THIRTEEN

Source: David Halberstam, *The Fifties* (Ballantine Books, 1994), 180-194.

As the booming postwar economy changed the face of American business, a technological breakthrough transformed the communications industry, sending powerful shock waves through all levels of the society.

By 1949, radio was on the verge of being overtaken by television as a commercial vehicle. For more than two decades, radio had virtually been minting money; now it was struggling, changing, and trying to find a new role. The signs of decline and flux were everywhere; one of the most startling took place in June 1949, when *The Fred Allen Show,* perhaps the best and most sophisticated radio show of its era, died after an eighteen-year run. The moment Fred Allen learned of television, he hated it. He called it "a device that permits people who haven't anything to do to watch people who can't do anything." Allen had realized earlier that the handwriting was on the

wall. "Television," he wrote, "was already conducting itself provocatively, trying to get radio to pucker up for the kiss of death. Young men with crew cuts were dragging TV cameras into the studios and crowding old radio actors out into the halls."

For more than a decade, Allen owned his time slot. He had been the foremost of radio's comics, living proof of continuity in that world. He was the rare entertainer who commanded both a mass audience and the affection of the intelligentsia. His jokes were not about mothers-in-law or women drivers; rather, they were dry, with a certain melancholy bite. There was nothing smooth about his delivery. Indeed, his voice, O. O. McIntyre, a Broadway columnist, wrote, "sounded like a man with false teeth chewing on slate pencils." He was irreverent and, on more than one occasion, churlish. He feuded regularly with network executives, who, he was convinced, were always trying to censor him. It was said that he always slipped two or three outrageous jokes into his scripts in order to trade them off to network censors for the dicey jokes he wanted to save. Of one network executive who always seemed to be looking down, he asked, "Why don't you look up?" he asked. "Is it because you're ashamed, or did you play quarterback for Yale?"

Even on the air he often made fun of the people who ran the network. "I'm Tinken, Vice-President in Charge of No Smoking in the Halls. You sent for a Vice-President?" he would say in character. At one point, one of those vice-presidents threatened to take him off the air, so Allen had him picketed by midgets carrying signs saying THIS NETWORK IS UNFAIR TO LITTLE PEOPLE.

Much of his humor was topical. Of a movie star who went to church in dark glasses, Allen said, "He's afraid God might recognize him and ask for his autograph." It was an age when it was still permissible to poke fun at ethnic foibles. No one did this better than Fred Allen, through his cast of characters on "Allen's Alley." In that skit Allen, as the master of ceremonies, would venture down the alley and knock on the door of its residents: Senator Claghorn was a blowhard Southern politician; Mrs. Nussbaum was a tart Jewish skeptic with a heavy Yiddish accent; Titus Moody was a New England Yankee skinflint; and Ajax Cassidy was a professional Irishman. The entire tour lasted five minutes, one minute per character. Much of the show's skilled writing was done by Allen himself, though later a young Columbia graduate named Herman Wouk helped out. The critical element, though, was Allen's timing.

In Allen's glory years, the entire nation huddled around their radios anticipating his gags and laughing almost before they were

out of his mouth. Did the newsreels do the March of Time? Allen did the "March of Trivia." Did Major Bowes of *The Major Bowes' Original Amateur Hour* make a big thing out of visiting small towns and blathering about their wondrous qualities? Then Allen lampooned him with "Admiral Crow's Amateur Hour": "Tonight we salute that quaint old city nestling back in those peaceful hills. The city we all love and venerate: two hundred miles of hail-fellow-well-met. Here the first eyedropper was made. Here it was that John Brundle jumped out of a window, landed on his rubber heels, and got the idea for the first pogo stick . . . the first hot-dog stand not to charge for its mustard was opened here. Situated on the shores of the second largest lake in America, the home of the biggest dental floss factory in the world . . . we love you . . . Tonight we salute . . . Tonight . . . Tonight our honor city is . . . (pause) Who took that slip of paper? Boy! . . . Don't stand there gaping! Get me a vice-president or an aspirin."

Perhaps his most celebrated stunt was his bogus feud with Jack Benny, then the country's top-rated radio comedian. It started casually enough. Allen had made a humorous remark about Benny. Benny, sensing the possibility of fresh material, picked up on it. Soon it escalated. They would appear on each other's shows to trade insults. "You wouldn't dare talk to me like that if my writers were here," Benny once said. The two of them even scheduled a fight. Joe Louis, heavyweight champion of the world, appeared on Allen's show to help him train for the bout with the dreaded Benny. A group of schoolchildren gathered outside Allen's childhood home yelling for him to beat Benny for the good of Dorchester, Massachusetts. Eventually, the two met on Benny's show for the big event. There was, of course, no fight, but only one program in history had been higher rated, a Roosevelt Fireside Chat.

