

INTERVIEW I

DATE: February 1, 1971

INTERVIEWEE: JACK BROOKS

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

PLACE: His office in the Rayburn Building in Washington, D.C.

Tape 1 of 2

F: This is an interview with Congressman Jack Brooks in his office in the Rayburn Building in Washington, D.C., on February 1, 1971, and the interviewer is Joe B. Frantz.

I suppose we may as well be informal on this, we've known each other long enough, so let's start off. You are a Louisiana native who shifted to Texas and grew up there and went to the University of Texas in due time.

B: We moved to Texas when I was five years old and I attended public school in Beaumont and completed my education, Joe, at Lamar College and the University of Texas.

F: Then you got caught up in the service in the Marines, I believe.

B: Volunteered, joined the Marine Corps when I was 19 and served about three years including twenty-three and a half months overseas in the South Pacific. When I returned from active duty I ran for the State Legislature and went to law school, and of course knew you during this period of time.

While in the Legislature I was going to law school at the same time. During that period I was, of course, interested in creating Lamar College as a four-year technological institution and this is what I did.

But back to the main subject, what we're concerned about, is I visited with Lyndon Johnson, I guess, for the first time while I was in the Legislature.

F: This was while he was still a congressman?

B: That's correct.

G: Was he in a position to do anything to help you with Lamar College?

B: No, he was not involved in that; it was entirely a state program and he was not involved in it.

F: I suppose you were too busy with your own career to get involved in that campaign of his in '48.

B: Well, actually, I was involved in it to a limited extent. I did some work, just paid work, typing work. That's when they used to type form letters on manual typewriters. That was the hard, slow way. Some people don't remember that.

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F: Trying to pick up an extra fifty cents here and there.

B: But 1948 is when I really got to know Johnson just briefly. It was actually after I was in the Legislature. I did not know him in '41 particularly.

F: Did you ever talk with him about the possibility of your running for Congress?

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F: Was this just a logical step up for you from the State Legislature?

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F: Had you known Mr. Sam earlier?

B: No.

F: You met him when you got here.

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F: But very quickly you landed on the Government Operations Committee.

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F: I must say, Jack, you have a facility, though, for getting put on committees kind of like being Crown Prince to the King of Sweden. I noticed you had Congressman Dawson ahead of you on one and Emanuel Celler on another, they just go on forever. Dawson finally quit, obviously.

B: That's right. However, on Government Operations, I was on that committee for two years and then one day after that; in other words, after my first term in Congress, I had a subcommittee chairmanship and have had one ever since. This, of course, was very fortunate, very fortunate in that the Democrats took control of the Congress and a good many Democrats ahead of me had quit or left, and so that was very fortunate for me. Dawson was a very friendly, pleasant, amiable chairman, who was good to me.

F: Evidently a prince of a gentleman.

B: A fine man. He was old, of course.

F: Yes, he was old then.

B: Sure he was. But he was really from Georgia, you know. I'll never forget, Joe, one interesting story. I brought him some Mayhaw jelly one time from East Texas. You may not be too familiar with Mayhaws--it's a small apple-like, about the size of a small cherry--smaller than that really, and they make jelly out of it, a very light, very pale pink kind of jelly that has a very distinctive and good flavor. And I brought

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F: He made a place for himself.

B: Oh, sure he did. He was an officer in World War I. Now to be black and be an officer in World War I must have been something! I wasn't around, but it must have been something.

F: Those were the days when the black man was still strictly looked upon as menial, a steward, or something like that, in the service.

B: That's right.

F: What was it like in those two years, being a congressman as part of a minority party? You haven't had the experience since.

B: I don't relish looking forward to it again. I'll tell you. You couldn't get anything done. It was very, very difficult to get anything accomplished. You could hardly get a hearing on legislation. On the Rayburn Dam and Reservoir--it was then called McGee-Bend Dam--I was at that point trying to get this big dam constructed; authorized it had been, but appropriated money for it, no. This was what it needed. You couldn't even get a hearing before the Appropriations Committee. They would not let you schedule a hearing on the legislation that they were not for. That's how arbitrary they were.

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authorized and had an interesting commitment from our friend President Johnson. He was then a senator, and there was a lot of controversy, interestingly enough, about this dam in that the timber people didn't want it built. They felt that it would cover up a lot of timberland. I, on the other hand, felt that while it would cover up some timberland, it would open up that country, as it has done; it would make their timberland that they had left much more valuable, would make more money for them than they ever thought about making. All of this has come to be true, and they're all happy about it now, but at that time they didn't think it was very good.

Old man Ernest Kurth had been an early friend of Johnson's--friend of his in '48, and you want to remember that Johnson is pretty loyal and he never forgets his friends. Well, Johnson liked me and we were friends, had come to be friends, as I was in Congress, but he still liked Mr. Kurth. They had been friends during the war, etc. Finally Johnson told him, well, he said he just guaranteed them that, if I passed that bill in the House, that he'd pass it in the Senate. At that time, of course, the timber interests were against it, the Republicans were against it, and the Bureau of the Budget was against it, and the Corps of Engineers was against it. So it required some considerable effort.

F: You had that unofficial, or nearly official Republican policy at that time of no new starts.

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F: So that all they were going to do was to wind up what they were already committed for. You must have had a real up-hill fight to get that pushed.

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F: Did you see much of the new Senate Minority Leader at that time--Senator Johnson?

B: Did I see much of him then?

F: Yes.

B: Yes, we were friendly then from my first years here. Friendly not because we had been old friends, but friendly because we supported the same kind of legislation and had the same interest in people.

F: Did you get much opportunity to observe the relationship between him and Mr. Sam?

B: Yes, because from the day I came to Congress Mr. Rayburn invited me to go down and have a drink with him every evening.

F: You went to those Board of Education meetings.

B: Yes, I went very often. I was not married then, Joe.

F: Not in quite such a hurry to get home.

B: That's right. I'd work in my office until 6:30, sometime a little later, and then I'd stop over there and have a drink with Mr. Rayburn and visit with him. There were probably four or five people there most evenings, out of a group of about ten or twelve. There were not a great number of people--

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F: I mean, this was a circle that you had to be invited in to.

B: Just didn't want a lot of people sitting around there listening to you making plans, that were going to go out and talk about it. Everything, as Mr. Rayburn used to say, was there within the room.

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F: Did it pretty well stay within the room?

B: Pretty well. There were some people who came on occasion that could not resist a tendency to go out and talk to the press, mouth off about what they thought was going to happen. It did not necessarily help them. Sometimes people knew who those folks were, sometimes they told them what they wanted them to hear so they could go and leak the wrong information. You know there's more than one way to skin a cat, and they sometimes got into that problem. Generally the people in there talked freely and candidly, pleasantly and amiably about all their friends and their plans and programs and legislation; sometimes old times. Maybe it was cane syrup and bee honey, you know. Just talked about everything. Relaxed. It didn't last too long, of course. We didn't stay late at night because people had dinner engagements.

