

An Oral History Interview

with

CLIFF ROBERTSON (part 1)

conducted by
Julie Ferdon

Tucson, Arizona
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Cliff Robertson

Cliff Robertson grew up in La Jolla, California. After attending Antioch College, he worked briefly as a journalist before beginning what would become a life-long career in acting, directing, and screenwriting.

In 1963 Robertson became the first actor to portray a living American president after being personally selected to play John F. Kennedy in "PT 109." In 1968 he won the Academy Award for his starring role in the movie "Charly." His career took a turn for the worse, however, after he blew the whistle on became known as Hollywoodgate, an embezzlement scandal involving Columbia Pictures executive David Begelman.

Robertson became friends with Congressman Morris Udall during Udall's campaign for the 1976 democratic presidential nomination.

JF: This is Tape number 30 of the Morris K. Udall Oral History Project. Good afternoon, it's Sunday, January 17, 1999, and we're at the Windmill Inn at Campbell Avenue and River Road in Tucson, Arizona. My name is Julie Ferdon, and I would like to welcome Cliff Robertson to another in a series of interviews that form the Morris K. Udall Oral History Project.

Mr. Robertson, thank you for participating.

CR: Cliff.

JF: Thank you.

CR: It's a joy to be here, a rather sad situation with Mo passing away, but I think the 1,500 people in that Centennial Hall was visible evidence of how much he was loved and respected--not only on his own home grounds here in Arizona, but all over the world. I live about 2,000 miles east of here, out in the boonies of Long Island, and of course I flew down for this, because Mo and I go back some twenty-five years, I guess. And I loved and respected the man, and was happy to come here and join other people who felt the same way.

JF: I should, for the record, note that yesterday, January 16, was the memorial service for Mo in Centennial Hall. He died on December 12, in Washington, and the service was here in Tucson, Arizona.

CR: Yesterday I was allowed to read a poem that I had written about Mo, which was subsequently put on the wall there on his hospital bed for the seven, eight years he was (JF: I remember seeing it there.) bedridden with Parkinson's. So I read that yesterday. But I had written another one on the way down here, after he passed away, and when I was flying down here the night before last. So if I can read my rather scratchy writing that was accented with a few bumps from the airliner, I'll do my best here. I call this "You Left Us, Mo."

"You left us, Mo; you left us. You left a hole in our hearts, a question on our lips, 'What now?' Where do we look, where do we find another Mo? Another man to stand so tall, for all--the weak, the small. Where do we find another friend of the mountains, of the plains, the water, the great sky blue of the dessert, too? Where do we look, where do we find that kind of man? You left us, Mo; you left us. With memories warm, forlorn without the laugh, the laugh that gave us pause to look inside our foolish pride and guide our eyes that we not hide the truth--the truth, to look for love, above all else, in every man. Throughout this land, throughout our lives, that we might follow the path he made. The path of Mo, that must not fade. You left us, Mo; you left your past so straight, so fine, that we might find a better way to live and look for love above all else. You left us, Mo, dear Mo. You left us so much--so very, very much."

JF: Thank you, that's wonderful. Really wonderful. I want to learn a lot about your relationship with Mo, but let's start with a little information about you, like where and when were you born?

CR: Oh, dear! (laughter) I was born a little after Mo, not much, out in California. My home town is La Jolla, but I left that environ--well, I kept a house there, which I still have, but it's too big for me and my cat, and my two daughters are now grown on the East Coast, and the cat has at last left this mortal coil, just about the time Mo did. So I live way out in the boonies on Long Island--Water Mill, Long Island--which has been mainly a farming area for potatoes. But alas, the "Manhattan marauders" are descending upon us. In the summer it's not quite the bucolic scene that so many of us have enjoyed. People used to ask me my favorite time of the year in Water Mill, I'd say, "The day after Labor Day." (both chuckle) Everybody goes back to their concrete Manhattan caverns. But now, they come out in their big fancy cars every weekend, so now my favorite time of the year in Water Mill is January and February--it's just too bloody cold. So those of us who live out there year round, feel a communal spirit on those cold days.