But once television came on the scene, the end came quickly for Allen's popularity. Perhaps, as his biographer, Robert Taylor, noted, it was the changing era. Allen's mordant, dark humor had worked when America was on hard times; as he mocked the successful and pompous, he had touched the right nerve in the society. But as the country began to undergo unparalleled prosperity, people no longer wanted to make fun of success—they wanted to share in it. Another reason, as Allen himself noted, was that it had simply run too long. "Even without the coming of television," he wrote, "the survey figures showed a gradual shrinking in the mass audience. The audience and the medium were both getting tired. The same programs, the same comedians, the same commercials—even the sameness was starting to look the same."

Toward the end, he was feeling burned-out. For eighteen years he had written, produced, and acted in his own show. During the thirty-nine-week season he rarely took a day off. "A medium that demands entertainment eighteen hours a day, seven days every week has to exhaust the conscientious craftsman and performer," he wrote. "Radio was the only profession in which the unfit could survive."

Yet in 1948 he was at the height of his popularity. Then ABC, with nothing to lose, put a dinky show called *Stop the Music!* against him. It was an early incarnation of the game show, and it was wonderfully hokey. Bert Parks, the master of ceremonies, would play a current hit song. After a few bars of music, Parks would shout, "Stop the music!" and would call a listener at home. If the listener could identify the tune—and the musicians were not, after all, playing Mozart piano sonatas—Parks would scream again and gush forth with all the goodies the listener had just won. The nation was transfixed. Allen was appalled: "Reduced to essentials a quiz show required one master of ceremonies, preferably with prominent teeth, two underpaid girls to do research and supply the quiz questions, and a small herd of morons stampeded into the studio audience and rounded up at the microphone to compete for prizes . . ." Be that as it may, it worked. *Stop the Music!* went from nothing to a 20.0 share by January 1949; Allen fell from his 1948 28.7 high to 11.2 in the same period. He tried to fight back. He arranged with an insurance company to award five thousand dollars to any potential listener of *Stop the Music!* who missed out on the phone call and the fabled prizes because he was listening to Allen. He did a skit called "Cease the Melody," in which he handed out many prizes, and because most television sets were still in bars, the first prize was a television set, complete with a saloon and bartender to accompany it. But it was too late. The Ford Motor Company pulled its sponsorship of his show, and in a few months he was gone. James Thurber, the great American humorist, described Allen's flight as "for me more interesting than Lindbergh's." His show might have lasted a little longer, Allen said afterward, but he knew it was time to quit when his blood pressure was higher than his ratings. "When television belatedly found its way into the home after stopping off too long at the tavern, the advertisers knew they had a more potent force available for their selling purposes. Radio was abandoned like the bones at a barbecue," he wrote.

Some of the radio comedians made the transition to television; Allen did not. His humor was too dry: He had loved radio precisely because it depended on the listeners' imagination to create a whole

world out of words. In television, he noted, that world was determined by budgets, scenic designers, and carpenters. Nor was he in good odor at NBC after more than a decade of making fun of its executives. Allen proposed a television version of "Allen's Alley," using the format of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*. It might have worked, but the executives saw it as too expensive, so they never tried it. Instead, Allen became one of several hosts for a new variety show to air against Ed Sullivan ("Sullivan," Allen had said sardonically but prophetically, "will stay on television as long as other people have talent"). He was uncomfortable on television from the start; the technicians would hear his jokes in rehearsal and therefore not laugh when the show was live. Allen premiered in the fall of 1950; by December of that year he was gone. After he gave up his radio program, he wrote his old friend Herman Wouk, saying that he had spoken at several dinners and had written the introduction to a cookbook. "But don't think for a minute I'm doing all this to be popular. I'm just trying to keep from being unpopular. I'm fending off oblivion." He also described his book, *Treadmill to Oblivion*, to Wouk. It was virtually his own epitaph: "It is the story of a radio show. A radio program is not unlike a man. It is conceived. It is born. It lives through the experience that fate allots to it. Finally the program dies and like a man is forgotten except for a few people who depended upon it for sustenance or others whose lives had been made brighter because the program existed." When he was stricken dead with a heart attack in March 1956, a certain kind of humor went with him.

