the coal industry. Pointing out that "many observers missed the significance of the debate because they were anticipating a Hatfield-McCoy vocal vendetta on camera, and when it failed to materialize were disappointed," the *Charleston Gazette* grasped the history of the moment in an editorial that explained: "Today's political campaigns are conducted in a vacuum of pap and nonsense. Face to face meetings give the voter a chance to base his selection on something other than hearsay and cliché." "It is our hope," the paper declared, that presidential debates "will become common occurrences on the national and the local political scene. We are convinced it is through programs like this that the public can be better informed and the democratic process strengthened." ¹²²

A national journalist who understood this historic event was James Reston. The *New York Times* columnist wrote that the most important outcome of the debate was that the winner was "not the man but the technique of using modern communication to talk before large audiences about large issues, instead of separating and scoring debating points before small audiences on narrow issues." And this new form of communication had enabled the candidates in the debate to connect with their audience.¹²³

One way Kennedy connected with the audience that night was his pronouncement in his opening statement that the primary was a crucial test for him, that it would make or break his chances of nomination. "Here [in West Virginia], a defeat would be a major one," he said. In other words, if Humphrey won, he would be finished. Kennedy had transformed the debate into a far larger happening. He had turned what otherwise would have been a low-key, low-profile event into a fight for his political life. He had placed his political future into the hands of the people of West Virginia; he had given the neglected people of the economically depressed state a pride and a feeling of worth—they were

determining the fate of a man, maybe the Democratic nominee, maybe the president.¹²⁴

John Kennedy won a sweeping victory in West Virginia. His vote was 61 to 39 percent margin, as he carried 50 of 55 counties in the state. A number of factors contributed to Kennedy's dramatic victory.

Kennedy's well-financed, high-powered campaign in the state that featured the "latest scientific mechanisms" was certainly important. Calling Kennedy's victory in West Virginia a "dramatic example of what thorough, if expensive, organization can produce if handled by professionals," the Pulitzer Prize—winning editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, Ralph McGill, wrote:

Kennedy's use of television, polls, and computers "was the dominant factor, not religion." ¹²⁵

Another factor was the money the Kennedys poured into the contest. There is no question that the Kennedy forces invested heavily in the state and that Kennedy dramatically outspent Humphrey in West Virginia. ¹²⁶ Kennedy's liberal spending in the state probably helped spark rumors that money was being used to buy votes, allegations fueled by Humphrey's desperate, wild accusations. According to the *New Republic*, anti-Kennedy Democrats perpetuated Humphrey's assertions of vote buying to try to "dissuade some band-wagon-minded friends from taking the jump" to Kennedy. ¹²⁷ Harry Truman, who hated JFK's father Joe Kennedy almost as much as he hated Richard Nixon, charged: "He [Joe Kennedy] bought West Virginia. I don't know how much it cost him; he's a tight fisted old son of a bitch; so he didn't spend any more than he had to, but he bought West Virginia, and that's how his boy won the primary over Humphrey." ¹¹²⁸

Republicans also tried to exploit Humphrey's allegations in their effort to defeat Kennedy in the presidential election. West Virginia Republican governor Cecil Underwood announced that he intended to make the alleged corruption in his state's Democratic primary a major issue in the general election. The chairman of the Republican Senate Campaign Committee, Senator Barry Goldwater, echoed Humphrey's reckless claims. The expected Republican nominee for

president, Richard Nixon, used his position as vice president to send FBI agents into the state to dig up evidence of vote buying that he could use against Kennedy in the election. Nixon's special assistant, Herbert Klein, announced that the Justice Department was looking into the vote fraud in the West Virginia primary and Kennedy's expenditures in it. US attorney general William P. Rogers also sent FBI agents into the state. Friends of the vice president and Nixon campaign workers conducted their own investigations in efforts to dig up dirt on Kennedy.¹²⁹ ("Since when has the FBI been used as a political weapon?" Kennedy appropriately asked.¹³⁰)

Theodore White described the FBI investigation as an "exhaustive study" that could "turn up no evidence of wrong doing." In fact, none of the investigations could discover any significant fraud in the West Virginia presidential primary. They did find some political corruption on the local level, including vote buying, but nothing by the Kennedy people.¹³¹

Nationally renowned political columnist Drew Pearson sent his partner, Jack Anderson, a superb investigative reporter, to West Virginia to investigate the allegations of vote buying and to find out what the FBI had learned. Anderson researched and interviewed a number of people, including the political bosses of Logan County, Ray Watt and Ray Chafin, who both swore "no money passed between them." Anderson reported: "Except for the rumors, not a single person knew of any money that had passed from the Kennedy forces to any local politician."132 Likewise, the political editor of the Charleston Gazette reported that its investigators found "no evidence that Kennedy bought the election." The two Charleston Gazette's reporters, Don Marsh and John Morgan, had covered Kennedy's primary campaign and then followed up on the rumors of illegal spending by interviewing and investigating sheriffs, prosecutors, Democratic county chairmen, and others in a wide range of political capacities concluded: "beyond reasonable doubt that . . . no vote buying or any irregularities involving the presidential candidates of consequence took place in the primary election." Kennedy "spent money," they reported, "but not for the purposes commonly alleged."133 The New Republic found, "there is

no proof that vote buying was responsible for Kennedy's victory."¹³⁴ "The talk about Sen. John F. Kennedy 'buying' his victory in West Virginia's primary—and so far that's all it is, talk—has brought a number of reporters down this way," reported Edward T. Folliard in the *Washington Post*, but "they have not yet been able to document a Kennedy money scandal."¹³⁵

West Virginia Republican governor Underwood admitted that his investigation found no wrongdoing on the part of the Kennedy campaign. Neither did two grand juries in West Virginia that looked into charges of vote buying. When pressed on allegations of vote buying, Humphrey aides in West Virginia conceded that they did not actually see Kennedy or his supporters do anything wrong. 136

Despite the fact that these investigations failed to reveal any vote buying or voting fraud, Kennedy critics have continued to perpetuate the accusations, probably in biased efforts to discredit him. ¹³⁷ Over the years they were transformed into charges that it was the Catholic Church that had financed John Kennedy's victory. ¹³⁸ They would culminate in stories about mobsters financing JFK's victory in West Virginia. ¹³⁹ Claims about mob money buying JFK's victory in the West Virginia primary are groundless. "That didn't happen," Don Marsh said of a possible mob connection to the West Virginia primary, "That's not even close. ¹⁴⁰

