

INTERVIEWEE: JOSEPH BARR (Mayor)

INTERVIEWER: PAIGE MULHOLLAN

June 10, 1969

M: Some people find this rather like a psychiatrist's couch, they get to talking and find out they like it. Maybe that will be your situation.

Did you know Mr. Johnson prior to the time you became mayor of Pittsburgh?

B: Oh yes. I met Lyndon Johnson when he first went to Congress.

M: This is the kind of thing we're at the mercy of. I had no idea your acquaintance went back that far.

B: I met him through former Governor Dave Lawrence who was the national committeeman from Pennsylvania.

M: What kind of contact did you have with him in those early days?

B: Most of the time it was on legislation, particularly legislation affecting the City of Pittsburgh. He always took a keen interest, as did his friend Sam Rayburn, in the problems of the cities, early before anyone else, with the exception maybe, of Vice President Humphrey. He came up by my invitation when I was state chairman in 1959 to speak at our \$100 dinner. After I invited him and he had accepted, there were a couple of people that didn't want him to come here. He called and said, "This could be embarrassing. If you want to call it off, I won't feel badly at all." I said, "It's not going to be embarrassing at all." Those persons were great civil rights people, and they found out when he came up here and in the speech he made there--they wrote me and said I was right and they were wrong.

M: These were liberal-wing Democrats?

B: Supposedly, yes. I would say more those who belonged to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Then in 1960, early in the year, I got a call from him one day, and he said he was going to be some place in Ohio, nearby, and he was going to come into Pittsburgh and stay all night. Would I have breakfast with him in the morning? I said, "Lyndon, I not only will have breakfast with you, but I'll arrange a luncheon for all the delegates in southwestern Pennsylvania."

M: This was prior to the convention in 1960?

B: Prior to the convention. This was very early in 1960. He said, "Would you do that?" I said, "I'll do that for any Democrat that's running."

I remember very well that morning. We had breakfast together, and I had two conventions. One of them was the survivors of Corregidor and Bataan, and I've forgotten what the other convention was. I asked him, "How about you accompanying me and you make the speech?" He made two great speeches. And it was at the time of U-2 incident. He had to be very cautious in questioning. Some people asked him what he had to say about it. Though he was a Democrat and the majority leader in the Senate, particularly on international affairs etc., he was one of the persons that Eisenhower could depend on and depend on to the ultimate degree.

So after welcoming these two conventions, I had to go out to Pitt for something, and I said I'd be back in about an hour. When I came back--I've never forgotten the experience that morning--he was there lying on the couch, and a girl was down on her knees beside him. And I thought, my Lord, maybe he has had another heart attack! What it was, she was putting in contact lenses. It was the first time he was going to try contact lenses. When I found that out I was much relieved.

Then we left from there to go up from the Hilton Hotel to the William Penn Hotel where we had a press conference. He had a written statement on the U-2 incident, and he tried to read it through these contacts. He finally put his other glasses on over the contacts and gave the statement and was asked a lot of other questions.

Then there was another convention in town, the Pennsylvania Motor Truck Association. I took him in there and let him speak to them, and I really worked him that morning. After we finished with that, we went in and finally had the meeting of all the delegates from these seven or eight counties in southwestern Pennsylvania, at which he spoke to them and told of his interest in the candidacy for President etc.

I often thought that in the end it was a good move, because these people out here got to know him like I knew him. We had a great number of state labor leaders etc. that were in our delegation and when they made the move for him to run for Vice President, they were the easiest people in the world to sell that he should be the person.

M: They weren't prepared to support him for the presidency nomination?

B: That's right. If you'll remember the Pennsylvania delegation went to California as a un-committed delegation. We had a great meeting in Pasadena. The Pennsylvania delegation was staying in Pasadena, which is a pretty good jaunt from Los Angeles, but we had the whole Huntington Sheraton Hotel plus two motels, because ours was a large delegation.

On the Monday morning, if my memory serves me right, we invited each of the candidates to come out and address the Pennsylvania delegation. We had that meeting open, and I've never seen more TV men, more press men, etc., because it depended on Pennsylvania, and pretty much what was going to happen with the large number of delegates that we had.

So right after the breakfast was over and all the various candidates spoke, we dismissed them and the press. You know how they can be, I don't blame them, that's part of their business. Dave Lawrence was then governor and was up making a speech, and I got tipped off at that time that one of the national radios had hooked into the microphone at which he was making the speech to the delegation. I went up and told him and said, "You might just as well keep on going." He said, "That's exactly what I'm going to do."