F: This wasn't confined to Texans?

B: No, there were some others, other than Texans. Although among the Texans that were very often there, eternally there when they were members, were Homer Thornberry, who was very close to the Speaker and, of course to Lyndon Johnson--now a judge; Frank Ikard was there very often. That was about it from the Texas delegation really.

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judgment. I wasn't in the Senate, didn't have any axe to grind over there; didn't want to be in the Senate. But Bill Knowland, apparently, as I recall--my impression was that while he was not a mean man and not a difficult man, he sometimes didn't understand, and he was a little hard-headed when you got around to it. Then he also didn't have quite the control of his own people that he needed. You find in the management of either the Senate or the House, in my judgment, those things are done by accord, by agreement, by understanding between the Republicans and the Democrats. When either the Democrats or the Republican leadership, which make the agreements or reach the accords, are not strong enough in their own party and in their own organization to deliver and to make those agreements stick within their party, then the whole thing has a tendency to fall apart. Well, Knowland, I don't think, delivered as well as he might have; whereas, of course, Johnson, when he made a commitment, he would deliver on that commitment. If he said, "We're going to stay on "X" or "Y," then he got his people to do that.

F: It has often been said that President Eisenhower was made to look as good as he did look because Johnson and Rayburn had this at least tacit agreement that they would support him every place they could, and oppose him only when it was a matter of real concern.

B: I think that's true, no question about that. Nobody tried to cut up President Eisenhower. I never thought, Joe, that he was a particularly able man; I don't feel that Mr. Rayburn or Mr. Johnson thought that he was a particularly able man, but he was a good-hearted man, he meant well, he wanted to do something good for his country. He was not a petty, vindictive sort of a man, and he was President of the United States, and I think they felt, as I did at the time, that it was our job

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as citizens and as Democrats to do the best we could with the President we had, and to help him when we could. Even then you could see that Johnson felt that the President was entitled to all the help he could get, and Rayburn felt this way. They did that. It's kind of interesting to note that when Johnson became President, many people did not accord him that same courtesy, even from his own party; that he had fully given and freely given from a position of power, and he didn't have to do it, to a Republican President who was not really up to a fight with him on a political level. In the Senate President Eisenhower was not well-versed. You know, he would have been lost in that Senate, and Johnson knew it like the back of his hand and could have, if he had so desired, fought him and made life miserable for him, killed every program he wanted to start, but he didn't do that.

F: Did you get much flak from this policy, because I know there's a temptation with some people just to be obstructionists, just to, in effect, give the opposite party hell because it's there? I wondered whether this was a matter of great concern among your colleagues, your Democratic colleagues, or did they feel this was the long-run smart policy?

B: No, there was a pretty general feeling that it was not so bad. There was some criticism, some deviation, you know. Some people wouldn't go along. In Government Operations I spent some time trying to investigate the Republicans. Their management of the government was not particularly good, you know, not so good. That's evidenced all the time. They have lots of rich Republicans who want to have a Republican president, and there are a few of them who want to be in the Cabinet and want to run the government, but not many of these people that have money and real

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capacity for management want to come and spend their time and really put their blood and their heart and their head into the management of a government organization. It's really beneath them, so they don't do it. They end up with people, when they arrive here they've still got their house at Palm Beach and their house in New York and their place at Majorca, and they're looking forward to going back the next summer. Well, you can't run the government like that. You've got to come prepared to stay with it.

F: They sort of like the trappings of office rather than the work.

B: Yes, and the work is tough, it's not very glamorous really.

F: You went in there on the Judiciary Committee, which is an important committee, and have remained there.

B: Yes.

F: You must have faced some of the interesting problems prior to their becoming national concerns, such as women's liberation, well back down the line.

B: Well, we didn't have a lot of problem about... Women's liberation?

F: Yes.

B: We didn't have a lot of talk about that.

F: This was a latecomer.

B: Yes, this one is really a latecomer. I'm willing for them to have all the liberation they want.

F: You did have the problem of civil rights and getting civil rights--.

B: Yes, civil rights was a major problem, was a significant problem during those years, and after Johnson became President it was even more important. I was interested in trying to get the legislation passed in the Judiciary Committee that we could live with on the floor and become

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law and the Administration could support and would meet the needs for the people in this country, and he was in better shape to evaluate that than the individual.

F: You've always had the problem of prying some proposed legislation out of the ultraconservative subcommittee heads on the matter of civil rights.

B: Not on the Judiciary Committee.

F: This didn't give you any great problem?

B: The chairman of the Judiciary Committee that handled civil rights was Emanuel Celler from New York; he was chairman of the subcommittee that handled it. I was on that subcommittee. We didn't have that problem. The problem was getting the votes within the committee.

F: What did you do, just work on people?

B: That's right, talk to them. We had the same kinds of problems on the immigration bill. Johnson passed a tremendous amount of legislation, probably the most productive legislative accomplishments of any President since and maybe including Roosevelt--unbelievable! If they don't pass any more, if they would just implement these--finance them and implement them fairly--this country could move on pretty progressively for another decade. They're not doing this, I might add.

F: You always have a certain amount of in-built inertia among any group of people, and this doesn't exclude congressmen. Did you have a real problem of convincing some of your colleagues that we were not trying to pass too much too quickly?

B: You always have that problem, certainly, Joe. Always have that problem. Congressmen, some of them, are always reluctant to pass something; they don't have time to study it all; they're a little reluctant about changing it.

And I would say that people, as well as congressmen, are generally against change. You drive to work the same way every day. People are creatures of habit, and this is true. Congressmen are people and they resist some of these changes, they're reluctant about it.

We were very busy while Johnson was President, I guarantee you. There were lots of things cooking because he was an active, thinking, inquisitive, innovative guy who liked to get things done. He enjoyed working, enjoyed doing the job. It was fun doing it. His idea of a good time wasn't to go play golf or his idea wasn't to go out riding on a boat for a week at a time; all the pleasures that other people look forward to Johnson did just for a few minutes. You know, he would go ride on the boat for an hour or two, and "while we're doing that we'll work on eight people about 9,000 different programs." Not really 9,000, but a lot. But he'd work on everybody there. Or if the people are not not involved in your business, have no part to play in its adoption, etc., he'd just run it by them; just try all the arguments on them, just run it through them; asked them what they thought about it. "What do you think about this?" He'd try his argument on them and see what the counter-arguments were. He didn't always like it either.

One of these welfare programs he had, he asked me what I thought about it. I told him, "I think it's a great problem."

F: Which one is this, may I ask?