JF: I understand. Did you go to school and do your schooling through La Jolla in California?

CR: Well, yes. Oh, yes, I went to kindergarten.... I did go away to prep school for a couple of years, but basically I was in La Jolla.

JF: Where was that?

CR: I went to a military academy, Brown Military Academy, nearby, but I was a boarder.

JF: And I understand you were a reporter for a while?

CR: Yes, I never intended to be an actor. I always seemed to like to write--or at least it seemed to come easy. Maybe that's why I liked it! So I never thought I'd be an actor, although I did--I would volunteer occasionally for the class play, only because it was an evasion. I learned when I was in Miss Redford's second grade in La Jolla Grammar School, that if you volunteered for the class play, you wouldn't have to stay after school for being naughty. You wouldn't have to stay after school and clean the erasers.

JF: That's a very important lesson to learn!

CR: It was a dodge. And I've always thought it was a dodge, and I'm not sure, I think it still is a dodge! It was an evasion, an avoidance. I'm always kind of tickled when I hear some actor being interviewed, and they're asked why and when did they want to become an actor, and there's a dramatic silence, and then you hear something to the effect that they wanted to, they had this emotional bubble in their breast that they had to burst and share with the world. (chuckles) And the truth of it, many times, they were parking cars

about twenty minutes before, and happened to get lucky and get a job. I'm not putting down my fellow actors, but I think a lot of us take ourselves a bit too seriously. Anyway, I learned that if you volunteered for the class play, you wouldn't have to stay after school and clean the erasers. It was nothing more than a dodge.

And then I went away, thinking I was going to be probably a journalist. I did indeed, for about twenty minutes, write for the Springfield Daily News.

JF: Now, was that after prep school?

CR: No, this was in college.

JF: And where did you go to college?

CR: Antioch. And I wrote for the old Springfield Daily News, general assignment. And then they said--some people felt that maybe I should, instead of trying to write for a deadline, maybe write for the theater. I thought, "Well, that's an interesting, exotic ... dodge." So I went to New York, not knowing anything about the theater, and everybody said, "Well, you've got to learn if you're going to write for the theater." I said, "Well, what do you suggest?" I didn't know a damned thing about theater. They said, "Well, you should probably go out into the hustings, summer stock, and then winter repertory. Go out and learn!" So I went out and learned to drive a truck and learned to build flats, and in those modest little companies everybody had to double in brass. You had to not just drive, hammer a nail, but you also had to play a part. They were very small, meager companies. So I would do it, I would act whatever part. [Unclear], a sort of facile kind of.... I took it very casually--far too casually. Here I am, this raffish kid from La Jolla, California, with no real life experience, but I thought.... I looked at these actors who took themselves so darned seriously and [unclear], and beat their breasts and declaim all their angst. I guess the generalist in me was still kind of looking at this scene as being amusing. But as cavalier as I was, I seemed to do pretty well. I don't think it pleased some of these actors that I would get pretty good reviews. Maybe it was because I didn't take it too seriously, or maybe just lucky, I don't know. Again, it came easily.

So then I went back to New York and I thought, "Well, I'll give it a shot." So I had all the usual jobs one has when they're struggling in the City. I was a busboy and I was a waiter. I worked on the docks, and (chuckles) one time for about eight minutes, a private detective, which was a joke. It just meant you had to follow somebody around (chuckles) and write down on a piece of paper what time they went into a building or something. I was simply trying to stay alive, because I made up my mind I would never write home for money. I said, "Whatever happens, I'm going to do it on my own."

JF: What did your father do?

CR: Nothing. He was a man that never worked a day in his life. He and my mother were divorced when I was about two. He almost immediately married another lady. Subsequently had about four wives--all legal. And he just sort of lived off of money that

he had inherited. He would come to visit.... Oh, well, then my mother, of course, after they split up, she went to live with her mother, my grandmother.

JF: And did you stay with your mother?

CR: Yes, sure. And then she died shortly after, when I was about two-and-a-half.

