

INTERVIEW I

DATE: March 13, 1974

INTERVIEWEE: WOODROW BEAN

INTERVIEWER: Joe B. Frantz

PLACE: Judge Bean's home in El Paso, Texas

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F: What do you go by--"Judge"--around here?

B: Well, yes. Everybody calls me judge.

F: When they're not calling you something worse?

B: You know, sometimes that's not too good a title. They say that once you're an ex-judge, that only the black people and the whores and the prostitutes still call you judge. But I like the title, I do.

F: But you're from this area.

B: Oh yes, I was born here, born in El Paso County.

F: In Ysleta.

B: No, I was born down at Fort Hancock, Texas. My father was a United States customs officer stationed at Fort Hancock. I was born there in 1917--August 28, 1917. And the reason that my name is Woodrow Wilson is that my father, I guess, was trying to get a promotion.

F: Well, you and I were born about the same time, and I've got a cousin named Wilson. It's W. Wilson, so you can figure that. Half the kids I grew up with were either named Woodrow or Wilson. You can always date them. I wonder how many now they're going to name Lyndon or--well, with Richard, you can't tell.

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- B: Of course, you know, I wasn't educated out here. My dad died when I was two years old. He was a big Mason. My mother was a Catholic, a leading Catholic in the community down there and my father had made her promise. We weren't people of means or anything else, had a small ranch there. My father had come to this country in 1900 as a Texas Ranger and had gotten into the customs service. There were four of us children and as we arrived at the age of five or six, we were sent to the Masonic Home and School in Fort Worth, Texas, where we got our grammar school and high school education.
- F: By that time, I was going to Poly [Polytechnic High School] in Fort Worth when they had that famous football team.
- B: 1932.
- F: Right.
- B: I graduated there in 1935.
- F: Well, you knew Perry Pickett, then, and Tom McCall, and all that bunch.
- B: Perry Pickett, Judge Pickett, and he kind of ties in with Johnson, too. Perry Pickett and I were on the debate team together at the home. He is now district judge at Midland, and I see him. He doesn't come up often. He's very active in the Shrine and Scottish Rite work. Every time he comes up here we get together and reminisce.
- F: I was very much aware of the Masonic Home in those days, because it used to beat the daylight out of us.
- B: That's right. Abner McCall, who's now the president of Baylor University, was my roommate there. So I think that's practically about the only claim to fame that I've got.
- F: Was Abner Scott's brother?

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B: Abner was Scott's brother. Scott of course made the mistake of going to TCU when Sam Baugh was there or he would have been an All-American football player. He played good football there, but he was never--

F: That's a hard man to run up against.

B: McCall, in my opinion, was the greatest high school football player that I ever saw.

F: The Mighty Mac.

B: Yes. Abner wasn't much of an athlete, but he was the brain of the school. And of course Pickett was a very good football player.

F: How did you get back out here?

B: Well, Perry came back out here because his brother, Leon Pickett, who's also a Masonic Home graduate, got a job right out of high school and was going to TCU during the school months. Leon was working for Gulf Oil in the summers out in the middle of the Odessa area. So when Perry went off to war, he was shot down over one of the Rumanian oil fields and was a prisoner of war. When he got back, he finished up law school. He went to Midland I think, more or less, because his brother was out there.

F: How did you get out here?

B: Well, of course, after I finished high school, I immediately came back home because my mother was still living at the ranch. Incidentally, my father and mother homesteaded that ranch in 1903 and the four of us still own it. In fact, she told us, "Never sell your interest because if you do you may end up without a roof over your head." But anyway, I always had in mind coming back and I did come back after I finished. I went to SMU and was majoring in government over there. I went to A&M one year because in 1935 or 1936 I was so broke I couldn't go anywhere else, but in 1936 I got a scholarship, a Scottish Rite

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scholarship to Southern Methodist University, and went on up there and completed my work in government. Then in 1940 I came back here. I was twenty-two years old, just barely, not quite twenty-two.

I ran for the state legislature in 1940 and was elected; that was my first term, 1941. Governor [Wilbert Lee "Pappy"] O'Daniel was governor.

F: That was a good time to be introduced.

B: It sure was.

F: We needed you, anyhow, at that time. Where did you do your law--?

B: At the University before the war, and then I finished up after the war, there at the University. I was down there when--Dean Keeton came later--Green [?] was there, and old Strumberg [?] was there, and of course the greatest, McCormick [?]. Those three people I was able to have classes under. Of course, it was one of the high points in my life.

F: Mrs. McCormick is still going strong there in Austin.

B: That's beautiful.

F: Yes. You came back then in the legislature. Where did you first get to know Lyndon?

B: Actually the first time I ever met him was in 1938.

F: That early?

B: That early, and of course that was when he was running for Congress. The way that I met him was I went down to visit with Perry Pickett who was at the University--the judge who's now at Midland. He was living over at the Littlefield Campus, and right next door to him was Jake Pickle and John Connally. I look back and I wonder what they were doing still living there because they were out of school at the time. And Hondo Crouch

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was living there at the time. So Pickett was very involved in the race that Lyndon was making for Congress, and he was telling me about how great a man Lyndon was and everything else.

F: Was this when Johnson ran the first time, or is this when he was running for the next term?

B: No, this was the first time he ran. Of course he was just a big old gangly--

F: He was NYA director.

B: He had been NYA director. I remember in talking to him, first time I ever talked to him, I had worked on the NYA over at Texas A&M prior to that. I worked down at the cow barns; I was in charge of the show calves. Of course, that's what I told everybody. My main job was shoveling manure down there and cleaning up after them. But that was the first time I ever met him.

F: That's good training for a public career. (Laughter)

B: It sure is, I'll tell you.

F: You shovel a lot of it before you get through.

B: Before you get through, you shovel a lot of manure. But that was the first time that I met him.

F: Anything particular about that meeting? Like where did you meet him--did you meet him down at the headquarters?

B: No, I tell you what, they had some kind of a speaking down there right in--what's the name of that park down there?

F: Wooldridge?

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B: Yes, Wooldridge Park, they had a rally down there. As I recall, this was in the primary and they had about--I don't remember how many, they had a number of candidates in the race.

F: This was a winner-take-all sort of thing.

B: Yes. They had an old gentleman in the race, and I can't recall his name. Later on I think when I was in the House of Representatives--

F: It could have been the older Brownlee.

B: That's who it was; that's who it was.

F: You know, there were two of those, father and son.

B: Of course I was most interested in politics at that time. I had already made up my mind years before that I wanted to be in politics.

But other than his [Johnson's] being a string bean, he was very thin in those days, and as a result of his thinness, instead of being six feet whatever it was, he looked like he was about seven feet tall. That's the main thing I remember about him.

F: He just looked like a long two by six.

B: That's right. But I remember his speech. He spoke with great gusto and like he knew everything there was to know. Very impressive, *very* impressive.

F: Did you have any more relationship with him in the next few years?

B: No, if I recall correctly, in 1941 was the next time that I saw him to visit with him when he came to the legislature and made a speech.

The only other thing that I remember is--I don't remember when this happened--John Connally and Jake Pickle taking me down. They were building the radio station; they had just gotten the radio deal. I don't know whether this was in 1938 or

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1939 or 1940, but John and Jake took me down, along with Pickett, to show us where they were putting that radio station that Johnson had just gotten. I remember old Stuart Long was there at the time, and old Stuart was all upset because it looked like Johnson already had a radio station going, I understand that later on that Stuart was on the radio station as a newscaster.

F: Yes. Right. Well, you knew a lot of those early people then, like Paul Bolton.

B: Yes, yes. See, I was very fortunate when I went to the legislature at the tender age of twenty-two. In those days the people didn't believe in sending anyone young to the legislature and that is the reason that so many of the people that I knew well, say, in 1941 and 1947, a lot of them were gone. Old [Harry] Bengé Crozier was a very dear friend of mine.

F: Mine, too.

B: And you had kind of a different type of newspaper reporter there. Of course, just this last week I was in Dallas and I was reminiscing with Bo Byers of the *Houston Chronicle*. Bo came into the legislature in 1947, of course.

After the war I ran again; I ran while I was in Japan. I was in the Marine Corps, and I ran while I was in Japan and was elected. I don't know of anyone other than Bo Byers that--well, Dick Morehead was there before the war, Dick, with the *Dallas Morning News*, was there. Sam Kinch, Jr., is there now and his father was there when I was there.

In the legislature when I was there in 1941 and again even in 1947, there just didn't seem as much to do as there is now. It was a more relaxed atmosphere. Of course, this is a new day and age.

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F: The work increases and the problems increase, but the size of the legislature doesn't increase.

B: That's right.

F: Bound to have [an effect].

B: But you know it's real funny, I never will forget in 1941 I was on the appropriations committee. I had two colleagues from here: Judge Isaacks, Maud's father, and Billy Bridges and they were both over seventy years of age so there were just three of us from this district. I got the choice of the finest committees because they both said that they didn't want to be out at night. So you can see how I landed on the appropriations committee.

F: Right.

B: Well, I never will forget--in 1947 I was chairman of the subcommittee on higher education. Preston Smith was on my subcommittee and if anyone had ever told me he was going to be governor of the state of Texas, I would have told him, "You'd better go to a psychiatrist." Of course, I think he wasn't any better or any worse than any other governor we ever had, and [he's] a dear friend of mine. But I never will forget when I got up in 1947--I was finishing up law school--to present our multi-multi-million-dollar budget for the higher education, I think that I had about thirty cents in my pocket. I kind of laughed to myself as I turned around and walked off because I hadn't been too saving while I was in the service, and I kind of laughed as I turned around and walked away after they had approved this multi-multi-million-dollar appropriation. I said, "My gosh, I'm glad the people of Texas don't know that the fellow who is advocating spending all that money has only about thirty cents in his pocket." (Laughter)

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F: You were always in the legislature when you were around Austin so that you never were called upon to work in any Johnson campaign?

B: No, I wasn't.

F: You were always busy with Woodrow Bean.

B: Not in any campaign there. The first campaign that I worked for Johnson in was in 1941, when he ran in the special election, and I was a member of the state legislature. That was the year when the legislature ran past the fourth of July. Of course, you know, you couldn't travel back and forth like you do now, and by then we were on five dollars a day and we didn't have too many votes out here. In 1941 the county did go for Johnson, but O'Daniel never was too strong out here. The first time he ever ran he only got about three or four hundred votes. Nobody even knew where he came from. He didn't even make a trip out here in 1938 to campaign. Well, anyway, 1941 was the first time that I really went all out for Johnson. Of course, you know, he was a young man in 1941, and I was a young man, very young, and I've been in the legislature long enough to know at that time, or to realize as I look back at it, that everyone that I was dealing with was over forty years of age at the time down there. Of course, that seemed real old to me at the time, being twenty-two, and I can understand why the young generation now don't like people over thirty at times. But 1941 was the first time that I ever campaigned for him, and I did. We came out here and we worked hard and I worked in these three counties out here.

F: Did he come out here?

B: Oh, yes.

F: Did he come by train?

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B: No, he flew out here. Now I'm trying to remember when was the first time he used the helicopter.

F: That was in 1948.

B: That was in 1948 when he first used the helicopter. But he flew out here and was here one day.

F: What did you do, line up speaking engagements?

B: He spoke. Of course, you know at that time he was very strong with labor out here. He always was strong with labor here even when he voted against the--later on, when the big decision came on the Taft-Hartley Bill, labor hung in there with him. And originally that was his main strength out here. For instance, Ernest Guinn, who is presently a federal judge here, was the county attorney at the time, and also represented, believe it or not, every labor union in town; he was their boy. Johnson later appointed him federal judge and I know he appointed him because of the work that he had done for Johnson all through the years.

F: Johnson always got a sympathetic reception from the Mexican group?

B: Very much so, very much so. The Mexicans always liked him. You know, Mexican people are funny and one thing that I saw--a lot of the things I'm saying here will be in retrospect, but one thing about Johnson, once you ever heard him speak, and it affected me this way, and I'm sure that that's one reason he was so popular with the Mexicans, he always made reference to improving someone's living conditions. And he was convincing, when I listened to him, and I know that when the Mexican population out here listened to him, they knew that they had a real champion in the man.

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I think that as time goes by and people go back and look over really and truly what he did, for instance, all the work that he did in harnessing the power in his own congressional district down there and getting electricity to the people--I forget just exactly how he used to put it; one of the first things that I ever heard him say, it must have been in 1938 or 1941 when he said that the outhouse ought to be eliminated and that they ought to get water into their homes and also electricity. At that time, you can take back in 1941, as far back as where our ranch was, we didn't have electricity. Now every ranch in that area down there, as a result of the legislation that he--no doubt in my mind, all these electric co-ops were formed, and even the telephone co-ops [that] were formed were the result of [his efforts]. I remember in 1950 when I was a member of the state legislature, speaking of telephone co-ops, John Connally was there representing the co-op people. We had a special session representing the telephone co-ops so that the government could help the rural area. I know damn well the reason he [Connally] was there was that I'm sure Johnson was responsible for him being there and carrying that title. That's something a lot of people don't know about--old John Connally was one of the world's greatest lobbyists. I had a lot of fun: Joe Kilgore and Frank Erwin and a bunch of the [University of Texas] Board of Regents were out here some couple, three or four years ago, and I thought I'd have some fun with Joe. So I went up to him and in a very loud voice so everybody could hear it, because Joe really was Connally's man with putting that co-op deal through, I said, "You know what, Joe? I don't think old Connally ever did split good with us on that telephone bill that we passed for him down there." And old Joe says, "Damn it, quit saying that. People will believe it." (Laughter)

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Johnson was really vitally interested in those gut things that make it easier for people to live. And I think the reason for it was the way he was reared as a young man.

F: Do you kind of have a situation because of your distance that a lot of state candidates didn't get out here?