During one of the probes, Oliver Hall, a part-time cab driver in McDowell County who had lost his job in the coal mines because of mechanization was asked if he saw any vote buying by the Kennedy people. Hall answered: "He [JFK] didn't have to buy it. He promised to help the people here and he really got close to them." Or, as the reporters for the *Charleston Gazette* wrote in the conclusion of their investigation, Kennedy "didn't buy the election. Instead, he sold himself to the voters." As time healed the scars of his defeat, and emotions had calmed, a sober Hubert Humphrey reflected on his loss: "I was whipped not only by money and organization but, more particularly, by an extraordinary man." 143

Personality, appearance, and style were also key components in JFK's triumph. John Kennedy was the polished, attractive, and immaculately dressed New Englander who walked the hollers and climbed the hills to stick out a hand; to smile in that charming, seductive way; and to talk to the people of West Virginia. He sat on logs and front porch swings when he visited farmers and their wives, and went into coal mines to learn the views of the miners as well as to make his views known. "They liked him," wrote Richard Goodwin:

He was direct, his discussions stripped of rhetoric—he used words they could understand and answer; and he was curious, seemingly more interested in their way of life, the rigors of their job, even the mechanics of mining, than in trying to persuade them of his own merit. It was *Kennedy at his best*.¹⁴⁴

West Virginians had enjoyed a taste of what the nation was about to experience. Early in the campaign, a reporter had written: "If bobby-soxers could vote, Senator John F. Kennedy would sweep the southern West Virginia coal-field regions." Bobby-soxers couldn't vote, but their mothers could. When

Kennedy spoke in the economically depressed town of Welch, according to the *New York Times*, he "appeared slim, tall, boyish, made even slimmer and taller by a finely cut, trim gray suit." A woman stared at him in awe and remarked: "How could anybody vote for anyone else after looking at him?" 146

It was not just women and it was not just the people of West Virginia. As a result of the West Virginia primary, people across the nation were noticing Kennedy's appearance and personality and the way it translated into votes. "A candidate who is just plain likeable can overcome many an alleged drawback," wrote Paul Duke in the *Wall Street Journal*:

It's a rule which obviously tilted heavily in Senator Kennedy's favor in the West Virginia Democratic primary and largely accounted for his smashing conquest of Senator Humphrey. . . . Pre-primary interviews with West Virginians favoring Mr. Kennedy brought responses of amazing similarity. Time and again voters would smile

and say they "liked" Mr. Kennedy but couldn't say exactly why. 147

Playing the religious card, no doubt, did have an impact on some voters, as a few people acknowledged that they felt pressured into voting for a Catholic or be seen as religious bigots. A Charleston housewife openly declared: "I hope Kennedy wins so people will not think West Virginians are bigots." Another woman stated: "Now they can't say we are bigoted." Nevertheless, surveys found that, in general, religion actually had little, if any, bearing on the outcome of the election. Despite all that has been written," Kennedy told the people of the state after the election, "I had no doubt that you would cast your vote on the basis of the issues and not on the basis of any religious prejudice." 151

In fact, West Virginians cited the election results to extract revenge on the national media for the way it had portrayed the state. Future West Virginia governor W. W. Barron put it bluntly: "The press must have been really dumb. If they had talked with the people and listened, they would have known Kennedy would win easily."152 The editor of the Charleston Gazette, Ned Chilton, explained that the outside press was taken in by the religious question: "Certain people in the Kennedy camp [had] used the religious issue" and the national press had fallen for it. 153 The national media was "predisposed to believe in the Catholic issue being so strong" in West Virginia, wrote Don Marsh of the Charleston Gazette, and that left them vulnerable to manipulation. ¹⁵⁴ The Charleston Gazette also expressed some bitterness about how the state had been portrayed; the paper's columnist L. T. Anderson wrote that "the nation's readers were misinformed about West Virginia. [The press] looked for bigotry and they found it where it didn't exist."155 A bitter Charleston Daily Mail noted that the vote showed that West Virginia "is not the bed of religious prejudice some of our distinguished visitors have supposed it to be. This ends West Virginia's usefulness, we suspect as a proving ground for religious prejudice but few West Virginians will grieve at that."156

The national media realized that they had been had, that they had been part of a plan that had worked, and this they made clear.

In his memoirs, Washington Post reporter Chalmers Roberts reflected: "Looking back, I think the press was considerably conned by the Kennedy tactic."157 The Wall Street Journal ran an editorial of "apology to the people of West Virginia." They had been assigned a "stereotyped role," the paper said, and it was wrong, and the national media should have known better. The Wall Street Journal now recalled that, "Al Smith [a Catholic] won the primary there [W.Va.] in 1928, but that was forgotten in the soap-opera script of this year's primary."158 An editorial in the New York Times read in part: "Senator Kennedy's tour de force in taking 60 percent of the votes against Mr. Humphrey shows . . . that the anti-Catholic prejudice reported ad nauseam as the most distinguishing mark of a West Virginian has been grossly exaggerated."159 On May 4, six days before the primary, Washington Post reporter Carroll Kilpatrick wrote: "[M]ost observers think Humphrey may be ahead." People would like to vote for Kennedy, but "they are worried about the religious question." ¹⁶⁰ On May 12, two days after the primary, Kilpatrick reported that the "religious issue was exaggerated." 161

In explaining how he and other reporters had been "conned by the Kennedy tactic" in the West Virginia primary, Chalmers Roberts confessed: "I, like many other newsmen, was too readily captivated by the Kennedy charm." Perhaps. Kennedy's close relationships with several of reporters writing about the West Virginia campaign could also have been a factor. For instance, JFK won the town of Slab Fork by a 3 to 1 margin—this was the same Slab Fork that Kennedy's friend Joe Alsop had predicted Humphrey would win for "ugly reasons." In a sarcastic article titled "'Un-American' Slab Fork Floods Jack," the *Charleston Gazette* made it known that it was Alsop who was the ignorant bigot, not the people of West Virginia. 163

In his memoirs, *New York Times* columnist Russell Baker offered another explanation. Baker explained that veteran reporters who covered the West Virginia primary, like W. H. Lawrence, could not have missed a story as big as the one they missed in West Virginia. Therefore, Baker wrote, word spread around Washington that "Jack Kennedy had Bill Lawrence in his pocket."

