

INTERVIEW I

DATE: June 11, 1972
INTERVIEWEE: ALLEN BARROW
INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ
PLACE: The home of James Jones in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

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F: Judge Barrow, first of all, how did you get involved with Senator [Robert S.] Kerr?

B: It was in his 1948 campaign. I had just returned from the Army two years.

F: Were you a Tulsa boy?

B: Not originally. No. I came to Tulsa about 1928. I was born in Crowder, Oklahoma. That's Carl Albert's district, by the way.

F: Carl Albert's mother was a Frantz, incidentally. We've never been able to get any kinship.

B: Really?

F: We've speculated on it.

B: If you were from Bug Tussle, you'd be related.

But he [Senator Kerr] asked me to manage his campaign in 1948. There was a group that wanted to, and I wasn't one of them. I'll never forget, he asked me if I'd manage it and assumed I would. And I said, "No, I haven't decided yet." He said, "Well, if you did manage it, what would you charge me?" And I said, "Nothing."

F: Were you in the business of managing campaigns?

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B: Oh, no, I was just a lawyer, got back from the Army, and was just trying to set up a practice here. He'd come across my name as being active, I guess; someone had recommended me.

So he said, "Well, if you did manage it, what would you charge me," and I said, "Nothing." He said, "What would you expect?" He liked that answer, you could tell, because apparently he had been talking to people that charged. I said, "I'd expect you to always remember I didn't charge you." He said, "You're my kind of man," and we shook hands, and that's where we started.

I managed his campaign in 1948 and 1954 and 1960.

F: When did you first begin to get conscious of Lyndon Johnson?

B: I think Lyndon Johnson went to the Senate that same year that Senator Kerr did back in 1948.

F: Yes, that was the year he got that eighty-seven vote landslide.

B: Yes, in one of the counties, eighty-seven vote landslide!

You could tell immediately that Kerr was most respectful of President Johnson as a senator; he considered him one of his side-kicks. I think they were brought closer together, probably, through Sam Rayburn. That's why it seemed like they tied in, because they were very close.

F: What was Senator Kerr's connection with Sam Rayburn? Had he known him well beforehand?

B: He was a great respecter of him, and he was quite friendly, quite close. I think while he was governor was when he became closer to Sam Rayburn, and that friendship lasted until his death.

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F: Did you ever know Sam Rayburn?

B: Yes, he took me to breakfast in fact with him at his own apartment. It was one of the pleasures I had. I went to breakfast in Mr. Rayburn's--Mr. Sam, I called him--apartment in Washington, and he served his famous biscuits and honey.

Incidentally, this was the year when I said to him, "Why doesn't the Democratic Party now groom somebody, since you're in control of Congress, who feels they're real good presidential material for president?" I'll never forget. Sam laughed, and looked at Bob, and he said, "You want me to tell him?" And he said, "Yes, you tell him." He [Rayburn] said, "Everybody thinks they're the one should be groomed." I thought it was pretty clever.

F: Right. When did you first meet Lyndon Johnson?

B: The first time I met him, to really meet him, was at a party in Washington. I would say it was about 1958, for that S & H green stamps, it has a name--

F: Sperry and Hutchins?

B: Yes. I didn't know that they were giving the party at the time. I went there with a friend in Washington who invited me to go with him. And while we were there, in walks this great tall man that I had seen before but never had seen standing this close up at least.

F: This was at the Wardman Park?

B: Wardman Park Hotel. He had some gentlemen with him, and I was introduced to him by the person just to my left as he made the

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rounds. My retort to him was, "You're the man we're for for president." He looked quickly, and then looked to the right of the fellow that was with him, and had that pleasant look. Then he said: "Where are you from, young fellow?" And I said, "I'm from Oklahoma." So you could tell he put it together immediately: "Here's one of my friend Bob Kerr's fellows." I never did tell him I was Senator Kerr's manager.

F: Did you see him after that?

B: I saw him after that just on occasion. I would be with Senator Kerr while Senator Kerr was managing a bill or something and sitting in the Senate or managing a filibuster. I'd see him just in passing and in his office; [he'd] be in the outer office with someone, and I'd see him.

F: Were you ever officially with Senator Kerr in Washington?

B: Oh, no. I was merely his manager in three campaigns.

F: You'd just be up there on business?

B: Yes, and then I'd look him up. I always ate dinner with him and always played gin with him all the time. In fact, this space satellite bill was the last time I spent so much time up there.

I told him I had a chance to go to Europe on a lecture tour and make some money, get your transportation and all that. And that's when he said, "I had the mistaken idea, I guess, that you wanted to be a federal judge." I said, "What does that have to do with it?" He said, "Well, I think you ought to stick around." He was watching the floor for a filibuster that Kefauver was putting

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on on this space [bill]. As I recall, Kefauver wanted the government to own the whole contract. So Kerr stood for, and managed, and finally obtained the government owning only half, as I recall, and then putting the other [half] public.

But he was there on that. So I played gin with him. I cancelled my reservations several times and played gin with him.

F: Prior to 1960, do you have any particular memory of any of Senator Kerr's comments about Lyndon Johnson, either as presidential timber . . . In other words, why did you think as early as 1958 that this man was going to be president?