In a few minutes there was another flare. A newspaperman broke a window, attempting to get into the caucus and what we were doing. Then after all of this we called the roll, and that was when the delegation

swung almost unanimously--there were some votes for Adlai Stevenson, and the rest were for John F. Kennedy.

So as the convention went on, as you know, we nominated John F. Kennedy for President on the first ballot. The next morning we were having a breakfast of all our delegation, and Governor Lawrence, who was the leader of our delegation, was staying at the Biltmore in Los Angeles, and we got a call to come down immediately. And that is when the wheels started turning for the nomination of Lyndon Johnson for Vice President.

I got a number of calls around--do it very judiciously--to try and get everybody in line for that evening. I think it was in the evening we had the--. Then Dave Lawrence made the nominating speech. If I remember correctly, I think Ribicoff was handling the floor for Kennedy. In fact I even took the nominating speech of Dave Lawrence of Lyndon Johnson over to Abe Ribicoff to see what he thought of it. He thought it was fine. There was only one group that held out, if I remember correctly, for a while, and I think it was the Michigan delegation. I think they passed.

M: I believe the first time they did.

B: And then they hopped back on. Lyndon, I thought, was a tremendous help to the ticket. Without him on the ticket John F. Kennedy would never have been elected President of the United States.

M: Didn't it cause you trouble within Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh?

B: Oh, no, didn't have any trouble at all here, but I think where he was so helpful was in the State of Texas and some of the Southern states, which I don't think that Kennedy alone and another person in the United States from the West or from the Northeast could have been as helpful as he had been because he had the contacts, as you know, with all the Southern congressmen, senators, whom he had worked with so long in the Congress of the United States.

This is just sort of a byplay part that came a little later. I think, before this, one day in December of '59 John Kennedy came to town, and he was going to speak before the County Bar Association. I got a call from John Bailey, who had been an old friend of mine in the Young Democrats etc., and he asked me if I'd meet him down in the suite in the Hilton Hotel; and if Alice was going to come because Mrs. Kennedy was with John.

I went down and there in the room were Bailey, Pierre Salinger, Larry O'Brien, Kenny O'Donnell, my wife, and Jack Kennedy. My wife was making the speech, telling Kennedy why he should not run for President; why he should run for Vice President instead. She had the Catholic idea, because we're Catholics ourselves, that you couldn't elect a Catholic. She said maybe this way he could back into it seven years from now.

I've never forgotten. The day after the inaugural of Kennedy we had a meeting of the national committee to elect the national chairman,

and Jack Kennedy came over to it, and he broke away from the Secret Service men and ran over to me and said, "Joe, tell Alice I made it."

M: He remembered.

B: Yes, he remembered. He had a great memory. And I thought they were a great team together.

I've never forgotten, as no one else will, the time of his death. I went down to the Blair House. I was offered a ticket for the funeral, but I thought there were other people far more important than I, particularly from the State Department's view, that should be at the funeral. I there talked to President Truman and Governor Harriman before I went over to the White House.

I came back that night, it was a Saturday, and it was rather late, and I went to church to the 12:30 Mass, and this curate was out in front of the church. He said to me, "Joe, I know you were down yesterday. What shall I tell my sister? I'm having a horrible time with her. The Lord should never have let this happen." I said, "The Lord has funny ways." It was my thought that they could not have gotten this tax cut through and certain other important bills at that time that I didn't think Kennedy could get through that Johnson got through. The priest said this would be helpful with his sister. They were at that time of great benefit to the country.

I never saw a person take hold of the reins like Lyndon Johnson did. It was a very difficult time, but being the statesman that he is, he in my opinion did the right and proper thing. He called all of the

staff of John Kennedy and told them he wanted them all to stay, but some did leave. I can remember President Johnson telling me that Pierre Salinger gave him not one minute's notice that he was leaving to go run for the Senate out on the coast.

I was of course very active in the U.S. Conference of Mayors, so I was back and forth from the White House quite a bit. I was never turned down when I called down there for an appointment with the President.

M: I was going to ask you to compare, if you can, the way the mayors of major cities had contact with President Kennedy as to the way they had it with President Johnson. Did it change any?