B: A lot of times. In those days, a lot of state candidates didn't come, like I pointed out. O'Daniel didn't come here in his first campaign. Then you take those running for lesser state office, hell, there weren't enough votes out here to want to have, but I'll show you as we get into it a little bit later that, for instance, in the 1948 election--I'm not going to try to keep any continuity on this thing.

F: No, no.

B: I just want to talk as it comes to me. I did go and look up the 1948 election. The Democratic primary of course had no Republican opposition. You take for instance in the primary here and this is really something: Stevenson got 6,427 votes in the primary; Johnson got 5,729. Now in the runoff, Johnson got 6,439 votes and Stevenson got 3,129 votes.

All right, so they're talking about that Box 13 down there turning this thing around, well, they're mistaken. Where Johnson won that election was right here in El Paso. Because we completely turned it around. It was real funny the way it happened. I remember it like it was yesterday. He came here and myself and a fellow by the name of Jack McDonald [?] who is now dead, Ted Andress who is now dead. Ted Andress was a very prominent attorney here that was killed at the airport by Dr. Edinoff [?]. Edinoff went to Rusk and was incarcerated there for a long time. Now Edinoff is practicing medicine back in New York in a hospital up there.

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Well, we had a real old time type of editor of the *El Paso Herald Post*--his name was Ed Pooley; I'm sure that you've heard of him.

F: That's P-O-O-L-E-Y.

B: P-O-O-L-E-Y. Ed Pooley detested Coke Stevenson. He thought that Coke Stevenson was the biggest fraud and crook that had ever come down the line. I never will forget one editorial he ran; the Humble Oil Company went out there and there wasn't an oil field within two hundred miles of Kimble County, and they leased his [Stevenson's] ranch, the only ranch he said in the editorial that was leased.

F: That's a great way to make a campaign contribution without making one.

B: That's right. Well, anyway, Pooley just wrote editorial after editorial and especially after we got beat in the primary. You know it began to look kind of bad; of course you've got to remember Stevenson was governor at the time.

F: Yes, and the state was in the black, which meant everything.

B: That's right. In the black, that's all he could talk about. See, I served down there when he was lieutenant governor.

So we had this meeting and Johnson was here. Of course, he had his coat off and his tie undone. We were at the Del Norte Hotel, had a suite there. He was prancing back and forth like he always did, you know, and really putting it to us, and how important it was that he get elected, *et cetera*.

Well, I'll give you an illustration now that we're talking about it. I just picked this up out of Box 13 that we had at the time. Richard Telles was a judge down there at the box at the time.

F: Any kin to Raymond?

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B: Raymond's brother. He is the real politician in the family; he's running for county commissioner now for the fourth time unopposed. And in that first election, I don't know what happened. In the primary Stevenson got 183 votes and Johnson only got 152 and that was right in the heart of south El Paso, so when I saw that return come in, I couldn't figure it out. Except you've got to remember that Coke Stevenson portrayed in 1948 the old West Texas frontier spirit and everything else, so the ranch vote and the farm vote was a lot more important then than it is here, and it permeated into the city. Well, in the runoff, after we got all our ducks in order and everything else and really started working this thing out, where Stevenson had gotten 183 votes in that box in the primary he only got 87 in the runoff, and where Johnson had gotten 152 in the primary, he kicked that up to 162, so he beat him 162 to 87. So that more or less reflects what the general vote in the runoff was, the 6,439 to 3,129 in Johnson's favor.

F: Was this a case of you all just getting out and seeing the right people?

B: That's right. And I'll say this, there was no hanky-panky or anything else going on. This fellow Jack McDonald, God rest his soul, never ran for office himself, but he was very interested in politics and Robert L. Holliday, one of the old Democratic greats who was a great friend of the University of Texas at El Paso as we call it now. Fact of the matter Holliday even has a building named for him up there. He was on the Board of Regents back during Governor Moody's administration. Holliday is the one that really put McDonald to work and it was just a question of--after all it was a two to one victory in that runoff. That is one reason that I think--you know, Johnson could tell you even better than Ralph Yarborough how he came out in every community plus he could nearly tell you how he ran in each precinct. He never did spout the figures like Yarborough was

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prone to do. But I think that really and truly that that's one reason Johnson all the way down through the years was so damned good to this community. Simply because he--

F: Well, he got several 87 vote margins, any one of which could have ruined him.

B: Oh, yes, oh, yes, that's right. Well, if the vote had gone in the runoff, the way it went in the primary, we wouldn't be sitting here talking.

F: No, no.

B: I have told this to so many people, and what was strange--Stevenson's cohorts neither here nor on a statewide level ever said a damned thing about, "Well, we've been crooked out of a bunch of votes in the south side of town." Of course, the Mexican area is the one that really mounted his [count].

F: Is it known as Box 13?

B: It was Box 13 at the time. Yes, of course the box is--

F: That's a coincidence.

B: It *was* a coincidence. In many conversations I've had since 1948 I've said, "Hell, they've looked at the wrong Box 13!" And I was saying, too, earlier that one man you really should talk to if you haven't talked to, and that is the judge of Box 13, in Jim Wells County, Clarence Martens. Have you ever met him?

F: Clarence Martens?

B: M-A-R-T-E-N-S. Clarence Martens was the judge in that box.

F: I have not been able to get next to Judge Parr at all.

B: Well, you know Archer Parr, his nephew. George Parr is a good friend of mine. So is Archer, his nephew. We were not only in law school together, but he was my first sergeant when I was in the Marine Corps. I had a company; I was captain, and he was

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my first sergeant. So maybe I can get one of these times--I think that they'd be happy to talk [to you] but I don't know when they'd want it released.

But Clarence Martens, you've *got* to talk to him, because that was--Clarence is a dear friend of mine and he told me that actually what had happened was right after--they had him up to the Rangers and Reilly and them had in a hotel room [?]. Of course, with that particular box, as I understand it, now I've never seen the returns on it and I don't know what's happened to them, that toward the end of the afternoon, everyone that hadn't voted, they just wrote their names down and made the mistake of writing them down in alphabetical order. But Martens told me, his wife knocked on the door and demanded to be let in and went in and got him by the arm and took him out of there. She didn't want any part of it. I think that, of course, Stevenson was the governor and the Rangers were down there on his orders, so I often wonder what would have happened if his wife, Anne, hadn't walked in the door and said, "Come on, Clarence, we're going home!"

F: Is he in Alice?

B: He's in Alice and very active, still very active in politics.

F: Good, that'll be a lead I need then. That is an essential part of the story. I've got Coke Stevenson's version incidentally, and it comes out very nicely. I think he gave me an honest one and that was simply that fact that he'd always had the Parrs in his pocket, but they kept asking him for more and more and he says, "You eventually get to a point where you can't satisfy someone, so I told him, 'Nothing doing,' and he turned on me."

B: Well, I think that something else had to do with it. I think, I don't know whether Johnson had anything to do with getting Parr's pardon way back there. I really don't know

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because I don't know what the time element was, but if it was anything to do around 1938, although I think Parr got his pardon in 1936.

F: I don't think Johnson was instrumental in that.

B: Johnson didn't have--but that has always been funny to me, too, because the Parrs have usually always supported whoever was in power, unless they had a big crisscross with them, like they had with [Allan] Shivers and also like Stevenson.

But I visit down there and go hunting down there a lot. Of course, Archer and I are very dear friends. They've got a lot of difficulties down there now. You know Archer's been indicted for perjury and I haven't heard--that case should be about over on that income tax deal that George has going down there. If you could get Parr or Archer on tape--Archer is a real brilliant boy. He was decorated in the Marine Corps. I recommended him for the Congressional Medal of Honor, and he got the Silver Star. I'm saying that to show you what kind of a man he is. He looks more like a college professor than you do.

F: I hope I don't look too much like one.

B: Well, you don't look like a [professor]. I always called him professor because, from the cow country, he never wears boots, he always wears very conservative clothes and rimless eyeglasses. A real nice guy, but there's a lot of history you could get from them if you could get them to [talk].

But I think Martens would be happy to tell you all about it; he's probably the only--he'd probably say, "I don't want this published until after I'm dead." But you certainly should [talk to him] because that is where you're really going . . . In any history about Johnson, to me, that is one of the most important, interesting aspects as to just

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really what went on down there, because you know they pinpointed it that that was where he got his 87 vote margin. Well, it really wasn't. Here in El Paso he got it, and I'm sure he got it in other areas just as well.

F: Did you have any relationship with him then while he was in the Senate?

B: You know, I never had much to do with him after the 1941 race. Of course, I went into the service immediately and I didn't get back till 1946. Then the next time I really had anything to do with him--I had run into him occasionally in Austin in 1946 and 1947.

I ran for Congress in 1947 and was defeated by one hundred and fifty votes.

F: You know what close elections are like, too.

B: Oh, I'll tell you what. Of course, I made the big mistake.

F: Who was that [that won]?

B: Ken Regan beat me; beat me by one hundred and fifty votes. I made the big mistake of voting against the right-to-work bill in 194[?]. It was a political mistake. But you know you don't vote against the right-to-work bill where you're [among] only six people out of one hundred fifty people who vote against it and then come back to the kind of district that I had: a rural district where the El Paso Natural Gas and all the bankers and everyone else was calling me a communist because I had voted the wrong way.

F: And the title of that is--

B: It's misleading as hell anyway.

F: Because who's against "the right to work"?

B: That's right. No one is. Anyway, I did get one of Lyndon's right-hand men in trouble on that race, Homer Thornberry, who now is on the Fifth Circuit and who was serving as congressman from Austin at the time. Homer endorsed me, which you know, another

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congressman just doesn't do that and he helped me considerably. Like he's told me, "Goddamn, it took me so long to get over that," because Regan just was his mortal enemy, you know, from there on in.

But I didn't really then have any dealings with Johnson until we got into that 1948 campaign. Of course, I selected his campaign manager, Ted Andress, and we worked hard and got him elected and that was in 1948.

Well, in 1950, I was recalled back to the Marine Corps and I was gone two years to 1952 and then when I came back in 1952 I was elected county Democratic chairman. From 1954 to 1958 I served as county chairman. And actually I had no dealings with him other than when he'd come to town we'd get together but I had no real reason to call on him.

F: Were you back in town for the 1954 re-election campaign for senator?

B: Yes, when Dougherty ran against him? Yes, but I was county chairman at the time. He came out here and hell, there was nothing to it at all, you know. I know Dougherty. Fact of the matter, I have a cousin by the name of Red Turner that lives down in Beeville, and old Red was old Dougherty's lawyer.

F: Of course, Sissy Farenthold's some kin to him.

B: They're related to Sissy. It's funny how these things tie up.

F: Incidentally, just for the record since they'll be wanting that down through history, you are distantly related to Judge Roy Bean, as closely related as it seems convenient to be.
(Laughter)

B: Well, I'll tell you what, I had a great uncle by the name of Joe Bean, who told me that we were related. Joe Bean was in the sheep business with the old Judge. See, my part of

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that Bean family settled in that Ozona country and the San Angelo country. Uncle Joe and the old Judge were in the sheep business together there in about 1900 when they had a big drought down there and they nearly all went broke. People ask me now if I'm related to the Judge. I'm sure that old Uncle Joe wasn't yarning me, but I tell them, "Well, when I'm in El Paso he's my fourth cousin, but by the time I get to Washington, he's my grandfather." (Laughter)

F: Right. The further you get from this area, the closer--

B: The further I get from this area, the closer related he is to me. Of course, he's a very popular man out here now, you know, even if he was somewhat of a scoundrel when he was actually around seventy-four years ago. Fact of the matter, I named my youngest boy Roy Bean, but my wife, when she came to and heard that I named him Roy Bean, immediately changed it to Scott. I didn't get too far.

F: Right. Well, now to get back, so you had no problems in 1954?

B: No problem at all, just a routine election. Johnson made one trip in here, just blew in and blew out, and there was no problem. I was practicing law at the time and had a good law practice going and, although I was county chairman, I had no reason really to have anything to do with it.

F: Back when you were in the legislature, you made history by proposing increased taxes on sulphur, oil, and gas, which takes some guts. What maneuvered it?

B: Well, we got it out of the committee anyway.

F: Right. Did Johnson ever surface on that? You know, in those days they were always saying he was a tool of Texas oil interests and I wonder if he did any kind of quiet lobbying.

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B: I'm sure that he did.

F: But not with you.

B: But not with me. He used to kind of kid me about that time, called me a "red hot," you know; that was one of his favorite deals. But you know, at that particular time in 1947 we had the same situation facing us that we have today as far as school financing. What happened was that the doggone schoolteachers did me in on that thing. Charlie Tennison [?] represented the Texas State Teacher's Association.

F: I never had much use for Charlie.

B: I don't know, sometimes, I think maybe he might have been working for the oil company at that particular time because we were really making a run with that bill. It's funny, people don't know it, but I'll tell you who wrote that bill. Bob Eckhardt was a student at the University at that time, and Bob wrote that bill.

F: Oh, he did.

B: He was kind of my--he wasn't on my payroll or anything but he was hanging around; I don't know why the hell I didn't put him on my payroll, but he used to come down. He and I were good friends that far back. He wrote the bill and they thought that we couldn't even get it out of committee. Well, we couldn't get it out of the committee on revenue and taxation, but I mulled around and got the thing transferred over to the judiciary committee where Judge Isaacks was chairman of the judiciary committee. He was seventy-five or seventy-six years old. He told me, "I'm going to get that bill out of committee for you." Well, in 1947, when you were taking on all the oil and gas and sulphur people, hell, it was just like--

F: Taking on God himself.

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B: Taking on God himself! And there was never anyone who was more surprised when that bill was bounced out of committee; of course, they started immediately really putting it to us after we got it out on the floor. If the schoolteachers had hung in there with us, we could have passed that darn bill, but they folded. I had all the revenues, if you go back and look at it, I had I think about, I don't exactly remember, but all the revenue was going to the schools, and we had earmarked a certain percentage of the revenues to be spent on teachers' salaries.

F: Sure would have turned education around in this state.

