David and Goliath
How the McClellan Committee Inspired Robert F. Kennedy’s Fight to Bring Down Labor Giant James R. Hoffa

By Emily Leah Bierman

Georgetown University
May 2012

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John Stampone, Army Times, date unknown, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum.
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Permission for publication granted to Georgetown University.
Acknowledgements

There are a number of people to whom I wish to extend my gratitude for their assistance on this project. My deepest thanks to Professor Howard Spendelow and my fellow members of the 2011-2012 Georgetown University Honors History Seminar for their support, careful proofreading and editing, and valuable suggestions. I would also like to thank my advisor, Professor Joseph McCartin, for his guidance and for helping me to find the few archived files on Robert Kennedy, James Hoffa, and the McClellan Committee that are open to the public.

I am grateful for the assistance of William Davis of the Center for Legislative Archives at the National Archives in Washington, DC. After spending many hours at the National Archives, I extend my thanks to the staff in the Research Room for their help. I would also like to thank Kathryn Plass of the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum for sending me a copy of the political cartoon that inspired the title of this thesis.

Infinite thanks to my parents for their never-ending support, patience, and wisdom.
Introduction

A great deal has been written about Robert Kennedy. His life and legacy have been scrutinized, investigated, and analyzed time and again by hundreds of historians and authors. For all that has been written about Kennedy, however, relatively little has been said about his young adult life. The enduring memory of Robert Kennedy is best characterized by the iconic images of him playing touch football with his famous family at their summer home at Hyannis Port, conferring with his brother outside of the White House as Attorney General, or standing on top of convertibles during his 1968 presidential campaign. Much of Robert Kennedy’s historiography focuses either on Kennedy as one of nine Kennedy children, or on Kennedy as Attorney General, senator, and presidential candidate. Because there is so much to be said about the later part of Robert Kennedy’s life and the Kennedy family as a whole, some aspects of his history have been overlooked. The years between Kennedy’s graduation from law school and his appointment to the office of Attorney General of the United States have, in particular, been neglected. For all that has been written about Robert Kennedy, there is still a story to be told about the years he spent as chief counsel for the Senate Select Committee on Improper Investigations in the Labor or Management Field.

In early 1957, the Senate Select Committee, known as the McClellan Committee for it Chairman Senator John L. McClellan (D-AR), was formed as a specialized derivative of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. The purpose of the Committee was to investigate corruption in labor unions with the objective of developing and passing a labor reform law that would help to prevent future misconduct. Robert Kennedy was chosen as Chief Counsel of the Committee. From 1957 until 1959, Kennedy wholly devoted himself to the task
of investigating corrupt union leaders, gangsters, racketeers, and criminals. The experience was significant for him for a number of reasons. Kennedy built a reputation as a skillful prosecutor and a determined, hard-working investigator. He developed a strong, lasting, and morally-driven disdain for people involved in organized crime. He established himself as more than just another one of Joseph Kennedy’s sons, or Senator John Kennedy’s younger brother. Most importantly, however, Kennedy committed himself to what would become a prolonged pursuit of fighting labor union corruption. In 1957, the largest and most powerful labor union was the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, and the most formidable force within that union was then-Vice President James Riddle Hoffa. For Kennedy and the McClellan Committee, fighting labor union corruption soon became synonymous with fighting Hoffa. The more Kennedy uncovered about Hoffa, the more he disliked him. The more Kennedy exposed Hoffa’s misconduct, the more Hoffa detested Kennedy. Relatively inexperienced and just thirty-one years old in 1957, Kennedy hardly seemed the appropriate force to challenge the man in charge of the most powerful union in the United States. The subject of this thesis is how and why Robert Kennedy committed himself to trying to dethrone labor giant James Hoffa.

Most of what is written about the McClellan Committee does not focus specifically on Robert Kennedy. Relevant sources provide a general history of the Committee, offering sporadic information about Kennedy and Hoffa. Accounts of the McClellan Committee are primarily written by people who served on the Committee, worked with Kennedy, or reported on the Committee’s proceedings. They are retrospective accounts, and often highly personal. Some of these sources include Clark Mollenhoff’s *Tentacles of Power*, Walter Sheridan’s *The Fall and Rise of Jimmy Hoffa*, and John McClellan’s *Crime Without Punishment*. Mollenhoff reported on the McClellan Committee hearings, Sheridan was an investigator for the Committee, and
McClellan was the Committee’s chair. *Robert Kennedy and His Times* by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. provides the most extensive analysis of Kennedy’s involvement with the McClellan Committee. Though Schlesinger was not associated with the McClellan Committee, he was later a close friend of both Robert and John Kennedy. Accounts written by authors without personal connections to Kennedy include *Power Unlimited: The Corruption of Union Leadership* by Sylvester Petro and *Corruption and Reform in the Teamsters Union* by David Witwer. While the former is an impassioned response written in the immediate aftermath of the McClellan Committee hearings, the latter is a removed and critical analysis of the Committee’s proceedings and impact. Less concentrated accounts of the Committee appear in most Robert Kennedy and James Hoffa biographies.

This thesis attempts to provide a new perspective on the McClellan Committee. Through extensive use of the McClellan Committee Hoffa files, transcripts of the Committee hearings, newspaper articles, and Kennedy’s own memoir *The Enemy Within*, this thesis explores, in detail, the unfolding of the case against Hoffa as Kennedy saw it. Most available sources on the Committee are organized entirely by topic, whereas this thesis takes a chronological approach in an attempt to replicate Kennedy’s experience of uncovering an increasingly grave and entangled case. While previous authors have made reference to various items in the Hoffa files, they have not used these files extensively. The Hoffa files, housed at the National Archives Building in Washington, DC, contain all of the Hoffa-related memoranda, witness testimonies, and reports that were prepared for Chief Counsel Kennedy throughout the investigation. Integrating the Hoffa files with articles, hearing transcripts, and first-hand accounts produces a compelling narrative of one man with everything to prove, and another with everything to lose. It was with a strong sense of determination and moral purpose that young Robert Kennedy accepted the task of
trying to remove mighty labor giant James Hoffa from power. Kennedy was a modern-day David, and Hoffa a modern-day Goliath.
Chapter One: The Seventh Kennedy

When Robert F. Kennedy accepted an offer to join the United States Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field in 1957, he was barely thirty-one years old. His resume included brief enlistment in the Navy, a short stint in the U.S. Department of Justice, campaign work for his older brother John, and two separate roles on the Senate Investigations Subcommittee. To the public, he was simply the younger brother of Senator John F. Kennedy, and if people did know anything about him, it was that he had a short temper and his father had a great deal of money. To his family, he was the seventh child and the third boy, preceded by his two outstanding older brothers. As soon as Robert Kennedy could walk and talk, however, his family realized something that the world would not until much later: Robert Kennedy had extraordinary discipline and commitment. At age four, Kennedy, so intent on his punctuality, accidentally ran through a glass door in his eagerness to be at dinner on time.\(^1\) In college, he collapsed on the field during a football scrimmage because he had been playing with a broken leg for a half hour.\(^2\) As the seventh Kennedy, Robert relied on his resolute determination and steadfast sense of righteousness to prove himself.\(^3\) Kennedy would invoke these same qualities years later when he decided to take on the project of ousting one of the most powerful men in the country, James Riddle Hoffa, from control of the Teamsters Union. Kennedy’s inexperience and young age made him a seemingly weak match for powerful Hoffa, but his keen determination and sense of virtue would make him a formidable force.

As Robert Kennedy wrote in a 1965 book privately printed as a tribute to his late father, “I was the seventh of nine children, and when you come that far down you have to struggle to

\(^1\) Pat Kennedy, as told to Rose Kennedy in Rose F. Kennedy, *Times to Remember* (Garden City: Doubleday &., 1974), 103.
Indeed, the essence of Robert Kennedy’s character is inextricably linked to his famous family. In order to understand him, it is essential to understand his family. Over the course of the Kennedy family’s history, sustained interest in their legacy has elicited public opinion that ranges from reverence to condemnation. While some admire the façade of prosperity and success associated with the immediate Kennedy family, others question the integrity of the wealth and power that they accrued over time. The actual history of the Kennedy family is neither as glamorous nor as controversial as most sensationalized accounts would suggest.

Robert Francis Kennedy was born on November 20, 1925 in Brookline, Massachusetts. He was the third son, and seventh child, of Joseph Patrick and Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy. By the time Robert was born, the Kennedys lived in a large home staffed by nannies and maids, but despite Joseph Kennedy’s burgeoning wealth, his family was excluded from the most prominent social circles in the Boston area. Brookline was a predominately Protestant suburb of Boston, and the family’s Catholicism proved to be a major social barrier. Both Joseph and Rose Kennedy were the grandchildren of Irish immigrants, and both of their families had experienced the intense discrimination against Irish Catholics in nineteenth century Boston. Unlike many of the Irish immigrants who came to Boston, both the Kennedys and the Fitzgeralds managed to become relatively successful in a short period of time. Joseph Kennedy’s father, Patrick Joseph (or “P.J.”) Kennedy, began his career as an adolescent, working on the docks in order to save money to invest in future business plans. Kennedy later used the money he earned to open a saloon, which was so successful that he eventually opened three more. The money that Kennedy made through his saloon ventures, as well as through a whiskey business he started, gained him enough respect and popularity in his Protestant neighborhood to successfully run for, and serve

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John Francis (“Honey Fitz,” or “Fitzie”) Fitzgerald possessed a similar rags-to-riches story. After the sudden death of his mother, Rosanna Cox, in 1879, John Fitzgerald became determined to live up to his father’s dream that he would one day become a doctor. In pursuit of this goal, Fitzgerald attended the prestigious Boston Latin High School, and was subsequently admitted to Harvard Medical School. Fitzgerald’s father died at the end of his first year at Harvard, and he was burdened with the responsibility of taking care of his nine brothers. The beginning of Fitzgerald’s political career, and the end of his medical one, occurred when he went to his neighborhood political boss, Matthew Keany, for help. Keany offered Fitzgerald a position as his apprentice, and by the time Keany died in 1892, Fitzgerald was his natural successor. Fitzgerald had a jovial personality, and soon became affectionately known to locals as “Honey Fitz.” Fitzgerald was elected to the state senate in 1892, and served alongside P.J. Kennedy. Ironically, Kennedy and Fitzgerald shared a mutual dislike of one another; each man was a powerful figure in his respective district, but their districts were highly competitive with one another. Fitzgerald served three terms, and then ran, successfully, for the post of Mayor of Boston. Fitzgerald’s charisma and political talents had significantly elevated the social standing of his family over a relatively short period of time.

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P.J. Kennedy married Mary Augusta in 1887, during his tenure as state senator, and John Fitzgerald married Mary Josephine Hannon in 1889, while he was working for Keany. Joseph Patrick Kennedy was born in 1888, and Rose Elizabeth Fitzgerald was born in 1890. As a result of their parents’ success, both Kennedy and Fitzgerald were afforded great opportunities for children of Irish Catholic families. Kennedy had a middle class upbringing; Fitzgerald an upper-middle class one. Kennedy worked a variety of petty jobs as a child, and demonstrated a business prowess as young as fifteen, when he managed to profit off of a neighborhood baseball team that he organized and managed. He attended Boston Latin and then Harvard, and took his first post-graduate job as a clerk at his father’s bank, Columbia Trust. Fitzgerald spent her youth enjoying suburban life in Concord, Massachusetts and summering on Old Orchard Beach in Maine. Her family later moved to Dorchester, where she attended an all-girls high school, supplemented by private tutoring in a variety of subjects. Though it was her dream to attend Wellesley College, Fitzgerald instead attended Boston’s Convent of the Sacred Heart, taking semesters at Sacred Heart Convent in New York and in Holland, at her father’s behest. Upon graduation, Fitzgerald accompanied her father on various political trips, and had her formal debut to society in 1911.11

Joseph Kennedy and Rose Fitzgerald first met as teenagers at Old Orchard Beach.12 Fitzgerald’s father disapproved of the courtship, primarily because the Fitz��ards were of a higher social standing than the Kennedys, but, according to Fitzgerald, the couple “met at informal get-togethers with friends… at lectures, the library,” and at church in order to spend time together.13 It was in part because of their persistence, and in part because Kennedy managed to work his way from bank clerk to president of Columbia Trust (making him the youngest bank

12 Rose F. Kennedy, Times to Remember (Garden City: Doubleday &c, 1974), 57.  
13 Kennedy, Times to Remember, 58, 63.
president in the United States), that John Fitzgerald finally agreed to the marriage. Joseph Kennedy and Rose Fitzgerald were married in October of 1914.\textsuperscript{14}

Though they initially could not afford it, the Kennedys moved into a house in a quiet, residential neighborhood in Brookline, and outfitted it with a new Model-T and a maid. Joseph Kennedy firmly believed that becoming the youngest bank president in the United States was only the beginning of his financial success, and knew that he would soon be able to pay off his loans – and he was right. Three years later, Kennedy became a trustee of the Massachusetts Electric Company, a business move from which he profited greatly. That same year, Kennedy left Columbia Trust and became assistant general manager of Bethlehem Steel.\textsuperscript{15} When World War I ended, Kennedy realized the steel plant no longer had the capacity to contribute to his burgeoning fortune, and decided to join the stock brokerage firm Hayden, Stone and Company. Kennedy learned an enormous amount about the stock market while working at the firm, and subsequently purchased stocks in a few companies that, after painful scrutiny, he believed would be quite successful. He left Hayden in 1923 and set up an office in Boston so that he could branch out on his own.

At the same time that his stock brokerage career was taking off, Kennedy began to capitalize on the movie industry, starting in 1919 with an investment in a small chain of movie theaters. By 1925, Kennedy had purchased Federal Booking Offices (FBO), a production company, which in its first year made $9 million. Three years later, Kennedy merged FBO with RCA and KAO to create RKO, which not only made Kennedy a fortune, but also made him famous. Then, in April 1929, Kennedy withdrew from the stock market. His experience at Hayden had taught him to be suspect of inflated prices, and the economic climate at the time

\textsuperscript{14} Dallek, \textit{An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy}, 18-19.
\textsuperscript{15} Dallek, \textit{An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy}, 20-22.
prompted him to sell his shares of stock. When the stock market crashed in October, Joseph Kennedy, the multi-millionaire, was left untouched.

Thus when Robert Francis Kennedy was born in 1925, the Kennedys were wealthy and fairly well known. The Kennedys had moved from their first home on Beals Street in 1921 to a larger house a few minutes away on Naples Road when Rose Kennedy was pregnant with her fifth child. The first four Kennedy children, Joseph (“Joe”) Jr., John (“Jack”), Rosemary, and Kathleen (“Kick”), were all born on in the house on Beals Street between 1915 and 1920. The next three children, Eunice, Patricia (“Pat”), and Robert (“Bobby”), were born in the house on Naples Road between 1921 and 1925. By the time Jean and Edward (“Teddy”) were born, the Kennedy family had moved to Bronxville, New York. In an interview with writer Joe McCarthy, Joseph Kennedy later explained that he moved his family out of Boston because, “I felt it was no place to bring up Irish Catholic children. I didn’t want them to go through what I had to go through when I was growing up there.”

Although the Kennedys left Boston in 1927 primarily because of the discrimination they had faced there, both Joseph and Rose Kennedy still felt strong ties to the city that they were born and raised in. This connection to Boston, and to Massachusetts, largely served as the impetus for Joseph Kennedy to purchase their summer home at Hyannis Port the same year.

Part of the reason for the premium Joseph Kennedy put on his own success, and the success of his children, is undoubtedly linked, as historian Doris Kearns Goodwin suggests, to the frustration he felt over his family’s exclusion from the high status culture of Boston. And while Joseph Kennedy’s personal ambition certainly contributed to the dynamic of the Kennedy

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17 Joe McCarthy, NEED CITATION AND PAGE NUMBER.
family, so too did its sheer size.\textsuperscript{20} By the time Bobby was born, Rose Kennedy had taken to dividing up areas of the porch so that the children “could be with each other and entertain one another for hours at a time with a minimal risk that they would push another down or stick one another with something sharp,” and had also started filing index cards for each child listing “all the primary vital statistics such as date and place of birth, church of baptism, names of godparents,” to keep track.\textsuperscript{21} Bobby’s comment about having to struggle to survive as the seventh child was certainly not a joke, particularly in light of the fact that his two older brothers, Joe Jr. and Jack, were highly competitive. Joe Jr. was hard even for Jack to live up to, and Joseph Kennedy had set extremely high expectations for his first-born son.

From an early age, Joe Jr. excelled at nearly everything he did. Jack wanted desperately to be like his older brother but, as a very sickly child, he was physically weaker. While they generally got along, Rose Kennedy remembers, “it was inevitable that they were also rivals.”\textsuperscript{22} For Bobby to find a place in Joe Jr. and Jack’s hierarchy was a struggle in its own right; as Rose Kennedy remembers, “Bobby wanted to be like his two big brothers and strove with all his might and main to be.”\textsuperscript{23} Of course, added to Bobby’s difficulties in carving out a place for himself in his family was the fact that he had four older sisters. His eldest sister, Rosemary, was mentally disabled and required extra attention because, as Rose Kennedy explains, “She was slow in everything, and some things she seemed unable to learn how to do, or do well with consistency.”\textsuperscript{24} Then there was Kathleen, or Kick as her family called her, who like Joe Jr. could do no wrong in the eyes of Joseph and Rose Kennedy. With six older siblings, two of whom were highly lauded by his parents, and one of whom required extra attention, Bobby was

\textsuperscript{20} Kearns Goodwin, \textit{The Fitzgeralds and The Kennedys}, 365.
\textsuperscript{21} Kennedy, \textit{Times to Remember}, 83
\textsuperscript{22} Kennedy, \textit{Times to Remember}, 119.
\textsuperscript{23} Kennedy, \textit{Times to Remember}, 123.
\textsuperscript{24} Kennedy, \textit{Times to Remember}, 151.
understandably a shy child, who, in his own words, “didn’t mind being alone.” What distinguished Bobby, as Rose Kennedy recalls, was his will power. She writes:

He never did become tall but he became strong, muscular, fast… I think this was the result of raw will power. When he was grown up and in politics, reporters wrote about his toughness and said he was ruthless. I think this is mistaken. He was determined, dedicated, loving, and compassionate. He was a thoughtful and considerate person. He always had the capacity, and the desire, to make difficult decisions.

He exhibited the same kind of discipline, and will power, with his faith and was, according to Rose Kennedy, “the most religious” of the Kennedy children. According to Bobby’s sister Pat, he wanted very badly to be an altar boy. She remembers, “I was conscious of… how much he worked at it… I used to go into his room to hear his Latin. Then Mother would come in, or he’d go into her room, so he could show her how much he’d learned. He worked hard at it.”

Bobby’s determinism, as well as his strong faith, would come to define his character.

Joseph Kennedy expected a great deal out of his sons, and over time each successive son would take up the task of trying to fulfill their father’s expectations. Joseph Kennedy’s goal was to see his family, his Irish Catholic family, in a position of power. He still harbored resentment that he had been belittled and disregarded throughout his life, and despite his success, on the basis of his nationality and religion. It was with this in mind that Joseph Kennedy began to support the presidential campaign of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1932. Kennedy donated his own money, helped raise money, and even traveled with FDR on the campaign trail. A large part of the reason why Kennedy was so invested in the campaign was that he desired to be Secretary of the Treasury, but Roosevelt appointed William H. Woodin instead. Though Kennedy was disappointed, Roosevelt made Kennedy chairman of the new Securities and Exchange

25 Jack Newfield, Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy And His Times, 22.
26 Kennedy, Times to Remember, 103.
27 Pat Kennedy, Kennedy, Times to Remember, 163.
28 Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy And His Times, 8.
Commission (SEC) in 1934, a position in which Kennedy excelled. After a successful year, Kennedy resigned to become chairman of the Maritime Commission in 1937. Then in 1938, Roosevelt made Kennedy ambassador to the Court of St. James.

With the exception of Joe Jr. and Jack, who were at Harvard, the rest of the Kennedy family excitedly made the move to England. The Kennedys were very well liked when they first arrived, but this impression would not last. In October 1938, Joseph Kennedy made public his view that he was not a proponent of war. As historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. points out, this kind of rhetoric was unacceptable, and even inflammatory, at a time when the enemy was Adolf Hitler. When the war began, Joseph Kennedy’s family moved back to the United States. Kennedy continued to voice his opinion that he was against the war, and his reputation in England continued to thin. Frustrated by the war, the loneliness, and Roosevelt, Kennedy threatened to resign in 1940, but Roosevelt wanted Kennedy to remain ambassador until his election was over. After some persuasion, Kennedy remained in office until the day after Roosevelt won re-election. After Pearl Harbor, Kennedy was eager to help the Roosevelt administration in any way he could, but Roosevelt had lost his faith in Kennedy. Joseph Kennedy would soon learn that Roosevelt’s stinging rejection was only the beginning of the devastation that would befall his family with the United States’ entrance into the Second World War.

As Rose Kennedy writes, “The summer of 1941 was the last one our family would ever have together.” Rosemary’s mental challenges had worsened since the family had been back from England, and Joseph Kennedy took it upon himself to find a treatment for her.

Unbeknownst to Rose Kennedy, Joseph Kennedy took Rosemary to undergo an experimental

29 Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy And His Times, 9.
30 Kearns Goodwin, The Fitzgeralds and The Kennedys, 509.
31 Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy And His Times, 28.
32 Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy And His Times, 28.
33 Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy And His Times, 35-36.
34 Kennedy, Times to Remember, 283.
procedure. Rosemary’s lobotomy left her “permanently incapacitated,” and because she needed constant “custodial care” thereafter, she lived in a convent where nuns cared for her for the rest of her life.\(^35\) That same year, both Joe Jr. and Jack enlisted in the Navy. In 1943, Jack was sent to the South Pacific to command a PT boat, and Joe Jr. was sent to England as a naval aviator.\(^36\) Kathleen also left for England in 1943 to “join the Red Cross training program.”\(^37\) Jack narrowly avoided disaster when his boat was hit by a Japanese destroyer, and he heroically led his crew to safety.\(^38\) The excitement swirling around Jack would inspire Bobby to enlist after his high school graduation.