JF: Oh, wow.

CR: So I don't remember her. Oh, I remember little images that my grandmother would tell me were obviously images of her, but I can't recall.

JF: So you were effectively raised by your grandmother?

CR: Well, my grandmother (chuckles) had been divorced--of course, living in La Jolla--so when my mother died, my father had remarried already, and so my grandmother immediately, in her Calvinist way thought, "Well, I'm not going to let this boy be under sort of questionable influences of...." I mean, you couldn't help but like my father. He was a charming guy, very, very handsome. He was about six-three and well-educated and bright, but it was just sort of a wasted life in many ways, because he never worked, because he didn't have to. He just spent money that somebody else had earned--his grandfather, one of those things. So that, plus kind of my strict religious upbringing with the Calvinist work ethic, is one of the reasons I decided I would never write home for money--not that there wasn't a lot of money to write home for. But I just was that independent, I just believed in the work ethic, and do to this day.

So at any rate, when I got back to New York from these various summer theaters up in New England, and winter rep, I came back to New York and nothing unusual--typical starving actor/artist's life. Lived down on the Lower West Side, seven dollars a week for a room. It was all rather romantic in those days. When you're young, you know, you feel like, "Oh, this is kind of exciting!" because mainly, you're on your own, and you're your own boss, and you can make your own mistakes.

So at any rate, I used to pooh-pooh what was then known as The Actors' Studio, which was a very serious group of actors that had been started by Elia Kazan and Lee Strausberg, Cheryl Crawford, Harold Clurman--very serious students, directors, writers for the theater. They then in turn had been members of the old Group Theater, which had been started in 1929. Group Theater was a group of very serious young writer-director-actors, and they begat people like Clifford Odets, the famous writer; and of course the people I just mentioned before, Franchot Tone and Lee Cobb. And those actors took the craft very seriously for several reasons. One, economic times in the thirties were rather desperate--you know, the Depression. So there were a lot of very, very politically active people, a lot of very left-wing people--and indeed, Communists. The Communists were very active in those days. All I know about this is from what I've read and what I've heard, but I've heard it from the horse's mouth. I used to pooh-pooh the Actors' Studio because I thought they took themselves a little bit too seriously, and I thought they were

kind of funny. Again, I was in my kind of, heck, McArthur journalistic mode. I was looking as a journalist. And then a friend of mine said, "Well, you're knockin' it because you're just afraid to try." And I said, "Why am I afraid to try?" And he said, "Because it's very difficult to get in." They would audition about 3,000 people a year, and they'd maybe accept three, for various reasons--one, they had a space limitation. It was held in an old abandoned church over in the west forties--still is. So I just said, "Put your money where your mouth is." This fellow bet me, and I took the bet. I auditioned, and of course they have you come back a second time, if you pass the first; and then a third time if you pass the second. The end of the year, I was accepted. So then I started going to class, and I began to learn how little I really knew. I came off my high horse a little bit, began to recognize that there was a lot there that I could learn from. I still felt that an awful lot of them were just a little bit too pompous.

Now, the Actors' Studio in those days . . . you didn't pay any money. Now, they subsequently have Actors' Studio West, and things like that. They're kind of connected, but you pay money, so it's not as difficult to get in. That's not to put them down, but it was then considered quite a plum to be able to be accepted in the Studio. And of course we had a lot of actors who eventually became famous: Jimmy Dean, who I knew; and Paul Newman. Marlon had never gone to the Studio, he only had a few lessons from Stella Adler, who was a teacher as well as an actress. Remember the old Adler name? A Jewish theater family in New York.

JF: So the Studio was primarily a teaching instrument?

CR: Yes. We would give shows and presentations and things like that. We also had a thing for writers to come: Tennessee Williams and William Inge--people like that would come. They were observers. They would be allowed to observe, and many times they would write. If they were in the process of writing, they would give scenes to some of the actors. They could sort of "test fly" them, if you will. I speak as a pilot now. In my conversation, if I [use] aviation terms, you have to understand that I've been flying airplanes for a long time, and my heart is in that firmament, if you will. I love to fly, and I love people. Of course Mo used to fly, and we would talk about aviation.