B: I can't remember, this welfare program he had to help people do something or other. I told him that he'd get into more trouble about that program than anything he'd ever done, that it was desirable and it was worthwhile and it was probably necessary and helpful, but that Congress would come unglued when it happened. I chuckled. He said, "I don't need any

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political advice from you. I know it's going to be difficult!" He was just mad as a hornet because, of course, he knew this was true, and he didn't want anybody telling him. It would just confirm what he knew and what was true and what did happen. It was a very sticky program, I can't think of the name of it now, Joe. Actually we had that little conference down in the little anteroom there, the little quiet sitting room off of his White House Oval Office. He didn't really get mad at me as such, you understand. He never did.

F: I know, he was mad at the--

B: Yes, he was irritated because this was the problem and he knew it.

F: To go back. 'Way back in December of '55 you probed into the U.S. government owned nickel plant in Nicaro, Cuba.

B: Yes.

F: And Wolfson was involved in it. It involved a \$43 million dollar expansion program, Leonard Hall, who was GOP national chairman at the time. What was this about?

B: Generally, it was . . .

F: Did this smack of a certain favoritism?

B: Oh, yes, no question. Mansure was head of the GSA at the time, Ed Mansure and Sherman Adams was sitting over there in the White House. Mansure gave these contracts to these people and they went down and worked on them, and they were not in the public interest, in my judgment, and shouldn't have been handled that way. It was very poorly done, very poorly planned. And as a result of this, a result of the hearings and the favoritism that it reflected--public hearings during Eisenhower's Administration--Mansure then resigned. Mansure did not admit that anybody else had done any of this.

F: He covered in effect for anyone else who might have been involved.

B: He accepted all of the blame and responsibility. Right after that they just about pulled the rug out from under him over at the White House and accepted his resignation. He left and went back to California. He was a wealthy man and a well-intentioned and a decent man; just they gave him bad advice and encouraged him to do things that were just wrong.

F: Was it sort of a closed bidding proposition that only Republicans could get in on?

B: That's right. But what happened was, we almost could prove that Sherman Adams had been the man that told Mansure that he had to do this. But he wouldn't say that, and so I never did charge it in public hearings. Because, Joe, unless you can prove a charge and feel that you can prove one pretty strongly, I don't think that it's fair to go and make the allegation in public. I think this is demagoguery and life is too short.

F: That's Joe McCarthy's technique. The charge is more important than the fact.

B: Yes. And a lot of other people do it that way, but I never have. We could have charged Sherman Adams with being the mastermind behind all of that and interrogated Mansure on that basis and may have been able to prove it, but there was some doubt about it because we had talked to a lot of people.

F: In something like that that has a real potential amount of dynamite, did you get much attempted blockage in your inquiries from the White House?

B: Yes, yes, yes, yes. You could see the forces were not for the investigation, no! No, they worked on me pretty hard.

F: What did they do?



B: Well, they talked to people and visited around, tried to make it difficult for you to get information.

F: Sources just close up on you, in effect.

B: Yes, try to, all government sources. They just try to lock them all up, almost; difficult to get records out of them, Joe. Then there were some imputations that Leonard Hall was deeply involved in this, and he had some of his old buddies saying Leonard Hall really wasn't a bad fellow, he was just kind of a big, likeable, affable, political type and we couldn't really get any hard evidence on Leonard Hall. He knew about it and was involved in it, but unless you can really pin down somebody's individual participation in it, you just can't in good faith, good conscience, investigate them. You just can't say that they did.

But it was an interesting investigation.

F: What became of it, it just petered out?

B: No. Mansure got fired and those people never did get all their money, and subsequently the Cubans took it over.

F: So they closed it down.

B: Yes, it would have been a good profitable operation theoretically, and it was a profitable deposit of nickel deposits down there, it could have produced the nickel; it just took a little more management and a little more effective management, and if they had run it that way they might very well have disposed of it without the tremendous loss that we took on it.

F: You attended those Wednesday luncheons of the Texas congressional delegation.

B: Since 1953.

F: Yes. Did it make much difference in the tone of them when Ralph Yarborough became senator? I know that during the days of Johnson and Daniel, for instance, that there was great harmony there, but after Ralph came in, did he make much of a problem as far as getting on with things? Did you have two declaimers between Johnson and Yarborough, or not, or are the rules so set up that everyone continues to be gentlemen?

B: Oh, no, everyone got along fine. There were never any hard feelings. That wasn't the case, Joe; I didn't interpret it that way. There was a little change in the tone in that Johnson liked to come in, and he was always well informed--you see, he worked at the job and he was well informed at what was going on in your district and mine and everybody's and he'd be willing to talk to you about it; what the status of it was, whether it was in committee, coming on the floor, whether it was over in an administrative office somewhere. Whatever the problems were that you had he was aware of them, and he considered them his problems too. If he had any problems that affected you, that you might help on, he'd be promoting them and telling you how to help him. It was a two-way street; he operated on that basis.

Yarborough was not as open-handed about it. You know, he was a little more sensitive and yet, in truth, the delegation all liked Yarborough and most all of them supported him. But he was a different type of an individual.

F: Does it create much of a problem when you have a really active senator like Johnson who is in a sense everybody's second congressman because he will look after constituents and the whole state is his constituency, and a congressman lives by credit in a sense? How did you work out the guidelines as to keep him from claiming everything that you put through?

B: No problem whatsoever. There was a period of time when Mr. Johnson and I had a difference and I was a little unhappy with him. But even during this period of time--

F: What was the case? Was it something along this order?

B: No, no, it was something else altogether. But even during this period of time, whenever we had a project to announce or a grant to announce or any kind of public improvement that we were working on, that both of us had an interest in, a congressional action, we announced it jointly. It was such a clean operation that when Johnson's office found out about something before ours, which often happened--not always, but often--he would call us. After a couple of years it got to where we would handle the releases because we would get a good many of them ourselves.

F: But his staff work as senator and Senate Majority Leader was usually quite good?

B: Yes, it was good.

F: What did you all fall out about?

B: Oh, we just had a difference about an appointment. We had a misunderstanding about an appointment to a federal job, and we worked it all out. It took a little while. As a matter of fact, Joe, I wouldn't want to put this out currently but we had an understanding about--I thought we had an understanding about who they were going to appoint as federal judge. There were a lot of people involved, but at any rate they didn't appoint the one I thought they were going to appoint and I was unhappy about it. I thought they had misrepresented the facts. I guess they really hadn't, just one of those things, but I was mad. You know, people get that way. I thought they had just shafted me. I wasn't happy with them a bit.