B: If I were to make a parallel, I think there is more legislation affecting the cities during Johnson's time than there was under President Kennedy's time. Every time we had a meeting of our Executive Committee or Advisory Board of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, he always received us over there. I can remember also on some things other than problems with the mayors, the time that the surtax came up. I remember I took a poll of my own. You know, Pittsburgh is the home of many large corporations. They said they were very happy to go for the 10 percent surtax if they would restore the 7 percent incentive. I took that information to him, and a lot of these men did of course know. I had the list written out for him. As you know, he did restore the 7 percent incentive, and I think he was entirely right in that because so many of these companies and corporations

were starting their new programs, getting more up-to-date plants, particularly right around here because this is an old city and some of these plants were old--a number of them had closed down.

M: Incidentally, this is my first visit here. Pittsburgh had done a beautiful job. Compared to all of the cities I've seen on this project, it's just lovely to look at--.

B: We think it's great. We still have myriads of problems. We're getting ready for this weekend. A funny thing happened to me out in Dallas about three to four years ago. I was late getting out for the meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and so when I got there I went directly to the hall--it was the hall, by the way, President Kennedy was heading for when he was assassinated. The site committee for picking the next site of the convention came to me and told me: "There were various other cities bidding for the convention, so we voted unanimously if you'll accept us, we want to come to Pittsburgh and see all the things that have been done." So consequently, starting Friday of this week, they're all coming. It has been a lot of work getting ready for them, and we do have a lot to show them and not all good.

M: But much of it is. I didn't mean to distract you but I did want to tell you, as an outsider, how much it does--

B: You take right in the Golden Triangle downtown here. There have been sixty-five new buildings since World War II.

M: And I passed half a dozen going up now, including that monstrous U. S. Steel Building.

B: Yes, that's a sixty-four story job. Actually will have more square feet of office space than the Pan-Am Building. But now the John Hancock Building in Chicago, that will surpass us.

M: I'm going to Chicago tonight as soon as I finish here, as a matter of fact.

Were there any informal types of contact or regular contact between the President and the various mayors, other than the Conference of Mayors?

B: Oh, yes. It happens that most of the big city mayors happen to be Democrats and Johnson was always quick, I think, to see most of them when they called. It was good politics and good judgment, because he consequently had congressmen too.

I can remember I was there in his office the day the session closed a few years back, and one of the calls he put in was to my own congressman to thank him for all the things that he had done. Because I think in the year of '67 probably more was accomplished, that is, I'm speaking now of things for the cities and the problems that confront our country, than any other time. Money was appropriated for education, the poverty program.

M: Did he consult the mayors about these programs and solicit their advice?

B: Oh, yes. His main contact between the mayors was Joe Califano, who had been in the same law office in New York with a young cousin of mine.

M: Sullivan and Cromwell, wasn't it?

B: I've forgotten. It was in Dewey's office.

M: Yes.

B: So at least some good Democrats came out of Dewey's office. But Joe kept in close contact.

I'm going back to a few things that the President had asked me to do. He was always apologetic that he was asking you to do anything. I think he was one of the ones that thought up the idea of--remember, he had gone over to Berlin when he was Vice President after the Wall went up, and he came home and he talked to the President and Dean Rusk. So they selected about twenty-two of us from both parties to go over to Berlin and take telegrams from all of the mayors in the country telling the West Berliner's how we're backing them etc. This is right after the Wall went up.

And then again in the year of 1967 he called me and asked me to go to Viet Nam.

M: And you did go.

B: Yes, I was one of the observers of the election. They asked me who I thought--the mayor, naturally they wanted a Republican mayor, and I suggested to them: 'I suggest your neighbor, Ted McKeldin.' He

had been governor of the State of Maryland, and was mayor, and I thought he would be objective and knew all about elections. So there were some twenty-two of us went over, and some other men from the State Department, men really from all walks of life. There were some senators and governors and the various religious faiths, mayors, the American Legion, the head of the Jaycees, head of the Disabled American Veterans etc. That was rather a hectic trip.

M: You might describe that. That's not directly related to the President, but we're interested in his times as well. Did you really get a chance to look at the Vietnamese elections?

