

## INTERVIEW I

DATE: June 20, 1985

INTERVIEWEE: ANTHONY BUFORD

INTERVIEWER: Michael L. Gillette

PLACE: Mr. Buford's residence, Buford Farms, Caledonia, Missouri

Tape 1 of 1, Side 1

G: Let's start with the circumstances of your meeting Lyndon Johnson for the first time. Do you recall how you became acquainted with him?

B: Yes. Do you want to start?

G: Please.

B: Well, Martin Windry was our lawyer, was Anheuser-Busch's lawyer in Texas, and he introduced me to Lyndon. That was in the early days around Austin. He told me one day that Lyndon, after the congressman from that district died, Lyndon was going to run for Congress. I think there were two or three of them running. Of course, I was very much for Lyndon and did everything in our power, although living in Missouri, to get him elected.

G: Let's see, that was in 1937 he ran--

B: Yes, 1937.

G: --to succeed Buchanan. What was your first impression of him? Do you recall what he was like?

B: Well, I've always been very high on Lyndon Johnson from the very beginning.

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G: Well, what was he like when he was--I guess he was state NYA [National Youth Administration] director then at that point when you met him.

B: What?

G: I guess he was the state director of the NYA, if you met him before he ran for that congressional seat.

B: Well, I don't remember much about that.

G: Really?

B: I don't.

G: Let me ask you to describe how you came to work for Anheuser-Busch to begin with and just give a little of your own background.

B: Well, of course, back in 19--before [Franklin] Roosevelt even ran, Mr. Busch, Sr. wanted to get somebody to be able to fit into the thing, because it was going to be an enormous job, not only federal-wise but state-wise, and Anheuser-Busch wanted to be a nationwide brewery. I don't know what they did, but anyway, they had--one of their people was writing to an insurance company one time, and I was practicing law in downtown St. Louis then by myself, and wanted to know if I would come out to Busch Farms at four o'clock to meet Mr. Busch. I said, "I would be glad to," and I went out there. Let's see, I must have gone to--I didn't want to go down to the brewery and I still wanted to retain my attorney-at-law business that I had. We had come to an agreement and I went down to Busch's as often as I could, as often as they wanted me to.

But we were all set and ready to go when Roosevelt ran. Of course, we were all for Roosevelt because he had come out for beer.

(Interruption)

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G: You were going to describe the first time you met Sam Rayburn.

B: Well, the first time I met Sam Rayburn was in the campaign of 1932 when Roosevelt was running and John Nance Garner was running as his vice presidential candidate. Of course, the Busches and myself were very much in favor for Roosevelt because he had come out for a return of beer. Anyway, we decided to make a contribution, and Mr. Adolphus Busch, Adolph Busch, was then president, as his father had already died. No, no, this is before. Anyway, Mr. Adolph Busch and August A. Busch, Jr., and I went to New York and took this contribution of ten thousand dollars, which was made up of the various members of the family. While we were in New York, of course we had an appointment, and we met Mr. Garner and Sam Rayburn was there helping out in the campaign, and that's my first time that I had ever met Mr. Rayburn.

G: You were describing Garner striking a blow for liberty.

B: Oh, yes. After we got through visiting and so forth, Garner said, "Any of us want to strike a blow for liberty?" We all said sure. He said, "Well, I've got some liquor in the bathroom here, so we'll all go in there." It was one of those great big bathrooms, and it was bourbon liquor, and we all had a drink and struck a blow for liberty.

G: You met Lyndon Johnson in 1937. Did he already know the Busch family?

B: No.

G: Did you introduce him to the Busch family?

B: Yes.

G: Can you recall that occasion or series of occasions when he met the Busches?

B: No, I don't remember.

G: Was it sometime later?

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B: Oh, it was much later. Yes. It was much later. See, we were very much interested in Texas passing the beer bill (?) as well as any other state. I worked very close with our attorney down there, and he's the one that introduced me to Johnson. And of course we had holdings down there; the Busch family owned the Adolphus Hotel.

G: I was going to ask, why would you be inclined to support Lyndon Johnson? Was it because he was--

B: Because Martin Winfry--he was a very good friend of Martin Winfry's, and I don't even know who was running against Lyndon for that first time in Congress.

G: Okay. Then he ran for the Senate in 1941 against W. Lee O'Daniel.

B: And got beat.