B: It sure would have. And of course that's what [Texas Governor Dolph] Briscoe's going to have to do. You know, Briscoe and I served in the legislature together, too, and I don't see any way out. He's going to be here on Monday and I'm going to tell him at the time that he'd better hurry up, that he'd better go on and say that immediately following the election or immediately doing something or the other, if he's got the material to do it, to do it before the election; to go on and have a special session on school financing and get it out of the way.

But, no, Johnson didn't surface on any of that. I'm sure that he had his lieutenants.

Joe Kilgore was down there with me at the time.

F: I've heard tales, and I've never known how much is rumor, that you'd be sitting there at your desk in the Capitol Building and here comes a call from your senator from Texas and he'd say things like: "Woodrow, noticed your vote yesterday. You sure that's the way you want to vote?" You got any evidence of that, or is that just somebody trying to be funny?

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B: Well, I know that he called other people, but he never did call me, and I think one reason that he didn't, he and I had pretty good definite understanding on everything and I was pretty idealistic at that time. I hope I haven't lost all my idealism because I think when a man does, that's when he--

F: That's when he gets old.

B: --gets old. We were talking about that housing deal. I think that's made a much younger man out of me. But he never did call me. Now I do know that later on--and I wasn't in the legislature at the time--when he was running for president, and we changed the election dates just to suit him, and hell, I was all for it because I was strong for him. But of course, the first real falling out--we're talking about that time now. In 1954, he had no problem. So in 1956--and this is when we really got together. In 1956 I was still county Democratic chairman, and that is when we went to Dallas for the May convention, and we had a knockdown dragout here at the county convention--fights and everything else. I took the five people from the steelworkers as my bodyguards because I was county chairman and I was also permanent chairman of the county commissioners. We took a pro-Johnson delegation to Dallas to the convention. Well, we got down there and, of course, we met at, I don't recall, I'm sure it was at the Adolphus because all of his prime supporters met there. I never will forget, he came in and we had the suite there. Part of us were sitting on the floor, and he came in and sat down on the floor. Immediately, goddurn, he got after Shivers. Of course, the conservatives were going to put up a fight, and he just ate Shivers up one side and down the other. Of course, he went around the room asking each delegation chairman, "How about you?" Some of them would say, "Well, I don't know how it's going to be." He said, "Well, goddamn it, you're

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either for me or against me. Now, if you're not for me, just get on up and get out of here right now." Then, of course, when he came to me, I said, "There's no problem with us. We're 100 per cent." That is when he said, "Well, how about the national committeewoman?"--see, going one step further. Johnson was a lot like these labor unions: you had to be for him 110 per cent; if you were just with him 99 per cent, you weren't worth a damn. I said, "No, I can't commit us on the national committeewoman." Because, after all, hell, I'd been going to their DOT [Democrats of Texas] meetings. The only one that had guts enough to come was Sam Rayburn, you know. During that Shivers stall, when Shivers were there, he'd come out for Eisenhower and everything else, and we just didn't have a damn show. We couldn't win a county convention. If we did win a county convention, it didn't do us any good to go to the state convention because, hell, we were really, using the word that's become famous, inoperative. But, anyway, I told him at the time, "No, I cannot commit to you on the national committeeman or committeewoman." And at that time, who was the guy from Temple? He's now a judge up there. Byron Skelton. See, Byron had gone to those DOT meetings and everything else, and he'd hung in there real good. I told him, "I'm sure . . ." And he said, "Well, I'll want Byron Skelton." I said, "We're not going to have any problems on Byron Skelton. But you know that we've got a lot of people in our outfit that think that Mrs. [Frankie] Randolph is a pretty good woman, not that I'm . . . I just can't flat commit us."

Well, it didn't make a damn to me what he thought, because the delegation that I took down there was *my* delegation. It wasn't Johnson's delegation. And of course, there wasn't anything that he'd ever done for me that I was obligated; I was under no obligation to him whatsoever. I became obligated. He's the kind that sooner or later he'd obligate

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you. As we go along I'll show you how he did me, and I think that I'm a pretty good pattern.

F: I don't want to interrupt your narrative here, but, basically, he was not in favor of the DOT, was he?

B: No, he never did like the DOT, because he couldn't run it and he never did. Our political philosophy at that time was that, hell, the oil companies and everyone were just running everything just to suit themselves, and this little bunch that we had over here were encouraged only by Rayburn. Once a year when we'd have our dinner--we'd usually meet at Waco--Rayburn would show up and give us confidence and hope, *et cetera*. But we had people like Bob Slagle from up at Sherman and like Mrs. Randolph and Skelton. Skelton wasn't a real firm DOT man, but--

F: He'd at least shake hands with you.

B: He'd at least shake hands and was pretty much Democratic-oriented, but Johnson thought we were all kind of squirrely. So anyway, at this 1956 convention in Dallas in May, we went on over to the convention and everything went just fine. Then it came time to elect the national committeewoman and he sent word back to me that he wanted me to second Mrs. Bentsen's nomination. I told him, "No," that I couldn't, that my delegation was going to go for Mrs. Randolph, which we did, and of course she was elected.

I don't think that Lloyd or Mrs. Bentsen have ever forgiven me for that, and they probably never will. Of course, I know Lloyd but I didn't support him, and I think this idea of his going out here and trying to get up a presidential boom is the silliest thing that I ever heard in my life. I mean I think it's ridiculous really. I think that Briscoe'd have a better chance of getting elected president than Bentsen.

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But that was just another way that so many of the old . . . Johnson just hated Mrs.

Randolph's guts.

F: I understand it was mutual, wasn't it?

B: It was mutual.

F: Where had they ever gotten crossed? Because she couldn't be managed?

B: She couldn't be managed. That's the whole thing! And she was tough and she had dough and she could get her articles in the paper when she talked. She had for years a weekly luncheon--I forget the name of the place--where everyone came just to have lunch, Dutch treat. Then you would usually have a speaker, someone going through or something. She was able to keep the spark alive, and of course she was always for Yarborough, see. And anyone that was for Yarborough, goddamn, Johnson wasn't for them.

F: Yes.

B: He just couldn't--and that's the funny part about it. I supported Yarborough in every race he ever ran, one of the greatest legislators that this state ever had, but the dumbest man politically that ever walked. So eccentric! As long as you could keep him on the floor of the Senate and writing legislation, the best senator that this state has ever had, including all of them. But Johnson and Shivers and Connally politically had just driven him out of his mind. And instead of going up there and settling down and trying to get along a little bit, he had to keep at war with them, he had to pull his six-shooters. That's the reason that, by God, he could have made his peace with Johnson and Bentsen would never have run--just like Kilgore; Johnson pulled Kilgore out of his race at the time. I know I talked with Joe, and there were other people involved in it, after had said he was going to run.

F: And moved to Austin.

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B: And moved to Austin. Johnson just called and said, "You're not going to get any money anywhere, so you just as well get out of the race." And Joe knew, Joe and I both knew Johnson well enough to know that, by God, that's the way it was because he was that strong. But, anyway, getting back to that 1956 convention, that's what happened there. Okay, Yarborough ran a hell of a race for governor.

F: Did you go to Chicago in 1956?

B: Yes, I went to the convention; I was a delegate to the convention. I whooped it up, carried Johnson signs around on the floor; people saw me on TV and everything else. I was all out for him. I knew that it was just a step; that he was trying to get ready for 1960. He got beautiful coverage up there. That was when he first really started coming on the horizon.

But that convention was the time that I fell in love with John Kennedy. I was there and we had this very exciting race, and we were voting. Wright Patman even got up and said, "We can't vote for a Catholic for vice president." You know, the Texas delegation voted for Kennedy for vice president and when I heard that I just liked to have up-chucked because I thought, "Well, hell, we're past that stage." There I was, a Catholic reared in a Masonic institution and I'd never heard any damn crap like that.

And of course, I had gone to the convention in 1948 as an observer when Truman was there. Of course, Truman is the greatest man in my book that ever lived.

I was utterly amazed at Patman, but I will say this, that Johnson hung in there with Kennedy and then when Kennedy lost that deal with [Estes] Kefauver, which, of course, was the greatest thing that ever happened. The minute it was over with, I went over to where the Massachusetts delegation was sitting, and by then Kennedy had come

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in and [Ted] Sorensen was with him. That was when I first met Kennedy, and this was in August. I told Sorensen, "We've got to have Kennedy come to El Paso." Now you've got to recall I was still county Democratic chairman. I said, "All you've got to do . . ." He said, "Well, meet me up at the hotel." They were staying at the Statler Hilton, the same one I stayed in in 1968 when they had all the riots.

F: The Conrad Hilton.

B: The Conrad Hilton. I went up to the room afterward, and it was at that time that I met John Kennedy and I met Ted Sorensen, and I met Mrs. Kennedy, [she] was there. She was at the time pregnant with a child which she lost. Well, anyway I had a talk with Sorensen, and he said, "Well, all right, you contact me when you get back to El Paso." And this is the best story of them all. So, hell, I was county Democratic chairman, and I wasn't going to call Johnson and say, "Is it all right for Kennedy to come to Texas?" As the fact of the matter, it didn't even enter my goddamned mind!

F: Yes.

B: Well, I called Sorensen, and I had had a few drinks with Sorensen up there and we got to talking pretty good, you know. Also Bob Kennedy was there, and I guess that they thought, "Well, this is kind of an old wardheeling politician like we got from up Massachusetts." And of course, I had my card with county Democratic chairman printed on it, and a pair of cowboy boots and a big hat, and I guaranteed them that we'd have five thousand people out to hear him speak if he came here.

F: Tony Lama boots.

B: I had Tony Lama boots on, too. Well, anyway, I came on back and immediately called Senator [Clinton P.] Anderson and Senator [Dennis] Chavez [who] were real good

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friends of mine. You see, we got visits from the senators from New Mexico here much more often than we get from anyone else. I called and told them that I'd invited Kennedy down and would they come, and they both accepted. So then I called Sorensen back, and I said that Chavez and Anderson had accepted, and I was waiting for them to let me know. So, hell, he called back about thirty minutes later and he said, "We'll be there." I said, "Send me a wire confirming it." So he sent me a wire confirming it. All right.

Then apparently, I don't know where the hell Johnson found out.

F: Probably had good information sources.

B: Now, let me tell you what's happening in the meantime. See, something else'd come up in the meantime. We went down to the September convention, all right, and at that time, you know--

F: Which convention?

B: The state convention, the governor's convention, we call it. That was the time, you know, that Yarborough and [Price] Daniel had such a close race that we figured, goddamn it, that Yarborough had gotten it stolen from him; so we had a hell of a fight here--you know now you just have the one [county] convention and that entitles you to go to both the presidential convention and also the governor's convention, but in those times you had two county conventions. Well, we beat them fair and square here. They went on down there, but they took the rump session down there, and when we got down there, I'll be damned if they didn't seat that rump session. Well, I appeared before the credentials committee and they unseated them.

We were fixing to walk back in the convention when Johnson called me. Johnson by then had come down because the thing was about to get out of Price Daniel's hand. If

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you go back to the *Fort Worth Star Telegram* articles, I made all kind of charges.

Johnson called me in after we'd been seated, and he said, "Well, how are you going to vote?" And I said, "I don't know how the vote is going to go." So he said, "Well, by God, you're not going to go in; you're not going to be seated then." I said, "We're already seated." He said, "Well, I'll just unseat you." And that was the time when he told me, "I'm going to teach you a lesson in political morality." Well you know Wick Fowler? I don't know whether you knew Wick or not, god bless his heart.

F: Yes, I knew Wick, "Two Alarm Chili."

B: Old Wick said that the first time that he had heard, right after that convention he went up to a barbecue with Johnson at Greenville and they were driving back through the night. Old Johnson was telling him, he said, "That goddamned Bean, I taught him a lesson in political morality." He [Fowler] said, "When he told me that he taught you a lesson in political morality, I nearly lost control of the car." Well, anyway, he did! We were seated and then he unseated us because he knew what we were going to do. He knew that I hadn't cut any deal with him of any kind. He knew that we were going to vote to seat the Harris County delegation and if we voted to seat the Harris County delegation, we were going to kick Daniel off the ticket as governor. What had happened, Pickle was the one that was counting the votes and he counted them up and he said, "Well, it don't make a damn. Bean was with us in May. Let's go and seat him, and even if he votes that way, it won't make any difference." Then after they seated us, they added the votes up again, and they said, "Well, that damned vote, with the El Paso vote going against us, we're beat!" And that's the reason that Johnson turned around. Hell, Daniel lost complete

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control of the convention. If Johnson had not been there, I don't think Daniel would have [won]; I think Yarborough would have ended up governor of the state of Texas.

F: You mean Johnson in effect did Daniel's work for him?

B: Why, hell, yes. Daniel didn't know what was going on. He didn't know what was going on. And to me, that is when Johnson showed me, well, I said to myself, "Here is a son-of-a-bitch that knows it all--that there ain't no way, hell--

F: How did he do it? Did he just get hold of the credentials committee?

B: He just goddamned got them in there and said, "You're going to do it this way or else." And the vote was still pretty damned close, even kicking us out.

F: Well, the convention was just half-split all the way.

B: We were fourth in the state in the number of delegates, but if they'd seated our delegation, it would have turned it the other way. Actually Pickle was just a bad counter, I've always said this. And after that I said, "Well, the only thing that you've got to do to steal a convention is to have a chairman and to have a guy, a son-of-a-bitch, that can count, so he'll know how many people of the opposition to seat and how many not to seat. They just flat stole that damned election, hell. But I was just madder than a son-of-a-bitch! Can you imagine? I'd gone all the way to Chicago supporting him, I'd been with him all the way through except on Mrs. Randolph's deal here at the May convention, and then the son-of-a-bitch kicks me out in September.