Then they had that program for Johnson to run for President in 1960, and he had said he wasn't going to run. Somebody, some very eager people in my district who liked Johnson and who were now my friends and who had been my friends wanted me to come down and make speeches for Johnson for President in 1960. I told them, "This is a waste of time. Mr. Johnson is not going to run. He said he wasn't and I believe him. I don't think he has got a madam's prayer anyhow. Kennedy's got this thing sewed up, we know that. I think that's a fait accompli. We're wasting our time. I'm not going to go down there and tell people that I think he's going to get the nomination, when I'd be willing to bet money he's not, although I'd be for him if he could get it. That would be all right. I'd be strong for him."

They said, "Oh, no, you've got to come do this, Brooks. You'll come." And they kept putting the pressure on me and I just finally told them I wasn't about to come. They were crazy as hell if they thought I'd go down there and lie for anybody; it just wasn't so and I wasn't going to say it was, and I didn't. They got mad and then in '62 they ran a man against me--the State Democratic Committeeman they ran against me for Congress.

F: Who was that?

B: He was a nice fellow and he's no longer with us. He died shortly after the election. But it was sort of a little sticky situation.

The funny thing is, in that 1960 campaign when Johnson came to Beaumont, came to the airport, I introduced him like the second coming. But his people that were mad at me did all the work on all the arrangements, Joe. You've put together a lot of programs. They got the band and they built the stand and they got the funding and they

did all the advance publicity and they did all the work. They asked me if I would introduce him and I told them, certainly, I would be honored to do so.

F: Is this when he is nominated as Vice President?

B: In 1960, running for Vice President. So I met him when he got off the plane, I knew his staff and his people and knew him well, and welcomed him; walked him up and introduced him as well as I could; got him a big standing ovation from everybody. The full treatment! Then he made a fine speech and bragged on me, though we had not been too close.

I will say that primarily it was my fault. He had never been unhappy with me, I had been unhappy with him. That's the fact, I admit.

So then after that was over with, we walked back through the crowd, we walked back up to the plane, and he left. His people that had done all of the work were sort of in shock because they had hardly got to say hello. We all worked hard for Kennedy and Johnson, worked like a dog. What I never did understand was why the Kennedy people would be unhappy with Johnson. Kennedy would never have been President, never made it, if it hadn't been for Lyndon Johnson. He helped him carry Texas, carried Texas for him, did it--there's no way it could have been done!--and helped in the South and helped all over, and it was so close. You know, everybody who gets elected to the presidency thinks they got elected by 20 percent--unanimously! This one we've got now--Nixon is a minority President, and you'd think he had a mandate from 89 percent of the people.

At any rate, Johnson did a great job for them, and after he was Vice President it was obvious that he had had a little standing misunderstanding

over a committee appointment with Mr. Albert Thomas, the late Albert Thomas from Houston. He came to Congress in '37 and Lyndon came shortly after that. They had some differences about who was going to be on the Appropriations Committee and Thomas won, and there was an argument about who got the proxies and who went out to the hospital and got somebody's proxy, etc. He and Mr. Thomas had had a pretty good go 'round about this, a little latent misunderstanding that had lasted for twenty-five years.

F: This goes back to the early congressional days?

B: '38 is when this [happened]. I had had my ups and downs with Albert Thomas myself. We had gotten to be friends again. You know, members of Congress do fall out with each other over matters, if they're hard-headed. When you really believe things, you have differences with other people who don't always agree. So Thomas and I were friendly and then Mr. Johnson and I were friendly and our wives got along. We liked Bird always; my wife Charlotte liked her. And we enjoyed visiting with them and they're gracious hosts and were always very kind and good to me and to my wife, and Thomas was the same. They would quietly tell me--old Johnson would say: "You know, you'd better watch old Albert; you'd better keep an eye on him. I see you buddying around with him all the time, and you'd better keep an eye on him, I'll guarantee you. You just wait! I'll tell you what he did to me." And then they'd go all through that.

And then the next time you'd be visiting with Albert, and old Albert Thomas would say: "Well, I notice you were out with the Vice President again. You watch him. I'll guarantee you, you watch him!"

They both were telling me that the other one was sort of a man to be very cautious about, because they had had a long-standing disagreement. Well, I kept thinking, you know, that they'd like each other because they were both mean as snakes, so finally I suggested it to the Vice President and he said: "You think Albert would come? We'll just invite him out. We'll just all have dinner sometime."

So we all had dinner at Johnson's house when he lived out at The Elms. We had a nice dinner; Bird had worked it all out and it was a gracious dinner. Albert Thomas was there with his wife Lera, and Charlotte was with me. We visited. And I'm telling you, if we could have had that recorded it would have been a riot, because we talked about all the things that had happened, and about that man who had run against me who had been Johnson's big supporter. Run against me, and that's serious when they run against you! They've done quit talking! Albert would talk about the things that he had done that had sort of happened to Lyndon Johnson. And Lyndon Johnson told about a few things that had happened to Albert Thomas that he happened to know about. And the wives just listened. We had it all out.

When it was over with, we really enjoyed it and from then until Albert Thomas died they were close and intimate friends and we had a lot of fun. He was a big help on the Appropriations Committee in getting things done.

- F: Did you get the feeling that NASA went into Thomas' district because of Johnson's influence as Vice President, or just simply because Thomas was Appropriations chairman and Kennedy knew where the power lay?
- B: I think both of them are due credit. They announced it jointly, and both of them are due credit for it. Albert was a very able operator in

the Appropriations Committee, they haven't replaced him, you know. They've got three congressmen over there in Houston now--one Republican and two Democrats. Albert Thomas was a powerful man and an able man and a lot of fun.

F: To shift slightly, you've been quite interested in safety--industrial safety and so on. You came out in '59, for instance, you and Ralph Yarborough surfaced about the same time, protesting against the Atomic Energy Commission dumping waste into the Gulf. This has been a concern of yours throughout. How did you get on this?

B: Joe, you understand my home is Beaumont. I represent Beaumont, Port Arthur, and now Galveston. I've always gone down to the Gulf. You see, I was born in Crowley, about 40 miles from the Gulf of Mexico. My family--we've all lived in that part of the country. We like the Gulf of Mexico, and it was quite obvious that they were going to ruin these waters. They're continuing to do that. We still have problems, and you now see a lot of people getting interested in it--ecology and environmental...

F: But you were one of the early ones.

B: Oh, yes.

F: Did you bring down a lot of sort of corporate wrath through your stand?

B: No, not too much. They were pretty confident. You really can't make the corporations, you can't make the AEC or government agencies or cities or states do anything about pollution--air or water pollution--unless you have a lot of public support for it. The cities don't clean up their effluent either, Joe. The cities are no better than the corporations. Your corporations didn't worry about it much, they just didn't do anything, because until the state had teeth in its laws, or the



federal government, and enforced it, and until public opinion forced them to do something, they weren't going to spend that money. I might say that the corporations are moving pretty well now; the oil companies in my district are making progress. They're not there yet, but they're making progress. The paper mills are making progress. The cities have got a long way to go. The problems are worse now probably than they were then.

