INTERVIEW IV

DATE: June 2, 1976

INTERVIEWEE: CHARLES BOATNER and TONY ZIEGLER

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: Mr. Boatner's office in Fort Worth, Texas

Tape 1 of 3

G: Okay. We're on again. Why don't we start with the kangaroo story that you had told me just a moment ago.

B: All right. After Mr. Johnson made his trip down under, he came back and told me of a visit he had made along with Ambassador Ed Clark to an Australian rancher's place--apparently in the outback; I never did know. The guy had isolated and perfected, or at least had a top grade of, the great white kangaroos. Mr. Johnson was fascinated with them. The man had offered to give him some, and he had accepted the offer.

G: Do you remember President Johnson's descriptions of the kangaroos?

B: Oh, "magnificent" was the word, and also he said that there was no long jumper in the United States that could in two leaps cover the ground that those kangaroos could cover. So I was guessing they were jumping about forty feet. I don't know, but at least that's what it looked like to him. Anyway, he wanted those back on the Ranch to add to his collection of exotics. He wanted them delivered, though, secretly. He didn't want any way [for] any word to get out that he had these kangaroos on the Ranch. I was left with that problem, and the discussion was over.

So I left his office and came back and explored with my fish and wildlife people, or especially the wildlife people, everything I could get on kangaroos and everything that any of them that had been to Australia could tell me on kangaroos. I discovered that the great kangaroo doesn't stop growing during its entire life--so the books told me--and they get, the males, up to from eight to ten and rarely one will get as tall as twelve feet. That's from the hind legs up not counting the tail. Females run about two feet under. They sample anything, and anything they eat they eat it right down to the ground and then proceed to dig out all the roots and eat those, too. All of the books started out with the warning that you just couldn't build a fence tall enough to keep them in, that they'd go over twelve foot fences. I could visualize these three pair of kangaroos that he wanted hopping all over the Fredericksburg countryside and creating havoc up even as far as Austin, to say nothing of what would happen if one got out on the highway and somebody saw this great white apparition jumping up and down. Also, there was the problem of getting it over secretly.

I took some of my consternations over to George Christian, who was the press secretary at the time, who was present at the ranch in Australia when Mr. Johnson was tendered the offer of the kangaroos. George said he had enough to worry about; he wasn't going to worry about kangaroos, that was my baby. So I

still was apprehensive, but I went ahead with the plans and got an airline to say that it would bring them in on a training flight. They were training some new pilots to go to Australia, and they would bring them in. Then I had the question of the customs embargo quarantine on them, so I worked that out in the Department where we could quarantine them at a wildlife refuge.

But this question of secrecy was still bothering me, so I contacted Ed Clark. Ed said the old man over there was a very well-thought-of person. He also liked his publicity, and he was planning on having a little press party when the kangaroos were shipped to the United States. I presented that situation to Mr. Johnson. He said if he couldn't get them in without publicity he would forego, and to make that known nicely and without hurting the old man's feelings. Ed being the diplomat, I turned the problem over to him, and we had no more thoughts of kangaroos.

G: You mentioned that you were known as Lyndon Johnson's man in the Interior Department, and he had other people who were closely identified with him in other departments and agencies. How did this work?

B: Well, he kept the Kennedy cabinet for political reasons. As he stated, he had enough problems succeeding Kennedy as president without getting rid of the cabinet that Kennedy had picked, and as long as they performed adequately he would keep those men in the cabinet. He also, with their knowledge, had one man that he felt was his man in each department, so far as I know. I

think they were in all departments. At least they were in the departments where he felt that maybe the cabinet member bore more allegiance to Bobby Kennedy than he bore to him.

G: Can you name the other Johnson men in this?

B: One in Space I know was Bill Lloyd. Bill had already gone to Space. Charlie Murphy was the man in Agriculture. I would say that Dick Stonley [?] was the man in Treasury, although the [President] had a wonderful feeling and rapport apparently with the Secretary of the Treasury.

G: How about Labor? Was there anyone in the Department of Labor?

B: He had someone over there. I can't recall who it was right now. In fact, he had two at different intervals. I know of two people.

G: Did he ever meet with you as a group?

B: No, no--well, only one time. The only reference he ever made to it was he had a meeting of the cabinet and their press secretaries one afternoon. Frank Cormier has a reference to this meeting in his book on Mr. Johnson. I'd say this was after his election to office, as contrasted with the completion of the Kennedy term. He had all the cabinet members and their press secretaries come over and meet with him in the Fish Room. There he looked the group over, and he said now he had been elected president of the people. We were a team and we had to play our position the very best of anybody, that if he found somebody that wasn't doing a good job he was going to find a replacement for them. If he found somebody that could play the position better than you could, even though you were doing it good, he was going to replace you. He was just like a

football coach. He was using that analogy.

He said, "Now, I don't owe a thing to any of you in this room except Charlie Boatner." It made me feel like an ass, singled out in that kind of company. He said, "Charlie is the one who worked for me up here on the Hill." Let's see, how did he put it? He said, "I can tolerate some of his" --I don't know; he didn't say peccadillos, but that's what he meant. He said, "Otherwise, I'm looking to all of you to do the very best job that you would do if you were in my place." That was the way he put it. At that time there was another guy there [who] worked for Commerce. He had worked for a committee of which Mr. Johnson was head when he was senator. Thereafter when the press secretaries would get together, as we did from time to time, to see if we had overlapping problems--say if I had one with State or with Defense or with Agriculture--we'd thrash these out among ourselves and see what we could do. Usually we met with some member of the White House staff, say George Reedy or George Christian or Bill Moyers or whoever was the man in charge over there at the time, or Loyd Hackler from Laredo, who was George's assistant, and who later became AA to Lloyd Bentsen.

The press secretaries would meet like that. In other words, say the President would have a cabinet meeting. Loyd or George Christian or Reedy or whoever he was would have a meeting of the press secretaries, and we could also thrash things out, that is, involvement.

Let's see, I've tried to clear that up and I've wandered as usual. Oh, I can't think of the guy's name that was over at Commerce, but as I say he had worked for Mr. Johnson over on the Hill and he was at Commerce. That is, he hadn't worked for Mr. Johnson, he had worked for a committee that was headed by Mr. Johnson, but he felt the same way toward the President as the rest of us who had worked [for him]. I don't know why, but when you worked for the man, and you've probably seen this in working with Mary Rather and Mildred and Juanita, you developed a loyalty to him, just like an old favorite. He tried to teach. He was concerned about you and your welfare and your future. You felt his concern. He projected it, and it wasn't a coat of whitewash. It was a genuine projection.

G: If he had questions about, let's say, one of the policies or one of the positions of Secretary Udall, for example, would be call you to get your opinion on it?

B: Oh, yes. That, and our job, or at least my job and I presume it was the same in the other departments, [was to give] him a report once a week on Monday, early, on what had occurred the previous week in Interior, good and bad, what was coming up during that current week, good and bad, what could be good, what could be bad. Because the way that he had directed me was that he felt it might be that there would be a tendency of a Secretary to tell him what was good and not what was bad, just give him the good things and not tell him about the troubles he was having. Well,

he wanted to know about the troubles. Really, he wanted to know more about the troubles than the good, because he'd read the good in the paper. And he wanted to know about the bad before he read it in the paper. And this involved the whole department. In other words, [for example], oil policy: if there were any leaks from the people, who was leaking in the department? And why.

G: Did he seem overly concerned about that? Did he seem overly concerned about leaks?

B: He was always concerned about leaks. He just didn't like for something to leak that he was figuring three months or six months away might be an announcement from, or business of, the White House.

G: Was it difficult to coordinate, say, what was released from the White House with what was to be released from the Secretary's office?

B: No,it wasn't if we--

G: Did you coordinate that?

B: Yes. If I thought or the Secretary thought there was something that was worthy of a White House release, I passed it on over. They said yes or no. If I thought it was worthy, I passed it on over--if I could see a final action in the department that might be a White House operation. I mean to be announced by the White House gives your department prestige, rather than the secretary announcing it. To have the president announcing it, that's

just the difference between page one and page seventeen in the newspaper.

G: Right. Was it generally divided by importance here? If it were more important, the White House would announce it.

B: If it were important to the White House or if it were important to the industry, if it were a major change in policy, if it were that it would be good for the people, these are the criteria. In other words, public interest.

G: What about coordinating this with congressional announcements, too?

B: Here again it was a ticklish business. You would let the congressman of the state, and then you would get word back that the White House was going to announce it. Then you'd let the congressman know that the President was going to make an announcement of importance to their state, and if the White House wanted them to know what it was, the White House liaison would let them know what it was. Sometimes they would guess, and I always felt that a premature leak sometimes helped the story rather than hindered it. Now in subsequent presidencies I've noticed that--I don't think Ford has made a decision that hasn't been known to the public for five days before he announced it.

G: Did you have any role in legislative liaison work in your department?

B: Yes. There were some congressmen who didn't see eye to eye with Stewart Udall, who was a former congressman, and for those that were in the Texas delegation, like Jack Brooks, who was a

thorn in the side of the Interior Department. That's the role that Jack had taken for himself.

G: How did you deal with him?

B: When he would cuss me, I'd cuss him, and we had a pretty mutual ground. He'd call me a goddamned scribbler and I'd call him a low-class Marine.

G: Then you think it was really a personal friendship.

B: Yes, it was a personal friendship. If he had a bargaining point, though, Jack could drive some hard bargains.

G: Did you ever get the impression that other congressmen would--

B: If he wanted the secretary to come down to Galveston to appear in his district, why, he would make it a point that he wanted a "scratch my back" deal. He would do this for the Secretary if the Secretary would definitely be in Galveston on such and such date and make some speeches in his district. You would get the conservationists in line with Jack Brooks to show that there was rapport between the Secretary and Jack, because Udall headed up in the federal government the conservationists.

G: Did you find that in the matter of getting, let's say, Interior Department legislation through the Congress that you had to consider the needs of particular congressmen in order to get the legislation, a quid pro quo type of thing?

B: I'll give you an odd story, and I don't think that I've ever told this publicly. But I noticed that Graham Purcell, a congressman from Wichita Falls, was constantly voting against Department of

Interior bills and consistently against Park Service bills. So I went up to talk to him to see what the heck was the matter with him, because some of the legislation I couldn't see why on earth, what reason it was that he voted so. I went up to find that out. It turned out that Graham had bought a house out in Virginia, and the back yard fence was the boundary line of part of the Manassas battlefield. Graham was a polo enthusiast, and he had some horses out there. He had bought this place with the idea that he could keep a couple of his ponies out there and he could go out and exercise them on the battlefield. The superintendent wouldn't let him. So I found that out. His miff with that superintendent was why he was voting against all Department of Interior bills, not that his vote had really hurt any of the bills. He was expressing his displeasure at not being able to exercise his ponies right outside his own place.