Another obstacle facing the family came in 1944, when Kathleen decided to marry William Cavendish, Duke of Devonshire. Cavendish was not Catholic, and Rose Kennedy was extremely distraught. The only family member who attended the wedding was Joe Jr.\(^39\) As Rose Kennedy later wrote of her disappointment with Kathleen, “She… knew how much the Church meant to me, to most of her close relatives, and historically, to her ancestors. It had, in fact… been the main cohesive force… that enabled the Irish people to survive and in some ways prevail during the course of many centuries of domination by the English.”\(^40\) Religion was exceptionally important to the Kennedy matriarch, and she reflected that her children “each seemed to have deep religious convictions, though as usual each manifested them in his or her own individual way.”\(^41\) The child who exhibited the biggest commitment to his faith, from a young age, was undoubtedly Bobby. His sister Eunice recalled that, “Bobby was really quite religious. He was at

\(^{35}\) Kennedy, *Times to Remember*, 288.
\(^{38}\) Schlesinger, Jr., *Robert Kennedy And His Times*, 50.
\(^{40}\) Kennedy, *Times to Remember*, 291.
\(^{41}\) Kennedy, *Times to Remember*, 163.
Communion on Sundays all the time. He was very strong on this. " In high school, Bobby was quite shy, and his grades were still mediocre, but he remained enthusiastic about his Catholicism. As cited by Schlesinger, Bobby wrote to his mother his junior year announcing: “Am now leading an underground movement to convert the school and am taking a lot of the boys to church on Sunday.” Bobby’s sister Jean told Schlesinger that Bobby had even considered becoming a priest. His faith would only grow stronger with time, and was probably the distinguishing factor between him and Jack. While Jack was a practicing Catholic, Bobby’s Catholicism permeated every aspect of his life. Bobby saw the world in terms of right and wrong, good and evil, holy and sinful. His morality, and his belief in absolutes were not only unique among his siblings, but were also a driving force behind his later political dealings.

Bobby’s devout Catholicism was likely also shaped by the tragedy that continued to occur throughout his adult life. In August of 1944, Joe Jr. embarked on a dangerous flying mission, and his plane exploded. The family was heartbroken. Joseph and Rose Kennedy had rested all their dreams of continued prominence and success on Joe Jr., a man who seemed to have the ability to achieve anything with ease and perfection. Just a month later, Kathleen’s husband was killed by a German sniper. Bobby was engaged in naval training at Harvard during this time of tragedy, and in 1945, embarked for Guantanamo on the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. as an Apprentice Seaman for the Naval Reserve. He worked extremely hard, and as Schlesinger, Jr. posits, he turned his inner turmoil and grief into labor by using the incredible

42 Kennedy, Times to Remember, 163.
43 Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy And His Times, 44.
44 Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy And His Times, 17.
45 Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy And His Times, 56.
47 Kearns Goodwin, The Fitzgeralds and The Kennedys, 695.
48 Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy And His Times, 57, 60.
sense of discipline that he had always had.\textsuperscript{49} For Jack, dealing with the sadness and loss, especially the loss of Joe Jr., was different. Jack had been very close to Joe Jr., but more than that, Jack suddenly felt that it was his responsibility to carry out what Joe Jr. would have done. Jack initially had to be persuaded by his father, but it was the combination of both his father’s expectations and the US response to Truman’s decision to drop the atomic bomb, that finally propelled Jack into politics. Jack’s campaign for a Massachusetts seat in the House of Representatives began in earnest shortly thereafter.\textsuperscript{50}

Bobby had returned from the Navy, and immediately began to help with Jack’s campaign. Jack’s war hero persona, his father’s financial ability to furnish an effective campaign team, and his grandfather’s legacy all worked in his favor, and his family proved to be a formidable campaign force. Bobby accompanied Jack on his rounds throughout Boston, and Jack’s mother and sisters hosted wildly successful campaign teas.\textsuperscript{51} Jack was victorious. Thus, Jack went off to Washington, and Bobby to Harvard. During his college years, Bobby was a successful football player, despite his small stature, and began to court Ethel Skakel, one of Jean’s friends.\textsuperscript{52} He graduated in 1948 and embarked on a trip abroad. Bobby visited the Middle East, and took an assignment for the \textit{Boston Post}. The piece he wrote about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was, as Schlesinger, Jr. points out, exceptionally insightful. Notably, Bobby wrote, “The United States through the United Nations must take the lead in bringing about peace in the Holy Land,” a interventionist view not shared, as history reveals, by Ambassador Kennedy.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{49} Schlesinger, Jr., \textit{Robert Kennedy And His Times}, 62.
\textsuperscript{50} Kearns Goodwin, \textit{The Fitzgeralds and The Kennedys}, 699, 705
\textsuperscript{51} Kearns Goodwin, \textit{The Fitzgeralds and The Kennedys}, 713-720.
\textsuperscript{52} Schlesinger, Jr., \textit{Robert Kennedy And His Times}, 67.
\textsuperscript{53} Schlesinger, Jr., \textit{Robert Kennedy And His Times}, 75-77.
Bobby was in Italy when he received news that his sister Kathleen had died in a plane crash. The Kennedy family was devastated, and again, Jack’s grief was paired with the burden of shouldering the legacy of another extraordinary sibling. A few months after his sister’s death, Bobby returned from his trip abroad and enrolled in law school at the University of Virginia. His grades, again, were mediocre, but he distinguished himself through the Student Legal Forum. In June of 1950, Bobby married Ethel Skakel. A year later, Bobby graduated from law school and had his first child, Kathleen. Later that year Bobby began work at the Department of Justice’s Criminal Division. Around the same time, Jack made the decision to run for Senate against Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. Though Bobby loved his work at the Department of Justice, he left his post to take over Jack’s campaign. As Doris Kearns Goodwin notes, Bobby was perhaps the reason that Jack won the election. Bobby did not tolerate any kind of slacking, and Schlesinger, Jr. points out that the “ruthlessness” later associated with Bobby first took form during his tenure as campaign manager. Everyone in the family, especially Jack, was impressed by Bobby’s commitment and effectiveness.

In 1952, Joseph Kennedy called Senator Joseph McCarthy and asked him if he would give Bobby a position on the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. McCarthy, who had already appointed a young lawyer named Roy Cohn as chief counsel, made Bobby assistant counsel. Bobby was put to work investigating the Chinese shipping industry, and was becoming more frustrated with his job as the days went on. Not only was he annoyed that Cohn, who was younger, had been made chief counsel, but he was also increasingly worried about McCarthy’s fixation on finding American communists. He submitted his resignation in 1953. A few months

54 Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy And His Times, 86.
55 Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy And His Times, 94.
56 Kearns Goodwin, The Fitzgeralds and The Kennedys, 762.
57 Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy And His Times, 95.
58 Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy And His Times, 101, 105
later, Bobby began to work for the Commission on Reorganization of the Executive Branch as an assistant to his father, Joseph Kennedy. The job had limited responsibilities for him, and he grew agitated and unpleasant. Jack’s close friend Lem Billings remembered that at this time, Bobby was a “really very cross, unhappy, angry, young man.”

In 1954, Bobby accepted an offer to rejoin the Investigations Subcommittee as minority counsel. Unfortunately, Roy Cohn still worked for the committee. Kennedy’s initial agitation with Cohn had, by 1954, become an intolerance. The two men sparred with each other almost constantly. The feud culminated in a near-brawl after a hearing, and embarrassingly, the incident was reported by the *Daily News*. It was not until the midterm election that Bobby’s reputation began to change for the better. Senator John McClellan (D-AR) was now chairman of the Investigations Subcommittee, and Bobby returned to the committee appearing scholarly, committed, and more refined. He won credibility in 1956 when he took on a tough investigation into Harold Talbott, Secretary of the Air Force under President Eisenhower, and executed it adeptly and successfully.

Bobby still had a lot to prove. He had skillfully managed his brother’s campaign, and was beginning to prove his prosecution potential, but in the eyes of many, he still seemed privileged, volatile, and unpredictable. When Clark Mollenhoff, a newspaper reporter, approached Bobby in late 1956 about rumored corruption within the Teamsters Union, Bobby was initially uninterested. Ironically, Mollenhoff was not particularly interested in Kennedy. He reflects in *Tentacles of Power*:

> For many reasons Bob Kennedy would not have been my first choice as counsel at that stage, but he seemed the only possibility. He was young. It was true that he had practically no knowledge in the labor

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60 Schlesinger, Jr., *Robert Kennedy And His Times*, 113.
61 Schlesinger, Jr., *Robert Kennedy And His Times*, 116.
area, but I knew he was bright and aggressive. In some respects his lack of knowledge of the power and cunning of the Teamsters was advantageous to my cause as I discussed it with him.\(^6^2\)

What initially drew Mollenhoff to Kennedy was precisely what Kennedy had been reprimanded for. Mollenhoff saw the unbridled passion that Kennedy had displayed over the years, as well as his naivety, as assets. Once Bobby began looking further into the topic of union corruption, he was fascinated. It was exactly this naivety that led Bobby Kennedy to believe he could take on the powerful Teamsters Union, and it was the same unbridled determination that had sent him through a glass door as a four year old that would get him through it.

Chapter Two: Taking on the Teamsters (August 1956 – August 1957)

Before Clark Mollenhoff approached him in late 1956, Robert Kennedy had been briefly exposed to union corruption while serving as chief counsel for the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. In *The Enemy Within*, his memoir of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Kennedy wrote, “As we continued our investigative work, we found that some of the leading East Coast gangsters… were involved directly or indirectly in the manufacturing or trucking of uniforms. We found that corruption, violence, and extortions permeated all their activities.” Further, Kennedy reflected, one of these gangsters, John Dioguardi (“Johnny Dio”), had given information in an executive session of the Subcommittee that he “and other racketeers had muscled into the labor movement in [New York].” The problem, as Mollenhoff wrote in his memoir of the Select Committee, was despite the fact that Kennedy was “intrigued” by Dio and his gangster friends, “there was not enough evidence… to justify open hearings.” Besides, Kennedy had his reservations about pursuing these leads. He later reflected that his two primary concerns were that “two previous Congressional investigations had been made of the Teamsters,” and that he was unsure whether the “Committee had jurisdiction to conduct such inquiry” into union practices. The Senate had launched hearings to investigate labor union corruption in 1953 and 1954. Both sets of hearings ended abruptly and mysteriously, and it was widely speculated that they were terminated due to closed-door political deals and bribery. Kennedy was also likely concerned, as Mollenhoff reflects, by the fact that, “Undiscriminating newspaper cartoonists, editors and the uninformed

voters were apt to accept the premise that those who prosecuted labor leaders were anti-labor." Though Mollenhoff only insinuates that negative press and anti-union or anti-labor labels could have been detrimental to Kennedy as a “public figure,” Kennedy may have also been concerned about the potential negative implications his involvement could have for his brother, the Senator and future presidential candidate, should the label “anti-labor” be associated with the Kennedy family name.

What eventually convinced Kennedy to take on an investigation into labor union misconduct was a combination of Mollenhoff’s persistence and Kennedy’s own morally-driven indignation for criminals and gangsters who took advantage of rank-and-file union members. Mollenhoff assured Kennedy, “Those other two Congressional investigations were fixed because of political pressure… and you do have jurisdiction because these unions are tax exempt and are misusing their funds.” Mollenhoff also arranged for Kennedy speak with “lawyers and investigators who had conducted some of the earlier investigations.” Kennedy finally approached Senator McClellan, chairman of the Subcommittee on Investigations, in August of 1956 about embarking on a full-scale investigation into labor union corruption. Subsequently, he set off on a trip to the West Coast to begin his “survey of the labor scene.” Kennedy was making a fairly large gamble. Mollenhoff writes, “There were many reasons to doubt whether Bob Kennedy could be any more successful than those who had gone before.” In addition to the fact that he was young and relatively inexperienced, Kennedy would also have to “overcome public sympathy for union labor,” which characterized “labor leaders as a class dedicated to

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72 Mollenhoff, *Tentacles of Power*, 129.
unselfish defense of the workingman against the oppression of management.”

Finally, Kennedy would have to confront the fact that his father vehemently opposed his involvement with the investigation. Joseph Kennedy feared that the only thing his son would accomplish was associating anti-unionism with the Kennedy family name, which could potentially compromise support for John Kennedy. Though Robert Kennedy was certainly aware of the challenges he faced, he was more concerned with the bigger picture. Throughout his life he had displayed an unwavering commitment to doing the right thing – whether it was getting to dinner on time by flying through a glass door as a child, or playing out the rest of a football game with a broken leg in college. He was interested in the end goal, not in the sacrifices he had to make in getting there. In addition, his deep and profound faith led to him to view the world in terms of good and evil, moral and immoral. Kennedy was determined to fight the immoral practices of perceived evil labor union leaders, and the challenges he faced mattered far less to him than accomplishing his goal.

Ultimately, Kennedy ended up being the ideal person for the job of Chief Counsel. He was passionate and determined, and he knew that he had a great deal to prove not only in terms of his career, but also in terms of his place in the Kennedy family. Importantly, as Mollenhoff notes, there were very few people who would be willing to take on the job of investigating labor unions, both for publicity reasons already mentioned, and because of the power and size of the unions themselves. In this sense, Mollenhoff writes, Kennedy’s “lack of knowledge of the power and cunning of the Teamsters was advantageous…”

Though the investigation initially planned to look into union corruption in general, it was not long until its main focus became the

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73 Mollenhoff, Tentacles of Power, 129.
76 Edward R. Schmitt, President of the Other America: Robert Kennedy and the Politics of Poverty (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010), 16.
76 Mollenhoff, Tentacles of Power, 125.
Teamsters Union. The Teamsters were one of the most powerful labor unions in the United States, largely due to strong and, increasingly, corrupt leadership. Established in 1898, but not known as the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) until 1903, the Teamsters Union promised fair wages, good benefits, and adequate working conditions to drivers around the country. The Teamsters Union was so effective, from the outset, at winning improvements for the rank and file that it quickly grew in both size and influence.\textsuperscript{77} Because of the burgeoning power of the Teamsters, employers began to fear how much control the union had over commerce.\textsuperscript{78} Drivers were ultimately responsible for ensuring that goods got from one place to the other, and one large union now controlled many of country’s drivers. If the Teamsters went on strike or decided to boycott, large areas of commerce could be affected. Employers’ fears were not unfounded. Teamsters often involved themselves in strikes and boycotts of other labor unions because they had the ability to physically halt transportation of any product, or block other modes of transportation.\textsuperscript{79} In 1905, just a few years after its establishment, the Teamsters Union faced its first allegations of union corruption. The Employers’ Association brought the Teamsters to trial on charges that its leaders were bribed to participate in a strike against a Chicago department store in April of that year.\textsuperscript{80} Though there was not enough evidence to prove the bribery charge, the media seized on the labor union corruption scandal.\textsuperscript{81} It was not until the 1930s, however, that the Teamsters Union cemented its reputation as a corrupt labor union. Organized crime and gangs were on the rise, and the Teamsters were either forced or strongly encouraged to cooperate with them, especially in major cities like Chicago or New York.\textsuperscript{82} At the same time, racketeering became an increasingly common practice within the union.

\textsuperscript{78} Witwer, \textit{Corruption and Reform in the Teamsters Union}, 22.
\textsuperscript{80} Witwer, \textit{Corruption and Reform in the Teamsters Union}, 31.
\textsuperscript{81} Witwer, \textit{Corruption and Reform in the Teamsters Union}, 34-35.
\textsuperscript{82} Witwer, \textit{Corruption and Reform in the Teamsters Union}, 82-86, 103.
Racketeering investigations in the 1930s tarnished the image of the Teamsters, and reform efforts to clean up union practices in the late 1930s failed. When Kennedy began his investigation, the president of the Teamsters Union was Dave Beck, and it was his own personal hand in Teamsters corruption that initially changed the focus of the investigation. During Kennedy’s trip to the West Coast with the Subcommittee on Investigations accountant, Carmine Bellino, it became abundantly clear not only that Beck had been misusing union funds, but also that the Teamsters were still highly involved with gangsters.83

The issue over the jurisdiction of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations to preside over union affairs lead to the establishment in January 1957 of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, hereby referred to as the McClellan Committee for its chair, Senator John McClellan of Arkansas. The creation of a committee separate from the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations was also the result of AFL-CIO [American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations] President George Meany’s resistance to having a committee compromised entirely of senators from the Investigations Subcommittee, whom he believed were inherently anti-labor.84 Thus, the McClellan Committee was a mix of four senators from the Investigations Subcommittee, and four from the Labor Committee: Democratic Senators McClellan, John Kennedy (MA), Sam Ervin (NC), and Patrick McNamara (MI), and Republican Senators Irving Ives (NY), Karl Mundt (SD), Barry Goldwater (AZ), and Joseph McCarthy (WI). Despite Joseph Kennedy’s protests, John Kennedy agreed to be a member of the committee, in his own words, “in order to keep it more balanced.”85 If he declined and the senator next in seniority, who was anti-labor,

83 Kennedy, The Enemy Within, 8, 10.
84 Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy And His Times, 143.
85 John F. Kennedy as quoted in Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy And His Times, 143.
had accepted, even the Democratic side of the Committee would be somewhat anti-labor. Consequently, two Kennedys became a part of the McClellan Committee, one as a senate member, and the other as Chief Counsel.

In Robert Kennedy’s words, “Our efforts to set up the Committee and get it functioning ran concurrently with the game of tag we were having with Dave Beck. He remained out of reach.” Kennedy had met with Beck earlier in the month to inform him that the McClellan Committee would investigate him in a series of public hearings. Not surprisingly, Kennedy subsequently had a difficult time reaching him. On February 7, the New York Times ran an article entitled, “Beck on Airliner Bound For London,” which reported that “Dave Beck flew from Nassau to London tonight without any word on when he would be back to face Senate investigators… Mr. Beck had told [the Committee] that he would be available for questioning in Washington today.” Beck eventually did appear before the Committee on March 26, but not before a slew of his cohorts had already testified, and Kennedy and his investigative team had found the evidence needed to incriminate him. Kennedy remembers, “I must confess that when Dave Beck first took the stand, and before he started to testify, I felt sorry for him… I looked at him, and realized that here was a major public figure about to be utterly and completely destroyed before our eyes.” That is precisely what happened. By April, not only had Beck’s gross misuse of union funds been exposed, but so too had his, in Kennedy’s words, “cruel, stingy, avaricious and arrogant” demeanor. As Mollenhoff writes, “Already the wolves in his own organization were after him, and on May 26, 1957, Dave Beck announced he would not

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86 Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy And His Times, 143.
87 Kennedy, The Enemy Within, 24.
88 Kennedy, The Enemy Within, 19-20.
89 "BECK ON AIRLINER BOUND FOR LONDON: Teamsters Chief Fails to Tell When He Will Face Senate," New York Times 8 Feb. 1957: 13, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
90 Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy And His Times, 148.
91 Kennedy, The Enemy Within, 29.
92 Kennedy, The Enemy Within, 33.
seek re-election as general president of the Teamsters.” Not only had Kennedy and the Committee turned the Teamsters against Beck, but they had also caught the attention of the American public.

In March, before Beck’s hearings had even come to a conclusion, the New York Times published an article praising Kennedy’s performance. Cabell Philips reported:

Kennedy reminds you vaguely of those modest, well-bred young upper-class men in their sedate Brooks Brothers suits whom you would be likely to meet at a faculty tea at Harvard or Dartmouth. He looks to be nearer 26 than 31. His manner is shy, almost deferential, yet by some subtle paradox it conveys an impression of secure self-confidence. He speaks hesitantly, but always to the point, and when the need arises, as with an evasive witness, he can be demandingly persistent.

An article that ran in the Chicago Daily Tribune in late April was somewhat less enthusiastic about Kennedy’s abilities, but saw potential in him. Willard Edwards wrote:

Young Bob is intelligent, hard working, tenacious, but a little impatient and excitable, lacking the smooth retort which must come easily to the lips of the practiced politician. His cross-examination of witnesses is thor[sic] but somewhat plodding… But while he has been considerably overshadowed by his brother, the younger Kennedy has demonstrated certain qualities which could carry him far in the political world… This can be said about the younger Kennedy: Once he absorbs a lesson, it is never forgotten.

Though Kennedy may not have possessed the finesse or self-assuredness of his older brother, he had certainly captured the attention of the media. Reporters and the American public were enamored by the glamour of the Kennedy brother team and the drama of the exposed corruption within the Teamsters Union. And while the simultaneous emergence of Robert Kennedy on the political scene and the downfall of Teamsters president Dave Beck had made for exciting news coverage, a greater challenge was lay ahead. Kennedy’s next task was to take on James Riddle Hoffa.

Kennedy first met Hoffa on February 19, 1957, when the McClellan Committee was just getting underway. A few days prior to the meeting, Kennedy had been approached by a man

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named Cye Cheasty, who informed Kennedy that Hoffa, “had given him $1,000 in cash as a down payment to get a job as an investigator with our Committee. Hoffa wanted him to be a spy and furnish secret information for our files.” Kennedy was impressed that Cheasty had come to him, reflecting, “As he talked I was continually conscious of the fact that here was a man to whom principle meant more than money.” Kennedy, to whom morality and good-will meant a great deal, appreciated the fact that Cheasty was willing to forgo the money that Hoffa had offered him in the greater interest of trying to prevent Hoffa from acquiring more power.