By playing the religious card, and thereby defining the contest, however, the Kennedy forces had established the West Virginia primary as an American moment. Kennedy had made it a contest between freedom and bigotry, and freedom won. In the *New York Times*, Arthur Krock wrote: "The powerful evidence supplied in West Virginia is that the Massachusetts senator's congenial voting appeal can . . . overcome the Roman Catholic factor in heavily Protestant states." *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* noted: "The results were viewed by political observers as proof that Kennedy's Roman Catholicism would not bar him from winning the nomination or general election." Speaking in Charleston on the June 20, 1963, on the state's centennial celebration, President John F. Kennedy stated: "I would not be where I am now, I would not have some of the responsibilities which I now bear, if it had not been for the people of West Virginia."

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NOTES

- 1 Articles and books discussing the West Virginia primary are cited throughout this study. The best and most comprehensive is Dan B. Fleming Jr., *Kennedy vs. Humphrey, West Virginia, 1960: The Pivotal Battle for the Democratic Nomination* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1992).
 - The controversies surrounding the primary will also be discussed throughout this article. The most prominent and lingering of these is that Kennedy won the state by buying votes and that he used mobster money to buy them. See Thomas Reeves, *A Question of Character* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1991), 165–166; John H. Davis, *The Kennedys: Dynasty and Disaster* (New York: S.P.I. Books, 1988), 236; Kitty Kelley, "The Dark Side of Camelot," People, Feb. 29, 1988, 109–11; Allen H. Loughry, *Don't Buy Another Vote, I Won't Pay for a Landslide: The Sordid History of Political Corruption in West Virginia* (Parsons, WV: McClain Printing Company, 2006); Seymour Hersh, *The Dark Side of Camelot* (Boston: Back Bay Books, 1997).
- 2 Kenneth O'Donnell and David F. Powers, "Johnny We Hardly Knew Ye" (Boston: Little, Brown, 1972), 165. Kennedy's press secretary, Pierre Salinger, wrote that it was in West Virginia "that Kennedy really sewed up the Democratic nomination for President." Pierre Salinger, With Kennedy (New York: Double Day, 1966), 34. Sorensen quoted Kennedy as saying:

- "There isn't doubt in my mind that West Virginia nominated the Democratic Presidential candidate." Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 147.
- 3 Joseph A. Loftus, "Kennedy Woos West Virginia in Key Contest for the House," *New York Times*, Oct. 7, 1962.
- 4 O'Donnell and Powers, "Johnny We Hardly Knew Ye," 165; Herbert Parmet, JFK: The Presidency of John F. Kennedy (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 39.
- 5 Carroll Kilpatrick, "Religion is Seen Buried as Issue," Washington Post, May 12, 1960; "Kennedy Wins in West Virginia," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, May 13, 1960, 839.
- 6 Arthur Krock, "In the Nation," *New York Times*, May 12, 1960; Edward Folliard, "Kennedy is Seen Key to Party's Race," *Washington Post*, May 3, 1960; Carroll Kilpatrick, "W.Va. Vote Today Holds Rival's Fate," *Washington Post*, May 10, 1960.
- 7 John F. Kennedy, "A Force That Has Changed the Political Scene," TV Guide, November 14, 1959, 5-7.
- 8 "Tippy Toes with Adlai," Newsweek, Feb. 29, 1960, 22; W. H. Lawrence, "Long Drive Wins," New York Times, July 14, 1960; Associated Press, "2 Reported Backed for Presidency," Baltimore Sun, May 27, 1959; Associated Press, "Truman, Johnson Confer in Texas as Boom Grows," Baltimore Sun, Oct. 19, 1959; James Donovan, "Mrs. FDR Sees Humphrey as Best 1960 Contender," Washington Post, Dec. 8, 1958; Washington Daily News, July 12, 1960, quoted in Republican National Committee, Here's What the Democrats Think About Kennedy, http://w.w.w.the matrix.com/2010; James Reston, "Stop-Kennedy Drive Fails," New York Times, March 7, 1960. Memorandum, Bob Wallace to Robert Kennedy, January 5, 1960, West Virginia Organization, West Virginia Primary, Pre-Presidential Papers, John F. Kennedy Library (hereafter cited as JFKL).
- 9 Memorandum, Bob Wallace to Robert Kennedy, January 5, 1960, West Virginia Organization, West Virginia Primary, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKL; New York Herald Tribune, July 3, 1960. Also see Gerald Griffen, "GOP Leaders Accept Health Bill Challenge," Baltimore Sun, July 19, 1962.
- James Reston, "It Could Be Johnson: Democratic Professionals in North Ponder Texan as a 1960 Compromise," *New York Times*, March 25, 1959.
- 11 Sidney M. Milikis and Michael Nelson, *The American Presidency: Origins and Development*, 1776–1990 (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1990), 299.
- 12 Benjamin Bradlee, "Keeping Up with Kennedy," *Newsweek*, Nov. 23, 1959, 33–34; "Prelude to 1960: Young Man Running," *Newsweek*, April 20, 1959, 30–31; Miles McMillen, "Struggle for Wisconsin," *Progressive*, April, 1960, 21–23; Benjamin Bradlee, "The Front Runner," *Newsweek*, March 28, 1960, 30.
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- 14 These personal attacks are from multiple sources, including the *Milwaukee Journal* and Humphrey campaign literature. They are quoted, detailed, and attributed in Memorandum I, "Wisconsin Attacks," Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKL. Also see James Reston, "Wisconsin Voters Watch TV War," *New York Times*, April 4, 1960, and "Kennedy Called 'Soft' on Nixon," *Baltimore Sun*, March 20, 1960.
- 15 James Reston, "Wisconsin Voters Watch TV War," New York Times, April 4, 1960.
- 16 Sorensen, Kennedy, 137; White, The Making of the President, 103; Salinger, With Kennedy, 33–34.
- 17 Letter, Theodore C. Sorensen to Robert P. McDonough, January 19, 1959, West Virginia Primary, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKL.
- 18 Earl Mazo, "2 Primaries Seen Crucial for Kennedy," New York Herald, March 18, 1960.
- 19 Quoted in Richard N. Goodwin, *Remembering America: A Voice from the Sixties* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1988), 84.
- 20 Goodwin explains if Kennedy had "faced no opposition in" West Virginia, he "might never have been able to demonstrate that he could overcome the Catholic issue." Goodwin, *Remembering America*, 84. Also see Salinger, *With Kennedy*, 34.
- 21 Memorandum, Bob Wallace to Robert Kennedy, January 5, 1960, West Virginia organization, West Virginia Primary, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKL.
- 22 Memorandum, Bob Wallace to Robert Kennedy, January 5, 1960, West Virginia organization, West Virginia Primary, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKL; Cong. Rec. 5994 (April 15, 1959) (statement of Sen. John F Kennedy); Edward T. Folliard, "Reporters Fail to Find Kennedy Bought Victory," Washington Post, May 31, 1960.
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- 24 See the folders in Pre-convention Files, Box 969, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKL. A Kennedy visit to Huntington and Weston in April 1959 was followed by hundreds of letters to people in those towns. In October 1959, it was Parkersburg and Vienna.
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- 26 W. H. Lawrence, "Survey of West Virginia Shows Confliction Trends," New York Times, May 9, 1960; "Next Tests for '60 as Politicians Size Them Up," US News and World Report, April 25, 1960, 56–58; Memo, Bob Wallace to Senator Kennedy, May 20, 1959, Pre-Convention folder, Box 696, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKL; "The Tilt Toward Kennedy," Newsweek, April 18,