So I went to see the superintendent then, who has since retired. He was a nice guy. I presented him with the situation, that it seemed to me that horse tracks and piles of horse manure might have been on that battlefield, that they used cavalry in that battle. In the late evening a few times a week that the Congressman could get home, if he would agree not to do it on Saturday or Sunday, because he played polo on Saturday and Sunday, [why not let him] exercise those ponies and practice his swings and turns out there. The superintendent of a park is the major-domo of that park, so he agreed to try it. We put a gate in the fence, and Graham worked his polo ponies out. The public didn't seem to

mind, and nobody else asked for the privilege. So Graham Purcell again started voting for Interior bills, unless he could see something wrong with them, and especially Park Service bills. That was the type of [work I did with individual congressmen].

G: Sure. Can you recall any occasion where there was a congressman's vote that was critical and you worked on him to change his vote, either to satisfy a desire that he had in his district or--?

B: We did everything we could in that last eight days when Stewart Udall made a premature announcement that Johnson had signed a bill which would by presidential proclamation make a bunch of new parks in Alaska. Johnson hadn't, and he made Udall retract the statement.

G: Why did Udall make the announcement?

B: You can only indulge in a little conjecture on that.

G: Do you think it was to--

B: I can tell you what happened that day, and you can draw your own conclusions.

G: Okay.

B: Udall went up to the Department of Justice when they unveiled a bust of Bobby [Kennedy]. He came back, and he was all emotionally charged up. Orren Beaty, who was his administrative assistant, and I were waiting in his office for him to come back. He came in and told us what he did. His eyes were full of water and kind of red and his voice was choked up, and he then told me that he had already called Shirley Povich at the Washington Star--or the Post, I've forgotten which Shirley was working for--and had informed them

that he had changed the name of Washington Stadium to Kennedy Stadium. I said, "Have you told the White House?" And he said, "I didn't have to tell the White House." I said, "I know that, but do you think it was the political thing to do, to do it without telling the White House?" He said, "In my case, yes."

Then he turned to me and he said, "Have you released the news that the President has signed the Alaskan park bills?" I said, "No, I talked with George Christian thirty minutes ago and he told me the President hadn't been in his office and the bills were on his desk, and he wasn't going to sign them until he had word from you that you had cleared with Wayne Aspinall a cancellation of your agreement that no parks would be created by presidential proclamation." Stewart said, "Well, he has. I came by there from Justice, and I saw the President signing the bills." I said, "Yes, sir. But I doubt it."

So with that Orren Beaty and I walked into Orren's office. We were talking about this, and "What the hell's wrong with Stewart?" Orren had heard me talk to George a minute before; in fact, he'd been on the extension and had taken part in the conversation. So we talked about thirty minutes, and Stewart walked in there and said, "Have you released that news yet?" I said, "No." He said, "Well, go release it." And I said, "All right." So I dropped one of these one-page [releases]. Oh, we had prepared it many days ahead. I called the White House. I went up in my office to get the release, called the White House,

couldn't reach George, couldn't reach the President. I went on up on the Hill, left one with the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee clerk, gave one to Jerry Verkler, who was Jackson's man, and then came by the AP and the UP and went on home.

When I got home, my wife, Alice, said, "George Christian is anxious to get hold of you." So I called down and George said, "What on God's earth is wrong with Stewart?" I said, "I don't know. I've been suspecting something was wrong, though, for the last two hours." He said, "Well, there is." He told me that Stewart had made this announcement. I said, "I know" and then told him what had occurred, and he said, "Just a minute, the President wants to talk to you." So he got Johnson on the line. He said, "Charlie, I have called Stewart and told him to retract that announcement. Now, I'm sure in a few minutes he's going to call you and tell you to retract the announcements. He hasn't talked to you yet has he?" I said, "No." He said, "I told him to retract it, and I mean that. You tell him that I've talked to you and told you that if he called you and told you to retract it that I have told him personally to retract it, and that's what I meant and you are not going to do it." I said, "Yes, sir." It happened just as the President predicted. So that's when Stewart called the papers and retracted his announcement.

My surmise is that Stewart was trying to force Mr. Johnson into signing this, and he didn't have the guts to ask Aspinall to release him from his pledge that no parks would be created by

presidential proclamation, that instead they would take the old traditional way of doing it by act of Congress. Aspinall had had disagreements with Udall since his first visit to Congress after his announcement that he was being nominated as secretary of the Interior by Kennedy. Johnson knew about the agreement. When these parks were first proposed he had told Stewart that he had to have a release he would sign the bills. But he would not sign the bills unless Aspinall would give him that release.

After that episode--this is on a Saturday, you know, a day the government workers don't work--Stewart went home, and he never came back to his office the last eight days. From what he had done that day, I think he was emotionally upset and trying to get a place in the Kennedy scheme again, where he could foresee that Bobby Kennedy or Ted Kennedy would come up and be the great white father. I think Stewart was operating on [the assumption] he had to be a part of that Kennedy team still and yet, and this was his way to do it, to name the stadium, get these parks in like Jack and Bobby wanted. Johnson wanted [the parks], too, but he knew this agreement had existed between the cabinet members and the chairman of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee. He was an old congressman, an old senator, and he wasn't going to abrogate that agreement. He'd already told Stewart the way he'd do it. Stewart didn't live up to it; so he didn't sign it.

Then, the question that came from the President to George Christian to me was "What can we salvage in this?" So I took the

bills up to Wayne Aspinall. This is in response to the question that had started all this. Wayne checked through and said, "This I'll go with and this I'll go with, and this I won't and this I won't" and so on, and he worked it down to I think four or five parks that he would have been agreeable to. They were all continental rather than Alaskan, changes in the Park Service that he had been agreeable to prior to Udall's thrust to get half of Alaska in as park territory. Now today, you know, we are still working on developing the parks up there, and what will go to the natives and what will go to Alaska and what will go to the Park Service and what will go to Fish and Wildlife and so on. It still hasn't been decided. Had Stewart gone to Aspinall and laid the thing on the ground to him, Aspinall was a reasonable man, I believe he would have gone along with it. I don't know whether it was that Stewart was too afraid that Aspinall would say no. He just thought he could go the other route and force Johnson into signing it, by saying that Johnson had signed it and Johnson saying, "Oh, hell, this is just the last day. I won't create any turmoil. I won't call the papers and tell them that was wrong." I don't think he ever anticipated that he, Stewart, would have to call the papers himself and tell them that was an error.

G: Did the renaming of the stadium cause any repercussions?

B: Mr. Johnson didn't like it, I don't think. I know you could tell it in his face, but the law said that the Secretary of the Interior had the right to name the stadium. But still, if you're

a member of the cabinet and you have the right to make it, you kind of check with your boss to see if this ties in with his thing.

G: Do you think that Lyndon Johnson felt that he had made a mistake in keeping on the Kennedy people as long as he had?

B: In his retirement days, I'd say three or four months before his death, he told me yes, it definitely was one of his mistakes.

G: Did he outline what he should have done?

B: Yes, he said that he should have replaced the whole bunch when he was elected. I think, though, in subsequent conversation at that time he indicated that he would not have replaced Rusk. He didn't go into others. There were some other interruptions, a telephone call as I remember, and he never got back to that subject. I was fascinated by it. He said that Rusk had been a very loyal and highly intelligent secretary of State, and he certainly wouldn't have replaced him. But I think he was driving at Freeman and Udall, Ribicoff, people in other words who worked hard and were managers or advisers in the Kennedy election effort.

G: That's interesting. One thing I was curious about: it seems that when Lyndon Johnson was a congressman he had extremely close ties with the Interior Department when Harold Ickes was secretary.

B: He did, and Chapman was there and Fortas was there, see. And those ties continued.

G: Did he ever, in retrospect, talk about the Interior Department and his relationship with it in the early days?

B: He talked about his relationship with Fortas and Chapman.

G: What did he say? Do you recall?

B: Well, you know, it was a highly intelligent group; and they could get things done; and they saw the problems of a congressman and the needs of the people that the congressmen were trying to solve; and they could get things through a department in a reasonable length of time and not have them just bog down . Especially you would hear this when he thought that I was taking too long on getting something through the department: "Now, if it had been Abe Fortas he'd have had that through the department two weeks ago and been working on something else. You're still sitting there, and you haven't got off first base."

G: Did he ever talk about Harold Ickes?

B: No.

G: Really?

B: I don't know really know how he felt about him.

G: Then Senator Wirtz had been under secretary, too.

B: Yes.

G: That's interesting.

B: I mean his old ties were still evident in his later visitors and advisers, or unofficial counselors, in the White House. And if I had a problem, or saw a problem coming, say, down in the Virgin Islands and thought that this was something I was going to have to tell Mr. Johnson about in my report, I would call Abe Fortas, who was readily available to me. That was one of the great things about him. Abe knew I wouldn't call unless I really had to have

an answer. [I would] tell him what the situation was, and with his knowledge of the Virgins and his current connections with the Virgins--this is before he became a Supreme Court Justice--[ask] what would he advise. Because I could put this right in the report and then not have Mr. Johnson call me back and say, "Have you talked to Abe Fortas about this?" or "What does Abe say?" So we could give him the problem and Abe's advice at the same time.

G: I see. He relied very heavily on Abe Fortas, I gather.

B: I don't know how often he went against his opinion because I don't know how many he asked Abe for, but I do know that he respected Abe's ability to look down the road and see what an action would cause, or whether it was really wrong or really right or whether it was more wrong than right or more right than wrong.

G: I was wondering if you recall what the President said to you when he asked you to go to the Interior Department.

B: He didn't ask me to go to the Interior Department. It is in one of these previous transcripts. I was closing up the vice president's office, doing the things that had to be done by Johnson as vice president, finishing those tasks up. I was nearly through; I came down and told him I had about another day's work and I'd be through, and that with all due respects I had talked it over with Alice and she didn't want me to come to the White House. So he wanted to know if I would stay in Washington if I weren't working at the White House, and I said that yes, I might.

G: Why didn't she want you to work at the White House?

