

INTERVIEW I

DATE: June 4, 1985

INTERVIEWEE: ROLAND BOYD

INTERVIEWER: Michael L. Gillette and Dave McNeely

PLACE: Mr. Boyd's office, McKinney, Texas

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M: --ran across Lyndon Johnson and Sam Rayburn and kind of begin it from the ground up.

One thing that was interesting to me, which I hadn't known until we got up here, was that this was the spot where Lyndon Johnson's mother was born. I was curious whether you had any knowledge of the Johnson family from that direction.

B: Yes, in a way. What got me interested in politics was after getting my law degree and coming to McKinney, Horace Neilson, the county attorney, asked me to be his assistant, after I had been here a year. So I did. A young lawyer couldn't make a living then, and that was an opportunity for me to get married, if I was his assistant and make the tremendous sum of a hundred and thirty-eight dollars and fifty cents a month. I was his assistant for four years and then decided I would run for county attorney. Then they called it county attorney; the title was changed to criminal district attorney after I was elected. So I became very interested in politics at that time, running my own race.

M: What year were you elected?

B: I was elected in--well, let me see, 1938. I was elected the year Bill Boyd was born.

I spent a great deal of time studying the county, both in order to select jurors, as well as to manage to get acquainted with every community. So I felt like I could get the majority of the votes in the county for any office I wanted to run for at that time. The

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county [Collin County] is my home, it's been the home of my family since 1853 on both sides of the family. So I've always had an extremely warm feeling towards this county.

M: When did you first begin to have I guess a political relationship and a personal relationship with Sam Rayburn and Lyndon Johnson?

B: Well, Avery Dowell had been Sam Rayburn's campaign manager in this county for years. I don't know how well acquainted you all were with the Fourth District during Sam Rayburn's days. The local people selected the Rayburn campaign manager. They, of course, cleared it with him, but it was who they wanted to be his representative, because they didn't want to take any chance on him not being elected.

So Avery Dowell became ill and twelve of the leaders in McKinney asked me if I'd come to Dudley Perkins' office one night, and we did. I was the only young man there; the other people were up in years and [were] the leaders in the community. So Dudley or the mayor, I guess the mayor said, "Now, we all know that Avery Dowell is no longer able to take care of Sam Rayburn's interests in this county. The purpose of this meeting is to select someone to manage his affairs in the county." So they started around the room at my right. Well, this one had had a heart attack; he couldn't do it. The next one, well, he was in bad health; he couldn't do it. It went all the way around. No one could do it; every one of them had a valid reason. Well, that left me. So they said, "Well, Roland, you're his manager in this county." I said, "Well, I believe I've been framed up on." (Laughter) But I was delighted, and from then on I took care of his interests here and developed a very close relationship with him.

G: When you say take care of his interests, what did that include?

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B: Well, I'd read the papers and saw what the issues were. People would come to my office if they had anything against him. If they thought he was making a mistake, they'd come to my office. If they were strong for him, they would come to my office and discuss it with me. And I would stay in touch with him on the telephone or through the mails and tell him just exactly what the issues were, what issues were important.

M: What year was that that you took over looking after his business?

B: I'll have to think a minute. I guess it was about 1934 or something like that. [1942, according to son, Bill Boyd]

M: So this was well before you became county attorney?

B: No. No, it wasn't. I'd have to give that some thought. I'll figure that out and be accurate about it. I can't be, right now.

(Interruption)

G: When did you first meet Lyndon Johnson?

B: It was through Mr. Rayburn. I guess it was in the 1952 convention.

M: You were not involved in his race in 1941 for the U.S. Senate?

B: Yes, I was a county campaign manager.

M: But hadn't met him necessarily?

B: No. Well, I guess it was in that race that I first met him.

G: Anything on that race in your county that you recall of significance? He ran against W. Lee O'Daniel and Gerry Mann and Martin Dies.

B: No, I scarcely knew Lyndon at that time. I ran on the same ballot with W. Lee O'Daniel when he was elected governor and I was the only person that got more votes than W. Lee

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O'Daniel did in Collin County. I've always been very proud of that fact, because he swept the entire state.

G: Do you recall what Sam Rayburn's posture was in that 1941 Senate race with Mann and Johnson and W. Lee O'Daniel?

B: Well, Mr. Rayburn was friendly with Lyndon due to Lyndon's father. They'd been in the Texas Legislature together. But he was interested in his own politics; he tried to stay out of the other races.

G: Did he have a favorite in that race?

B: Well, I'm not sure, but I would imagine he voted for Lyndon. But if I recall correctly, he didn't make any statement about who he supported.

M: How about then when Lyndon ran in 1948, in the election in which he finally made it to the Senate, were you involved in that, I presume?

B: Yes, as a delegate to the state convention. Now, during the time--that was the Coke Stevenson election I believe.

M: Correct.

B: Senator Wallace Houston was a lawyer here in town, and he was very close to Coke Stevenson and he was doing everything he could against Lyndon. So before then, when Coke had been elected [governor], I had asked the senator, since he was a state senator in Austin and knew the state very well, how he could explain the bloc voting in South Texas. He said, "Roland, I know you think it's corrupt"--that's when Coke was getting the bloc votes--"but really it's the most wholesome thing on earth." I said, "Please explain to me, Senator Houston, how it happens." He said, "Well, those Latin Americans, it doesn't make

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any difference to them who wins, and if the local banker will loan them money, then they find out who the local banker is for and that's who they're for. There's not a thing on earth corrupt about it."

So then after the 1948 race when Lyndon had gotten all these bloc votes I said, "Senator, I wish you would explain to me, I know you understand about the bloc voting in South Texas, just how does it happen?" He said, "Roland, it's the most corrupt thing that ever hit the state." (Laughter)

M: He changed his tune, huh?

B: Yes. It was entirely different when Lyndon got the bloc vote.

M: You said you went to the convention. Were you involved at all in that certification process in 1948 when they chose Lyndon over Stevenson, you know, the 87-vote margin and so on?

B: Yes. I was doing everything I could. I was the delegate from this county. I don't remember whether I was the head of the county delegation, but I was very active in that.

G: Let me ask you to recall that convention, if you can, in detail.

B: Well, it was in Fort Worth. Mr. Rayburn had had a very hard race. In fact, he had several very hard races even after he was speaker. State Senator G. C. Morris from Greenville had run against him and almost beat him. That's when the people--I believe it was the drug people from Philadelphia [who] were sending all the money in here trying to beat Mr. Rayburn. They employed "Chink" Smith, Garland Smith, and put an awful lot of money here. But we got our Rayburn organization to operating and we won by just a few hundred votes is all.

Well, in the Fort Worth convention, our delegation, about eleven o'clock at night,

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[we] were walking from the Blackstone Hotel down to the Texas Hotel. Ray Roberts and I were walking along together. Going down, there were several women, Senator Houston, most of our wives were there. So as we passed a parking meter, Senator Morris had his fingers locked like this and [was] leaning up against a parking meter, and he had two or three people with him that looked like a pretty rough bunch. Ray Roberts and I were a little bit behind, and as we passed, G. C. said, "There goes the two son of a bitches right now," and Ray whirled and said, "Roland, let's whip them." I said, "Hell, Ray, we've already whipped them! We whipped them where it hurts! There are three or four of them, there's not but two of me and you." He said, "That doesn't make a damn! We can whip them!" (Laughter) I said, "You come on, you. You forget about what they said." So we walked on to the Texas Hotel. But both of us were doing everything we could to keep everybody in line and get as many votes as we could for Lyndon.