Hoffa had first become involved with the Teamsters Union in 1932. At just 19, Hoffa had proved that he was capable and skilled at union organizing; consequently, the Teamsters hired Hoffa to work as an organizer for Joint Council 43 in Detroit. He was good at the job, and the Teamsters promoted him three years later to business agent of Detroit Local 299. Hoffa continued to organize with his friend Owen Bert Brennan, who would later become one of his closest business associates. Hoffa and Brennan also frequently intervened in pickets and strike-breaks, and by 1940, Hoffa already had three convictions of assault and battery, conspiracy, and extortion. In the late 1930s, Hoffa aided organizer Farrell Dobbs to negotiate a regional trucking agreement that involved twelve-states. Hoffa was later instrumental in ousting Dobbs from his Minneapolis local by force; Dobbs was a Trotskyite and was also vocally opposed to some of President Roosevelt’s policies, which was problematic for the Teamsters. Hoffa subsequently became vice president of the Central State Drivers Council – a position

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96 Kennedy, *The Enemy Within*, 37.
97 Kennedy, *The Enemy Within*, 38.
previously held by Dobbs. In 1945, Hoffa was elected president of Local 299, though there is dispute as to whether or not Hoffa was president before that year. Seven years later, Hoffa became vice president of the International Brotherhood of the Teamsters. By the time Beck resigned in 1957, Hoffa seemed his natural predecessor. Hoffa seemed to think he deserved the title of President of the Teamsters as well; evidence exists that he cooperated with the Committee in bringing down Beck.

Kennedy and Hoffa would form their enduring opinions of each other during their first encounter at a private dinner in February. A mutual acquaintance, Eddie Cheyfitz, planned and hosted the dinner because he thought it would be a good idea for the two to meet each other. Kennedy wrote of Hoffa’s behavior that evening, “When a grown man sat for an evening and talked continuously about his toughness, I could only conclude that he was a bully hiding behind a façade.” To Kennedy, it seemed that throughout the entire dinner, Hoffa “wanted to impress upon [him] that Jimmy Hoffa is a tough, rugged man.” Hoffa found Kennedy “condescending,” and “a damn spoiled jerk.” He also had the impression that Kennedy was “puzzled over the fact that a kid from a poor family, lacking education, could rise to the top of the largest union in the nation.” It was clear from the dinner that Hoffa and Kennedy would not get along. Kennedy writes:

As I was going out the door, Hoffa said: ‘Tell your wife I’m not as bad as everyone thinks I am.’ I laughed. Jimmy Hoffa had a sense of humor. He must have laughed at himself as he said it. In view of all I already knew, I felt that he was worse than anybody said he was [emphasis added]. In the next two and a half years, nothing happened to change my opinion.

The battle between Robert Kennedy and Jimmy Hoffa had begun.

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104 Sloane, Hoffa, 31.
105 Sloane, Hoffa, 36-37.
106 Witwer, Corruption and Reform in the Teamsters Union, 160.
107 Kennedy, The Enemy Within,. 43.
108 Kennedy, The Enemy Within, 41.
109 James R. Hoffa as quoted by Sloane in Hoffa, 77, 78.
110 Hoffa as quoted by Sloane in Hoffa, 78.
111 Kennedy, The Enemy Within, 43.
On March 13, Hoffa’s attempt to infiltrate the Committee via Cheasty imploded. As a double agent, Cheasty had been supplying Hoffa with Committee materials at the behest of the Committee itself. In early March, the FBI arrested Hoffa in Washington, D.C. for bribery and conspiracy.\textsuperscript{112} The result of the trial that commenced thereafter would not only fuel Kennedy and the Committee for years, but it would also mobilize the American public against Hoffa. Though the trial was a federal case separate from the Committee hearings, Kennedy appeared as a witness because, he wrote, “Naturally, this was a trial in which I was most interested.”\textsuperscript{113} Mollenhoff writes, “Kennedy lacked courtroom experience, and Williams [Hoffa’s attorney] tried to take advantage of this fact with a needling cross-examination. Kennedy had a momentary unsteadiness, but then became amazingly firm.”\textsuperscript{114} Kennedy, however, was only a small part of a trial that nearly everyone believed would end in Hoffa’s conviction; Kennedy famously told a newspaper reporter if Hoffa were acquitted, “I’ll jump off the Capitol.”\textsuperscript{115} Kennedy later wrote, “It was embarrassing then. It was even more embarrassing when Jimmy Hoffa was acquitted.”\textsuperscript{116}

Mollenhoff writes of the lead up to the trial, “Hoffa was through. That was the general attitude in the press and in the government.”\textsuperscript{117} Even Meany “declared that F.B.I. agents had removed one of the worst influences in labor when they arrested Hoffa…”\textsuperscript{118} The government had Cheasty’s testimony, and the FBI had taken pictures of Cheasty handing Hoffa Committee documents and Hoffa giving Cheasty cash in return.\textsuperscript{119} A number of factors ultimately overshadowed this seemingly infallible evidence. Hoffa’s attorney, Edward Bennett Williams,

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\item\textsuperscript{112} Schlesinger, Jr., \textit{Robert Kennedy And His Times}, 154.
\item\textsuperscript{113} Kennedy, \textit{The Enemy Within}, 58.
\item\textsuperscript{114} Mollenhoff, \textit{Tentacles of Power}, 202.
\item\textsuperscript{115} Kennedy, \textit{The Enemy Within}, 56.
\item\textsuperscript{116} Kennedy, \textit{The Enemy Within}, 56.
\item\textsuperscript{117} Mollenhoff, \textit{Tentacles of Power}, 185.
\item\textsuperscript{118} Mollenhoff, \textit{Tentacles of Power}, 185.
\item\textsuperscript{119} Mollenhoff, \textit{Tentacles of Power}, 185.
\end{itemize}
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was, according to Mollenhoff, “one of the best publicized lawyers in the nation.”\textsuperscript{120} He made it his goal to portray Cheasty as dishonest and untrustworthy, and did his best to “paint a sympathetic picture” of Hoffa as “a poor boy who dropped out of school at fourteen, worked long hours, fought for better wages for the working people, and emerged as a vice president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.”\textsuperscript{121} There was also speculation that the jury had been manipulated. Kennedy wrote:

\begin{quote}
…the judge, in a conference at the bench, took judicial notice of the make-up of the jury, pointing out that while the Government attorneys selected jurors without discrimination as to race, Mr. Williams… had used his challenges against white jurors only. This circumstance, taken with the presence of Joe Louis and other events that transpired during the trial, shows a definite effort to influence the judge and jury in other ways than through accepted legal channels.\textsuperscript{122}
\end{quote}

Kennedy refers here to the fact that the majority of the people on the jury were black, and that “the Teamsters paid the expenses of Joe Louis to come from Detroit to Washington and appear in the courtroom for two days” in Hoffa’s favor.\textsuperscript{123} Mollenhoff writes of the trial, “From the outset, it was clear that the Hoffa forces were going to play the race issue.”\textsuperscript{124} Williams tried to portray Cheasty as a racist, and “a highly inflammatory pro-Hoffa issue” of the Afro-American was delivered to the jurors, prompting the judge to order “that the jury should be isolated from the general public for the duration of the trial.”\textsuperscript{125} Then, the Teamsters solicited African-American boxing champion Joe Louis to appear before the jury in favor of Hoffa. They appeared in the courtroom as old friends, and when Mollenhoff asked Louis why he was at the trial, Louis answered, “I’m just here to see what they are doing to my old friend, Jimmy Hoffa.”\textsuperscript{126}

Interestingly, as Kennedy notes, “Later our Committee heard testimony clearly indicating that

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\textsuperscript{120} Mollenhoff, Tentacles of Power, 186.
\textsuperscript{121} Mollenhoff, Tentacles of Power, 197, 204.
\textsuperscript{122} Kennedy, The Enemy Within, 57.
\textsuperscript{123} Kennedy, The Enemy Within, 57.
\textsuperscript{124} Mollenhoff, Tentacles of Power, 195.
\textsuperscript{125} Mollenhoff, Tentacles of Power, 195-200.
\textsuperscript{126} Mollenhoff, Tentacles of Power, 206.
\end{flushright}
Hoffa and his own Local 299 in Detroit discriminated against Negroes.” Whether Hoffa was acquitted because Williams successfully convinced the jury of his innocence, or whether Hoffa and the Teamsters successfully manipulated the jury, is indeterminable. Likely, it was a combination. Regardless, the American public was outraged.

The Committee received a flood of letters after Hoffa’s acquittal in July. One read:

I am just about ready to call our Jury System a failure… No doubt Hoffa’s henchmen must have gotten to the Jury – or threatened the 8 negroes with the loss of their jobs (it will be interesting to see how they fare financially)… Hoffa had a smart lawyer who knew how to play to the jury’s emotions.

The letter was anonymously signed, “A disgusted Teamster.” Another letter expressed similar sentiments:

As an average American citizen, I feel shocked and ashamed at the outcome of the James Hoffa bribery trial. This is because it would appear Mr. Hoffa has made a mockery out of the United States Senate and the F.B.I. Please don’t let Mr. Hoffa make it appear that crime does pay – if it is big enough and powerful enough. Perhaps our courts or our methods of selecting a Jury should be brought up-to-date… God speed to you and your committee on your work.

Mobilized, Mollenhoff wrote, “Kennedy said he felt it necessary to conduct hearings and get the full Hoffa story to the public before the Teamsters convention in late September, 1957… ‘It would be tragic if he is elected president of an organization as powerful as the Teamsters,’ Kennedy said.” The Committee had been investigating Hoffa’s connections to organized crime throughout 1957, and planned to question him about it during his first round of hearings on August 20.

A memo the Committee received from the New York Anti-Crime Committee on February 21 read:

Bernard Spindell has allegedly told a number of people… that he did a large amount of wiretapping for James R. Hoffa whom he said he met through John Dioguardia alias Johnny Dio… Mr. Spindell said

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127 Kennedy, The Enemy Within, 57.
128 Anonymous to Senator John L. McClellan, Location Unknown, July 20, 1957; Vol. 1; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46, National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
129 Paul H. Leutheuser to Senator John L. McClellan, July 20, 1957; Vol. 1; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46, National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
130 Mollenhoff, Tentacles of Power, 217.
that he had received $125 a week from Johnny Dio to check his private phone at home, and business, against anyone tapping these phones. While doing this work, Dio introduced him to James R. Hoffa, who asked Spindell if he, Spindell, could tap approximately 20 telephones in the building located in Detroit where Hoffa maintained his offices.  

Hoffa paid Spindell $10,000 to tap the phones, and place microphones in, his offices. Of interest to the Committee was not necessarily the wiretapping, for which Hoffa would go on trial in New York in September, but his connection to Johnny Dio. The same file also states, “During the month of October, 1955, we received information to the effect that Johnny Dio had been flying to Detroit for a conference with James R. Hoffa at least twice a week.” Dio was a known labor racketeer with connections to the mob, and the Committee was interested in finding out the extent of Dio and Hoffa’s relationship, and of course, its impact on the Teamsters Union.

In preparation for his appearance, Hoffa sent a telegram to the Committee on August 7. He wrote:

Apparently, I will be called upon to answer questions relating to certain situations and events affecting individuals and groups of individuals which occurred over a considerable span of time. I have attempted to refresh my recollection with respect to many phases of my labor activities since I received the subpoena of this committee. My testimony here in all particulars will be based upon my best recollection of the situation or event at the moment I testify.

Hoffa went on to make a list of demands, such a transcript of his testimony and the right to “refuse to answer any questions which relate to matters outside the scope of the Committee’s authority or which do not relate to a proper legislative purpose or which are not pertinent to this inquiry.” Amusingly, one of the Committee members scribbled next to this statement, “this the com will judge.” Still reeling from Hoffa’s acquittal in July, the Committee was prepared to

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131 Memorandum of E.M. Jones, investigator for New York Anti-Crime Committee, February 21, 1957; Vol. 1, pg. 1; Hoffa 18-5. Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
132 Jones, Vol. 1, pg. 1; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
133 Jones, Vol. 1, pgs. 1-2; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
134 Telegram: James R. Hoffa to Senator John L. McClellan, August 17, 1957; Vol. 2; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
135 Hoffa to McClellan, Vol. 2; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
136 Hoffa to McClellan, Vol. 2; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
begin a new confrontation with Hoffa. With the support of the American public in the aftermath of both Beck’s hearings and Hoffa’s trial, the Committee had engaged in months of preparation for its Hoffa hearings. No one was more determined to bring down Hoffa than Robert Kennedy, but James Hoffa was not ready to go down without a fight.
Chapter Three: Gangsters and Pay-Offs (August 1957 – December 1957)

James Riddle Hoffa faced the McClellan Committee for the first time on August 20, 1957. At the time, Hoffa was Vice President of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and President of the Central Conference of Teamsters, the Michigan Conference of Teamsters, Joint Council 43 of Detroit, and Local 299. He had powerful influence in the Teamsters Union, and was a formidable force for the Committee to take on. When the hearings began, the Committee had a number of leads on Hoffa, outlined in a forty-eight-point indictment entitled, “Conflicts of Interest and Questionable Actions of James R. Hoffa.” The document, which was issued by Senator McClellan three days after the hearings began, is divided into subsections, highlighting the varied nature of Hoffa’s questionable actions. The Committee was prepared to question Hoffa about his misuse of union funds, which ultimately amounted to around $9.5 million, as well as about his “Questionable Associates,” including racketeers like Johnny Dio, ex-convicts like Barney Baker, and mobsters like Joey Glimco. Evidence suggested that Hoffa was entangled in a web of questionable business transactions involving union money, and was also entrenched in a complicated network of criminals and underworld figures. The Committee had a solid case against Hoffa, but, in the words of Robert Kennedy, he “was no stranger to a witness stand.” Hoffa had “previously appeared before another Congressional committee, and had come from his bribery trial” a month before the first round of hearings began. He had also

137 Testimony of James R. Hoffa, Investigation of Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Hearings Before the Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Eighty-Fifth Congress, Part 13, August 20, 1957, pgs. 4930-4931.
139 “Conflicts of Interest and Questionable Actions of James R. Hoffa,” August 23, 1957; Vol. 4, pg. 4; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
141 Kennedy, The Enemy Within, 72.
faced a number of charges throughout his labor career in Detroit.\textsuperscript{142} Hoffa was confident going into the hearings, and with good reason.\textsuperscript{143} He had power, the support of the Teamsters, and a talent for evading charges. The first round of hearings in August 1957 was only one battle in what was to become a long war.

When Hoffa received subpoenas from Pierre Salinger and Carmine Bellino on August 8, he launched into “a speech and a lecture.”\textsuperscript{144} In a memo to Kennedy from Bellino, Hoffa reportedly made claims that:

\begin{quote}
…the committee was out to defeat him for the presidency of the Teamsters before election; that [Kennedy] wanted to be Governor; that [Kennedy] would not be Governor by using him; that the statements linking him with New York City and the racketeers\{sic\} were false and untrue and that there would be a day of reckoning.\textsuperscript{145}
\end{quote}

Bellino adds, “We listened and told him we were not there for a lecture from him.”\textsuperscript{146} Salinger and Bellino then asked him for his “personal records” and his bank accounts, but Hoffa claimed that he did not keep personal records and that he handled all his transactions in cash.\textsuperscript{147} Hoffa’s highly defensive behavior throughout this encounter was testament to his own cognizance that he was deeply embroiled in questionable matters both financial and personal, and that the Committee was prepared to present evidence implicating him in these matters.

Johnny Dio was one of the New York racketeers to whom Hoffa referred in his “lecture” to Salinger and Bellino. In a memo filed with documents from early 1957, the Committee wrote, “In the New York City area the staff has done considerable investigative work which tends to indicate that Hoffa has attempted to extend his control of the nation’s trucking by gaining control

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{142} Kennedy, \textit{The Enemy Within}, 72.
\bibitem{143} Schlesinger, Jr., \textit{Robert Kennedy And His Times}, 156.
\bibitem{144} Memorandum from Carmine S. Bellino to Robert F. Kennedy RE: James R. Hoffa, August 8, 1957; Vol. 3; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
\bibitem{145} Memo from Bellino to Kennedy RE: James R. Hoffa; Vol. 3; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
\bibitem{146} Memo from Bellino to Kennedy RE: James R. Hoffa; Vol. 3; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
\bibitem{147} Memo from Bellino to Kennedy RE: James R. Hoffa; Vol. 3; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
\end{thebibliography}
of the New York Teamsters Joint Council.”

Hoffa used Dio in New York gain control of taxi-cab locals in New York in 1955. According to the memo, “There had been developing in New York for several years a bitter fight for the control of the joint council between Hoffa and anti-Hoffa forces. These Dio locals were chartered on the eve of the election and their voters were the balance of power needed to elect the pro-Hoffa forces.”

The locals under Dio’s control had been chartered by the Teamsters in 1955 “under extremely curious circumstances,” in which “Many of those who became officials of the newly chartered teamster[sic] locals had no connection whatever with the labor movement.” By collaborating with Dio, Hoffa gained control over enough locals in New York to ensure the Joint Council would be under the control of his own forces. The memo adds, “it would appear that Hoffa has used underworld figures in numerous other areas in order to enhance and extend his domination of the Teamsters.”

When the trial began in August, Hoffa “seemed confident,” according to Kennedy, “that he would be able to charm his way through and that the Committee would soon forget about him and he would be free to go his way as before.” This did not happen. By the time the Committee began questioning Hoffa about Dio a few days into his hearings, Hoffa had developed less-than-confident strategies to avoid incriminating himself. According to Kennedy, “In the first of our series of hearings he relied principally on a bad memory to get him through; for the AFL-CIO had taken a stand against letting their union officers take the Fifth on matters that involved their administration of union affairs.” He commonly used phrases such as, “I don’t want to be held to this,” and prefaced comments with noncommittal phrases like “I

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148 Unlabeled memorandum circa early 1957; Vol. 1; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
149 Unlabeled memo; Vol. 1; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
150 Unlabeled memo; Vol. 1; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
151 Unlabeled memo; Vol. 1; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
152 Kennedy, The Enemy Within, 72.
153 Kennedy, The Enemy Within, 72-73.
believe,” or “I think.” More amusing, as Kennedy cites, were phrases like, “To be the best of my recollection I must recall on my memory I cannot remember.” When Kennedy questioned Hoffa about his intentions to bring Dio into the Teamsters Union, Hoffa’s comments were reflective of his overall testimonial to the Committee; Kennedy asked if Hoffa had argued to bring Dio into the Teamsters, and Hoffa said, “Not to my recollection. There seems to be a difference of opinion, but not to my recollection.” Kennedy later asked if Hoffa had taken any meetings or discussed the union with Dio aside from one recorded encounter, to which Hoffa replied, “It is possible I could have. I don’t remember.” While Hoffa’s behavior was transparent to the Committee and to the general public, it was clear that the Committee would have to rely on a plethora of other witnesses to build a more conclusive case against him.

Kennedy had a number of reflections about the first hearings with Hoffa. He remembered, “The hearings were always tedious and a physical and mental strain.” Of Hoffa, he said, “I think he saw the whole investigation simply as a fight between the two of us – Bobby Kennedy and Jimmy Hoffa don’t like each other. To him, it was a personality clash, not the United States versus corruption.” Kennedy may have seen the investigation this way as well. While Hoffa may have interpreted the feud as one man’s personality against another, Kennedy saw it as corruption personified against legitimacy personified. For Kennedy, Hoffa was a symbol of all that was corrupt, and Kennedy was part of a team that symbolized restoring order.

154 Hoffa, Hearings Before the Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Part 13, August 21, 1957, pgs. 5109-5110.
155 Kennedy, The Enemy Within, 73.
156 Hoffa, Hearings Before the Select Committee, Part 13, August 21, 1957, pg. 5113.
157 Hoffa, Hearings Before the Select Committee, Part 13, August 21, 1957, pg. 5114.
158 Kennedy, The Enemy Within, 74.
159 Kennedy, The Enemy Within, 74.
and legitimacy to union affairs. Their feud was personal, regardless of the way either perceived it.\textsuperscript{160} This is perhaps nowhere better exemplified than in Kennedy’s own words:

In the most remarkable of all my exchanges with Jimmy Hoffa not a word was said. I called it “the look.” It was to occur fairly often, but the first time I observed it was on the last day of the 1957 hearings. During the afternoon I noticed that he was glaring at me across the counsel table with a deep, strange, penetrating expression of intense hatred… It was the look of a man obsessed by his enmity, and it came particularly from his eyes. There were times when his face seemed completely transfixed with this stare of absolute evilness.\textsuperscript{161}

Hoffa hated that Kennedy, who to him was nothing more than a spoiled young man riding his family’s coattails, was the man who had the potential to determine his future success or failure.\textsuperscript{162} Kennedy hated that Hoffa had the audacity to extend his power by any means at the expense of the rank-and-file. The investigation was personal for both.