B: Well, she said, "Look, we go out now and I have to dress and leave home and bring your tux to you. You dress at the office. We go, and then invariably I have to drive home by myself and leave you at the office because you've still got some work to do. I don't see you now except on Sunday and sometimes not then, and if you get at the White House I won't ever see you. I'll just go back to Texas." For a guy who has finally got all his kids in college and has just got his wife to himself again, you want to have some kind of life. So I was going to come back to the paper. So he said this, and I said it, and he told me at that moment that Alice had already told him that she was going back to Texas if I went to the White House.

Anyway, that's the way it sat, and the next day while I was working up at the vice president's office on the Hill I got a call from Udall's secretary wanting to know if I could come down and see Udall. I said, "I'll be glad to. I won't be able to come down until lunch time because I have appointments until then and I don't want to break them, but I'll grab a cab and come down." She said, "No, Stewart's limousine will be waiting for you." So I went down there, and Stewart outlined what he wanted. We had told several people that we were going to go back to Texas and I was going to go back to work for the paper, and I think one of those people had passed the word to Stewart or something. Stewart was desperately wanting a tie-in with Johnson, so he told me what

he had in mind, and that is the job called Assistant to the Secretary and Director of Information in the Department of the Interior. I told him that I had been reading the papers as he had--I was sure he had--and that the columnists all seemed to think that he'd be the first member of the Kennedy cabinet to go. I didn't want to go to work for a man that was going to be fired in two weeks or a month, so what would he say to my going over to the White House and checking it out with Mr. Johnson. I grinned, as I remember, and said, "I believe you'd like that, too, wouldn't you?" He said, "Yes, I'd love it."

I went over there, and Juanita said Mr. Johnson was free at the moment, so I went on in and I asked him. His response was: "How long have you been working for me?" I said, "On your payroll, two years." He said, "In all the time you've known me, you should know by now that I'm a better politician than to fire any of Kennedy's cabinet at this time." He said, "Yes, go over there. I'd like to have you over there. I want to put one of my men in every department so that I can call them and find out things and get straight answers that I think the secretary wouldn't give me all the answers to. Or they can give me reports." This is really the first time that he had mentioned this reporting system to me. But then he publicly proclaimed this thing, as I told you, at the meeting in the Fish Room. He said he had a man in every department.

G: Yes, I've read those reports, incidentally, there. There is a

lot of substance in them; I think they'll be useful.

B: There are some of them that were made verbally, some of them made . . . He would change styles on it. He'd say, "Oh, forget it, just give them to me verbally. I've got too much [to read]. People are inundating me, they're snowing me, they're killing me with reading material. Don't do it. Just give it to me verbally." Or, "Don't give me so much in detail, keep it all on one page."

G: You mentioned that one time he called you to ask your opinion of Head Start.

B: Yes.

G: Was this the purpose of his call, or was this something that just came up during the course of the conversation?

B: I imagine it was the purpose of the call, really. He would always want to know how things were or how things were going with the boys, what grades they were making.

G: Did he seem to have some concerns about the program?

B: No. He wanted to know what the public reaction to it was, what the people whose money would be involved in Head Start but who wouldn't have children in Head Start, what was their reaction to it?

G: What did you tell him?

B: I told him that the ones I had talked to generally were for it, but the ones I had talked to were all liberals. I hadn't talked to any of the conservatives, but in about four days I was going to Colorado and Arizona; I would talk to some of the conservatives out there, and I'd give him a reading on their feelings.

G: Yes. Did he ever express an ambivalence about the effectiveness of some of the domestic programs?

B: Well, yes. He had one comment that he made to me two or three times, and I don't know whether he ever made it to anybody else, or whether ir stuck in his mind. But one time I had brought this in to explain my position, a discussion of the Chinese and how they had always absorbed every civilization that had tried to conquer them and they all became Chinese. He said, "yes," but he thought the American government had a very similar system in the bureaucracy, that you could introduce an idea into the bureaucracy and never produce a damn result. (Laughter) They would absorb the idea and just go on. They would still be Chinese in other words. It would still be a bureaucracy. You just couldn't get things through a bureaucracy. You had to go through it with a sledgehammer or a scimitar or some way to split that bureaucracy and get them to do things your way. He said this was one of the great problems of the president, or this is the implication of it. They would twist any idea around to where it was the way they wanted to do it, not the way the original idea was. And I tend to agree with him.

G: Did he ever feel that programs such as the War on Poverty components were politically difficult for him, or creating political problems on the Hill or with local bosses or political figures?

B: I never heard him express himself on it. But I do know that feedbacks I got and fed to him were to that effect, that they were creating problems for him, especially the ones down here involving the Negro.

G: Say the Community Action Program or something like that?

B: Yes. "Look, you're just not going to get anywhere; you're just wasting money on them." That was, and it's still the thinking. We still have that. We had a case not long ago down at the Big Thicket. A guy didn't want to sell his land to us, and we didn't much care which way. He could keep it, and we could take boundaries around his place. But he was asking the superintendent some questions about it. He said, "Now, all the land around me is going to be park?" The superintendent said, "Yes." He said, "Now that means the public can come in and wander around out there. You might even have a campground out there." Tom said, "We haven't surveyed it for campgrounds, but it's conceivably possible that we would have a campground someplace near your house, because you are in a rather high area and it's accessible to the highway." He said, "When you say public, you mean niggers, don't you?" The superintendent said, "Yes, we mean all people." And the guy said, "I want to sell." You have still got that attitude, you see.

G: Sure. Let's back up a minute and cover some of the earlier things that I missed yesterday. Were you working for him when the Bobby Baker episode blew over?

B: You mean Bobby's--

G: I believe that was October.

B: No, I was already in Interior. See, that was after his election. Bobby had a lot of free time after Mansfield became speaker [majority leader].

G: Right. Did you get an opportunity to see Bobby Baker at work while

you were over there?

B: The only incident I worked anywhere with Bobby on was, when Mr. Johnson bought 4040. Bobby somehow ended up in charge of building the bathhouse with the swimming pool. He built that swimming pool and had put a slate roof on it, and that damn thing wasn't any bigger than this room--you know, a women's dressing room on that side and a men's dressing room on that side, and a little entry way and I believe one toilet. It couldn't have been any bigger than this room [20 x 20]. I don't know if Mr. Johnson ever questioned it, but I did. There was a slate roof put on that thing, and it seemed to me that it was just about three times the cost of what a slate roof ought to be. I checked it and it was, but I just gave a report on it to Mr. Johnson. I don't know what adjustments were ever made, if any. But I was sitting in for Walter, and the bill crossed my desk. I just automatically called some building contractors to find out about the cost of slate roofs, and it just didn't jibe at all. I don't remember the figure now, but it was too damn high. It was like fifteen, twenty thousand dollars for slate roof, and I thought it should be maybe five, but no more. This was my feeling.

G: Right.

B: So I checked and found out that I was nearer right than this bill was, but what happened there I don't know after that.

G: Yes. Do you recall LBJ's reaction to any of the crises during his vice presidential period, such as the Bay of Pigs or the Cuban

missile crisis, Vietnam while he was vice president, the overthrow of Diem?

B: No, I really don't. I know he was perturbed by the whole situation, but I never heard him express any . . . has anybody ever taped Bill Jackson or Howard Burris on this?

G: No. They're both on my list.

B: Well, Bill has got a farm in Missouri, and they come down there. It's a summer place. I think Bill and Howard handled the security reports, being the military aide and the Air Force aide when he was vice president. I think that they could give you more of a reading on that.

G: Okay, great.

B: You'd love it. Bill's just this side of St. Louis. I've got the address at home. Beautiful farm.

G: LBJ was always regarded as a legislative leader nonpareil, and I've just wondered if you ever saw any particular instance in which he did show an exceptional talent for either diagnosing a problem with a bill or getting one through?

B: What I did notice was his ability to find the common ground that all of them agreed on and then work from that common ground, get one to agree on it and another to agree on it and then, if necessary, to point out, as has been said so many times, the things he had done for somebody. Maybe he'd have to cash a blue chip, as he put it, to get the guy to come on over..

G: Can you recall any occasion of him in action in particular and give

the details of it?

B: Well, I'm going to--cut it off.

G: All right.

B: We went to Las Vegas when Johnson was vice president. The members of the staff along were me and Mary Margaret. He was to address a national convention of labor unions out there. Bear in mind that Las Vegas is four hours behind Washington, several hours. He was to appear on the program about nine o'clock at night and make his speech. By the schedule he'd gotten up that day, that was already one o'clock in the morning,or midnight. He made his speech. Then Eydie Gorme and her husband came on; well, he couldn't walk out on them, so he had to sit through this. And then the Negro entertainer, Pearl Bailey, came on, and he couldn't walk out on her, so he had to sit through that.

By his schedule it was about three o'clock in the morning when we got headed back to the hotel suite, and he was dead tired. Hank Greenspan and a couple of his henchmen attached themselves to the President and me and the two Secret Service men, and they were telling him how the world should be run. This was, I don't think, doing more than irritating him, because they were expressing ideas that people had been voicing all over the world and they weren't working. At any rate, we got back to the hotel--Mary Margaret didn't go to this deal, she said she was too tired and went to sleep--and the key wouldn't turn in the lock. That lock was frozen. So I looked up at Rufe Youngblood and said, "Rufe, go get the bell captain and the master key." Well, if Liquid Wrench had been developed at that time, I would have said, "And a can of Liquid Wrench."

Mr. Johnson was exhausted, and he leaned over against the side of the wall just looking at me fighting that key. I looked up at him and went on. Rufe Youngblood darted out in the lobby and got a chair and brought it back for him to sit down. These guys were pounding his ear, and he was paying no attention to them with their theories on government. So just before Stu Knight or Lem Johns -- I've forgotten which one it was who went to get the master key and the bell captain--got back, why, there was utter silence in the hall. The Vice President looked up at me and said, "You know, Charlie, it was incompetent staff work like this that cost me that election." Thereafter, no matter who I was traveling with, and even on my own, I try the room key on the door before I leave the room to see if it'll turn the lock. On one other occasion in a VIP suite I found one. What happens, see, is they clean the surface of the lock. They push the cleaner, that brass polish, and the corrosion back in there, and they freeze the tumbler to where you can't get enough leverage to turn it.

G: That's amazing.

B: This happens in these VIP suites. They polish the lock every day, but they might not open it for two weeks.

G: Is there anything else that you learned from experience in traveling with him to prepare for?