JF: You were flying at the time you met Mo?

CR: Oh, sure! Yes, I've been flying for thirty years. But anyway.... So eventually, in New York, with all these jobs, you struggle along, and finally [what] they called "the golden days of television"--which were exciting days, because it was all live, you know. They didn't have much tape--they had some--so when you'd do one of these dramatic shows, it was like doing live theater. And of course you're meanwhile doing off-off-Broadway and off-Broadway and Broadway. And so I did those things, and then finally I did my first movie, and then immediately raced home--to New York, that is--went out, said the words, and raced home. I had to protect my Actors' Studio integrity, you see. A lot of us felt in those days that--well, with good reason!--that Hollywood was Sodom and Gomorrah. A lot of fine artists, but.... And therefore, we were kind of prejudiced against Hollywood, because of some of its antics. And indeed, I've never really lived out there,

although I still have the house in La Jolla, but it's too big for me and the cat, so I rent it to some people, and it helps justify its existence. But the main reason I keep it--aside from the fact it's got a tiny little gate house in the back, so when I'm out there filming I can go in on weekends and kind of restore the old hometown roots, you know. I'm just not about to sell it to some of these developers that are always hounding at the door. And I'm just trying to hold onto those hometown roots some way.

JF: Yes, I understand.

CR: Anyway....

JF: So your beginnings were strictly in theater?

CR: Yes.

JF: And then at some point, obviously, you moved over more to movies.

CR: Well, once you started doing television, that was a form of movies, it was film. And whether it was in New York or whether it was in Hollywood, it was in front of a camera. And there are just not that many plays, you know. So that's the reality all actors have to face.

JF: At some point, you also got involved in writing and directing.

CR: Oh, yes.

JF: Where was that in your career?

CR: Well, I was sub rosa doing some writing, without acknowledging it, and I'd deny it hotly today if anybody put me on a stand! (chuckles) But in the early days--well, not so early--some of these producers or directors knew that I was a writer, so they were always coming up to me and saying, "Cliff, can you fix this scene up that you're in? It's a little hollow here." So for my own self-aggrandizement, I would do a little rewriting. So I did a lot of that.

JF: Of parts you were playing?

CR: Yes, parts I was playing. Well, sometimes I'd even cross that line. Then later on, I became a member of the Writers' Guild--I was even on their board. So I mean, I'm a union man, and I'm also a member of the Directors' Guild, having directed film as well. We frown on that sort of thing, officially.

JF: Have you gotten back into plays at all?

CR: I did a thing a couple of years ago on Broadway, just for a limited run, with Elaine Stritch. It was "Love Letters," which has enjoyed a lot of success around the country.

Two people's lives, from the time they were eight until they're much older. I enjoyed that. She's an absolutely wonderful, delightful talent. We did that on Broadway, but I haven't done anything since, on Broadway. I've done that same play in Colorado and also down near San Diego, and also in San Francisco.

JF: What do you consider your best works?

CR: Oh.... You know, I have to tell you this: I have never been satisfied with anything I've ever done. It's simply a degree of dissatisfaction. And that's not being modest, either--it's strictly sheer unbridled ego. And it's because I guess I think I'm better than I really am, so when I see what it is, I think, "Gosh, I can do better than that."

JF: Well, maybe the question I should ask then is, which works are you least dissatisfied with? (laughter)

CR: Yes, that's a good way to look at it! Well, I'm not least, but I'm less dissatisfied maybe with a picture I wrote, directed, and starred in called "JW Coop." Well, of course, that was because I had more creative control. I was a writer and I was a director and I was an actor who was the star, and even a producer--so I was less dissatisfied with "JW Coop," and I was less dissatisfied with, of course, "Charly"--not simply because of the Academy Award, but just because I had a lot to do with it. I wrote a lot of the second act. And indeed, I've written a sequel to "Charly," which I am finished with and I would like to get produced now, if I find those people with the deep pockets. But it will be a modest picture. I'm a very frugal director, I don't waste other people's money cavalierly.