F: Oh, yes. You've also been interested in airline safety.

B: Right. I've done a lot of work in airline safety. I've had some interesting hearings on airlines and pilot operation and engineers. We have just recently done a study on airports and the approach systems, control systems, and they're in pretty sorry shape.

F: You mean like the one in Huntington, West Virginia?

B: That's right. Terrible condition, no excuse for it. The only reason is that the FAA has been encumbered with well-intentioned but not too competent people. Just a thumbnail, this is a very involved subject, but briefly it takes a great deal of money for a period of years to develop effectively what kind of system you want, and, too, to put such a system into operation. You can't just spend a lot of money this year and get it done. It's going to take a four or five year program. This Administration just won't ask for the money. The FAA has had some problem about making the request. You know, you have to spend some money on research to determine how you want to spend a lot of money. We have hundreds of airports that are really not effectively lighted or controlled, and we have thousands of airplanes--continuing thousands. We have major problems at the major airports, at Washington, New York, Boston, Chicago, St. Louis, Atlanta. Take a city like Atlanta. You can't go to Atlanta hardly without having a delay--weather, traffic.

F: Yes, I've spent time in that airport.

B: You're going back and forth, and you can understand how it is. A man would be lucky if he never went to Atlanta. You can count on a delay. The federal government has got to recognize this. The FAA Administrator we have now is a well-intentioned, fine man, but it's difficult for him to sell the necessity for spending this money to the Administration. They have other things they want to do and spend money on. You'd have had to be there and pound on them.

We made some progress under President Johnson when I worked on this then, but it hasn't been finished. You've got to continue this program to get it accomplished. They're compounding the problem of safety because the pilots are interested in their pay raises and the engineers are interested in their pay raises and retirement; the companies are interested in their profits and trying to stay alive.

F: They're thinking about cost accounting.

B: They don't spend a lot of time really on the major problem of improving these airports. But that's life, I guess. I just hope I don't crack up in one of them.

F: Of course you don't have much choice, except to keep using them.

In '60 you helped surface the little dealing that our current President had with a loan from Hughes Tool. Do you remember that?

B: Yes, I do.

F: Did that smack of some favoritism toward TWA?

B: Yes, it looked like it might be helpful to them.

F: What were the circumstances behind that?

B: Well, I don't recall all the details on that, Joe. It never did turn into a full-fledged investigation, in that the facts seemed to be there, but

I didn't have enough time or enough people to get all of that evidence, hard evidence that you could have a hearing on.

F: So this really never rubbed off on our Vice President then?

B: No.

F: Let's move up to '63. You were at the assassination of President Kennedy.

B: Yes.

F: How did you happen to be there?

B: I was there in a car, some cars behind them and heard the shot.

F: Tell me about your own experience on this.

B: My own experience was very interesting in that I was just sitting in the car. We were riding along and we heard this shot, I thought it was a shot--two or three of them. Somebody said it was firecrackers and I said, "It sounded like shots to me." It sure did, too! I looked ahead and saw those cars speeding up, so we speeded up and went on up to the hospital.

F: Did the whole caravan follow out to the hospital?

B: I don't know. I just know that our car did and those preceding us did. We got to the hospital and got out of the car and saw Larry O'Brien sort of stumbling along. I said, "Come on, Larry, let's go."

F: Did you know what had happened by this time?

B: Yes, he did...he felt...

F: I mean, did you know?

B: Yes. I had seen the look on people's faces and I just had that feeling that the President had been shot and was hurt badly. I just had that premonition right then, though I had no hard evidence, of course.

So I walked Larry O'Brien in the door and told a policeman there that I was Congressman Jack Brooks from Beaumont and this was Larry O'Brien, the President's assistant, and we wanted to go in there, and we did.

I walked in this door and turned right to the main hall there. There were a couple of news people there. One of them said, "He looks dead to me, Jack." He was talking about Kennedy. So Larry O'Brien walked straight on in there into where I later learned Mrs. Kennedy had been standing and where Kennedy was lying. I turned to the right and saw President Johnson and he said, "Come on in here with me." I went on in there with him. He was standing in there with a couple of Secret Service people and his wife and Homer Thornberry. He asked me to stay there and I did. There wasn't much to do. You couldn't hear much information. The Secret Service and phones were being set up in there in that room just adjacent to there where you could see them.

Shortly after that Mr. Johnson suggested that I go with Bird to see Jacqueline Kennedy and Nellie Connally. So I went with her to see Jackie Kennedy, who was standing there somewhat disheveled and distraught, and she talked to her. I think Kenny O'Donnell was there, some of the other people connected with Kennedy. Kennedy was lying there under a sheet and he was dead.

Then I took Mrs. Johnson up, and went with a Secret Service man, up those back stairs to see Nellie Connally. She was crying and felt awfully bad about her husband.

F: Was Mrs. Johnson more or less calm as usual?

B: Yes, she was calm, certainly. Mrs. Johnson is a strong woman. She was concerned, but she was not distraught, not loose at the plate. Oh, no!

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She talked to Nellie and consoled her, as she had tried to Mrs. Kennedy. I gave Nellie Connally my handkerchief to wipe her face off, wipe the tears out of her eyes, and told her I thought John was going to be all right. He had been shot and was not killed, he was right there in that hospital, a good hospital; and my theory is if they shoot you in the hospital you can pretty near get well unless they tear up your heart, your head. I just had that feeling, and I had gotten that impression from our report while we were standing there waiting.

So then we came on back downstairs and they brought in a report that Kilduff wanted the President to make a statement--Vice President Johnson to make a statement as President. Kilduff said, "Well, you're President now." Johnson said, "Well, we want to get the official report on that rather than some individual."

F: You hadn't had it officially yet?

B: That's right. And Johnson said, "We'll just wait until then." That wasn't a very good place to be waiting around when nobody knew how many people were involved in this; what kind of a conspiracy it was; who was going to be the--

F: Did Johnson talk at all about the possibility this was sort of a nationwide uprising?

B: No, he didn't say it was a nationwide uprising.

F: Or some broad conspiracy to get several leaders?

B: No, he was aware of the possibility, Joe, that there might have been an effort. They had shot Kennedy, they had shot Connally; there might have been an effort to shoot him and three or four other people. He was aware of that possibility, understood that; and the Secret Service was very aware of it and concerned about it. They didn't know.

So we waited until he got the final word from the doctor, the coroner's report, that he was dead, because Johnson did not feel that he should, under any circumstances, assume the presidency without that confirmation officially, properly, legally, fully.

F: Were you there when the coroner came in?

B: Oh, yes.

F: How did he announce it?

B: He just told him that the President was dead.

F: How did President Johnson react?