B: Yes, no matter if you go out for one day, you take enough socks, underwear and shirts for six days. You can always get a suit cleaned overnight, but getting the socks and the underwear and shirts is

something else. Even when I was over at Interior I kept a bag packed at the office, because I might get a call from the White House: "Charlie, I don't have anybody else, can you go down to Texas and do so-and-so?" Although I wasn't on his staff, I remained on his staff.

G: Can you recall a particular time?

B: And it's with the agreement of the secretary. What secretary of the interior is going to tell you no when you tell him that the president has asked you to do so-and-so.

B: Can you recall a particular time when he asked you to go down there for something?

G: Yes. There was a flare-up on Padre Island, the land judgments, and he wanted me to go down and take some readings on that. That was one, although it was in our area. If it fell in your area or in the area of something that you had handled previously, and you'd done it right or at least you'd come out of it unsunk and with all colors flying, he would always remember you to handle it again. If it had to do with the screwworm problem, even after I was over in Interior, I'd still be the guy that handled the screwworms.

G: One thing that we haven't talked about that--

B: You were a generalist. I mean, you might be hired for a specific purpose, but as I said yesterday, if you were the closest staff member to Johnson at the time he thought of it you were the guy who was charged with doing it.

G: We haven't talked about his use of the telephone, which I know he used frequently with great effectiveness.

B: I told you about the incident yesterday when he called down when my boy graduated. Now, another time I was down here. I had gone, oddly enough, to Brownsville. At their end of the island they have a park, and they were dedicating the park and they'd asked the Department of the Interior to send somebody down to represent and make a little speech. So Stewart, rather than going himself, said, "Texas is your baby. You go down there." I said, "All right." It was old Judge Dancey, and he had been a Lyndon Johnson supporter, a county judge, who was in charge of getting this program together for the dedication of the park.

I didn't let the White House know that I was going down there. Hell, it was a weekend and the President was in Texas, I thought, or was going to Texas. That was the report in the paper, that he was going to Texas that weekend, so I didn't bother to let anybody over there know that I was going down. I was there, and I had gone over to Matamoros. Yes, I guess it was Matamoros. At any rate, I got a phone call from the White House in this restaurant over in Mexico. They'd called home and Alice said, yes, she knew where I was going but she didn't know what motel or hotel I was staying at. But they had proceeded to track me down through calling all the motels down there. They had tracked me down, and I told him what I was down there for. He told me what he wanted, and then he told me some things to say for him. Actually, he had changed his mind [about going to Texas] and was calling from Camp David. But he had wanted to know something that was going on in Interior.

G: Do you remember what it was?

B: I think maybe it was on what was our position going to be on a plan to build a dam on the Snake River that had been proposed. He wanted to know what Stewart's position was going to be, and I told him it was against the dam. And it was.

G: Was he a hard man to talk to? Did he give you a chance to explain, or was he constantly arguing or interrupting?

B: It was according to whether he had the time or not. If he had the time or if he thought the explanation was pertinent to his knowledge at the moment, of what he needed at the moment, he wasn't hard to explain to. If he just wanted a quick answer, yes, he was hard to explain to, because he just flat didn't want to listen to the explanation. He might come back to you later and want to know. I know one time I made what he considered a wrong decision in talking with some reporters, and he said he'd go along with me on that one; that was to be his policy, but he felt I was making policy for him on this and he didn't want anybody making policy for him. [He said] he'd go along this time, but not to let it happen again without checking with him, that I was prejudging him. I think I judged him correctly, but it was just that he didn't like somebody else making policy for him.

As, for instance, these gimmicks that he had, cigarette lighters and things. One time we were in a town where on a previous visit I had given the newspaper editor one of these lighters and told him that Mr. Johnson wanted him to have it. Subsequently we were in

this town, maybe six months or a year later, and the editor had this lighter and was toying with it when he was talking with Mr. Johnson. Mr. Johnson said, "Where'd you get that lighter?" And he said, "Charlie gave it to me. He said you'd sent it down here." He said, "That's right." But he wanted to know how that guy had gotten that lighter, because he knew he hadn't given it to him.

G: And you hadn't told him that?

B: I really hadn't told him. This was just a matter of public relations. I didn't give him a lighter and say, "Here's one of Mr. Johnson's I'd like you to have." I said, "Here's one of Mr. Johnson's lighters. He knew you smoked and you might like to have it as a conversation piece, and he sent it down to you."

G: Did he seem more relaxed to you when he was at his ranch?

B: Oh yes, anytime--when he was senator, when he was vice president, but he was reconciled and most relaxed there in his retirement time, although he was working on the plans to make the Ranch a park.

G: Did he in retirement, do you think, seem happy most of the time? What was his mood?

B: I think his mood was sadness, sort of a happy sadness, in that he was sad that he was quite certain he wasn't going to live very long, that his days were numbered. He always told you that you had to get this done by next Tuesday because he might not be here, or you should have had it done last week because he might not be here the next day and that there were things that were crying to get done. He said, "Now, I can get them done. If you'll give them to me now

and show me what your problems are, I can get them all done because they'll listen to me." He said, "You're going to have hell getting them done after I'm dead." He was just as right as hell. I can't line up Mrs. Johnson and Lynda and Luci and Pat and Chuck and Lucia and Rebekah and Sam like he could, and Jesse. Now, he just told them the way he wanted it to be and that's the way it was, but I can't tell them that.

G: Do you have any insights on his family that you want to share?

B: It's a great family. I mean, they've all got an intense loyalty, an intense loyalty to their parents, to him, to each other. It's an intriguing family, to watch their infighting.

G: You were talking about Lucia.

B: Lucia is a female Lyndon Johnson. I could predict what Lyndon Johnson was going to do, or feel certain that I was reasonably correct, from prior knowledge of Lucia. I used to watch Lucia pull strings on friends of theirs just to see if they'd react as she thought they'd react. When I went to work for Johnson, I saw him doing the same thing on staff members. He'd be just pulling strings on them, just having nothing else to do at the moment. He'd indulge in a little puppetry, is what I termed it, to see the reactions.

G: For example, what would he do?

B: Oh, to recall a specific example is hard, but among the girls he'd ask if they hadn't noticed that, say, Ashton's new hairstyle that she had devised herself had hurt her appearance. He asked two or three others. He'd have a purpose in it, to see how quick they

would react. To me the funny reaction was, if I heard them talking about it and usually you did, they would immediately go look at their own hairstyle: "Was he talking about them, or was he really talking about me?" Then one of them would pass the word to Ashton, and maybe Ashton had changed her hairdo from the way it had been styled. Or he might take it from the reverse standpoint, how her new hair style was more becoming to her. Or, "was she gaining weight?" and all of them were standing up sidewise to the mirror to see if they were gaining weight. Was he really talking about them? But he'd do this just to gain a desired result. Maybe it was a general staff improvement. I'm just trying to take a commonplace incident there. Lucia would do the same damned thing.

G: You mentioned her use of the silent treatment when she was angry at somebody and him doing that, too.

B: If he was displeased with something you'd done, then he'd have the whole staff in and he'd indulge in a little overpraise of everybody. He would deliberately leave you out. (Laughter)

G: That's something.

B: "I'll tell you about Charlie or George next week. There's nothing I can say about him today." You know, that's not silence, but it had the same effect. He wouldn't always use the same damned methods.

G: What else can you tell us about his mother? You spent a lot of time with her.

B: Mrs. Johnson was highly educated for her day, and she added to her education as she went along. She was a woman who inspired respect.

I wouldn't say [she inspired] love, for the outsider, as [much as] she did respect and admiration. I wouldn't say that she was one who you wanted throw your head on her bosom and hug her, but you always respected her lady qualities.

G: Did she give the impression of being a rather formidable person?

B: I always had the feeling that I wouldn't want her as an enemy, that she would be formidable. But there are a lot of people about whom I've had that idea because of their intelligence, of their foresight; they could out think me.

G: Yes. Do you think he was influenced more by his father than by his mother?

B: I think he was influenced by both of them. It was a desire to please both of them. Mama was somebody he could go to and cry on her shoulder, I think. She would tend to pick him up more. I think Papa would say, "Well, you . . . ." Apparently, from the way Mr. Johnson spoke of his father, he was always inspiring him to be greater or better by downgrading his achievement rather than praising him for his achievement: "Okay, you've done that, but what have you done about this?"

G: You see that in him, too, I think.

B: I can see that in him: "What have you done for me lately? You're a Johnson. Johnson's are second to none." This was what I could see his father [saying].

B: Can you recall in particular things that he said about his father?

G: Just his old stories, I think, are illustrative of that: "Come on,

son, wake up. Every other boy in town has got a half-hour start on you."

G: Some of the recent writings depict him as much closer to his mother than to his father, and of course his father didn't live as long.

B: No, and I think it was his mother who got up in the morning and worked with him on his lessons. She sort of held the family together. I can't say this except from intimations that I had, from what other people have told me down in that area, that Mr. Johnson was always striving to make some more money, and occasionally he'd just go bust. When he did, why, bust to him might still be a level of living equivalent to the rest of the people in the town. But he seemed like he was a promoter. He was elected to the legislature. He didn't stay in the legislature though, so apparently he was either beaten or saw the handwriting on the wall that he was going to get beat. But he was a road supervisor; he sold real estate. I think if you look at the old picture of the boyhood home, she had her front porch and he had his front porch. They were even decorated different. She had spools on her side of the porch or vice versa, and his was plain. She held her elocution class out there on hers and built that little deal out on it. He had his friends; she had hers. Her friends used her porch. His was sort of the office types, and he had his desk inside there.

G: In your conversations with Rebekah Johnson, did she ever compare LBJ to his father?

B: No, she never compared them. She didn't compare her boys either,

but I have noticed one thing. I've been through the boyhood home with both of the sisters, and they say, "This was Papa and Mama's room, and this was Lyndon's room, and this was the girls' room." "Well, where did Sam sleep?" "He slept in Lyndon's room." It wasn't the boys' room; it was Lyndon's room.

G: That's interesting.

B: I think this to me is indicative of an obstacle that Sam fought all of his life. He was never put on a level with Lyndon. Sam's got a hell of a brain, but I do believe that no matter what he did--he's a younger boy--if he came up valedictorian of his class, Lyndon had already been there. No matter what he did, Lyndon had already done it. I think that is defeating.

G: Sibling competition

B: But I have known other--I mean, as I grew up I had friends that had elder boys, and sometimes this situation existed in the family. I'm just saying, from what I see, what might have been the case. But it's always been odd to me that this was Lyndon's room.

G: That is interesting. What else did Mrs. Johnson talk about in your discussions with her?

