

INTERVIEWEE: GOVERNOR EDMUND G. BROWN (TAPE #2)

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

DATE: August 19, 1970

F: This is the second interview with Governor Edmund G. Brown in his office in Beverly Hills, California, on August 19, 1970. The interviewer is still Joe B. Frantz.

Governor, the big interest of course in '62 was your campaign against Richard Nixon, and the feeling that Richard Nixon was using California as a testing ground for a comeback for the Presidency. I wondered if you would talk a little bit about the issue of Nixon's aspirations at that time, and how much help, if any, you received from the national party.

B: Nixon, of course, flatly denied that he had any Presidential ambitions--that he intended to spend four years in Sacramento. But I hammered away from beginning to end that this was merely a stepping-stone to the White House for him--that he wanted to use California as a parking place on the way to the White House. I told him very frankly I didn't believe him, and California needed a full time governor, and that he was really a candidate for the Presidency. I kept talking about the fact that he knew nothing about California government. He hadn't taken very much time to learn. Richard Nixon, of course, pounded away like he had done years before on Communism, denied my charges, but that's about what it amounted to.

As I remember, the national administration--President Kennedy was in California on two or three occasions during '62 on allegedly non-political trips.

F: Which the President can make very well.

B: Which the President can do very, very well. He came out and we opened a dam up in Los Banos, the part of the California Water Project where we were in partnership with the federal government. And he was here on other occasions. Of course, I was always with him in his automobile. He was a great help to me in every way that he could. I can't remember Kennedy or Vice President Johnson making any speeches for me. They may have.

F: I have no reports of any.

B: I haven't any recollection of either one of them coming out directly--

F: As I recall, Medicare was something of an issue, both nationally and in California, in that campaign.

B: I fought for Medicare. I can't remember when it was put over in the California legislature. I think it was '63.

F: But you were running ahead of the national party on this.

B: Yes, I was. As a matter of fact, I fought for Medicare from the very beginning, and came very close to getting it in '62. My recollection on this is not clear at all.

F: I presume that your overwhelming victory in November '62 filled the national party with some jubilation.

B: I think that they were all very anxious to see that Richard Nixon was defeated. He wasn't very well liked in Washington. I had the support, I think, of the Democratic Party pretty wholeheartedly throughout the entire United States. I raised some money outside of California, but as a governor, I didn't feel like I needed any help from the national leaders. As a matter of fact, I never felt so. I always felt that a governor had to win it on his own record. As a matter of fact, if a President or Vice President came into the State, he would be somewhat

subordinated and felt the governor should always be number one in his own state. If the President came in, the crowd was cheering for the President, not for the governor, and that I didn't like.

I recall particularly, however, that the Cuban crisis occurred toward the end of the campaign.

F: That was in October.

B: In October. And I immediately called off any formal campaigning because of the international crisis. As a member of the National Civilian Defense Committee, of which I was vice chairman and Nelson Rockefeller was chairman, we were called back to Washington. We were briefed by the authorities and by the President and by the military authorities--the Secretary of Defense--and warned as to what might happen. I dropped all formal campaigning for a week. Nixon continued to campaign, but he was really seriously injured by the attention given to the fact that the governor of California was back there planning internal defense while he was out on the political stump.

F: He would have been better to have been quiet for a week himself.

B: Yes, I thought it was much better for me, and I really feel that it was very helpful to me. The zeroing in on a national crisis was very helpful in my campaign.

F: I judge, on the national scene there was a general feeling that you had buried Richard Nixon, or he had buried himself.

B: He didn't bury himself. He worked awfully hard. I'll have to take credit for burying him at the time, but we didn't bury him very deeply as subsequent history developed.

I think whatever they may say of Richard Nixon, he has made a

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remarkable comeback from '62 to '68. The man never stopped. He campaigned for Congressional candidates all over the United States and for Republican governors. He campaigned for the Republican nominee, Goldwater, when a lot of them left him. He built up a real bankroll of support, both financially and in friends, during the '64 campaign against Lyndon Johnson.

F: In '63 you are back in office for another term, confirmed by the voters. One of the first things you did was to offer a program to end racial bias in California, which I gather--

B: To end what?

F: To end racial bias in California--which I judge again was out ahead of the national leadership.

B: I support a bill called the Rumford Bill, which was a fair housing bill, a bill that prohibited any discrimination in housing. It had real teeth in it because after a finding by the Fair Employment Practices Commission, which was the administrative agency, that a person had been discriminated against by reason of race, color, or religion, they could take the case into court and compel the individual to rent or lease the property to them. I fought very hard for it and had no difficulty getting it through the Assembly where we had quite a liberal group. But the Senate was another kettle of fish. It was only at the last day at almost the last minute that through parliamentary maneuvering we got it through.

This, however, was a very pyrrhic victory because the real estate people and the great majority of the people in California were very offended by the housing bill. They knew that I led the fight for it, and they put on the ballot an initiative measure that prohibited a legislature from ever compelling a person to sell his home to any reason

whatsoever. This bill was passed in 1964, I think, by an overwhelming vote of the people of the State of California by seventy-percent.

In other words, I was completely out of tune with the white citizens of the state who felt that the right to sell the property to whomever they wanted was a privileged right, a right of ownership, a Constitutional right. I just went down to defeat, and it played a great part in my subsequent fall. However, I still feel that I was absolutely right. If I had to do it all over again, I would have done exactly the same thing. I think one of the reasons the failure of the Reagan administration to implement fair housing in California has played a great part in the present racial divisions that are taking place in this country.