The rest of the 1957 hearings heard testimony from a number of racketeers, associates of Hoffa, and Teamsters members who had pertinent information regarding Hoffa’s misconduct. A memo produced in mid-1958 entitled, “Hoffa’s Connections with Ex-Convicts and Underworld Figures In and Out of the Labor Movement,” provides a telling summary of the 1957 hearings. The memo begins by citing three different statements Hoffa made during the hearings in which he expressed a commitment to “investigate certain individuals within the Teamsters Union who have Police records.”\textsuperscript{163} The list includes eighteen men with criminal histories, notably, Anthony “Tony Ducks” Corallo, Barney Baker, Samuel “Shorty” Feldman, and Joseph Gilmco.\textsuperscript{164} As Kennedy reflected:

…there was no group that better fits the prototype of the old Al Capone syndicate than Jimmy Hoffa and some of his chief lieutenants in and out of the union… They are sleek, often bilious and fat, or lean and cold and hard. They have the smooth faces and cruel eyes of gangsters; they wear the same rich clothes, the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{160} Schlesinger, Jr., \textit{Robert Kennedy And His Times}, 160-161.
\item \textsuperscript{161} Kennedy, \textit{The Enemy Within}, 74.
\item \textsuperscript{162} Schlesinger, Jr., \textit{Robert Kennedy and His Times}, 154.
\item \textsuperscript{163} “Hoffa’s Connections with Ex-Convicts and Underworld Figures In and Out of the Labor Movement,” circa mid-1958; Vol. 30, Box No. 71; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
\item \textsuperscript{164} “Hoffa’s Connections with Ex-Convicts and Underworld Figures;” Vol. 30, Box No. 71; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
\end{itemize}
diamond ring, the jeweled watch, the strong, sickly-sweet-smelling perfume... And they have criminal records to compare with those of the old Capone mob.¹⁶⁵

One of the men who perhaps best fit this description was Dio. The racketeer was a major player in Hoffa’s entourage of criminals, and would later expose some of the men listed in the 1958 summary.

When Dio appeared before the Committee on August 8, 1957, he, according to a New York Times article, “invoked the Fifth Amendment about 140 times...”¹⁶⁶ Pleading the Fifth did not help Dio. As Joseph A. Loftus writes in the same article, Dio “became an involuntary witness against himself... when the committee played two recorded telephone taps in the crowded hearing room.”¹⁶⁷ The tapes, which were “corroborated by a New York detective” demonstrated that, “Dio was a part of the labor union network of James R. Hoffa” and that “a little-known Teamsters’ boss, Tony (Ducks) Corallo, may be even more powerful than Dio in the New York labor rackets.”¹⁶⁸ According to the 1958 memo previously cited, Corallo was Vice President of Local 293, and also “controlled Local 875 and Local 275...”¹⁶⁹ Both the New York Times article and the memo discuss Corallo’s joint attempt with Dio to “rig an election of Hoffa’s candidate, John O’Rourke as President of Joint Council 16 of New York City.”¹⁷⁰ Corallo’s criminal record included 12 arrests “on charges ranging from robbery, grand larceny, and narcotics.”¹⁷¹ Kennedy wrote that, “Carmine Bellino, who has seen his share, said Corallo was the meanest, toughest gangster he had ever seen.”¹⁷² Within a few weeks, the Committee had uncovered Hoffa’s

¹⁶⁵ Kennedy, *The Enemy Within*, 75.
¹⁶⁹ “Hoffa’s Connections with Ex-Convicts and Underworld Figures;” Vol. 30, Box No. 71; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
¹⁷⁰ “Hoffa’s Connections with Ex-Convicts and Underworld Figures;” Vol. 30, Box No. 71; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
¹⁷¹ “Hoffa’s Connections with Ex-Convicts and Underworld Figures;” Vol. 30, Box No. 71; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
¹⁷² Kennedy, *The Enemy Within*, 81.
undeniable involvement with exceptionally questionable characters. As the hearings progress, this trend would only continue.

In September, after both Hoffa and Dio had appeared before the Committee, Hoffa and then-Teamsters President Dave Beck faced the AFL-CIO’s Ethical Practices Committee. As summarized by a *New York Times* article, “the teamster leaders denied the charges” that had been brought against them by the Ethical Practices Committee – charges that “were based largely on evidence presented to the Senate Select Committee…” Importantly, “the teamster officials pledged themselves to initiate reforms at their annual convention,” which was to occur at the end of the month. With this statement, the Teamsters, “in effect told the parent organization that they would be judged by their own convention and not by the A.F.L.-C.I.O. Executive Council, and that the election of a teamster president was the teamsters’ own business.” As noted in the article, “If the council finds the charges true, it can- and most certainly will – recommend expulsion of the teamsters from the federation.”

Beck’s retirement, a result of the charges brought against him by the Committee hearings earlier in 1957, had paved the way for Hoffa to seek election as Teamsters president. As newspapers speculated whether or not the Teamsters would be ousted from the AFL-CIO, Hoffa focused on his upcoming election. To the horror of the McClellan Committee, and to the dismay of the American public, Hoffa was indeed elected President of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters at the aforementioned convention on October 4. In another *New York Times* article, A. H. Raskin reports that Hoffa voiced concern about the Teamsters position within the AFL-CIO, and “appealed for time to prove that he could

make the teamsters ‘a model of trade unionism.’”\(^{177}\) According to the article, the AFL-CIO had “ordered the 1,400,000-member Teamsters Union to get rid of corrupt leadership by Oct. 24 or face suspension.”\(^{178}\) Hoffa had told the McClellan Committee that he would work to fight criminal influences within the Teamsters,\(^ {179}\) and seemed confident at his election that “actions by the union at the week-long convention,” would satisfy both the McClellan Committee and the AFL-CIO.\(^ {180}\) But at the same time Hoffa espoused intentions to satisfy the AFL-CIO, he also declared, “expulsion would not destroy the teamsters.”\(^ {181}\) Hoffa knew that the fight was far from over.

On December 4, the AFL-CIO announced that it would oust “the country’s biggest and most powerful union.”\(^ {182}\) Expulsion meant that the Teamsters would “be denied representation in state and local central bodies” of the AFL-CIO, but it symbolically represented the Federation’s disapproval of the existence of criminal leaders within the Teamsters Union, as well as the Union’s failure to adequately address the problem of criminal influence.\(^ {183}\) The decision, though not entirely unexpected, was nonetheless dramatic. Adding insult to injury, still pending at the time of the Teamsters’ expulsion was the verdict of Hoffa’s wiretapping trial in New York. Hoffa faced a potential jail sentence for “conspiring to tap telephones in the union’s Detroit headquarters… to find out what information union subordinates were giving to official racket investigations.”\(^ {184}\) Luckily for Hoffa, fortune was on his side. On December 20, the jury

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\(^{179}\) Hoffa’s Connections with Ex-Convicts and Underworld Figures In and Out of the Labor Movement.” Vol. 30.


announced “that it was hopelessly deadlocked.” Hoffa was later acquitted when the case was retried in 1958. Thus, while Hoffa faced a major setback with the expulsion of his union from the AFL-CIO, he once again managed to evade criminal charges and maintain his position of power.

While the AFL-CIO was primarily concerned with the existence of racketeers and mobsters within the Teamsters Union, the McClellan Committee also began to uncover increasing amounts of financial misconduct within in the union in 1957. The Committee certainly continued to investigate the Union’s criminal ties, as evidenced by the previously mentioned report “Hoffa’s Connections with Ex-Convicts and Underworld Figures,” but it soon became clear to Kennedy and the rest of the Committee that Hoffa’s financial integrity deserved ample investigation. In the “48 Point Statement or Indictment” of James R. Hoffa, over half of the points listed are related to questionable loans, misuse of union funds, and business transactions. For example, Point 8 reads: “Local 337 of the Teamsters Union loaned $50,000 to the Northville Downs Racetrack, a trotting horse track in Michigan, where long-time associate of James R. Hoffa, Owen Brennan, a Teamster Union official, raced part of his string of harness horses.” The next point is even more conspicuous: “James R. Hoffa’s home Local 299 and Local 337 in Detroit, Michigan, purchased the home of Paul “The Waiter” Ricca, notorious mobster of the Capone gang who has been ordered deported from this country.” Another incident listed in the indictment, and of particular importance to the Committee, involved a trucking company called Test Fleet Corporation. According to points 16 and 17:

...Commercial Carriers, Inc., a trucking company with contracts with the Teamsters Union, played a part in setting up the Test Fleet Corporation. The General Counsel of Commercial Carriers, Mr. James Wrape,

186 Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy And His Times, 158.
187 “Conflicts of Interest and Questionable Actions of James R. Hoffa;” Vol. 4; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
188 “Conflicts of Interest and Questionable Actions of James R. Hoffa;” Vol. 4; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
189 “Conflicts of Interest and Questionable Actions of James R. Hoffa;” Vol. 4; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
incorporated the Test Fleet Corporation in Tennessee under his name. Elliot Beidler, accountant for Commercial Carriers, kept the books and records of Test Fleet for four years at no salary…. After the company was set up the stock was quietly transferred into the names of Josephine Poszywak and Alice Johnson, the maiden names of Mrs. James Hoffa and Mrs. Owen Brennan… Commercial Carriers Corp. handed Test Fleet Corporation lush contracts for the transportation of Cadillacs. The Result: On an original investment of $4,000, Mrs. Hoffa and Mrs. Brennan received a new profit of $125,000 in the period from January 1949 to December 31, 1956.\footnote{\textit{Conflicts of Interest and Questionable Actions of James R. Hoffa;} Vol. 4; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.}

Kennedy reflected that when he asked Hoffa about Test Fleet during the August hearings, Hoffa claimed he did not know exactly how much his wife had made off of the company.\footnote{Kennedy, \textit{The Enemy Within}, 105.} Hoffa “insisted that there was nothing whatever wrong about his ownership in a trucking company… It was interesting, however, that Hoffa’s ownership in trucking companies was always hidden behind his wife’s maiden name.”\footnote{Kennedy, \textit{The Enemy Within}, 105-106.} It became clear that Hoffa was often more interested in making money than he was in being a labor leader.

Though Hoffa wanted it to seem as though his business transactions were acceptable and legitimate, the manner in which he conducted many of his purchases and investments reflects a rather conspicuous attempt to hide any association of his name with his business interests. He and his associate, Owen Brennan, used their wives maiden names not only for the Test Fleet Corporation, but also for “the payroll of a juke-box local… Each of them received $100 a week over a considerable period in a malodorous but profitable little arrangement designed to restore peace among the warring factions of the industry…”\footnote{Kennedy, \textit{The Enemy Within}, 107.} In this case, the “warring factions” were the union local and the Detroit mob.\footnote{Kennedy, \textit{The Enemy Within}, 107.} Also questionable to the Committee was the fact that Hoffa conducted many of his business transactions with cash. The Committee had a “signed, sworn affidavit” that Hoffa “had demanded and received cash pay-offs from Detroit laundry owners in return for sweetheart contracts.”\footnote{Kennedy, \textit{The Enemy Within}, 93.} According to his indictment, Hoffa also borrowed
thousands of dollars in loans from employers known to have contracts with the Teamsters, implying that Hoffa was involved in multiple pay-off schemes.\textsuperscript{196} Despite the evidence, and despite the large amounts of cash transactions that Hoffa was involved in, he denied in the hearings that the cash was used for pay-offs. Kennedy wrote, “Though Hoffa denied that he ever took bribes from employers, we found that he frequently had on hand enormous amounts of cash – far more than his income as a Teamster official could account for.”\textsuperscript{197} This was troubling to the Committee for a number of reasons. He claimed in the hearings that he simply “accumulated” the money, but would not divulge how.\textsuperscript{198} Further, Kennedy reflected, “Carmine Bellino found the attempt to trace where it all came from and where it went a frustrating experience, since Hoffa deals only in cash… maintains no bank account… has written only one personal check in his life… his records are apparently nonexistent; and his memory, when it comes to where he gets his money or where it goes, is terrible.”\textsuperscript{199}

There were cases where the misuse of union funds could at least indirectly be traced back to Hoffa. There were numerous examples of credit card statements billed to Teamsters locals, or checks written from Teamsters locals, that were used for personal expenses. For example, a memo to Robert Kennedy on November 12 reported:

American Airlines February 1953 Statement of Account to Joint Council #43, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, reveals the following credit card purchase of eight (8) passenger tickets for air travel from Detroit, Michigan, to Kingston, Jamaica… The total amount of the above mentioned statement is $2,434.29, which was paid April 14, 1953 with Joint Council #43 Check #6867 for the amount… An Air Travel Credit Card purchase receipt… indicates that tickets… were for Mr. and Mrs. J Hoffa. A receipt was also found indicating tickets… were for ‘Hoffa 15 years and Hoffa 11 years.’\textsuperscript{200}

\textsuperscript{196}“Conflicts of Interest and Questionable Actions of James R. Hoffa;” Vol. 4; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
\textsuperscript{197}Kennedy, The Enemy Within, 99.
\textsuperscript{198}Kennedy, The Enemy Within, 99.
\textsuperscript{199}Kennedy, The Enemy Within, 99.
\textsuperscript{200}Memorandum from W.H. Henson to Robert F. Kennedy RE: JAMES R. HOFFA; ROBERT HOLMES; Personal Expenses Paid With Union Funds, November 12, 1957; Box No. 66; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
Similarly, the “48 Point Statement or Indictment” of Hoffa listed that “More than $5,000 in union funds were paid to the Woodner Hotel in Washington, D.C. for the lodging of friends and associates of James R. Hoffa during his trial on bribery-conspiracy charges. This money came from union dues of Teamster members in Chicago, Detroit and St. Louis.”\(^{201}\) That Hoffa seemed to show a blatant disregard for the source of the Teamster funds he used to finance his vacations was not only problematic for him as president of the Teamsters, but it was also a major source of tension between him and Kennedy. Hoffa was furious that Kennedy was probing into his business, and Kennedy was disgusted that Hoffa could take advantage of the dues, and trust, of rank-and-file Teamsters members.\(^{202}\)

In addition to suspected pay-offs and bribes, covert attempts to profit from contracts and locals, and the use of union expenses for personal expenditures, a major financial issue that the Committee took interest in concerned a business operation involving a land development project in Florida called Sun Valley, Inc. Hoffa had been financing the development of a community in Florida using Teamster funds and a “front” in the form of man named Henry Lower, who, as Kennedy described, was “a fugitive from a California road gang when he went to work as a Teamster official.”\(^{203}\) In 1957, all the Committee knew was that two accounts had been opened at the Florida National Bank in Orlando, one in the name of the Teamsters, and one in the name of Sun Valley, Inc.\(^{204}\) According to a September 7 memo sent to Kennedy, “$300,000 was deposited in [the Teamsters] account,” and a smaller amount had been deposited in the Sun Valley account.\(^{205}\) Future hearings and further investigation would later reveal the whole story.

\(^{201}\) “Conflicts of Interest and Questionable Actions of James R. Hoffa,” August 23, 1957; Vol. 4; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
\(^{202}\) Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy And His Times, 163.
\(^{203}\) Kennedy, The Enemy Within, 108.
\(^{204}\) Memorandum from Carmine S. Bellino to Robert F. Kennedy RE: Sun Valley, Inc., September 7, 1957; Vol. 4; Hoffa 18-5; Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
\(^{205}\) Memo from Bellino to Kennedy RE: Sun Valley, Inc.; Vol. 4; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
According to Kennedy, “Lower had gone to Florida banks looking for ‘half a million’ in loans to develop Sun Valley. He told Mr. Ford, then president of the Florida National Bank, that if he got the $500,000 to improve the land he would make sure that a like amount - $500,000 – in Teamster funds would be placed in an account in the bank, interest free.” In 1956, the bank gave two loans to Lower worth $500,000 in total, and the Teamsters matched the loans with two separate deposits at no interest. Though an interest on the loans could have been profitable to the Teamsters, Hoffa simply told the Committee he made deposits without interest, “Because I wanted to.” As Kennedy recounted, “The plan to make a profit on this deal was simple. Lots cost Henry Lower only $18.75 each. They were sold for prices ranging from $150 to $500. Altogether about two thousand were sold, mostly to rank-and-file Teamsters…” There also were other complications. According to Kennedy, Lower used the Teamster loans for his own expenses, rather than for investing in the development of Sun Valley. As result, “The roads were not built, sewers and electricity not installed – and some of the lots… were still underwater… The Teamster members who had bought lots stood to lose their investments.” Once again, Hoffa had carelessly used union funds at the expense of rank-and-file Teamster members. What made the Sun Valley incident even worse was that in addition to misusing Teamster funds, Hoffa had also cheated the members who purchased unfinished lots in Sun Valley out of their purchases.

In less than six months, Kennedy and the McClellan Committee had uncovered not only that Hoffa was involved in a plethora of financial scandals, but also that he was associated with an extensive network of racketeers and gangsters. Hoffa had proved uncooperative and unhelpful.
in the first round of hearings; though his confidence waned as his associations with questionable characters were uncovered, his ascendance to the Teamsters presidency and his victory in evading charges in his New York wiretapping trial continued to supply him with a steady amount of security for the remainder of 1957. What Hoffa had begun to realize, however, was that with Kennedy as chief counsel of the Committee, he did have some reason for concern. Kennedy had embarked on a kind of moral crusade against Hoffa; fueled by his sense of righteousness and the need to prove himself as a prosecutor and as a member of the Kennedy family, Robert Kennedy was determined to bring Hoffa down. Tensions between Hoffa and Kennedy mounted throughout the Committee investigations, as it became ever more clear that Hoffa was a corrupt and contemptible labor leader, and Kennedy was a moral-hard liner with everything to prove.
1958 was the McClellan Committee’s most eventful year. It had the drama and the excitement of a movie, and it captured the interest of the nation. James Hoffa would face the Committee multiple times beginning in August, confronting ever-more embarrassing and incriminating accusations. The Committee itself faced its own drama when Senator Patrick McNamara (MI) resigned in May, producing a whirl of controversy about the Committee’s practices. Finally, tensions between Hoffa and Robert Kennedy continued to build as the hearings became more involved and increasingly personal. Through it all, the Teamsters continued to support Hoffa, and thus while his popularity amongst the American public waned, he maintained his vast power and control over the union. It was baffling to the Committee how and why a man who had so obviously breached the limits of power was able to remain in good standing with the rank-and-file union members – the very people he was exploiting. Hoffa’s gross misuse of union funds was contemptible, but his extensive involvement with members of the mob, racketeers, and criminals, was even more appalling – especially to Kennedy. Before the McClellan Committee, the mob had received relatively little publicity, and while the public knew it existed, the concept was a rather nebulous one. Gangs and gangsters had entered the public discourse in the 1930s as a resulted of the previously discussed Dewey racketeer investigations and the growing notoriety of gang leaders like Al Capone, but the extent of the network or connectedness of these gangs was unknown. As Hoffa’s involvement with the mob was uncovered throughout the McClellan Committee hearings, especially in 1958, the government and the American people learned, and took great interest in, organized crime. Largely as a result of the hearings, organized crime would quickly become a major interest of the U.S.

Kennedy, who abhorred the idea of the mob and everything it stood for, later had a significant influence on the extent of the U.S. Justice Department’s concentration on organized crime. In just two years, he would be Attorney General of the United States, and his hatred for the mob, as well as his commitment to minimizing its influence, would endure. So would his contempt for Hoffa.

At the beginning of 1958, many wondered what the Committee had accomplished other than relaying the corruption within the Teamsters Union to the public. A letter to Senator McClellan written on January 29 reflects this sentiment. Jerome Poorman of Michigan writes:

From a layman taxpayer’s viewpoint, it would appear that Hoffa thus far has come out of the investigation controversy ‘smelling like a lily’ … Throughout all of this period, and considering all of the ‘goons’ and other questionable characters who have taken the Fifth Amendment, it would appear that nothing has been accomplished by all of the weeks of investigation, castigations, aspersions and allusions notwithstanding… I could go even so far as to suspicion that through Mr. McNamara [Senator McNamara] your committee might have been thrown for another loss when dissension was created in your own group…

Robert Kennedy’s response to this letter is a succinct summary of what the Committee had accomplished as of January 1958, and an honest recognition of the large amount of work it still had left. Kennedy answers:

Our investigation of the Teamsters Union and Mr. Hoffa has conclusively demonstrated that racketeers and hoodlums have infiltrated at least this union to a major degree. The only lasting result of this, or any investigation, will be the legislation that emerges from the Congress that seeks to correct the evils uncovered… I am sure you realize that this Committee has no powers of prosecution and cannot be responsible for action or inaction of prosecuting authorities. However, the result of this Committee’s action has been a wholesale series of indictments in New York, convictions of labor racketeers for long terms, indictments and calling of grand juries… Regardless of these accomplishments, we must agree with you that there is much to be done, of course, and that the final results of this Committee will be written in the halls of Congress.

Inherent in this letter is also an indication of Kennedy’s own contempt for the Teamsters and for Hoffa. Even in what was a presumably carefully edited, standard response letter, there are notes

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212 Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy And His Times, 168.
213 Letter from Jerome L. Poorman to Senator McClellan, January 29, 1958; Box No. 68; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
214 Letter from Robert Kennedy to Jerome L. Poorman, February 12, 1958; Box No. 68; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
of the moral lens through which Kennedy saw the hearings. His use of words like “infiltrated”
and “evils” to describe the Union hardly suggest an apathetic, even-tempered opinion. A few
years later, Kennedy used similar language in The Enemy Within, writing of the Teamsters, “As
Mr. Hoffa operates it, this is a conspiracy of evil.”²¹⁵ By early 1958, the Committee had, as noted
by Kennedy in his letter, revealed that Hoffa and the Teamsters were involved with the world of
organized crime, but the extent of this involvement was yet to be uncovered.