B: Senator Kerr had told me as far as he was concerned, he [Johnson] was the man who was going to be president and should be; he was developing as the strong man of the party, that he was the logical one to take Mr. Sam's place, and the fact that he'd done such a tremendous job as the majority leader. In fact, we talked many times, and Senator Kerr always said I had my ear closer to the ground than anyone he'd ever met [and could] feel the pulse of the people. And I had determined on my own that Lyndon Johnson had the reputation of being the strongest majority leader we'd ever had in the Senate, even by his adversaries, by the opposite party even.

F: Was Senator Kerr doing anything toward organizing a Lyndon Johnson boom or boomlet?

B: In this way: he organized to the extent that when it came up in 1960 all delegates were committed to Lyndon Johnson and stayed

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there until he should release them, and he never did release them until the final--as you know, when they made it unanimous on Kennedy.

F: Oklahoma under Senator Kerr, and the one thing that I've remembered best about Senator Kerr, Oklahoma practically became a well watered state. I don't have to give you the chamber of commerce statistics on that, but it changed its character considerably. And Lyndon Johnson was very interested in water problems. Do you know whether they ever worked together on the Oklahoma situation?

B: Yes, they did. In fact, I'd say that Lyndon Johnson's backing of Kerr's program was the big impetus that allowed it to go through. Plus this congressman from Ohio, Mike Kirwan, sold him on it. Some of these potent leaders in various places were very effective in helping Bob Kerr, and some on the Finance Committee as well. But Lyndon Johnson was for it all along, and he was talking Trinity, as I recall, at the time when he was majority leader. He was speaking of Trinity, and Kerr was talking about this last watershed to be developed. And Lyndon Johnson was behind him one-hundred percent on that, and they became even closer through this association. As far as I know, Johnson backed Senator Kerr all the way on the program.

F: What did you do to get Oklahoma organized between 1958 and 1960 for Johnson?

B: The Senator [Kerr] did that single-handedly, as far as I know, and I think that was by using the weight of his office to get the national committeeman and the state chairman elected. Kerr was

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doing so well on popularity; he was growing all the time in popularity. For instance, [in] the first district, Tulsa County, which had voted a large majority for Eisenhower, of course, but also this was one of the counties for Willkie, as I recall, when he ran in 1940, and also [for] the man from Kansas--what is his name?

F: Landon.

B: Landon. I think Tulsa County, you will find, was one of those for Landon. I think it's as reactionary as Houston, Texas, or more so.

By the way, that was one of his [Kerr's] great delights and happinesses and thrills of his life when he finally carried Tulsa County [for] the first time and the last time. It was in 1960. He lost it for governor; he lost the two previous times for the U.S. Senate; and he carried it in 1960. He had that big thing on his map behind his desk saying Tulsa's percentage increase was about 244 percent compared to the rest of the counties.

F: Was he, in his way, as politically minded as Lyndon Johnson?

B: Absolutely. As a manner of fact, I think he was one of the greatest politicians, greatest minds, and statesmen I ever knew. He was one of the great minds that I've had the pleasure of being associated with, and I was quite close to Senator Kerr. Mrs. Kerr said, in my presence one night when I took them to the hotel after we'd been on a speaking thing, that I was closer to him than his own sons were. He'd confide things to me that he knew would stop right there. We were together all the time.

F: Did you go then to Los Angeles?

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B: Yes, I went to Los Angeles.

F: Officially or unofficially?

B: I went there as an alternate. My friend, Ed Hughes, who was a dear friend of Bob Kerr's, too, and owns three banks here--he had become friends with Bob Kerr--was the delegate. I was the alternate, and he was the delegate.

F: Who was your national committeeman that year? I don't remember.

B: That was the fellow from Stillwater. Jim Arrington, [James Hugh Arrington], I believe, was national committeeman then. Yes, I'm sure he was.

F: There wasn't any problem with the Oklahoma delegation as far as Johnson was concerned?

B: No, there was not. And a lot of people out there, two or three outsiders, tried to get them to branch off. But when we'd have the meetings, Bob Kerr was just there, and they didn't even vary at all.

F: Had the candidates tried to work the delegates beforehand, before you got to Los Angeles?

B: I'm sure they had, but not the ones I knew, and I'm sure that was the reason, because they [the candidates] knew they [the delegates] were close to Kerr, they didn't [work them].

F: So in Los Angeles, you're there at the convention. What's your duty primarily: stand around and be handy?

B: No, my duty was just to go there and be there. Actually, I went there with Ed Hughes and we just played around, and I went on the

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floor. I had some sort of official deal, but they got me one better so I could be on the floor. So I went on the floor with Ed Hughes. I stayed at the Beverly Wilshire and the Senator stayed at a downtown hotel. We'd see each other each day and keep posted. In fact, [we] ate lunch together and things like this.

F: Was your hotel a sort of semi-official Oklahoma hotel?

B: No, the official hotel was where he [Kerr] stayed downtown. But I chose to stay out in the area away from downtown, because I wasn't going to all these things over at the Biltmore.

F: The Texas delegation always felt that it got in a semi-fleabag, I think. At least, to hear them talk about it, they did. They always felt that because they were so one-hundred percent for Johnson, they just got shunted to one side. And I just wondered if that was paranoia on Texas' part, or if that did happen.

B: I don't think so. Oklahoma had the like situation.

F: It was not choice accommodations or location.

B: No, indeed. From my memories of it, I would say it was a good third or fourth-rate hotel. It had none of the niceties you expected.

F: And away from the principal action?

B: Yes. They were shunted off.

F: Did the Oklahoma delegation really have any hopes of succeeding for Johnson?