F: In view of your forthright leadership, particularly toward minorities and liberal measures generally, how did Jess Unruh sort of get in close to the Kennedy people? Because this is when he begins to emerge in '63.

B: As a matter of fact, he was very close to Kennedy in 1960. He was much closer to Kennedy than I was, even though I was one of the original supporters of Kennedy. As a matter of fact, I was a supporter of Kennedy before Jess Unruh. While Jess Unruh was trying to plan who he'd be for, I had made a secret agreement with Kennedy to support him in the event that he carried the states of Wisconsin and West Virginia and Oregon, and was running well in the polls. These were conditions that he set up himself. I had also made a commitment--I can't remember whether I told you before--that I would not be a candidate for the Vice Presidency.

In my first one, did I tell you about the visit I had with President Johnson in his home?

F: Yes.

B: I told you all about that.

F: Right. And about his chastisement of you later?

B: Yes. Later, at one stage in the game, I was instrumental in removing Paul Ziffren as national committeeman in 1964, I think, because he was constantly quarreling with Lyndon Johnson. He attacked the Lyndon Johnson policies, and I felt that Lyndon Johnson as Vice President of the United States, that it was necessary for California to have his friendship. As Vice President, he was placed in charge of National Emergency Committee or Commission, or something else. So I nominated and fought for the election of Stanley Mosk as Democratic National Committeeman over Paul Ziffren, who had previously been the national committeeman. They were both my friends. As a matter of fact, Paul Ziffren was a far closer friend of mine than Mosk, and continued to be even after I fought him.

F: You were chairman of the Western Governors Conference in '63. Does that act more--

B: Chairman of the Western Governors Conference, that's right.

F: Does that act as more than a sort of public relations conference? Does it have any real clout?

B: No, none at all. Whatever public relations value you get out of it, but the Western Governors Conference is a very loose organization. It's more of a social gathering than it is a joining together of governors for the purpose of really accomplishing anything.

F: At the National Governors Conference, you charged that Goldwater was a segregationist, and you proposed a petition supporting the Administration's program on racial discrimination--or an end to racial discrimination.

B: Did I? I had forgot about it.

F: Yes. You don't have any recollections of whether you worked with the national Administration on this?

B: No, I have no recollection of that.

F: Did President Kennedy offer you a Cabinet post?

B: No, he never did.

F: There was some rumor on that, you know.

B: Never even suggested it; never offered me anything, as a matter of fact.

F: By the time we get down to the end of the year--December of '63--Kennedy has been assassinated, and you have a new ballgame in the sense that Johnson is President. And Unruh is on record as having backed you for the Vice Presidential nomination. Was this sort of a real peace gesture on his part, or was this newspaper talk?

B: I have no recollection of his offering to support me for Vice President. I was always rather hopeful secretly that the President would select me as his Vice Presidential candidate, but I really never expected it. As I read Lyndon Johnson, I thought that he'd want someone that was really very close to him. I thought he'd want another Senator because Lyndon Johnson is essentially a legislator, and I felt that he would want someone that knew the national scene, the international scene, more than he thought I did. So for that reason, I never at any time thought that he'd select me.

F: In your opinion, did the governors feel that President Johnson was more of a Senator's man than he was a governor's man?

B: Yes, I don't think the governors ever felt very close to Lyndon Johnson. The governors of the South probably did, but the Northern and California governors didn't particularly think that he was aware of their internal problems. Although I must say that when President Johnson, right after

he took over as President--we were all assembled for the funeral, and he came over, and I don't believe that I've ever heard a more moving talk than Lyndon Johnson made to the governors; and I think that they were all--tremendously impressed.

F: Where was this now?

B: This was over in the Executive Office across from the White House. We were all there.

F: He had you come in as a group?

B: We came in as a group--Republican and Democrat--and everybody was tremendously impressed. He was a very humble man, fully aware of the terrible responsibilities that he had. Nevertheless, he was a man that impressed us with his ability to take hold of the situation and to run this country. Republican and Democrat alike, conservative and liberal and moderate, they were all tremendously impressed.

F: There was the feeling that--to use the cliché--the Ship of State was going to remain steady?

B: That's right. And it was in very good hands. I talked with all the governors afterwards. There was a unanimity of opinion that this man was going to do a good job.

F: Did you get to see him privately on that trip?

B: I don't believe I did. I can't recall seeing him privately. He never called me in nor spoke with me.

F: He takes over at the end of November '63; of course '64 is going to be an election year, and you head the California delegation. And you were more or less on record as favoring an uninstructed delegation.

B: I was for Lyndon Johnson.

F: Yes, but you weren't trying to, in a sense, restrict your delegation to

being for Johnson.

B: No. As a matter of fact, I wanted Lyndon Johnson, as I remember it, to run under his own name. But he had his own reasons, which I have never understood, for not running. I don't know why he did that.

F: Did you ever talk with him about entering his name in the primary?

B: I did. I'm sure I talked with him about it. I can't remember where, but he told me that he wanted to run uninstructed delegations. I talked with him about it at the White House. I think I talked to him on the telephone.

F: But he wasn't going to--

B: He wasn't going to put his name up at all. He wanted a delegation, of course, that was very friendly to him, and the California group was very friendly to him.