B: Yes, and we were free to go any place that we wanted. We were there probably three days before the election was held on Sunday. The election polls opened early because the villagers would be afraid, I think, to come in when it was dark. Actually their election laws are a little more thorough than ours. First of all, there were a number of candidates--I think thirteen different groups there running for President; and they not only had their pictures on there but they had their slogans on there and their names on there. There was no way really to make an error. And then on your identification card when you went in to vote, you had the fingerprint of the voter; and then so there couldn't be any double voting they cut the end of the card off.

M: After the vote had been cast.

B: No, as you got your ballot. They rotated these. They'd start with these thirteen, and the next time number two would be on top; the

next time number three would be on top. What you did is throw the others away, and the one that you wanted to vote for you put that one in the ballot box.

Then they went over to vote for the members of the Senate. If you don't think that was a tremendous thing, the number that were running, with people sitting down trying to find their fellows that they wanted.

They also had in every village the posting in the village papers of all the names of those that were qualified to vote--twice. They had to be published twice within a few weeks. I was up in Da Nang on Thursday or Friday, I've forgotten now which it was, and every polling place that I went to there were the lists for anyone to examine. A great number of those that manned the polls were teachers in schools, who were a little more learned than some of the other people.

I've never forgotten the night in Da Nang when we were going to bed; we were staying out at the Third Marine Corps base, and this general came in and gave me a bullet-proof vest to wear because they had tried to hit the field a few night before and missed it by yards. I said, 'If you don't mind, I'll put it at the bottom of my bed. If they're going to throw those mortars in here, this is not going to help me much.'

As for the fighting itself, as we were leaving, Senator Murphy and the men who represented the National Association of Manufacturers--

we were leaving Saigon, as we were leaving the palace, I told him, "I want to get in the four different corps areas." I Corps, they call it--that's Da Nang, Hue, the DMZ zone. Number two goes down in Cam Ranh Bay and that way. Saigon was the third corps, and then down in the Mekong Delta was the fourth. So I said, "I'd like to stop, if we could, in that second corps area." He said, "It's a little hot up there today." I thought he was talking about the weather because over there you don't perspire, you sweat.

We got up there and they started in, and I never saw more shooting, the dive bombers were coming in, and I was playing gin rummy with Senator Murphy and I said, "You tell that pilot to get us the hell out of here." So I'd taken the wrong connotation of hot.

I had promised the mayor of Saigon that I would come back from where we were at Can Tho on election day in time for the polls to close in city hall--there were a number of polling places there--and visit with him. We were there, watching the count, how they were counting--it was a little difficult to follow in their language, but the best I could see, and I've been around politics for a long time watching elections, I thought it was an honest election, as honest as any election I've ever seen.

Now how they had the selection of those who were allowed to vote--

M: That was beyond your observance.

B: Yes. In other words, the lists were right, no one voted more than once, every person was checked properly as they went in. And I would say that I was in probably down at Can Tho that day maybe in twenty or twenty-five voting places.

I told this mayor, "I have to get going. I haven't been to Mass yet." It was Sunday. The cathedral was just a couple of blocks back of city hall. That's the one that got hit a few times, you'll remember, when they had the parade the year before.

And I can remember, we went in, it was hot, the place was jammed, and thousands and thousands of bicycles and scooter bikes outside. The mayor of Baltimore, though he was not a Catholic, said he wanted to go with me. We went up, and we were standing by the left of the altar, and someone must have figured out that we were Americans and came up and moved a couple of poor Vietnamese out of their seats and gave us the seats. Some priest came out in a white cassock and gave the sermon, I think he must have talked for forty-five minutes, and that's not very interesting when you can't understand a word he's saying.

One of the things I always get a kick out of, I said, "Hell, we're due at 6 o'clock, and it's after that now," at a certain place where they drew their Constitution etc. over by the square, and I said, "Heck, we'd better go." We started out, and our guides and our guards had stayed outside because I didn't think they should be carrying guns and

rifles into the church. And I came out and I said, "Where's McKeldin?" They hadn't seen him yet. He came out in a few minutes and said, "What's wrong with you? You must not be in the state of grace. You didn't go to communion." Here was the Protestant guy who went to communion in a Catholic Church. I then asked, "Don't you remember the few things that we ate over there in the mayor's office right before we went over?"

That was a very interesting trip. I'd say it's a dangerous trip for any civilian. I'm one of those persons who doesn't have much fear in him, but I think when the President asks you to do something, that's not a wish--it's almost a command. I think if more people did that--.