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- 28 "The Kennedy Boys Return to the Stump," New York Times, May 1, 1960; Don Marsh, "Profile of a Presidential Candidate: Kennedy is Storybook Candidate," Charleston Gazette, May 7, 1960.
- 29 W. H. Lawrence, "Roosevelt Spurs Kennedy's Hopes," New York Times, April 29, 1960; Chalmers Roberts, "Humphrey Hopes High in West Virginia Today," Washington Post, May 10, 1960. Also see Richard J. H. Johnston, "Kennedy Hailed in Mining Region," New York Times, April 27, 1960.
- 30 "The Kennedy Boys Return to the Stump," New York Times, May 1, 1960.
- 31 Phillip Benjamin, "Kennedy Gloomy in West Virginia," New York Times, May 6, 1960; "Jack, Wife, Tour State This Week," Charleston Gazette-Mail, April 17, 1960; O'Donnell and Powers, "Johnny We Hardly Knew Ye," 185; Jacqueline Kennedy, Historic Conversations on Life With John F. Kennedy, Interviews with Arthur Schlesinger Jr. (New York: Hyperion Books, 2011), 67–68.
- 32 White, *Making of the President*, 116–118.
- 33 Remarks of Senator John F. Kennedy, Beckley, West Virginia, April 1960, West Virginia Primary, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKL.
- 34 Remarks of Senator John F. Kennedy, "A Ten Point Program for West Virginia," Wayne, West Virginia, April 25, 1960, West Virginia Primary, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKL.
- 35 Remarks of Senator John F. Kennedy, "Aid to Depressed Areas," Huntington, West Virginia, April 20, 1960, West Virginia Primary, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKL.
- 36 Remarks of Senator John F. Kennedy, "West Virginia—The State Which the Pentagon Forgot," Wheeling, West Virginia, April 19, 1960, West Virginia Primary, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKL.
- 37 Remarks of Senator John F. Kennedy, "A Program for West Virginia," Charleston, West Virginia, April 20, 1960, West Virginia Primary, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKL.
- 38 "The Tilt Toward Kennedy," Newsweek, April 18, 1960, 31.
- 39 Gallup Polls cited in *New York Times*, April 24, 1960, and Edward T. Falliard, "Kennedy is Seen as Key to Party's Race," *Washington Post*, May 3, 1960; Carroll Kilpatrick, "W.Va. Vote Today Holds Rival's Fate," *Washington Post*, May 10, 1960.
- 40 Edward Folliard, "Kennedy is Seen Key to Party's Race," Washington Post, May 3, 1960. Likewise, see Lawrence E. Davies, "Nixon Forecasts Test for Kennedy," New York Times, April 12, 1960.
- 41 Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, *Lyndon B. Johnson: The Exercise of Power* (New York: New American Library, 1966), 259.

- 42 Winthrop Griffith, Humphrey: A Candid Biography (New York: William Morrow, 1965), 18; W. H. Lawrence, "Kennedy Charges 'Gang-Up' by Foes," New York Times, April 14, 1960: Howard Norton, "Kennedy Starts Drive in West Virginia, Hits at Anti-Catholic Bias," Baltimore Sun, April 19, 1960. Also see newspaper clipping, "Kennedy Reception Attended by 2,300," News-Register, n.d., "West Virginia Organization and Trips" Folder, Box 969, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKL and White, Making of the President, 115.
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- 44 Joseph A. Loftus, "Lewis Backs Move to Stop Kennedy," *New York Times*, April 13, 1960; Howard Norton, "Kennedy Starts Drive in West Virginia. Hits Anti-Catholic Bias," *Baltimore Sun*, April 19, 1960.
- 45 Carroll Kilpatrick, "Kennedy Cites Hoffa Role," Washington Post, May 6, 1960; "Kennedy and Labor," Cong. No 86- vol. XVI at 836 (1960) (Quarterly Almanac).
- 46 O'Donnell and Powers, "Johnny We Hardly Knew Ye," 183.
- 47 Herb Little, "Clarksburg Talk Slated by Johnson," *Charleston Gazette*, May 7, 1960; Wayne Phillips, "Johnson Arrives in West Virginia as Climax Nears," *New York Times*, May 8, 1960. Also see O'Donnell and Powers, "Johnny We Hardly Knew Ye," 182–183; Evans and Novak, Johnson: Exercise of Power, 259; Howard Norton, "Kennedy Starts Drive in West Virginia, Hits Anti-Catholic Bias," *Baltimore Sun*, April 19, 1960; "Tour of West Virginia Planned by Johnson," *Washington Post*, April 30, 1960.
- 48 W. H. Lawrence, "Stop Kennedy Drive Led by Byrd," *New York Times*, April 22, 1960. Also cited in O'Donnell and Powers, "Johnny We Hardly Knew Ye," 182 and Sorensen, Kennedy, 141.
- 49 Carroll Kilpartick, "Bitterness of West Virginia Battle Begins to Worry Democratic Chiefs," *Washington Post*, May 3, 1960; "It May Interest You," *Morgantown* (WV) *Dominion*, May 20, 1960.
- 50 Press release, April 30, 1960, West Virginia Primary, Pre-presidential Papers, JFKL.
- 51 Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 142; O'Donnell and Powers, "*Johnny We Hardly Knew Ye*," 186; White, *Making of the President*, 106. Goodwin points out that Kennedy did not discuss his Catholicism early in the campaign. In fact, he did not bring up the religious issue until April 19 in an address in Wheeling. Goodwin, *Remembering America*, 85–87.
- 52 Sorensen, Kennedy, 142.
- 53 O'Donnell and Powers, "Johnny We Hardly Knew Ye," 186.
- 54 Chett Pritchett, "Religion," *The West Virginia Encyclopedia*, ed. Ken Sullivan (Charleston, WV: West Virginia Humanities Council, 2006), 610; David A. Corbin, "We Shall Not Be Moved," chap. 5 in *Life, Work, and Rebellion in the Coal Fields: The Southern West Virginia Miners*,