F: Mayor Yorty was sort of building up his own delegation at this time, as I remember.

B: Did Yorty have a delegation to field against me?

F: Yes.

B: Yes, he had a delegation to field. I remember now. Yorty had a delegation to pledge to him, which was really an uninstructed delegation, and we shellacked him. We gave him a good trouncing. But Johnson would never come out for my delegation. He wouldn't even put his arm around us, as I remember.

F: Even though Yorty had supported Nixon in '60?

B: Even though Yorty had supported--and I was the Governor. Still he wouldn't say a word for our delegation. I can remember it annoyed the hell out of me, too. I felt that he should have said something, he should have let it--

F: From a standpoint of political maneuvering, did you work more closely

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with Governor Connally or with the President during the spring and summer as you head down toward the convention?

B: I don't think I worked very closely with either one of them. President Johnson was very friendly. I was very friendly with Governor Connally, too. I felt Connally was a very close friend, so I kind of looked to Connally for leadership in plotting the political strategy of the year 1964.

F: You found Connally very easy to work with?

B: I found him very easy to work with, and I liked him very much, even though I thought he was far more conservative than I was. But I liked Governor Connally very much.

F: More conservative than the President, for that matter.

B: Much more conservative than the President, yes.

F: Just before the convention, you named Pierre Salinger to the Senate.

B: Yes.

F: You know, until very recently, he had been working, of course, as Press Secretary for President Johnson--inherited from the Kennedy Administration. Did you consult with President Johnson on this?

B: I can't remember. You know, my candidate for the United States Senate then was Allan Cranston.

F: Who eventually got it.

B: And I was working very hard for Allan Cranston. And Pierre Salinger came out and entered the fight against Cranston at the very last minute with the support of the whole Kennedy clan and all of the Kennedy people in California. I always considered myself a Kennedy person, but I don't think I was ever as close to Larry O'Brien and Ken O'Donnell as Jess Unruh. They let it be known to the national press in various ways that

Unruh was really their number one man. I always resented that very much too because I had been a very loyal supporter of the Kennedys, and I felt that they kind of undermined the Governor by doing business with Unruh. I think the President himself always looked to me for leadership in California, but the underlings--the people that were close to him, his political people--liked Unruh better than they liked me. He was more the tough type of politician than I was.

They were always a little bit annoyed at me because in the '60 campaign they wanted me to come out for Kennedy on Thursday. I had told them weeks before that I'd be for him, but I was coming out in my own time. I can remember Bobby Kennedy telling me that he wanted me to come out for him on a Thursday, and I wouldn't do it. He was mad as hell, but I didn't give a damn. As a matter of fact, I was really responsible more than anybody else in getting Governor Docking of Kansas and the Governor [Loveless] of Iowa to come out for him, which really put him over the top on the first ballot back in '60.

F: Did Johnson, as far as you know, approve of the appointment of Salinger?

B: I don't think I ever asked him, but I remember I was somewhat dismayed when Salinger told me that Johnson had paid his filing fee--took the money out of his own pocket and paid Salinger's filing fee--to run for the United States Senate.

I thought this was kind of double-crossing the Governor of California. He got into it at the last minute, and his victory was the beginning of the end for me. Salinger's defeat of my candidate was a further increase in the power of Unruh in '64. It humiliated me to be defeated in the primaries, but I was enough of a Democrat to want a Democratic United

States Senator. I didn't want George Murphy, whom I'd known for years and thought was a first-class boob--which he has turned out to be--so I supported him. I supported him because he was the democratic nominee and when Clare Engle died, I felt that I should do it.

This, however, proved a very bad thing. I should have left it to the people to make the decision. The Republicans very cleverly made an issue of the fact that I was trying to force Salinger on the people of the State, number one. And number two, they also raised very serious questions as to his residency in California in the Senate. It accentuated the fact that Salinger had voted in Virginia, not in California. They made him a carpetbagger, and it was really a serious political mistake on my part--and on Salinger's part to accept. What I should have done was appointed a Democrat to serve an honorary position--some outstanding man that could forever be called a United States Senator.

F: Someone sort of, in a sense, above the arena.

B: Yes. As a matter of fact, personally, I really wanted to run for the United States Senate in 1964. I knew that Claire Engle was very, very sick. But Claire's family--his wife particularly--claimed that he was well. I would tell people privately that he was sick, which I knew to be true, because I'd had a report on it from the authorities in Washington.

F: I was in California when he died. I remember reading the papers. I was up in the San Francisco area. There was a sense of shock about it, which didn't really gee with the facts that this was a man who was going to die pretty soon.

B: A lot of my friends in the legislature came back with silly stories that he was going to get well when the poor man couldn't talk. I visited him

in Washington, and he was obviously--. He had a tumor of the brain, and it was malignant. He was going to die. That was all there was to it.

F: Just a matter of timing.

B: Matter of timing. It was obvious that he couldn't make a speech, couldn't make a personal appearance, or anything. So these people went back there-- one of friends, Jerry Waldie, said he talked with him and that he'd been injured in a handball incident, that he had hit his head, and that he'd be back. Well, all of those things made it impossible for me to run because people viewed my statements about Engle's illness--that he was not physically able to run for the Presidency [Senate]--as they would have regarded if I had been a candidate--as a selfish effort on my part to run for the Senate.