JF: I wish you success in that. I would love to see a sequel.

CR: Thank you. Well, I think it would be good, and everybody who's read the script seems to think so. It's just a matter of. . . . Because I don't live out in Hollywood, I don't operate in that network, so I don't know a lot of the sources, and I'm rather poor at going out and trying to sell.

JF: Beating the bushes, huh?

CR: Yes. I mean, I could probably represent you, or somebody else. Again, it's not modesty, I think it's something to do with my Calvinism. I have trouble kind of bragging about.... See, I could relate to Mo a lot that way. I think he had.... I mean, he was on stage for a good reason, and he enjoyed it, but he wasn't a person that was wanting to kind of grab the microphone and take over. He learned you had to sometimes. But I don't think people who have that kind of aggression appeal to me, although I recognize it's very necessary in some cases.

JF: Yes, I've noticed, just in talking to you yesterday and today, a number of similarities between you and Mo. The work ethic: certainly his work ethic has come up a great deal in the oral histories. You're both very sort of unassuming, thoughtful people, real people, easy to approach. Also the basis.... Integrity. And now I learn you were both pilots.

Is it correct that President Kennedy hand-picked you, hand-selected you to play him on "PT-109?"

CR: (self-conscious chuckle) Hand picked? Well, we weren't all standing up against the wall and he walked up and down like a general and said, "I'll take you." It wasn't one of those things. When they heard they were going to make a movie based on his World War II exploits as a PT boat skipper in the South Pacific, and the subsequent sinking of the PT boat and his heroism involved, he had three requests: one, it be historically accurate. He didn't want it to be another Hollywood exaggeration. Hollywood has a tendency to exaggerate history and everything else. And that's hardly a product of profound deliberation. Anybody looking into Hollywood, these Hollywood shows and interviews and stuff--it's kind of funny.

Anyway, one of the requests was that it not be an exaggeration, that it be historically accurate. Two, that any monies that might come from the making a movie of it, kind of based on his story, would be given to the survivors of his PT boat; or for those who were no longer alive, their families. And three, that he be allowed to chose the actor to play it. So they tested a lot of people. I remember, I was out in Hollywood at the time, working on another picture. And I remember.... I mean, Warren Beatty was mentioned, and Peter Fonda was mentioned. You'd hear about this person or that person, and you'd think, "Yeah, I think that fellow would be pretty good." But you never think of yourself--certainly for a role like that. I was doing a movie at Paramount, and they came over and they said, "They want you to test for this movie." I said, "No, I'm in the middle of his movie at Paramount. I'm afraid I can't do that." They said, "Oh, yes you can." I said, "What do you mean?" They said, "Here's some sides"--taped scenes--"you're to report tomorrow at Warner Brothers, and do this test. It'll take all day." I said, "Yeah, but I have to go to work at Paramount." They said, "It's been arranged." I figured then, somebody, somewhere up there, had some influence, so I went and did it and promptly forgot about it. About four days later, a friend of mine called from New York--this girl I knew--and she said, "What's going on? Your picture's on the front of the paper with President Kennedy. Looks like you're going to play his part in the movie 'PT-109.'" That's the first I'd ever heard of it. So I went and told my former agent. That's how it happened.

JF: Wow. Now, didn't you play politicians in other movies?

CR: Oh, yes.

JF: You played Kennedy again, even, didn't you?

CR: Well, you know, they try to disguise some of these characters. Sometimes there'll be a blend of some living characters. I was in a very good, beautifully-written screenplay--and I say that because it had won a Pulitzer Prize as a stage play, "The Best Man," written by Gore Vidal, of course, who was one of our best writers, and politically very astute. And I asked him, and happily he wrote the screenplay, and I was cast. And

Henry Fonda was to play the one presidential candidate, and I was to play the other. My character was more conservative, Henry was more liberal, and there were always conjectures about who my character was. So I asked Gore one day, I said, "Who is he?" I mean, "Who is this guy? Is it Nixon? Who is it?" He said, "It's a combination of Bobby Kennedy and Goldwater." (laughter)

JF: In one character?!

