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This photo depicts the Kennedy family as they appeared in late-summer 1931. The JFK Presidential Library and Museum provides this description: "The Kennedy Family at Hyannis Port, 04 September 1931. L-R: Robert Kennedy, John F. Kennedy, Eunice Kennedy, Jean Kennedy (on lap of) Joseph P. Kennedy Sr., Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy (who was pregnant with Edward 'Ted' Kennedy at time of this photo), Patricia Kennedy, Kathleen Kennedy, Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. (behind) Rosemary Kennedy. The dog in the foreground is Buddy." Photo by Richard Sears; maintained at the JFK Library/Museum in Boston. Click on the image for a full-page view.

From [his youth](#), Bobby had been close to his older brother Jack. After JFK returned from World War II a war hero, Bobby wrote to him. One of his letters ([handwritten](#) by the younger Kennedy on the 9th of January, 1945, while in [Naval Training](#) at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine), [tells](#) the future President to write a book.

The rumor around New England is that "you've got a book in you."

JFK wrote [Why England Slept](#) soon after the war was over. A more well-known work, [Profiles in Courage](#), came later. One month after his brother was assassinated, Bobby handwrote a new foreword for the Pulitzer Prize-winning Profiles. His words - including these - are still included in current copies of the book:

President Kennedy was fond of quoting [Dante](#) that "the hottest places in Hell are reserved for those who, in a time of great moral crisis, maintain their neutrality." (Forward, page xvii.)

In 1950, Bob Kennedy [married Ethel Skakel](#). To accommodate their [growing family](#), the young couple bought [Hickory Hill](#) - in McLean, Virginia - from Jack. [The home](#) held painful memories for Jackie, the future president's wife, since she had miscarried while living there.

After JFK won the [1960 presidential election](#) (click on "Virtual Museum Tour" at the bottom of this link), he asked Bob to become U.S. Attorney General. Since the younger brother had scant legal experience, many people criticized his appointment as the federal government's top lawyer. Evan Thomas, in [Robert Kennedy: His Life](#), relates (at pages 94-95) the new president's reaction to such criticism:

At dinner on January 20 [1961], the newly inaugurated president jokingly told his friends, "I don't know why people are so mad at me for making Bobby Attorney General. I just wanted to give him some legal experience before he practiced." After dinner, Bobby came up to Jack, Charlie Bartlett observed, 'with his fists clenched.' RFK accosted his older brother, "Jack, you shouldn't have said that about me." JFK tried to lighten him up. "Bobby, you don't understand. You've got to make fun of it, you've got to make fun of yourself in politics." Bobby was not mollified.; "You weren't making fun of yourself," he said. "You were making fun of me."

Bobby made up for his lack of experience by hiring some of the best legal talent in the country. While men on his staff had better credentials than he, the attorney general [always](#) had [the ear](#) of [the President](#). His authority was thus unquestioned. And though he was used to [his family](#) teasing him, he had become his own man. Bobby once said:

I was the seventh of nine children and when you come from that far down you have to struggle to survive.

Those survival instincts helped Bobby to be both pragmatic and idealistic. The President valued his counsel. In the fall of 1962, as the Kennedy Administration dealt with the "Cuban Missile Crisis," the Kennedy brothers would need all the strength they could draw from each other.

The President, as usual, assigned the most difficult job to Bobby.

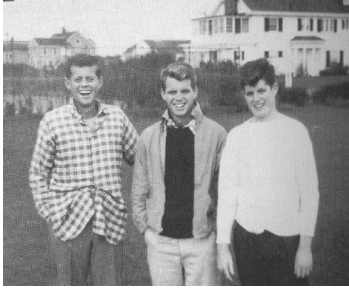
See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/WHO-WAS-RFK-Bobby-Kennedy>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/WHO-WAS-RFK-Bobby-Kennedy>

Media Stream



Kennedy Brothers

Image online, courtesy the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.

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Swearing-In for Naval Training

Image online, courtesy the ReoCities website.

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Bobby Kennedy and Ethel Skakel

Image online, courtesy ReoCities website.

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Hickory Hill

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Jack and Bobby Kennedy

Image online, courtesy the Democratic Underground Website.

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Bobby and Jack Meeting Together

Image online, courtesy A.P. Press file photo.

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President Kennedy

Image online, courtesy the JFK Library website.

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Bobby Kennedy in his Office

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Bobby and Jack

Image online, courtesy the masslive.com website.

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Bobby and Jack Working Together

Image online, courtesy the Boston Globe website.

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Jack and Bobby Meeting Together

Image online, courtesy the [Mary Ferrell Foundation](http://MaryFerrellFoundation.org) website.

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Kennedy Family Photo Shot

Image online, courtesy the [Cape Cod Times](http://CapeCodTimes.com) website.

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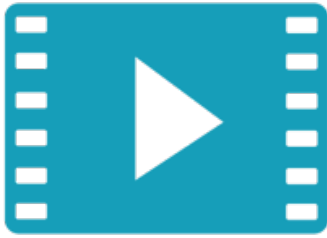
President Kennedy Photo

Image online, courtesy PBS.org website.

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Robert F. Kennedy - Early Career to 1960 Convention

From *RFK*, a film produced by David Grubin and aired on PBS' *American Experience*.



Clip is from "The Garish Sun," the first hour of the program.

Written and Directed by David Grubin

Produced by David Grubin and Sarah Colt

Narrated by Blair Brown

Music by Michael Bacon

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