Well, I came back and I was very mad, and I knew we didn't have a chance to win the presidential deal, but I was county chairman and I was going to do my best. So I just went, after I got back here, I just said, "Screw Johnson." And so I got Kennedy lined up to come here, and then all of a sudden I started getting phone calls from Johnson. I told

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my secretary, "I don't want to talk to him," and I kept getting phone calls. And finally he called my boy, John, who incidentally is superintendent of the Masonic Home and School now.

F: John was here then.

B: Yes, John was here. I was county Democratic chairman at the time, and he was superintendent of the county schools. So Johnny called me and he said, "Goddamn it, don't be hardheaded." He said, "Go on, here's the number, call him." And so I said, "Okay, I'll call him." So I called him and he was at his home in the evening.

F: In Washington?

B: In Washington. And he said, "Why in the goddamned hell haven't you been answering my phone calls?"--like nothing had happened in Fort Worth, like *nothing* had happened in Fort Worth! I said, "Well, I just hadn't had time to get back there." And he said, "I know you got that goddamned Kennedy coming down there to make a speech." I said, "Yes, he's accepted." And he said, "Why in the goddamned hell didn't you clear it with me?" I said, "Senator, I don't have to clear anything with you. What have you ever done for me that I have to clear it with you other than kicking me out of the convention after I supported you all year long?" "Well, forget about that. I just want to let you know that I'm going to be there." I hadn't even invited him! (Laughter) So, what are you going to say? I said, "Well, hell, we'll be happy to have you." He said, "I understand that Anderson and Chavez are going to be there. I'm not going to have those senators from other states coming in there without my being there!"

Well, that was the first trip Kennedy ever made to Texas, the first speech he ever made in Texas, and I knew that that guy was going to go places. I don't know much, but I

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know politics as I grow older, and I knew in 1956. I said, "By gosh, that guy, there's a winner," and I got right with him. Well, on October 26 in 1956 we had the big dinner; we had about five thousand people out.

F: Where did you hold this?

B: At the coliseum. We had everybody there, and Kennedy was supposed to be the main speaker. Well, we introduced Anderson, he got up, said, "Very happy to be here." Introduced Johnson--that son-of-a-bitch talked for an hour! Poor Kennedy had about fifteen minutes to give his speech, and in those days Kennedy was a real skinny guy, reminded me a lot of Johnson when I first saw Johnson in 1938. And poor old Kennedy just sat there, and he sat there. And there I was, the head honcho and it was just . . . and all that Johnson told me was, when he got up to speak, he leaned over and he said, "You go back to the back of the audience and start the applause."

F: Who'd he say that to?

B: To me! I had to get up out of my chair and go back, you know, and I knew when to clap, and, oh hell, he was terrific! He got after Shivers and he knew everyone out here hated Shivers anyway. And he just, tore up everything in sight and never once mentioned Adlai Stevenson or Kefauver, or mentioned Kennedy, never once.

F: It was a Texas political speech.

B: It was strictly a Texas political deal, and no one was going to remember anything anyone said there--I can't even tell you right now. All that I know is that Kennedy talked about U.S.-Mexican relations and I can't even tell you what he said, but I can nearly tell you everything that Johnson said because he just had them whooping and hollering, *et cetera*. But it was kind of embarrassing to me because there I had the principal speaker, see?

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F: Brought him all the way from Washington.

B: All right. It's all over with, so we go down to the hotel. I got Kennedy--to get back on it--

F: Did they come in together?

B: No, I'm going to tell you what happened. Well, we didn't come in together. And that was the year that they had the Joe Smith deal, some guy, you remember someone wanted . . . So we got every Joe Smith we could find in town meet him out at the airport. Well, Johnson came in early. I was really in good with the sheriff down there and I wanted a big crowd. I've got the picture of the reception around here somewhere. I'll show it to you before we leave.

So Lady Bird came in with Lyndon in the early afternoon. Kennedy was making a speech out on the West Coast somewhere, and Johnson and all of them got here. We were expecting Kennedy any time, and I'd set up a bar at the airport. Well, by the time Johnson got there half the damned people were drunk. I had gotten an order to swell the crowd. I told the sheriff, "Let all the trusties out," and there were about a hundred trusties. You could tell them because they wore khaki pants and khaki shirts, and they all got drunk. (Laughter) Well, anyway, finally, they gave me up the ghost waiting on Kennedy, so they went on down to the hotel. I took them on down to the hotel.

F: Kind of rough when you've got two of them on your hands.

B: Yeah, yeah. You see, it was real lucky because when Chavez and Anderson came in together I just turned them over to another guy, Riley Allison [?] who is a big contractor here who did a lot of work up in New Mexico and he took them off my hands.

F: Where did you take them--to the Cortez?

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B: To the Del Norte. No, they stayed at what was then the Hilton Plaza now because they'd stayed up at the penthouse of this contractor, Riley Allison [?]. Anyway, the dinner was for seven, so about seven o'clock, myself, and Captain Anguiano and Monsignor [Lawrence] Gaynor went to the airport. We were the only three to meet Kennedy because he came in a small plane. Sorensen was the only one he had with him, so we went out and picked him up and I told him, "Senator, we're not going to have time to go to the hotel." [He was] staying at the Del Norte and I remember one of the orders was that he needed a piece of board to put under his bed. So I said, "We can stop here at Pope Pius parish house and you can take a shower and clean up," because it was just right next to the airport. I had this Catholic monsignor with me, who had known the Kennedy family back there. Monsignor Gaynor used to be general counsel for the New York Life Insurance Company and decided about when he was thirty-two or thirty-three years old that he would go into the priesthood.

F: Who's Captain Anguiana?

B: Captain Anguiana was with the sheriff's department here. He's now bailiff of the domestic relations court.

That [occasion] of course has been one of the high points in both our lives. Just the two of us, including the priest went out to meet him. Anyway, we stopped back by the parish there for him to get cleaned up and the furnishings in this parish are just out of this world; it just looks like a penthouse. Kennedy took one look at the furnishings and everything else--they had a round table with all the booze on it, anything you wanted to drink, a couple of brothers standing back ready to serve the drinks. Of course we were in a hurry, so they took him in there in a room to shower and clean up, and Kennedy told

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me, "Come on in here with me, Woody, so that we can [talk]" and told me more or less what he was going to say to find out what [my] reaction [was]. I told him, "I think it's fine." Well, he pulled his shirt off and his back was a mass of scars. So we shot the bull and I never will forget he told Gaynor, "Monsignor, don't ever let it get out that you priests are living like this down here or the priests in Boston are going to run us out of town."

Well, anyway, we finally got on down there to the meeting, and Johnson took over everything and poor Kennedy sat there. He twisted and fumbled and everything else. You wouldn't have known that Kennedy was the main speaker.

F: Kind of looked like Kennedy was just a passenger.

B: Kennedy was just kind of along for the ride. So then that evening we went on down, hell, we all went over to Juarez after it was over with and had a couple of drinks over there, and walked up and down and got through fairly early; we were back at the hotel by midnight that night. Then, of course, the next morning we all took off in six different directions. But Johnson was very incensed that I had the audacity to have Kennedy down there and he never did trust me completely where the Kennedys were concerned after that as I'll tell you what happened a little bit later on.

Anyway, then in 1959 was when I really started, I really got heavy with Johnson because I became county judge and we only had one bridge crossing where you could cross over and you could cross back.

(Interruption)

Anyway, Lyndon just completely upstaged it, but Kennedy made a lot of friends out there though. As you will recall in the 1960 election he wasn't getting off the ground

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at all until he hit El Paso. Then he had thirty, thirty-five thousand people out at the airport to meet him, and that got him going. But anyway getting back to Johnson, I ran for county judge and was elected by, not 87 votes, but by 187 votes.

F: You kind of like the close ones, too.

B: That's right. Landslide Bean, they were calling me. But we only had across the river here this one crossing over and one crossing back and, as a result of the damned thing, we were really having a lot of problems. And you know sometimes people just don't think that things can be so darned easy. Anyway, I'm showing you these pictures here, and I know we can't get it on tape, but these are the kind of lines that we were having at the bridge.

F: Yes, I remember some of those.

B: I immediately started action to try to get a new port. Of course, the people downtown were just utterly against it. They just, damn it, didn't want any--the Popular Dry Goods wanted everything that came from Juarez to go right by in front of them and the other stores. Well, I got the same newspaper editor that had elected--old Ed Pooley who god darn, bless his hide, he's the world's greatest, he took these pictures. I went to him, and I told him, "Hell, we've got to have a new [bridge]." Now this should have been a city operation but the mayor, Raymond Telles--he and I had been very close politically up till this happened, and then after we cut off, and we've never been the same together. His brother and I always get along fine, but--

F: I've interviewed Raymond Telles.

B: Yes, well, Raymond was opposing this, so anyway, I knew damned well there was only one way. It's impossible to get the State Department to do anything. They don't like any

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changes along this border at all, just don't stir up anything. Well, goddamn, it was just horrible, the damned inconvenience to the people here so I said to myself, "Well, there's only one guy that can get this darned thing over." If you remember we're in 1959 now, 1960's coming up. Well, I know that Johnson is running for president and I know I'm in for four years and I know that he's going to need a lot of help. So I found out that he's going to be in Albuquerque along with Sam Rayburn to a big political meeting. By gosh, I just hauled off and announced that I'm going to Albuquerque to talk to Johnson and the fact of the matter there's a headline here somewhere I'd show you. You know how hot this god durned thing was getting here. Here it is right here--"Bean Tries to Press Senator Johnson for Cordova Port Opening." That was in Albuquerque. Well, then I had both newspapers with me, and I was badgering everyone. But when I went up there to talk to Johnson, well, hell, he didn't even know what I was talking about and could care less. So he said, "Well, I'll talk to you about it," and this and that, and mind you this is way on up in February.

Then I said, "Hell, there's only one thing for me to do. I'm going to go to Washington." So I went to Washington and I got there--of course, I was kind of a novice; I hadn't been up there. I know how to do it now, but I didn't then. So I went, and he was on the floor--he was majority leader now, mind you--so I go to the floor. They send someone down with me to the office and they pull him off the floor and I said, "Well, Senator, I'm up here to talk to you about this bridge deal." "Oh," he said, "Woodrow, they're not going to do anything on that damned thing. You're wasting your time and mine, too." I said, "Well, hell, if that's what it is, Senator, hell, I'll just get on the next plane and go home. I'm going to tell those people that's what you say; that's all

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that I can say." (Laughter) I said, "But there's one thing I want to tell you. You know your campaign manager that I got for you in 1948 is a dead man." See, just that month they had killed Ted Andress out here at the airport. I said, "I was talking to my brother who you know real well." My brother had just been selected grandmaster of the grand lodge of Texas, the head of all the Masons in Texas. Well, I knew that that would get Johnson's attention because there's three hundred thousand of them. And here Johnny was, and I'm not a Mason, I'm Catholic here.

F: That's a pretty big fixed group.

B: Yes, and what I mean, I knew that that would get Johnson's attention, the fact of the matter I happen to know that Johnson got money to go to college from a Masonic lodge. Well, anyway, the minute I said, "You're going to need a new campaign manager, and I'm recommending that my brother be your campaign manager. He's the county school superintendent out there, right across the hall from me. I'm county judge over there. Between the two offices, hell, we can do a lot." When I said that, he said, "Wait just a minute." You could just see it; you know, there he was at one of the most responsible damned jobs in the world, Senate majority leader and he was thinking what would happen in this old paltry county down here. I mean he never forgot that; he used to always say you've got to get elected to office before you can be a statesman. You've got to be a politician before you can be a statesman, but that was to me--

F: You could see that computer mind working.

B: To me, it worked just like that: he could see three hundred thousand votes. So he said, "You go on up and wait for me at the office and don't you leave." I said, "Well, hell, I can't do nothing if we can't do anything on this bridge." He said, "Well, you go on up

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there and wait for me at the office." So I went up there, and mind you, this was about twelve o'clock. I wasn't up there thirty minutes until he came in, and who was this--I can never forget his number one man.

F: Walter Jenkins?

B: Walter Jenkins and Reedy.

F: Yes, George Reedy.

B: Yes, George Reedy. He called them in, and he said just like you know, how he'd always talk, "Beans wants to get a bridge up. I want a man here from the State Department, one from the Treasury Department, one from the Immigration Department, one from the . . ."
And he said, "And don't tell them to send any people at the bottom of the ladder. I want assistant secretaries at least!" Do you know that within two hours time that all those people were there?

F: That was in a Republican administration?

B: Yes, within two hours time! All right. We were meeting there, I don't even know [where]. It wasn't his office that we were meeting in, [it was] a great big chandeliered room there.

F: Probably the Senate majority leader's office.

B: Yes, so I had all my plans and everything else, what I wanted, and, hell, these people never heard of it. This is something that some crazy damned country county judge was going to get them in international complications immediately. Well, he came in after they all got there and he said, "I want all of you to introduce yourselves." So he got up, and they went around and he was talking to them like you'd talk to a bunch of hoe hands that were getting started, you know. He said, "Now this is Judge Bean. He's got

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something to tell you. And I want it done. I don't want any excuses; I don't want to hear why it can't be done. I want it done!" Then he looked at his watch. He said, "I'm going to a Finance Committee meeting and I'm going to be back in about an hour, hour and a half, and when I get back here I want an aye vote from everyone on getting this done." I don't know whether he was going to a Finance Committee meeting or not, but that was a pretty good thing to pull on those people.

F: You're interested in finance.

B: Yes, fine. So then I got up and I explained it all. It was a very simple thing. I even took these pictures up there and showed them what we were faced with and everything else. And, hell, I bet you there wasn't a person sitting around that table that had even been to El Paso.

F: Yes, just barely knew where it was.