Going back to what the soldiers had to say the day after the election, we went out to various places. We went over by the Cambodian border, and I went to probably eight or ten bivouacs there. They understood more about what the war was about, I think, than the American people do. They were saying that ^{if} this was lost. If we gave in to the Communists, they felt that Laos would go and Thailand would go, and the Communists in the Philippines, etc. They were very bitter about some of the attitudes of these card burners back in this country.

I can remember one group I was talking to, we were in fatigues and had our names on, one thing I was asking these fellows that "when you get home, get interested in government, get interested in

politics." One very large Negro sargeant said, "Mayor, does that mean you have to be a Democrat?" I said, "Why would you say that?" He said, "I'm from Philadelphia, I know who you are." And I said, "No, it doesn't mean that whatsoever."

Well, to go on about the war thing. I don't think the President had any choice other than to do what he did.

M: Did he talk to the mayors about Viet Nam, for example at other meetings on other things?

B: Yes. Several times we went down, and we had very lengthy briefings, not only by the President himself but Dean Rusk and by McNamara and Holbrook. They'd get up in that East Room and give us the whole thing and all ended their talks always, "Now if you have any solution of how we can get out of there fairly and squarely, we're open to them." Johnson kept pleading for that, as you know, for a number of years. No one has come up with the solution, just as no one has come up with the solution to the problems of the cities.

I'm off the subject a little bit, but my main criticism, if you want to call it a criticism, of the past administration and the present one, is that they've not established their priority list. I think this anti-ballistic missile, it's a great mistake to spend that money because if they don't do more for these cities there won't be any cities here to preserve with the anti-ballistic missile. I know there were billions of dollars that President Johnson poured into education. I think more

in his administration has been put in than probably in the whole history of our country. And the war on poverty. A lot of people say they can't see where it's done much good. Well, they are those people with no foresight. I can see where it has done a great deal of good. Some mayors don't like it.

M: I was going to say, a lot of the criticism of it was from cities who didn't think that it was being administered in a way consistent with the cities' needs. They thought that the cities were taking too much out of it. Do you think that's not true?

B: We got ready for it five months before the bill was passed here. We formed a non-profit corporation, and we had people from all walks of life on the board, and I took the chairmanship of it. There were probably 1500 people working down there. I've never mentioned one name; we kept politics out of it entirely. There may be some mayors who want to put some politics in it. I thought that would be the greatest mistake in the world. True, some of the programs that we started didn't end up the way we thought they should. It was a new thing, there were new people running it. No one had ever had any experience in this before. I've heard some people even criticize Head Start. I remember the day it started. I went up to the school, I remember one youngster they had to drag in. Here was a youngster who had never seen a crayon before, never had anything. I went up to the same school the day they finished, and this child cried when

he had to go home. You were trying, previous to Head Start, to send youngsters from disadvantaged families that didn't have the same chances that most of the other children had in the first grade with those youngsters. Consequently they were never able to catch up, and that in my opinion was the reason there were so many school dropouts. So I say it's going to take almost ten years for us to see the value of Head Start.

I'd say in the first few years in the CAP program here that we were able to reach about 50 or 55 thousand people, and in a city of about 600,000 that's a lot.

A lot of people have the poverty program confused. They think it's only for the colored. That's not true. We have our various neighborhoods elect people, and we have a number of white people from neighborhoods--there's a lot of poverty among the whites. But somehow or another speeches have been made by those who are not as concerned as they should be that they think this is just for the black man. That's not true at all, because there are far more poor whites than there are blacks. A fellow said it pretty well the other day. He said, 'God must love the poor people; he created more of them.'

M: And if you come from Arkansas like I do, you'll know that there are as many of one color as there are of another.

B: You're an old ridge runner.

M: Right. And I've seen some of them of my own color. Things like the CAP program, you think, were not unsound basically, if they were used as the President and the Administration had intended they be used?

B: That's right. They were not unsound. I thought Sarge Shriver did a tremendous job on it. And I thought then also President Johnson's extra appropriations that he asked for for summer employment for the young people kept the troubles down in the cities. It's unfortunate we're not going to have the jobs we had last year, because the money has not been appropriated. I think that was a great mistake. President Johnson fought for those programs and fought for the money for them.