There was a genteel quality to radio success. Erik Barnouw has pointed out that in 1950 there were 108 different series that had been on the radio for a decade or more, and twelve had been on for two decades or more. On television, the stakes were bigger and more volatile. In this more intimate medium, success could come (and depart) far more quickly.

As the decade started, the television map of America was a spotty affair, not improved when the Truman administration put a four-year freeze on awarding new stations. In 1953, when Dwight Eisenhower took office and ended the freeze, there were 108 stations, but only twenty-four cities had two or more. In those days the networks were patched together for a particular big event—a heavyweight fight or the World Series. Not until the fall of 1951 did the coaxial cable stretch across the country. But Americans had already

begun to adapt their habits to accommodate their favorite programs. Studies showed that when a popular program was on, toilets flushed all over certain cities, as if on cue, during commercials or the moment the program was over. Radio listenership was significantly down. People went to restaurants earlier. Products advertised on television soared in public acceptance. Book sales were said to be down. Libraries complained of diminished activity. Above all, television threatened the movie business. By 1951, cities with only one television station reported drops in movie attendance of 20 to 40 percent, and wherever television appeared, movie theaters began to close; in New York City, Erik Barnouw noted, fifty-five theaters closed by 1951 and in Southern California, 134.

The first example of the unprecedented power of television was the meteoric rise of Milton Berle. Berle was the quintessential vaudeville slapstick comic. For better or for worse, no one ever accused him of being droll. His humor was manic and often vulgar. It depended heavily on sight gags. (When Fred Allen finally bought a television set in 1950 and saw Berle, he was appalled by what he thought the crudeness of the show.)

Berle arrived on television in 1948, almost by chance. He had heard that the Texaco people were looking for a master of ceremonies for a television version of *Texaco Star Theatre*. Berle knew instinctively that television was right for him. Texaco tried out several hosts, but it was obvious that Berle was the most successful. At the time he started, there were only 500,000 television sets in America. Almost from the start, his Tuesday night show on NBC was an *event*. The early history of television and the story of Berle's show were close to being one and the same thing. Those who didn't have television sets visited those who did. The very success of Berle's show accelerated the sale of television sets; those Americans who did not yet own sets would return home after watching him at their neighbors' houses and decide that, yes, it was finally time to take the plunge.

A year into the show, his fame was so great that his face was on the cover of both *Time* and *Newsweek* in the same week. He was television's first superstar. He was forty-two in 1950, but his entire life had been spent in the theater. At the age of six he won a Charlie Chaplin lookalike contest wearing his father's clothes and shoes and a mustache cut from his mother's furs. At the time his mother was a department-store detective, but she soon found her real calling: a stage mother. Alternately guarding her son and ruthlessly pushing him forward, she would roar with laughter if the audience seemed a

bit slow. Before he was ten he was on the vaudeville circuit; at twelve he was in a hit show called *Floradora* and was paid forty-five dollars a week. From then on, he always seemed to find work. He would do anything to make people laugh; it was his means of winning approval. Years later he would note with some sadness that his mother's method was not necessarily the best for rearing a child: "You take a kid at the age of five, and make him the star of the family, and then take the same kid out into the world and make him a star with everyone catering to him as if he were more than another perishable human being, and it's a miracle if that kid doesn't grow up to be a man who believes he's Casanova and Einstein and Jesus Christ all rolled into one."

While still in his teens, he was opening the Palace, the best of the vaudeville houses, and by the time he was twenty-three, he was serving as master of ceremonies, a job he held for two years. As a star, he headlined at theaters around the country. He brought an almost demented energy to the job. He never allowed the pace to slacken. He would do anything for a laugh—don a wig, a dress, or false teeth, fall on his face or take a pie in it. There was never a pause in the action for the audience to catch its breath. He could not duplicate his success on the stage for radio. He tried several radio shows of his own, but they all flopped. He needed the audience right there with him. Whereas Allen's humor was cerebral, satirizing the world around him, Berle's work was about himself. He needed the audience to see him—what you saw was what you got.

In the late fall of 1948, his television show enjoyed a 94.7 rating, which meant that of all the sets in the country being used, 94.7 percent were tuned to his show. In the beginning NBC had lost money on its television shows, but by 1950 the tide turned: Sales for broadcast time tripled. In 1952 the industry made a profit of $41 million.