G: Was there any formula to Johnson edging out Stevenson in the convention vote?

B: I'm not sure I understand you.

G: Well, it was fairly evenly divided, wasn't it?

B: Yes, it was. I believe that one of the bloc-voting counties in South Texas, those votes went with Lyndon, and I think that pretty well decided it.

M: When that Duval County [Jim Wells County] vote came in late?

B: Yes.

M: What was it, 206 extra names, something like that, that gave Lyndon an 87-vote margin?

B: Well, you know, I wrote an account of this several years ago and sent it to the [LBJ] Library, sent it to Liz Carpenter. It's just exactly how that race was happening right here. I

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was Lyndon's county manager, and he said, "Now, Roland, you get your county organized and the minute the polls close, you be sure that all local people know the exact vote in that box so it can't be changed. Now, you get your mayor, your judges and everybody knowing exactly what the vote is. Now, don't call it in, because there are so many counties that Governor Stevenson controls that if they can find out what our vote is, they're going to win." So that went back and forth, I remember, for many hours. I don't know what happened in other counties, but I know what happened here, and I know what was supposed to have happened in every county, and that was that the local people nailed down the vote there. And one box would report, and then the Stevenson box--Lyndon knew every one of the Stevenson boxes that weren't accurate counts; he knew which boxes the votes would come from. So it went back and forth.

I don't know whether you've ever heard the story about what was happening in Austin that night. Well, this is certainly off the record. You know, Jake Pickle, his first wife--

M: Sugar [Crites]?

B: Yes. She was the daughter of a very prominent lawyer in Austin. And this is the story that I believe to be accurate. That Jake knew that her father, who was supporting Coke--Jake was working very hard for Lyndon--was playing chess with the election. So when it had finally gotten down to where it was the end of the Johnson votes and there were still some counties that they hadn't sent in, Jake knew that if he couldn't stop that that we were sunk. So he told his wife--in fact, in the beginning of that campaign he had his wife to go have dinner with her daddy every night so she could hear what was happening in the other camp

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and come home and tell Jake. He told his wife, "Now, you tell your daddy that you've just learned, that Jake has told you, that the FBI is in Austin, knowing that there is a fraud going on in this election, and they're ready to make an arrest." So they had gotten a telephone operator, Southwestern Bell, to call the Coke Stevenson office and say, "Now, Governor, you're a friend of mine. You saved my mother after my father's death. I'd do anything on earth for you. I will lose my job with Southwestern Bell if anybody ever knows that I'm making this call, but I just want to tell you that the FBI is in town and they've tapped your telephone." There weren't any more dishonest votes that came in. (Laughter) You understand why that has to be off the record.

G: Have you checked that story out? Are you fairly confident that it--?

B: I'm convinced that that's the way it happened. Now, I don't say that Jake would admit it.

M: That's interesting.

G: What was Rayburn's role in that election?

B: Well, I don't know that he had any special role in it except he was for Lyndon. Now, you know, he felt bitter towards Coke Stevenson, I'll say it that way. When Rayburn brought the--he told me [this], and this is something else that's off the record--when they brought the national leaders down here during the war and he was on the stage with Coke Stevenson, he said Coke spent all of his time on that stage trying to learn from him how he could get all the steel he needed, because he needed another windmill or two. And [Rayburn] said, "It was the most disgusting thing I ever saw, to see the Governor of Texas at that particular time, studying about [that] when he was on the stage with these national leaders and they were trying to promote the war effort." So I know that Stevenson and Rayburn were

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crossways.

G: There's a story that's told that after the [1948 primary] election, when Truman came through Texas on that whistlestop tour--and I think spent the night at Bonham, didn't he?

B: Yes.

G: [The story is told that] at the time that LBJ's fight with Stevenson was in the court of Judge Black, as a matter of fact, that Rayburn called Hugo Black. Do you have any recollection of that?

B: No, I don't. Now, I know the night you're talking about, because we went to the Rayburn home to greet President Truman. Bill--well, that was in 1948 and Bill was born in 1938, Bill was ten years old. I remember his mother saying, "Now, Bill, Mr. Rayburn is going to introduce you to the President. You be sure and don't do like most ten-year-old boys, hang your head and don't say anything. You hold your head up and you say, 'My name is Bill Boyd, Mr. President.'" So as we left, the President and Mr. Rayburn were over on the side of the room, people still going through the line to shake hands with him, and President Truman, as he saw Bill going out the door, he said, "Nice to meet you, Bill Boyd." Of course, that's been a story in our family ever since then.

G: Do you recall anything else on that train trip?

B: No. They had the rally in the football stadium at Bonham, and it was filled up. I kept up with it at the time but I didn't have any part in it.

M: What did you think of Johnson?

B: I introduced Sam Rayburn many times, and I couldn't introduce him without saying, "I don't care how you measure this man, he's one of the great men of our day." I've introduced

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Lyndon just as many times as I did Sam Rayburn. I could never say that about Lyndon.

But I said, "If you measure this man by his accomplishments, you have to admit he's one of the great leaders of our time." To get that answer, you had to measure him by his accomplishments, because he had many faults.

G: What were they?

B: Well, you know them as well as I do. He was extremely ambitious. He carried ambition to where it was a fault, I thought.

G: Can you give me an example of that?

B: I don't believe I'll go further in that direction.

G: Well, let me ask you this. You were a county manager for both men. How did your role for each one differ?

B: Well, since they were both friends--now, I always told Lyndon this, I said, "Now, Lyndon, I'm going to help you every way I can until and unless your interest conflicts with Sam Rayburn. If it does, I'm on his side." Lyndon would say, "Well, Roland, Sam Rayburn is like a father to me. I will assure you I'll never be on the side opposite Sam Rayburn." I said, "Well, as long as you make good on that, why, I'll be your friend."

M: Were there ever times when they were at cross-purposes?

B: No. Lyndon was, as I say, very ambitious. Mr. Rayburn would get a little peeved at him in the national convention, but nothing serious.

G: The first one that comes to mind is 1940 and the third-term issue, whether Roosevelt would run for a third term. Johnson and Alvin Wirtz were very enthusiastic for Roosevelt when Rayburn was a supporter of [John Nance] Garner.

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B: Yes.

G: Did this create friction between them?

B: I don't believe it was important.

G: Do you recall Rayburn being upset with Johnson as a result of the third-term [issue]?

B: Not as a result of that. And I can't give you any specific instances, but he could get upset with Lyndon. In fact, the Speaker could pretty well get upset at anybody.

G: You've talked about Lyndon Johnson's ambition. Let me ask you to continue to describe him as a politician and as a person, what he was like.

B: Well, he wanted the right answer. He wanted to have the credit for leading and getting the right answer, which is inherent in a politician's makeup.

M: Was it there to an undue degree, do you think, in Johnson?

B: It was pronounced.

G: Did he and Rayburn differ in their political philosophy? For example, would you say Rayburn was more liberal than LBJ or vice versa?