- 1880–1922 (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1981); Benjamin Bradlee, "Now in West Virginia," *Newsweek*, April 18, 1960, 39; Associated Press, "Ike Chides Pollsters, Press for W. Virginia Assessments," *Washington Post*, May 12, 1960; Lou Harris and Associates, "A Survey of Voter Attitude in West Virginia on Presidential Preferences," January 1960, JFKL.
- 55 Doris Fleeson, "Who Raised the Religious Issue?—Kennedy Aides 1956 Memo Recalled, Citing Senator's Effect on Catholic Vote," Washington Star, April 25, 1960.
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- "Biography of John F. Kennedy," *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, 86th Congress, 2nd Session, 1960, vol. XVI, Washington, D.C, 834; "The Kennedy Brothers: Off to a Fast Start," *US News and World Report*, April 12, 1957, 77–78; Richard M. Nixon, *Six Crises* (New York: Double Day, 1962), 308. For the complete memo, see "The 'Catholic Vote,' A Kennedy Staff Analysis," *US News and World Report*, August 1, 1960, 68–72 and "Can 'Catholic Vote' Swing An Election?" *US News and World Report*, August 10, 1956, 41–46.
- 58 "Can 'Catholic Vote' Swing An Election?" *US News and World Report*, August 10, 1956, 41–46; Doris Fleeson, "Who Raised the Religious Issue?— Kennedy Aides 1956 Memo Recalled, Citing Senator's Effort on Catholic Vote," *Washington Star*, April 25, 1960; "Young Man Going Somewhere? Senator Kennedy," *Newsweek*, July 9, 1956, 28–29.
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- 60 W. H. Lawrence, "Kennedy Charges 'Gang-Up' by Foes," *New York Times*, April 19, 1960.
- 61 O'Donnell and Powers, "Johnny We Hardly Knew Ye," 187–188.
- 62 Wayne Phillips, "Kennedy Backed by Humphrey, Hits Issue of Religion," New York Times, April 22, 1960; "Biography of John F. Kennedy," Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1960, 832. For the full text of Kennedy's remarks to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, see "I Am Not the Catholic Candidate for President," US News and World Report, May 2, 1960, 90–92.
- 63 Wayne Phillips, "Kennedy Backed by Humphrey, Hits Issue of Religion," New York Times, April 22, 1960.
- 64 Russell Baker, *The Good Times* (New York: William Morrow, 1989), 320–321.
- 65 Carroll Kilpatrick, "Kennedy Cites Hoffa Vote Role," Washington Post, May

- 6, 1960; Philip Benjamin, "Kennedy Gloomy on West Virginia," *New York Times*, May 6, 1960; White, *Making of the President*, 110–111.
- 66 White, *Making of the President*, 110–111. Other Kennedy aides told similar versions of this story. See for example, Goodwin, *Remembering America*, 84 and O'Donnell and Powers, "Johnny We Hardly Knew Ye," 181–182.
- 67 Philip Benjamin, "Kennedy Gloomy on West Virginia," *New York Times*, May 6, 1960.
- 68 Philip Potter, "Kennedy Victory is Seen in W.VA." *Baltimore Sun*, May 8, 1960.
- 69 Don Marsh, "One-Sided Victory Looked Impossible," Charleston Gazette, May 12, 1960.
- 70 Fleming, Kennedy vs. Humphrey, 35–36.
- 71 W. H. Lawrence, "Stop Kennedy Drive Led by Byrd," *New York Times*, April 22, 1960; David Wise, "West Virginia's Byrd, Kennedy Foe, Once was Kleagle in Ku Klux Klan," *Washington Post*, April 21, 1960.
- 72 Cong. Rec. 8492 (April 21, 1960) (statement of Sen. Robert C. Byrd); Associated Press, "Byrd Says Kennedy Made Religion Issue," *New York Times*, April 22, 1960; Associated Press, "Kennedy Role of Underdog Hit by Byrd," *Baltimore Sun*, April 19, 1960.
- 73 L. T. Anderson, "Nation Misinformed About State," *Charleston Gazette*, May 12, 1960; Rowland Evans Jr., "Bogus K. of C. Oath Circulated in West Virginia," *Washington Post*, May 1, 1960.
- 74 UPI, "Europeans Display Victory by Kennedy," New York Times, May 12, 1960; Fleming, Kennedy vs. Humphrey, 45.
- 75 "In a New, Strange Atmosphere, Kennedy Will Renew Campaigning in State," *Charleston Gazette*, April 18, 1960; Associated Press, "Kennedy Side Accused of Viewing West Virginia Foes as Intolerant," *Washington Post*, April 7, 1960.
- 76 L. T. Anderson, "They're Trying to Shame Us into a Kennedy Vote," Charleston Gazette, April 17, 1960.
- 77 Cong. Rec. A3571 (April 27, 1960) (statement of Sen. Robert C. Byrd); Senator Robert C. Byrd, "The Democratic Primary in West Virginia," Cong. Rec. 8492 (April 21, 1960) (statement of Sen. Robert C. Byrd).
- 78 W. H. Lawrence, "Kennedy Hailed by Bobby Soxers," *New York Times*, April 21, 1960.
- 79 W. H. Lawrence, "Survey of West Virginia Shows Conflicting Trends," *New York Times*, May 9, 1960.
- 80 W. H. Lawrence, "West Virginia Ad Asks Who's the Bigot," *New York Times*, April 30, 1960.
- 81 W. H. Lawrence, "Candidates: Democratic Race Grows Bitter and Nixon Has Yet to Sew Up G.O.P. Nomination," *New York Times*, April 24, 1960.