B: Yes, anyway, he came back in about an hour, hour and a half, and he said, "Well, is everything all set?" This one guy--some guy from the U.S. Department of Health--got up and said, "Well, we're having so much trouble with prostitution in Juarez." Johnson said, "That don't make a damn. That don't make a damn. I don't want to hear excuses like that. All that I want"--and he pointed to the guy from the Secretary of State's office, he said, "I know that this is going to have to be dealt with on a high-level basis, and I want you to take Bean over there to talk to whoever's on the Mexican Affairs desk"--I didn't even know what the hell he was talking about, the Mexican Affairs desk--"to have Bean go over it with them in detail. Then I want him to write me back a letter on this thing." Well, I didn't know really what the hell I was getting into. He said, "Come back in the morning." So I went back in the morning and we just shot the bull there for a little bit.

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Then he said, "Now I want you to go over this with Sam Houston again." So I went over the whole thing with Sam Houston, his brother.

F: What's Sam Houston doing at that time?

B: He was up there sitting around in one of those offices. He was on the payroll somewhere. I don't know exactly what he was doing. Hell of a nice guy. Poor old Sam, I tell you what, you know, you've got a brother like Lyndon Johnson, hell, life is impossible. I'm afraid I'd be a drunk, too!

F: Yes.

B: He's been accused of that. I've never see him drunk, but anyway, I asked Sam, because I'd known Sam, "Sam, what do you think?" He said, "Well, if Lyndon wants the damned thing, I know that he can get it done." He said, "But, goddamn, it's kind of a big order. Do you know how many agencies you're going to have to get to concur on this thing?" I said, "Well, it looked like there was about fifty people sitting around the table yesterday."

Well, I came on home and I picked the damn site and everything else, and here, way early on, I spent right at three hundred thousand dollars on this side of the bridge. And then all of a sudden the Mexican government said, "No, we can't do it." So I called Johnson on the phone and I said, "You told me, 'You go on home, goddamn it, I'll take care of it.' Senator, we're in trouble!" He said, "What do you mean, 'we're' in trouble?" (Laughter) I said, "By God, I'll tell you what, you told me to go and get this thing started and I've spent three hundred thousand dollars." He said, "Three hundred thousand dollars!" I said, "Yes." "County money?" "Yes," I said. "County money. Now goddamn it, you've going to have to come through on this thing." Well, in the meantime, I'd been visiting back and forth over here with the mayor and counting on Johnson, of

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course, to take care of the stuff down there. Hell, it was getting along toward the fourth of July when I made this call and old Telles, Raymond Telles, was just tickled to death about it because, hell, the city owned part of that right-of-way over there, and I had had to go over to the city--

F: Was Telles mayor at this time?

B: Yes, he was mayor. I had had to head three marches on city hall to get the city to turn over that property to me before I could build this stuff. You see that picture there? You see how he looks? I had just got through putting it on him, and I was telling it. I knew it was going to make him mad, so I put my arm around him when he took our picture.

So about that time, I got a call from Earl Long. He was down in Pecos. That was the year that he was out here on that damn drunken spree. Well, I had met Earl years before. He'd come to El Paso and he wanted me to take him to the races up at Ruidoso, so I immediately told him, "No, Earl. I'm leaving town. I've got to go to California." So hell, I went on out to California. I already had my bags packed.

F: Probably just as well that you did.

B: And I said, "All I need now is--I've squandered away three hundred thousand dollars of the county's money on this damn thing--Earl Long. [He] is going to go to town and if he's here I'll get drunk with him, and they'll have my picture in the paper: The County Judge and The Governor Drunk." So I said, "If I'm going to get drunk, I know my wife--we're just going to go on to California." So I went on out to California. And I sent Lyndon a wire just before I left--this was about the first of July--in which I said [that] all of our stuff was ready on this side and that we were still waiting, but it looked like the whole thing was blown. So I went on out there, and let me tell you something, my word,

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my political career was at the end. I said, Telles had said, "Well, hell, Bean can always make a skating rink out of that down there!" So I was out there and I was really down because I could see that was probably what we were going to do with it--make a skating rink out of it, couldn't make anything else. So I was there and of course my secretary knew where to get in touch with me.

I'd been there about a week, and he [Lyndon Johnson] called me on the phone, and he said, "I just talked with [Adolfo] Lopez Mateos. The bridge is going to open on the twenty-seventh of August. I'm going to celebrate my birthday with you." I said, "Well, Senator, I don't know. Those Mexicans haven't done a damn thing on the other side." And he said, "Lopez Mateos said that he would guarantee it." Well, I just liked to [have] fainted. So, hell, I couldn't get packed quick enough to get home, you know. I said, "Well, you want me to announce it or are you going to announce it?" He said, "No, your head has been rolling. You get on back and tell them that I talked to you, and you make the announcement." Which I did. There's never been a project completed as fast in Mexico as that bridge was.

F: They must have turned everybody in north Mexico loose on that.

B: They turned everybody loose on it; they turned *everybody* loose on it! And here the little old deal--you and I--

F: You can't do it that fast--

B: Hell, no! The Mayor and I went down there and cut the fence. There was a fence there and before they even started, we went down there and cut the fence on the damn thing. And so on the twenty-seventh day of [August]--now this is one of the greatest things that's ever happened to this town, that crossing there--[it was done]. And it was done

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simply and solely because Lyndon Johnson wanted it done. There he was, he had a Republican president. So when he came down, he flew in, oh hell, [with] all the trappings, had the military with him; came in in one of those big military airplanes. You know, the band was there to meet him at Biggs Field. Hell, I was afraid that they were going to play "Hail to the Chief" there in a minute. (Laughter)

F: He probably had a dream--

B: It was his birthday, the son-of-a-bitch. And those Mexicans gave him spurs and a hat and everything else.

F: He wanted it for his birthday.

B: Yes. Hell, yes! He wanted to celebrate his birthday. And my birthday was the twenty-eighth, you know, but that was never mentioned. Well, anyway, we went down there and I guess there was thirty or thirty-five thousand people that turned out down there and it looked like it was going to rain. I introduced him as the world's greatest living American; of course George Reedy prepared my introductory remarks. He said, "What do you want to say?" I said, "Well, hell, call him the world's greatest living American." Right there in the Del Norte Hotel, and I'll never forget. We were there and you know how Johnson is about political details, so he goes over to the bathroom, says, "Come in here into the bathroom." He's in there taking a number one, and said, "Close the goddamn door," and we stood there in the bathroom and talked for thirty minutes. But he wanted to know exactly who was going to be there and everything else, and fortunately I had the list in my pocket. He took it and looked at that list and handed me back the list and when he made his talk that afternoon he mentioned every son-of-a-bitch. I must have had fifteen names on that list and he mentioned every one on that list!

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But it was raining. It was the most beautiful damn thing you ever saw in your life. We had bands from the United States and bands from Mexico, and it started raining. He could hardly wait to get out of there 'cause after he'd made his appearance and raised his hand and took the pictures and everything else, he wanted to get home to the Ranch that night because they had a birthday party for him. Wick Fowler was there, and poor Wick was just drunker than seven hundred and eighty dollars. You know he'd lost his wife and he was drunker than seven hundred and eighty dollars. Wick had come out a couple days before and I'd been riding herd on him. Johnson said to me, "Well, why don't you come on and go?" And I said, "Don't take me; take Fowler." He said, "Well, all right, I'll take him." I wanted to get Fowler out of town.

But he set them on their ears down there. And right now, and we're only talking about fourteen years later, they've built a complete new section of town down there. If you haven't crossed that bridge--

F: I have--

B: Then you know what I mean. There wasn't a damn thing over there.

F: It turned Juarez around.

B: Turned Juarez completely around. Lyndon Johnson had the greatest impact on this, as far as the international part of this city, that any man has in the whole history of this town. And it's for the best. And Johnson knew that it was for the best or he wouldn't have done it. It wasn't just a political deal with him because he told me. But the main thing is that-- you know, a mere majority leader of the party in power can't call the president of another country and say, "Look, I want a bridge, I want a mile and a half highway put in that's going to cost two or three hundred thousand dollars American money in order to facilitate

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the flow of traffic between the two cities." Now he told me, now this was before the Chamizal. He and I had Ed Pooley and Ray Dwiggins who later was tax collector of customs here and my brother, John, the three of us rode down to the dedication deal together. And, of course, on the way down there--I knew how he liked his name to be seen--"Welcome Lyndon Johnson" on every corner, you know, like a big political rally.

(Interruption)

Just "Welcome, Senator Johnson" you know.

F: Bienvenidos.

B: Bienvenidos, in Spanish and everything and little kids. Course I was county judge so we pulled the trustees out of jail and they were waving the deal. He didn't know they were up there in jail. And kids, had horses down there and everything else. There was a real celebration. On the way down there he said, "Now, I'm going to tell you all how you can make some money." He said, "This Chamizal deal is going to be settled." Now mind you this is 1959, before Kennedy is elected or anything else. He said, "It's going to be settled and I'm going to see to it that it's settled."

F: He brought it up?

B: He brought it up and he told us. "Oh," I said, "Senator, they aren't ever going to get together on that." Just to show you, he was telling me what was going to happen, and I know damn well then. Many years later I said I knew goddamn well what he told Lopez Mateos. He told Lopez Mateos, "Look, let's open this crossing and then we'll make a real big deal out of it. We'll settle the Chamizal deal and give you back that land that you're entitled to." I know damn well he told him that. I know that's the reason now that . . .

F: He convinced Lopez Mateos that he could deliver.

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B: Yes, damn right he did. And Lopez Mateos saw to it--you see that picture of me and Lopez Mateos? And that's the mayor over there. Because just shortly before the bridge was open that was when that picture was made when he came up here. And he cut a deal with the President of Mexico without even talking to anyone about settling the Chamizal deal. Now I'm convinced of that, I'm utterly convinced of it.

Of course, after Kennedy and Johnson both got in, the Chamizal deal was settled, the river was straightened. Mexico got back the part of the land they said that they were entitled to. Complete new facilities were built down there. If you've seen it down there, hell, it's the greatest thing that . . . We've now got a Chamizal monument down there, Bowie High School's got that beautiful school down there. Mexico's got . . . It did more to cement relations with [Mexico].

But see, he was so damn practical minded and once he saw that something had to be done, hell, the goddamn details, the red tape didn't make a damn bit of difference to him. The man was a mover. He knew when things had to go. He moved them, and that was what I loved about him because he had the guts to do it. He loved to exercise power. I don't give a damn whether he had been a constable or a president of the United States, he'd been just as tough in that sphere. He loved power and he knew how to use it!

F: Do you think he really suggested the Chamizal deal?

B: Hell, I know he did. He told me. I remember this and I've talked with my brother and I've talked with Dwiggins to make sure, years back, not recently. He said, "You wait and see, this is going to be settled. So if you have got any land down there, this is time to make a little dough on it." He kind of said it laughingly, but he said, "It's going to be settled." You know I got to thinking about it later on, and I represented a lady who had

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an interest in the Peyton Packing Company, and they sold that Peyton Packing. They had a big strike there and the Peytons, the people who owned it, sold it. And they sold it just about six months too quick. When the announcement came, they came to me and I said, "All I can tell you is that Lyndon Johnson said that that thing is going to be settled, and if I were y'all, I'd wait a while before I'd sell out." Hell, no telling how much money they lost as a result of selling because that was part of the area that was condemned. But Johnson knew on August 27, 1959, that the Chamizal deal [would be settled]. Johnson had already cut a deal with the President of Mexico that he would see to it, regardless of who got elected president, I believe, that the damn deal was consummated. Don't you recall that right after he was selected as vice president, the first trip he made, he went to Acapulco to meet with Lopez Mateos.

F: Yes.

B: And that was when the final deal [was made]. Hell, Kennedy hadn't even been down there. That was when I know the final deal had been cut to settle the Chamizal deal. So he completely made a new town out of both cities.

F: How did you happen to pick Cordova that far southeast. Because you were going out to the unsettled area?

B: Well, I'll tell you why: the river was there and there was a bridge already built there and what I was trying to do is to get away from the added expense. Plus there wasn't a damn thing there, and a former mayor had built that bridge across the river. Of course, you know how that works. You went into Mexico--

F: An El Paso mayor or a Juarez mayor?

B: No, it was a Juarez mayor. It was a Juarez mayor.

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Because actually the way the north-south freeway was destined to come in, it would feed right into that particular area. And that's the way it worked out. But I'm sure that there [are] a lot of people on the other side. For instance, when I first started this thing, I could have gotten rich off of that thing. The guy that owns the red buses that come from Juarez came to me. He already had an ICC [Interstate Commerce Commission] permit, had had one for two years. Just when I first started talking about it. He said, "I'll give you 50 per cent of the company if you get that bridge open." I said, "My God, get out of here. All we need to do is let that get out and the god darn project is doomed to hell already!" So of course that gentleman there, Mr. Bermudez [?], owned all that land now. And of course they're the ruling family over there. That was another reason that I picked that area. Because I knew that if I picked another area they wouldn't go with me on the other side.

F: Yes. Now who was Bermudez?

B: Bermudez was a former mayor of Juarez, former governor of the state of Chihuahua, and for twelve years was head of the Mexican oil--

F: Pemex?

B: Pemex, in Mexico.

F: Where did the PRONAF [*Programa Nacional Fronterizo*] idea come from in there?

B: That was completely a Mexican deal, completely. They dreamed all that up.

F: They sure made themselves something.

B: Oh, hell, it's the most beautiful [place]; there's not a more beautiful area that you can find anywhere in the country.

F: Certainly not along the river.