B: On some things, yes. Well, no, in the way I saw the two men there wasn't a great deal of difference. Of course, the press, they tried every way they could to picture them as different.

G: Did LBJ ask you to work in a different way politically in this county? Did he expect more of you, for example, than Rayburn had done?

B: No.

G: Did he want you to do about the same sort of thing you had done for Rayburn?

B: That's right.

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M: Were their vote totals pretty similar, like in 1948?

B: I don't remember those. I don't think there was a great deal of difference.

M: Was there pretty much linkage between the people who were going to be for Rayburn and the people who were going to be for Johnson?

B: I would say the majority of the people were supporting both of them.

G: We always hear that the oil companies, particularly big oil, would constantly oppose Rayburn. Was this the case?

B: No question about it.

G: Can you elaborate?

B: Well, he felt very much abused by the oil people. Now, there were a few exceptions to that, like Mr. [J. S.] Abercrombie in Houston was a dear friend of his. But most oil people cursed Sam Rayburn every way they could, and he was the one that was saving--he and Lyndon--the depletion allowance for them, and they'd still curse him. Well, that certainly offended the Speaker.

G: Do you know the source of their opposition?

B: The oil people?

G: Yes.

B: Well, I think I do. I think it's because of the rural, simplistic attitude that Rayburn had to every question. And the oil people, extremely wealthy people, they just couldn't equate with that. They couldn't understand why an ordinary citizen from the Fourth District that was in his office would be shown in first if he came first. That didn't sit well with them.

M: He just wouldn't kiss their ring?

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B: No, he sure wouldn't. But he was fair and had a few friends, not many friends, in the oil industry.

M: Did you ever have any falling-outs with Mr. Rayburn?

B: No. No. I'm trying to think. I'm sure I did things that he thought I shouldn't, but I was about as independent as he was.

G: Let me ask you about LBJ and the oil companies.

B: I don't believe I'd be qualified to express an intelligent opinion on that. I know he realized that in the public's eye he had to stay away from the oil fraternity to get anywhere in politics. I remember when--this letter here mentions on December 21, [1959] to come to the Ranch meeting, to get there in the early afternoon. Well, at that time--well, probably the only way to get these things in the right perspective is just tell you what happened. Cliff Carter met me at the Austin airport. He had called me and said the senator wanted me to come down and go deer hunting with him and would like for me to get there in the early afternoon. So, going to the Ranch, Cliff told me, said, "Well, the senator and Mrs. Johnson have invited the district man from every congressional district in the state." I believe there were twenty-three then. And said, "All the rest of them are coming just before dinner, but he wanted you to come early." So we went deer hunting that afternoon and just visited. I never did know why he wanted me to come early until the next morning.

So there were I believe eighteen [of us]. After dinner that night we visited in the living room, telling political stories. So then the next morning--we were assigned different bedrooms or cabins--after breakfast he said, "Well, let's all go in the new office." It wasn't completed then; it was just being built. So we sat on the saw-horses and piles of lumber

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and one thing and another. As soon as we all got in there he said, "Roland, will you tell these boys why Sam Rayburn was not president of the United States." He hadn't given me any warning, but I said, "Sure. Sure, Mr. Leader, I'll tell them." I said, "In 1944 Mr. Roosevelt, when John Nance Garner fell out with him, called Mr. Rayburn and said, "Mr. Speaker, I want you to run as my vice president." Mr. Rayburn said, "No, Mr. Roosevelt, I will not do it. The Shivercrats have control of the state of Texas. If I run, it will not do a thing on earth except embarrass you because I can't carry the state of Texas. And I don't mean to embarrass you and I don't mean to embarrass myself. Since I can't carry Texas, I will not run."

After I said that, Lyndon said, "Well, now, you eighteen men can cause me to put forth every effort to get to be president of the United States or not. I am not going to get in the position, I'm not going to run and try to get the nomination for president unless you assure me that you all will see that the state of Texas stands behind me. I don't mean to have to spend one hour campaigning in Texas. You all have got to do the campaigning for me. I want you to study a long time before you take on this obligation. If you all are unanimous in wanting me to run, and you all will assure me that each one of you will take care of your district and I won't have to worry about that, then I'll do everything on earth I can to get the nomination for president." So we discussed it. We all said we would like to do that, and he could count on us. We'd do everything it took.

So then he said, "Well, I want every one of you to go back home and start working now on the delegation that your county will send to the state convention so we can have a solid delegation in Los Angeles." And Cliff Carter said, "Well, we need some kind of

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emblem," and he said, "Now, a lot of people have wanted us to get a lapel button that is a cattle brand with LBJ on it, but that would be a mistake. We don't want Lyndon identified with the South any way we can keep it from happening. We believe that he has the best chance to get away from the South and to emphasize the West, so we believe that the western hat with LBJ on it, the bronze lapel button, [is better]." And he had a few there that this company in Fort Worth had made. And we all discussed it and decided there wasn't any question that was the best emblem. So we bought a hundred thousand dollars worth of those western hat, LBJ lapel buttons at that time. And each of us were given gold ones either then or later. There weren't but just about twenty or twenty-five made, but those gold ones became so popular when he got to be president that I guess he had them made by the thousands.

M: Now, the time period when you were down there at the Ranch for that talk, was that in 1963 after he'd become president?

B: No. He was majority leader of the Senate then. That was in December 1959.

G: Did he have any reluctance to run for president that year?

B: No, he wanted to. Yes. Because, see, he had been--well, in 1952 he'd kind of liked to have run, and in 1956 he'd kind of liked to have run. He figured that this was his time or he'd never--

G: Why did he wait so long before he announced in 1960?

B: Well, it wasn't an accident. It was planned timing, in my judgment. Now . . .

M: Did he wait until after the primary, was that the deal?

G: Well, he waited until Kennedy had long been started. Of course, he was saying at the time

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that he needed to stay and run the Senate.

B: Yes. That's what he was saying. Evidently he thought that was good politics. But we put forth a superior effort in Los Angeles and before Los Angeles, but the Kennedy boys taught us an awful lot.

G: What did they teach you?

B: Well, the first thing, their telephone communication system was in place before the convention ever started. Hell, we didn't even know we needed one until we saw what they were doing to us. (Laughter) We got ours in place in short order after we realized we had to have it. You know, the command post was the trailer moved outside the convention hall where Lyndon stayed.

Mr. Rayburn was on that delegation. Price Daniel was head of it. As they called the roll call of the states, the minute Lyndon [Kennedy] got the majority, Price Daniel--I was standing between he and Mr. Rayburn--turned to me and said, "Roland, you know who the Kennedys are going to want to run as vice president?" I said, "I don't have the slightest--"

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B: [I said], "We've fought them every way you can fight anybody. Lyndon would be the last one." He said, "Yes, Roland, but let me tell you, in fighting them we learned how smart those boys are. We learned how tough they are. They want Jack to be president of the United States and we've convinced them he can't be unless he can get Lyndon behind him."