- 82 W. H. Lawrence, "Survey of West Virginia Shows Conflicting Trends," *New York Times*, May 9, 1960.
- 83 W. H. Lawrence, "400,000 Expected to Ballot Today in West Virginia," *New York Times*, May 10, 1960.
- 84 Carroll Kilpatrick, "Humphrey Victory Forecast in W.Va.," Washington Post, May 4, 1960.
- 85 Benjamin Bradlee, "Now West Virginia," *Newsweek*, April 18, 1960, 34. On the night of the West Virginia primary, Kennedy flew back to Washington, and he and Jackie went to a movie together with Bradley and his wife while waiting for the election returns.
- 86 Joseph Alsop, "Matter of Fact: The Figures Speak," *Washington Post*, April 20, 1960; Joseph Alsop, "Matter of Fact: Poll of a Mining Town," *Washington Post*, April 15, 1960. Also see Joseph Alsop, "Matter of Fact: The People Speak," *Washington Post*, April 18, 1960. On the night of his inauguration, President Kennedy attended a party at Alsop's house.
- 87 Cong. Rec. 8491(April 21, 1960) (statement by Sen. Robert C. Byrd).
- 88 "The Religious Issue," US News and World Report, April 25, 1960, 56.
- 89 W. H. Lawrence, "West Virginia Ad Asks Who's the Bigot," *New York Times*, April 30, 1960.
- 90 L. T. Anderson, "Nation Misinformed About State," Charleston Gazette, May 12, 1960.
- 91 Rowland Evans Jr., "Bogus K. of C. Oath Circulated in West Virginia," Washington Post, May 1, 1960.
- 92 John Wicklein, "West Virginians Discuss Religion," *New York Times*, April 25, 1960.
- 93 Carroll Kilpatrick, "Humphrey Victory Forecast in W.Va.," *Washington Post*, May 4, 1960.
- 94 Richard J. H. Johnston, "Kennedy Hailed in Mining Region," *New York Times*, April 27, 1960.
- 95 W. H. Lawrence, "Kennedy Tackles Issue of Religion," New York Times, April 12, 1960.
- 96 W. H. Lawrence, "Kennedy Hailed by Bobby Soxers," *New York Times*, April 21, 1960.
- 97 Richard J. H. Johnston, "Kennedy Hailed in Mining Region," *New York Times*, April 27, 1960.
- 98 Newspaper clipping, "Kennedy Reception Attended by 2,300," *News-Register*, n.d., "West Virginia Organization and Trips" Folder, Box 969, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFK; John Wicklein, "West Virginians Discuss Religion," *New York Times*, April 25, 1960.
- 99 Cong. Rec. A4947 (June 1960) (statement by Sen. Robert C. Byrd); Cong. Rec. A3571 (April 27, 1960) (statement by Sen. Robert C. Byrd); W. H. Lawrence, "Kennedy Charges 'Gang-Up' by Foes," New York Times, April 19, 1960. For the Humphrey campaign's denunciation of the tactic, see

- Associated Press, "Kennedy Side Accused of Viewing West Virginia Foes as Intolerant," *Washington Post*, April 17, 1960, and John Weyland, "Kennedy Stir-Up Said Deliberate," *Charleston Gazette*, April 17, 1960.
- 100 "Challenge to Voters," *New York Times*, April 29, 1960; Associated Press, "Kennedy Role of Underdog Hit by Byrd," *Baltimore Sun*, April 19, 1960.
- 101 Chalmers Roberts, "Humphrey Hopes High in West Virginia Today," Washington Post, May 10, 1960; W. H. Lawrence, "Humphrey 'Broke,' Cuts his Staff 50%," New York Times, April 15, 1960; Associated Press, "Humphrey Insists that He's An Underdog," New York Times, April 27, 1960.
- 102 See Carroll Kilpartick, "Bitterness of West Virginia Battle Begins to Worry Democratic Chiefs," *Washington Post*, May 3, 1960; Joseph Loftus, "Kennedy is Firm on Oath of Office," *New York Times*, May 9, 1960.
- 103 Associated Press, "Humphrey, in Coal Field Tour, Feels Like Triumphant Caesar," *New York Times*, April 12, 1960.
- 104 Richard J. H. Johnston, "Invective Traded in West Virginia," *New York Times*, May 1, 1960.
- 105 Goodwin, *Remembering America*, 88; John A. Loftus, "Kennedy is Firm on Oath of Office," *New York Times*, May 9, 1960.
- 106 Washington Star, May 8, 1960; John A. Loftus, "Kennedy is Firm on Oath of Office," New York Times, May 9, 1960; Howard Norton, "West Virginians Still Uncertain," Baltimore Sun, April 26, 1960.
- 107 Associated Press, "Humphrey Insists That He's an Underdog," New York Times, April 27, 1960; Joseph Loftus, "Kennedy is Firm on Oath of Office," New York Times, May 9, 1960; Richard J. H. Johnston, "Humphrey Calls His Chances Good," New York Times, May 4, 1960; "Kennedy Wins in West Virginia," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, May 13, 1960, 839; Wayne Phillips, "Humphrey Hits 'Political Payola," New York Times, May 7, 1960.
- 108 "Kennedy Wins in West Virginia," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, May 13, 1960, 839; Carroll Kilpatrick, "2 Candidates Charge Smears," Washington Post, May 9, 1960.
- 109 Carroll Kilpatrick, "2 Candidates Charge Smears," Washington Post, May 9, 1960.
- 110 W. H. Lawrence, "Kennedy Backers in Debt, They Say," New York Times, May 4, 1960; Carroll Kilpatrick, "Pressured to Abandon Race, Humphrey Says," Washington Post, May 4, 1960; Goodwin, Remembering America, 88.
- 111 W. H. Lawrence, "Humphrey Cites Wealth of Foes," *New York Times*, April 26, 1960; Howard Norton, "Kennedy Gains West Virginia Victory," *Baltimore Sun*, May 11, 1960.
- 112 Associated Press, "Humphrey Insists that He's An Underdog," *New York Times*, April 27, 1960; "Charge Made by Humphrey," *Baltimore Sun*, April 27, 1960.
- 113 Goodwin, Remembering America, 88.