In a memo from Pierre Salinger to Kenneth O’Donnell (Assistant Counsel), nine men
were listed as of particular interest to the Committee regarding the “Criminal Element in the
Teamsters Union” as of April 1958. First on the list was Anthony Corallo, the man who came
under the radar of the Committee in 1957 as a result of his relation to Johnny Dio. Corallo had
been, according to the memo, “considered a kingpin in the narcotics racket” for “a long time,”
and had been arrested twelve times between 1929 and 1945.²¹⁶ At the time, he was Vice
President of a Teamsters local in New York City. Number two on the list was Joseph Glimco,
described as “a long time friend and associate of old-time members of the Capone syndicate…
President of Local 777 of the Teamsters in Chicago… arrested twice for murder… extremely
close to… Hoffa.”²¹⁷ Glimco was known to be a corrupt union leader with ties to the mafia in
Chicago.²¹⁸ Similarly unsavory figures constituted the rest of the list. Samuel “Shorty” Feldman,
employed by a Teamsters local in Philadelphia, was a convicted for “burglary and attempted
grand larceny.”²¹⁹ Glenn W. Smith, head of the Kentucky State Conference of Teamsters, was
“convicted twice for burglary and larceny,” and was indicted “on charges of conspiracy to

²¹⁶ Memorandum to Kenneth O’Donnell from Pierre Salinger RE: Criminal Element in the Teamsters Union, 28 April 1958; Box
No. 70; Hoffa 18-5; Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record
Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
²¹⁷ Memo to O’Donnell from Salinger RE: Criminal Element in the Teamsters Union; Box No. 70; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
²¹⁸ Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy And His Times, 164.
²¹⁹ Memo to O’Donnell from Salinger RE: Criminal Element in the Teamsters Union; Box No. 70; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
commit a number of acts of violence throughout the State of Tennessee."²²⁰ Louis N. “Babe” Triscaro, employed by the Teamsters in Cleveland, was arrested for “shooting with intent to wound” and “assault with a dangerous weapon with an attempt to disfigure.”²²¹ Sam Goldstein, President of a Teamsters local in New York, was convicted of “running a gambling establishment” and was arrested for “unlawful entry and extortion.” John O’Rourke, International Vice President of the Teamsters, “was the front man for the underworld effort to capture the Teamster Joint Council #16 in New York City.”²²² Herman Kierdorf, an associate of Hoffa in Detroit, served jail time for armed robbery, and had also been arrested for kidnapping. Robert “Barney” Baker, “right-hand man and trouble shooter” for Hoffa, had been convicted of “throwing stench bombs” as well as “felonious and malicious injury to property.”²²³ It is worth noting not only the scope of the crimes committed by these men, but also their large geographic span of influence throughout the United States. These men were only nine out of many criminals that were brought to the attention of the Committee on behalf of their involvement with the Teamsters Union. As Kennedy notes, “We had derogatory information on over 150 Teamster officials, more than one hundred of whom appeared before the Committee and took the Fifth Amendment.”²²⁴ This number does not account for the unofficially Teamster-affiliated mafiosos or gangsters, like Momo Salvatore (Sam) Giancana, Joey Gallo, or Tony Provenzano, who were brought before the Committee in 1959.

The Committee prepared for its next round of hearings with Hoffa by collecting further information about his criminal ties, his misuse of union funds, and by serving subpoenas on various underworld figures. The momentum of the Committee had somewhat slowed, partly due

²²⁰ Memo to O’Donnell from Salinger RE: Criminal Element in the Teamsters Union; Box No. 70; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
²²¹ Memo to O’Donnell from Salinger RE: Criminal Element in the Teamsters Union; Box No. 70; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
²²² Memo to O’Donnell from Salinger RE: Criminal Element in the Teamsters Union; Box No. 70; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
²²³ Memo to O’Donnell from Salinger RE: Criminal Element in the Teamsters Union; Box No. 70; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
²²⁴ Kennedy, The Enemy Within, 92.
to growing internal divisions within the Committee, a surplus of work, and an abundance of incriminating information, but lack of hard evidence - like the recorded conversations of the previous year.225 Two major setbacks affected the Committee over a relatively short period of time: in April, Hoffa’s attorney requested that his hearing be deferred until the end of Hoffa’s wiretapping trial in New York.226 While the postponement was initially frustrating for the Committee, Kennedy and the rest of the Committee were particularly perturbed by Hoffa’s acquittal in June. In the interim of the wiretapping trial, Senator Patrick “Pat” McNamara, as previously mentioned, resigned from the Committee, and was replaced by Senator Frank Church (ID). The Committee, aside from investigating the Teamsters and Hoffa, had also been entrenched in late 1957 in an investigation into the Kohler Company and the United Auto Workers (U.A.W.) strike of 1955. According to an April 1 New York Times article:

Senator Pat McNamara, who has contented that recent hearings of the Senate rackets committee were ‘rigged against labor,’ quit that committee today… ‘The Kohler hearings demonstrated that I could spend my time more profitably on other committees,’ he told reporters. ‘I have more important things to do, comparatively, than waste my time on that committee.’227

As Kennedy reflected, McNamara “felt, particularly after the first year, that the Committee’s work was being used to blacken the name of labor as a whole. This was a matter of concern to him as to many others.”228 Because there was growing opposition to the Committee on the very grounds that it was simply out to get labor, Senator McNamara’s resignation was a large hurdle for the Committee. Kennedy and the Committee maintained, as he later wrote, “Because of limited jurisdiction our Committee could not go into improper activities of business per se, but only where there was some direct connection to labor.”229 Still, one of the major criticisms of the

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225 Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy And His Times, 158.
226 “Statistics – James R. Hoffa,” circa 1962; Vol. 94, Box No. 82; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
227 “M’NAMARA QUITS RACKETS INQUIRY: Senator Had Said It Was ‘Rigged Against Labor’…” New York Times 1 April 1958; 1, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
228 Kennedy, The Enemy Within, 301.
229 Kennedy, The Enemy Within, 216.
Committee, both then and in retrospect, was that it came to characterize itself as anti-labor rather than as anti-labor union corruption – this was precisely the confusion that Joseph Kennedy was afraid of when he advised his sons not to participate on the McClellan Committee. Indeed, most criticism holds that the Committee focused too heavily on problems within labor unions and too little on the culpability of employers.\textsuperscript{230} While further investigation into labor-management relations could have, at the very least, emphasized that the Committee was anti-corruption rather than anti-union, the Committee’s focus on labor unions and \textit{not} on management was reflective of their respective levels of involvement with gangsters and attempts to exploit innocent workers.

By the summer, the Committee was ready to launch its second investigation into Hoffa, which included an investigation of the then-elusive concept of the mafia. While Americans and the government had known since the 1930s that gangsters existed, they were largely unaware of the extent of their power and influence. The concept of “the mafia” had gained some attention in late 1957, when a meeting held at the home of a mafioso in Apalachin, New York was interrupted by a policeman, prompting the attendees to flee.\textsuperscript{231} Those who were caught were found to be involved in a slew of illegal activities – from narcotics trafficking to illicit labor investments – and it became clear that the strength and organization of the mafia had been severely underestimated.\textsuperscript{232} That the mafia was so powerful, so organized, and so influential was a startling discovery, particularly for Kennedy, who would discover firsthand just how great of a menace the mafia was to the United States. A number of memos illustrate the kind of information that Kennedy and the Committee began to uncover about the mafia’s influence in the realm of labor; for example, a memo from Walter Sheridan to Kennedy in December 1957 contained testimony from a labor racketeer who had known Hoffa for twenty years, and claimed

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\textsuperscript{231} Schlesinger, Jr., \textit{Robert Kennedy And His Times}, 167. \\
\textsuperscript{232} Schlesinger, Jr., \textit{Robert Kennedy And His Times}, 168. 
\end{flushright}
that “the Teamsters Union and the mob were in partnership. He said that he had personally
shaken down numerous employees with Hoffa’s knowledge and had given Hoffa cuts in the
proceeds.”233 Another memo sent to Kennedy in January 1958 reported that, “three former
members of the Capone Gang in Chicago had been brought to Miami, Florida to instruct
deleates to the [Teamsters] Convention, who appeared to be undecided whom to vote for.”234
There were also a number of leads regarding Hoffa’s close relationship with Barney Baker, a
man with a highly questionable past and known association with various mafiosos.

In early June, the Committee conducted a confidential interview with Barney Baker’s
former wife. The interview uncovered a number of telling facts about Baker. Mollie Baker
revealed that Baker, “worked for Murder, Incorporated in New York City and knows all the big
shots in the criminal world.”235 She told investigator Walter Sheridan that Barney “became
close” with John Vitale, “the Number One Man in the Mafia in St. Louis,” that Barney “had a
hand in passing the [kidnapping money of Bobby Greenlease] and that the Mafia got it,” that
Barney was “very close with Tom Burke,” who was “part of the old Capone mob and
participated in the Valentine’s Day killing in Chicago,” that Barney had “dealt in stolen furs,
stolen jewelry… and even dope,” and that “the Teamsters often used the mob in New York for
their dirty work.”236 Mollie Baker said that Barney Baker had threatened to kill her a number of
times, and that the only reason she was cooperating with the investigation was that “she wanted
some way or other to finally be free of Baker, either by sending him to jail or getting him

233 Memorandum from Walter J. Sheridan to Robert F. Kennedy RE: James R. Hoffa, December 10, 1957; Vol. 51; Hoffa 18-5,
Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National
Archives Building, Washington, DC.
234 Memorandum from James McShane to Robert F. Kennedy RE: Chicago Hoodlums at Teamster Convention, Miami, Florida,
January 30, 1958; Box No. 69; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or
Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
235 Confidential Memorandum from Walter Sheridan to Robert F. Kennedy RE: James R. Hoffa – Barney Baker, 2 June 1958;
Vol. 66, Box No. 76, pg. 1; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or
Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
236 Confidential memo from Sheridan to Kennedy RE: James R. Hoffa – Barney Baker; Vol. 66, Box No. 76, pgs. 2-3; Hoffa 18-
5; RG 46; NAB.
killed.”237 As Kennedy describes it, Baker became heavily involved with Teamsters over a short period of time: “Starting in Washington, D.C., he soon became the general organizer for the Teamsters in Missouri and finally was promoted by Hoffa to his present job” – aid to Hoffa at the Central Conference of Teamsters.238 When Baker was questioned by the Committee later in 1958, it became clear that not only was Baker indeed very close to Hoffa, who was directly responsible for Baker’s involvement with the Teamsters, but also that Baker was heavily involved with the mafia. When questioned about a gang war he was involved in with John O’Rourke in 1936, Baker, according to Kennedy, “claimed he didn’t know why he was shot.”239 He later testified that “he knew such sinister underworld figures as Joe Adonis, Meyer Lansky, the late Benjamin ‘Bugsy’ Siegel, ‘Trigger Mike’ Coppola, ‘Scarface’ Joe Bommarito, Jimmy ‘Blue Eyes’ Alo, Vincent ‘Piggy Mac’ Marchesi, and others.”240 Interestingly, as Kennedy points out:

During much of Barney Baker’s testimony, Jimmy Hoffa sat in the hearing room and chuckled as heard the man who ‘works under my direct orders’ admit association with killers, gangsters, gamblers, racketeers, traffickers in narcotics and human flesh. And when we asked Hoffa if this didn’t bother him at all, he said: ‘I am sure, hearing him testify here that he knew every one of them… it doesn’t disturb me one iota.’241

Though he admitted to association with various mafiosos and criminals, Baker denied his former wife’s claim that he was involved in the Greenlease kidnapping. William Moore reports in an August 21 Chicago Tribune article that, “Baker denied all knowledge of the ransom money, part of the $600,000 ‘blood money’ that the parents of little Bobby Greenlease of Kansas City paid his kidnappers in 1953 when the boy was already dead.”242 Curiously, as Moore also reports, Baker “went into a hospital – at the expense of James Hoffa’s Detroit teamsters joint council 43

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237 Confidential memo from Sheridan to Kennedy RE: James R. Hoffa – Barney Baker; Vol. 66, Box No. 76, pg. 5; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
238 Kennedy, The Enemy Within, 88.
239 Kennedy, The Enemy Within, 88-89.
240 Kennedy, The Enemy Within, 89-90.
241 Kennedy, The Enemy Within, 90.
242 William Moore, “Hoffa’s 370 Pound Union Aid Denies Link to Greenlease Kidnap Cash: Trips to Hospital Traced; Blon...” Chicago Daily Tribune 21 Aug. 1958: 10, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
– two days after the disappearance of $300,000 of the Greenlease ransom money.” Baker, Hoffa’s “right-hand man,” was entrenched in business of the mafia.

Baker was only one of a long list of mobsters or mafia assistants with whom Hoffa was associated. Joey Glimco had been called to testify in front of the Committee on April 24 – he invoked the Fifth Amendment 80 times during his testimony. As reported in the *Chicago Tribune*, Glimco, according to Kennedy, was “an associate of Capone Mobsters Tony Accardo, Jake (Greasy Thumb) Guzik, Murray (The Camel) Humphreys, Sam (Golf Bag) Hunt, Paul (The Waiter) Ricca, and Claude Maddox, and of the New York narcotics boss, Charles (Lucky) Luciano, who has been deported to Italy.” Glimco, according to the same article, was appointed rather than elected to the presidency of Local 777, and the Committee had discovered that he had a close personal relationship with Hoffa. Glimco’s misuse of union money and extensive connections to the mafia, particularly in light of his close association with Hoffa, was disconcerting to the Committee. Consequently, a few months after Glimco’s hearing, dozens of news articles reported that the Committee would be starting an investigation into the mafia, as it related to organized crime. On June 18, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* ran an article announcing that the Committee had “sought for a month to serve subpenas[sic] on Sam (Mooney) Giancana, a top man in the crime syndicate, and four lesser hoodlums… Subpenas[sic] already have been served on Paul (The Waiter) Ricca, Tony Accardo, and Claude Maddox.”

Many of these men were also listed as associates of Glimco.

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244 Memo to O’Donnell from Salinger RE: Criminal Element in the Teamsters Union; Box No. 70; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
246 Moore, “GLIMCO DUCKS 80 QUESTIONS IN RACKET QUIZ,” *Chicago Daily Tribune* 25 April 1958: 1
247 Memo to O’Donnell from Salinger RE: Criminal Element in the Teamsters Union; Box No. 70; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
248 “PROBERS SEEK HOODLUMS FOR SENATE QUIZ,” *Chicago Daily Tribune* 18 June 1958: 2, *ProQuest Historical Newspapers*. 249
On June 29, the *New York Times* ran an article entitled, “Senate Unit Seeks Inquiry on Mafia.” The language of the article is indicative not only of the ambiguity associated with the word “mafia” at the time, but also of the breakthrough the Committee was about to experience.

Joseph A. Loftus reports:

A Senate investigation of possibly the most pervasive and powerful racket combine in the country will reach the public-hearing stage on Monday… At the heart of it is the Mafia, or Black Hand, a criminal syndicate with fingers running into a dozen labor unions and forty different kinds of businesses… The combine operates from coast to coast and can be traced to Italy and to Charles (Lucky) Luciano, the deported gangster there.\(^{250}\)

Loftus later goes on to write, “Robert F. Kennedy… was asked if there was such a thing as the Mafia… ‘There is an organization,’ he replied. ‘There is authority and there are leaders. Some call it ‘the syndicate.’ Some call it the Mafia. It takes action against those who don’t follow its rules and regulations.’”\(^{251}\) The article later says that the focus of the Committee’s hearings would be Vito Genovese, “a participant in the Apalachin meeting [in New York, 1957],” with “union connections on the New York waterfront.”\(^{252}\) The uncertainty inherent in this article points to the fact that even by mid-June, when the Committee was privy to an abundance of evidence regarding mafia involvement in the Teamsters Union, they still were unaware of the gravity of their discovery. This would be the first time that the mafia would be so intensely and publicly investigated, and it would forever change the way Americans thought of the mafia. Robert Kennedy was particularly affected. In 1960, he wrote:

The results of the underworld infiltration into labor-management affairs forms a shocking pattern across the country. We found and duly proved that the gangsters of today work in a highly organized fashion and are far more powerful now than at any time in the history of the country. They control political figures and threaten whole communities. They have stretched their tentacles of corruption and fear into industries both large and small. They grow stronger everyday.\(^{253}\)


\(^{253}\) Kennedy, *The Enemy Within*, 240.
Before the Hoffa hearings began, *The New York Times* ran an article speculating whether or not Hoffa would successfully be able to clear gangsters, mafiosos, racketeers, and criminals out of the Teamsters Union. A.H. Raskin writes that while Teamsters membership was on the rise, and Hoffa had taken steps to legitimize the union by cooperating with a board of monitors, replacing “international trustees,” and forgoing “outside business interests,” for Hoffa, “the real test is still ahead. Not one goon in the Hoffa machine has yet been lopped off the teamster payroll.” On August 1, in response to some derogatory comments Hoffa had made about the Committee, Senator McClellan released a statement in anticipation of the hearings:

> Mr. Hoffa’s evil and distorted opinion of the work of this Committee is of small consequence indeed. The Congress and the American people want this job done. The Committee will not be deterred by his offensive remarks in this instance, or hereafter. We shall continue to expose the corrupt and filthy racketeers and underworld elements who are exploiting decent, honest working people, and who are attempting to gain a dominate power over the economy of our nation… The only effect of Hoffa’s abusive language about the Committee is to confirm the wisdom of our course and the necessity and desirability of continuing with our work. The expressions of confidence which we are receiving from labor leaders and many other citizens encourage us to go further, and more strongly, against labor racketeers.

Four days later, Hoffa appeared before the Committee for the first time that year.

The first few days of the hearings were dominated by a new batch of financial controversies concerning Hoffa. An article in the *Utica Daily Press* reported that the Committee was “running behind schedule,” and that in the coming days, “Hoffa would be questioned about the union activities of Frank ‘Human Torch’ Kierdorf,” which “was supposed to have been followed during yesterday’s [August 6th] sessions.” An air of anticipation is clear in the article; Kelso writes, “Sen. Irving M. Ives…. Said that during the course of the so-called Hoffa probe the gangland conclave at Apalachin might come up, but Ives did not elaborate… Chief counsel

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255 Senator John L. McClellan’s Statement, August 1, 1958; Vol. 40, Box No. 71; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

256 John Kelso, “Union Funds Used for Loan: Hoffa Aide Testifies; Tie-In with Apalachin Hinted by Sen. Ives,” *Utica Daily Press* 7 Aug. 1958; Box No. 70; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
Kennedy said sometime ago that ‘another batch’ of Apalachin witnesses would be called towards the end of this month. The first two days of the hearings were, however, focused on more of Hoffa’s questionable loan-lending, business ventures, strike settlements, and use of union funds for personal expenses. The primary focus of the first two days of the Hoffa hearings was an alleged strike pay-off of the Detroit Laundering Institute. Hoffa denied “that he took any pay-off money from the laundrymen or from Joe Holtzman or Jack Bushkin [labor consultants].” According to Kennedy, the Committee “knew, and [Hoffa] admitted, that he had borrowed $5,000 from Holtzman and $5,000 from Bushkin – without note, interest or security. But that $10,000 in cash was a ‘loan,’ not a pay-off, he said.” Hoffa loved to characterize any questionable financial conduct as a loan, but his guilt in this specific case was highly probable. Three other people testified to the fact that the money was indeed a pay-off, not a loan.

The number of instances of financial misconduct directly relating to Hoffa was astounding. To name every case would be futile; in a July 23 memo from Carmine Bellino to Kennedy, entitled, “Tentative and Partial Outline for Hoffa Hearing,” over half of the points listed on the six-page outline deal with questionable funds and expenses. These points do not include the plethora of leads the committee received in the months leading up to the second round of hearings. For example, checks worth thousands of dollars were issued from Local 299, the Central Conference of Teamsters, and Local 41 for “Investigation of truck lines, legal fees, rooms for [Nate] Stein at the Hotel Bellerive… advertising and publicity expenses for the James

257 Kelso, “Union Funds Used for Loan,” *Utica Daily Press*; Box No. 70; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
261 Memorandum from Carmine S. Bellino to Robert F. Kennedy RE: Tentative and Partial Outline for Hoffa Hearing, 23 July 1958; Vol. 42, Box No. 72; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
R. Hoffa testimonial dinner, Sheraton Cadillac Hotel, Airplane fare to Israel…” 262 In a confidential interview with boxer Embrel Davidson, who “expressed considerable concern for his safety if knowledge of his interview got back to Hoffa or [Owen] Brennan,” it was revealed that Davidson was advised to go to Brennan, Hoffa’s close associate, for a new contract. 263 Brennan introduced Davidson to Hoffa, and told Davidson, “I’ll be fair with you but don’t ever f____ me. If you do I’ll f____ you good [formatting reflects that of original memo].” 264 When Hoffa was questioned about why Davidson “had been paid $75.00 a week by the Michigan Conference of Teamsters Welfare Fund from late 1952 to early 1954” despite “perform[ing] no services whatsoever for this money,” Hoffa said, “I can state to the Chair and to the record that any money that was paid to Davidson, which I had no knowledge of, if it had any part of the fighting, fight promotion, which I was a partner of Brennan of, I firmly believe the money should be immediately returned to the Health and Welfare Fund.” 265 McClellan later sent up a follow-up letter to ask if this money had been repaid. There were a plethora of other instances of financial misconduct on behalf of Hoffa of a similar nature, though the focus of the committee remained both on the Sun Valley project, and on the aforementioned Detroit Laundry pay-off.

On August 7th, the Committee finally asked Hoffa about his association with Kierdorf. Kennedy asked Hoffa whether he had, “in accordance with [his] statement before the committee last year… made an investigation or had made an investigation,” of Kierdorf, whom Kennedy prefaced as “a business agent for local 332 up in Flint, Mich.,” and “in the penitentiary for armed

262 Memorandum from Harold Ranstad & Charles Mattox to files RE: Film Truck, Service, Inc…, 9 Aug. 1958; Box No. 70; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
263 Confidential Memorandum from James P. Kelly to Robert F. Kennedy RE: Embrel Davidson – James R. Hoffa; Bert Brennan, August 2, 1958; Vol. 42, Box No. 72; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
264 Confidential memo from Kelly to Kennedy RE: Embrel Davidson – James R. Hoffa; Bert Brennan; Vol. 42, Box No. 72; Hoffa 18-5, RG 46; NAB.
265 Letter from John L. McClellan to the Trustees of the Michigan Conference of Teamsters; Vol. 50, Box No. 72A; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
robery."  