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- B: Not along this river. Johnson made it possible for us to really dress ourselves up, from a tourist's standpoint and from a tourism standpoint. Oh, hell, he's responsible for really putting us in the shape that we're in. And the way he did it, you know, he could be very heavy-handed. And he was heavy-handed on this, because the bureaucrats never want to do anything and, goddamn it, he just told them, "You either do this or you're liable to get fired." In effect, that's what he told them!
- F: In effect, the State Department decided to settle Chamizal after the thing had already been worked out?
- B: That's right. Actually that's exactly what happened. I think that Johnson cut a deal with Lopez Mateos in July of 1959 and two years later they sat down and wrote the treaty. There's no doubt about it. I had more dealings with him, I guess I talked to him, you know, every day on the phone on the damn thing. Because he took a very personal interest in the damn thing.
- F: Tell me about the sixties.
- B: Okay, in 1960 I was chairman of all his fund-raising here and in one little old dinner here we raised around eighteen thousand dollars.
- F: Did you ever have any hope really that he could get the nomination?
- B: I knew he wouldn't get the nomination, and he knew I was for Kennedy. He *knew* I was for Kennedy because every time I'd go to Washington--I went to Washington a lot--I'd go either to Bob Kennedy's house or to John Kennedy's house. We would always have a little cocktail party of some kind, not especially for me, but they was always having something on the weekend. You've got to remember Mrs. Randolph was still on the

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national committee and when she was there we'd always go and visit with Kennedy. And you didn't do anything in that town that Johnson didn't know.

F: Did Johnson use you at all as a pipeline to Mrs. Randolph?

B: No, hell no. He completely, utterly ignored her.

F: She was just a fact of life he didn't want to face.

B: He just didn't want to talk about her. But in 1960 I was very obligated to him because he had really made a hero out of me. They still talk about it. A lot of people call it the Bean Bridge. And if I don't go down in history for anything else, I'll go down in history [for that].

Well, we need another bridge right now and I don't know what these jackasses are doing, not doing something about it. But they're in business for themselves and they've got too many outside interests, both the county judge and mayor. They can only spend about three days a week on the job. And you know, in order to do anything in Mexico, it's a time-consuming deal. If you don't really mix and mingle, [it won't work]. You can't go down there and talk to those people and talk to them one day. You've got to go down there and stay a week like I used to. And you've got to drink with them and you've got to really get in with them. They'll shake their head yes to everything but it's actually no unless you stay in there and hang in with them.

But in 1960 I sent my brother as a delegate to the convention because I just knew goddamn well I didn't want to get mixed up in the deal. I was for Kennedy and I didn't want to get mixed up in the deal. However, I owed Johnson a debt of gratitude, so I threw a big appreciation dinner for him here and the check was fifteen thousand and some odd dollars.

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F: Did your brother become his local campaign fund raiser?

B: Yes, he did. Yes, he did, and served him well. Well, anyway, my brother was a delegate to the convention and I flew out there and delivered the check, not to him but to Lady Bird. And then I saw him. Then I went and visited with--of course you know the state convention, I didn't even bother with the conventions that year because I knew that . . . Hell, first of all, I was obligated not to bother Johnson. And second of all, I knew it was a foregone conclusion that Texas was going to go all for him.

He did do one thing. He had a fellow--now what the hell was this guy's name? Maybe you can think of his name. He was the statewide campaign manager for Johnson for president. He's a Forth Worth man--Larry--

F: Not Waddy Bullion?

B: No, no. Larry . . . Now isn't that funny I can't recall his name. Well, anyway. Now, I'll think of it before I get away and we'll get it on tape there so you can get it in order.

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SANITIZATION I threw this dinner.

F: Johnson came?

B: No, Johnson didn't come. Now, we just threw the dinner. Hell, I spoke at the damn thing. We raised about fifteen thousand dollars for him. That's the first time I'd ever gotten with the conservatives at all here. Mexicans and labor people were the only ones I'd ever had any truck with. So I flew out there and laid the bread on Lady Bird--the cashier's check--and I visited with Bob Kennedy. Didn't see John at all and I visited with--her name was [Elizabeth Rudel] Smith--Mrs. Smith who later became treasurer under the Kennedy people--a lovely, beautiful girl. She was a widow and, like I told her, I kind of halfway fell in love with her, but I was married. But anyway, we were sitting there in the Ambassador Hotel and I was going to fly back. Morris Jaffe, a good friend, you know Morris, was out there with me. Morris had gone out there, and I'm sure Morris had gone out there to take Johnson a bundle, too.

F: Morris from San Antonio?

B: Yes, Morris is from San Antonio. And a very good friend of mine. So Morris and I and Bob Kennedy and Mrs. Smith were sitting there and a girl that worked in Johnson's office who later Morris hired as his secretary--I don't remember her name. So I said to Mrs. Smith, "Honey, you got all the answers on this. Who's going to be the presidential nominee and the vice presidential nominee?" And she looked right straight at Bob Kennedy and said, "It's going to be Kennedy and Johnson." Now this was before the deal was cut. Well, I left that evening and came on back. And I was right down there at the Desert Hills Motel that we passed a minute ago and was having a few drinks. Everyone

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was there and in the convention, but they weren't going to vote until the next day on the president and the next day on the vice president.

F: Let me ask one question: did Bobby give any sign when she said that?

B: Well, we just laughed. He was drinking a beer, and he was kidding me. He said, "Hell, the only reason you're over here is to shoot us out of the saddle." Those were his very words. Then he said, "I just can't understand it, now damn it. We've been screwing with you for four years thinking certainly . . . And then all you do is come and tell me . . . All you did was bring some money over here to Johnson." I said, "Well, hell, I owed it to him. You Kennedys don't need any money anyway." So I came on back and we were over here at the Desert Hills and they were talking about who's going to be this, who's going to be that, so I bet five hundred dollars I could call it. There was about five people that covered me, you know they didn't think--hell, we didn't think Johnson would. Everyone thought, "Well, Johnson's so damn good, he won't take it." Well, he was dying to get that damn job, I don't care what anyone tells you. Because he knew damn well that at that time, the way things were, I know that he thought this is as close as any Texan is ever going to get to the White House. Well, it happened.

F: You just learned about it over TV or radio?

B: Yes, I was just watching TV. And, sure enough, it came out and I won five hundred bucks because that old gal had given me real hot dope.

F: Yes.

B: And what happened out there--I really don't think the Kennedys wanted him. I think really and truly Bob Kennedy didn't want him and you know they never did get John

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Kennedy--I had many conversations with him over a four-year period before, and I got to talk to him many times.

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But it's real funny, like in 1960, when they made their stop here, you've got to recall I was still county judge. I had an administrative assistant by the name of Tom Diamond who's a very prominent lawyer here now. He and I are working on the Briscoe campaign now, and I just delegated Tom to open up the headquarters and to run the whole damn thing for him here. He was a genius at advance planning, so when Johnson and Kennedy came in, they were both here for the El Paso stop--hell, we must have had, people said, thirty thousand; I imagine there were forty-five, fifty thousand people at the airport. But see, that wasn't all. The next morning they spoke down here at the plaza and that thing was crammed full, you couldn't see anything, and I sat on the platform with them. Goddamn it, they didn't make the platform big enough. Here comes poor Mrs. Johnson and Elizabeth Carpenter was with her. And they forgot to put a seat up there for

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her, so I gave Mrs. Johnson my seat. But that was one day that Johnson didn't steal the show! Apparently they'd had a talk. He spoke very briefly. Then Kennedy made the main address and just made a beautiful, beautiful speech, said just the right things.

And Sorensen has told me, I visit with Sorensen in New York now when I go up there, that that was one of the--Dick Goodwin was along and the fact of the matter, we were riding up on the elevator the night before and old Kennedy was peeling an orange. He put the damn orange peels in my pocket. He looked around and said, "This is a good place to put those," and he put them in my pocket. We went on up to the room.

SANITIZATION

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SANITIZATION

Both Sorensen and Bobby Kennedy told me--see, that picture there was made at a later period in the campaign, the one with Bobby--Bobby told me at that time, just about the time we were talking. Hell, we had four thousand people down at a breakfast for Bobby when he came. Of course the Mexicans by then had caught on and goddamn, the Mexicans love [the Kennedys]. They talk about that mess that [Teddy] Kennedy got in. If he's nominated, he's elected. I don't give a damn what happened, because I think that he's going to get the black vote and the Mexican vote and the labor vote, and, by God, there ain't too much left after that, if you get that solid. But anyway, Bobby Kennedy said at the time he was here that the Kennedy-Johnson ticket--that that's when they'd really gotten off the ground.

F: There wasn't any trouble selling "Viva Kennedy" here?

B: Oh, hell, no, no, not any trouble selling it today. Because these people--see you gotta remember that 57 per cent of our population is now Mexican and 41 per cent of the registered voters are Mexican and by the time 1976 comes around, you're going to have 50 per cent registration of Mexican voters. I see that coming, you know, that's just right around the corner.

But Johnson was stronger than hell with the Mexicans. Mexicans love Johnson. Well, he had that good bullshitting way about him, the out and going and that bravado that, hell, they loved.

F: An arm around the shoulder.

B: Yes, goddamn, he just loved to really socialize with them. He was very popular with the Mexican people, because they, like I pointed out earlier, knew the son-of-a-bitch was

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really sincere about trying to make their plight a little easier. Lord knows that they need a guy like Johnson as much now as they did then. He was a politician, but by God, he believed.

It's just horrible that that Vietnam War came in there because he'd have made life a hell of a lot better for all of us if it hadn't been for the Vietnam War there. Can you imagine all the money he'd have spent on housing and on health and on education if it hadn't been for that because he wanted to do something! That was the difference between . . . and I don't know how he got sucked up in that Vietnam War, no one will ever be able to explain it.

F: He knew how to use power effectively.

B: That's right.

F: You didn't have any trouble with the campaign then, I mean, you had it made here?

B: Hell, no, there's no problem at all here. We cast better than 60 per cent here. And of course my brother was the campaign manager in all of West Texas, and I handled the stuff here, the local deal. Of course, you know, we did have trouble in Texas. I forget there was only about, what, forty-eight thousand votes difference, and this county went big for him. This whole area out here went big for him, from west of the Pecos on this way. Of course by then he had gotten strong. See, Stevenson beat him in the country counties in 1948 but after he got moving with them--he could never really impress on anyone that he was kind of from West Texas himself. Of course, these people in the Pecos area didn't consider Junction as West Texas, although they had the same pursuit that they engage in.

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F: Did you have anything to do with Johnson while he was vice president, beyond the Chamizal?

B: No. Because, you see, I had gone out of office when all that work started and it was just as well to put everything . . . You know, I got into tax trouble in 1962.

F: Yes, I know. He didn't get a chance to tip his hand in the congressman-at-large race that you were [in]?

B: No, no, he didn't. All of his people were for me, see, then that was 1960. Get on up to 1962 and I'm out for congressman-at-large. I had not filed my income tax for ten years. People asked me, "Why?" Well, I really can't tell you why. I've tried to--

F: Just too busy.

B: Well, I'll tell you what, my good friend, Honore Ligarde--I don't know whether you know Honore from Laredo or not, he's a member of the state House [of Representatives]. I went into this business, and they'd been auditing me and everything else and the first part of 1962 I had a talk with the people and I said, "Well, look"--I had my auditor talk to them. I said, "I'm going to announce for Congress, and I damn sure don't want to announce for Congress if y'all are going to put a criminal fraud charge on me." They said, "We have no intention of doing that. We're just trying to figure out how much you owe and when we figure it up, you pay it. There's going to be some civil penalties and that's all there is to it now."

Well, I took them at face value on the thing and in the meantime Bobby Kennedy had appointed me on the juvenile deal. Well, I was county judge, so I called him back and I told him, "I'm having tax problems, Bobby, and I cannot, I just can't. I don't want you to put me on because it could very easily be embarrassing to you." He said, "Well, I

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had heard that, but I was going to do that anyway." I said, "No, you don't want to do it, because I don't know what the hell is going to happen. I'm going to have a slam bang race for congressman-at-large here pretty quick, and this is all going to come out one way or the other. I'm determined to run, either way it goes--if they go after me on the criminal"-- See, there were about seven other lawyers on more or less the same thing [charge] here at the time, but of course the only difference was that I was holding an office and, in retrospect, I guess, was at the time the most prominent politician, and was running for congressman-at-large.

Anyway, my auditor, Josh Conn [?], went and talked to them, and hell, we had assurances. "There's not going to be anything on this. We can't find any evidence other than negligence." And that was what Honore Ligarde had said because he had gotten all of the--I got 90 per cent of the vote in Webb County, you know those seventeen counties. Well, to make a long story short, sure enough they filed on me--criminal charges, misdemeanor; fortunately I didn't file. There's one thing about it. It's better not to file at all rather than to file a false return. And now we get into what I think--

F: Do you think the charge was political?

B: I know it was; I think it was political. I'll never be able to say just exactly where it came from because I was in tight with the Attorney General. I was the first friend the Kennedys ever had down here. I was in.

F: I sure did want you for congressman-at-large.

(Laughter)

B: Well, anyway, now, this is what I think really happened. I was in tight with Johnson. I know it because I talked with members of his staff when all this stuff was going on.

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Never did contact him because I didn't want to; it wasn't the thing to do. Yarborough turned and ran when I got in this problem; he turned and ran.

All right, now this is what happened: it was rumored at the time--see, I was in real strong with labor. And if you recall that first primary, hell, I just led the whole field by one hundred and twenty-five thousand votes. Well, it had gotten out late in the campaign that what they were going to do, the labor group, and we'd talked about, was that I was going to run for congressman-at-large, get elected congressman-at-large, and then spend two years getting ready to run for governor. And I know deep in my own mind, I think that somewhere down the line that got out and then the damn heat just got so hot on the IRS. Because you know, they didn't announce that I was even having any problems of any kind at all until one week before the primary. And I had been under investigation, well, not under--yeah, let's call it under investigation for eighteen months prior to that! So, I can't help but think that, because I know that I had handled cases myself since then where there's been a lot more fraud violations involved than was involved in my case that nothing has ever been said. I know that there were five other lawyers in the same boat that I was in here at the time, and they just suffered civil penalties and that was all. But you've got to remember I was county judge, you've got to remember that in politics, I've always lived by the sword, and if you live by the sword, you die by the sword. The amazing thing is that I have been resurrected; that's what the amazing thing is.