F: You were just, in a sense, running him down in order to build you up.

B: Right. And I didn't want to do that. I was more concerned with electing a Democrat.

F: Did you have any trouble at the Atlantic City convention holding your delegation? I presume they were down the line for Johnson.

B: For Johnson? Oh, no, it was a leadpipe cinch.

F: The same way with Humphrey?

B: The same way with Humphrey. Whoever the President wanted, they were going to get.

F: There was no great sense of surprise or consternation in your delegation when Humphrey was selected?

B: No, I don't think so. I think people thought it might be Humphrey. I think it would have been very easy to start a movement for me for the Vice Presidency, but we all felt that that was a Presidential choice traditionally--

F: It wasn't an open choice.

B: As a matter of fact, the President called me at the executive mansion in Sacramento several weeks before the convention. I thought at that time that he was going to ask me to be the Vice Presidential candidate. Instead of that, he asked me to nominate him. So when he asked me to nominate him, he said, "I'm going to ask Governor Connally from my home state to introduce you and to say a few words about me, and then for you to nominate me." I knew when he asked me to nominate him that he had eliminated me from the Vice Presidency. Although I had always felt I was eliminated even before that because he never discussed it with me or talked with me. And there were some bad newspaper stories emanated from it that I was not competent to be the President of the United States, even though I had been Governor of the largest state in the union.

F: On the other hand, he was not as strong in California as he was in many other states.

B: He thought that, but he did very well in California. He won by over a million votes, and his receptions here were great. He could never understand California politics, he could never understand the CDC, and some of the liberal Democrats that had really taken Lyndon Johnson on over a period of years. And he never felt secure in California.

He was amazed at the wonderful reception he got in Sacramento when I was Governor. He had a tremendous crowd and great reception.

F: He came out here in the last week of the campaign, and you and Salinger in a sense--

B: Traveled with him. And he had tremendous crowds. He had the biggest crowds I've ever seen in California before or since.

F: You didn't have to whip it up. It just came?

B: Oh no, it was natural. They had big, big crowds. We worked at it. We really worked at planning it, but he was the President and they liked him. the meetings we had in Riverside and San Bernardino were just great. He talked too long at all these meetings, as I remember it, he had no terminal facilities. But the people liked him, and they liked to hear him. I thought they were very successful meetings.

F: Did he tend to give set speeches, or did he just talk off the cuff?

B: He had prepared speeches which he'd give, and then he'd go on for another half hour--which he shouldn't have done. I mean, if he had stopped at the end of his set speech, it would have been much better.

F: So you helped him carry California overwhelmingly. Did he ever talk to you at all about any appointments after that?

B: Never at any time. He never did. Even after I was defeated, he called me--I called him up. I don't think he called me up. I think I called him and said I'd like to come back and see him. And I think he said to me at that meeting, "Is there anything that I can do for you," after I was defeated.

I think I said to him, "There's only one thing that I really want, and that is I'd like to be on the Supreme Court if the opportunity ever presents itself." I realized, however, that he'd have difficulty appointing me as long as Earl Warren was the Chief Justice, because it would be rather difficult politically to have two former governors on the Supreme Court at the same time. But if Warren had ever retired, I would have made a real drive for the Supreme Court, which was the only thing I really wanted.

F: Warren waited a little late for that.

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B: He waited too--it was too long. When he retired, Nixon was President.
Let's see, he wasn't President--he retired--

F: No, he sent over that cryptic note saying, "On appointment of my successor--" in the last days of the Johnson Administration when the Fortas appointment came up.

B: Yes, but that was--

F: Nearly four years later.

B: That's right. It was much further along. I think at one time he asked me whether I wanted to be an Ambassador. As a matter of fact, he did appoint me as an honorary Ambassador to Brazil--his personal representative in the inauguration of the President of Brazil. Then he asked me to go over as his special representative to the Island of Tonga. I headed the delegation to Brazil with Ambassadorial status, but I was a member of the delegation with Governor Burns of Hawaii the head of the delegation.

F: At Tonga.

B: The Island of Tonga. Later on, of course, he appointed me chairman of the National Commission on Reform of the Federal Criminal Code, and also appointed me a member of the Income Maintenance Commission.

F: I want to ask you about those in a minute. As '65 comes on, then President Johnson begins to have more trouble with the war. Did this give you real trouble as Governor, because California, of course, is the great jumping off place.

B: Yes. He briefed us back there, and he made a very convincing case. We were briefed on two or three occasions.

F: We being whom?

B: The governors. He brought all the governors back from Minnesota after the

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Governors Conference. He briefed us in Washington before he sent further troops in, and before he bombed--. I can't get the chronology of those things. But the governors--usually led by Republicans, by the way--they would pass resolutions, they would offer resolutions supporting President Johnson and his efforts--particularly Rockefeller and some of the others. It would have been very difficult for the Democratic governor of the largest state to oppose the President. As a matter of fact, there were really only two governors that really fought him. One was Hatfield of Oregon, and the other was Romney and Romney would always, in the end, go along rather reluctantly--

F: Sort of hedge.

B: Sort of hedge. But Hatfield really didn't oppose him, but he wouldn't vote for it. It would be 49 to 1, and Hatfield was very convinced that the whole Vietnamese venture was a mistake.

F: Is this really the beginning of the real schism between you and Unruh?

B: No, I don't--

F: The splitting of the California delegation?