Now one program that he fought for is Model Cities. I still have a question about Model Cities, there has been a lot of money spent for planning, but whether Congress is ever going to appropriate the money for doing the things in recreation, libraries, schools, and all the other facets that are needed in these various ghetto and sub-ghetto neighborhoods. My main worry is, you've lifted these people's eyes up, and it's the old story about the carrot going past the nose and then not giving the carrot to the rabbit. Unless Congress follows through and appropriates this money, this planning money is going down the drain and these cities will still have ghettos after ghettos.

M: The the concept--

B: Oh, the concept is great.

M: And you all were consulted so that it wasn't something that was put over on you by--?

B: Oh no. In fact we were called in immediately when they sent the first skeleton bill to the Hill. Bob Weaver had us all in and went through the thing point by point and asked for suggestions, and suggestions that were made by the mayors throughout the country were put into the bill. To the everlasting glory of Senator Ed Muskie, if it wasn't for Muskie they never would have gotten the bill out of the Senate Committee. That's the only program if there's no follow-through on, I think it could be harmful. That's the reason I say they ought to get a set of priorities down in Washington. If you were in talking to any other mayor in any other city, you'd hear the same story. It's almost as if you close your eyes.

M: I'm going to see Mayor McKeldin, for example, in the near future, I hope.

B: He's quite a fellow. I knew Ted when he was governor, and I knew him when he was mayor before he was governor. He had an uncanny sense of picking the right years to run. It's normally a Democratic state, but he picked the time to run. Last year he didn't run again and Tommy Alesandro ran and carried every precinct, a Democrat in the city of Balitmore.

They have lots of problems there, and if you want to hear problems of the cities, you come to Pittsburgh next week when all the mayors of the country are meeting here.

M: The books that are coming out on Mr. Johnson, at least one of them that I'm thinking of, particularly--Eric Goldman's book. His big point is that Mr. Johnson never understood the cities. You said earlier that he understood them 'way back before he was President.

B: That's right. I used to talk to him about them, and so did Dave Lawrence. Dave Lawrence was the national committeeman from here and was also the mayor of the City of Pittsburgh for thirteen years.

M: It's a great tragedy we can't talk to him because he and President Johnson--

B: They were very close friends, and he had a great admiration for the President. And let me say this to you, that Mr. Johnson is not the fastest person to give you his word, but his word was his bond.

M: Once given--

B: And he was very smart in not giving his word too fast. The President of the United States has to be very cautious. I've always been very careful, any time I was ever in to see him, when newsmen got me when I came out, never to quote the President of the United States. I think that's about the worst thing a citizen can do. Many times I was in there fortunately they didn't know I was in there.

M: He was good at that too.

B: I knew how to get from the Executive Office Building through by the little restaurant they have downstairs there and up. I don't think everything that is done in the White House should be for public

consumption. There's an old story about Macy's don't tell Kaufman's what they're doing--why should we tell the world everything we're doing! Our Constitution says something about freedom of the press, but it never mentions anything about television, and I think those fellows cause us a lot of trouble.

M: They define press rather broadly.

B: Yes. They even caused me trouble physically. I think I got hit in the head six times with a camera down at the convention last year out in Chicago. They're rude. They want to interview some person that's third or fourth from the aisle and will step right over people. a lot of those cameramen are hippies to me.

M: They're always around the Pennsylvania delegation because there are so many votes. It's always a popular gathering place. I was going to ask you about politics. What about 1964? Did Mr. Johnson campaign here that year?

B: Oh, yes. I remember he came, and we took him up to the arena. And God save us, the crowds were so big, the arena was jammed for hours before he got there. We got down to a corner you probably wouldn't know at Fifth and Liberty, and he frightened me when he got out and said, 'We'll get in this open car.' We had not planned to have him in an open car. And the crowds--we could hardly get through. He was a great favorite here. He had come in earlier that year in the summer to speak to the National Convention of the League of Women Voters. And then we went out to a steel hall that afternoon

on the south side. I've never seen such crowds in my life. He was a fearless man. He'd get out and talk to them. I'd say, not exaggerating, over on the south side--I don't know where they all came from--there must have been 200,000 people, and it's the remote part of the city, across the river. I think crowds helped him with all his problems. I mean, it's bound to. You're a lonesome man, as President of the United States, and when you get out and get that public accolade, I think it bolsters your morale a little bit. I think he's just as human as any of the rest of us, and it bolsters his morale.

I had invited him to come here and speak the last week of the campaign, and up until the Tuesday before he thought he was going to be able to make it, and some things came up on the Viet Nam problem and he could not make it. He was a great favorite out in this area, and I knew he could help Humphrey a great deal.