B: Yes, they really did. Senator Kerr was a good salesman, if you knew him, and particularly when that first vote--Ed said out there that

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it seemed like if he didn't get it on the first vote, why, he wouldn't get it, that is, Kennedy. When it looked like it was going to be trouble, their spirits went up, and it looked like Johnson might be in there for maybe beyond the third or fourth roll call. You know it didn't develop that way, but they started changing the votes. Yes, they had a feel that they had a winner. Senator Kerr sold them on that.

F: Did Johnson come and talk to the Oklahoma delegation?

B: Not while I was there. I wasn't there, though, all the time. As an alternate, anytime we had an official meeting to vote again, I'd go if the Senator went. That was at one of the rooms. It seems like to me it was the National Hotel where we were headquartered. But it was one of the bigger hotels or either at the convention, or we had some room at the hotel.

F: Okay, so Johnson didn't make it, and that releases the Oklahoma delegation from [being pledged to] Johnson.

Now, you come up to the vice presidential thing. I gather you know something through Senator Kerr about that.

B: Yes. The way it happened, the way I knew about that, we were all going to dinner that night at one of the nice hotels--one of the nice hotels where we didn't stay. (Laughter) And in fact, this was the first night that Senator Kerr was--they were making love, so to speak, to the Boones. Byron and Audrey Boone, the publisher of the [Tulsa] World here, were going to have dinner with us, the whole group, the ones Senator and Mrs. Kerr invited.

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The Senator and I were down at the hotel and were playing gin. He told Mrs. Kerr and all of them to go on out to this place and we'd be out after awhile, because this hotel where we were going was quite a distance and that was where the dinner was going to be. Seems to me it was the Hilton.

F: Was he waiting around for anything, or did he want to finish his game?

B: No, actually he wanted to finish his gin game. He got quite wrapped up in his gin.

F: Was he sort of depressed by the fact that Kennedy had won, or did he just accept it?

B: No, he had no depression at all. He just accepted it as a fact of life.

F: Did he anticipate who the vice presidential candidate was going to be?

B: He said they certainly were going to need someone who could carry the South. And he hadn't gotten into that.

F: But he wasn't caucusing with anybody on it?

B: No, he wasn't. In fact, this afternoon when we were playing [gin] just before dinnertime, it was a time when everyone was sort of getting over the "well, it's done now, and we're going to have to start now."

They felt Lyndon Johnson and Kennedy, in their appearance, had made such enemies of each other with that exchange they had at the Biltmore, I believe when they were interviewed, that there was

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no hope to ever reconcile the two. Of course, it was the farthest thing from my mind that Lyndon Johnson would accept if he [Kennedy] even asked him to be the vice presidential nominee. But I learned differently, as it happened.

F: Things can turn around in a hurry.

B: In a hurry, yes.

(Interruption)

F: Okay, you were playing gin.

B: We were playing gin in the hotel, and he had told the family to go on out to the hotel and we would meet them out there because we were going to finish. We couldn't all go in one cab or two cabs anyhow. We were finishing this game, and the phone rang. One of his staff members answered it, and came to him and told him that Senator Johnson was calling. So he went to the telephone, and talked, and said, "All right, I'll be over in a minute."

So he came back, and we were finishing this one hand, and he just remarked: "Well, they've asked Senator Johnson if he'll be the vice presidential nominee along with John Kennedy." I said, "Really?" He said, "Yes, that's the question. In other words, he has to make up his mind." I said, "Who asked him?" And he said, "Well, it wasn't Bobby!"

So I knew then that someone had gone directly to him [Johnson] for John Kennedy. He [Kerr] said, "I'll go over. You wait here a minute. He's calling Sam Rayburn. He [Johnson] wants Sam Rayburn and me to meet with him."

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F: Was it another hotel or the same hotel?

B: No, he went to another hotel, I think it was the Biltmore. I said, "I'll wait right here," because he said, "It won't be long." I said, "Well, one thing for sure--we were just finishing this hand-- I can tell you, he isn't going to take the vice presidency." He turned to me and he said, "And why not?" I said, "My gracious, that office amounts to nothing, and here's a man that's one of the most potent individuals in Washington next to the president, I'd say and such a successful majority leader that he isn't going to give up that powerful position." And he said, "Did it ever occur to you that he'd like to live awhile?" I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "You know he has had a heart attack, and Mrs. Johnson would like to have him around awhile." I said, "Well, I can see that, certainly, yes. In other words, you're saying he'd take that position because his family wanted him to give up this pressure of the majority leadership." He said, "You just think about it. Wouldn't you?" I said, "Well, I don't know. I'll have to think about that." "Well," he said, "his family wants to have him around for awhile, and he'd like to be around awhile with them, I'm sure."

And that's the way he went to the meeting. He left me with that, without having even talked to him [Johnson] yet, other than what they said over the telephone.

When he [Kerr] came back, I said, "Well, am I going to have to ask you?" He said, "The Speaker and I recommended that he take

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it." He said a lot of them in John Kennedy's camp didn't want it at all, didn't want the presidential nominee to go that route, didn't want John Kennedy to go that route. And apparently it created, just on the surface, an open break between him [John Kennedy] and Bobby, because Bob Kennedy didn't want Johnson. The President [Kennedy] wanted him because he was the best candidate to join with him to carry and win the election. It was just that pragmatic. That was sort of the way he [Kerr] laid it out.

We went on down to dinner and I didn't say anything about it. As I recall it, the announcement came out in the newspapers. They put out about seven issues of the newspapers out there. While we were eating, I think they came out with the announcement that Johnson had accepted to being considered for vice presidential nominee.