B: No, the Unruh schism started right after I was reelected as governor over Nixon. He determined at that time that he was going to build himself up to be governor four years from now for some reason that I've never understood. He thought the way to do it was to tear me down--or my forces down--so that my people couldn't support somebody else. So he went out to make me look bad, and I must confess he succeeded.

F: This was pretty much California politics and was not altogether then hitched to the national politics?

B: No. Of course, I don't think Robert Kennedy really thought he'd run for

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President until the situation in Viet Nam had deteriorated like it did in March of 1968.

F: You were in Greece when Watts broke out?

B: Yes.

F: You were vacationing?

B: No, I was invited over there by the Order of AHEPA. I was called and told about--

F: What's heppa?

B: No, it's AHEPA. It's a Greek organization, the Ancient Hellelic?-- I can't give you the name of it, but it's a great American-Greek organization. They were having a national convention in Athens, and I was invited over there as a guest. Senator Hart was invited. Governor Rockefeller was invited too, but he didn't come. But I did go over there.

The Watts riots took place, and I immediately flew back. Joe Califano met me at New York, and offered all the assistance in the world. As a matter of fact, they flew me back in a Presidential jet--not the big one, one of the little ones--met me in New York when I arrived--

F: Did they have a fairly good grasp of--

B: Oh, yes, and they were very helpful. They gave me all the support in the world. They were very concerned. Califano was particularly helpful. They knew what was going on. They were ready to move and everything else.

F: Were there ever any problems in working with the Johnson Administration in the Watts situation?

B: None whatsoever. The Johnson Administration was really very, very cooperative with me during the whole period I was Governor.

This may be a little bit ahead of your story, but in '66 the President

called me and told me,--he said he would come out and do anything he could to help me. He said, "If you really want me."

I said, "I really want you." Although I was still of the same feeling that a governor had to win this on his own, and that Johnson really couldn't help me particularly. But then he went over to Asia, and Bill Moyers called me from the Presidential plane and told me that he developed this hernia--whatever it was--that he was going to the hospital and he wouldn't be able to come out.

I always felt that this was a little bit of a letdown on President Johnson's part. I felt he kind of let me down because he said he'd come out here. I felt he could have made some move. He could have stopped or something, and to this day I feel that Johnson felt I was in real trouble. The polls showed I was in trouble, and it would hurt his image if he came out to help me. I don't know whether that's true or not, but that was my feeling anyway.

F: You kind of got the feeling that he felt he ought to stay out of California?

B: He'd stay out of California; that I was going down to defeat and if he supported me, it would hurt him in the days ahead. I don't know whether he'll see this, or you'll ever show it to him, but I thought it was kind of selfish on his part.

F: This is up to you because you set the use limits on this. We'll send you a form on what you want to do with it.

You, also, had later in that year a problem up at the Oakland Terminal.

B: Yes, we had several other problems. We had a problem at the Oakland terminal. We had another one on San Francisco just before the election. Those things all hurt me because Reagan came along as a strong law enforcement

man and I was soft. People always felt that I was too friendly with the blacks anyway. Going back to the Rumford Housing Bill and my fight for fair housing, they thought all those things were soft on the black man--the average white.

F: They just tarred you with it.

B: They just tarred me with it and, "Put a guy in there that'll put these colored guys in their place." And Reagan very cleverly handled that thing. I couldn't put my finger on it, but he was a master along with his sales forces, his advertising agencies, to put me in a bad light.

F: I don't want to get too much in the realm of supposition, but I've been intrigued by what the law-and-order people have not done--I'm using "law and order" in quotes--have not done to reduce racial demonstrations. I have a feeling that their time had come, and it would have happened regardless of the party.

B: In the Reagan situation when he was running for governor, he blamed me. After he got in and he had more riots on the campus than I ever had. We had one in California at Berkeley. He has had them in almost every campus, college, and state college in the State of California. But now instead of blaming the governor, because he's the governor, now he's blaming it on the regents, the president of the university, the chancellors, and the teachers--the faculty.

F: He's rather adroit really at--

B: He's a very, very adroit politician. There's no question about it at all.

In my opinion, Reagan is a liar too. I mean, he doesn't tell the truth. He cut the welfare program illegally. When he had to put it back, he blamed it on the social workers sabotaging his program to cut welfare

costs. One of the attributes of a successful politician is to adroitly blame others for things that are in your field of responsibility, and this is what Reagan was always able to do. I don't think Johnson was ever able to blame other people very well either. He assumed the burden [and] was very frank and forthright.

I could never understand why people felt there was a communication gap. I think that was contributed to by Johnson's always wanting to make the release at his own time and his own place. He was so tough about any releases about anything. If he talked to you and told you, "Now, let me make the release on that." If you let it out, you were verboten from there on out. I think those things kind of annoyed the press. He had a communication gap problem that was really not true, because I don't think any President ever told the people more of what he was going to do and why he was going to do it, particularly with respect to Viet Nam and other things. I always thought those charges against Johnson were very ill-founded.

F: In '66 the State Democratic Convention endorsed you for another term with some dissension in the convention. In fact, a fairly good wing of the party opposed you, I judge, at one time, that is, in the convention. Do you feel that--

B: You mean the CDC convention?

F: Yes.

B: Oh, the CDC convention, not the Democratic convention.