M: What about 1968? Was there a campaign organization in Pittsburgh? Was Pennsylvania ready to go for Mr. Johnson prior to his withdrawal?

B: Yes. I've never forgotten that night. I was at home and the phone rang. My son came in and said, "The White House wants to talk to you." I said, "You tell them I'm listening to the President and I'll call them back." It was Marvin Watson. The phone rang in a few minutes, and my daughter answered and said it was Marvin Watson and he wanted to talk to me right away. He said the President had asked him to call me to let me know--I think he did this to--

M: That puts you on a very select list, being one of those he had called.

B: Yes. He wanted to let me know he was going to announce he was not going to be a candidate. I felt very badly for him. He sacrificed everything doing what he thought was the right thing, as I did, in the Vietnamese war. He was the victim a lot of people within his own party, people he had helped and helped considerably. I guess that's part of politics.

Right now there's a certain thing in this country where people are just against the ins; it's sort of a rebellion. This supposedly generation gap, etc., which I don't see. There's only one answer to it, and it's more law and better order in enforcing the laws and on the campuses and on the streets. I think if you coddle some of these youngsters, you're doing a great mistake, and you're going to make weak characters out of them, and they're supposed to be our leaders of the future.

I thought Yale did a smart thing yesterday, when it let that young man speak. Unfortunately I've just heard about it, didn't hear it, but they say he did a great job, but, of course, with their big hems and haws. Eighty-seven percent of the student body, I think, voted against the Vietnamese war.

M: You say you went to Chicago. Were you in touch with Mr. Johnson during the convention in any way?

B: Yes, I talked to him out at the ranch a couple of times there. Of course I was in close touch with Mr. Humphrey and Marv Watson and all the rest of the fellows who were around.

M: There was some move to get him--

B: We wanted him to come in.

M: You wanted him to come to Chicago?

B: Come to Chicago. But then when these hippy-dippies got so vociferous, I thought it was actually better judgment for his safety that he didn't come in.

M: You all wanted him to come just to make an appearance, not to come for any possible draft or possible nomination?

B: I talked to him about that. There was no chance for that at all. And before you leave I want you to read the letter he sent to me when he withdrew, and a letter I sent to him. Because in my life he is one of the greatest Americans that ever was. He was a great President and history will show that.

M: That's what he's interested in this being done for. He thinks if everybody tells their story, critics and admirers alike, that that would be the best exoneration he could have in history.

B: I don't think he needs to be exonerated. If I was Lyndon Johnson, I'd be walking around with my head high. I've observed this new crew and have heard them twice with all their Cabinet, and I think they mean well but as the kids say, they're not hep to what's going on. As of now, the Housing Bill they passed last year was a great housing bill, and they were six months before they asked for supplemental appropriation for Sections 235 and 236.

M: That's a good indication of what may ultimately come.

B: Yes. Now I say the housing thing can't all be done by the federal government, but the federal government can be a catalyst. To make it worthwhile I think maybe some of these large corporations will go into building a prototype type of home, but that's two or three years off and we can't wait for that. Now with this new interest rate, I'm fearful of what it's going to do to housing. Sometimes I think housing is even more important, particularly in these ghetto areas, than getting the hard core employed. The reason I say that, there's a person that comes downtown to work in the same office building where you and I work, they go to the same hotels, the same restaurants for lunch, and a good pay check, but nevertheless when they finish work that evening and they go back to that ghetto. There's bound to be an internal resentment. I think that's where most of our trouble comes from. We've fortunate here. We had no trouble until the Martin Luther King assassination, and then we had some serious trouble here for a couple of days, but we were able to keep it under control in the one area.

M: Did the federal government do anything about it?

B: We finally had the National Guard come in. I had a number of calls from the White House saying anything they could do, they would do. We did get a lot of helmets and things like that from the U.S. Army--

M: You didn't have to call on the White House then?

B: No, they called me a number of times to find out if there was anything they could do. But through our own police and the state police and

the National Guard, we were able to quiet the thing down, and they left on Sunday afternoon.

M: They were having trouble right close to home at the same time at home in Washington.

B: In Washington. A fellow called me the day it started here. It was a day later starting here, and a friend of mine in Washington called and said, "Just find out what they did in Washington, Joe and just do the opposite."