F: What did you do, incidentally, during that campaign season? You had Senator Kerr running for re-election, and you had the national Democratic ticket. Did you participate at the national Democratic level, or did you stick with the Senate?

B: I stuck right here. In fact, Howard Edmondson [later governor of Oklahoma] tried to get me to be national committeeman, and I wouldn't do it. I said, "No, I only have one scar, and that's Bob Kerr's, and I'm going to keep it that way."

Later when he ran for governor--he was district attorney then--his wife Jeanette said, "You're either for us or against us." And I'll never forget this, because we were having dinner one night,

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and I said, "Well, I'm for you, but I can't be active for you. I can only have one candidate, I'm not a party man. I'm for Bob Kerr and I wouldn't be effective for him if I were for everybody in the party." And he saw that after he'd been governor two years. He told me, "I sure saw what you said was correct."

F: Did the Kennedy-Johnson ticket give you any trouble in your management around here for Kerr?

B: Yes, this type of problem. It looked like one of those things where he'd be damned if he did and damned if he didn't was developing. Kennedy wasn't popular in Oklahoma, and you could see that. In fact, I've never seen such nasty letters received by a man as [those] Senator Kerr received from some of his Baptist friends, whom he had helped in their organizations--the church, the hospital. In fact, I said to him "Well, I guess you see another side now of your strong Baptist friends." And he said, "Well, now, they're just being the way they feel. They'll get over it." But I said, "In the meantime, look what they're doing to you." It really hurt him. They wrote some very vicious letters.

F: Did he read a lot of those letters?

B: No. He read a lot of them, but he finally stopped because what happened, we had taken a poll, and we had one of the most scientific polls at the time. We used them all the time, and that was before people were taking polls. We told Howard Edmondson that he was going to win within 1 percent of the vote of what he

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carried of the total vote. We used him as one of the people to hide what we were really seeking.

At the time we took our last poll, we were 175,000 votes ahead of the Republican nominee for the U.S. Senate. Senator Kerr called me one night and said, "I need a decision quickly." I said, "What's that?" He said, "Senator Kennedy has asked me to introduce him"--at whatever it was--"in Oklahoma City. They want him to come to the Democratic Party deal, and he won't come unless I'll introduce him. It's going to be a Southwest TV hookup. You're one of my three advisors"--he used this term--"Should I do it or shouldn't I?"

I said, "I'd say yes. I'd say you have no alternative. He's your presidential nominee, and you have to." He said, "You're right with me. That's what I feel I have to do." I said, "It's going to cost you, but in my judgment, you've got enough margin you can do it." And this is the way it turned out. He said, "What do you think it will cost me?" I said, "A hundred thousand votes." I'd seen all these letters, and you could project them out, you know. He said, "Well, according to our poll we had, we can stand it." And I said, "We sure can."

So he then introduced Senator Kennedy. In fact, that's where he used that term: his daddy and mother would turn over in their graves if he hadn't introduced his presidential nominee. So he did. Raymond Gary, the former governor, didn't even appear, wouldn't even come on the stand.

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But, as I say, some of John Kennedy's closest friends didn't think that was enough on Bob Kerr's part, and those who didn't want to see that it helped and those who didn't want him to do it said it was the worst thing he could have done to his political future and all this. But he came out, even at this, carrying the state, as I recall, with 77,000 votes.

F: Still he ran well ahead of the ticket, didn't he?

B: Yes.

(Interruption--Jim Jones speaks.)

J: Did Senator Kerr ever mention in 1960, or before, that Lyndon Johnson was reluctant about running for president, didn't want to be president?

B: Yes, he did. In fact, he didn't think at one time he was going to, but he felt he had done so well in his recovery and all that--

F: Did he think it was a health reason?

B: Kerr thought it was more a family and health combination. That was the way he was putting it: more family first and both being related.

F: I presume that Kerr was aware of that feeling that Johnson, with at least some Southern identification, might be handicapped there.

B: Yes, he was.

F: But he thought he ought to stick his neck out anyhow?

B: Yes. Actually, his first thing after he had lost for the presidency was that he should take it just for health reasons. But his reason before, in backing him all the way, was that he

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thought that they could overcome that, that that was a thing of the past, that Texas was not so identified with the South.

F: Kind of a swing state.

B: A swing state and that that wouldn't be a handicap to him, in fact, might help him.

But the main thing he [Kerr] thought would help him [Johnson] overcome any southern tint that people might hold against him geographically, was the fact of the broad base he had as having been the majority leader, and how business looked at him and how society and groups looked at him. There was nothing local about him at all. He had such a broad base over all things that, he had proved himself, and that wouldn't be a problem that he had.

I think that was one of the main things, too. You can talk to business people here in town who were for him just because he ran that Senate with an iron hand, I mean knocked heads together, and got things done. In fact, business people in that 1954 campaign, Bob Kerr's hardest one, with Roy Turner. And that was the campaign of all campaigns, I'll tell you. Both of them, money, everything.

In our polls, and he [Kerr] didn't like this, by the way, but Mrs. Kerr told me "never stop telling him the truth because you're the one person that does tell him the truth." And so I told him that the polls were showing if we had the election today, Roy Turner would win [opponent of Kerr's]. And he didn't like that, but that's what it showed anyhow, that it would be awfully

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close. I said, "What it amounts to, Senator, is they like Roy Turner more than they do you, but they feel you're better for their business." And that's what it showed, too.

