INTERVIEW III

DATE: July 2, 1982

INTERVIEWEE: HORACE BUSBY

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: Mr. Busby's office, Washington, D.C.

Tape 1 of 1

B: Let's see, Taft-Hartley was passed in Congress in 1947, the Republican 80th Congress. Their first two official acts when the Republicans finally regained control of Congress after not having control since--they hadn't had control of the House since 1929. They lost control in the Congress that was seated in 1931, and they lost control of the Senate, the Republicans did, in the Roosevelt election of 1932. So this was an historic turn of events and all like this, and much celebration.

Their first two objectives: one was to cut taxes; the other was to reverse the favoritism to labor, as Republicans saw it, of the Roosevelt years. The big piece of [labor] legislation under Roosevelt had been the Wagner Act, which created the NLRB and allowed labor--well, basically it guaranteed the collective bargaining and union recognition by elections and all like this.

The Taft-Hartley legislation was, of course, depicted in extreme terms, much as some of the things that the Reagan Administration is doing now. It was a reversal of direction, and [there was] a terribly strong propaganda campaign against the bill. In actual effect--and I'm saying this at the top instead of later on--there have been friendly studies

made, friendly to labor, that the Taft-Hartley thing did not really do in the unions as it was depicted as doing.

Anyway, Lyndon Johnson had been elected by a 72 or 73--plus a point or so--per cent of the vote in the Tenth District in 1946. In 1947 he voted for the final passage in the House of Taft-Hartley, and then he voted to override Truman's veto. Were there two votes on overriding veto? Did they pass it twice?

G: I'm not sure.

B: I guess not. There's some duality in there somewhere that I've forgotten about. But anyway, he voted to override the veto. Voting for Taft-Hartley did not bother him. He felt that there were excesses, and so I've heard him argue with labor, that the bill was needed, and that it was not so hostile to unions as the unions were just automatically saying. They described it as a union-busting bill. All the nomenclature and cliches of labor's history were dumped on that bill, and Johnson did not agree with them. What did disturb him to an extent was voting to override a Democratic president's veto. That was very uncharacteristic of his fidelity to the White House when there was a Democrat in it, the fidelity that had been formed under Roosevelt.

Now he voted [to override another Truman veto]. There was some other issue. Truman had a number of vetoes; he was a veto-heavy president. I think Johnson himself, as president, only had sixteen, wasn't it? A very little number. None of the Lyndon Johnson vetoes as president were on substantive legislation; they were on legislation where technically something was wrong with it or something like that, and there were no

controversies about them. Of course, none of his vetoes were overridden and I don't think there was ever a vote on the matter of overriding.

But anyway, there's some other Truman veto that year that he voted to override. But after he had voted to override on Taft-Hartley, basically from that point forward until he went to the Senate, he had virtually no further friendly contact from the Truman White House. In 1946 Truman had several times included him on Potomac cruises on the yacht ***Williamsburg***. I mean, Truman knew him--we've gone over that--very well. He did not attribute the coolness so much to Truman as he did to some of the staff, and particularly Clark Clifford.

I'm digressing from your question, but even when I got here, I asked him--this was in March of 1948--why it was that he wasn't around the Truman White House so much. Maybe I told you this before. And he said, "He has this curly-haired fellow down there named Clark Clifford." Everybody knew Clifford had come to the White House--he was from St. Louis--as a naval aide, a ceremonial aide, because he was attractive and all like that. But he had stayed on after his discharge and had become counsel, or whatever it was, at the White House. So when I asked Congressman Johnson about his White House relationship in 1948, he said, "It's this curly-headed fellow, Clifford." I said, "Why does he not want you there?" And he said, "Well, he's one of those St. Louis aristocrats." There is an aristocratic society group in St. Louis. He said, "He doesn't want the President to be around southerners and political types." So he laid it all off on that.

Anyway, in the campaign in 1948 when Coke Stevenson, at that time former-Governor Coke Stevenson, announced for the Senate race on New Year's day, 1948, it is my recollection that he did not say anything at all about Taft-Hartley. And at that time when he announced, W. Lee O'Daniel was the incumbent senator, and Stevenson's race was presumably against O'Daniel. Many people, including myself, were all for it, anything to get O'Daniel out. Johnson announced for the Senate in May, and after Johnson had announced, O'Daniel announced that he was not going to seek reelection. So that changed the politics of the race.

Stevenson went through the first primary--the way Stevenson conducted himself and the way he conducted his campaign was quite low-keyed. He was serenely confident of victory, because he had a statewide image. Johnson had a district-wide image, although Johnson had made one statewide race in 1941 against O'Daniel. Stevenson was conservative and Johnson was a New Dealer, and so Stevenson had not the slightest doubt that he was going to win and probably win without a runoff. While Johnson was scurrying about the state in the helicopter, in Stevenson's entire campaign he rarely made a radio speech, rarely made any kind of a formal speech. He was driving the state and he went into the towns and shook hands around the square. It was quite maddening to Johnson, because the stories in the leading Texas newspapers, particularly the ***Dallas*** [***Morning***] ***News*** stories, that being the paper that most Texas politicians followed more closely than any other, were just ecstatic basically about this nice campaign, "Calculating Coke."