At this earliest stage of its history, television was primarily an urban phenomenon. According to *Variety,* of the 1,082,100 television sets operating in American homes in 1949, some 450,000 were in New York City and most of the remaining ones were in Philadelphia, Washington, Boston, Chicago, Detroit, and Los Angeles. Berle was a classic Borscht Belt comedian. His live audience was primarily Jewish and urban; therefore, he was playing to what might be considered a home crowd. Five million people watched him every night and 35 percent of them lived in New York.

It was a marvelous time for him. He was being paid five thousand dollars a week to do what he knew best and what he probably

would have done for nothing. (People who called him at home would have to listen to five or six jokes before they could get a word in.) In 1951, fearing that he would go to a rival network, NBC signed him to a thirty-year contract for $200,000 a year. It was at precisely that moment that he started to slip. In part he was done in by the coaxial cable. Its coming meant television was reaching into smaller towns and rural areas. People there were not native Berle fans, and his flip references to New York neighborhoods and stores fell on alien ears. As his ratings began to decline, he became more manic than ever, rushing across the stage feverishly interrupting other acts. For his fifth season, 1952–53, the format of the show was changed. Goodman Ace, a talented comedy writer, was hired. There was to be more form, less freewheeling by Berle himself, the very thing that in the beginning had seemed to make the show so popular. It ended up fifth in the ratings for that year, and Texaco dropped its sponsorship. By 1954–55 he had fallen to thirteenth, and the next year he was in charge of a show that went on every third week. In 1955 he was dropped from the show. Eventually, NBC worked out a new contract in which his annual salary was cut to $120,000 a year and he was allowed to work on other networks. Berle became the first figure to experience both the power and the volatility of television. The highs were higher than anything in the past, and it generated an astonishing intimacy between performer and audience. But because of that intimacy, the audience could be fickle and a star could descend just as quickly as he rose. It was a lesson that various entertainers, actors, and even politicians were going to learn the hard way.

FOURTEEN

Television would change more than just the face of comedy and entertainment. Politics was soon to follow, and from then on politics became, in no small part, entertainment. The first political star of television was a freshman senator from Tennessee, intelligent, shrewd, but also awkward and bumbling. No one would have accused Estes Kefauver of being, in the phrase that came to haunt many a television figure in the coming years, just another pretty face. His face was, to be kind, plain. Nor was Kefauver particularly eloquent. Speaking in front of groups, both large and small, he often stumbled. Words escaped him; awkward pauses punctuated his sentences. Part of his success with ordinary people, thought his senatorial colleague Albert Gore, came from the fact that he was so awkward and uncomfortable as a speaker that listeners felt a responsibility to help poor old Estes out.

If at first he appeared something of a caricature—the hillbilly who came to Washington—in reality he came from an extremely privileged old Tennessee family. He was well educated, a graduate not only of the University of Tennessee but of Yale Law School. "I've met millions of self-made highbrows in my life," his friend Max Ascoli, the editor of *The Reporter* magazine, once said of him, "but Estes is the first self-made lowbrow." He was also extremely ambitious. When Kefauver was first elected to Congress in 1939, Lee Allen, the head of Kefauver's local Democratic committee, turned to him and said, "Well, Estes, you're a congressman." Kefauver pondered the idea for a minute and then answered, "Lee, they're a dime a dozen."

From the start, it was clear that he was different from other Southern senators in that racial prejudice offended him and he would not accept the traditional conservative position on civil rights. It was true that he came from a border state where racial attitudes were not as harsh, and it was true also that he saw civil rights as a matter of conscience. In large part, though, his more liberal stance came from his own soaring ambition and desire to hold national office. As early as 1942, as a junior congressman, he broke with the Southern Democrats in Congress by voting against the poll tax. That had provoked the bile of the virulent racist from Mississippi, John Rankin, who stood on the House floor, pointed his finger at Kefauver, and said, "Shame on you, Estes Kefauver."