And then it turned around. And as it went on, he [Kerr] started picking up. He put the heat on, too, the last two or three weeks. And Roy Turner--they peaked too early, in my judgment--fell off. And we just seemed to peak exactly [right]. That's what we always tried to do with our timing, was to peak just on election day. So he came out of it beautifully. I believe 38,000 was the majority, and Roy Turner withdrew the night before the run-off.

F: Did Johnson come into the state during 1960?

B: No, not that I recall.

J: He went to Shawnee.

B: Did he?

F: You didn't have any hand in it?

B: No, mine was the northern part of the state.

F: Senator Kerr didn't particularly make any effort to get Johnson in here?

B: Well, if Johnson came to Shawnee, see, that's the Baptist University.

F: That would be some reassurance.

B: That would be the reason, too, that he would come, I'm sure, because Kerr asked him to. That would have been the only reason probably. Because they were very warm, close friends, [had] great

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respect for each other, and had many of the same mannerisms and powerful leadership you could detect in them, and mutual respect.

F: Where did Senator Kerr spend election night? Here or in Oklahoma City?

B: Oklahoma City.

F: Were you with him?

B: No. He said I was the only person who wouldn't come. Each time we had an election, he'd call and--"why aren't you coming over here?" "Because I'm not through until this election is in over here." I never went to but one election party, and that was our first one in 1948. We went over there, and they had [the party] on top of one of the buildings over there, some club, lemonade and all. Anything he had, there was lemonade.

F: Are you serious?

B: I'm serious.

F: He's a teetotaler?

B: He was a teetotaler at anything that he had a part of, that was his function. But if you invited him to something, you didn't need to be embarrassed or anything, because that was your business. He could mix right along with all your guests at a cocktail party and not bother him at all. But, as far as he was concerned, [at] anything he sponsored, he wouldn't dare have anything.

In fact, one of the papers here, the Tulsa Tribune, went down to see his new home and said they had a bar in his home approximately twenty feet long or so. He called Jenk Jones, in my

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presence, and they said Jenk wasn't there and he said, "You get him. I'll give him until the next day to print in the same prominent place that that's a milk bar." It was, too, right in the kitchen, for the children. And Jenk they found, and Jenk came to the phone and they did make a retraction. But he was very serious about that.

F: Let's talk along about the local Tulsa situation. Jenk Jones [Jenkin Lloyd Jones, Editor of The Tulsa Tribune] is one of the hardest-headed newspaper editors in the nation.

B: That's one description you can put on him, among others.

F: Are there any attempts by the prominent Democrats like Senator Kerr to get him to moderate his views, or do they just accept him as one of the facts of life you have to put up with?

B: I'll tell you what Senator Kerr did to the Tribune very effectively, and [to the] World, too. To start out with, when Kerr first ran for governor the meanest paper here against him, strangely enough, was the World. It went to the fact and I can tell you exactly-- this is going to be closed for a while--Eugene Lorton [Robert E., World president] who owns the Tulsa World. I asked the Senator one time why the hate was so bitter, and he said "I'll tell you exactly." I said, "Because I know it's more than just difference in politics."

Gene Lorton, you may not recall, backed Roosevelt one time. Then he didn't get the ambassadorship; he got on a commission for the Canadian border instead or something. So he went back to the

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Republicans. But he called Kerr when he was running for governor and told him he wanted to see him. Kerr went to see him, because he sure wanted the help of the World if he could [get it]. He told Bob Kerr--and these are Kerr's own words--that he wanted him to be for repeal, and Kerr said he couldn't be for repeal because it would be against everything he stood for. And Mr. Lorton said, "Well, you can't get elected without the Tulsa World's support, and if you don't come out for repeal, you're not going to get elected, and we're going to be against you."

Senator Kerr whereupon said--and this was the last word he had with Gene Lorton--"You may kiss my you-know-what." And that's the last word he ever had with Gene Lorton in his lifetime.

Running along parallel with this was the Tribune, who disliked him strictly because he was a Democrat and [because of] the seat of power he'd gained without them.

Here's both newspapers against him through the 1954 campaign.

F: Kind of hurts your pride, among other things.

B: Yes, both of them. And here's Wade Hamblen [?] though most effectively of anyone I've ever seen would have a big meeting here for the chamber of commerce or something where all candidates were to speak. So in that morning's World, and the afternoon before, would be these cutting editorials about Bob Kerr. So I always cut them out for him. And he'd get up there and read this to the audience. "In case you missed this, I want to tell you what they said about me today." He'd read them. Gene Ben Elgin and some representative

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of the World, usually Henthorne [N. G. Henthorne, Jr., Political Editor of Tulsa World] would just get red in the face. He'd get the audience just roaring, laughing, by where he'd put the emphasis on their words. He would fight them by reading back their own editorials. Everytime he spoke he'd read back the Tulsa World editorials and the Tribune editorials. This prompted one of his famous statements. He said, when he started his speech when he was going to read an editorial in '54, "There was never a city like Tulsa, where I have such dear, dear friends, where I need so many more." Which was a very true statement.

But in 1960, then both of them were for him. In 1960 both of them joined him.

But the World hatred later carried on because he pardoned Phil Kennamer [?], who was a federal judge's son here who was involved in a society type of killing, a young club they were in. Kerr pardoned him to go to the Army in 1942. You remember about then the states were releasing them on pardon, if they joined the armed forces. So he wanted to join, and did, and joined the paratroopers. And he was killed on his first drop. They still hate him. In fact, Bill Henthorne said to me one time that they still-- I said, "What more do you want, other than the man's dead?" This family, the Gorrells [?] the one that he supposedly killed--

J: Wasn't this over the Fortune daughter?