G: And got beat. I think it was 1311 votes.

B: Yes. W. Lee O'Daniel, I remember him.

G: Also in that race were Gerald Mann and Martin Dies.

B: Martin Dies was a congressman then.

G: Yes. Do you have any recollection of that race and what you all did to help him?

B: No, I don't. No. I don't remember. I know we were for Lyndon, but I don't remember any of the details of it.

G: During World War II he would stop in St. Louis, I guess on his way back from San Francisco when he was out in California doing some manpower studies and things of this nature.

B: Well, he always stopped in St. Louis between--they'd come in on the train from down in Texas, and the train would get in there about eight o'clock, and then the train for Washington didn't leave until around twelve or twelve-thirty.

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G: You mean eight in the morning or--?

B: Eight in the morning.

G: I see. So he'd have half a day.

B: They'd have all that time. We arranged all the time. He always knew when he was coming, so I met him and we went out to our house out in St. Louis County and stayed out there and visited and so forth until it was time to go back to the train.

G: What were his politics in those days? Would you say he was conservative or liberal or--?

B: I would say he was very conservative.

G: Really?

B: Yes.

G: Can you give me an example?

B: No, I mean it just--by being a Texan and running for Congress down there and running for United States senator, he almost had to be a conservative. I don't mean a radical conservative, I mean a moderate conservative.

G: Did he ever talk with you about his experiences in World War II or did you have any idea what he was doing out in California during the war or overseas?

B: No. Oh, I think we talked some, but I don't remember.

G: Okay. Anything on his role in national Democratic politics during the forties? He headed a congressional campaign committee in 1940 to help Democratic congressmen get reelected. Do you recall anything?

B: Yes, I recall that.

G: Did he get some contributions from Busch?

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B: I don't think so. I don't know. I don't remember whether we gave any contributions then.  
That was just the congressional committee all over?

G: Yes.

B: I don't remember.

G: Would you say that during this period his relationship with you and the Busches was extraordinary, or did you have relationships with a lot of other Democratic congressmen or even Republican congressmen similarly situated?

B: Well, his relationship with us was always good.

G: Was he, say, your closest friend then among the Texas delegation or were you close to Rayburn as well?

B: Yes, by far.

G: Okay. Anything else on that W. Lee O'Daniel Senate race?

(Interruption)

Then in 1942 Mrs. Johnson bought that radio station, KTBC. Did that establish a business relationship?

B: Yes. Yes, it did.

G: Let me ask you to describe that.

B: Well, of course, naturally we wanted to help, so we told our advertising department to look into it and anything we could do to help out in an advertising way, just like we do all of our other places, to do that. I think they bought that at a very good price, as I remember. I forgot what they paid for it, but it was a good buy for them.

G: Did she have a good sense for business, do you think?

B: I think Mrs. Johnson was very sensible regarding business.

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G: Can you give me any examples?

B: No. Only as just a general thing.

G: Okay. Some of the critics have charged that it was Lyndon Johnson's position as senator that enabled them to succeed with the radio station. Let me ask you to add some insight to this. Is there a relationship between, say, his political position and a desire to advertise on the station? Would you naturally be more inclined to place media on her station because he was a member of Congress?

B: Well, I think maybe that was said by a lot of people. I don't know. I would say that they run a very good radio station and they had what it takes to make it go.

G: Did he ever express an interest in getting out of politics and going into business?

B: Not that I know of.

G: Never talked to you about it?

B: No.

G: Did he ever talk to you about running for office when he didn't actually run, say, running for governor sometime or doing anything like that?

B: No. I never did discuss that with him.

G: Okay. You knew a lot of the people that he was closely associated with. Alvin Wirtz, for example.

B: Yes, I knew him.

G: Let me ask you to describe their association and if you can recall times that they were together.

B: I wasn't that close to the situation.

G: How about Sam Rayburn?

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B: Well, Rayburn was strictly a Lyndon Johnson man all the way. When I used to go to Washington, I used to call on Mr. Rayburn, and many, many times when we were other there late in the afternoon, why, Johnson would drop in, Lyndon Johnson would drop in. Maybe we'd have a drink. And others would call on Speaker Rayburn at that time.

G: Okay. You have a book that's inscribed by the various guests at a party that was given in 1944 for you and your wife. Harry Truman was there, Lyndon Johnson was there, Sam Rayburn. In fact, LBJ was really the host of the party.