But anyway, so we get into 1962 and this breaks. I'm defeated in the runoff for congressman-at-large. Of course, you know, there's nothing like a wounded politician, look at Nixon. That's when all your enemies and a lot of people that you didn't even--I

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had horrible bar enemies here. Any lawyer that practices law the way I had always practiced--real swinging. I've always gotten involved in every damn race whether it was for constable or Congress. I was always the leader of the anti-establishment group.

F: You're always on the line.

B: Always on the line and no one ever knew--if you asked me who I was for, for J.P.

[Justice of the Peace] in Fabens, I'd tell you. I had lived by the sword, and these bastards--I was ready. Well, the first thing they did was--well, let's take it in sequence.

Okay, prior to the runoff, I had been subpoenaed by the juvenile delinquency committee because I'd done a lot of work. I'd started a juvenile delinquency patrol while I was county judge here and started the new way of doing things, trying to reason with these kids. The dope problem was getting pretty hard. I'd put a curfew on the high school kids and everything else. So Tom Dodd, the senator from Connecticut who got reprimanded by the House, it was his committee, the juvenile delinquency committee. So Tom subpoenaed me to appear before them before the tax thing broke. So I showed up with a U.S. attorney from here, Jimmy Handler [?], a Republican opponent. Jimmy and I were very good friends. He lives in Dallas now. So he and I went up there and I reported into Dodd's office. The guy came out and said, "Well, due to your difficulties right now, we don't know whether you ought to appear before the committee or not." I told him, "Well, now, look, I was subpoenaed to be here," and I said, "I'm going to appear before that committee with or without the Senator's permission." Well, they went back in, you know, and Handler was here with me and [he said], "Goddamn, you're kind of tough on them." "Well, that's the way I feel." We were staying together, had a suite together. There I was, you know, going to be indicted any minute, and there I was with a U.S.

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district attorney from my district. So, I waited there awhile. He finally came back and said, "Yes, the Senator will be happy to hear your testimony." Hell, I knew more about this crap with juvenile delinquency on the border than anyone; I'd made a thorough study of it. Hell, I'd done something about it! So I appeared before the committee, hell, even appeared on national TV, both networks.

While I was in the committee room, someone I didn't even know came up and handed me a note. I had made no effort whatsoever to contact Johnson or to contact the Kennedys after this story broke. Because I figured--I'd been in politics a long time, hell, twenty years before that I'd held office, and I know that when a fellow falls in ill repute, by God, the tendency for a politician is to get just as far away from him as you can. So I made no effort to contact them. I'd made an effort to contact Yarborough earlier on, and I'm the only guy, hell, I had supported him in every race he'd run and the son-of-a-bitch didn't even have the decency to even write me a letter, or have one of his staff call me and say, "Look, Woodrow, the heat's on and I know you don't want to embarrass the Senator," so on and so forth. But it was something altogether different. I wanted to speak to him about some problems that we were having here; I was still county judge.

Well, I had this note handed to me while I was waiting to appear before this committee. It was signed by George Reedy in which George said, "I understand that you're staying at the Congressional Hotel, and I'll meet you there in the bar at five o'clock." So I was there at the bar and I was having a drink, and George comes in. George's feet were hurting and we sat there and had a few drinks, and he said, "Goddamn, I just can't understand why you didn't file your income [tax]. You've got the world by the tail with a downhill pull, got a beautiful voting record and everything else.

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Lyndon is so damn upset about it that he just don't know what to do." I said, "Well, George, what the hell should I do?" He said, "All right, you go to Austin when you leave here, and go to Charlie Herring's office, and just go from there."

So I went to Austin and I went to Herring's office, and we sat and talked. I said, "Hell, Charlie, we got this runoff." He said, "I've done some checking. The only thing they can get you on is a misdemeanor." But he said, "Goddamn, you know you've got a lot of goddamn people mad at you. You've been going around the country cussing the oil companies, cussing everyone; any son-of-a-bitch that doesn't agree with you, you just goddamn laid in on him." I said, "Yeah, I realize that more than you do." But he said, "I tell you what, you go and run this goddamn campaign, and campaign just as hard as . . ." He said, "Frankly, I don't think you can make it now and if the son-of-a-bitch was from anywhere except Dallas County that you're running in the runoff with, you could make it." You see, Poole beat me by sixty-nine thousand votes and he got forty-eight thousand of those votes up and above, right out of Dallas County. Well, and of course, I carried him! [?]

F: Which would have looked on you as the devil if you had been Snow White.

B: Yes. Harris County I carried, but now I never could figure that one out because that was where I had all my goddamn press releases and everything else at a later date.

Well, anyway, I went on down and saw Herring and mind you, I can't say that Johnson ever said a goddamn word. All I know is that Judge Rice was a very close friends of Lyndon Johnson's and all that I know is that I was very guilty of what I was charged with. I paid every penny, I don't owe 'em a damn penny! But I do know that I felt very much better about the whole thing, because, you know, that was a jailable

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offense. And here I had just been riding the tide, wining and dining with presidents and everything else and then had not stolen any money or anything and my record, as far as my official record was concerned, was perfect, but I had violated the law.

So I went on in to Herring's office, as per instructions from Reedy; I don't know who told Reedy to tell me to go to Herring, but I know who he worked for! Now this is something about Johnson; I know that Johnson didn't have any business, didn't have anything to do [with it]. I'm sure, if it came from anywhere, it came from the Republicans or it came from . . . You know, we had seven candidates in that race and you can't have a secret investigation by the IRS, because one of those bastards always tell someone, "We're investigating Bean," or tells his wife; his wife tells someone, that's--forget it! Well, I can't help but think it was someone involved in that race that got the information and, by God, they turned it over to a newspaper reporter and naturally . . . old Bo Byers was hot on that story down there. He was trailing me all over Houston.

So anyway, I went on down and I saw Herring, and Herring said, "Just run just as hard as you can." So I ran as hard as I could, but I'd given out of money, couldn't get any money, had gone into the race without any money because I didn't have any big backers.

F: It's a hard race to raise money for.

B: It is a hard race, and so the last two weeks of the campaign, hell, I was broke. So I just went down to Alice, Texas, and hell, I stayed there; I stayed out at old Archer Parr's ranch about half the time. We'd come into town; every evening we'd come in to town and order us a few drinks, eat a big steak and go back out there. Hell, I didn't have the money to go anywhere! The labor guy who was writing my stuff was a guy by the name of Bob Sherrill. I don't know whether you know Bob.

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F: Yes, I know Bob.

B: But he was from Austin originally and goddamn it, old Bob did a beautiful job. I'd call in to him about once a day and he'd say, "Where are you now?" "Oh, goddamn, Bob, I'm out of money and everything else, and it would be best for me not to make the scene anywhere." So he'd make up stories that I'd spoke here, that I'd spoke there, and he'd make up the name of a town even and just did a beautiful job for me. Like he said, he had a completely invisible candidate. Of course all the papers were looking for me, so finally, right toward the end, I made one more stab and went down to Houston. And oh, by God, I'll tell you, you talk about--that was when labor came out and old Hank Brown came out and said that he wasn't going to support me. I told him to go to hell and they put it on the headlines of one of the papers down there. I guess that's the reason that I carried Harris County because I told the labor leader I knew that the troops were going to vote for me, but he wasn't. But anyway, we get on down and the election's over and I'm defeated.

Well, I can't help but think, and you've got to remember that Charlie Herring was attorney general for the Western District of Texas for about two or three years after Eisenhower took office and that he was Johnson's appointment originally. I don't know this to be a fact, but I understand that Judge Rice thought that old Herring treated him just like his own son practically, now I don't know that to be [fact]. I've never discussed this with Charlie, because I know what to ask and what not to ask. Well, of course this boy [J. Evetts Haley] from up at Lubbock put in his book, *A Texan Looks at LBJ*, that Johnson put the fix in for me down there. Well, I can't say that he did or he didn't, but I will say this: that I think that if it hadn't been for Johnson that I'd gone to jail! Just

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honest to God gone to jail, cause, you see, Johnson had that wonderful facility: he could get madder than hell at you one minute--

F: But he never forgot you.

B: --but he never forgot you. If you got in trouble, goddamn it, he may be mad at you and not do something for you, but if you were in trouble and he could help you. See, that was the difference between him and most politicians. That's the reason he went where he went. Because it didn't make a damn, even if he was mad at you and you were in trouble and there was some way that he could help you . . . I know of a lot of people that he's helped, not only when they got in trouble with the government, but I mean when they got in trouble financially, in their business. By God, if he heard about it, if there was any way that he could, by God, call a banker and say, "Look, see if you can't give him a loan," he'd do it.

The thing about it is that to my dying day even though I don't know--I know damn well that he interceded and in my own heart I know that he called Judge Rice who he could call and told him, "Look, this goddamn guy was horribly negligent. He's handled thousands of dollars for the county. I've sent him money to handle out there and he has never violated his public trust." Because that's exactly what Rice said. You know, usually when an officeholder comes in there, usually he's in there because he's stolen public funds.

F: Well, they like to make examples out of him anyhow.

B: Yeah, they like to make examples out of him, and I was all set for it! So when I came in there, and Rice himself said off the stand, "Well, you made an excellent county judge. You've handled public funds and nothing's missing. Why you were negligent in not

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filing your income tax, I just can't fathom and I'm not going to ask you to tell me, because I don't think you can tell me either." Then after it was over with, he took me back in his chambers. I told him I was going to resign as county judge, and he said, "No, I didn't make that a requisite of this sentence. You're on probation. I'll fine you ten thousand dollars for being negligent!" He said, "You don't have to resign as county judge." I said, "Well," I said, "I've got a lot of problems at home." So Ernest Guinn, present federal judge--who Johnson appointed federal judge, he and I, we've always been big Johnson supporters. I came back. Well, at the time a guy that I had defeated for state representative, to show you how things go, in 1940, was president of the bar association. And they wanted to get my law license so bad they could taste it.

F: Who was that?

B: Ellis Mayfield. And Skip Broaddus was his law partner. I had chewed them up politically and had beat them in a number of law suits. I never minced words; I called them the bastards that they were! And of course now it was their inning.

Well, by then things were tough. My oldest brother had a heart attack right at the time that I was coming to trial.

F: Oh, it always comes together just like that.

B: Just like that. Everything just happened at once and, of course, he's the only father I'd ever known. Well, when I went to the hospital, there the goddamn newspaper people were waiting for me at the hospital. The trial had been set. So I called Ernest and I said, "Ernest, see if you can beat the son-of-a-bitch, they don't have to disbar [me]." I said, "Look, Ernest, see what kind of a deal you can work out with them. I'll take a suspension, but they ain't going to disbar me or we will fight it." So he worked out a deal

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where I was suspended for two years from the practice of law, and I'm glad they did. I'm glad that I took that course because it gave me two years at the ranch to kind of unravel things and find out really and truly, you know, that the end of the world hadn't come.

But Johnson saved me, he saved me. It might have been that Rice would have given the same sentence, but I don't think so. I just don't think so. Of course, I know Sorensen called me and talked to me at the time that all this happened, wanting to know if there was anything he could do. He didn't call in the President's name or anyone else's name. I told him, "Ted, there ain't a goddamn thing. I goofed, I didn't file those taxes, I'm just going. . . ." The only thing that I could plead, other than guilty, was to plead insanity, and I said, "I'm not crazy, although it appears on the surface that I may have a screw loose." Well, anyway, I went on.

Of course my brother was still very close to Johnson. Johnson offered my brother an assistant secretary of agricultureship, after all this happened, and Johnny turned it down. Of course he just didn't want to go up there.

F: Should I see him? Has he got enough of a different connection with Johnson?

B: His connection was altogether different. It wasn't near as personal as mine was with him. He'd be happy to talk to you though. He's there in Fort Worth. Of course my brother's utterly convinced that if it hadn't of been for Johnson that I'd have gone to jail because there was a hell of a lot of people out here that . . . there were bets as to whether I'd go to jail or not! And a lot of people out here--

F: They would have helped you down the road a little.

B: Like people say to this day, the town's pretty spread on Bean. Fifty per cent are for him and fifty per cent are against him--and how it would go that fifty and one tenth per cent

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on any given day, you can't determine. But I'll be convinced to the day I die if it wasn't for that old tall son-of-a-bitch I'd have spent my time at Seagoville. It's real funny you know, Morris Jaffe was close to Johnson, and I spent the night with Morris the night before I went up for sentencing. He still gets a big kick out of it--we stopped there at New Braunfels, you know, at I forget the name of the place where they have just delicious breakfast and pancakes and everything else.

F: Krause's?

B: Yeah. And old Morrie says, "By God, you eat that food there like this is the last supper or something." I said, "Hell, Morrie, I can't tell, it may be the last supper." I'll always think that old Morris was too relaxed and enjoying himself too much, and I'll always think that he knew what the hell my sentence was going to be. I think that Herring might have dropped a hint to him that it looked like we were out of the woods, but I can't help but think that if it hadn't been for Johnson that, goddamn, my life would have turned out a lot different.

After that, of course, Johnson became president. I was on my sabbatical as I call it at the time Kennedy was killed in November.

F: Where were you, down at the ranch?

B: I was at the ranch and I had driven in to the cotton gin when I heard it on the radio, I had the radio on in my pick-up. So I came on up and my wife and I went across. I was shipping some cattle, some bulls to Mexico and gosh, it was early, about noon when I got here. We went across the river and I went over to the customs there to make some arrangements. We were eating and, by God, they closed the bridge on us! We were holed up over there for about four hours before we got back home.

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Before that, of course, in 1961 I went down when he had that camel herder down there; I went down there to his [Johnson's] place and I noticed today that old Eddy Arnold was going to be here the sixteenth and Eddy Arnold performed for him.

F: Oh, he did?

B: Performed for him down there. Jaffe and I and my brother John--Jaffe had his own plane there on that landing strip--and we took Eddy Arnold and John White, the Agriculture Commissioner, and John and myself and we flew back to San Antonio. And old Eddy Arnold was so mad because no one had paid any [attention to him]. You know how those goddamn barbecues are, no one is paying any attention to the singing, just shooting the bull and talking and so on and so forth. I hope to see him while he's here, to remind him about how pissed off he was at the fact that no one was listening to him because they were all looking around at that camel herder down there. Beautiful barbecue.