Hoffa claimed, “I checked into Frank Kierdorf’s record. I found out that the offense he had committed was not connected with the union.” The following exchange between Kennedy and Hoffa is indicative both of their impatience with each other, as well as Hoffa’s quintessentially evasive responses:

MR. HOFFA: …I say that Frank Kierdorf – we needed an opening, needed an experienced man, and Kierdorf was recommended for the position.
MR. KENNEDY: Why, Mr. Hoffa? Wasn’t there in the city of Flint, Mich., another man that could serve the position of business agent for the local other than someone who just came out of the penitentiary?
MR. HOFFA: We needed an experienced organizer for the position; there is plenty of men in Flint,[sic] capable of handling this job.
MR. KENNEDY: Is it a good training to be serving time in the penitentiary for armed robbery, to serve as a business agent for a local?
MR. HOFFA: No sir,[sic] it isn’t.
MR. KENNEDY: You said you needed a good business agent.
MR. HOFFA: I am very certain that Frank Kierdorf, working with Herman [Kierdorf, his uncle], had experience prior to going into the penitentiary. I am quite sure of that.
MR. KENNEDY: The only experience we can find, Mr. Hoffa, is the experience in armed robbery.
MR. HOFFA: Well –
MR. KENNEDY: Why did you employ him, then?
MR. HOFFA: I told you, sir.

Hoffa’s responses were often frustrating. He refused to admit that anything he did – whether financial or otherwise – was illegal, unethical, or unfair. The cited exchange between Hoffa and Kennedy is emblematic of nearly all their exchanges; Kennedy relentlessly implicates Hoffa, and Hoffa evades admitting guilt with equal stubbornness.

The same day, the Committee also questioned Hoffa about Tony Corallo. As previously mentioned, Corallo controlled a number of Teamsters locals, and was arrested numerous times. Hoffa claimed, “I never met the man, don’t know the man, and never checked with the man.” Senator John F. Kennedy asked Hoffa, “It has been a year since you came before the committee or taken any action. I thought he was one of the worst witnesses we had last summer; have you

266 Investigation of Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Hearings Before the Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Eighty-Fifth Congress, Part 36, 7 August, 1958, pg. 13510.
267 1958, pg. 13510.
268 Hearings Before the Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Part 36, 7 August, 1958, pg. 13511.
269 Hearings Before the Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Part 36, 7 August, 1958, pg. 13524.
taken any action about it?” Hoffa replied, “Not yet, no, sir.” Kennedy quipped, “Weren’t you disturbed? He was pretty well characterized before this committee as one of the most notorious hoodlums we had in the country. Do you mean to say that didn’t cause some disturbance in your mind, some distress about the reputation of the Teamsters?”

Hoffa merely complained that he had not had enough time, and in an attempt to placate the situation, said, “In my opinion, the situation will be corrected,” and later, “There will be action in due time.”

It was yet another unsatisfying conclusion to a round of questions that would likely have caused anyone else to buckle under the pressure.

If there was any doubt about the tensions between Robert Kennedy and Hoffa at this point, the ambiguity certainly ended with a contentious exchange between the two during the hearings that same day. The conversation is as follows:

MR. KENNEDY: Mr. Hoffa, after the hearing was over on Tuesday, while leaving the hearings after these people had testified regarding this matter [the Detroit Laundry strike pay-off], did you say, ‘That S.O.B., I’ll break his back’?

MR. HOFFA: Who?

MR. KENNEDY: You.

MR. HOFFA: Say it to who?

MR. KENNEDY: To anyone. Did you make that statement after these people testified before this committee?

MR. HOFFA: I never talked to either one of them after they testified.

MR. KENNEDY: I am not talking about them. Did you make that statement here in the hearing room after the testimony was finished?

MR. HOFFA: Not concerning them, as far as I know.

MR. KENNEDY: Who did you make it about, then?

MR. HOFFA: I don’t know. I may have been discussing someone in a figure of speech. I don’t even remember it.

MR. KENNEDY: Whose back were you going to break, Mr. Hoffa?

MR. HOFFA: It was a figure of speech. I don’t know what you are talking about.

MR. KENNEDY: I am trying to find out whose back you were trying to break.

MR. HOFFA: It is a figure of speech.

MR. KENNEDY: A figure of speech about what?

MR. HOFFA: I don’t know.

MR. KENNEDY: Who were you talking about?

MR. HOFFA: I have no knowledge of what you are talking about.

MR. KENNEDY: Do you deny that you made the statement?

MR. HOFFA: I don’t recall making it.

MR. KENNEDY: Do you deny that you made it?

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270 Hearings Before the Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Part 36, 7 August, 1958, pg. 13526.

271 Hearings Before the Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Part 36, 7 August, 1958, pgs. 13526-13527.
MR. HOFFA: I could have made a remark to somebody we had been talking about the day before or the day after. It is a figure of speech.

MR. KENNEDY: Whose back were you going to break?
MR. HOFFA: It does not mean physically.
MR. KENNEDY: It’s find out whose back you were going to break figuratively.
MR. HOFFA: I don’t know. I don’t know.272

There is perhaps no exchange recorded in the hearings that better illustrates the tension, anger, and mutual disdain that Kennedy and Hoffa had for each other. Hoffa despised Kennedy. Kennedy detested what Hoffa stood for, and he loathed that Hoffa refused to admit or take responsibility for any one of the many crimes he had committed. Kennedy, however, did not dislike Hoffa in the same way that Hoffa abhorred him – evidence of this is inherent in the way Kennedy addresses Hoffa. Kennedy often seemed more amused by Hoffa’s noncompliance than embittered, while Hoffa undoubtedly appeared to grow more agitated with every question Kennedy asked.

On August 10, a telling article ran in the New York Times. Kennedy told the reporter, “There is no question that he [Hoffa] plans to take over the transportation of the country. He’s taken the first couple of steps along those lines.”273 From the hearings, it had seemed to the Committee that Hoffa was not concerned with a criminal presence within the Teamsters Union because, in the words of Senator Ives, he wanted “tough people to make it doggone tough on [the] people you [Hoffa] are leading. Just use force against them, if necessary.”274 These views were reaffirmed during last of the second round of Hoffa hearings in August 1958. Hoffa was questioned about his relationship with Samuel Feldman, and his answers to Kennedy’s questions were virtually identical to his answers about Corallo a few days before. He admitted that he had not made an effort to remove Feldman from his local, and said in response to Kennedy’s

272 Hearings Before the Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Part 36, 7 August, 1958, pgs. 13530-13531.
274 Hearings Before the Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Part 36, 7 August, 1958, pg. 13522.
reminder that Feldman “has 18 arrests, 2 convictions, and 2 prison terms,” simply, “I believe that was prior to his coming to the union and had nothing to do with the union, if what he tells me is correct.”\textsuperscript{275}

Hoffa was also questioned about Joey Glimco. Kennedy said to Hoffa, “I say you are not tough enough to get rid of these people,” and then proceeded to ask Hoffa why he had not taken action to remove a man who “is one of the close associates of Tony Accardo, Paul ‘The Waiter’ Ricca, the leading gangsters in Chicago,” with “36 arrests.”\textsuperscript{276} Hoffa again evaded the question. The rest of the day was spent inquiring Hoffa about even more questionable financial transactions, including “loans” and the purchase of furs.\textsuperscript{277}

After the August hearings, Hoffa sent a letter to Senator McClellan in which he pledged to root out the corruption within his union. He wrote:

This union has thousands of local union officers and business agents. A number of names have been mentioned before this Committee. Doubts have been raised in some minds about this question of alleged racketeers and gangsters… I intend to allay these doubts. I intend to meet squarely charges of corruption… I have consulted with our Union’s general Executive Board and I have received unanimous approval of the following proposal… That the International Brotherhood of Teamsters establish an Anti-Racketeering Commission composed of three outstanding citizens of this country, who shall counsel and advise with me on the question of each and every individual who is named by your Committee in relation to criminal record.\textsuperscript{278}

Whether or not Senator McClellan, or any other member of the Committee, had faith in Hoffa’s proposal is unknown. If the memory of the past hearings had any influence over their interpretation of this letter, however, it is highly likely that no one was too convinced, least of all Robert Kennedy. This was not the last time Hoffa would face the Committee in 1958 – he would have to answer to Kennedy and the senators again in September.

\textsuperscript{275} Hearings Before the Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Part 36, 12 August, 1958, pgs. 13630-13631.
\textsuperscript{276} Hearings Before the Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Part 36, 12 August, 1958, pgs. 13630-13637.
\textsuperscript{277} Hearings Before the Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Part 36, 12 August, 1958, pgs. 13650-13653.
\textsuperscript{278} Letter from James R. Hoffa to Senator John L. McClellan, August 22, 1958; Vol. 30, Box No. 71; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
Chapter Five: Tensions and Triumphs (September 1958 – September 1959)

When James Hoffa appeared before the Committee for the last time in 1958, there was an extraordinary amount of tension not only between Hoffa and Kennedy, but also between Hoffa and the Committee as a whole. For all the excitement and drama that defined the 1958 hearings, the year was also a frustrating one for the McClellan Committee. In addition to the Teamsters hearings, the Committee had conducted a series of U.A.W.-C.I.O. (United Auto Workers – Congress of Industrial Organizations) hearings that involved an investigation of U.A.W. leader Walter Reuther. While the Committee had been generally united by a unanimous distaste for Hoffa during the Teamsters hearings, it was bitterly split along party lines when it came to Reuther and U.A.W. Clark Mollenhoff reflects, “Partisan politics dominated the questioning. Bob Kennedy questioned the witnesses only to bring out the basic facts, then faded into the background as various Senators quarreled with witnesses and put into record speeches about their philosophies of unionism and government.”

Politics was again brought to the fore in June with the introduction of the Kennedy-Ives Bill to Congress. The bill aimed to fight union corruption through “impos[ing] minimum democratic standards on unions; curb[ing] some loose financial practices by requiring reports from unions, and in certain cases, from employers; soften[ing] some of the Taft-Hartley labor law provisions.” This entailed, amongst other things:

- Public disclosure of union internal processes and financial operations… Criminal penalties for failure to make reports, for false reports, for false entries, and for destruction of union records. Reporting and public disclosure of financial transactions and holdings by union officials that might conflict with their obligations to their members… Criminal penalties for payments by ‘middlemen’ to union officials…

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A direct response to the hearings, the Kennedy-Ives bill, named for Senator John F. Kennedy (D) and Senator Irving M. Ives (R), was soon criticized as a “middle-of-the-road” attempt to combat union corruption that “lack[ed] substance.”\textsuperscript{282} Though it passed in the Senate on June 18 by a vote of 88-1,\textsuperscript{283} it was defeated in the House a month later by a vote of 198-190.\textsuperscript{284} 71 percent of Democrats supported the bill, while only 23 percent of Republicans did.\textsuperscript{285} The major criticisms of the bill, as explained by a \textit{New York Times} article, were that “it would require annual reports on expenditures for certain types of labor relations activities, a provision they [employers] contended would jeopardize all employee communications; it did not go far enough in curbing unions in certain areas, such as secondary boycotts.”\textsuperscript{286} Senator Kennedy said of the bill’s defeat, “Only Jimmy Hoffa can rejoice at his continued good luck. Honest union members and the general public can only regard it as a tragedy that politics has prevented the recommendations of the McClellan committee from being carried out this year.”\textsuperscript{287}

As a result of the residual simmering intra-Committee hostilities and the failed Kennedy-Ives bill, the climate during the last round of Hoffa hearings in 1958 was, in a word, tense. Hoffa faced the Committee September 15\textsuperscript{th} through 18\textsuperscript{th}, during which time he was questioned primarily about further misuse of union funds and whether or not he had made any attempt to clean up the Teamsters Union. The first day of the hearings was defined by the latter, and as summarized by a \textit{New York Times Article}, “Between angry shouting bouts with Senate investigators, James R. Hoffa congratulated himself today on ‘an excellent job’ of cleaning up

\textsuperscript{282} “McClellan’s Blessing,” \textit{The Washington Post and Times Herald} 10 June 1958: A12, \textit{ProQuest Historical Newspapers}.
the International Brotherhood of Teamsters… the committee disagreed." There was a

“booming exchange” between Senator Ives and Hoffa, during which the former expressed his
agitation with the latter for failing to take action against criminal elements in his union time and
again. While Ives expressed the frustration of the Committee, no exchanges during the
September hearings seemed more personal than those between Hoffa and Kennedy. The tension
between the two men, as well as the Committee’s cognizance of their contempt for each other, is
perhaps best expressed by the following exchange between Hoffa, Senator McClellan, and

Senator Ives:

MR. HOFFA: I have a perfect right to be found innocent, I hope, as an American citizen of this country, and I
should not be criticized, in my opinion, for doing whatever was necessary during the course of that trial [refers to a
trial involving violation of a labor law] to be able to prove that I was not guilty, even though certain individuals on
this committee, one individual, did his utmost to convict me of something that the jury found me innocent of…
The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Hoffa, if you are referring to the chairman –
MR. HOFFA: No, sir; I am not. I distinctly –
SENATOR IVES: If you are referring to me, the same thing stands.
MR. HOFFA: No sir; I am referring to Robert Kennedy.
SENATOR IVES: Robert Kennedy is not the committee.
The CHAIRMAN: Just a moment. I take the responsibility for what he did, all of it. I make no apology. 289

Even a transcript, devoid of tone of voice or facial expression, demonstrates the agitation both
Senator McClellan and Senator Ives felt toward Hoffa. With each subsequent hearing, Hoffa’s
answers somehow became less straightforward, more convoluted, increasingly defensive and
evasive, and ever more condescending. His strategy was to avoid answering a question
succinctly in an effort to avoid incriminating himself without pleading the Fifth. By September,
his answers had crossed the line from defensive to rude, and his contempt for Kennedy was
obvious:

MR. KENNEDY: …Isn’t the main reason that you are not going to be able to get rid of these people [criminals and
gangsters], Mr. Hoffa, because you brought them in and you are dependent on them in the Teamsters Union, you are
dependent on their support?

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York Times 16 Sept. 1958: 1, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
289 Investigation of Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Hearings Before the Select Committee on Improper
Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Eighty-Fifth Congress, Part 40, 15 September 1958, pg. 15026.
MR. HOFFA: Well, I will not agree that that is correct. You cannot prove that it is correct, and you will never prove it is correct, and you haven’t proved now that it correct.
MR. KENNEDY: I think these records, and these hearings, that we have had in the Teamsters Union, prove that unequivocally it is correct and that is why you haven’t moved against one person.
MR. HOFFA: That is your opinion and I have mine.  

A similar exchange occurred during the hearings the following day when Kennedy was questioning Hoffa about allegedly financing one Gene San Soucie’s purchase of a personal car:

MR. HOFFA: It was a purchase as an individual car, for himself.
MR. KENNEDY: And with his own money?
MR. HOFFA: I don’t know what he would say about that. He would probably say he borrowed the money. I don’t know what he would say.
THE CHAIRMAN: That he borrowed it?
MR. HOFFA: And it could be worked out.
MR. KENNEDY: You mean just a little lie, a little white lie?
MR. HOFFA: A little lie. Just like the committee or anything else, you try to get information to accomplish the purpose you are after on the basis of what is right and wrong.
MR. KENNEDY: You mean you could tell this lie?
MR. HOFFA: No lie.
MR. KENNEDY: That is what you were going to do?
MR. HOFFA: No; it isn’t.
MR. KENNEDY: Was Mr. San Soucie going to say this was union funds used to purchase this car for this purpose?
MR. HOFFA: He could have very easily said that it was a loan and he borrowed the money.
MR. KENNEDY: Did he?
MR. HOFFA: The books show it was made out to him.
MR. KENNEDY: Did he borrow the money?
MR. HOFFA: He had the money. I could have made the loan to him, if it became a question.
MR. KENNEDY: I am asking you whether you set up the –
MR. HOFFA: I set it up deliberately to avoid a lawsuit. Let’s put it on the basis of where it belongs.
MR. KENNEDY: Mr. Hoffa, in the last 5 minutes, you have unveiled exactly what you are. I am telling you what we did. The record will show what we did, and then it doesn’t matter what you think. 

Kennedy’s relentless prosecuting certainly provoked Hoffa’s responses, but perhaps not enough to warrant such accusatory remarks. At one point, Senator Ives even intervened. Later that day, Kennedy was questioning Hoffa about the purchase of a home for Paul DeLucia, “the most notorious gangster in the United States.” Hoffa had used union funds to purchase the home, and the Committee was trying to ascertain whether or not this transaction was in the best interest of the rank-and-file Teamsters members. Hoffa was especially condescending toward Kennedy,

290 Hearings Before the Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Part 40, 15 September 1958, pg. 15030.
291 Hearings Before the Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Part 40, 16 September 1958, pg. 15045-15046.
292 Hearings Before the Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Part 40, 16 September 1958, pg. 15064.
repeatedly answering, “He apparently did” in response to questions asked of him about his associate, Bert Brennan.293 Suddenly, Senator Ives interjected:

SENATOR IVES: I object to the way the witness is answering these questions. After all, when he answers our counsel, he is answering the committee in effect.
MR. KENNEDY: I don’t mind at all.
SENATOR IVES: You may not, but I do. I do not mind how people answer me personally, either; but after all, you have to show some respect to these Senate committees, and I do not think that you do.
MR. HOFFA: He asked the question, should he bring Brennan in.
SENATOR IVES: It is your tone of voice, Mr. Hoffa, and your whole attitude that I do not like.294

Not all of the September Hoffa hearings were as tense or as personal as the aforementioned exchanges, but there was certainly a prevailing sense of annoyance and impatience on both sides over the course of the three days. The Committee questioned Hoffa about large checks made out to Nate Stein, a variety of questionable loans and expenses, and the Sun Valley expenditure.
They also continued to ask Hoffa about the boxer Embrel Davidson and his association to Brennan, as well as about Barney Baker and his influence on the Teamsters. The Committee probed Hoffa about his relationship with one Judge Gillis. According to a 1957 memo:

Judge Gillis had been in increasingly bad odor in the community, as a result of being a heavy drinker, and of having been in two unpleasant scrapes, one centering around a drunken brawl, and the other relating to his having been drunk and having urinated upon another man.”295

Hoffa had made a $15,601 deal with Joseph Schneider and his wife to create “a series of TV programs on the trucking industry and union.”296 The Schneider were close friends of Judge Gillis, who was in the middle of a campaign, and ended up not only being included in “the last couple of shows… to bolster… his standing,”297 but was also given $100 a week of the money

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291 Hearings Before the Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Part 40, 16 September 1958, pg. 15061.
292 Memorandum from Arthur G. Kaplan to Robert F. Kennedy RE: Detroit – James R. Hoffa – Judge Gillis, 29 October 1957; Box No. 66, pgs. 1-2; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
293 Memorandum from Sherman S. Willse to Robert F. Kennedy RE: James R. Hoffa – Joseph A. Gillis Interview of MR. AND MRS. JOSEPH A. SCHNEIDERS, 24 October 1957; Box No. 66; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
294 Memo from Kaplan to Kennedy RE: Detroit – James R. Hoffa – Judge Gillis; Box No. 66, pgs. 1-2; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
Hoffa had given to the Schneiders. Judge Gillis was, at the time, presiding over the extortion case of William Bufalino, among others, and the Committee wanted to know if Hoffa had “enter[ed] into a contract for television service… knowing and understanding, and as a part of the transaction, that $100 a week of that [$15,601 of Teamsters money] was going to go to a judge, a presiding judge of a court before whom [he] might have cases.” Hoffa claimed not to know.

1958 ended somewhat turbulently for the Committee. As Mollenhoff reflected:

There was a smirk of contempt on Jimmy Hoffa’s face as he completed his testimony the afternoon of September 18, 1958… The McClellan committee could expose and condemn his activities, but the swaggering little labor Napoleon from Detroit knew the limitations of Congress. Chairman McClellan had charged him with being a liar, a cheat and a thief – but condemnations by a committee chairman were not a conviction… It mattered little to Hoffa that McClellan had accused him of misusing millions of dollars in union funds and had branded him as thoroughly corrupt – a “cancer” in the American labor movement. As long as Hoffa had control of the Teamsters union treasury he could fight back.

As expected, shortly after Hoffa’s last 1958 hearing, Hoffa began to publicly attack the Committee. He told the New York Times that “the committee had used ‘rumors, falsehoods, deliberate perjury and, in my opinion, planted enemies,’” and said, “Robert Kennedy is a person who believes in God, but who has betrayed the trust the United States Government has placed in him when he deliberately tries to destroy this wonderful organization.” Hoffa’s inflammatory comments were not to be taken lightly, for he was as popular as ever within the Teamsters Union. On November 9, the New York Times ran an article entitled, “Why They Cheer for Hoffa,” documenting, as the subheading reads, that the “boss of the teamsters has emerged from the attacks upon him stronger than ever, bolstered by the principle that anything goes so long as

298. Hearings Before the Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Part 40, 16 September 1958, pg. 15086.
299. Memo from Kaplan to Kennedy RE: Detroit – James R. Hoffa – Judge Gillis; Box No. 66, pgs. 1; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
300. Senator John L. McClellan, Hearings Before the Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Part 40, 16 September 1958, pg. 15087.
301. James R. Hoffa, Hearings Before the Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Part 40, 16 September 1958, pg. 15088.
he delivers the benefits." The article documented a speech Hoffa gave at the Merchants Motor Freight in Detroit. According to the article, Hoffa “had a simple explanation for the charges that the union had become a homing ground for jailbirds: ‘All this hocus-pocus about racketeers and crooks is a smokescreen to carry you back to the days when they could drop you in the scrap heap like they do to a worn-out truck.’" As reporter A.H. Raskin reflected in the article:

…the enthusiasm with which they embrace the Hoffa brand of leadership is in many ways more disquieting than Hoffa’s own long record of moral delinquency. For it tends to lend substance to the creed by which Hoffa lives, namely, that anything goes so long as the union keeps delivery fatter pay envelopes, bigger pensions and better conditions to its members. He summed up his prescription for keeping workers’ loyalty in one of his wiretapped conversations with extortionist Johnny Dio. It was: ‘Treat ‘em right, and you don’t have to worry.’