- 114 Press release, April 30, 1960, West Virginia Primary, Pre-presidential Papers, JFKL.
- "Kennedy Wins in West Virginia," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, May 13, 1960, 839; Press release, April 30, 1960, West Virginia Primary, Pre-presidential Papers, JFKL; Carroll Kilpatrick, "2 Candidates Charge Smears," Washington Post, May 9, 1960; W. H. Lawrence, "Kennedy Charges 'Gang-Up' by Foes," New York Times, April 19, 1960.
- 116 Goodwin, Remembering America, 88.
- 117 Carroll Kilpartick, "Bitterness of West Virginia Battle Begins to Worry Democratic Chiefs," *Washington Post*, May 3, 1960; W. H. Lawrence, "Candidates: Democratic Race Grows Bitter and Nixon Has Yet to Sew Up G.O.P. Nomination," *New York Times*, April 24, 1960.
- 118 W. H. Lawrence, "Kennedy Debates With Humphrey in West Virginia," *New York Times*, May 5, 1960.
- 119 Carroll Kilpatrick, "W.Va. Hill People Liked the Debate," *Washington Post*, May 6, 1960.
- 120 Chalmers Roberts, "W.Va. Vote Seen as Deciding Point in Kennedy's Political Ambition," *Washington Post*, May 6, 1960.
- 121 Carroll Kilpatrick, "W.Va. Hill People Liked the Debate," *Washington Post*, May 6, 1960.
- 122 "Many Observers Missed Significance of Debate," *Charleston Gazette*, May 11, 1960.
- 123 James Reston, "West Virginia Debate," New York Times, May 5, 1960.
- 124 The Kennedy campaign stressed this point in different ways on several occasions. Speaking for his brother at a dinner in Pineville, Robert Kennedy called the primary as important to the nation as well as to West Virginia: "The people of this state," he said, "may well decide who will be the next president"; the contest should be regarded as a "national election" not a state primary. Thomas Stafford, "Humphrey Says Jack Extravagant," *Charleston Gazette*, May 7, 1960.

This tactic also demonstrated the Kennedys' ability to elevate local issues into issues of national significance. Referring to the mechanization of the coal mines, John Kennedy declared: "[I]f this primary serves no other purpose, it has highlighted the national problem of men being made idle by machines that take away jobs." Don Marsh, "Vote Issues, Sen. Kennedy Pleads, Here," *Charleston Gazette*, May 7, 1960.

- 125 Ralph McGill, "Organization Won for Jack," *Charleston Gazette*, May 14, 1960. Likewise, see John E. Morgan, "Kennedy Organization Superior," *Charleston Gazette*, June 18, 1960.
- 126 See for example, W. H. Lawrence, "Kennedy Backers in Debt, They Say," New York Times, May 4, 1960.
- 127 "Digging for Dirt," New Republic, June 6, 1960, 6.
- 128 Merle Miller, *Plain Speaking: An Oral Biography of Harry S. Truman* (New York: Berkley Publishing, 1974), 187.

- 129 William M. Blair, "Nixon is Studying Kennedy Outlay," New York Times, May 27, 1960; Philip Potter, "Nixon, Aides Probe Spending in W.Va.," Baltimore Sun, May 27, 1960; "Bourbon for Votes," Newsweek, June 6, 1960, 42; "West Virginia: Payola by the Pint," Time, June 6, 1960, 20; Edward T. Folliard, "Reporters Fail to Find Kennedy Bought Victory," Washington Post, May 31, 1960; Cong. Rec. 11365 (May 27, 1960) (statement of Sen. Gene McCarthy); Jack Anderson, "Here's Top Banana in Tax Bonanza," Washington Post, August 7, 1960; "Digging for Dirt," New Republic, June 6, 1960, 6. For the FBI investigation, also see Memorandum, C. A. Evans to Rosen, July 5, 1960, FBI, record Number 124-10193-10230, Record Series, HQ, Agency File Number 94-37374-24, JFK Assassination System, Archives II.
- 130 Quoted in, "Bourbon for Votes, Newsweek, June 6, 1960, 42.
- 131 White, Making of the President, 114; Memorandum, C. A. Evans to Rosen, July 5, 1960, FBI, Record Number 124-10193-10230, Record Series, HQ, Agency File Number 94-37374-24, JFK Assassination System, Archives II; Tom Wicker, "U.S. Sees No Fraud in West Virginia," New York Times, July 13, 1960; Edward T. Folliard, "Reporters Fail to Find Kennedy Bought Victory," Washington Post, May 31, 1960; "Bourbon for Votes?" Newsweek, June 6, 1960, 42.
- 132 Jack Anderson, "The Washington Merry-Go-Round: Here's Top Banana in Tax Bonanza," *Washington Post*, August 9, 1960.
- 133 Edward T. Folliad, "Reporters Fail to Find Kennedy Bought Victory," Washington Post, May 31, 1960. This was the sixth and final article Morgan and Marsh wrote on their six county investigation. John G. Morgan, "Kennedy Didn't Buy Win, He Sold Himself to Voters," Charleston Gazette, June 18, 1960.
- 134 "Digging for Dirt," New Republic, June 6, 1960, 6.
- 135 Edward T. Folliard, "Reporters Fail to Find Kennedy Bought Victory," Washington Post, May 31, 1960.
- 136 Edward T. Folliard, "Reporters Fail to Find Kennedy Bought Victory," Washington Post, May 30, 1960; Associated Press, "Morse Urges Senate Probe into Primary Spending by Kennedy," Baltimore Sun, May 29, 1960; "Bourbon for Votes," Newsweek, June 6, 1960, 42.
- 137 For a more extensive account of these allegations and the investigations, see Fleming, "Fraud Investigations: Everyone Gets into the Act," chap. 8 in *Kennedy vs. Humphrey*. "All of these efforts failed to unearth any real evidence against the Kennedy's campaign tactics," Fleming writes (107).
- 138 In his memoirs, Humphrey claimed it was the Catholic Church that financed Kennedy's victory in West Virginia. Hubert H. Humphrey, *Education of a Public Man: My Life and Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 157–159.
- 139 For allegations that mob money financed the Kennedy victory in West Virginia, see Reeves, *A Question of Character*, 165–166; Davis, *The Kennedys*, 236; Kitty Kelley, "The Dark Side of Camelot," *People*, February 29, 1988, 109–111; Hersh, *The Dark Side of Camelot*.