B: It was the case of, like you're trying to lead me out, I was trying to lead her. I'd ask her questions about Lyndon's boyhood and his early feelings about work.

G: What did she say?

B: I asked her one day if it was his desire to make his own money that he built this shoe shine box, and she said it was his own desire. His daddy didn't like it because he didn't like his boy shining shoes on the streets of Johnson City, and I think, although Lyndon tells this story-- (Interruption).

G: We were talking about his mother, describing LBJ's shoe shine.

B: Well, she told me even how he got his name and about how she always had a fear out there on the river of him getting down to the river without her seeing him, as mother's will with their first born. This was a constant dread in her mind. On the naming, I think he was better than a year or so old when Mr. Johnson finally decided he wanted him named for his good friend Linden. She said, well, she would accept Linden. I think I can recall her exact words. Mr. Johnson's friend Linden was a drinking man, so she said, all right, she would go with it as long as she'd substitute a "Y" for that "I." Then he got the Baines from her family name. So Lyndon was named for a friend of Mr. Johnson's who spelled his name L-I-N-D-E-N. She specifically said that she'd change the "I" to "Y."

G: Excuse me, I was wondering how did this tie into her fear of him getting down to the river?

B: No. I was relating how [I was] just trying to find out [about] the rearing of the boy, how long it was before Rebekah was born, you know, how she was with one child, where they lived, when did they move to Johnson City. This was in the early days, and I was trying to build up a background on the guy. Because it looked like he was

going to be Texas' foremost politician, and I wanted to know everything I could know about him. I always thought that the mother was a pretty good source. She said Mr. Johnson was gone quite a bit of the time in the legislature as a real estate dealer, and she would be out there by herself with the baby.

G: Did she ever talk about his trip to California, or did he ever talk about it?

B: Yes. She expressed her dismay that he didn't want to go on to college and that he and the other boys were planning this trip. She thought it would be good for him to see something other than Texas, although like any mother she was apprehensive of what might befall him on it.

G: Didn't he actually run away? I mean, he didn't tell them?

B: She never said that he ran away. I've gathered from talking to Sam and Josefa that he ran away. I never could get the exact reason he was running away, whether it was getting away from parental influence or whether there was some irate father of some girl around there. Sam sort of intimated that. I never could find out. Now Mrs. Johnson said that it was back in those days that he joined the Christian church. She told me that he had been going to a brush arbor meeting with a particular girl who was a Disciple of Christ or a Christian. I think it was not Disciple of Christ; I think it was this Archidelphian Christian deal. She said that she always thought that Lyndon joined the church that night, the last night of this brush arbor meeting, to impress this girl, but that she then got all her children together and they joined the Baptist Church, where she

thought they should go, except Lucia. Lucia was either sick or something, or too young, and Lucia later became a Baptist.

G: Did she ever say the girl's name?

B: No.

G: Did she ever talk about--?

B: I didn't ask her her name.

G: Did she ever talk about the story of the other girl--presumably another girl, perhaps the same one--whose father was a Ku Klux Klan member?

B: No, I never had heard that one.

G: That came later, I guess.

B: That sounds like it's something intriguing, too. No. She's told me that he was going with this girl when he became a member of the Christian Church. I have never known really who it was that was having this brush arbor meeting, whether it was the Archadelphia Christians or the Disciples of Christ, the Church of Christ, or just who it was. But it was some division of that faith.

G: Did you see Lyndon Johnson around his mother very often, or did you have an opportunity to see the intereaction there?

B: Yes. There was a lot of love displayed on both sides. I remember one time that Mother Johnson had the girls. It was at lunch and no one else was there. I was the only one there with them. Mr. Johnson had a habit when he was eating peas or spinach--he picked his bowl up and pulled it closer. So Luci, then about two or three,

picked her bowl up and started eating. Mother Johnson told her "Ladies don't eat like that." "My daddy eats like this." She said, "Honey, I raised your daddy, too. He didn't do this when he was your age. He's developed that, and it's a bad habit, since he became head of his own household." But she said, "While you're a little girl you must never do this, and when you become a lady, like your mother and me, you won't want to."

G: That's great. What was his reaction to that?

B: I don't know that he never knew about it.

G: Oh, he wasn't there.

B: I wasn't going to tell him. It was just Mrs. Johnson and me and the two girls at lunch. I went by to see her at her duplex in Austin. She had the girls there, and she had invited me to stay for lunch.

G: Did she seem to try to influence him? Say, in these years did she try to make suggestions?

B: I've heard her bring up and express her opinions of matters that were going on, but I don't know whether she was trying to influence him or just let him know how she felt.

G: Did he seem to seek [her advice]? (Tape ends abruptly).

Tape 2 of 3

B: We were still talking about Mrs. Johnson.

G: Right.

B: She liked to be around. She liked to support him in every way

that she could. I think that's why she wrote that book. It was an effort to let him know from whence he came and who were his people.

G: Do you think she saw him more as part of her side of the family and her father?

B: She tried to shape him, I think, more like her father than like his father. I think there were qualities that she liked in both men. There were some qualities in Mr. Johnson that she didn't like. One of them was stopping by the saloon; she didn't like that. Now, Mr. Johnson was great with the girls, all the girls. He was a great father to the girls. They all remember how he would come to their bed in the morning and, especially Lucia, carry her in by the stove to dress so she wouldn't get her feet cold.

G: Sam Houston was quite close to his father, too, I think.

B: I think Sam probably should have been closer to his father because he was the second boy.

G: Perhaps there was--

B: Mr. Johnson apparently put more stringent controls on Lyndon than he did on Sam because Sam was little. Lyndon was nearer a man. What is there, ten years difference in their age?

G: I think a little bit less than that.

B: I don't know, but approximately a decade.

G: Anything else that his mother recalled?

B: She would tell you how she brought Lyndon up with literature and good

books and [how] she always tried to read to him out of the classics. She tried to give him, insofar as she could, a classical education, the education that she thought should do for a gentleman who she aspired to be great.

G: Do you think that she would have preferred to have seen him in some other profession than politics, say, education or the ministry?

B: Mr. Johnson said, and I think it was an honest reflection not a political statement, that he always wanted to be a teacher or a preacher or a politician. These were the guys that he had seen-- The best life they had apparently, the best period in their life, although it was a good life, was when his father was in the legislature. This was the peak. I think this is why he was interested in that. He was interested in teaching because his mother had told him about her father. He had been a teacher and the head of Baylor and secretary of state. Or was it her grandfather that was secretary of state? One of them, one Baines was. Also, the preachers were held up to the youngsters of that day and that age, in that environment, as educated men. There is a tale, I don't know where I first heard it, about how his grandfather liked to invite all the preachers over and discuss the Bible with them, and how he became an Archidelphian because the Archidelphian minister could answer questions on the Bible that his preacher, of whatever faith he was at that time, couldn't answer.

G: Let's see, Rebekah Johnson died when he was vice president, didn't she?

B: Let's see. She died I'm thinking before he became vice president. I'd have to look the year up. She died not long after the Chicago convention in which he was nominated for the first time for--I mean I think he was one of those mentioned for that job at that time.

G: Any other reflections of them together?

B: No. You could sense or feel the rapport between them when they were together or in the same room. Also, many times he'd refer back to her in talking. He'd refer back to his father, something his father had taught him or something his mother had taught him.

G: Did he seem like himself around her, or did he assume a more--

B: He seemed like a son around her.

G: Was he as flamboyant?

B: Yes, he was. Again, I think he'd always been given to pranks. Apparently, from the tales I've heard of him, even in San Marcos he had a practical joker's attitude. But he also had a love and respect of her that seemed to tone down [his behavior]. His domination seemed to be less or seemed to be less flamboyant when she was present. Were she present, he would assume a more, can we say, docile behavior. I've noticed when she was present he would escort her into the dining room. When we'd leave the family room there, or the living room or whatever you call it, he'd escort her in there in place of just walking on in like he'd normally do. But she was that kind of a woman. You knew somebody had to escort her because her dignity, her presence demanded it.

As for instance, when they were small Alice always had our boys stand up when any lady came into our room. But most of the time, nine-tenths of the time, well, all the times except when Mrs. Johnson came in she'd say, "Boys," and they would stand up until the lady seated herself. She came in from across the street, came in our front door, and the boys all bobbed up. I mean this was something that even a boy three years old was aware of, or maybe the three-year-old boy saw his two brothers do it, but the five-year-old was doing it. She looked the part, a big, regal [woman].

G: Like a queen almost.

B: Yes. She had the air. I think she'd have been just as much of a queen in New York City as she was in Austin or Johnson City. That air went with her. You've seen people like that. I think, although she [Mrs. Johnson] was a larger woman, Helen Hayes when she steps on the stage has that same dignity about her, that same carriage. I mean it was in her carriage. It was in her face.

G: Was she a contented woman ? Was she a happy woman basically?

B: I believe she was. She seemed to be. Well, like I think her collection of glass. That was a time-consumer for her, but she learned about it. When she'd go to Washington she'd spend a lot of time working on the family genealogy down at the Archives. This was again a thing, a constructive something that she was trying to do to employ her time.

G: That's fascinating.

B: But she'd go to a ladies' tea. She might not be the honoree, but

it was when she left that the other people left, not when the honoree left.

G: Did she have good political instincts?

B: She had good political instincts. I think he inherited them from both of them. I've watched her at political rallies when he was running, and she didn't go out of her way to shake hands with people. It seemed like people wanted to come up and shake her hand. She never failed to give them a nice smile, and they went away feeling like they had received an accolade. She just had that presence. She might have been some time, but I've never seen her put in a position where she was other than the equal of everybody there in her own mind.

G: I've gained an impression that she sometimes thought that politics was beneath her or beneath her son.

B: I think she thought the political arts didn't come up to his ability, but since that was his chosen work she wanted him to be the best politician he could be. And she was going to do all she could to help him.

G: She didn't mind at all the campaigning?

B: She didn't show that she minded. Now I know when you're that age that to get up and make an appearance at a ten o'clock tea is an ordeal, because she still dressed from the skin out, including corsets. You know she was wearing one because when you touched her on the waist, by gosh, you felt an old whalebone corset. I know. My grandmother wore one. My mother wore one.

G: That's amazing.

B: A steel [or] bone corset.

G: Did she ever express a preference that he had gone into something else?

B: She always spoke with affection of when he was teaching school and pointed out how well-liked he was, how his former students still got in touch with him and former administrators got in touch with him.

G: Did she see him as a restless boy or a restless young man at all?