B: That's right, he and Mrs. Johnson were.

G: Let me ask you to recall that occasion.

B: Well, I recall that we were--I told Lyndon we were coming to Washington. He said, "Well, we'll give a little party for you. I would like to get a little bit closer to President Truman." Truman was then in the Senate, and he had just been nominated. And I said, "Well, get up the list and I'll add whatever little influence I have and see if we can get Senator Truman to come out to your house," which we all did.

G: Any other recollections of the party?

B: Well, it was just a lovely party. Of course, he had several of his friends from Texas there, too.

G: You mentioned that Herman Brown was there.

B: Herman Brown was there and Albert Jackson, who was the Washington representative I think of--was it the *Dallas News*?

G: Well, or the *Times Herald*.

B: *Times Herald*, yes, *Times Herald*.

G: Tom Clark was there, too, I think.



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B: Yes, I think Tom was, that's right. Tom Clark was then in the criminal division of the Department of Justice.

G: Let me ask you to describe Lyndon Johnson's relations with the Clark family. He knew Tom Clark.

B: Well, I think they were very close. I think Johnson and Tom Clark were very close. And then after our legal representative in Texas died, well, we employed Tom Clark's brother, Bob Clark, who was at that time living in Dallas. We had a fine relationship with Bob, too. He was a good lawyer and a true friend.

(Interruption)

G: Let me ask you about the 1948 campaign. Lyndon Johnson ran against Coke Stevenson for the Senate, and this was that very narrow victory of 87 votes. You have a letter on your wall there which President Johnson wrote you after that campaign, that he couldn't have done it without your help. And so let me ask you what that help was.

B: Well, maybe he was very kind to write a letter like that. But we were very active for Lyndon Johnson, as much as we could. We talked to our wholesalers, off the record, not that we'd influence them, but we told them that we'd like to see Johnson elected senator.

G: Did they help him as well?

B: I don't know.

G: Well, was Johnson more to your liking than Stevenson, or was it basically friendship?

B: Just because it was friendship.

G: What about the other beer breweries? Did Falstaff and Schlitz help LBJ?

B: I don't know.

G: How about Lone Star? I wonder about the Texas [breweries].

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B: I don't know. I don't know. Lone Star was the principal Texas brewery then I think, and I don't know. I really don't know.

G: Would the industry as a whole do you think be inclined to favor the same candidate?

B: No, it was all mixed up at that time.

G: Really? Okay. All right, then he bought the LBJ Ranch in the early fifties, in 1951. Did he seek your advice right away on fixing the Ranch up and developing a herd, do you recall?

B: Well, he knew I was in the cattle business and we were such close personal friends, right after he was elected in November of 1948--was it?--the Vice President (?), Mr. Busch and I went down to see him. We went--Mr. Busch had a private car at that time, and we went down to Austin. He and Lady Bird came and had dinner with us. Then we went back. It was just a visit--we had business in Dallas and while we were there we went on down to Austin.

G: When did you first go to the LBJ Ranch? Do you recall that? You must have gone out to the Ranch sometime in the 1950s.

B: Yes, but I don't recall it. I know they used to hunt a lot of deer out there, and Mr. [A.W.] Moursund had a thing built so you could see for several yards or miles. We'd go up there in the evening and see the deer as they'd come and go the various different ways. Moursund was a very close friend of Lyndon Johnson, and he was a very fine man, too.

G: Was he? Did he know quite a bit about cattle?

B: Yes. Moursund knew a lot about everything.

G: Did he?

B: Yes. He was a very top man in my opinion. I wonder if he is still alive?

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G: He is, yes.

B: Is he?

G: He's younger than the President was. He was also a business associate of LBJ, too.

B: I think that's right. If you see Moursund, be sure and tell him you were up here and I asked about him, will you?

G: Okay. Now let me ask you to describe Lyndon Johnson coming to your farm here.

B: Well, he was here two or three times. But of course, when he was running for vice president, I was called--he knew I was going to have a sale, but he was supposed to speak in Springfield. I got word through Albert--I mean, what's his secretary's name?

G: Walter Jenkins.

B: --Walter Jenkins that he was coming by here, and he came. We met him--he had a little airplane, a small airplane, that landed here at Bismarck, Missouri, which is nine miles from here, and I went over and met him. We had a big crowd at this sale, this cattle sale, and he was very popular.