140 Tom Searls, "'The Dark Side of Camelot' Casts West Virginia in Bad Light," Charleston Gazette, November 12, 1997.

Some mobsters may have contributed to the Kennedy campaign expecting something in return, but that never happened. Attorney General Robert Kennedy vigorously prosecuted mobsters, including those who allegedly contributed to the Kennedy campaign. Kennedy operative Paul Corbin (no relation to author) told Fleming that there was no way Robert Kennedy, as John F. Kennedy's campaign manager, would have allowed any type of relationship between the campaign and mobsters: "The last thing Bob Kennedy would ever do would be to allow Mafia money in the campaign," Corbin said. Quoted in Fleming, *Kennedy vs. Humphrey*, 71–72. In chapter 5, "The North: From Racketeers to Apple Farmers," Fleming has an excellent discussion of the allegations of a Mafia connection, which he also rules out.

- 141 Edward T. Folliard, "Reporters Fail to Find Kennedy Bought Victory," Washington Post, May 30, 1960. As president, Kennedy followed up on his promises to assist the people of West Virginia, and he did so by working closely with Senator Byrd, who had opposed him in the primary. See David A. Corbin, "The Kennedy Administration; Ask What You Can Do for West Virginia," chap. 4 in The Last Great Senator: Robert C. Byrd's Encounters with Eleven U.S. Presidents (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2012).
- 142 John G. Morgan, "Kennedy Didn't Buy Win, He Sold Himself to Voters," *Charleston Gazette*, June 18, 1960.
- 143 Humphrey, Education of a Public Man, 159-160.
- 144 Goodwin, Remembering America, 86.
- 145 W. H. Lawrence, "Kennedy Hailed by Bobby Soxers," *New York Times*, April 21, 1960. Likewise, see Don Marsh, "Profile of a Presidential Candidate: Kennedy is Storybook Candidate," *Charleston Gazette*, May 7, 1960, who wrote of watching "a mob of adolescent girls fighting for his autograph."
- 146 Phillip Benjamin, "Kennedy Terms Primary Crucial," New York Times, May 5, 1960. For another article that pointed to Kennedy's "personal attractiveness—especially to women" as a factor in his West Virginia victory, see Howard Norton, "West Virginia County Machines Helped Swell Vote for Kennedy in Primary," Baltimore Sun, May 13, 1960.
- 147 Paul Duke, "Kennedy's Win: It is a Great Personal Victory, Based in Image of Likeability He Can Project," *Wall Street Journal*, May 12, 1960.
- 148 W. H. Lawrence, "Survey of West Virginia Shows Conflicting Trends," *New York Times*, May 9, 1960.
- 149 Carroll Kilpatrick, "Religion is Seen Buried as Issue," Washington Post, May 12, 1960.
- 150 See, for example, Carroll Kilpatrick, "Religion is Seen Buried as Issue," *Washington Post*, May 12, 1960; John Wicklein, "West Virginians Discuss Religion," *New York Times*, April 25, 1960.

Thirty years after the West Virginia primary, Kennedy's state organizers and media personalities who covered the campaign met for a reunion and to discuss the primary. Nearly every one of them agreed that religion was not an issue among the voters. The real issues were jobs and poverty. It was

- Kennedy who wanted his religion to be made into a campaign issue. Richard Grimes, "Kennedy Campaign Recalled," *Charleston Daily Mail*, May 16, 1990.
- 151 Carroll Kilpatrick, "Religion is Seen Buried as Issue," Washington Post, May 12, 1960.
- 152 Quoted in Fleming, Kennedy vs. Humphrey, 67.
- 153 W. E. Chilton III, Oral History Interview, JFK Library, July 14, 1964, 5. The *Charleston Gazette*, which had delighted in attacking the national media for falsely prophesying the outcome of the primary, made its own false prophecy—that the primary that meant the ascendancy of John Kennedy meant the downfall of Senator Robert C. Byrd. An editorial in the paper read:
- Some weeks before the Tuesday vote, Sen. Byrd freely gave counsel to the voters, again in Senator Johnson's behalf. In this connection, we believe Senator Byrd was repudiated for the first time. . . . A conclusion that may fairly be drawn from Tuesday voting is that the curious political power of Senator Robert C. Byrd may be on the wane. "Repudiation of Sen. Byrd by Voters Indicates His Power is on the Wane," *Charleston Gazette*, May 13, 1960. Byrd would go on to become the longest serving US senator in history.
- 154 Quoted in Fleming, Kennedy vs. Humphrey, 66.
- 155 L. T. Anderson, "Nation Misinformed About State," *Charleston Gazette*, May 12, 1960.
- 156 Carroll Kilpatrick, "Religion is Seen Buried as Issue," Washington Post, May 12, 1960.
- 157 Chalmers M. Roberts, "First Rough Draft": A Journalist's Journal of Our Times (New York: Praeger Publishers,1973) 175–176, 179.
- 158 Editorial, "The Cleared Air," Wall Street Journal, May 12, 1960.
- 159 Editorial, "Mr. Kennedy's Victory," New York Times, May 12, 1960.
- 160 Carroll Kilpatrick, "Pressured to Abandon Race, Humphrey Says," Washington Post, May 4, 1960.
- 161 Carroll Kilpatrick, "Religion is Seen Buried as Issue," Washington Post, May 12, 1960.
- 162 Roberts, "First Rough Draft," 175-76, 179.
- 163 "'Un-American' Slab Fork Floods Jack," *Charleston Gazette*, May 12, 1960; Joseph Alsop, "Matter of Fact: Poll in a Mining Town," *Washington Post*, April 15, 1960; Associated Press, "Ike Chides Pollsters, Press for W. Virginia Assessments," *Washington Post*, May 13, 1960.
- 164 Baker, The Good Times, 320-321.
- 165 Arthur Krock, "In the Nation," New York Times, May 12, 1960.
- 166 "Kennedy Wins in West Virginia," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, May 13, 1960, 839.
- 167 Harry Hoffman, "It Was a Big Day for Kennedy, State," *Charleston Gazette*, June 22, 1963.