B: She described him as very restless, and she also said that she did her best to point him in the direction that she thought he would achieve things in getting him to go back to school. She just didn't think he could achieve his best without an education. [She told] how she had called the president of San Marcos to arrange for him to go to school down there when he went back. When Mr. Johnson told it he did all the arranging, but the first time she told me about it I based it that she had done about as much arranging as he had done. Of course, we all like to make ourselves appear the hero of the day.

G: Anything else you want to talk about today? Any good anecdotes that you haven't told us?

B: I told you the one about the door, and I thought that was a classic remark, "Staff work like this cost me the election." He didn't say incompetent, he said, "Staff work like this cost me that election." Hell, I wasn't working on his staff then, but I got the idea that he thought it was a poor thing for me to do [to] walk away from that hotel suite without checking that key to see if it would turn the lock.

But, oh, his regard for people on his staff and their problems

was always great. He had a party on December 22, 1960, for all the secretaries and key members of their staffs, and it was at that--it was a little cocktail dinner in the White House mess--when I got word that my father had died. Now bear in mind it's Christmas. He knew I wasn't going home. Johnson already knew that, knew I didn't have any reservations to go home. I walked over and told him and Udall that my father had died and I was going to go home and pick up Alice and we were going to start for Texas. By the time I had gotten home he had gotten hold of Marvin Watson, I guess, because Marvin called Alice and told her that they had already checked the airlines and there wasn't any plane out that had space on it, and that the courier plane was going down to the Ranch the next day bringing some stuff prior to his visit. [He said] the staff car would be at our house at whatever time we said to take us out to Andrews to get on the courier plane, and it would stop at Carswell and let us off. Well, this was great. This was transportation when I didn't know how I'd get here unless I chartered a plane.

When we got to Carswell the General's car was waiting, and it took me straight [home]. I came down in the Jetstar and Jim Cross flew it, and by nine o'clock, nine-thirty that morning I was at home. My boys came over to my mother's home and said, "What's that Carswell car and those two sergeants doing out there in front of the house?" I said, "My God, are they still there?" They had helped us carry the baggage in, and I had thanked them. I went out to the car and I said, "Were you all assigned to me?" They said, "We are at

your disposal, Mr. Boatner. The General said we were to stay with you to provide you wheels." I said, "Well, I've got plenty of wheels now; I don't need you. Tell the General how much I appreciate it, and I will call him and tell him." Then they said, "One other thing he told us to tell you was whenever you wanted the courier plane to take you back to Washington to let him know, and he'd have it routed through." Then I hadn't told him [President Johnson] when the funeral was going to be, but they had checked up and at the funeral was a big wreath from the President and Mrs. Johnson. It's things like this that, while he didn't personally do it, I know that if he hadn't had a staff member around he would have done it. Because it was his instigation that did it.

And another thing, he always liked to find out all about people. He was asking me about Amon Carter, and I told him about Amon Carter's Christmas lists. He knew about those. But one thing people don't generally know [is that] I had to get a list of the children in the various orphanages in Fort Worth and the old folks' homes, and Mr. Carter always delivered five dollar bills to them anonymously at Christmas. So I told him this. This was early when I went up there. Let's see, I joined the staff on August 1, 1961, and this must have occurred in August, that he was asking me about Mr. Carter and I told him. Well, along about December 2 or 3 he stopped by my desk one day and said, "Charlie, find out how many people are in the Old Soldiers' Home, how many will be there at Christmas time." So I called out to the home in Washington and found out how many would

be there, this is Christmas of 1961, and he got a list of them, had their names put on envelopes [containing] five dollar bills, didn't say who it was from and delivered [the envelopes] out there to them. He had a little extra money to take care of at this time, and this is what he did with it.

G: That's something.

B: I don't know whether he ever did it again, whether he continued to do it or might have done it previously, but I'm inclined to think that he got the idea from what I'd told him. Mr. Carter always contended that that gift did him more good than any other gift he made because it was done just between him and the Lord and with no publicity.

G: That's amazing. Year after year it must have involved a lot of money, too.

B: It did, but he always did it. One year over at the paper he ended up with too much money, so he gave us a second bonus. He gave us a bonus about a month before Christmas and said he still made too much profit so he gave everybody another week's bonus on Christmas Eve. But his salaries were so damned low that he could do that. (Laughter) I'll try to think of some more at lunch, but right now that one money thing. . . .

Then there were things that he did for various staff members. I might have told Joe about this one. We were in Lubbock. He met my youngest son who was in school there, and he said, "When are you coming to Washington to see your dad and mother?" And Arvel said, well, he had just hit me up for the money for a tux so he wouldn't

come. Have I told that story?

G: That's a good one.

B: We went all through the San Antonio episode, then Henry Gonzalez called him. But the way he remembered all that, and then going home that night I told the chauffeur to take me by the house. "No," [said Johnson,] "We're going out to the house to get that tux for him." The boy has still got the tux; he still wears it. [It is] midnight blue, and now it's really in style. It was lighter blue. And Lyndon Johnson's name is on the inside pocket. That's what he likes about it. He was always concerned about the girls.

Oh, one thing. I rented this house up there. I was still living at 4040, but the grass was, my God, that high in the yard and I just hated it. The people had moved out and they weren't taking care of it, and I didn't know how to get a yardman. So one Sunday there I said, "Gene, where's the lawnmower? I want to go over to my house and mow some grass." He said, "Down in the garage." So I was getting the lawnmower out, taking it out. "Charlie! What are you doing with that lawnmower?" [asked] this voice from upstairs. I said, "I'm going to borrow it." "Who said you could borrow it?" I said, "Gene said I could borrow it." "Well, goddamn it, I own that lawnmower. Why don't you ask me?" I said, "I didn't know whether you owned the lawnmower or not." He said, "I know what I own, and I own that lawnmower." I said, "Mr. Vice President, may I borrow your lawnmower to go cut the grass on my house on 32nd Street that's disgracing the whole block?" "How close is it to my

old house on 32nd Street?" I said, "About a block away." "You get over there and cut that yard. I don't want anybody to know a staff member of mine . . . . What's Gene doing? Why can't he go over and help you?" I said, "Gene's busy helping Zephyr."

G: That's great. He didn't miss much, I suppose.

B: He heard me, I imagine, to cause him to look out and see me loading that lawnmower into the back of my car. It was something else, but he did. And he asked me two days later if I'd gotten through with the yard, if I needed some time off to go mow it. I told him I'd mowed the front and most of the back.

Then on Sundays, too, he'd go out [to Horace Busby's]. Buzz had this place twenty miles out of Washington, out there on the farm. It was an old farmhouse, and they'd fixed it up beautifully. He liked to go out there and lay down on the veranda and sleep or relax. Buzz came, and he'd wake up and he'd want to talk. He'd tell Buzz to call two or three people; he liked an audience.

Oh, yes, one other tale. I don't think he was doing it deliberately to impress, but it did. He always invited everybody to stay for dinner in his retirement, and he'd invite all day long. During the day, people would call him from other places and he would refuse the call until dinner time, and just before we'd go into dinner he'd go out to a phone and he'd tell the Secret Service to start his calls. All during dinner he'd talk to the head of Mayo's or he'd talk to Laurance Rockefeller or he'd talk to senator this or congressman that or Ehrlichman or John Connally--all during

dinner.

G: That's amazing.

B: But if it were something important about ranch business, like selling cattle, he'd make that call after dinner when he could get Dale on the phone. He and Dale would get on the phone, and Dale would sit there and write "too low" or "too high" or "not enough" or "get ten dollars more a head" or "a thousand" and scramble it over to him.

G: But you witnessed the thing on the calls.

B: Oh, yes, every damned time you'd go down there it'd be the same thing. He was on, as you know, several boards, like for the National Geographic. Grosvener or somebody would call him, or General LeMay on the board would call him, or the board at Mayo's. He was trying to raise money for Mayo's and doing a good job of it. And then various members of the Democratic Party would call him or so on. Other interests that he had [were] cattle interests, banking interests. But he'd get all those calls accumulated, and, he'd probably tell them to start the calls in fifteen minutes. He ate lightly and quickly, and while you were still eating but he was already through he'd start these calls. The dinner table conversation of course, stopped, and all you could hear was these calls. But I think it was great; I think he was a showman, and he was using these to show his not inconsiderable influence still on the government and on the processes of the United States. He'd do it at lunch time, too, if he had any guests. He'd take some calls at lunch.

G: That's a good episode. Anything else?

B: No. Something else might come to me, but I don't think. . . .

G: We'll do another session.

B: We better get something to eat. (Interruption).

B: The day came to prepare the burial place for the President in the cemetery. The Army had taken over, as it is supposed to do, in preparing a place for its commander-in-chief. They'd brought down, I thought, a whole division of people in the rain and the sleet and the freezing temperatures. We went down to the cemetery to see what they were doing there, or preparing to do, and they had the gravedigging machinery two spaces removed from Mother Johnson. The President no less than a dozen times had pointed out to me: "Charlie, I want to be buried right there," and [he would] point to the space next to his mother. So I asked the Colonel in charge why the machine was located where it was, were they going to move it over. He said, "No, this is the proper place to dig the grave. The man is placed, and the woman is placed on his right side as you look at them." In other words, Mrs. Johnson, Bird, would have been between Mother Johnson and the President. This was just the reverse of what the President wanted. I told the Colonel, and he said that he couldn't do anything about it. I told him that this was National Park Service property, and he couldn't dig. So we were at a stalemate. I told him that the President had told me repeatedly where the grave was to go, and the grave was to go there. He said he'd have to see his general.

The General came over in the rain, and I explained it to the General. The General said, "What's your authority?" I told him what my authority was, and he said, "I'll have to have you identified." I said, "All right, sir, go right ahead, but you're not going to dig any graves until you dig it in the right place." So he said, "Who can identify you?" I said, "I understand you were taking some instructions from Larry Temple. He can tell you." Well, they called and Larry, who was Mrs. Johnson's representative, came down. The General told Larry what the situation was, and Larry said, "If Mr. Boatner says, 'Dig it next to Mother Johnson,' dig it next to Mother Johnson." That settled that argument.