Backed by a coalition of the state's more liberal newspapers, he decided to run against Senator Tom Steward in 1948 and, in the process, to challenge the powerful machine of boss Ed Crump in Memphis. The Crump machine responded by red-baiting Kefauver, inevitably comparing his record, as was the fashion in those days, with the radical congressman Vito Marcantonio (Will Gerber, Crump's hatchet man at the time—who was better at political intrigue than at spelling—wrote his friend Senator Kenneth McKellar, "We are anxious to get everything we possibly can to show that Kefauver has been voting right along with Marc Antonio . . .). At this point Crump made a fatal mistake and claimed that Kefauver was a fellow traveler and a "pet coon for the Soviets." Kefauver seized on the remark. The coon, he noted, was a uniquely American animal: "You wouldn't find a coon in Russia." In addition, he added, a coon was tough and could lick a dog four times its size. When Crump persisted with the charge, Kefauver said, "I may be a pet coon, but I ain't Mr. Crump's pet coon." Soon the coon became his trademark. For a time Kefauver traveled with a live racoon, but

afraid that it might die on the campaign trail, he switched to a coonskin cap, a powerful symbol in a state that had given the nation Davy Crockett and Sam Houston. He won the election handily, dealing a severe blow to the Crump machine. A surprisingly well connected liberal senator from a border state, he was in a perfect position to be launched toward even higher office—the vice-presidency, at the very least.

On January 5, 1950, he took a first step in that direction by introducing a bill to investigate organized crime in the United States. He had become interested in it as a member of the House Judiciary Committee, after talks with a number of mayors who believed that racketeering was extremely well organized, operated on a national basis, and therefore was too powerful for local law enforcement officers to deal with. This was an explosive issue, because the kind of crime Kefauver was going after had deep roots in every big city, and those cities were controlled by Democratic political machines. Thus he risked alienating the most powerful kingmakers in his own party. Kefauver was being pushed on the issue by, among others, Phil Graham, the publisher of *The Washington Post,* and a major political gadfly and power broker in Washington. Graham was afraid that if someone like Kefauver did not take up the investigation, sooner or later a Republican would and it would be a huge political embarrassment to the Democrats. Kefauver at first seemed reluctant, but Graham uttered the magic words: "Don't you want to be Vice-President?"

So, aware of the political pitfalls ahead but thinking he had received the go-ahead from top Democratic urban officials in the country, Kefauver took his crime investigation on the road. The committee scheduled hearings in fourteen cities and its investigation lasted ninety-two days. The hearings uncovered important new material, and there was a pattern to it: Everywhere he went there was something called organized crime, or the Mob, and it was invariably intertwined, either voluntarily or involuntarily, with some local Democratic administration. The longer the hearings went on, the less amused his fellow Democrats were, and among those least amused was that old Democratic loyalist (and product of a big-city machine himself) Harry S Truman.

On March 12, 1951, Kefauver finally arrived in New York City. No one had expected the New York hearings to be particularly important, but in fact they turned out to be a landmark, not so much in the history of crime or crime fighting as in the history of television and the coming of a national political theater. On a handful of

previous occasions television had covered hearings (for example, three years earlier, when the Senate Armed Forces Committee had considered Universal Military Training, and also the HUAC hearings on Alger Hiss), but the Kefauver hearings were broadcast nationally, a first for this kind of television.

Actually, Kefauver, who was hardly averse to publicity, had not sought to have his hearings covered by television and had no idea until the last minute that they were going to be. On March 12, 1951, they went live on a relatively primitive hookup, but it was national. It went to twenty cities in the East and the Midwest. Because television was so new, all programming was still quite limited, and that was particularly true in the daytime. The networks had barely gotten around to filling their evening slots, let alone morning and afternoon. By some estimates only 1.5 percent of American homes had television sets in use during the morning hours. That meant that any company could buy commercial time at that hour on the cheap. By chance, *Time* magazine was planning a subscription drive and decided to sponsor the telecast of the hearings, first in New York City and then in Washington, for fifteen days.

In a way, Kefauver's timing could not have been better. A year or two earlier and there would have been no audience; a few years later, there might have been less excitement—for people might have been more blasé. In the New York area alone in the previous twelve months the number of homes with television sets had gone from about 29 percent to 51 percent. That meant that for the first time in any metropolitan area in any city in the world, there were more homes with television sets than those without. All over the city, and then in other cities, as his hearings continued, housewives called their friends up to tell them of this exciting new show.

For the Kefauver hearings contained innately explosive drama. There, live and in black and white, were the bad guys on one side, looking very much like hoods, showing by the way they spoke and in other ways they never quite realized that they were part of the underworld; on the other side were Kefauver and his chief counsel, Rudolph Halley, the good guys, asking the questions any good citizen would about crime. Estes Kefauver came off as a sort of Southern Jimmy Stewart, the lone citizen-politician who gets tired of the abuse of government and goes off on his own to do something about it.