B: He was very sober during all of this period, very straight-faced, very cautious, thinking, planning; thinking about what needed to be done and what had to be done. There are a lot of changes, you understand, a lot of problems involved, and he was thinking about them. And the Secret Service wanted him to leave, get him out of there.

We just stood there and waited a minute and he said, "Well, Jack, you go in the car with Bird and take Bird in this second car and I'll take this first car, and we'll have two cars meet us at that side entrance there." So the Secret Service set up a couple of cars and we went out and got in them.

F: Did you go with the President?

B: I went with Mrs. Johnson in the second car and we went right on out to the plane.

F: You and Jackie and Mrs. Johnson?

B: No. No. Mrs. Kennedy didn't go out there with us then.

F: She didn't go with you?

B: No, sir! We went on out to the plane, got on the plane--

F: Was it a marked car?

B: I don't remember what kind of a car, it looked like a sheriff's car or a highway patrol car, something like that. Just a couple of plain patrol vehicles. They may even have been unmarked, but there was nothing spectacular about the cars, just ordinary.

We took off out there and stayed at the plane and they waited there on the plane, and the question about where he ought to be sworn in came up. My position was he ought to be sworn in right away, right then, not wait one minute; that the country was too important to wait for a big ceremony in Washington or do it there on the steps of the Capitol or something or other like that. No, sir, I wanted it done then! We have national and international commitments and problems that can arise at any second, and it's not like a corporation which can have an acting manager for a month. This country is too big for that. We have too many international commitments. And any bobbling in that power is dangerous for the machinery.

F: Did Johnson seem hesitant to do it then, or was he pretty well committed?

B: He hadn't been committed to anything, he had just got there! The question hadn't come up. He agreed that that was the thing he ought to do. They got hold of Sarah Hughes and Sarah came out. We were waiting, of course, until Mrs. Kennedy, who wanted to ride back with us apparently, and the coffin.

They brought that out and got that loaded. Mrs. Kennedy stood there, Mrs. Johnson, myself, Homer Thornberry, Kilduff, Albert Thomas, and a couple of other people--that's who is in the picture--and he was sworn in.

F: And did Johnson sort of decide who was going to get off and who was going to stay on, or did he just say, "Close up the plane and let's go"? You came on to Washington with him, didn't you?

B: Yes. Everybody who was on there was going back with him. The Secret Service who were committed to the safety of the people who run this country were very concerned about getting that plane out of there. They wanted it to leave and so they left.

F: Where was your bride in all of this?

B: The bride was in Houston...no, in Austin.

F: Waiting for you to come to supper, huh!

B: Waiting for me to come to supper. After they got airborne, one of the aides there on the airplane said that he would notify a couple of people. They have a radio connection and communications are excellent. And I said, "If you would call one of those switchboards and get somebody to call my wife and tell her to join me in Washington as soon as she can; that I will be there and have left for Washington and am all right."

So my wife had just unpacked in Austin; she then started making arrangements to get a reservation to come in to Washington. We got in that night and I went on home, and my wife came in four or five hours later. I got up and went out and got her at the airport. We did not have any children then, Joe, so we operated that way.

F: You were a little more flexible.

B: Yes, sir.

F: Had she been under much strain herself? Had she been concerned about you?

B: She was pretty upset, bless her heart.

F: I can imagine.

B: Well, no reason. It worked out all right.

F: What was it like on the plane coming back?

B: They spent a good bit of time trying to evolve what should be said, what Johnson should say, had to work up a little statement.



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F: Did the Kennedy people move in pretty professionally to serve Johnson the way they had Kennedy, or was there sometimes alleged division between staff?

B: Some of them seemed to be helpful, some of them were not very helpful.

Tape 2 of 2

F: This is tape number two on Jack Brooks. We were talking, Jack, about the trip back. What was it like when you landed?

B: I was a little disappointed in the attitude when we landed. Bobby Kennedy came on the back of the plane there, and they brought the coffin off and they went off, kind of shoving; a little bit of a bad deal. I thought it was very poor taste on their part and they shouldn't have been doing it that way.

F: You mean they showed no concern for the new President at all?

B: That's correct. They were pretty arrogant. Of course, it was my advice to President Johnson that the first thing he ought to do was fire Bobby Kennedy and Stewart Udall. I personally got along with them. I had no difficulties with them particularly, but I knew that they hated Johnson and they could not work for him. You know, Joe, my theory is, if somebody hates you, don't have them on the payroll. They're not going to be constructive. I'm sorry that they hate me, you're sorry that they don't like you, but you just can't have them on the staff. They're not going to be helpful to you. And in a political appointment, when you appoint them and give them the job, I think you ought to be bored for the hollow horn, if you give it to somebody who's just dedicated to your destruction. Johnson did not think he ought to do that. He thought he could work with them and he wanted to be kind. After he got to be

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President, you see, he didn't want to be unkind to anybody. He was aware of what power was, he understands power, and he wanted to be reasonable, considerate, thoughtful of all the people that worked for him and that had worked for Kennedy; be kind to them, and he tried to be.

And in many of the instances when he was, it cost him because they turned on him. And they never were for him and they hurt him. I thought it was regrettable. I think he should have gotten rid of those people.

F: Udall got to the point that he worked fairly closely with Mrs. Johnson.

B: Yes. I said that he followed Mrs. Johnson around with a bare-rooted tree and a shovel, and every time she stopped to look at something he dug a hole and handed her that tree. And that's the only way he kept his job.

F: But you felt that he never really supported Johnson?

B: Oh, of course not. Of course not.

F: In other words, that last week surfacing over the D.C. Stadium and---

B: Right. Proved what had been my conviction since 1963, that's right.

F: This was the first time he'd had the opportunity to do anything.

B: But he never had done anything too constructive. At any rate, Johnson made a good presentation that night. He behaved well. When Charlotte came back, we went down and had dinner with him the first night he was President.

F: Oh, you did. Where?

B: I think we ate at The Elms, we went out there. I remember going down there to pick him up. He couldn't get in the office. The Kennedys had that office and wouldn't clear it out. They had all these dignitaries from all over the world coming in that wanted to be received in the

President's office. They didn't care who the President was, but they wanted to be in that office, and understandably. It was a real, real sticky operation of gracefully getting them out of that office so they could get it redone, or get a rug in it and get a desk in it, you know, some presentable office furniture equipment. He was officing over in the old Executive Office Building there for a couple of days, which was a bad deal--communication-wise. You know, the telephone systems weren't adequate. We went over there to pick him up one night to take him home.

F: At the EOB.

B: The security was a little looser then and my wife and I went and picked him up; came in our car. We drove him on out there and the security went along with us. We've been friends ever since then and never had a real serious disagreement while he was Vice President or President. While he was President he was very kind to people, worked hard on these programs; I enjoyed working with him; we enjoyed knowing him.