M: You mentioned the Democratic National Committee, I know you've been close to that for a long time. Some of Mr. Johnson's friends, who also criticized him slightly, say that he kind of neglected the Democratic National Committee and that it really hurt this year then when the time came for it to function. Do you think that's a fair criticism?

B: I think every President, whether he be a Democrat or a Republican, can't pay as much attention to the Democratic National Committee as he would like to, because I think sometimes the reason for it is that names are submitted to them for people for certain places who are not qualified. And consequently to get people in the right spots and the right places in government, there has to be a terrific screening and they have to be capable people. I heard the same thing with Roosevelt, I heard the same thing about Truman, about Kennedy, Johnson. You know, we Americans are born critics.

I do think that the resolutions we passed, and I was chairman of the Resolutions Committee, the National Committee meeting here in January to augment the things that had been done at the convention last year, is going to open the Democratic National Committee to a much broader field, to include more persons than are taking part in it. The fact that the young people weren't in it enough; they were sort of a step-child. I think that's wrong. I think that the National Committee should be just a vehicle and persons from all walks of life should be on the various committees, not just members of the Democratic National Committee. I think Fred Harris is attempting to do that. It was like the Republican National Committee; with Bliss and the fellows before him, there was too much of a closed shop.

M: Did Mr. Johnson ever talk to you about that problem?

B: We talked a lot about the National Committee. I think he was very fond of John Bailey because he knew he had a man of integrity in there, and he knew he had a rough job. Like Democrats always, we're always short of money. Now we have such a great debt hanging over us that we'll be almost until the next presidential election before we get that cleared up and we'll be starting out anew again, and then we'll have another deficit after that one is over.

M: Are there any subjects on which you had close contact with Mr. Johnson that we've neglected to mention here so far? I'm sort of at your mercy.

B: The last judicial appointment that got through committee the last week of the session of last year was my own city solicitor for the Third Circuit Court, which comprises New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and I think the Virgin Islands.

M: Who drew that map? It sounds like someone who wanted to go on vacation once a year.

B: I think probably those fellows take turns going down to the Virgin Islands. There was no one against us. This man's name is David Stahl. He had the highest recommendation from the Pennsylvania Bar and the American Bar etc., but they had a horrible time getting a quorum of the Judicial Committee. It was on a Monday they met and didn't have a quorum. I think Tuesday was the last day it could be done, so I called down to the White House and asked, "Tell me a couple of fellows who maybe aren't too friendly with you, fellows who might be friends of mine, and maybe I can talk to other people and get them there." We got them there. I even called the mayor of Honolulu, who was a Republican, Neal Blaisdell, to make sure he got Senator Fong there. I called George Smathers in Florida to make sure he missed the Finance Committee and he got there. We got Dave Stahl confirmed in the last eighth of a mile, as they say, in a long race.

M: The President did play a part in helping you out then?

B: Oh, yes. He took a tremendous part. I think it was just probably three or four days before he left office, he had us over to the White House--the Democratic National Committee--and in his usual way he came to me and said, "You've done plenty, and you've done plenty for the Democratic party." I felt fine, the way he said it naturally; and that he had done a great deal for our country and for our party.

I have not seen him since then. I've had to write him a couple of times for some pictures for various people etc. But I intend to see him. In fact, he's invited me out to the ranch, and I'll be there before the thing is over.

M: One thing we like to ask people who know him pretty well, like yourself, is about Mrs. Johnson.

B: A lovely person, brilliant. I think probably the most able woman that has ever been in the White House. When you have women liking another woman, you've got something. And I've never met women who came out of there, from all walks of life, from both political parties, that did not come out with the highest praise for Mrs. Johnson. If ever there was a loyal wife who was always at his side, she was there. That was true when he was Vice President, and it was true when he was in the Senate. I attended many social functions, and you never saw Lyndon come in to one that he didn't have Lady Bird with him. I think they're very close.

(Interviewer and interviewee wandered away from the microphone to read letters exchanged between Mayor Barr and President Johnson.)

M: You've been very kind with your time. I don't want to cut you off at all. Are there any other anecdotes or things of importance that you'd like to add in while you have a chance?

B: As usual on these things, you forget the things that you want to say most. But when you send a copy I may have some other remembrances and I'll pen them in.

M: Good, we'll be very happy to have you do so.

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By JOSEPH M. BARR

to the

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