Despite everything that the Committee had uncovered, despite the daily press reports on Hoffa’s misconduct, and despite the fact that while Hoffa superficially delivered to the union, he was actually taking advantage of rank-and-file members in practice, he maintained his popularity with union members. Members of the Teamsters Union were more impressed with the significant gains their president had managed to win despite his preoccupation with the Committee. Free from the AFL-CIO, the Teamsters no longer had to pay an annual fee, nor did they need to abide by the Federation’s rules for recruiting workers. The Union increased in size and grew richer, and Hoffa achieved a number of significant collective bargaining deals. Because Hoffa’s corrupt practices were not particularly visible to the rank-and-file, and the aforementioned gains were, he maintained popular within the Union.

While Kennedy had emerged to the American public as the “break out star” of the McClellan Committee, not everyone was enthused with his work. A Canadian magazine,
Saturday Night, ran an article vehemently attacking Kennedy and his methods of prosecution on the Committee. Anthony West wrote in an article entitled, “A Carnival of Cant”:

The conduct of the Senate Committee over which Senator McClellan presides, is pretty fancy in its own right. Its counsel, Robert Kennedy, a brother of the Democratic presidential hopeful, has two main methods of procedure, hallowed pieces of the late Senator Joseph McCarthy’s legacy to democracy. The first method is used with a co-operative or “friendly” witness who has been turned up by the committee’s team of investigators; Mr. Kennedy reads back to them in public session the statements they have made previously to the committee in private executive session, slightly altered into the form of leading questions which would be inadmissible in a law court. These “friendly” witnesses are not subjected to cross-examination, so that there is no way of checking on their credibility, or of exposing their many inconsistencies, or, in some cases, their transparent dishonesty. West ended his article by concluding, “It, the combined act of Mr. Kennedy and Senator McClellan, with supporting cast of morally outraged senators, would have been one of the most richly comic displays of sanctimonious humbug which the great Republic had ever achieved but for one thing – its demonstration of circusmaster McClellan’s profound contempt for the law, for individual rights, and common decency.” West’s concerns echo most criticisms that people had of the Committee, and of Kennedy himself. There was a perception, among those who were critical of the Committee, that the members of the Committee were employing bully tactics to try to elicit information from well-meaning union leaders. Yet, any in depth analysis or thorough reading of any of the thousands of pages of transcripts from Committee hearings, would reveal this to be untrue.

Kennedy expressed similar sentiment in his response to West’s article, included in the same issue of the magazine. Kennedy began his article by matching West’s audacious comments. He writes, “I was shocked that an article so lacking in substance and truth should appear in a magazine which enjoys such high reputation.” In response to West’s claims about Kennedy’s

309 Anthony West, “A Carnival of Cant,” Saturday Night, 6 Dec. 1958: 22; Vol. 83, Box 79; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
310 West, “A Carnival of Cant,” Saturday Night, 6 Dec. 1958: 24; Vol. 83, Box 79; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
311 Robert Kennedy, “Mr. West and Mr. Hoffa,” 6 Dec. 1958: 23; Vol. 83, Box 79; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
two main methods of procedure, Kennedy explained, “At best this can be attributed to Mr. West’s complete ignorance of the Committee’s procedure; at worst it is a deliberate distortion of the truth, because what Mr. West described simply never happened.” Kennedy goes on to describe, in depth, the procedure for committee hearings. He concludes his discussion of inquiry proceedings by writing:

Newspapers in the United States have not been noticeably reluctant to criticize Congressional committees. The record is replete with examples of scathing attacks on the methods of various committees. Does it not, therefore, seem unusual that if what Mr. West says is true, it has been missed by all of these other men whose jobs have been, in some case, to cover our hearings continuously?

The rest of Kennedy’s article details the various misdeeds of Hoffa, including his misuse of union funds and associations with racketeers and gangsters. He writes:

Mr. West states that the gangsters and hoodlums are needed in the Teamsters Union in order to combat the anti-union employers. The fact is that where such hoodlums and gangster operate… they act in concert with the anti-union employers and to the detriment of the union members. There is not one word of testimony in the record that Hoffa’s goons have been used anywhere or anytime to better the lot of Teamster Union members.

Kennedy likely found it an outrage that West could claim a union needed gangsters and racketeers in order to operate effectively. If Kennedy was defensive, it was only because he believed whole-heartedly in the purpose of the Committee. He not only believed in the importance of the Committee’s work, he also believed in the immediacy of it.

It was with this sense of purpose and determination that Kennedy began his final year on the McClellan Committee. The year opened with a fresh fight for a labor-reform bill. According to an article published in the Chicago American, “the new Kennedy bill is regarded in labor circles much broader than the Kennedy-Ives bill,” and “is specifically aimed a the likes of James

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312 Kennedy, “Mr. West and Mr. Hoffa, 6 Dec. 1958: 23; Vol. 83, Box 79; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
313 Kennedy, “Mr. West and Mr. Hoffa, 6 Dec. 1958: 23; Vol. 83, Box 79; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
314 Kennedy, “Mr. West and Mr. Hoffa, 6 Dec. 1958: 24; Vol. 83, Box 79; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
R. Hoffa.”315 While a bill was set in motion, the Committee was not done investigating. On February 1, Senator McClellan announced “that he had obtained evidence of questionable recent activities involving the Teamsters Union and would conduct hearings on them” the following week.316 On March 26, Sam (Mooney) Giancana, “Chicago’s most elusive gangster… was found by the agents of the Senate Rackets committee” and was subsequently summoned.317 As the hearings pressed on, Kennedy was in the process of advocating for his brother’s labor bill. The New York Times reported that after receiving the Quadragesimo Anno Medal at the Association of Catholic Trade Unions in New York, Kennedy said at the communion breakfast, “We are in desperate need of some kind of Federal labor legislation now… If we don’t get it well we ever will.”318

While the investigation continued and efforts were made to pass a reform bill, it soon became known to the press, and to the American public, just how personal Robert Kennedy’s years as chief counsel for the McClellan Committee had become. In March, it was reported that “over a period of weeks” in December 1958, Kennedy had “received anonymous threats from a telephone caller that someone would throw acid in the eyes of his six children.”319 Kennedy had reportedly “told the committee about the threats in a closed-door meeting,” and “had not asked the committee to take any specific steps to protect his family.”320 The sources of the threats were, and remain, unknown. Regardless, it is worth noting that the difference between Kennedy and the men he prosecuted during the Committee hearings, including Hoffa, was that while he hated

315 Marty O’Connor, “Kennedy Kicks Off Battle for Anti-Hoffa Legislation,” Chicago American, 21 Jan. 1959; Vol. 56, Box No. 73; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
316 Joseph A. Loftus, “TEAMSTERS FACE RENEWED INQUIRY: McClellan Sets Hearing This Week on Reports of Rec…” New York Times 1 Feb. 1959: 64, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
317 “Sam Giancana Finally Gets Senate Summons,” Chicago Daily Tribune 26 March 1959: 3, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
what criminals, liars, and gangsters stood for, they in turn hated Kennedy for who he was. As if the American public and the Committee needed further testament of the kind of people they were dealing with in the hearing rooms, this incident surely demonstrated a pure lack of morality, decency, and reason.

In late May, perhaps in preparation for Hoffa’s final meeting before the Select Committee in June, Harold Ranstad wrote a memorandum to Robert Kennedy outlining the “Strategy of James R. Hoffa at Committee Hearings.” The nine points summarize how Hoffa “determinedly avoided taking refuge in the Fifth Amendment,” instead to choosing to “testify that the transaction was handled by one or more of his assistants and that he is entirely unfamiliar with the details.”321 It also highlights Hoffa’s insistence on the broad scope of his power, his general evasiveness, and his propensity, “If what is done is illegal or otherwise offensive,” to deny “personal knowledge,” while “his stooges dutifully take the Fifth for him…”322 This memo did little to change Hoffa’s responses in his May testimony. He continued not to know or remember things, and was as evasive as ever.323 He also continued to spar with Kennedy. In a line of questioning regarding Glen Smith, Kennedy cited Smith’s Teamster-funded lawyer in reference to the argument that Smith should be acquitted for tax evasion. He subsequently asked whether Hoffa supported Smith’s lawyer, to which Hoffa answered, “I am supporting, Mr. Kennedy, exactly what I said. And I would appreciate it… that when I make a statement that somebody does not try to ridicule the statement in regard to my answer, because I am here to answer

321 Memorandum from Harold Ranstad to Robert F. Kennedy RE: Strategy of James R. Hoffa at Committee Hearings, 28 May 1959; Vol. 87, Box No. 80, pg. 1; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
322 Memorandum from Harold Ranstad to Robert F. Kennedy RE: Strategy of James R. Hoffa at Committee Hearings, 28 May 1959; Vol. 87, Box No. 80, pg. 2; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
323 Investigation of Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Hearings Before the Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Eighty-Sixth Congress, Part 54, 26 June 1959,18915.
questions, I don’t believe I am here to be ridiculed." A typical exchange between the two followed:

MR. KENNEDY: Have you taken any steps against Glen Smith to revoke his membership in the union?
MR. HOFFA: Glen Smith is on a leave of absence, not working, to the best of my knowledge, for the organization. I do not know his whereabouts at this particular moment.
MR. KENNEDY: Would you answer the question?

The rest of the hearings that day, as they related to Hoffa, primarily regarded the new bill that Senator John Kennedy was preparing to present to Congress. Hoffa expressed his vehement opposition to the bill, while Senator Kennedy skillfully rebutted every one of his claims. When Hoffa claimed he would like to “acquaint the American people with the fact that this is a strikebreaking union-busting bill,” Senator Kennedy responded:

Mr. Hoffa, this bill is not a strikebreaking union-busting one. You are the best argument for it, your complete indifference to the fact that numerous people who hold responsible positions in your union come before this committee and take the fifth amendment[sic] because an honest answer might incriminate them. Your complete indifference to it I think makes this bill essential.

The bill, which was named The Landrum-Griffin Labor Management Reporting And Disclosure Act of 1959, was passed in September of that year. Reactions to the bill were split. Some saw the bill as a great compromise and an effective tool for reforming unions. As Mollenhoff writes, “Chairman John L. McClellan and the Kennedy brothers, Jack and Bob, emerged as the heroes in the labor reform drama.” This sentiment was echoed in a New York Times article that read:

The passage of the Landrum-Griffin bill by the House of Representatives – with the decisive margin of 178 votes – reflects, more than anything else, the growing demand throughout the country for action, and strong action, to curb labor union abuses… Mr. Hoffa, above all others, represents the combination of devious dealing and dictatorial, overweening power in some of the leading unions, espoused by the McClellan committee, and which call for curbs. Also Mr. Hoffa’s bitter opposition to the bill must have actually helped its passage…

324 Hearings Before the Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Part 54, 26 June 1959, 18915.
325 Hearings Before the Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Part 54, 26 June 1959, 18915.
326 Hearings Before the Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, Part 54, 26 June 1959, 18938.
327 Mollenhoff, Tentacles of Power, 332.
Senator Kennedy was widely acknowledged, by those who supported the bill, for successfully achieving a compromise between the Landrum-Griffin and Kennedy-Ives bill in a tense joint session of the Congress conference committee. As a newspaper reported of the session, “It called for twelve days of the utmost skill in the art of compromise – which the committee chairman, Senator Kennedy, outstandingly provided.”

Some reactions were not as enthusiastic. Most of the bill addressed changes to the way unions were governed, but one part of the bill that called for picket and secondary boycott reform caused many liberal politicians to deem the bill quintessentially anti-labor. This part of the bill significantly reduced the power of unions, particularly the Teamsters Union, and was not a part of the bill that Senator Kennedy condoned. Though Senator Kennedy worked hard to achieve a compromise between anti-labor and pro-labor forces, he ultimately was not satisfied with the final bill and subsequently withdrew his name from it. Robert Kennedy also believed that the bill was excessive, and in anticipation of Senator Kennedy’s presidential campaign, neither of the Kennedys wanted to anger other labor unions by supporting the bill. The passage of a labor reform bill indicated the effectiveness of the McClellan Committee hearings in proving the existence of widespread corruption within the Teamsters Union, but partisan politics ultimately resulted in a conservative bill that reduced the power of unions perhaps too much.

On September 15, following the passage of the Landrum-Griffin Bill, Robert Kennedy submitted his resignation to Senator John McClellan. He was about to devote himself entirely to his brother’s presidential campaign. The idea of a Kennedy as president made of Hoffa fume.

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When Robert Kennedy resigned from the McClellan Committee in September, his fight against Hoffa and the Teamsters was far from over. As chief counsel, Kennedy had been a part of a massive investigative undertaking that did not, and could not, conclude with Kennedy’s departure. As he summarized for *Life* magazine in June 1959:

In 2½ years this committee has heard 1,366 witnesses during 243 days of hearings. It has employed almost 100 investigators, clerks, and accountants. It has spent $1.5 million. It has turned up improper activities in 15 unions and more than 50 companies. It has disclosed, in particular, a truly scandalous corruption in the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, a union so powerful that it is certainly the mightiest single organization in the U.S. next to the federal government itself.

Exposure, Kennedy acknowledged, was not enough. He said, “Mere disclosure of a sordid situation does no good unless it is cleaned up.” He would later write, “These three years have had their share of frustrations… The lack of action by the Department of Justice is disappointing.” Soon Kennedy would be able to take his frustrations into his own hands. The presidential nomination of his brother John Kennedy, and his own subsequent ascendancy to the office of Attorney General, would allow him to pursue the corruption he had exposed. Kennedy was not, however, fixated solely on Hoffa. He had developed a much more nuanced interpretation of fighting corruption during his years on the McClellan Committee. Hoffa was a component of Kennedy’s more general efforts to weed out labor union corruption as Attorney General. As McClellan Committee investigator Walter Sheridan reflects:

It was not a vendetta. It was, rather, a determined and dedicated effort… to cope with a uniquely talented man [Hoffa] who used his almost limitless power and resources to perpetuate a racket-infested nationwide empire; to corrupt public officials and private citizens; and to arrogantly violate his own fiduciary trust and the laws of the land for the benefit of himself and his associates and to the detriment of his own union members and the public good.

In fact, Kennedy’s greater concern actually lay with organized crime, and not the Teamsters union per se. A large part of the reason why Kennedy despised what Hoffa stood for had to do with his casual and unapologetic association with men that Kennedy considered the embodiment of pure evil. Kennedy’s abhorrence of the mob and his personal dislike for Hoffa were inextricably linked. As Attorney General, pursuing Hoffa was only one part of Kennedy’s larger plan for fighting union corruption and organized crime.

This is not to say that Kennedy was disinterested in Hoffa’s future once he resigned from the Committee. Hoffa was still President of the Teamsters – and a well-liked president at that. Kennedy’s attitude toward Hoffa can perhaps best be conveyed by a document produced by the Committee sometime in 1959 entitled, “Proposed Findings International Brotherhood of Teamsters James R. Hoffa.” The summary noted, “Ignominy was piled on ignominy as the testimony wove through stories of violence, financial manipulations, callous repression of democratic rights and racketeer control.” Most importantly, the summary concluded:

The Committee feels strongly about Hoffa. It has these strong feelings on the basis of the facts which it has heard over two years. It is hard to conceive how critical the problem is unless one has had the opportunity of hearing all the testimony or reading the printed record, but the Committee has heard the testimony and is acquainted with the facts. The Committee is convinced that if Hoffa remains unchecked, he will successfully destroy the decent labor movement in the United States. Further than that, because of the tremendous economic power of the Teamsters, it will place the underworld in a position to dominate American economic life in a period when the vitality of the American economy is necessary to the country’s preservation in an era of world crisis. This Hoffa cannot be allowed to do.

Added on to this rationale was Kennedy’s deep sense of morality. He had been bound to the concept of right and wrong his entire life, a result of his intense piety and commitment to his faith. Journalist Murray Kempton wrote of the influence of Kennedy’s Catholicism on the investigation, “there are persons so constituted that they can go nowhere without some piece of

339 “Proposed Findings International Brotherhood of Teamsters James R. Hoffa,” undated; Vol. 85, Box 80, pg. 1; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
340 “Proposed Findings,” Vol. 85, Box 80, pg. 1; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.
faith to serve for light. Robert Kennedy is a Catholic; and naturally he sought his faith there.\textsuperscript{342} Kempton said that the McClellan Committee made Kennedy “a Catholic radical.”\textsuperscript{343} Three years of testimony that revealed time and again how deeply entrenched Hoffa was in so many different forms of corruption and criminality made it impossible for Kennedy to see his continued fight against Hoffa’s evil influence as anything other than a moral commitment.

The McClellan Committee investigation had far greater implications than Kennedy’s own convictions about Hoffa’s character and destructive influence. Not only was Kennedy’s own reputation bolstered, so too was his brother’s. The American public, as well as the government, had a much better understanding of the once-elusive concept of the mafia. And, of course, Hoffa’s hatred of Kennedy grew ever more intense. When John Kennedy was elected president in 1960, the confluence of these factors meant that the new administration establish a vested interest in fighting organized crime, making Hoffa even more angry. As a prelude to all this, Robert Kennedy began writing \textit{The Enemy Within}, his book about the McClellan Committee and Hoffa, at the end of 1959. Published in February of the following year, the book had the effect of promoting the success of the Committee, and John Kennedy, to the public far more than the passage of the Landrum-Griffin Act had.\textsuperscript{344} \textit{The Enemy Within} was not only important in boosting John Kennedy’s reputation in terms of legislative success, but it was also important in casting Robert Kennedy in a good light after a number of critics seized upon the idea that Kennedy had taken advantage of men who had plead the Fifth Amendment during the hearings. Some claimed that Kennedy deliberately brought witnesses in for questioning with full cognizance that they would plead the Fifth so as to make them appear guilty.\textsuperscript{345}

\textsuperscript{343} Kempton as quoted by Schlesinger in \textit{Robert Kennedy and His Times}, 191.
\textsuperscript{345} Schlesinger, Jr., \textit{Robert Kennedy and His Times}, 188.
defended himself in his book, writing, “Of the 1,525 witnesses whose testimony our Committee
heard, 343 of them took the Fifth Amendment… we did not know for a fact that a witness would
plead the Fifth Amendment until he actually appeared before the Committee and did so.”

He also added that sometimes “a witness might answer some questions and refuse to answer
others… On a number of occasions I was told by a witness’s attorney that his client intended to
take advantage of the Fifth Amendment, yet when the witness appeared he answered all the
questions put to him.” He did acknowledge, however, that the Fifth Amendment could
sometimes lead to unfairness, citing the case a of man who was pleading the Fifth on everything,
and was asked a question by Senator Curtis about his association with a governor. The man pled
the Fifth, though the question was unfair because there was no proof whatsoever that the man
had any association to the governor, and Kennedy had to release a statement that the association
was unfounded. To this he reflected, “It was low politics and a perversion of the use of the
Congressional investigating committee.”

That the Fifth Amendment may mistakenly implicate
was a given in a situation in which it was so frequently used. Still, Kennedy defended the Fifth
Amendment, reflecting, “It is an important safeguard written into the Bill of Rights,” and, “it is
not the Fifth Amendment that is causing the graft and corruption in the country, or even
preventing it from being cleaned up.”

In an allusion to Hoffa, Kennedy added, “I have far
more respect for the person who takes the Fifth Amendment than for those who appear before the
Committee and say they cannot remember, who equivocate, rationalize, or lie.”

Once The Enemy Within was completed, Robert Kennedy took over his brother’s
presidential campaign. Hoffa, predictably, was infuriated that John Kennedy was running for
president. As reported by Parade, “At the 1960 Democratic Convention in Los Angeles, he [Hoffa] set up a secret headquarters that distributed anti-Kennedy propaganda, cornered delegates and brought pressure on others to back Lyndon Johnson, then Kennedy’s leading opponent.” In September, the New York Times reported, “Teamster officials disclosed today that their president, James R. Hoffa, would begin next week the union’s intensive nation-wide campaign against Senator John F. Kennedy, the Democratic Presidential candidate.”

Interestingly, most other labor leaders were in full support of Kennedy. A few months earlier, the Washington Post ran a story entitled, “Labor Hails Kennedy,” in which reporter William Eaton wrote, “Leaders of organized labor were openly jubilant today over the nomination of Sen. John F. Kennedy and were ready to give an enthusiastic endorsement of the Democratic ticket in the November presidential battle.” But John Kennedy, Hoffa had claimed in August, was “irresponsible and a man unworthy of the trust of the American people.”