So Nanette and I rode in the Los Angeles limousine with the Speaker from

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the--well, he first went with Governor [Luther] Hodges and had this short TV interview in one of the little rooms there about the nomination. Then we rode back to the hotel with him in the limousine. As soon as we left, I said, "Mr. Rayburn"--I told him what Price Daniel had said. He said, "Roland, what do you think?" I said, "It would be the worst mistake that Lyndon Johnson ever made. Most of our delegation feels that way. They don't want him to be on the same ticket with Jack Kennedy." He said, "Now, listen to me, Roland. What you all are overlooking is this: that when we went to the convention tonight, the Democratic Party did not have a leader; now we've got a leader, and his name is Jack Kennedy. Now, it is a fundamental principle in politics, if the leader ever says that the United States needs you and you say, 'No, I'm the majority leader of the Senate, I'm not going to run,' you're through with politics in America. It's always happened that way and it always will." So I said, "Well, I hadn't thought of it that way."

Well, the next morning Truitt and Rita Smith [?], Nanette and I had breakfast at the hotel for everybody from the Fourth District who was there, and Mr. Rayburn, it was for him. There were forty-eight people from the Fourth District that were in California. He made a nice little talk about "Well, we've got a leader now. We all close ranks, we go home and win the election." So as the meeting broke up, he said, "Roland, you and Nanette come on, go with me back to my apartment." So we went back with him. He said, "When you told me what Price said and you told me your reaction, I went to bed, I couldn't go to sleep. I just thought, well now, what if the Kennedys want Lyndon? What am I going to advise Lyndon to do?" He said, "I decided that the question might not come up, but if it does, I'm going to play hard to get. About three o'clock, my phone rang and it was Bobby Kennedy.

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And Bobby said, 'Mr. Speaker, we're out here in the suburbs someplace. Jack wanted me to come and talk to you. Jack wants Lyndon to run on the ticket with him.'

So Mr. Rayburn said, 'I'd already decided the way I was going to handle that situation when it happened, and it happened.' He said, 'Well now, Bobby, I don't know whether I'm going to advise Lyndon to do that or not.' Bobby said, 'Well, Mr. Speaker, I know it's late, but will you talk to me if I come to your apartment?' He said yes. He said, 'He came in, he was all fired up. I played hard to get. I can still see that lock of hair. He got so heated up in his argument trying to change my mind, that every time he'd try to make a point, well, that lock of hair would come down.'

He [Rayburn] said, 'Well now, let me think about this a while. If Jack Kennedy will agree to three conditions, then I will advise Lyndon to run on the ticket.' He said, 'All right, what are they?' 'Well, number one, we, the South, have been cussed in every Democratic convention. I don't mean for that to happen if I have anything to do with it. They always treat us like we're stepchildren and it's always an unpleasant experience for the South in the Democratic convention. The first thing, Jack Kennedy has got to go on nationwide television before the next session starts. He's got to look Mr. and Mrs. America in the eye and say that 'I want Lyndon Johnson on my ticket. I want him to be the next vice president of the United States.''' Bobby said, 'All right, what else?' He said, 'Well, he has got to agree that if Lyndon accepts, then he makes him a working vice president. You know, it's customary for the president to shut the vice president out of what's happening in the White House. I don't mean for that to happen to Lyndon Johnson. If he will give me his word that Lyndon will be in on all important decisions and that he will tell everybody

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and he will make"--let me see what the third one was. I'll think of it in a minute. It's slipped me right now. So then he said, "If he'll agree to those three things. I don't want you to tell me he agrees to them. I want you to go back and have him call and tell me he'll agree to them." So he did, and Mr. Rayburn advised Lyndon to do it.

Well, of course, the fight was between--for the vice presidential nomination--[Lyndon and] Symington. And I had many mutual friends who were very close to Stuart Symington. They called and asked me, "Well, we understand that Lyndon put on the campaign to get this." And I said, "He did not. I assure you he did not. I know exactly what happened." They said, "Well, there's some mighty hard feelings developing in the Symington camp. If we send a car for you, would you come out here and meet with the leaders in the Symington group and let them cross-examine you on what happened last night?" I said, "I'll be happy to." Well, they were having a big party, but we went in the bedroom; about three or four of their leaders came in the bedroom. So I said, "All right"--we started, I gave them blow by blow. They said, "Well, there's no question, we were mistaken." And you know, too, the press wrote a real nasty article about that.

M: What, about that?

B: That Lyndon had put on a campaign and double-crossed everybody. Well, I was in the Speaker's bedroom when he gave those people an interview that had written that nasty article. I think he sent them word that he wanted to talk to them after that article, and they came intending to tear his story to pieces, but they couldn't. That was the end of it.

M: Did Rayburn and Lyndon talk about that strategy of Rayburn playing hard to get?

B: No.

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M: That was Rayburn just acting totally on his own?

B: Yes. In fact, that was the way Rayburn operated.

G: Why do you think Rayburn came down on the side of favoring LBJ's acceptance of the offer?

B: He knew what it would mean to Texas. And he knew that Lyndon was a great leader if you could just keep him in the right channels.

G: Did he feel like it was a step down in power, though?

B: That was the reason that I told him that I thought it would be a mistake. That's when he said, "No. You don't realize that the reason that he has so much power right now is because one end of Pennsylvania Avenue is run by one party, and the other end is run by [the other].

If you get one party controlling the White House and the Hill, the majority leader of the Senate loses practically every bit of his influence. It's a peculiar situation that gives him the power he has now."

G: Do you think that the fact that he would be running against Richard Nixon had some influence with Rayburn as well?

B: Oh, no question about that. Mr. Rayburn was very bitter on Richard Nixon, and as subsequent events proved, he had a right to be.

G: But did Rayburn say, for example, that he wanted to help defeat Nixon and this was the way to do it?

B: Well, that was certainly his attitude. But of course, Sam Rayburn was a strong party loyalist. But also he sure believed in making that party operate [in] the best interests of the United States.

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M: I was curious about what you thought about the impact after Mr. Rayburn's death in 1961.

Did that remove perhaps a controlling influence on Lyndon?

B: I don't know. Now, I think Lyndon had matured a great deal by that time insofar as becoming a leader. The day Sam Rayburn died I was in Washington and Walter Jenkins called me at my apartment and said, "Roland, I guess you've heard that Speaker Rayburn died." I said, "Yes, my secretary just called me." He said, "Well, the Vice President is going to fly back to Texas on *Air Force One* and he would like for you to go back with him." I said, "I'll be happy to, Walter." He said, "Well, you come to the Vice President's office in the Capitol" at a certain, certain time; I believe he said eleven-thirty. I did, and he came in from I guess the Senate floor and his driver was there. And Mary Wiley McKinney [Mary Margaret Wiley Valenti] and some other person, I believe Mrs. Johnson, and Lyndon and I, we went down in the elevator and got in the car, and as we pulled out from under these steps on the Senate side of the Capitol, he said, "Driver, stop here just a minute. Roland, look there. The day that Sam Rayburn died is the day they complete the extension of the east side of the Capitol. You remember that would have never been extended if it hadn't been for Sam Rayburn. One of the hardest fights he ever had was to get the east side extended to where it would look like the national Capitol. They're taking the last scaffold down now."