F: It was my understanding, according to my notes, that there were seven hundred delegates that refused to vote at the State Democratic Convention. Maybe I've got the wrong convention.

B: I think the Democratic convention generally supported me for a third term, but the DCD--this the Democratic Council of Clubs--they had an endorsing convention, and some of them walked out on me because of my support of Johnson and the war.

F: Did you have a feeling that Johnson's policy, in a sense, lapped over into--

B: Very definitely. This was the nail in the coffin.

F: You were carrying Johnson as well as Brown--

B: I was carrying Johnson because I was supporting him in his Viet Nam position. I was asked all over the State, "Do you support President Johnson on Viet Nam," and I said that I did. I was a hawk. The young people and the peace people, the liberals, that had been my strongest support just sat on their hands and wouldn't support me at all.

F: They also, I judge, didn't come out on election day.

B: And didn't come out on election day.

F: They didn't take Reagan, they just dropped you?

B: They wouldn't take Reagan. They wouldn't take either of us. The bitterest attacks were made by the liberal group in the Democratic party, even though my record was one of continuing liberalism. I always felt that they were far more intolerant than the Republican right, or they're just exactly the same--the extremes in both parties.

F: Bobby Kennedy came out here and stumped for you?

B: Yes, he did.

F: Did he make a wholehearted effort?

B: Yes, he did. He made several speeches, and he was all for Pat Brown. But I got kind of a feeling, seriously, that it was really more for Bobby Kennedy than it was for Pat Brown. Now that might be a very ungrateful

thing to say.

F: He was helping you now, but running for '68.

B: Yes, that's right. Bobby, however, was very, very popular. He had great crowds wherever he went, and the governor was practically ignored at these meetings. It was really a mistake to bring Senator Kennedy out here for me; because, in the first place, they called him a carpetbagger coming into California and telling Californians who to vote for. And the people really loved Bobby Kennedy, the young people particularly.

F: Did you get the feeling that for every liberal vote he picked up he may have alienated some old line Democrats?

B: Yes, and I don't think he picked up very many liberal votes either. Bobby had not expressed himself too strongly on the war at that time. I mean, two years later the situation [had] deteriorated substantially, and with the sending in more troops and the bad news that we'd get from Viet Nam, it was far worse in '68 than it was in '66.

F: So Bobby, in a sense, just sort of left you in the shadow?

B: I don't think he did it purposely, but that was the sum and substance of what happened. People crowded around to see him. I was old hat to them.

F: They'd seen you before.

B: Yes, that's right. But they wanted to see Bobby, and they really turned out for him. And the Kennedy people were very domineering. They set up these meetings. They spent money like drunken sailors, and then billed us for it. They had a whole coterie of--

F: They didn't fit into your campaign schedule then. They pretty well set up their own schedule.

B: I was with them. I don't think I went all over the State with them. I

went to Sacramento and Ventura and traveled with them, but I can't remember the trip.

F: After your defeat in November '66, were there expressions of genuine regret on the part of the liberals that they hadn't contributed more?

B: I don't think so. They were so much against the war that they probably thought that Pat Brown was just another--it didn't make any difference who was elected, both Reagan and Brown were for the war. I think there's a regret now. I think in '70, as they see what he has done to the universities and done to conservation and done to education, in general, mental health program--

F: I spent a part of the afternoon with two UCLA history professors who asked me what I was doing, and I told them. They said, "Well, tell the Governor we wish he were in office."

B: Oh, yes. As a matter of fact, I would have given Reagan a very close fight this time, in my own opinion, but I just didn't want to be governor again. If there had been a great demand by the Democrats of the State that I run, I probably would have done it. But Reagan has got people buffaloed into thinking that he's unbeatable. So the Democrats who genuinely like me didn't want me to run again and suffer a second defeat.

F: I don't know whether you can pick this out from other visits, but about a month after your defeat you visited the White House. Was this at the President's invitation, or do you recall?

B: The President invited Bernice and I to the White House to stay there during the time that I was governor, I think on two occasions to two formal functions. I think we stayed at the White House. I can't remember.

I don't think he ever called me to commiserate with me. I have no

recollection. He may have. I think I called him and said I'd like to come back and see him, and I think that was probably in December '66.

F: You were there December 16, according to my notes.

B: I remember that, but I don't think he called me. I think I probably called. What was the name of his--

F: Juanita Roberts?

B: No, his--

F: Marvin Watson?

B: Marvin Watson,--told Marvin I'd like to come back and see him. Marvin arranged it for me to come back there. I think at one time Irving Sprague, who was one of the White House assistants, called me and said there was going to be an opening on the Circuit Court. He said he hadn't talked to the President about it, but he happened to know it from confidential information, and wanted to know whether I'd be interested. I said, "Let me think it over," and finally told him that I wanted some other non-full time position. I have no idea whether the President would have offered it to me. I have no idea.

F: You've gone out of office now and the Democratic party is pretty badly split out here in California, and yet it picks itself back up to get your former candidate Alan Cranston in the Senate. Did you work with the White House in trying to reconstitute the party, in effect. Or was this strictly a California endeavor?

B: You mean in '68?

F: '68.

B: You see, my delegation, which was the Johnson delegation--he withdrew so late in March it was impossible for me to get any other delegation, we had an uninstructed delegation. Then we had the McCarthy delegation, and

the Kennedy delegation. So our little uninstructed delegation didn't have any more chance than a man in the moon with Kennedy and McCarthy fighting it out here in California. So in '68 I was really further down the political ladder because they were the ones that emerged, and I was for neither one of them.