People talk about Johnson talking all the time. They make a mistake. He was a very good listener, Joe. People don't understand that. But Johnson is a smart man, a good mind, a retentive mind, analytical mind, very objective about things. When he asks you something, he's listening. He'll listen very closely to what you'd say. You better be telling him straight and not be making any mistakes, because he will notice.

F: And you'd better tell it the same way next time, too, because he will remember.

B: That's right. I would recommend that you not forget that. The only way, I guess, that I got along with Johnson all these years was that I always told him just what I thought was right--period.

F: You were a guest at the Ranch fairly soon after he became President--in March.

B: Yes.

F: What was the occasion like? Do you recall that?

B: I don't. We went down there a good many times, you know, and went to the White House a good many times.

F: It's all run together now.

B: That's right. Most of these occasions were not publicized, they were just informal visits, no story in the paper. Just go down and visit and talk with them and have supper or have lunch or go ride on the boat, go to the Ranch or go to Camp David, whatever he was doing--just somebody that he trusted and could visit with and talk to them about whatever he wanted to talk about.

F: They never were stiff affairs.

B: Oh, no, not for me. Never! I don't know about other people, but for me, no. I guess sometimes it would irritate him a little bit.

He had so much to do and was working so hard that if some people would relax a little too much he'd look like he wanted to say, "Well, by God, if you were working as hard as I was, you wouldn't be quite that relaxed!" But I tried not to bring him too many problems. You know everybody wants you to go get the President to do something, if you know him. They want you to bug him, worry that son-of-a-bitch to death. I operated on the theory that if they wanted him to do it, let them write him and call him or send it down there. So I didn't bring him a whole lot of new problems. He already had enough to say grace over, so I didn't bring him very many. I used to just cull out in my own mind the things I wasn't going to worry him with.

F: In '66 you were named one of the twelve-members of the select committee on standards of conduct.

B: That's right.

F: Did this grow out of the Adam Clayton Powell fiasco, or was this coming a long time?

B: I don't think it had anything to do with Adam Clayton Powell. It was basically a reorganization of congressional legislative procedures. This was not so much morals as it was how you run the Congress, not personal ethics but the legislative system. It was not a very fun time. It was a hard deal. It was an even committee--three Republicans and three Democrats, and that's not a good way to run anything. The way to run something is to have control. If you've got responsibility, you ought to have control. I'm not for even committees. If the Republicans are responsible for something, I want them to have the control on it; let them do it. We'll file a minority report if we don't agree. But when you have even committees you have very bad compromises. They didn't care. Have nothing! And the bill we finally came out with was not so bad--there were some things in it I wasn't for, but it wasn't so bad and with some variations it could have been adopted. But we couldn't get it adopted, couldn't get a rule on it, couldn't get Speaker McCormack too strongly for it. I don't think that the parliamentarian Mr. Deschler was ever for it. Then they appointed another committee later. It failed and they turned it all over to the Rules Committee; the Rules Committee then brought out this bill they passed last year. It was loaded with things that are problems. They're going to change the whole system of what congressmen do. I don't know whether it will be possible for them to continue, really. If you have a record vote on everything and I stand

on the floor all day long, how do you answer your mail! How do I interview you! How do I see anybody in my office! There are a lot of things wrong with these problems. But anyhow, that's what they've done.

Joint committees that are equal--I've got three years experience to prove that they don't work well. That's a serious mistake.

F: Did the President ever talk to you about the quality of leadership in the Senate and House while he was President?

B: Yes.

F: I've always felt that he must have longed to have had what Eisenhower had in the way of congressional leadership.

B: Yes.

F: What did he say?

B: Yes, it would have been [good]. It was my impression that he felt sometime that if he could have been President and had somebody like him as Majority Leader, somebody like old man Rayburn as Speaker, that things would have gone even better. Although, if you want to be honest about it, he didn't have much cause to complain, and he did not complain about this. Because, actually, we got so much legislation passed. It just might have been easier to pass. It took an awful lot of work on his part.

F: I gather Speaker McCormack went along with everything.

B: Oh, of course, that's right.

F: He just lacked the energy.

B: No, McCormack had lots of energy. It was just tough ...it was hard. McCormack was loyal to him always, always loyal to him, very helpful to him. If there were four or five leaders there and Johnson had a major problem he brought out--I've heard this--and he laid out the problem and

it was a tough decision, McCormack would always speak up courageously for the presidency and the national interest. He liked him. And we got them passed in the Senate, too. It just wasn't as easy, not as cut and dried, took a lot of pulling and hauling. And Johnson's friends worked awfully hard, lots of people to see, lots of things to get done, lots of people for the President to call and talk with, you know, to get these things ironed out. But we got them all done.

F: In '68, which is another election year, the President came down to a rally for you in Beaumont in March before he announced he wasn't going to run again.

B: Yes, sir.

F: And then he came again in October on account of a Jack Brooks Night.

B: Right.

F: Were you expecting him in either case? Do you have some kind of pro forma invitation to your party leader this way, or does he do this on his own initiative, or how does this work? Besides the fact that he likes Jack Brooks.

B: When you're President of the United States, you can't just say that "We're going to go to Beaumont, Texas, on October 10," because on October 9--

F: All hell may break loose somewhere.

B: Innumerable emergencies come up. You just really cannot commit yourself to a private personal operation like that. I'd invited him and hoped he could come, and he thought I ought to have the program and was for it, was happy about it, but wasn't positive that he could be there. Now I understood this, so I didn't tell anybody. I told them he'd be there if he could, that he just was not promised at all, and he wasn't.

He couldn't promise, I knew he couldn't. Other people might ask him, "Are you really going to be there?" and expect an answer, but I know that he does not know whether he can be there and it's foolishness to do that. It turned out that he could and everybody was delighted. We had a wonderful time. I've got some pictures over there in that book; we'll keep them and enjoy them.

And he came back last year, really surprised me last year. I had invited him and I thought he might be able to come, slip off. By God, he did, just slipped off there in his own plane, flew in there and brought Luci and Pat. Came at the last minute. Didn't make a speech.

F: Just there.

B: That's right. Well, you know, if he makes a speech that's serious they say he's running for President, trying to tell everybody how to run the world. If he makes a speech that's just friendly and quiet, they say, "That's all he had to say." But we did have a wonderful visit after that party, sat around and talked and visited. Carl Albert was there, also. We had a wonderful time.

F: Did you get the feeling that the President was interested in Carl succeeding to the speakership?

B: Yes. They've been close friends and my feeling was that they were friendly.

F: Back in June of '68 you made a rather eloquent tribute to the veterans at Khe-sanh.

B: Right.

F: Was this because of your long-time Marine interest, or what was the impetus for this particular speech?



B: The impetus was they were men who had done an exceptional job for this country, and I thought they were entitled to some recognition. This was an appropriate forum to honor them: Flag Day ceremonies here in the House of Representatives.