Hoffa’s protests made it clear that he had a personal vendetta against the Kennedys, but the Jimmy Hoffa – Bob Kennedy feud did not become a tangible concept in the media until John Kennedy was elected President and Robert Kennedy became Attorney General. The media build-up for the feud had begun during the campaign, both as a result of Hoffa’s anti-Kennedy campaign and a lawsuit he had filed against Robert Kennedy. In May 1960, Hoffa announced that he was going to sue NBC for 2.5 million dollars for comments Robert Kennedy made about him when he appeared on the Jack Paar show in 1959. Kennedy had called Hoffa “completely

351 Jack Anderson, “Bob Kennedy versus Jimmy Hoffa,” Parade 17 Feb. 1963; Box 80, pg. 7; Hoffa 18-5, Records of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field; Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
“evil” on the show, prompting Hoffa to sue NBC, Jack Paar, and Kennedy for “conspiracy… to ridicule, degrade, defame and humiliate Hoffa…” Anyone who followed the McClellan Committee hearings was privy to the fact that Hoffa and Kennedy did not get along, but it was becoming ever more clear that the tensions between the two had long passed the stage of mutual dislike. Prompted by the lawsuit, the media seized on the clash and by 1961, the Hoffa – Kennedy feud had become a reality in public discourse. That year an article entitled “The Kennedys vs. Hoffa” appeared in American Weekly. It reported:

The struggle between Hoffa and Kennedy long ago passed the impersonal, judicial stage. To Kennedy, Hoffa has come to symbolize corruption itself, and he proposes to destroy corruption by destroying Hoffa. Likewise, Hoffa hates Kennedy because he symbolizes those forces which would wrest from him his power – doubly important to a man who is so short he must physically look up to everybody.

The article explained why the feud had come to a fore in 1961, deducing, “since Hoffa’s vague memory while testifying kept him free of contempt or perjury prosecution, there wasn’t much the McClellan committee could do about him but criticize and keep turning its records over to the Justice Department. Now, however, Kennedy is in a position to follow through with the legal steps he thinks necessary to punish wrongdoings brought out by the committee.”

A similar article, entitled “Bob Kennedy versus Jimmy Hoffa,” appeared in Parade two years later. By 1963, it had become clear that part of Attorney General Robert Kennedy’s larger agenda of fighting organized crime and union corruption including taking action against Hoffa. Hoffa gave the pretense that he was unconcerned, telling Parade, “They [Robert Kennedy and his team] think they’re going to wear me down. That ain’t gonna happen! The bums can drop dead! When I go to bed, I sleep.” In private, his behavior suggested otherwise. Jack Anderson
writes in “Bob Kennedy versus Jimmy Hoffa,” that Hoffa’s “friends have detected signs of
strain. Always tense and truculent, Hoffa has become even more explosive. He rants about the
Kennedys at the drop of their name.”\footnote{Anderson, “Bob Kennedy versus Jimmy Hoffa,” Parade 17 Feb. 1963; Box 80, pg. 6; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.} Conversely, Kennedy:

\[\text{\ldots has mellowed and matured as he has shared with his brother the great crises of leadership. While remaining relentless in his pursuit of Hoffa, Kennedy is no longer the impetuous young racketeer who once threatened to jump off the Capitol dome if he failed to nail Hoffa. He no longer indulges in outbursts against Hoffa, indeed, hasn’t mentioned Hoffa’s name in public since become the nation’s chief law officer. In private, Kennedy speaks of him quietly and sternly.}^{362}\]

While the feud grew more personal for Hoffa, it became less so for Kennedy. Hoffa became
more and more obsessed with bringing down Kennedy, while Kennedy became more and more
invested in his moral commitment to fighting corruption on a national scale – a project that
included Hoffa by virtue of the fact that he was a piece of the puzzle in fighting organized crime
and union misconduct. Anderson writes, “Kennedy firmly believes that Hoffa is the most sinister
figure in the American labor movement, that if his power goes unchecked the day may come
when racketeers will gain a stranglehold on the nation’s commerce. So Kennedy has resolved to
bring Hoffa down, a mission he pursues with almost puritanical fervor.”\footnote{Anderson, “Bob Kennedy versus Jimmy Hoffa,” Parade 17 Feb. 1963; Box 80, pg. 7; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.} Hoffa continued to
associate with gangsters and racketeers, so Kennedy continued to pursue him.

While the feud was not entirely devoid of personal sentiment for Kennedy, it was
certainly the case that Hoffa had much more of a personal vendetta against Kennedy than
Kennedy had for him. Kennedy despised what Hoffa stood for, and that he had taken advantage
of rank-and-file union members, but Hoffa simply hated Kennedy. The two sparred, in part,
because of their similarities, which many journalists commented on. Means wrote, “both are
relentless, forceful men, with ambitious one-track minds.”\footnote{Means, “The Kennedys vs. Hoffa,” Vol. 4, Box No. 83, pg. 17; Hoffa 18-5; RG 46; NAB.} Anderson commented, “Both are
driving, determined men, highly competitive and combative. Both are rock-hard physical-fitness
faddists.” Their strong personalities in many ways predisposed them not to get along. Hoffa was always quick to offer a personal jibe at Kennedy. In an interview with *Life* in May, he referred to Kennedy as “The Little Nut,” and said, “I understand Bobby likes to play touch football. I sure would like to play with him sometime.” More indicative of how much Kennedy bothered Hoffa were his far less light-hearted comments. Hoffa rationalized his own questionable associates and financial misdeeds by declaring, “The best example is Kennedy’s old man,” and also claimed, “To hear Kennedy when he was grandstanding in front of the McClellan Committee, you might have thought I was making as much out of the pension fund as the Kennedys made out of selling whiskey.” Hoffa’s accusations helped give rise to the rumors that Joseph Kennedy made his fortune by selling alcohol during prohibition and was associated with members of the mob, neither of which was ever proven to be true.

Far more serious, however, were the claims that Hoffa wanted Kennedy dead. After Hoffa was sentenced to eight years in prison in 1964, Teamster leader Edward Partin, of Local No. 5 came forward with a story that Hoffa had approached him in 1962 about a plan to kill Kennedy. In *Life* Partin wrote that Hoffa asked him if he knew where he could get a plastic bomb:

> I told him that, hell, I didn’t even know what a plastic bomb was and what did he want it for? He said, ‘Well, somebody needs to bump that sonofabitch off.’ I asked what sonofabitch and he said he meant the Attorney General [Kennedy]. Then he got to thinking more about it and talking about it. He said, as well as I recall the order of it, ‘You know I’ve got a run-down on him... His house sits here, like this, and it’s not guarded...’ Jimmy was making kind of diagrams with his fingers and I remember being surprised about the Attorney General’s house not being guarded... he went on, thinking it out some more, and he said, ‘What I think should be done, if I can get hold of these plastic bombs, is to get somebody to throw one in his house and the place’ll burn after it blows up. You know, the s.o.b. doesn’t stay up too late’... At the time I didn’t like Bob Kennedy any too well myself... but killing – that was something else. It was nuts and I said, ‘Yeah, maybe, but there’d be people on the guy’s trail all over the country.’ Hoffa said that wouldn’t make any real difference because Kennedy ‘has so many enemies now they wouldn’t know who had done it’..."
Kennedy’s response to the threat was to ask that any further publication about the matter be stopped. Kennedy was concerned not for his life, but for the idea that the information may impede the on-going investigation of Hoffa by frightening potential witnesses who could testify against the union leader.369

What had prompted Hoffa to contemplate murdering Kennedy? Psychological analysis aside, Hoffa was furious that part of Kennedy’s agenda as Attorney General included fighting labor union corruption – and because Kennedy, who Hoffa had despised from the moment he first met him, now had the power to fight labor union corruption. The Department of Justice had never paid significant attention to labor unions or organized crime before, and the change of focus was startling not only to Hoffa, but also to F.B.I. director J. Edgar Hoover. A Wall Street Journal article accurately predicted the climate of the Justice Department right after it was announced that Kennedy would be Attorney General. Robert D. Novak reported:

…there are some areas of his new job where Bobby has definite views – views that could cause friction within the Justice Department. Both he and his brother want to launch an all-out war against labor racketeers and other hoodlums by greatly expanding the new labor rights unit (present staff: four lawyers and a secretary), using the F.B.I.’s secret files to try to find criminal records of labor leaders, working with tax specialists to try to jail racketeers on tax evasion charges. But a part of this program is believed to be a switch in emphasis for the F.B.I. from Communist-hunting to gang-busting, a move that F.B.I. director J. Edgar Hoover is almost certain to fight, as being a precedent for turning his G-men into a national police force. And the indestructible Mr. Hoover is thus far undefeated in the wars of Washington.”370

Kennedy deliberately filled the Justice Department with people he knew could take on Hoover.371 Always driven by a strong sense of moral imperative, Kennedy did not want to have to waste more time than he had to arguing with Hoover. Hoover did not like either of the Kennedys, and was even more displeased by the way Robert Kennedy ran his department once he was in office.372 What angered Hoover the most, however, was exactly what Novak had

369 Mahoney, The Kennedy Brothers, 192.
372 Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy and His Times, 254, 256-257.
written about in his Wall Street Journal article. In 1961, Hoover’s top priority was still rooting out Communism in the United States.\textsuperscript{373} Kennedy was far from convinced that domestic Communism movements should be the focus of the Justice Department or the F.B.I., and Hoover deeply resented him for it.\textsuperscript{374} Though he was insulted, Hoover did not get in the way of Kennedy’s crusade against organized crime. Why Hoover chose not to involve himself in what Kennedy considered the greatest menace to the United States is a contested topic,\textsuperscript{375} but it allowed Kennedy to pursue an evil that had long weighed heavily on his conscience.

Organized crime became the focus of the Justice Department under Robert Kennedy, and much to the chagrin of Hoover, he changed the way the Department operated accordingly.

Federal units had previously not shared investigative information with each other, and Kennedy ensured that that for the first time groups like the Internal Revenue Service and the Narcotics Bureau worked in tandem in order to collaborate on organized crime investigations.\textsuperscript{376} Under Kennedy, the Organized Crime Section grew four times in size, and he submitted legislation in April 1961 in order to crack down on racketeering.\textsuperscript{377} That same month, Kennedy enjoyed the success of tracking down New Orleans mafia boss Carlos Marcello and deporting him to Guatemala.\textsuperscript{378} Marcello eventually managed to return to the United States, but Kennedy’s ability to find a leading mafioso and take action against him proved that Kennedy was ready to take on organized crime – and that he was capable of it.\textsuperscript{379} All over the United States, the federal government, whether through attorneys or authorities, prosecuted and rooted out mafia leaders.

\textsuperscript{373} Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy and His Times, 261.
\textsuperscript{374} Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy and His Times, 263.
\textsuperscript{375} Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy and His Times, 266.
\textsuperscript{376} Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy and His Times, 267.
\textsuperscript{377} Schlesinger, Jr. Robert Kennedy and His Times, 268.
\textsuperscript{379} Palermo, Robert F. Kennedy and the Death of American Idealism. 64.
and groups, like the Patriarcas of Rhode Island and the De Cavalcantes of New Jersey. These convictions concerned Hoffa not only because of his many associates who happened to be mobsters, racketeers, and mafiosos, but also because part of the Kennedy’s organized crime crackdown inevitably involved its influence in labor unions.

Kennedy had appointed Walter Sheridan, who had worked with Kennedy as an investigator for the McClellan Committee, to head a labor rackets section of the Organized Crime committee. This section became known unofficially as the “Get-Hoffa” squad, and Hoffa was more than well aware of its existence. Hoffa was a primary focus of the group, given his extensive history of labor union corruption, but under Sheridan the labor rackets component of the Organized Crime Section successfully convicted labor leaders Anthony Provenzano and Barney Baker, both of whom had been the subjects of McClellan Committee hearings. Kennedy had originally hoped to convict Hoffa for committing fraud on the Sun Valley Project that was unearthed by the McClellan Committee, but he decided not to pursue it further when Hoffa was indicted in 1962 for another episode that had been exposed during the hearings. In October 1962, Hoffa was put on trial in Nashville for illegal payments associated with the Test Fleet Corporation – the trucking corporation that Hoffa had put under his wife’s maiden name. It was around this time that Hoffa made his alleged death threats against Kennedy. The Nashville trial resulted in a hung jury.

the President, was dead. Upon hearing that John Kennedy had been assassinated, Hoffa reacted as follows:

In Washington, at the International Brotherhood of Teamsters headquarters, Harold Gibbons and Larry Steinberg ordered the flag lowered to half-mast and the building closed, and everyone was told to go home. Then they called Jimmy Hoffa in Miami and told him what they had done. He flew into a rage and became very abusive. He told them he was not going to be a hypocrite and that they should not have done what they had. He also yelled at his secretary for crying.\textsuperscript{386}

On the day of John Kennedy’s funeral two days later, Hoffa said in a televised interview, “Bobby Kennedy is just another lawyer now.”\textsuperscript{387}

\textsuperscript{386} Sheridan, \textit{The Fall and Rise of Jimmy Hoffa}, 300.
\textsuperscript{387} Sheridan, \textit{The Fall and Rise of Jimmy Hoffa}, 300.
Conclusion

James Hoffa may have triumphed in the death of President John Kennedy, but he would soon have little else to celebrate. A little over a month after John Kennedy’s assassination, Hoffa was put on trial in Chattanooga, Tennessee for jury tampering during his 1962 Test Fleet Corporation trial in Nashville. Shortly thereafter he was sentenced to eight years in prison. In April 1964, Hoffa went on trial again and was found guilty in July for misuse of union pension funds. He received another prison sentence, this time for five years. Robert Kennedy was too consumed by his grief to appreciate the fact that Hoffa had finally been convicted of something. President John Kennedy’s aide and family friend Kenneth O’Donnell said of Robert Kennedy’s disinterest in Hoffa’s conviction, “He had enough tragedy of his own now.” Profoundly and deeply affected by his brother’s death, Kennedy was a changed man. John and Robert Kennedy’s childhood friend LeMoyne Billings remembered, “It was much harder for him than anybody.” Kennedy, Billings said, regarded:

…his brother’s career absolutely first; and not anything about his own career whatsoever. And I think that the shock of losing what he’d built everything around… aside from losing the loved figure… Everything was just pulled out from under him.

In his grief, Kennedy could not bring himself to celebrate in the downfall of another.

Hoffa was wrong when he said, “Bobby Kennedy is just another lawyer now.” Kennedy remained Attorney General for President Lyndon Johnson until September 1964. In his remaining months in the White House, he devoted himself entirely to what he believed were the causes most important to his brother. Domestically, President John Kennedy was most

390 Kenneth O’Donnell as quoted by Schlesinger, Jr. in Robert Kennedy and His Times, 637.
391 LeMoyne Billings as quoted by Schlesinger, Jr. in Robert Kennedy and His Times, 612.
committed to developing an anti-poverty program and passing civil rights legislation, and both quickly became Robert Kennedy’s new crusades. Driven by a desire to sustain the memory, the accomplishments, and the dreams of his brother, Kennedy decided to run for a senate seat in New York at the end of his tenure as Attorney General. In January 1965, after a successful campaign, Kennedy officially became a senator. He served on the Labor and Public Welfare Committee, but union corruption was no longer Kennedy’s focus; Hoffa had been sent to jail and the Landrum-Griffin Act of 1959 had significantly reduced the power of unions. More importantly, however, Kennedy was still invested in the causes that were closest to his brother, and he therefore switched his focus from labor unions to poverty and civil rights.

Originally, Robert Kennedy had no interest in running for president in 1968. President Johnson was running for re-election, and Kennedy did not want to cause a rift in the Democratic Party by splitting the ticket. Kennedy and Johnson had never liked one another, and though Kennedy disagreed with many of his policies, particularly his approach to the war in Vietnam, he did not want to further antagonize Johnson. Kennedy, however, did receive a great deal of pressure to run from his staff. Then, on November 30, 1967, Democratic Senator Eugene McCarthy announced his intention to run for the presidency. With McCarthy’s entry into the presidential race, the Democrats were split, but Kennedy still was not sure that he should run. Finally, after intense deliberation, on March 16, 1968 Kennedy announced his candidacy for the presidency of the United States. A confluence of factors ultimately convinced Kennedy to run for president. In addition to McCarthy’s candidacy announcement, Kennedy believed it was his moral duty to address the urgent issues of poverty and civil rights. As historian and family friend

396 Schlesinger, Jr. Robert Kennedy and His Times, 682.
397 Schlesinger, Jr. 829.
Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. reflected, Kennedy “reserved the hottest place in hell for those who remained neutral in the face of injustice,” and he could not justify his own inaction when so many people were suffering. Johnson’s escalation of U.S. involvement in Vietnam further solidified Kennedy’s conviction that he had an obligation to fulfill. Days after Kennedy announced his intention to run, Johnson withdrew from the presidential race. Kennedy began his campaign in earnest. In many cities, Kennedy received a reception similar to that of a rock or movie star; journalist Jimmy Breslin reported that a crowd in Topeka, Kansas, “tore the buttons from his shirt-cuffs… They tore at his suit buttons. They reached for his hair and his face.” On June 5, Kennedy won the California primary. Moments after delivering a speech of gratitude to his California supporters, he was shot in the kitchen of the Ambassador Hotel. Robert Kennedy was pronounced dead on June 6, 1968.

In 1964, Hoffa had tried in vain to appeal his jury tampering conviction. His appeal reached the Supreme Court, which in December 1966 affirmed both his conviction and prison sentence. Even before the Supreme Court’s decision, however, Hoffa’s downfall was imminent. Largely as a result of the negativity surrounding Hoffa’s legal battles, the Teamsters had a difficult time attracting new members, and Teamsters officials were visibly eager to replace Hoffa. Hoffa’s desperate attempt to appeal his conviction was unsuccessful, and he reported to the Lewisburg Penitentiary on March 7, 1967. That Hoffa still harbored resentment for the McClellan Committee was clear. Just before he entered the jail, Hoffa spat at McClellan Committee reporter Clark Mollenhoff from the backseat of the closed-window car he was

398 Schlesinger, Jr. Robert Kennedy and His Times, 834.
400 Jimmy Breslin as quoted by Schlesinger, Jr. Robert Kennedy and His Times, 862.
402 Sloane, Hoffa, 314-315.
escorted in. Upon learning of Kennedy’s assassination the following year, Hoffa maintained that Kennedy was “a vicious bastard who was out to get me at all costs.” Hoffa was released from prison on December 23, 1971, at which time he decided to become an advocate for prison reform. He also devoted himself to the task of getting his jury tampering conviction overturned so that he could work with unions again, because he was barred from doing so until the end of his original prison sentence per the requirements of a union business restriction. When the attempt to overturn his conviction failed in January 1973, Hoffa’s lawyers decided to build a case that President Nixon’s ban on union influence was unconstitutional. Hoffa disappeared on July 30, 1975, before a decision was reached. The cause of Hoffa’s disappearance is still unknown, but he was officially declared dead on July 30, 1982.

President John Kennedy’s death marked a turning point in Robert Kennedy’s determination to remove Hoffa from power. For years, it had been Kennedy’s moral imperative to ensure that Hoffa, a man who involved himself with the some of the worst criminals in the United States, engaged in illegal and unethical financial schemes, and took no responsibility or showed any remorse for his actions, was ousted from the presidency of the largest union in the country. He had devoted himself entirely to rooting out corruption in the Teamsters Union because he was personally disturbed by the presence of gangsters and racketeers in American labor unions. He also needed to prove himself a capable and hard-working man to both his family and the American public. The death of his brother irrevocably changed Robert Kennedy, and as a result, also changed his focus. By late 1963 and early 1964, however, Robert Kennedy had already done a great deal to fight union corruption. His work on the Committee ultimately

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403 Sloane, Hoffa, 331.
404 James R. Hoffa as quoted by Sloane in Hoffa, 339.
405 Sloane, Hoffa, 351-355.
406 Sloane, Hoffa, 356.
407 Sloane, Hoffa, 370.
contributed to the passage of the Landrum-Griffin Act, which so significantly reduced the power of labor unions that both John and Robert Kennedy were not fully supportive of the bill. Hoffa was finally convicted early in 1964, further reducing the immediacy of fighting labor union corruption. Finally, much to the chagrin of J. Edgar Hoover, as Attorney General Robert Kennedy had diverted the focus of the Department of Justice away from homegrown communism toward fighting organized crime. As the United States became more entrenched in Vietnam and the battle for civil rights grew more volatile, Kennedy realized that there were more immediate causes than labor union corruption to be addressed in the mid and late 1960s. He was also fueled by an unwavering desire to fulfill his brother’s legacy by addressing the causes that he believed mattered the most to President John Kennedy.

While the death of President John Kennedy probably diverted Robert Kennedy’s focus away from union corruption sooner than had President Kennedy lived, it is likely that by the end of 1963 Robert Kennedy’s priorities had already begun to shift, given the urgency of the civil rights movement and Vietnam along with the relative abatement of the crisis within the Teamsters Union. Kennedy had devoted over three years of his life solely to fighting labor corruption. He had helped prompt the passage of new legislation, accelerate Hoffa’s removal from the Teamsters Union, and heighten government and public knowledge of organized crime. He had done all he could to fight the enemy within, and he had done it well.

On the title page of The Enemy Within, Kennedy included the following quotation from Thomas Jefferson: “I have sworn upon the altar of God, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man.”408 Driven by a sense of righteousness, Kennedy was relentless in his pursuit of a man who had abused his power and exploited those who trusted him. Kennedy was always determined, in his own words, “to show that the individual does count in a society

where he actually appears to count less and less.\footnote{RF Kennedy as quoted by Schlesinger, Jr. in Robert Kennedy and His Times, 872.} He was devoted to those he felt had no one else to speak for them, whether this commitment manifested itself through defense of rank-and-file Teamsters in his early political career, or through advocacy for the poor and the oppressed in his later years. His sense of purpose gave him profound strength. Fueled by strong moral convictions and even perhaps some naïveté, Kennedy emerged victorious in the aftermath of the McClellan Committee investigation, while James Hoffa fell casualty to the unexpected skill and determination of Robert Kennedy. David beat Goliath.
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