G: Why was he popular here, do you recall?

B: Well, at that time, most of this whole country was Democratic then. And of course, he was on the ticket.

G: He I think had come even before that, too, in 1958 or so.

B: Yes. He and Lady Bird came; they came here two or three times, and we loved to have them.

G: Let me ask you about him as a rancher or a cattle man. Did he know much about cattle? Did he make the right decisions?

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B: Oh, I think he had a good herd. By that time, when he got in the cattle business, if he didn't know he could ask anybody he wanted to and tell him about them.

G: Did he devote as much time to it as he needed to, to make it productive?

B: He was an awful busy man. I doubt if he devoted--I don't think he had a big herd, but he just wanted cattle to be around LBJ Ranch, you know.

G: I noticed from your correspondence that you would buy cattle from him and he would buy cattle from you occasionally. Was he a hard man to do business with in that sense?

B: Well, I didn't buy--he started his herd up here, about twenty cattle I think, I think I sold it to him at a very decent price. I think it was four-fifty or five hundred dollars a head.

G: Four hundred dollars a head I think.

B: Four hundred. I believe it was four hundred.

G: Yes.

B: He might have come up to one of my sales or two of them. But what he bought then was just adding on to his own--I don't remember ever buying anything from him. Maybe I did, I don't know.

(Interruption)

G: Anything else on LBJ as a rancher or a businessman that you recall?

B: Well, no. I think he was not only a good rancher, a good businessman, but made a marvelous vice president and senator and a marvelous vice president and a good president.

G: You were also close to several other prominent politicians from this state. Let me ask you first about President Truman and Lyndon Johnson's relationship with Truman. Did they get along well? Were they close?

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B: I think they got along very good, especially after that dinner that Lyndon Johnson had out there for us. Truman was a candidate then, too.

G: After Truman became president, did Lyndon Johnson ever ask you to intercede in his behalf just to get something through?

B: No, no, at no time.

G: [Stuart] Symington was another one of course.

B: Symington was a great friend of mine. He was our United States senator here for several years and then his son Jim was in the House, you know. We have a record, Buford Mountain Record [?] of old-time songs which Jimmy put together for us.

G: Did Stuart Symington and Lyndon Johnson become rivals as 1960 approached and they were both interested in the presidency, and then thought of for the vice presidency? Do you recall that?

B: I don't recall much about it.

G: One thing, did you help LBJ during the 1960 campaign when he ran for vice president, support him?

B: Let's see, who was running for president?

G: [John F.] Kennedy.

B: Kennedy, yes. Yes, we did.

G: Was LBJ restive as vice president? Was he unhappy in the position, do you think?

B: I don't think so.

G: Really? Did you see much of him then?

B: No. I only went to Washington maybe once or twice a year. See, they'd get awful busy when they get to be vice president or president, you know. I never did--every time

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though we went to Washington--well, we were invited to the White House after he became president and every time I went we always arranged to see him. It was only a very short time.

G: Any significant conversations during that time? Did you talk about the office and what he was doing?

B: No. No.

G: Okay. The *St. Louis Post Dispatch* was not always in his corner as a newspaper. Did he ever complain to you about the *Dispatch* or its editorial policy?

B: No. No. The *Post Dispatch*--it's a funny newspaper. It's for some things and against other things and so forth. I've always been a supporter of the *Globe Democrat*, more so than the *Post*.

G: There was a writer, Howard Woods, that wrote for the [inaudible]--

B: Howard Woods worked for the *St. Louis Raider* [*St. Louis Sentinel*], the colored paper, and Howard Woods was the editor.

G: That was the *Argus*, wasn't it?

B: *Argus*, yes. When Johnson was going to run for president, I got Howard Woods interested in Johnson's campaign. I almost forgot that.

G: It looks like you may have been instrumental in Woods joining the administration with the Equal Employment Commission, too.

B: That's right.

G: Anything else about your friendship with Lyndon Johnson that we haven't talked about? Do you think we've covered it?

B: It was just one of those old-time friendships, and it lasted until he died.

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G: Did you see him any in retirement after he left the presidency?

B: I don't believe we did. Let's see, I might have gone down there one time. He didn't live too long after the presidency.

G: Okay.

End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I

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