I came out for McCarthy at the very last--said that I was going to vote for him. But I did it only because some of the Humphrey people started spending very substantial money in an effort to put Humphrey over--the Humphrey delegation, or the uninstructed delegation over--and I thought it was a mistake, that they couldn't spend enough money to do it. I didn't want the defeat of my delegation to be regarded as a defeat for Humphrey. So I came out to separate myself from the efforts of Gene Kline and Gene Weinman and other people who were on my delegation.

F: Did you go to Chicago?

B: I was not invited by Unruh to be a member of the delegation. Usually the ex-Governor traditionally has been asked to be a member. They get somebody to resign, and they put him on there. But they didn't invite me or anything like that.

So I went back there and I can't remember how I got on the floor, but I went to a meeting of the California delegation. Jess Unruh who was chairman, invited me to speak to the group. I had no previous notice of it. I walked in uninvited, and he asked me to speak and presented me to the delegation. But it was a very cold, cold reception. As a matter of fact, I thought that the actions of the California delegation were an absolute disgrace.

F: I had a floating pass that gave me access to the whole convention. I

sat part of the time with the California delegation just to watch them--

sat with them and Georgia, particularly--and I was intrigued by them.

I never could see any strong reason in the California delegation. It just seemed to me that--

B: It didn't make sense.

F: They weren't trying to get on with anything--

B: God, and when the vote came on Muskie, they were away. A great many of them wouldn't vote for Humphrey. Even at the end when he was a leadpipe cinch to have it, they were voting for McCarthy or McGovern. I can't remember, there were a certain number of those delegates that even voted against Muskie for the Vice Presidential nomination--as I remember, voted for that Negro minister from Washington, D.C. Their treatment of Humphrey and their actions, I thought, were absolutely disgraceful.

F: From your observation post, would you really subscribe to the charge that Johnson sat in Johnson City and ran the convention?.

B: No, I don't think so. I think Johnson set the convention up for his own remonation, planning the dates and the people in charge and all that sort of thing. But I think when he withdrew that, unfortunately, he really withdrew. I think that he withdrew too much, as a matter of fact. My own reaction was that he was really a deeply hurt man at the treatment that he had received. I'm convinced that he didn't run the convention. I think he would have run it a whole lot better than it was run, although I don't know what he could have done with it.

F: The Administration came along on a national basis and subscribed to a certain extent to your own open housing views. Did the President ever talk with you about this subject and draw on your experience?

- B: I don't believe he did. I think the President became convinced that this was the right thing to do for the country, and he did it. I don't think he ever really got credit for the great liberal legislation that he passed. He fought for liberal legislation beyond and above the call of duty. I discussed with Johnson on one or two occasions was the question of the so-called Heller plan--the return of money to the States--during that time I was governor. I didn't get very much help from him. I still think it's a good idea. I don't like the Nixon program of prorating it to the cities. I think it should be prorated on a need basis under some formula. I would discuss with the President various aspects of state government, and he would sit there patiently and listen to me.
- F: California is the United States in not-too-small a microcasm--I mean, you get nearly all the situations, problems, opportunities and so forth--the problems of minorities; the problems of old folks, the problems of poverty; the problems of education; and, of course, that one of offshore oil.
- B: Yes.
- F: Did you work with President Johnson on these programs as they developed in Washington where he extended federal aid to education, where he did extend social security--
- B: Oh, yes. And we were very close in those things. I met him from time to time.
- F: What about pollution?
- B: The environmental problems were not as great as they are today in '66. This was not a major issue. It was just beginning to emerge.
- F: What about the redwood?
- B: Redwood Park--

F: Which Mrs. Johnson was very much for.

B: Oh yes, she came out here to California. And, by the way, in my '66 campaign she was wonderful. She traveled up and down--came out and traveled Point Reyes, and went down the Highway 1, the beautification program--and she was a really tremendous help. We gave her a wonderful dinner at the Hearst Castle down there in San Simeon. She made nothing but friends wherever she went. She was so genuine, and everybody really loved her.

F: And really noncontroversial.

B: And noncontroversial. Everybody was for beauty. But she was very, very effective. She and my wife traveled around together.

As a matter of fact, the President was very cooperative with me on appointments. He didn't make any appointments in California without having some member of the staff call me and say, "Is this person all right with you." A great many of his appointments, I don't know where they came from--I mean, people that he'd come up with. But he did accept my recommendations during the two years, '64 to '66, that I was Governor in a great many cases.

F: He never chose anyone that would be an embarrassment to you?

B: No, he never did--not a person. Of course, in his judicial appointments, we had two Republican United States Senators so the Congressmen would nominate--the Senators. But he'd always call me for veto. He'd have Irving Sprague call me. Then he put Irving Sprague in the White House, who was my administrative assistant in Washington. Irv, I think, proved very loyal to the President, very capable. He was a very capable man. The President would always tell me what a great fellow he is.

The President was very patient with me. In his time when I'd come there to the White House, he'd have us stay at the White House. President Kennedy never invited us during '60, '61, or '62 to the White House. President Johnson had us there twice. Then he had Bernice and me there at almost the very last function that he gave when he had the Prime Minister of Iran there. We stayed again at the White House. I always regarded the President as a very close friend, and a man that I respected and admired very, very much.