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B: No, Wilcox. Well, Wilcox were involved and a lot of prominent families. But one of the Gorrells was killed, as I recall. And [inaudible] later committed suicide, I think. A terrible thing! But the whole thing went [back] to the fact that the World wanted that man locked up forever, and he let him out on a pardon to go into the Army.

But both of them [the Tulsa newspapers] joined him in 1960.

F: That may have been what induced his heart attack.

B: It might have had a lot to do with it.

F: Just sheer shock. I presume that he was elated over the November, 1960 results, even though Oklahoma didn't quite come through all the way.

B: He surely was. He was disappointed that he couldn't do more for the team in Oklahoma, but he was sure pleased by the results. He saw big things for the nation.

F: Did he ever comment to you on Lyndon Johnson's position as vice president?

B: No, other than [to say] he was going to make it more than just a title, an office, he was going to work at it if he could, and [he] apparently did. I guess that was with the cooperation of President Kennedy.

F: Did you get any sort of insights into the awarding of the Space Center to Houston, in which Senator Kerr may or may not have played a role?

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- B: No, I didn't have any of that at all. He was chairman of the Space Committee though.
- F: Yes, I know.
- B: No, I didn't. He went down to one of the space shots with President Kennedy and some of the other leaders of Congress. But, as far as the placing of the Center, no, I have no information on it at all.
- F: Did you feel that Lyndon Johnson had any role at all in your appointment as judge?
- B: I don't know. I don't think he did, because I think the way it went was, he had his first trouble when he appointed Judge [Luther] Bohanon. His trouble there was that neither the Bar, nor the FBI, and therefore Justice, approved Judge Bohanon. By the way--this is an interesting note--he [Kerr] was determined that Bohanon was going to be the federal judge there, because he had promised his friend Elmer Thomas.
- F: When we say "he," are we talking about Kerr?
- B: Yes. He had promised Elmer Thomas that he would appoint his recommendation, Luther Bohanon.
- F: What was the objection to Bohanon?
- B: They had a lot of things that came out [that they] accused him of. He was attorney for [inaudible], claimed that there were fees, claimed that even [Stephen S.] Chandler came out and made statement that he [Bohanon] had tried to pay him a sum of money if he'd get him appointed.

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F: Who's Chandler?

B: He's the federal judge over in Oklahoma City. You know, there'd been a lot of controversial news over there against Bohanon, and Bohanon against him and Alfred Murrah, the chief judge of the Tenth Circuit.

But that's where it started. In fact, he [Kerr] told me after the 1960 election; he called me and wanted me to come over and said, "That's the only arrangement we had. After election, anyone that was appointed, I'd have to approve in my area." When I went over to his office, we were going to have lunch--

F: You're talking about over in Oklahoma City?

B: Yes, and he said, "Let's talk about these appointments that are going to be coming up." And I said, "Well, I'll start below the federal judge. I'm not going to make a remark about that unless you ask me." He said, "Thank you." I knew he'd had a lot of guff about that. So we started talking about other things.

But he told me that, in Washington, the deputy [attorney general] then, I guess it would be Byron White, and Bobby had come over and told him that they were just sorry they could not approve Luther Bohanon for judge. You know how Kerr does: he took off his glasses, and looked at them and said, "He'll be appointed, or there'll be no one appointed in that position. I was here before you boys came, and I expect to be here long after you're gone." So, by his tenacity, he got him through.

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When my appointment came up after Royce Savage had resigned this position, he nominated me. [Senator] Mike Moroney asked him to wait until after his primary--why I don't know, didn't have much primary; anyhow the Senator [Kerr] told me that, and I said, "Fine." After the primary Senator Kerr then went up, and they had their investigation, the Bar and all.

Oh, yes. He didn't get the American Bar approval on Bohanon. That hurt, that broke his heart, too, because one of the members on there was his buddy in the war. The fact is he lived in this area--Jerry Klein [Gerald Brown Klein]--and he did the investigating of Luther Bohanon. He told Bo he was really working to get it through, and finally had to tell him it had failed. But he was sure for him. But when it came out in the Senate, he found out the vote was unanimously against him. So you can imagine what a shock that was to him. He never got over that.

In the meantime--it's interesting--[Kerr] got Senator Kennedy's money bill through; he floor-managed that. And at the same time, just before that, he had defeated him on his Medicare by one vote. The President had him come over to the White House. It was the night of the President's birthday. It was either his or Bobby's. I think it was the President's.

F: The President's was late May.

B: That's when this was. Because he said after he told him, "I want you on my team from now on." Anyone that can defeat me in this

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Medicare!" Beat him by one vote--that was [Senator] Byrd of West Virginia he got to come along with him on the final [inaudible] vote. He credited him with it, but he said, "Is there anything I can do for you?"

About that time, he said the side door--you know the layout, I don't--in walked Bobby Kennedy. He saw the Senator and he just stood off. He [John Kennedy] said, "Bobby's come over to have dinner and celebrate my birthday." He [Kerr] said, "Well, Mr. President, you might put in a good word for me with your brother Bobby, the attorney general." That was to help get this appointment through. That's all he said. So Bohanon's appointment went through.