F: Tell me about the camel herder on that day. Did he get kind of lost also?

B: Oh, hell, no, he couldn't speak a word of English of course. The president of Pakistan was there too, you know, and the fact of the matter, I just happened to open that--I got this letter from him--you know who sent this? "Dear Woodrow, Lady Bird and I hope that you can come out to the LBJ Ranch on Sunday, July 16, to attend the barbecue which we are giving in honor of the president of Pakistan, His Excellency Mohammed"--what the hell ever happened to him anyway, Joe?

F: Well, he just retired but apparently that's one ex-president that they didn't shoot.

B: That's it; that's about the only one. But it was a real good party and of course, the goddamn barbecue was good, and the first thing I did, I said, "Well, Senator, how you doing?" He said, "Goddamn it, I'm the vice president now." You know how I'd been so used to

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calling him senator, and there was a whole bunch of people around there and they all roared.

Then of course when he came out here the last time he was here, on the final dedication of the Chamizal, his office called and told me that he sure wanted to see me while he as here, while he was president, because I hadn't ever seen him while he was president up till the time he came out here. And I was there and visited with him a few minutes.

F: Tell me a little bit about the dedication of the Chamizal.

B: Oh boy, it was beautiful. Of course by then Lopez Mateos had died, and the present President--what the hell is his name I can't even think of his name--

F: [Luis] Echeverria?

B: No, not Echeverria, the guy before him. I'll think of his name--buck teeth--[Gustavo] Diaz Ordaz?

F: Diaz Ordaz, yeah.

B: There must have been thirty or forty thousand people out there, and Diaz Ordaz was here.

Johnson was always at his best when you had a big Mexican deal, and he needed this trip down here, you know. The goddamn Vietnam thing was beginning to really build up.

(Interruption)

F: Did you ever see him after he was president?

B: Yes, I saw him here.

F: At the Chamizal?

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B: Yes, Chamizal, when they had this beautiful dedication. Really, you know, that was something that's gone back to about 1870 some odd. They had all kinds of commissions, even before that.

F: It was going to drag on [and on].

B: Yes, it looked like it'd just never [be done]. It'd always been in the craw of the Mexican government. And like I said before I still think that back in 1959 when I think he was getting me off the hook for the three hundred thousand dollars that I'd already spent that he decided, "Well, hell, we're just going to settle the Chamizal right now." And to Mexico that meant a great deal. I don't think Kennedy had ever heard of the Chamizal till Johnson told him about it. And it gave Kennedy a real good entree because early on in 1960, right after he took office you might say, was when they started laying the groundwork for it, and that expenditure was routed. It was a boom to El Paso, too. I imagine, with relocations and everything else, they must have spent close to a hundred million dollars in federal funds. And of course whenever you get in a deal with Mexico, you end up paying all the money anyway.

F: Well, you got to give lots of jobs, and haul in lots of equipment, and sold lots of cement and what not.

B: Oh, my gosh. It was a new industry around here for a couple of years, thanks to Johnson. You know Johnson, as I look back, he always wanted to do something politically that you could see. Early on when I saw him doing that, I said to myself, "Well"--, and that may be one reason why when I became county judge, I built a hospital--you could see it. You built a stadium, you could see it. You built a port of entry, you could see it. And then of course, a highway you can see! I was once told that, hell, it don't make any

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difference how much money you save the people, as long as you don't steal it, they don't give a damn, if you're doing something that they can see and can appreciate. I think Johnson worked a lot on that basis.

F: Did you ever get up to Washington while he was there as president?

B: Never. I was in Washington a time or two while he was president, but every time that I was there he was out. It must have been three or four times. I never had a--

F: You didn't have any problem selling him here in 1964?

B: Oh no. No, no, I had a--

F: Did you get involved at all?

B: No. Well, actually, there was no problem.

F: There wasn't much to do? (Laughter)

B: Actually, there was no problem, you know, because Goldwater came to town and made a lot of speeches and then didn't anything come of it. Actually, no one was hot about it one way or the other, about what was happening in the presidential race in 1964. Humphrey came through, and I went to see Humphrey 'cause I've known Humphrey, and I visited with him in 1964, but Johnson didn't even come down here in 1964. He wasn't in El Paso at all in the 1964 campaign. Of course, it wasn't necessary for him to be anyway.

F: Had no problem. Could use that time somewhere else. Did Humphrey come down here in 1968?

B: Oh, yes.

F: Did you get involved in that?

B: Now, you've got to remember that I came back to the practice [of law] in 1965 and I had a real good break in 1965, right after I came here. I'd been gone two years. When I came

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back to practice law, I didn't know what was going to happen. And right off the bat they picked Johnny Cash up, the famous singer, for bringing some pills from across the river. He called me to be his lawyer, so immediately I got nationwide publicity again.

F: How did he know about you? Somebody tell him?

B: I had represented one of his friends who had moved to Louisiana and who was Hank Williams' widow, and I had represented her here a long time ago.

F: She married Jim Reeves.

B: So the minute she heard on the radio--'cause it went out everywhere that he'd been arrested--she called.

F: What's her name?

B: I don't remember her first name. At any rate, she called the jail to talk to him and didn't talk--well, couldn't get [him]; you know, he didn't want to talk to anyone, he was still all goofed up. So she told the jailer, Captain O'Rourke, down there to call me. Hell, I was so fresh back into the picture of law, didn't even have a phone yet, 'cause I didn't know where I was going to be. He knew what office I was in, so he called me and I went over there and we promptly got him out of jail and sent him on his way. And I got my picture in all the papers, so I got to a running start.

F: Everybody knew you were back in practice.

B: And a hell of a fee on top of it! I got him off, so it put me in real good shape again.

F: Do they do a certain amount of that--that doesn't have anything to do with what we're talking about--to people that are coming back?

B: Oh, yeah. See, you can go across the river and buy marijuana just like you buy cigarettes here, or you can go over there across the river and you can also buy any kind of a pill.

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You don't need a prescription for pills, and he was taking these pep pills. Sure they're drugs, but they're not--

F: They're not narcotics.

B: They're not really. They're narcotics, but they're not hard narcotics.

F: Yes.

B: But it was a real good break for me. The good Lord must have been looking after me; he must have known that I needed some help. Of course, you know, I charged him a fee and then I had to get his income tax returns to put in for his probation and when I saw what his income tax had been for the last year, something like eight hundred thousand dollars income, I said, "My God, Bean, you've been robbed!" (Laughter) That was something!

F: Did you have any contact with him at all besides just getting him out?

B: Well, yes, I visited with him.

F: He came back here?

B: Yes, he's been here, and I visit with him. Every time he comes through here we see each other and he's sent me a number of clients. For the first four or five years, he sent me five hundred dollars every Christmas. He missed that last Christmas though. (Laughter) I guess his new wife is making him save money.

F: Yes, I guess. Did Johnson ever come back here, outside of the Chamizal time?

B: That was the only time. He was back here that one time for the dedication of the Chamizal and I know he was real proud of himself, and I sure was proud of him. Because in my own mind, I figured that he'd be the one that had really gotten it started and really put it over.

F: You feel kind of like an uncle in a sense of the Chamizal settlement because--

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B: Well, yes, I think, you know, we got it started. I think that what happened though was that we got started on the Cordova Bridge and then when we dedicated the Cordova Bridge, when he made that statement that--"Don't worry, the Chamizal is going to be settled." Of course, there'd been talk about it for a hundred years nearly, and I figured, "Well, it's not going to happen." But I should have known better. I should have taken Johnson at his damn word because when he said he was going to do something, he always did it.

F: Did you ever see him down in Austin while he was president?

B: No, I tell you what, never did get to see him in Austin while he was president [or] after he got out of office. The closest thing we came to see him was in January, the year that he died, he called my wife's parents' home--Tony Lama, the famous bootmaker--and my wife was there. He apparently tried to call me at the office and also at home and I wasn't available, so he called there. He was flying over and he was calling from the plane at which time he ordered a pair of boots for himself and two pair for his grandchildren. As usual, in that commanding voice, he said, "Now, honey, I want you and Woody to be at the Ranch on February 14, that's St. Valentine's Day, because I promised these two granddaughters boots for Valentine's Day and I want you to bring mine along too." She said, "Well, I don't know whether we can come or not." She didn't know him too well, and he said, "The hell you can't! I want you there at the Ranch and be sure and get there in time to eat lunch!"

So we made the boots and then of course he passed away and then we didn't know what to do so we didn't send any boots or anything up; we didn't know whether his wife knew about it or not. It would have been just another reminder, so we didn't, but Luci

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was out to make a speech to the Heart Fund at which time I went to the dinner and we made a couple of pair of kid boots for her children. Since then, as a member of the housing authority, we have named a hundred and thirty unit low-income housing project after him, the LBJ Memorial Apartments, which when completed we plan to have--Mrs. Johnson doesn't even know about this--I'm going to have to write her or I'm going to make a point to see her in Austin to tell her about it. I'm getting up an artist's conception of how the apartments are going to look to take to her. That'll be the first big thing that's been named after him here. We're naming a high school after him, and also I hope to get this--on my next trip to Washington--may have to wait until the Democrats get back in--get this Cordova Port of Entry named the LBJ Port of Entry. It certainly should be named after him because he's directly responsible, not only for the port of entry, but also, as I said before, he's responsible for that Chamizal settlement.

F: They ought to name the bridge after you, at least.

B: Oh no, I may get indicted again. I don't want anything named after me!

F: What became of his boots?

B: The ones that we made for him? Well, he wanted just stock boots. You know we made him a pair of boots while he was president and we got a scrapbook--we put the seal of the president of the United States on top of the boots and a lot of people raised all sorts of hell about the president having a pair of boots with a seal on it. The Tony Lama Boot Company get reams of publicity. They got a scrapbook this thick of all the articles that came out in the papers all over the United States to raise hell about it. And of course--who was it--Bill Moyers continually kept saying, "No, he hasn't gotten the boots, hasn't even seen the boots." And it turned out that of course he'd gotten the boots. Then

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he wrote us back and asked us if we'd make another pair of boots just like that so that he could keep to put in the LBJ [Library]. I don't know whether you've seen the boots, [they] are down at the LBJ [Library]. So we made him two pair of boots; one to wear and one at the LBJ building down there now.

F: Had he been a long time consumer of the Tony Lama Company before he became president?

B: No, he wasn't too much of a boot wearer, and of course, the only long-time customer of ours is Briscoe. Briscoe's been buying boots from us for, hell, twenty-five or thirty [years].

F: I don't think I've ever seen Briscoe in anything else.

B: That's all he wears is boots. He's the best advertising that the boot company has. But Moyers kept saying, "No, we haven't gotten the boots. We wouldn't accept them if we did." I read that and I told the boys down there, "You wait and see, I bet you he's going to keep these boots, and he's going to write you back for another pair." And that's exactly what he did! And they said to me, "How did you know that?" And I said, "I know him!" (Laughter)

F: Was Moyers just ignorant or were they--?

B: SANITIZATION because Moyers, two years ago this year, came and followed us in the precinct conventions and the county convention and all the way to the state convention. Followed us to see how things were being done, and they put it on the public TV deal. I was chairman of our delegation and I had a chance to query him about the boot deal. SANITIZATION

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SANITIZATION

SANITIZATION

F: When Johnson got those boots, did he send specifications? Did he send other boots?

B: I wrote him and he sent me the fiberglass form of his foot, all the way up to the ankle.

He had had it--

(Interruption)

B: We were talking about those boots, weren't we? Now Moyers had gotten the boots, and Johnson loved the boots. We had given him those boots when he came out here to the Chamizal deal, and that's the last time that I saw him. My brother-in-law, Tony Jr., was with me; no, I take it back. Hell, I saw him when Briscoe was sworn in. I'd even forgotten about that, I visited with he and Lady Bird when Briscoe was sworn in, I surely did.

F: You were down at Austin.

B: I was down at Austin. Of course, I'd served and helped Briscoe in his election out here.

F: Was Johnson aware of what you were doing with housing out here?

B: I'm sure that he was. Because I'll tell you why: Lady Bird talked with Luther Jones, our state representative, and she prior to that she'd mentioned to him, "I understand Woodrow's really doing a lot of good work out there with the low income housing." I remember her saying that.

And of course that's something that Johnson'd be interested in, goddamn, you know, put a roof over someone's head. People don't [realize]. Hell, you know they always thought of him as just a damn--some people think he was just a wheeler dealer from Texas. He had a heart on him as big as a saddle blanket. He really cared for

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people. Of course he picked himself up fourteen million dollars along the way, but what the hell! He earned every bit of it, and he didn't steal any--I don't think he stole any of it from the public anyway.

F: Well, with the kind of drive he had, if he'd given his full time to making money--

B: There's no telling how much--

F: --he'd own the whole country.

B: He'd own the whole country, right!

F: I mean, he was bound to.

B: But you take another thing I've pondered over: you know, it took him so long to make the plunge on the civil rights deal. I think that he wanted to do that when he first went to the United States Senate. But I think that he went by that old adage, "You can't be a statesman unless you hold an office," and back in 1948 and the fifties if he had gone ahead on civil rights, hell, he'd have been beaten the next time down there. It's horrible to say that, but that's what would have happened to him!

F: Did you get to know Lady Bird fairly well?

B: Oh yes, I know her. She's one of the sweetest people that ever lived and a bright person and a good person and put [up] with all that horseshit that he gave out. He was the meanest son-of-a-bitch, I know, to live with that anyone could have been around because he was so--he wanted everything done just like that (snaps fingers). He was in command at all times, and I'm sure that it was difficult for her to live with him. And to put up with all that bullshit that I know that he put out because he was probably the most egotistical man that ever lived. And had well right to be egotistical.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I]

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