F: This last visit to the White House--was there a feeling of defeat around there, or did you have the feeling that things were still going forward?

B: I had a feeling that things were coming to an end. We sat up there and talked with the President and Lady Bird on the second floor right in front of the place where Lady Bird had her chambers--where she slept. I said to him, "You really didn't want to leave."

He said, "Let me get her notes."

He went back and read from her diary where they talked about not running as long ago as a year or two years before that. He read out of her diary to Bernice and me. There was somebody else there from Texas--I can't remember--a lumberman from San Antonio or something.

F: Zachary maybe?

B: What?

F: H.B. Zachary.

B: I can't remember who it was. What were the other questions you wanted--?

F: The other questions were your work on the National Commission for Reform of the Federal Criminal Codes, just how much of a Presidential directive you had in this.

B: He gave us directions and then he left us completely alone and never heard from him again after it. He appointed a commission, and we all worked. We had hearings throughout the United States.

F: This wasn't window dressing? This was set up to do a specific--?

B: Oh yes, they came up with a program of guaranteed annual income--you know, a negative income tax. We didn't call it that.

F: This is on income maintenance.

B: Income maintenance. Have you seen a report of that commission?

F: No, I haven't.

B: I'll give you one. You can use that, take that with you.

F: Fine. You also had this one on Reform of the Federal Criminal Code.

B: Yes, he appointed me to that.

F: You're chairman of that.

B: I'm chairman of that commission. It's composed of three lawyers appointed by the President, three Senators appointed by the Vice President, three Congressmen appointed by the Speaker and three judges appointed by Chief Justice Warren. We've been working for three years--since June of 1967, '68, '69--I guess it has been.

F: Do you run out this year?

B: We had an extension of our life. We went out November 8 of this year.

F: What are you coming up with?

B: We're coming up with a whole new code that we'll present to the Congress.

F: Again, was this Presidential initiative, or did the American Bar Association call for this? Where did the emphasis come from?

B: This emphasis came from the Congress. This was a Congressional act. Congressman Dick Poth of Virginia is the man who was really responsible

for this legislation.

F: Did you have the same experience that you did with income maintenance; that is, the President more-or-less telling you to get at it, and then leaving you alone?

B: It was an independent commission really. I mean, all he did was the appointment, and the terms were fixed by the Congress.

The Income Maintenance Commission--I never saw the President in connection with that at all, but Joe Califano called me on that and asked me whether I wanted to be on that. He said, "We need another governor."

I said, "God, I'm on enough commissions right now, and I'm involved in a new practice."

He said, "Please, please take this," and I enjoyed it very much and learned a great deal about welfare in the United States as a result of my two years on that commission.

F: The Defense Department placed a lot of defense installations in California, as you know, over the decade, and of course the aerospace industry has moved in in connection with it. How much of that emphasis comes out of Washington, and how much of it is just done on a strict economic basis? I know that's hard to--

B: The aerospace industry had come to me as governor and asked me to see if I could assist on some occasions. I can remember seeing Bob McNamara for McDonald-Douglas. It was Douglas Aircraft then. They didn't think they were getting enough business, and I went back to see Bob McNamara. He called me and said that confidentially he didn't think they were doing the good work that they had been doing two or three years ago--that their work was not as good as some of the others. Then I talked to the President

one day. I said, "It means a great deal to me if you can give a contract to Northrup." I had [had] lunch with President Jones of Northrup.

He [President Johnson] said: "Please believe me. I never interfere in those contracts at all. I stay away from them. I don't want to get close to them."

I said, "Well, I understand they're going to give this to Texas."

He said, "I don't know where they're going to give it, but I have nothing to do with it."

F: Is that the one that went to General Dynamics?

B: Yes.

F: Which has been in a hot potato ever since.

B: That's right.

F: Did the President ever talk with you about offshore oil and possibilities and problems?

B: I can't remember. I remember telling him about the great work I did on the tidelands in California. We got a tremendous royalty on those, Long Beach, East Wilmington Field. I boasted about it. Whether he asked me about it, I don't know.

F: One thing I always thought the President knew as well as any man was the problems of water in semi-arid areas. Did he take any hand at all in your attempt to get your water situation worked out?

B: I can't remember him ever helping with the California Water Project. I think that Arizona versus California that we were always fighting about. I can't remember that at all. I don't think I ever went to him about those things, although if I search my recollection a little bit more, I may know a bit more about it.

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F: I think, Governor Brown, we've just about covered it, at least for the time being. If you come up with more ideas, or if I come up with any, I'll be back to see you.

B: Good.

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE

Gift of Personal Statement to
the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library

In accordance with Sec. 507 of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended (44 U.S.C. 397) and regulations issued thereunder (41 CFR 101-10), I, Edmund G. Brown, hereinafter referred to as the donor, hereby give, donate, and convey to the United States of America for eventual deposit in the proposed Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, and for administration therein by the authorities thereof, a tape and transcript of a personal statement approved by me and prepared for the purpose of deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library. The gift of this material is made subject to the following terms and conditions:

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4. The material donated to the United States pursuant to the foregoing shall be kept intact permanently in the Lyndon

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Baines Johnson Library.

Signed: Philip G. Hat Bunn

Date: April 5th 1971

Accepted: Harry J. Middleton - for
Archivist of the United States

Date: March 11, 1975