On March 13, Frank Costello, alias Francisco Castaglia, reputedly the leader of organized crime in New York, testified. Costello had little in the way of an actual criminal record, but step by step he

had moved from apprentice to bootlegger to slot-machine operator to gambling-house owner. He had been Lucky Luciano's top lieutenant, and when Luciano had been deported, Costello had taken over as America's top racketeering figure. By 1950 his influence at Tammany Hall was pervasive. As he became more successful, he diversified his business interests, moving into more legitimate fields. By this time he seemed, or at least wanted to seem, perfectly respectable. As such, Costello objected to the cameras showing his face. "Mr. Costello doesn't care to submit himself as a spectacle," his lawyer noted. After some consultation the committee agreed; his face would not be shown. A television technician suggested showing Costello's hands. That proved truly devastating. Those hands relentlessly reflected Costello's tension and guilt: hands drumming on the table; hands gripping a water glass, fingers tightly clenched; hands tearing paper into little shreds; hands sweating—all the while accompanied by the words of the committee's relentless pursuit. Costello's attempts to represent himself as merely a businessman who had made a success in the new world were not convincing. The television lights were hard on his eyes, he claimed. It was time to go home. He walked out, to be followed by a contempt subpoena.

Some 70 percent of New York City television sets were on, which gave the hearings twice the ratings achieved by the World Series during the previous fall. People in the other cities hooked up were also mesmerized. The newspapers wrote stories about husbands coming back to find the housework unfinished, their wives glued to the television set and wanting to talk only about the inner workings of the mob. In New York, Con Ed had to add an extra generator to supply the power for all the television sets. The editors of *Life* magazine understood immediately that American politics had changed. "The week of March 12, 1951, will occupy a special place in history," *Life* wrote. "The U.S. and the world had never experienced anything like it. . . . All along the television cable . . . [people] had suddenly gone indoors . . . into living rooms, taverns and club rooms, auditoriums, and back offices. There in eerie half-light, looking at millions of small frosty screens, people sat as if charmed. For days on end and into the nights they watched with complete absorption . . . the first big television broadcast of an affair of their government, the broadcast from which all future uses of television in public affairs must date. . . . Never before had the attention of the nation been so completely riveted on a single matter. The Senate investigation into interstate crime was almost the sole subject of national conversation."

Estes Kefauver became America's first politician to benefit from the glare of television—even though the hearings had been devastating to his own party. They had shown that it was almost impossible to tell where the power and influence of the mob ended and that of the city officials began; former mayor Bill O'Dwyer, newly minted as Truman's ambassador to Mexico, admitted that he had knowingly appointed men with connections to organized crime to high office. (Some of Truman's aides thought that O'Dwyer should resign immediately, but Truman, a man of old-fashioned loyalties, would have none of it.) Kefauver immediately went on the lecture circuit and made a handsome additional income. Magazines competed to put him on their covers. He appeared as a mystery guest on the television show *What's My Line?* and gave the fifty-dollar fee to charity. Hollywood wanted him for a bit part in a Humphrey Bogart movie called *The Enforcer*. He put his name to a ghostwritten four-part series for the *Saturday Evening Post*, "What I Found in the Underworld." His book, written jointly with Sidney Shalett, *Crime in America* was on *The New York Times* best-seller list for twelve weeks. Something of an erratic husband and a womanizer (Capitol Hill's nickname for him was the Claw, for his habit of groping women in Senate elevators), he was chosen father of the year. A poll of 128 Washington correspondents placed him second only to Paul Douglas in ability.

Television had catapulted him to the very head of the line in the Democratic party, which was at that moment in dire trouble, among other reasons because of the hearings he had just held. When his young counsel Halley, a novice in elective politics, ran for president of the New York City Council in the fall of 1951 as a reform candidate on the Liberal line, he won, beating all the major-party candidates. Kefauver understood immediately that he was in an ideal position to run for the presidency without seeming to run. He could travel from city to city, reporters would attend his press conferences, and he would push aside questions of his own ambition and talk instead on the grave question of crime in the nation's cities. Kefauver claimed he was not interested in running for office. He was the outsider taking on the corrupt politicians from the corrupt machines. Without even knowing it, he had become the prototype for a new kind of politician, who ran not against his opponents but against the political system itself.

Eventually, Estes Kefauver did announce his candidacy for the presidency and filed for the New Hampshire primary. By chance, at almost the same time *Time* magazine polled the television industry for its annual awards and the Kefauver hearings won two; he also

won an Emmy from the American Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for special achievement in "bringing the workings of our government into the homes of the American people." He could not attend the awards banquet but accepted the Emmy by phone from New Hampshire, where he was busy campaigning.