We went on to Andrews Air Force Base to where *Air Force One* was--I don't know whether it stayed there all the time or not, but that's where they were to pick us up. As we crossed the Anacostia River, Lyndon picked up the phone in the back seat of the limousine and he wasn't having any luck, he couldn't get his office. After a little while, Walter

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Jenkins called him on that phone. Walter said, "Mr. Vice President, the President is on his way to the West Coast and he needs to talk to you very badly." Of course, Lyndon said, "Well, Walter, now when I hang up, I want you to call Fred [Kappel]"--or whatever the name of the president of AT&T was--"and tell him that I'll be damned if I'm going to put up with this poor telephone service. If he thinks we're going to let him try to put Telstar in orbit if he can't even make one damn telephone ring. We're going to cancel that Telstar contract that we let him have." That was his abrupt way of doing things.

G: There were a number of former presidents [there]. Let's see, President Truman was there at the funeral and President Eisenhower.

B: Eisenhower, yes.

G: Of course, President Kennedy came.

B: Yes.

G: Anything else about the funeral that you recall?

B: No. Of course, Mr. Rayburn wanted it to be the simplest that you could have. He wasn't strong on ceremony in any way.

M: You said you were at your apartment when you received the word. Did you spend a lot of time shuttling back and forth from Texas to Washington during this time?

B: Yes, I did at that time because I was national counsel for Wherry housing and that caused me to be in Washington quite a bit.

G: I want to ask you to go back to the 1960 convention. Did the people who favored LBJ's accepting the vice presidential--one, Mr. Rayburn--nomination, did they have a hard time with the rest of the Texas delegation?

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B: Oh, yes. Things were very bitter.

G: You all had raised a lot of money campaigning against Jack Kennedy--

B: Yes, we had.

G: --and now you were going to have to go out and raise some on his behalf.

B: That's exactly right.

G: Let me ask you to analyze this problem and tell me how it was dealt with.

B: Well, the quick-tempered people on the delegation just absolutely exploded, before the microphone and everywhere else. Now, I'm not going to tell you who some of them were, because they now hold pretty important positions due to Lyndon Johnson. But they were very bitter. They did everything but curse Lyndon Johnson.

G: Did Johnson ever talk to you about his position and why he [inaudible]?

B: Well, it was just mentioned casually. He was extremely ambitious. There isn't any question in my mind he wanted to be the vice presidential candidate when he lost the presidential nomination.

G: What do you think Mrs. Johnson's position was?

B: Well, she's always stood in the wings. She's a great lady if I ever saw one, and she is the one of the most intelligent people politically that I've ever had any contact with.

G: Do you think she had a preference of her own, though?

B: If she did, she didn't show it any way that I could judge her.

G: The story is told that there were two meetings between Robert Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson and his people, among them Sam Rayburn, and during one of those meetings he [Kennedy] tried to dissuade LBJ from accepting the nomination and instead being content

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with [being] chairman of the DNC or some other post.

B: I don't remember that.

G: Really?

B: I believe I would have known it if it had been that way, but I don't remember anything like that.

G: There was some opposition to it.

B: Oh, yes, sure was.

G: Did you ever have any feeling that Kennedy was having second thoughts about offering the post to Johnson?

B: No, not in any way.

M: Did he go on television as Rayburn had requested?

B: Yes, sir, he sure did. He couldn't have been more positive.

M: Have you [remembered] that third condition that he extracted from JFK?

B: No . . .

G: Was it patronage?

B: Well, I believe it was in connection with that. Yes, I think that was what it was.

M: Because he and Yarborough later I think split the judicial appointments, didn't they?

B: Yes, that was tied up for months and months. Of course Lyndon and Ralph never [did] get along on anything. That's to state it mildly.

(Laughter)

G: Any recollections of the 1960 campaign after the convention?

B: Nothing specific at this time.

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G: Do you remember the Adolphus Hotel incident?

B: Sure do.

G: Were you there in Dallas?

B: I sure was.

G: Let me ask you to recall that.

B: Well, I was trying a case in federal court in Dallas. They had this event planned, and when we adjourned court for lunch, I went to the Adolphus Hotel. [Grover] Sellers from Sulphur Springs, ex-[Texas] attorney general, and I were standing on the ledge just before you go into the ballroom, and the lobby was full of Democratic women. Lyndon and Lady Bird were coming to make an appearance at the luncheon in the main ballroom. Some of the North Dallas women outside the hotel spit on Lady Bird, and Jim Wright was sharp enough to get one of their attention and she was interviewed on television, bragging about having spit on Lady Bird.

G: What was the atmosphere of the crowd?

B: Oh, Sellers told me, said, "Roland, if you want to make this the bloodiest scene that's ever happened in Dallas County, as these North Dallas women came in the lobby just holler, 'Let's get 'em!' That'll be the bloodiest thing to ever happen in Dallas County." And people were just that mad. They felt like that not only Mrs. Johnson had been insulted, but the North Dallas people were very bitter towards the Democratic Party. Most of our people felt like the United States had been insulted.

G: Do you think LBJ sensed at the time that this had potential political advantage?

B: Well, I'd never sell him short on not sensing anything about politics, because he was usually

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way ahead of everybody else.

G: Did you sense that it was going to have a boomerang effect on them?

B: I felt like it would, if it were handled properly, and evidently our people restrained themselves pretty well.

G: Was Bruce Alger involved with this group?

B: Yes.

G: Anything else on that incident?

B: No, that really generated an awful lot of energy for the campaign, I'll tell you.

M: What did you do? You said you were standing there with Grover Sellers, you saw them spit on Lady Bird, and then what did you do?

B: Well, I just stood there. It was packed and jammed, you could hardly move. As they came in, I think they finally had to take them to the second floor on the outside up the fire escape and they came in the window, but the doors were open and everybody started into the luncheon. That's as well as I remember it.

G: Do you think that the Johnson forces prolonged the traffic and getting through the crowd in order to get as much film time as possible?

B: It wasn't obvious if they did. I'm not saying they didn't, but it wasn't obvious.

G: Anything else on 1960 that we haven't talked about?

B: No, I think that's pretty well covered it. I know I'll think of a hundred things after you leave, but I don't think of another thing now.

M: One thing I sort of wanted to touch on, unless you're not finished with this, is the whole relationship through the fifties when the [Allan] Shivers people were trying to bring the

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party down on the side of the Republican national ticket and so on.

G: Why don't we start with 1952 and work forward?

B: Well, of course the 1952 convention, they were very, very insulting to Sam Rayburn and Lyndon both.

M: And the convention went for--did it endorse Eisenhower?

B: Well, yes, the state went for him. I don't remember the 1952 [convention] near as well as I do the 1960.

G: It was, I guess, after the 1952 presidential campaign, I want to ask there how active Lyndon Johnson was in supporting the [Adlai] Stevenson [inaudible]?

B: Well, of course, Mr. Rayburn would have liked for him to have been much more active than he was.

M: Do you think LBJ saw the handwriting on the wall on that one?

B: Well, he had pretty good political intuition, all right.

M: How about yourself? What was your attitude toward the Stevenson ticket?

M: Oh, I supported them. I usually agreed almost completely with Mr. Rayburn. I thought he was right.

G: What did Lyndon Johnson do in that campaign?

B: Well, that's where he got the nickname Lying-Down Lyndon. (Laughter) He just took things kind of easy is the way; that's the way the press painted him and I think they were pretty accurate.

G: It was after that election that Sam Rayburn and others in the Democratic Party attempted to construct an alternative to the regular party machinery that Shivers had control of. Do you

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recall that process?