CR: Yes. Well, people who were very aware of those people, it might seem a little strange mixture, but from Gore's point of view--I didn't go into detail, I let it lay--but I think from his point of view, he found . . . I don't think he was a best friend of Bobby Kennedy, in any case. In his works, his books, he's indicated that. He found that there was a dynamic there, a rather aggressive dynamic--positive, but.... And then he also saw, obviously, a conservative side of Goldwater. So the character was called Joe Cantwell, and that's the character I played.

JF: I'm going to have to go back and look at that.

CR: Yes, "The Best Man." You can get the tape.

JF: Yes, definitely.

CR: It's not a bad film. It's in black-and-white.

JF: In playing some of these roles, did they engender in you an interest in politics or government?

CR: Any more?

JF: Any more than you already had, or....

CR: Maybe a little. I think that if you're going to play a character, you do research, you do your homework. If you're going to write a book about somebody, you're going to do research. So if you're going to do a character in a movie or a play, it behooves the serious actor to do as much research as he can. So I did as much research as I could, in most cases. I mean, I've played a lot of characters. I played the [second] man on the moon in the movie, "Return to Earth," which was about Buzz Aldren. I mean, Armstrong was first, and Buzz Aldren was two steps behind. And there was a story written about his problems after that. It was called "Return to Earth," so I played the astronaut, Buzz Aldren. And I'm a good friend of Buzz's to this day, so I guess he was reasonably satisfied. So I did my research on that.

I played Henry Ford in the movie "The Man and the Machine." So I did my research on ol' Henry Ford, and played him from the time he was a younger man, 'til he finally died. And then I did.... Gosh, there's been quite a few. I even did Bob Fosse's "Star 80" character of Hugh Hefner. Bob said he me, "Cliff, now, you've played former

presidents, and you've played astronauts and famous men. I'll bet you never thought of playing Hugh Hefner." I said, "No, I never thought of that." He said, "What do you think?" I said, "Well, working with you, I'll play your Aunt Tillie if the words are there. I don't care, I'm an actor." He said, "Well, I have to tell you that we're not going to do any puff piece on Hefner," although I don't think Hugh was aware of that. I'm not saying he expected a puff piece, but Fosse was a man of very high artistic integrity, and he wanted this guy warts and all. He said, "You're going to play him....you know, he's walking around in his pajamas with all these beautiful young women. It might not be some people's most attractive character. There's some good side and there's some bad side. And we're going to show him as honestly as we can." I said, "Okay." I never talked to Hefner after that. I didn't really know him. Although I will say this, he couldn't have been more hospitable. Before we did the picture, he invited me to come over to what they call The Mansion in Beverly Hills. But I went over there two separate times as sort of a "fly on the wall." I went back to my reporter kind of hat, looked at it from that point of view.

So yes, the answer to your question: Yes, I would take an interest in these characters in doing my research.

JF: Your reporter background probably served you very well (CR: Yes.) in doing that, too.

CR: I think so.

JF: Now, somewhere along the line, you came to know Morris King Udall. How did that come about?

CR: Well, I'll tell you, at one point there were about ten Democratic men who were going to be in the primaries. There were about ten of them. And I looked over this list, I watched them on television, and I read what I could about them. And there was one that stood head and shoulders--not only physically, but I felt in every other way. And it was Mo Udall--everything he said, and the way he said it, everything he wrote and the way he wrote it. So I went to him. I called him, he was in New York, and I was living in New York. I went over and I said, "I'd like to meet the congressman." So his staff said, "Fine." Or they went to him, and he said fine.

JF: Was this during the New York Primary, by chance?

