

The Man Who Orchestrated the Graveyard Vote in Chicago for Jack Kennedy

“Jack” Francis Xavier Davoren

In 1979, the Massachusetts Democratic Party had two operatives, Joseph Krzys and Pat Haley, that were part of the Data Education Consulting Company that ran out of our 101 Tremont Street office.

The Dems were having a reception at the Boston Aquarium, (I believe it was in March) and invited me to tag along for the show.

Pat Haley introduced me to an old Massachusetts pol, Jack Francis Xavier Davoren. He was an old Irish politician who had been Majority Leader of the House and Secretary of State, recently retired. He was wearing a dignified Chesterfield coat.

I invited him to a drink – he preferred Irish Whiskey (if I recall correctly). He loved to spin yarns, and I kept buying him drinks to loosen him up. Soon he revealed he was close to the Kennedy’s and had helped JFK get elected at the state level in the 1950s and at the national level in 1960.

I commented what a close election it was and how I hated Nixon, starting with the 1960 election (when I was only 13 years old - I recall Nixon being arrogant during the debate with Kennedy).

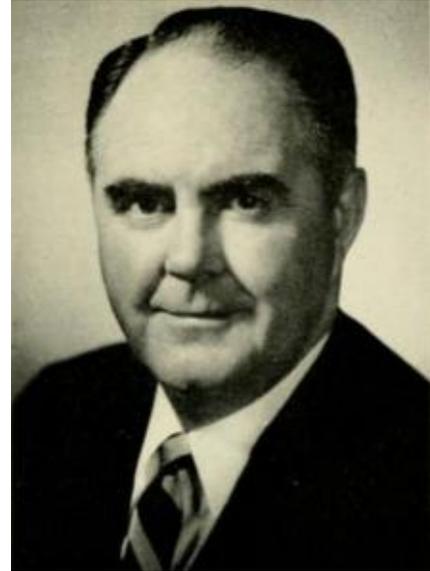
Jack responded that Kennedy almost lost that election. After recounting his election activities turning out the Massachusetts vote, Davoren continued on – now with about three Irish whiskeys in him:

“If it weren’t for the Chicago graveyard vote, we would have lost the election. I personally delivered a briefcase of \$100,000 to Mayor Daley in Chicago to deliver the graveyard vote”. ... then he added that “Nixon’s team found out about it, too!”

A bit aghast, I inquired why Nixon’s gang didn’t blow the whistle declaring a hijacked vote?

Jack, with a glint in his eye, retorted, “because they did the same thing in Texas! And we found out about it! So we had each other by the ‘short and hairies.’” (otherwise known as “by the balls.”)

1964 Majority Leader of the
Massachusetts House



[John Francis](#) Xavier "Jack" Davoren (July 27, 1915 – August 24, 1997) was a U.S. politician who served as a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives from 1955–1967 and Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth from 1967–1974.

While in the house, he served as the House Majority Leader from 1962–1964 and Speaker from 1964 to 1967.

Davoren left the House of Representatives in 1967 after he was elected Secretary of the Commonwealth.