B: That was Mrs. [Frankie] Randolph. Mr. Rayburn was never enthusiastic about that branch of the party. He thought it was a little too liberal. But he did appreciate their loyalty to the party.

M: How about in 1954? Did you work on Johnson's 1954 campaign for re-election to the U.S. Senate?

B: Yes. Who was his opponent in 1954?

M: Dougherty, wasn't it?

G: Yes, Dudley Dougherty.

B: Yes. Not much race to it.

M: How about the 1956 convention?

G: Well, let's start with the campaign. It was really Rayburn's announcement that started that whole Johnson favorite-son candidacy.

B: Yes, it was.

G: How did that develop, do you recall?

B: Well, no. Rayburn knew that that's all it would take to start a campaign and it would be for him to say. The first announcement was I think the *Dallas News* called him for an interview and he gave it, I believe is the way it started.

G: He said basically, "I nominate Lyndon Johnson as favorite son." Did he talk to Johnson before he said that?

B: Well, he knew it would be all right with Lyndon.

G: Was this a result of animosity between Rayburn and Shivers, who felt that Shivers had

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misled him?

B: Well, he definitely felt that he didn't have any love whatever for Shivers, and Shivers for him. Allan and I were at the University of Texas together and, well, he had been president of the student body while I was editor-in-chief of the annual. We had been friends, but we definitely fell out at that time. But when we both went back to get our golden diploma at the University of Texas, Allan looked me up. He had mellowed quite a bit and so had I, so we had a real pleasant visit.

G: Shivers had, according to some sources, promised Rayburn a degree of loyalty in support of the nominee in return for having the delegation seated, for his role in that. Did Rayburn feel that Shivers had gone back on this promise?

B: It was my feeling that he did.

G: Was this responsible for the friction between Rayburn and Shivers?

B: Well, I think that was just one thing.

G: What were some others?

B: Well, their philosophy was entirely different. He didn't have any confidence whatever in Allan Shivers. He just didn't believe he'd tell the truth about anything and he thought he was an opportunist and thought he would . . .

I know one little sidelight. I was in a meeting with Mr. Rayburn and Lyndon, I guess it was when we got to Los Angeles in 1960, when I heard Mr. Rayburn explain to Lyndon the way the rest of the nation always whipped us in the national convention. That was to fill the corridors up with Confederate flags and then get in a hot debate on the floor of the convention and then insult the South and then all the southerners rush out and get a

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Confederate cap and flag. Mr. Rayburn said, "Now I don't care what you do, if that happens, there's no way on earth the South is ever going to have anything. What we have to do in this 1960 convention is to be damn sure that no Confederate flag or uniform gets in California during that convention." Of course, I had seen it happen a time or two.

G: This was something that the northerners promoted in order to enrage [?] the southern delegates?

B: Sure. I would imagine they planned it that way.

M: And was that prevented in Los Angeles?

B: Positively. Lyndon would never have gotten the nomination for anything if it hadn't have been.

M: One thing you said a while ago, you said that Rayburn turned down the nomination or the selection as vice president from Franklin Roosevelt? Was that in 1940 or 1944?

B: Oh, that was in 1944. See, now, Roosevelt called Harry Truman next, and Harry Truman accepted and then he became president. And Harry Truman was in the Rayburn Board of Education room the day that Franklin Roosevelt died, and he got the call that the President was dead and he and Sam Rayburn drove to the White House for Harry Truman to take the oath of office. Mr. Rayburn told me after that, he said, "I'll have to admit I was delighted to see that responsibility go on Harry Truman because I knew he could handle it, in place of on my shoulders."

M: Where I was headed, you had mentioned that Rayburn had told Franklin Roosevelt, "I can't hold Texas for you because those Shivercrats are out to get me." Were they already known as Shivercrats in 1944?

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B: Well, Texas Regulars.

M: Okay.

B: There wasn't any question Allan was their leader.

G: How were the Shivers forces beaten in 1956 in the precinct [and] county conventions?

B: We started early. In about January of that year, Walter Jenkins said, "Roland, they're having a very small dinner for the new Democratic senators. Lyndon would like for you to attend that dinner." We went to it, and I believe everybody that was there, there were very few people except these new senators. As we were going home, he was taking me back to the hotel, he said, "Roland, Lyndon would like for you to help get your congressional district back out of Shivers' control." I said, "I'll be glad to. I think we can if we start now."

So I planned the campaign, the leaders that I wanted working in that, and we had a meeting or two and got started. Pretty much the rest of the state did the same thing. It was one person, and it was largely about the same group that met at the Ranch.

G: Organized labor had a force in the field also, the Frankie Randolph group. To what extent does that group deserve credit for this effort?

B: Well, they were certainly loyal, they certainly voted right at that time, but they were very difficult to live with, I'll tell you that.

G: But was it the Johnson machinery that beat Shivers or was it the liberal-labor group?

B: In my judgment it was the Johnson with support from the liberal-labor.

G: The Shivers forces used segregation as an issue. That was after the *Brown [v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas]* decision.

B: Yes.

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G: The Supreme Court was very unpopular.

B: Yes.

G: Did you have trouble with this issue in McKinney, in this area?

B: Well, it was certainly discussed and the people had very strong feelings about it. But I don't remember it controlling the situation.

G: How did Johnson deal with that issue?

B: Well, he said as little about it as possible.

M: How about the relationship--if this does not get off the track here--between Johnson and Price Daniel? I'm talking of the period from 1952 to 1956, while Daniel was also in the Senate.

B: Well, I think that there isn't any question that it was cordial and friendly. And I think they both worked together--

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B: --for the best interests of Texas.

M: This is really off the track of what you probably want to talk about, but how did Bill Blakley get to be a U.S. senator--twice?

B: Well, I hadn't thought about that in a long time. I've heard lots of people call that to be--well, it was a fluke election. I don't--

M: He was appointed initially by Allan Shivers.

B: That's right.

M: And Price Daniel cursed him a lot of the time, as I recall. And then when it came Price Daniel's time to appoint someone to the U.S. Senate after Johnson became vice president,

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he also appointed Bill Blakley.

B: I didn't remember those details.

M: I was curious what grip he had on some part of somebody's body.

B: I couldn't answer that.

M: Okay. Let's drop that.

B: I was at a cocktail party the night that Blakley arrived in Washington. The ex-congressman from Galveston [Clark Thompson] and his wife were giving a cocktail party for--and Jack Kennedy was there and Mr. Rayburn was there and Blakley came. I believe that was the first day he arrived in Washington. I remember as that cocktail party broke up--no, it was [as] Mr. Rayburn went down the receiving line. Jack Kennedy was the honoree. He said, "Now, Mr. President, from now on I would appreciate it if you'd get to these functions on time. I've been wanting to leave and I couldn't leave until the president of the United States got here. Please, from now on, get to these when you're supposed to."
(Laughter)

G: Let's go back to 1956. You had two volatile [state] conventions after the conventions that you had in the precincts and counties. You had the first one in Dallas. Do you recall that?

B: Not many of the details about it.

G: This was the one where Frankie Randolph and Byron Skelton became national committeeman and committeewoman.

B: Committeewoman. And both of them were friendly with Sam Rayburn, particularly Byron Skelton. In fact, Byron was kind of the go-between between the Rayburn part of the party and the Ralph Yarborough [part].