They got down, as I estimated, five-and-a-half feet, and the machine's digging bucket struck metal. The operator pulled back and jumped down in the hold to be sure that he was right, and he said, "It's a pipe! a big pipe!" It's dusk, and down in the hole it's dark. I said, "Does it run lengthwise or crosswise to the grave?" He said, "Lengthwise, right down the center." Then I thought, "We'll have to remove it." I got a walkie-talkie and called Lawrence Klein, the ranchman of all work, with his cutting torch down there. He turned off the irrigation water, cut the section of pipe out, and we later relocated the line. But when Lawrence came out of the hole I said, "Lawrence, did the President know that that pipe was there?" He said, "Yes, sir." I said, "How do you know?" He said, "Well, he was here and located it, how we should bring it through the cemetery." It's my firm belief that

one of the last little jokes that the President thought that he'd play on his staff was locating that line lengthwise to that grave and then wondering how we would handle the digging of the grave when we hit that pipe.

G: That's something. Did he indicate why he wanted, any elaborating of why to be buried between his mother and his wife?

B: He wanted to be buried next to his mother and with his wife on the other side, and said, "Then I'll be between the two women whom I loved and who loved me, and we'll be there together."

G: That's interesting. Thank you. (Interruption)

G: Okay, we're on.

B: You might start in with your first meeting with Lyndon and how you got associated with him in the NYA. Say what your name is and so forth for the transcriber.

Z: I'm Tony Ziegler, and my first contact with LBJ was through C. N. Avery in Austin. Avery had been Congressman Buchanan's campaign chairman for years. So I had worked for Texas Quarries stone company, and Avery was one of the officials of this company. C. N. happened to be in Washington the day that LBJ was appointed state director of the National Youth Administration for Texas, and LBJ told me later that after he got his appointment he went down to the dining room there in the house and C. N. Avery tapped him on the shoulder and said, "I've got a friend by the name of Tony Ziegler that would like to have a job. I'd like for you to interview him when you get ready to hire down in Texas." LBJ told me that, that C. N. tapped

him on the shoulder. So I had an interview then with LBJ and he hired me.

Then we'd work late very night. We was working on the student aid part of it then, so a lot of times we'd be there at eleven or twelve o'clock at night. LBJ would come by or be there and sign the payrolls and send them on in to the WPA at Austin, who processed them and sent them their checks. I guess after about six weeks one day LBJ asked me to go to San Antonio with him, and he said, "Ask you wife if she wouldn't like to go. I'll take Lady Bird and we will the four of us go to San Antonio. We'll go over to the WPA and work out some deals over there, and then we'll have dinner together and come on back." We had a very enjoyable evening, and we got accomplished in San Antonio what we wanted to accomplish. We got home that evening and Catherine, my wife, told me, "Tony, that man some day is going to be president of the United States." I said, "Why? What makes you think so?" She said, "I don't know, I can just feel it. When I hear him talk, I can just feel it." So later on Catherine told Lady Bird about it. Then through the years we met them in Washington, and we would go up there about every year. When they were living at the Perle Mesta home we were invited out, and the last thing Catherine said to Lady Bird [was]: "Lady Bird, the next time we come to Washington you will all be in the White House." She said, "Oh, that couldn't be." So sure enough, the next time we were in Washington they were in the White House.

G: What was your function in the NYA?

Z: My function in the NYA? At first I was working on the student aid, and then in the fall just before the start of 1936 LBJ sent me to Wichita Falls to open a district office in Wichita Falls, Texas. Then something interesting. I'd been there about, oh, probably a week or ten days, and LBJ sent Sherman Birdwell around to check on the boys and see if we were getting anybody to work. You see the OPA [WPA] had assigned the youth and they had to pay for them, and we had to keep time on the youth. In other words, it was a deal where they had more work than they could do, and then it was talking them into taking on this extra work of NYA. So Sherman Birdwell came up there one Sunday night. I'd talked to a couple of girls at the OPA [WPA] personnel office and they said they'd work on Sunday night, and the personnel director said he would.

B: That's the Birdwell ranch family?

Z: No, Sherman Birdwell. He owned an interest in the Cook Funeral Home in Austin. I think he still does. But he'd been a friend of LBJ's for a long, long time. So Sherman got up there on the train from Fort Worth and Denver and got in about nine-thirty or ten o'clock that night. He knew our office was in the radio building in Wichita Falls, up on the sixth floor. So he said when he got off the train and went over two blocks to the hotel he thought he'd locate the radio building, and he located the radio building. It was just two blocks from the hotel. He saw lights up there on the sixth floor, so he came up. There was about seven people from OPA [WPA] working for

NYA there at ten o'clock on Sunday night. He said, "Well, I'll have a good report then to give to LBJ. I'll take out early in the morning, and I can get an extra day's work in." He said, "You know, LBJ never wants us to waste a minute if we can keep from it."

G: Did he ever tell you how he got that appointment, who influenced his getting the NYA directorship?

Z: No, he never did tell me. Congressman Buchanan was the chairman of the Appropriations Committee; I'm sure he had something to do with it.

G: He used to refer to these people who were with him in these days as NYA boys, people who had gone back--

Z: Yes.

G: Who else did this include? I know that Jake Pickle was involved then and Ray Roberts.

Z: Ray Roberts, Albert Brisbin--he lives in San Antonio now. I don't know how many. There couldn't be too many of those. That was written the last full day he was in office, and see, he goes clear back to NYA days.

G: Yes. Sure is.

Z: I'll get you to see that charter.

G: What was unique about Texas that was lacking in other NYA states? What really distinguished the program that he directed in Texas?

Z: I think one of the big things was getting sponsors to sponsor projects. In other words, not let Uncle Sam pay for it all, let the cities and counties put some money in it, too. Because LBJ always told me, "The more money or interest or time you can get

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somebody in on something and then get their names in the paper, they'll help you just that much more, see? But they've got to be a part of it." For instance, later on we had a project, a girls residence center over at Mineral Wells, and the city of Mineral Wells put money in it, I think about fifty or sixty dollars a month. The school district put some money in it, and the city also furnished the water free. Then Jack County and Young County and Palo Pinto County, those three counties' commissioners all put money in and sent the girls from their counties in there. In other words, all together we had about two hundred dollars a month coming in with about six different sponsors. We really tied in there, you see.

Now one of the things where Texas led off fast, too, was in roadside parks. LBJ sold the State Highway Department on the roadside picnic parks. Also, in Wichita Falls--and it's still standing there--we built a three-and-a-half mile cement sidewalk along the state highway from the edge of Wichita Falls out to where there was a school out there so these kids would not have to walk on the highway. They could walk on that concrete. The State of Texas and Mr. Woodard's supervisor up there, the State Highway Department chairman, furnished all the materials and all, and all that the National Youth Administration did was furnish the labor. They built several iron bridges, and they taught a couple of our boys how to weld when they built these iron foot bridges. But I'd say he got a lot of people to work right quick.

G: He seemed to identify, I suppose, with the New Deal.

Z: Oh, yes. Yes, yes.

G: Could you sense an admiration for President Roosevelt on his part then?

Z: Yes. Yes, yes.

G: Really?

Z: Yes, there wasn't any question about that.

G: Can you recall anything in particular that he might have said?

Z: No. Once in a while he would refer to him as the Chief and how he wanted us to help these underprivileged youngsters.

G: I believe Mrs. Roosevelt made a tour of some of the Texas projects. Were you on hand then?

Z: Yes. She dedicated the little chapel up here at Denton. You know about that I guess. I was there for the dedication of that. Of course that wasn't in my district; I didn't have anything to do with that. That came under Dallas.

B: Tony, when President Roosevelt would make a fireside chat, would Mr. Johnson remind you all that the President was going to speak that night--

Z: Yes, a lot of times he would. Yes.

B: --or point out in memos later what the President had said that pertained to your program?

Z: Yes, he did that.

G: What were some of the worst problems that you faced with the NYA? Do you remember anything in particular that was challenging, too,

other than just getting people to work?

Z: The big thing was getting people to work. In other words, you didn't have your own organization to get aboard, you had to depend on talking somebody else out of it.

G: Right. Can you recall any particular problems he might have had, say, with the national office or any of the other state agencies?

Z: Well, the other state agencies--

G: I mean federal agencies, I should say.

Z: Federal and state agencies, too, that we were supposed to work with to LBJ never worked fast enough. They always took too much time. In other words, "We ought to have that done and be on something else by now," see? He was a driver. He wanted to get this done and get that done and do this and do that.

G: Did Aubrey Williams ever come down during this period?

Z: Yes.

G: What were your impressions of him?

Z: I thought that he was a very smart man. In my association with him I liked him. He was dedicated to the job he was doing; I mean, he wasn't just working at a job, he was really interested.

G: One of the things I've read about the Texas NYA that was unusual was the program that prepared Negroes for college. It was sort of a summertime prep course. Do you recall that sort of a Head Start for blacks graduating from high school and going into college?

Z: No, I don't remember too much. I know we had these residence centers. We had one down in Inks Dam and one out at Ranger. We

had them scattered all over the state where they learned what in NYA we called "work experience" instead of skills, in other words, where they had welding and radio and that. Sometimes the state furnished the instructors and sometimes NYA furnished the instructors, you know.

G: Well now, Senator Wirtz was on that NYA board, Alvin Wirtz.

Z: Yes, Alvin.

G: Did you have much contact with him?

Z: Yes, sir. He attended a lot of our meetings in Austin.

G: Did he?

Z: Yes.

G: What was his role? How did you see his relationship with Lyndon Johnson?

Z: More or less an adviser, just like Robert B. Anderson from up at Vernon, who was secretary of treasury at that time. He was on his committee, too.

G: Generally, what sort of advice would they give? In what kind of situations?

Z: Just, I'm sure, suggestions for projects, and LBJ was letting them know what was being accomplished on these various projects.

G: I've gotten the impression that Senator Wirtz was his early political mentor, that he gave him a lot of good insights into politics.

Z: Yes. I'm sure of that. Now I worked in two of LBJ's campaigns. I was working for the government, resigned my job and went to work in the campaigns. And Bob Anderson, up at Vernon, wrote a lot of his speeches. He was an excellent speechwriter, Bob was, and Bob

would try them out on me then.

G: Which campaigns were these?

Z: That was that first one.

G: For Congress in 1937?

Z: No.

G: Or 1941, the Senate race?

Z: Forty-one, the Senate race, yes.

G: What did you do in that campaign?

Z: I would work with the newspapers and then help set up these. . . . For instance, in this last one, you see, he was going by helicopter. And for instance, I'd go over to Mineral Wells and help. I always had two sound systems. Of course one, you know, is liable to go haywire. So promote two sound systems, so--

G: A backup.

Z: --when he spoke you'd have a backup with you. He'd pat me on the back for that. He said, "Old Tony, he's got another one there, so if this one [breaks down] we got another one to stand on." In those days, in jerking them around in cars and that, they could come apart.