Then mine went up and I didn't have any trouble, didn't have the Bar against me or anything. Had unanimous approval; didn't have any objections at all. So mine went right through. I had no problem at all. In fact, the man who was chairing the subcommittee was the fellow that Bobby Kennedy beat in New York. He was one of the finest men; he was really a fine gentlemen, and he was chairing the hearing on mine.

Actually, I told people here who wanted to write letters because they thought it was being delayed, I said, "A letter won't help anything. I'll get it or not get it because of Bob Kerr. It's just that simple." He said that was the way it was going to be.

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It was rather funny though. He was on another filibuster when I was up there getting ready to leave again, and he had already had me cancel my plane for Friday night, and it was now Monday. We had been out to Wardman Park where he lived then; they had an apartment. We were out there playing gin with a fellow with Ideal Cement and one of his fellow gin players and their lawyer.

The next day we'd had a lot of people come up. I called and had them come up because, finally, to help try to get this new federal building. I'd been chairman of that committee to get a new federal building ever since ten years.

F: Here in Tulsa.

B: Yes. So I had them come up and give a last impetus. Kerr had a meeting, called GSA over, [and] talked with them. The man said, "Well, Senator, we just have a problem of where we get money enough." He said, "That's my worry. What other problem do you have?" That's the way he told them. So he said, "How about you getting on this side of the table with me and showing me how we can do it?" So the group was there, and he said, "I'll take you all to lunch." So down in the basement, they called down, and they had this room set up there close to the cafeteria, a private room in the Senate Office Building. I was just at the phone, calling to check my reservations, and I came out, and he said: "You might be interested to know you just got approved by the U.S. Senate as a federal judge." I was saying to him,

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because there was a filibuster going on, I said, "How did you do it?" He said, "It wasn't easy!" (Laughter)

So he went on in to this meeting and told them about the facts and that was the first time I knew; he didn't say a word to me. He decided this is the day now. So he asked for the floor to submit my name.

F: I presume that Senator Kerr had a pretty good, pleasant relationship with President Kennedy.

B: Yes, I'd say he did.

F: Was it equally good with Bobby?

B: I don't think he ever liked Bobby, nor vice versa. I don't think Bobby ever liked him. I think Bobby respected him on his know-how.

F: Bad chemistry?

B: I don't know what it was. He didn't feel that Bobby was a man you could find him where you left him, like he did about Lyndon Johnson. Lyndon was more his kind of people, so to speak. And I think by Bobby not being for anything he was for, it seemed like they just got at odds.

But the President was so practical about the whole thing. In fact he told the Senator and the Senator related to me that Bobby was going too fast in his pushing integration down South [and that] he was going to try to slow him up. He told the Senator that on his own offer. Said he was going gangbuster-

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type instead of gradually going in there, and he was going to try to slow him up because he saw trouble.

F: Did you ever run into Lyndon Johnson again?

B: Never ran into him again, never did.

F: When did the Senator die?

B: He died January 1, 1963, the third year of his third term to be elected.

F: Did he ever talk to you about the possibility of Johnson being dropped by President Kennedy?

B: No, he didn't think he would. Although Bobby didn't like Lyndon, and didn't get along apparently, and didn't like him any more than he did him. Apparently Bobby didn't like any of the power establishment. I guess he was trying to put a new image or something. We talked about that. In fact I asked him. I said, "Do you think he'll drop him now?" And he said, "No, I don't, because he still needs him." He didn't think he would at all. He didn't think that he and Johnson had any particular love for each other, but he didn't think he'd dare drop him.

F: I presume Senator Kerr really thought that Johnson saved the South for the Democratic Party in 1960.

B: Yes, he did. In fact, he thought that was the success of his race, that combination. Of course, it turned out to be, as you know rather close. He needed Texas badly. He felt that very keenly. I have heard so many people say so many times that had Kerr, or Sam Rayburn, or both, lived, had President Johnson had people

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around him--his own people he could trust--that it would have been a different ball game. That if he'd gone in there and put his own people in all these offices that he could trust, instead of trying to say, "Well, I'm keeping the team," he'd have done a lot better. I do think it was a great loss to him, losing Sam Rayburn and Bob Kerr, because I know how much respect he had for Mr. Sam, too. I think I've said to you, Jim, that I think it would have been a different administration and he'd have had so much backing, had he had one of these men or both of them alive to lean on and trust.

J: I think there's no question about it.

F: Anything else we ought to talk about?

B: No, but it's been interesting just to review. I don't know if there's anything shattering or newsworthy to it.

F: I think that vice presidential story makes the trip worthwhile. I'm intrigued with that, and no one else has come up with that.

B: You know what I've really enjoyed? I've read all these books, these accounts of the 1960 convention and about what happened, and here I know it's not true. When I read those things, it's just about like my reading a Tribune story now of a courtroom scene, and then I go home and I don't recognize the lawsuit.

F: Kind of destroys the credibility of the witness.

B: Oh, yes.

J: It's like on March 31 when we went over to Humphrey's apartment and the President told him. There were just three of us there,

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and when you read it in Teddy White's book, The Making of the President, 1968, I've forgotten what Teddy White said, but it's not the way it was.

B: One of them had Senator Kerr slapping Bobby Baker. In the first place, I don't have to know. Senator Kerr wouldn't slap anybody, number one.

F: That's not his style?

B: No, indeed. If he slapped, it was on the shoulder. "Hey, buddy, let the Senator talk," or something. But when I see these stories by [Theodore H.] White and the rest of them, they all have different versions.