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G: Johnson wanted Beryl Bentsen, as I recall.

B: Yes. That was in the Dallas convention. I certainly wanted Beryl also.

G: How did Johnson lose that particular fight?

B: I don't recall the details.

G: Another issue there was whether to replace the Shivers State [Democratic] Executive Committee then or to wait until the fall.

B: I know that was so, but I don't remember any of the details of it. I was at the convention and I believe I was the head of the county delegation, but I'm not sure.

G: Now, after that you had the national convention in August. That was in Chicago, is that right?

B: That was 1956?

G: Yes.

B: Yes.

G: Let me ask you to recall as much as you can about that. LBJ was the favorite son candidate.

B: Well, that campaign could never get off the ground, but of course, Lyndon learned an awful lot and his men learned an awful lot there. They were determined that they were going to correct everything they did wrong in Chicago and they were going to correct it in Los Angeles. That's the reason for the deer hunt in December before the convention in the summer.

M: One thing I was sort of curious about, this system of having district managers--and you were handling I guess the Fourth District for Lyndon--did he evolve that immediately upon

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election to the Senate in 1948, or did he pick up that tactic from previous senators, or where did that come from?

B: No, from the time he first ran for the Senate, I think that was his method of operating. He wanted somebody that he could depend on to where he could make one call to any district, and then they could make one call to each county in the district, and then those people would be in close touch with every large precinct. There's never been anyone that I've ever had any contact with that would pay as much detail to organization as Lyndon Johnson would.

M: Another thing I was curious about was B. A. [Beryl] Bentsen was [inaudible] national committeewoman. What was the relation between Lloyd Bentsen with regard to Rayburn and Johnson and Shivers?

B: Well, Rayburn and Lloyd and B. A. were very, very good friends.

G: He was in Congress I guess at the time.

B: Yes, he was.

G: I want you to talk a little bit more, if you can, about that 1956 convention in Chicago. The Texas delegation seems to have sponsored a lot of vice presidential candidates there, everyone but [Estes] Kefauver.

B: Well, you know, things got pretty hot between Mr. Rayburn and Kefauver at that convention. Mr. Kefauver insulted Mr. Rayburn before the microphone and then he realized his mistake and came back and wanted to apologize to him, and Mr. Rayburn said, "No, Senator, I don't feel like accepting your apology. Maybe after the convention is over I'll accept it." He wasn't about to let him get before the microphone.

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G: What was his insult, do you know?

B: He insinuated that Sam Rayburn wasn't fair, maybe a quick gavel or something. And of course, if it was going the way Rayburn wanted it, the gavel was pretty quick. You know, that's how he kept the United States Army intact was that quick gavel.

G: The Selective Service [inaudible] extension.

B: Yes.

G: Is this a story that Rayburn himself told you about that vote on the Selective Service?

B: Well, yes. Yes, he didn't make any bones about it.

G: Any more detail?

B: Well, of course, he had complete control of the House of Representatives and any person in there, regardless of party, would do anything on earth Sam Rayburn asked them to. He told the tally clerks, he said, "Now, on an ordinary vote, you all are not too quick and too efficient. We got to get out of that on this vote." Well, each one of them was supposed to keep a running total, and he assigned somebody to figure out how they were doing, and he was to get the signal before the last vote came in as to what it was and then what it was when the last vote came in, and just with that vote, the gavel came down. He knew that in those kinds of stress times, with those congressmen, freshmen and everybody, that they panic. He didn't mean for them to have an opportunity to panic on that vote.

G: And it was a one-vote [win].

B: Yes.

G: Back to the 1956 convention. The Texas delegation even supported Jack Kennedy for the vice presidency then. Was this something that Mr. Rayburn supported?

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B: I would imagine so, because Mr. Rayburn had a great deal of respect for the Kennedy boys, especially Jack.

G: Did you have to sell this to the rest of the delegation?

B: Well, ordinarily the people that were delegates, they wanted to know what Sam Rayburn wanted done, and that was pretty well--well, in the caucus in Chicago, when we got to the critical time, I was asked, "Well, Roland, have you talked to Mr. Rayburn about this?" And I told them yes and what he said. Well, that settled it. In the San Antonio [state] convention, when we were fighting the liberals and trying to get Frank Ikard elected chairman of the San Antonio convention, then we discussed the strategy and we knew it was going to be a close vote. Mr. Rayburn was not coming to the San Antonio convention and he didn't come, but he called me the day before I left to go down there and said, "Now, Roland, if I have any message to deliver at that convention, I want you to be the one that delivers it. I'm not going to be available on the telephone," but he gave me Mrs. [W. A.] Thomas' number at her home in Dallas. "Now, that's where I'll be. If any thing ever comes up that you need to talk to me, you call me at that number."

So just before the vote on the chairman, then the two or three of us that were getting our heads together and trying to control the way it happened--Price might have been in on that, I don't remember. They said, "Well, I believe it would be a good idea"--I'd told them what Mr. Rayburn told me--"for you to go and talk to Mr. Rayburn and ask him what he thinks about Frank Ikard as chairman." So I did, and he said, "Now, Roland, you go before the convention and you tell them that I've served in the House with Frank Ikard, he's a great man, a great congressman. I have all the confidence on earth in Frank Ikard. You can tell

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them I'm for Frank Ikard first, last and always." Well, that was the end of that contest. It was a roll-call vote. There wasn't any doubt about what the final result would be after that. And the liberals marched up and down the streets. We had dinner on the top floor of the St. Anthony Hotel, Frank and two or three other couples that were with us. They kept marching from the convention hall back to the hotel. It sounded like they were tearing San Antonio down. They were mad. They were real mad.

M: That was what year?

G: 1958.

B: Yes.

G: That was another convention that was adjourned rather precipitously, wasn't it?

B: Yes, it was.

G: Do you recall that?

B: I remember that everybody that was a friend of Sam Rayburn's understood the way he ran the House, and that is to find out where we're going and let's get there on purpose as quick and do it the right way and get it over with. Because when you don't get it over with, that's when you start having your trouble.

G: Which may have been a problem two years earlier in Fort Worth when you had that fall convention.

B: Sure was.

G: Can you remember the details of that?

B: At the time I don't recall any. I know what the issues were.

M: What did you think when Ralph Yarborough got elected to the U.S. Senate?