F: Have you kept up your commission in the Marines?

B: Yes, I have. I'm a colonel in the Reserve now.

F: Does that have any particular effect on you one way or another, vis-a-vis the war in Vietnam? Can you divorce yourself from that--?

B: Certainly, it would. I have a lot of friends who've been out there. I was out there myself earlier this year. I might say that there's nobody that's more interested in ending the war than the people out there fighting it. You know, you have a lot of people in this country who say, "We've got to end the war," and they think they're the only people who are for ending it. They ought to talk to those Marines out there, who are dug in! Sitting there taking that artillery, or subject to anti-personnel mines and all of the booby-trap operations, all of the other dangers of living in an area like that. No, I think the Marine Corps certainly influences you. I say I'd like to see the war ended, but Johnson wanted the war ended. Johnson wanted the war ended, tried to end it, worked on it. Started the pacification program.

I see Nixon now says it's a new program. Of course, Nixon had that plan in 1968 to end the war; that plan we haven't heard about. It's the best kept secret in history because nobody has heard about that plan.

F: Well, he said in '68 he wasn't ready to reveal it yet.

B: I don't know how long he's going to wait. But I'm a little bitter about that, Joe; I really think it's unfair. I think it was raw demagoguery, and anybody that had a plan that was worth a damn should have given it

to the country then--that day. There have been a lot of people killed since October '68, a lot of people wounded.

F: In the fall of '68 the New York Times came out with an endorsement of you. Why would they endorse you 'way off in Southeast Texas?

B: I tell you, I don't know. I was surprised about that. I guess they just liked my record; maybe they'd been interested in my record in favor of housing, my record in favor of Medicare--medical treatment for people, or my record in favor of veterans' benefits, or my work on computers. Maybe they were interested in that. I've been very interested in developing a better computer system for the United States government. We've saved millions and millions of dollars as a result of those bills, which Johnson was a major factor in getting passed. I just don't know what it was that triggered their support. I was grateful for it, but, like you, I was a little surprised.

F: It was a recognition of your national status, but it still, you know, intrigues you that--

B: Well, they don't have much circulation down there in the ninth congressional district.

F: No, I wouldn't imagine.

B: But I just say if they wanted to brag on me, I'm happy to let them do it.

F: Did you get the feeling--I know you did, but did it spread throughout Congress while Johnson was President that you did have a President who understood all the possibilities in government? I'm talking about from the operational standpoint now, I'm not talking about policy, but just how to get things done and where to trim.

B: Certainly. It was obvious that he knew what made the machinery of Congress operate, how it functioned in detail.

F: Did this tend to make congressmen a little more careful and maybe insightful in what they tried to do?

B: A little more what?

F: A little more careful and a little more, say, incisive in what they tried to do? In other words, knowing that the man at the head of the party and at the head of the nation knew when you were saying that maybe you could not do certain things because of certain rules, that he knew ways around them.

B: Well, it made for a little more efficiency in getting things accomplished. Those are sad stories and foolish answers and excuses. They didn't hunt. They would not go, of course. It was easy to explain a committee situation to President Johnson; he'd understand it just like that (snaps fingers), as quick as lightning he'd understand exactly what the fact situation was and what could be done and what the alternatives were. Sure, this was one of the reasons he got all that legislation passed, he understood the name of the game, how to get it done.

F: A couple of final questions. Did you have any idea that he wasn't going to run again prior to that television speech on March 31?

B: Not officially. I'd heard him talk when he was tired, saying he ought to quit. But it was just talking, I thought.

F: You're like me, you sort of looked on it as...at one time or another, you thought he talked on lots of sides of a question, you know.

B: That's right. I didn't think anything of it.

F: Were you watching the telecast?

B: No, as a matter of fact, I was going to pick up a friend and just listening to it on the radio.

F: So you had a little instant shock.

B: Yes, but it's all right. It was a real shock, it was a different thing, but, you know, I never chided him about it. I didn't think it was bad. These people say he shouldn't have done it, or he should have. I figure it's his own business.

F: Did you have the feeling that...?

B: He worked hard, Joe, and I thought he was entitled, if he didn't feel he was well enough to do it and wanted to survive, to quit. He'd worked his heart out, done a great job. There was another overriding consideration. I felt, and he never did tell me this, but I always felt that he thought that if he said he wasn't going to run that he might go on and work out an accord in Vietnam without being accused of political motivations. He never told me that, but this is what I feel was one of the factors. Plus the fact that I'm sure he'd served long and ably and kind of wanted to get back home. It's not so bad out on the Ranch, you know.

F: It's a good life. One other question. You've been concerned about the transporting of gasses.

B: Right.

F: Is that just part of your general safety concern?

B: Right.

F: Do you think of this from a national standpoint, or do you have that problem particularly in your district?

B: No, it's a national problem which does affect my district, would affect any district in the country. When they move dangerous substantives of gasses or liquids in unsafe containers or in boxcars liable to be wrecked, they just don't insure against the problems that can easily arise and that do arise, and we've had four or five instances in the

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country where they've had tragic accidents. Spilled gas or poisonous liquids or all sorts of things. We move some of these noxious substances around this country a good bit, and I think we're going to have to be a little more cautious about how we do it.

F: How should we do it?

B: Well, there are different ways for different substances. But the engineers can determine what kind of container will control certain caustics or poisonous liquids or gasses, and then you've got to insulate that in a container and put it in a safe carton of some sort or build boxes around it, build a superstructure around it. Then you've got to take care of it while you're going and have special care while you're moving it.

F: Do you feel that the military is sufficiently alert to this problem?

B: No, they're not. They have some of the same problems that commercial operators do. I guess less, perhaps. They're less likely just to ship a carload of poisonous gas somewhere because they've been touched up by this publicity and by problems that they have. That's one of the continuing safety problems we have in this economy now.

F: We've been lucky.

B: Yes, we have been lucky. I don't know how much longer we're going to be lucky. We've got problems in air on transportation. We've got problems on pollution, serious problems on pollution, Joe. I think that if we don't do something about it, it's going to really hurt this country's future. I don't know where you can take little kids swimming now.

F: Not where you used to go.

B: Oh no, you can't go there.

F: Or fishing either.

B: No, no, you can't do it. So it's changing around a lot.

F: Thank you, Jack. Do you think there's anything else we ought to talk about?

B: No.

F: You've been very patient. I appreciate it.

B: I hope it's been beneficial.

F: It has. I appreciate it.

[End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview I]

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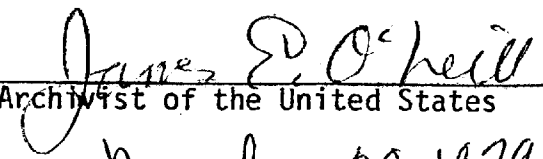
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