And here I'm sitting playing with a man who liked gin more than--that was his relaxation. I rode with him in a plane when he went out to speak in Albuquerque for [Senator Clinton P.] Anderson, when he first ran and old Patrick Hurley was running against him. We flew out there, and I won in the gin game all the way out there. He got up there in the room, and he made the pilot sit down and play three-handed gin, and I knew I'd had it then because I don't know anything about that three-handed gin. The pilot would take cards I needed, and I'd have to change my whole hand. I said, "What are you guys doing to me! A third-man-out deal or something?"

"You're ready to go, Senator, ready to go." The speech he was going to make for this big deal was right there in the hotel and was going to be broadcast. So he got up in time and

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went down there. But as soon as his part was over, he . . . whoosh, "Deal." So he went all the way back, that just shows you how gin runs, we picked up his sister, she lives I believe in Roswell and came on back. We played gin all the way back. That was his relaxation.

F: Senator Kerr felt very strongly what Lyndon Johnson felt, I guess, and that is a kind of special character to the U.S. Senate as a superior club.

B: Yes, indeed. In fact, when he addressed the Catholic Church here, the bishop was there, and the monseigneur, and several priests. And here Kerr was addressing them, and he's known as "Mr. Baptist." It was a men's club out here. So he got up there, and he started in and he stopped. And he said, "You know, Father"--he turned to this McNamee [?], I believe--he said, "You know, your church is the only organization that has going something better than the U.S. Senate. They give more credence to age and seniority than the U.S. Senate--the only body that does." He roared and fell out. It relaxed the whole crowd. He had a knack for doing that. From there, he took off. He was [from] the old school, but he had a great knack--understanding and get with it.

One thing you really liked about the man, too, was that he would give you the responsibility. No one could cut under you, not the last man to see him or anything else. In fact, an experience down here where two lawyers came in and he always got about a three-room suite where people could wait to see him--one bedroom

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and then shift over to the other one. The two lawyers wanted to know if I'd let them in to see him, because they didn't have time to wait their turn. So I said, "Sure." I opened the side door there and said, "Senator, these fellows, friends, want to see you. They have to hurry back." [They] hadn't been there three minutes, and this door flung open to this waiting room, and he said, "Allen"-- that's what he called me--"come here a minute." I went in, and he said, "Do you know what these men want to talk to me about?" "Now, Senator, we weren't saying anything." "Now, just a minute! Do you know what they wanted to talk to me about?" I had no idea. He said, "Well, they don't like the way you're running my campaign." They kept trying to apologize, and he said, "Just a minute. Isn't this what you said?" "Well, yes, but we're trying to explain why we said it." And he said, "Well, I'm going to tell that. They think you're giving the emphasis too much to the south side and should be putting more of it where you have friends in your other two districts.

I said, "Is that so!" He said, "I wanted you to hear this. Now, is this what you men said?" "Well, yes, but . . . " They're embarrassed naturally; gosh, I'm embarrassed even being in there. He said, "I'm going to tell you what I told them. Anything you did ever is as if I were doing it, number one--in the past or in the present. Number two, if they ever had anything else to say to me about anything, why, say it to you first. You may tell them

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your idea of why you're doing it the way you're doing it or you can refrain. This is up to you."

"I'm doing it because I'm going where we need the votes, that's where I'm putting the emphasis, where we need them, to offset some areas where we're popular. And I'm doing other measures to get the vote out on the day of the campaign."

He was that way with his brothers, too. His brother came over here one day and said he wanted to see him alone. He said, "You are alone when you're with Allen and me. Just start talking as if you're alone." That's the way he'd do you though. Anyone he had trust in, that was it. He brought you all the way, and no one could--

J: Johnson was that way, too.

B: Yes, he had that knack, according to Kerr.

This is interesting. The two newspapers both, for different reasons, Byron Boone [publisher of the Tulsa World], a friend of mine, kept telling me I couldn't afford to be a federal judge because I had too good a law practice and you can't live that way on a federal judge's salary. I said, "Well, Byron, I'll decide that." Of course, I knew he had someone he'd like to have appointed. And, of course, Jones [Jenkins Lloyd Jones, Tulsa Tribune Editor] having been [inaudible] . . . I went down to meet him [Kerr] for breakfast. I was walking in, and out walked Jones. And just up a block I see Byron Boone. He [Kerr] said, "You know who I have had here visiting?" I said, "I assume the

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two newspapers." "That's right, and they sure have people they'd rather have as federal judge than you." I said, "I can imagine. They have their own nominees." He said, "I told one of them"-- and I knew which one he was talking about--"that he understood that his being for me [Kerr], that he'd get to name the federal judge." He said, "You sure did misunderstand me. Nobody names the federal judge except Senator Kerr, not even my wife could. You may recommend. You've done it; now you've recommended, but that's all." But he took the license of saying, "We were for you. Now we can name the federal judge." And that didn't get so very far in a hurry.

But he'd tell you. He wouldn't go around the mulberry bush. He'd tell you.

F: He went straight down the line with Johnson during those senatorial days on the tidelands attitudes, didn't he?

B: Yes, as far as I know they never differed on that. In fact, I think they were pretty much together on all major legislation I ever knew of. They were a lot alike in many respects.

F: Except one doesn't serve lemonade.

J: That's right.

B: That's probably so.

J: He certainly doesn't serve lemonade.

F: Thank you, Judge.

B: Yes, indeed.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I]

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