

September 16, 2007

Reference No. 12106

Processing Note

Transcript only of this conversation; there is no recording.

In a conversation with Supervisory Archivist Claudia Anderson on September 6, 2007, former Governor of North Dakota, William Guy noted that there was a mistake in the transcript of his conversation with the President dated August 25, 1967. On page 4 of the transcript, the transcript quotes the Governor as saying, "He's the highway commissioner for Missouri and has been for many years. He might be a political candidate." According to Governor Guy, the transcript should read, "He's the highway commissioner for North Dakota..."

DATE: 8/25/67

TIME: 12:50 PM

CALLER: William Guy

Pages of Transcript: 5 pages

Barbara Cline
Archivist

The President (A)
to Governor Guy (B)

August 25, 1967

12:50p 12106

A Hello

B Hello

A Governor?

B Yes, Mr. President.

A I was quite distressed by your wire -- first because no one had any authority to make a firm commitment. We had issued orders to begin with that the Vietnamese and Amb. Bunker hoped that we could keep this to a dozen. But you can't do this when you go to selecting them and it decreases each day. We did not feel that we could assign individuals to accompany -- if you have a friend, then somebody else has a friend -- and then the conference of mayors has a friend. And we have to have more than one plane. We don't have the helicopters to move these people around. Marvin Watson did not understand that he ever implied a commitment that people could take friends. There are staff people going, there are Vietnamese speaking people that will accompany you and will take you where you need to go and give support. We were fearful that if we broke over, it would be difficult. Next we'll have the counties -- the counties will feel that since we have governors and cities that the counties ought to be invited to go. I want to do anything you want to do. I'll send him back on another mission. I feel like we ought to have the delegation, the staff people, the governors and we were strong on the governors because it would lend dignity to the group. I would have lots of complications. I don't know what I would say to the head of the Conference of Mayors. The Army asked for a reserve officer who would give leadership. Senator Mansfield came right back and pointed out that to assign a reserve officer who is connected with the Democratic leader to such a trip would subject the President to great criticism. Now this is the reasoning we follow. Marvin is on the line. He says he understood you asked for it, but he didn't have any firm commitment with you.

Marvin: Governor, I did recognize the request you made. I did say that we would check into it, and when I checked into it, it was impossible.

B Let me fill in a bit on this -- some people have a problem when they are flying or standing in a tall building. Some people have trouble in a confined room with no windows. I just happen to be a victim of a strange situation where I have had some problems if I don't have somebody I know with me. So for years I have gotten along wonderfully with my wife or somebody with me. So this is what I did. I certainly got the impression I could. So I therefore selected the highway commissioner who might be the Democratic candidate for governor... he went ahead and got shots, passport, and all that. And when I got the call back from Marvin Watson last night, it jerked the rug out from under me. Nonetheless, I appreciate the assignment and I'll do the best I can.

A We'll have dozens of people there.

Bq Well, it's hard to explain. It isn't just the presence of people that's a problem.

A If it's a medical thing, we'll have doctors aboard. Now what do I say to the Mayors and what do I say to the Governor of Oregon when I show them the manifest. ... you see, that's our problem. We'll have an electoral group that handled this problem elsewhere--the Dominican Republic-- and we'll have experts speaking the language -- we've a plane loaded with twenty-odd folks. I'll send him next week if necessary.

B No, I'm not trying to be a prima donna here... not at all. In fact when I travel, if my wife is with me, I don't take any aides. I carry my own grip, I'm my own security. It isn't that. That's not the point. I'm sure that you have many problems, but it did kind of irritate me because I thought I had understood that it was sufficient to have this man take the whole series of shots and get his passport.

A I apologize for that, and I know nobody meant to convey that impression. If you got that authority, I'm not aware of it. I don't know if we have a transcript of that conversation between you and Marvin.

- B I'm sure it's an honest misunderstanding between Marvin Watson and me.
- Marvin: I'm the one who should apologize -- to the President and to you, Governor. I do recall your asking, and I also, if you recall, remember my saying that I would check into it and we would be back in touch.
- B Yes, this was Saturday, and then when we talked on Monday I thought we came to the agreement. I recall your saying that if you take an aide then everyone will have to take an aide, and I said that I can't speak for the rest of them. I'm just appealing for my own situation.
- A What do you think would happen if we did that. And what would you say if Bunker came back to you and said we had to limit this to a dozen. They are going into five areas and it's already up to twenty, and I guess there will be any number of interpreters, experts, etc. Say we just tell them that we're going to do this. Then the head of the Mayors will say, "What about bringing my AA?" -- and then there's the Mansfield thing. Mansfield thinks it's unfair, for ~~that~~ they'll charge us for being partisan.
- B I have great hopes for this election. I think it could be the basis for a new course of action. I am proud to be invited to attend and will do the best I can, Mr. President.
- A You don't know how grieved I am that you got this impression. If there is anyway we can substitute....any wayI want to do anything that doesn't create a problem. You must see this sort of thing in your job.
- B Oh yes. Well, I had hoped that Marvin Watson -- instead of asking this man as a Presidential invitee, or nominee for this commission, that he would just be attached to the Department of State staff or any other staff, and wouldn't be assigned to me at all.
- A Do you think we could get by with that?
- B I don't know.but if I were the mayors or these other people in this affair....

- A We have preachers, governors, and I don't think there is a single one of them that wouldn't like to bring a companion.
- B I'm sure that they would want to bring three or four, and I want to emphasize that I don't attach any importance at all to me for asking for an aide. It's just that this is a personal problem that has nothing to do with being Governor. It's a problem that I have been able to control through the years and I can proceed here, and I think we'll do all right.
- A What you're saying is that it is a physical problem...
- B That's right.
- A Let me see if a doctor...
- B I don't know what kind of a phobia it is that I have. It's some kind that I have had for many years and I was automatically trying to cope with it.
- A I'll talk to Dr. Burkley and we'll see if we can't work it out and we'll call you back.
- B I'll be down in Missouri.
- A What does this fellow do?
- B He's the highway commissioner for Missouri and has been for many years. He might be a political candidate.
- A Would that give us a problem?
- B No.
- A Let me look into it.
- B I'll be at Tantarra Lodge, Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri.
- A Fine, thank you very much, Governor.

B I appreciate your concern.

A I want to do anything that you want done.

B Thank you.

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