CR: Yes, it was. And then we went on to Wisconsin and places like that. So I went over and he said, "Well, great, hop aboard!" and we became friends. And then of course I shared some of his.... when Ella died. I'd go down to see him, anyway, after. I mean, he was back in Washington, and I would visit him regularly out at McLean. And then when Ella died, and later on, I guess I was about the first person he ever told that he was thinking of getting married again. He said, "I may be nuts, but I'm thinking of getting married again." I said, "Well that's fine, that's good." He told me about Norma, he said, "I want you to meet her." I said, "Fine." I invited them, I said, "When you guys get

married, why don't you spend your honeymoon up at my house on Long Island?" So they did, they spent a week up there. And then I continued seeing him after he went in the hospital. After a while, he couldn't talk, but he would try. He didn't have to try, and that was what that poem was about that I read yesterday, "I Seem to Understand." I'd go down and I'd talk about those days, and I'd talk about things that were happening. We watched television, watched a basketball game. I'd hold his hand.

JF: What was it about Mo that attracted you?

CR: Everything. He was the most Lincolnesque figure that I'd ever met. Consistent. Because some of these politicians are like actors--they're one thing on stage and another thing off stage. He just.... I don't think there was a mean bone in Mo's body, but at the same time, he had a sharp eye, and he could spot deceit in a minute, shoot it down, but he'd soften its fall with a little humor.

JF: What did you do during the presidential campaign for him?

CR: Talked. Sometimes on the streets, as I mentioned the other day.

JF: With him? Traveling with him, or separately?

CR: Sometimes. Well, I was with the party, but we'd come into a town and as I said yesterday, sometimes he'd say, "Well, we're going to be walking along the street. I'm going to go four blocks up here. I'll meet you at the MacDonald's," maybe four blocks around the other way. "Here's a map," and he'd give me a map. I'd go out, tell people--they'd recognize me--usually. And if they didn't, it didn't make any difference. And then we'd meet and have a hamburger. Then we'd go [talk to the] television [reporters]. I even went back to where I wrote for the paper, the Springfield Daily News, in Springfield, Ohio, thought I'd get a plug in there. I went back there and talked. Talked on television, newspaper. And I was there when we thought we'd won in Wisconsin. I was up there reading the vote. And I got on the plane the next morning, I had to go back to New York, and John Chancellor was there. As I walked on the plane, he said, "Cliff, I called it, and I thought he'd won it." I said, "Yeah, that last passel of votes up north of Eau Claire, that little block vote, came in and just toppled him." If he'd won one primary.... Well, obviously, if he'd been lucky enough, if the magazines had been smart enough to give him a cover on one magazine, if he got that window of visibility.... But he showed his class when he lost. Not many of them can do that.

JF: That's very true. So you campaigned in Wisconsin (CR: And New York.) and Ohio. (CR: Yes.) Anyplace else that you recall?

CR: Well, I went out with him to Seattle for the Aviation Machinists' Union. We flew out there together. There was a big conference there. The head of the Aviation Machinists' Union--they called him "Wimpy" Winpisinger--he supplied the jet for Mo and I and some other people. But I accompanied out there, and I spoke there at the conference, as a union man. I mean, sure, as some kind of a high-profile person in the

movies, but I was speaking in that case, as a man who was a member of three or four unions. So I was able to kind of juggle my hats a little bit. You know, I'd go to the newspaper, talk as a guy who used to work for the newspaper. When I'd go on the television, I'd go as Cliff Robertson, movie actor, or director, or writer, or whatever.

JF: Did you fly in the campaign plane ever?

CR: No. I flew commercial.

JF: Did you ever fly with Mo when he was flying?

CR: No, he had kind of given it up. I mean, he was so darned busy. We would talk aviation.

JF: He took over the controls of the campaign plane once, scared everybody to death.

CR: Did he?

JF: He did that, I understand, in Alaska, too, when he was doing the Alaska Lands Bill.

CR: Well, you know, old pilots, you can't put them up in the front there without them wanting to put their hands on the controls. But we talked a lot about it, and I kept saying, "You know, Mo, I got my Baron, I still have it there." "Yeah," he said, "that'd be kinda fun. It'd be nice to get back." I said, "Great!" But we never did.

JF: You know, I'm going to take this opportunity to turn the tape over.

CR: Sure.