G: Do you have any particular recollections of the 1941 campaign when he ran against W. Lee O'Daniel? First of all, his decision to run, were you involved in any of this?

Z: No, I wasn't there.

G: Did you travel with him during that campaign?

Z: Just in the counties around Fort Worth.

G: I see.

Z: Maybe out a hundred, a hundred and fifty miles, like to Wichita Falls. He had me out to take straw polls for him, and he taught me how to take them.

G: How did you do that?

Z: You figure out a town, and then you figure out the percentages of people. In other words, the silk stocking roll, you want to get so many out there, and so many union, you see, and so many Negro where they lived, and the Mexicans where they lived, then you average that all together and you take a poll, and if you're getting about 90 per cent of the vote you're doing awfully good. See what I mean?

G: Sure.

Z: Yes. That was interesting. When he was elected president I made them for about twenty-two counties that I was working, and I didn't miss it over 3 per cent on any county that I had taken these polls in.

G: That's awfully good.

Z: I sent them to Cliff Carter. You remember him. Or have you heard of him?

G: Sure. Well, back to the NYA. Can you recall his decision to resign the directorship in order to run for that congressional seat after Congressman Buchanan died?

Z: Yes. He had told the boys in the Wichita Falls papers and the boys in the Abilene paper. They knew that some day he was going to run for Congress because he told them. In other words, he was trying to get the newspapers to back him, which they did, when he ran for

the Senate later. They were both Harte-Hanks papers.

G: But did he tell you that he was going to resign to run for Congress?

Z: No, he didn't tell me.

G: He didn't.

Z: I just saw it once. . . .

G: Yes. I just wondered if you knew of his decision to. How about Mrs. Johnson during this period, was she supportive of him actively.

Z: Yes, all the way through. Yes.

G: Did she prove to be an asset, and if so, how?

Z: Yes, very much of an asset. She could talk for him. You see, she has a degree in journalism, though, from the University of Texas. She's a good writer, and she's just a smart person. I'm an old German candle maker.

G: Well, this is a letter thanking you for a German candle.

Z: Yes, and for twenty years, see. We still send her one every year.

G: That's something.

Z: We were down to the party they had down there about a month ago, and I saw a lot of the old NYA boys then, Bill Deason, I guess. Have you talked to him?

G: No, but I'm planning to.

Z: Now Bill should be able to help you a lot. Of course, he was what I'd call a third man. See, Jesse Kellam was the first, and then Bill Deason.

G: After LBJ resigned and took the seat in Congress, and I believe Jesse Kellam took over, did the NYA change any in terms of its direction?

Z: No, it was just same way. Jesse's a hard worker, too, just like LBJ.

G: Is he?

Z: Yes.

G: Did LBJ continue to have an involvement with the NYA, or did he leave that to Jesse?

Z: He left more of that to Jesse after he took over.

G: Did he?

Z: Yes.

G: You didn't have to worry about him showing up to see if you were [working]? Anything else on the NYA days that you remember?

Z: No.

G: Did you ever meet his parents back then?

Z: Yes, I met his daddy and his mother, too. He used to have a sister who lived here in Fort Worth, and his mother used to ride up here with me a lot. I stayed in Wichita Falls until after he was elected to Congress, and after he was elected to Congress then Jesse Kellam moved me down here. The man quit, and I came down here and took over. Then they did away with the Wichita Falls office; then they were, you know, kind of combining them after they got it running good.

G: Sure. Do you have any particular recollections of his father?

Z: No. His father was a big man like he is I remember, and his daddy had a good sense of humor as I remember it. I wasn't around his daddy too much. I was around his mother more than that. Now his

mother used to always save all the newspaper clippings. I used to save a lot of those for her. Anything about LBJ she liked to keep.

G: I suppose you saw him in later life. After he became president and everything.

Z: We had dinner at the White House.

G: Did he like to reminisce about the old days?

Z: Yes. You can tell that by that letter he wrote me on that last day. I'm just a small potato, but there's not many men that would from 1935 up until a couple of years ago remember a person like that on their last day when they were going out. But he evidently was thinking about NYA or he would never have written me a letter. And one thing--of course, I'm not bragging when I say it, but I think you can check with Jesse Kellam or Bill Deason on this--I always got more sponsor's contributions than any of the other boys, and LBJ liked that, getting people involved in it, you see.

G: Anything else you want to add?

Z: No, I believe that's about all.

G: If you think of anything else, you can add it later.

Z: Okay.

Tape 3 of 3

G: We're on again. We were discussing Sam Rayburn's attitude toward LBJ accepting the vice presidential nomination in 1960.

B: Let me go back to when Sam Rayburn came out to the convention. The Texas delegation was put in at the New [International] Clark

Hotel, which was across the plaza and a half a block up from the Biltmore Hotel. To an old police reporter it was obvious what the new [International] Clark Hotel was; it was either a whorehouse or a place where the prostitutes who worked the Ambassador lived, or at least some of them. Well, Mr. Sam went over to see the suite that was allocated for him, and all the reporters that had arrived went along with him. He walked in and he kind of sniffed the atmosphere and looked at the decor, and we went up to the suite. Price Daniel, the governor of Texas, was in the inspection party. Mr. Rayburn went in, looked around his suite and looked back at Price, and then he sort of turned and addressed the windows and said, "I'm an old man, but I'm a powerful old man. I have never yet taken a suite in a whorehouse, and I'm not about to. Price, you move over here. I'm taking your suite at the Biltmore." Price said, "Yes, Mr. Rayburn." That was that. (Laughter) But again that afternoon the reporters interviewed Mr. Sam, and he was strictly against the idea of Mr. Johnson taking the vice presidency if Kennedy succeeded to the presidency.

So that night Kennedy was nominated, we went back to the Biltmore, and the place was pandemonium. I ran into Bill Kittrell, the old Dallas politico, in the lobby and I said, "Bill, what do you think of your nominee?" Bill leaned up against the wall and he said, "I can shut my eyes and he sounds like a president." I took that to mean that he had the same tomes that we'd been listening to for the last fourteen years, that is in his enunciation

that FDR had in his. But then we hunted out, checking out other rumors, checking out the vice presidency, and I ran onto a report that Mr. Rayburn had changed positions and was now going to recommend to Mr. Johnson that he take the vice presidency. I saw Ed Jamieson, who worked for our bureau in Washington, Bascom Timmon's Agency--they represented the Star-Telegram, the Nashville Tennessean, a number of other papers--and Ed had heard the same thing from different people.

So we found Mr. Rayburn and asked him. He admitted that it was true, that he had recommended to Mr. Johnson that the offer was to be made he understood, [that] the only way the party could succeed in gaining the White House was to have Johnson in there as vice president, and that he had done a reversal in his position. Later I heard that there had been a meeting of powers in the Democratic Party, and that this was the conclusion that Rayburn had conveyed to Mr. Johnson. That's all I can tell you about that.

G: Yes. Did you learn any more about the meeting or who was there?

B: No, I never did bother to. I accepted it as fact. I think I had seen Mr. Farley and Mr. Rayburn with their heads together on the floor. I can't confirm it, but I heard it. Ed Jamieson told me that he got it directly from Jim Farley. I got mine from a member of the Johnson staff.

(Interruption)

B: Wait a minute. Let's see if you think it would pay off.

G: Well, we can take it out. I think sometimes if you tell it the first time, it's usually richer than going back.

B: Oh, you're implying that I edit my own thinking, eh? For conciseness. Mrs. [Sam Ealy] Johnson was telling me of her first visit to Lyndon and his bride in Washington, and they were living at the hotel that was across the street from the depot. Tony, what's the name of it? The Democrat headquarters was there? At any rate, they had a little apartment there. Not on the sub-basement, but you walk in and. . . .

G: In the Dodge Hotel, was that it?

B: What?

G: Was it the Dodge Hotel?

B: Dodge. Dodge House. They had this little apartment there, and Lyndon had invited another man over to dinner. Mrs. Johnson was there, but she was going out to dinner. Mother Johnson was telling me the story; she said, "Bird went to the store and came back"-- this was probably one of the first house guests--" with three pork chops." Mother Johnson looked at the three pork chops and she said, "I looked at my daughter-in-law, and I said, 'Darling, what are you going to do if one of the men decide they want a second helping of meat? I think really you ought to have another pork chop just in case or if they want to split it." Bird said, "Well, there are just three of us; I got three pork chops." But Mrs. Johnson said she said, "I understand that reasoning perfectly. I know that you're trying to live within Lyndon's income, but in

this case I still believe, Darling, that whenever you have guests it's better to have another pork chop." She said she left it at that, but she noticed that some time while she was bathing and getting ready to go out that Bird had gone to the store again and gotten another pork chop.

G: That's a good story.

B: She, of course, had earlier indicated that she endeavored to give Bird those things from her experience that she felt that Bird hadn't got from being raised by a father and two brothers. So that's the story.

(Interruption)

Z: [It was] the early part of NYA days, and President Franklin D. Roosevelt was visiting in Texas and was making a trip from Fort Worth to Dallas. LBJ arranged to have a bunch of the boys working on the highway, and he was there with them when President Roosevelt and his caravan went by.

B: Tony, did he have any sign up, that this was the NYA or not?

Z: I'm sure he did. I wasn't here, you see, I just heard about it. I wasn't down here, but I'm sure he did. I know they had their shovels, and they were working when he went by.

G: I believe Mr. Boatner made mention of LBJ getting his staff together in the evenings and having poker games or something and talking about the day's work or what needed to be done.

B: Next day's work.

Z: Yes. I've sat in on some of those sessions.

G: Can you describe them? What were they like?

Z: They were just trying to figure out if a certain project was coming along as fast as it should be, you know, or what was holding it up or why we couldn't get this done sooner or that sooner.

B: In other words, he would combine a brainstorming session with--

Z: With ideas. He always wanted [to know]: "Have you got any ideas?"

B: --a little relaxation at the poker table.

Z: Yes, yes. "How are you going to do this better? Is there any way we can do it better, or quicker?"

B: In those days, Tony, did he have a group of social friends and then a group of workers, or did he do his socializing with his staff?

Z: Not all of it. He went to parties where I don't think any of the boys who worked for him were.

B: But he did socialize a whole lot with his staff?

Z: Yes, yes.

B: He took you and your wife--

Z: --to San Antonio for dinner that night, yes.

G: Okay.

[End of Tape 3 of 3 and Interview IV]

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