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- B: Well, Ralph and I, we've always been, in a way, friends. I supported him against the Texas Regulars, but our philosophy was different.
- M: What about in 1964 when Johnson put out the word to Joe Kilgore and people like that not to oppose Yarborough?
- B: I know that caused a great deal of bad feeling. But I think it was a wise political move for Johnson to do that.
- M: Why was that?
- B: Well, I think had he not have done that, it would have been a very bloody campaign between [Ralph and] Joe. I think it would have split the party terribly. I don't blame Joe for being upset about that.
- G: Was there going to be a natural antagonism when you had a vice president, later a president, from the same state as a liberal senator who supported Kennedy early on?
- B: Yes, but Lyndon and Sam Rayburn were both practical men in politics. I wouldn't say that Ralph Yarborough was a practical man. There wasn't any question he was an intelligent person, a well-read person. He's so well read that his office just turns your stomach to go in there and see the books stacked all over everything. And I'm sure he's read every one of them. I've been friends with Ralph, but I've just never considered him practical.
- G: Would you say that this was at the heart of the friction between them?
- B: Yes, I'd think so. I sat between Ralph and Lyndon in the back of an American Airlines plane coming back from Washington when Lyndon was coming down to kind of get things organized and Ralph was coming down to be the principal speaker before the labor unions in their convention in Austin. Lyndon said, "Now, Roland, I want you to hear this." So we

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were right in the back end of this American Airlines plane. I was in the center and he was on one side and Ralph on the other. He said, "Now, Senator, I know you're going to Austin to speak to the labor convention. You know, I've had one heart attack. I'm not going to run and try to get the nomination and fight you. Now let me tell you, if you get before the television and make an anti-Johnson speech, I'll tell you exactly what I'm going to do. I'm going before television immediately afterwards and say that I would like to be president of the United States. I think I can be, but I am not going to spend my time having to fight in my own state, so I'm not going to run. Texas doesn't have this opportunity to have a president." That took effect, because Ralph was very guarded in what he said in that speech in Austin.

M: What year was that? Was that in 1959?

B: I believe it was.

M: How did those two get along during the time they overlapped in the Senate?

B: Well, Lyndon certainly held Ralph at arm's length. They were courteous to one another, as all senators are supposed to be, regardless of politics, but that was about as far as it would go.

G: We mentioned earlier the problem of patronage and judgeships when Johnson was vice president and Yarborough was senior senator. How was this resolved, do you recall?

B: Well, it lay there for months and months. This is strictly off the record, but when Joe Sheehy died, Lyndon wanted me to be the federal judge for the Eastern District of Texas. Ralph Yarborough was determined that William Wayne Justice would be. So as soon as I detected that situation, I said, "Now, Lyndon, I absolutely forbid you to do one thing in my

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behalf. I won't feel like you're disloyal, although I would probably accept it if it were offered to me. But I don't want you to lift one finger because I've got all I can do practicing law and I really enjoy practicing law." So it wasn't any time after then until they had an agreement that Ralph could appoint the Eastern District and Lyndon appoint some other in some other district. I believe that's when [John, Jr.] Singleton was made a federal judge in Houston, I'm not sure. But that's the way that was settled.

G: Anything else on the relationship with Yarborough?

B: No. You all have just about gotten to the bottom of the barrel as far as I'm concerned.

G: Was Johnson happy as vice president?

B: Johnson was as happy--I'll tell you what it took to make him happy: for things to be happening and him to feel like that he was contributing to what was happening. He certainly wanted what was best for the nation. He was very unselfish in that regard.

M: Given that, how did he feel during the vice presidency?

B: A few times he felt like he was neglected, but Kennedy appreciated his ability enough that there were very few times that he wasn't making use of Lyndon's ability. It wasn't the usual vice president put on a shelf. Mr. Rayburn's thoughtfulness saw to that.

G: Do you think Johnson would have been on the ticket in 1964 if Kennedy had lived?

B: I'm of the opinion he would. Now, I know Bobby didn't want him, but I'm of the opinion that of the Kennedy family, I think Jack ran it and not Bobby.

I don't know whether you all have ever heard this story about [Henry] Gonzalez being elected congressman from San Antonio. You know, I don't even remember who his opponent was, but Eisenhower went to San Antonio and just took them by storm. There

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wasn't any question who was going to win that special race. So Henry was smart enough to call Lyndon and say, "I'm beat. There isn't any question about it. President Eisenhower came down here and they've got me beat. If you can't figure out something that will turn this around, why, there's no question." So Lyndon said, "Well, let me see what I can do." So he called the president of American Airlines and said, "Now, what time do your next planes leave Mexico City coming to San Antonio?" And the president called up and found out and told him when they'd be there. He said, "All right, you save two or three seats"--and picked out a certain plane from Mexico City to San Antonio--"on that plane." Then he called the president of Mexico [Adolfo Lopez Mateos]. He had a little hard time getting the president of Mexico; he was out to dinner and they didn't want to disturb him. The president had been to the LBJ Ranch. In fact, I had been there one time when the president of Mexico was his guest. They were both politicians and friends. So he said, "Now, Mr. President, you're always asking me if you can do something for me. Now, your comedian"--I can never pronounce his name, Cantafax or whatever it is.

G: Cantinflas.

B: Yes. He said, "Now, will you tell me that you will have him at the American Airlines desk at such-and-such an hour?" And the President said, "Why do you want him?" He said, "I want him to come to San Antonio and campaign in a special congressional election and elect a very fine Latin American who will do a good job in Congress." The President said, "Why, sure. I'll get him there," and he did. That turned the election around.

M: What year was that?

B: When Gonzalez was elected and he's still there now. It's when Paul Kilday was appointed a

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military judge in Washington. I don't remember the year. [1961]

G: We haven't talked about Lyndon Johnson and John Connally. Let me ask you to recount what you know about that relationship.

B: Well, of course, they're an awful lot alike.

G: How so?

B: Well, both of them very ambitious and both of them certainly try to do their homework. I like both of them.

G: Was Connally unique in Johnson's sphere of advisers and aides?

B: Well, Lyndon appreciated John's ability in politics. Of course, John Connally had a charm that Lyndon didn't have.

M: Did Johnson get Connally the job with the Murchisons [Sid Richardson?]?

B: I don't know. I wouldn't say that he did.

M: What about Connally running for governor? Was that with Johnson's blessing?

B: As far as I know it was. But John made up his own mind.

M: Did you get involved in that or did Johnson call around to any of his people like you and say, "Look, I want you to help Connally in this"?

B: No, it wasn't necessary. I supported John.

Well, I'm going to have to break this off.

M: I'm about dry.

G: One thing--

M: Go ahead.

G: Anything else on Johnson's presidency? You haven't really talked about that. Did you play

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any role there, informally? Did he ask your opinion or seek your--?

B: Well, he asked me to mediate the Long Island Railway dispute for him as a member of the emergency board, and he asked me to go to Geneva as a public delegate to the United Nations. There were several other things that if I hadn't had all I could do, I know he would have been glad for me to have done different things for him.

M: The thing I was curious about is how do you feel about Kent Hance switching parties just after he joined your firm?

B: Well, I didn't advise it. I was surprised. I like Kent and think he's an able lawyer and a valuable addition to the firm, but it hadn't changed my loyalty to the Democratic Party.

M: Has it done anything to your relationship with him?

B: No, I couldn't say that it did.

End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview I

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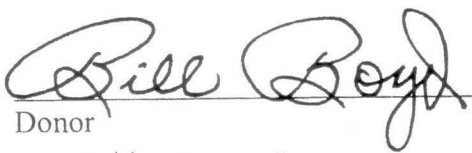
Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of

ROLAND BOYD

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, William M. Boyd, of McKinney, Texas, do hereby give, donate, and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title, and interest in the tape recording and transcript of the personal interview conducted with my father, Roland Boyd, on June 4, 1985, in McKinney, Texas, and prepared for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

- (1) The transcript shall be available for use by researchers as soon as it has been deposited in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.
- (2) The tape recording shall be available to those researchers who have access to the transcript.
- (3) I hereby assign to the United States Government all copyright I may have in the interview transcript and tape.
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