Johnson would jump him every once in a while about this image, because--again, I may be repeating myself--in 1944 when the University of Texas Board of Regents dismissed as president Dr. Homer Rainey, the night editor of the [***Daily***] ***Texan***, who was me, pulled out the so-called second-coming type, the 72-point type that is the biggest, and ran this headline, "Rainey Fired," and underneath it, "Students to Assemble on the Mall at 10:00 a.m." or something. One of the [Texas State] Senate investigating committees later cited that and said this had incited the strike. I was a bomb-thrower.

But anyway, the students assembled in front of the Main Building, got a coffin and put a sign on it that this was the coffin of academic freedom and put on black bands and had a silent march, which was very, very impressive. These were the civilian students; the naval students couldn't participate. But no civilian went to class and [they] marched on the Capitol.

An interesting twist on that about Austin; Austin at that time being considered a quite liberal town, the liberal city in Texas, which it is not anymore. We had one policeman, an old fellow, whose sons were professional baseball players--well, Higgins.

G: Ox Higgins?

B: Ox Higgins. The papa, who was the epitome of a great big Irish cop, went alongside the marchers and when people attempted to cross through the marchers--you know, pedestrians, cars--Officer Higgins would accost them with his night stick and say, "I'll run you in if you cross this. This is a funeral." And the whole town was very sympathetic with the demonstration, unlike the way they'd probably be today.

But when this procession got to the Capitol--I don't know what street it went down, but it came up Congress Avenue from Sixth Street and went to the Capitol and put the coffin on the state seal in the mosaic in the floor of the lobby. So then the student body president and one or two other student leaders--I was following them as the ***Daily Texan*** person--went to the Governor's office to call on the Governor to express concern about what had happened to the university. Well, it turned out, as was fully reported in the press, that.when the student procession entered the Capitol, Stevenson figured that this was going to happen, and there is a back stairway entrance to the Governor's Office, it's useable only by the governor. It's been there since the building was built. It's an escape route. So Stevenson had gone down the escape route and had gotten in his car with a state trooper and hied off to Junction, out in West Texas, which was his home.

Some of his friends felt immediately, friends in the press, this was an unusual way for Coke Stevenson, and an unusual way for a governor, to conduct himself. When he came back finally, two or three days later, they asked him about it and he said--he was a prototype cowboy type, big western hat and pipe and all like that--"I learned a long time ago that when the coffee's hot, you pour it in the saucer to let it cool," some phrase like that. Margaret [Mayer Ward] could remember it. It was a catchy phrase and it stuck to him.

Well, Johnson had pecked at him all through the first primary on the basis of the image he had created of himself in that episode. He didn't talk much about that episode, about the Dr. Rainey portion of it, but he did talk about Stevenson being calculating and

not willing to face things and all like this. The issue of Taft-Hartley was basically, to the best of my recollection, not present in the first primary. As I say, it was not present because Stevenson did not need it, and Johnson wasn't going to raise it himself.

Somewhere, though, along in the first primary Stevenson engineered some endorsements of himself by the railroad brotherhoods and possibly by some one other of the older line unions. The basis for that went back to his period as lieutenant governor when he had done something helpful to them. But the railroad brotherhoods, who were politically consequential at that time and have no consequence at all today, were, as was much of labor, the AFL side of labor--this was before there was a merger--quite conservative. I think the other union probably was the building trades, which was an old-line AFL union, and they were and they still are conservative. But in the way things worked in Austin, the lobbyists or the president or whomever they were of the brotherhoods, were State Capitol buddies of a lot of conservative politicians, and they had been with Stevenson when he was a house member and when he was lieutenant governor, when he went into the governor's office. So they endorsed him, which was later to have some consequence.

In the first primary, Johnson finished rather far back from Stevenson--well, not so far back percentage-wise, but like 70,000 votes behind--and then there was the third man, George Peddy, who had I don't remember how many votes. But anyway, there had to be a runoff. What ensued then was this. Stevenson came to Washington. This was a public relations ploy. The design of the ploy was premised on this. He was trying to continue to

project the image of a man that was supremely confident that he was going to win, that this second primary was just a detail, that they shouldn't really be running it off because it was so certain that he would win.

The Democratic Party's national convention was held in Philadelphia, the convention made famous by Humphrey's civil rights speech and the walkout of the southerners and all that sort of thing. But they nominated Truman, and then they also nominated Alben Barkley. Truman concluded that convention with a fiery attack on the 80th Congress, the Republican 80th Congress, and he called them back. See, they were in recess, and he called a special session, which had to be in August. The first primary was in July. So that session began almost immediately after the first primary. So Lyndon Johnson came to Washington for that session, and Stevenson planned and staged this visit to Washington himself. I'm puzzling here about the time period between the first primary and the second.

G: Well, the second was late August, I think.

B: Well, the first one was late July.

G: Right. That's right. Let's see, I've got a date on it.

B: There doesn't seem to me to be enough time for all this to have unfolded.

G: Yes, August 28.

B: When was the July [primary]?

G: July 24.

(Interruption)

B: I want to correct one thing I said about Coke Stevenson's phrase about coffee. I was thinking about Thomas Jefferson when I said he talked about pouring it into the saucer. You know, Jefferson explained to Washington why you had a Senate.

G: And a House.

B: George Washington did not want two bodies; he wanted one. So Jefferson said, "Why did you just pour your coffee into the saucer?" and Washington said, "To cool it." And Jefferson said, "That's why we have a Senate." But he [Stevenson] didn't say that about pouring it into the saucer, because he spoke about drinking coffee from a tin cup, which was consistent with his ranch background, and he said he always let it get cool before he tried to drink it. And that was what Johnson worked on.

Subsequently also--another slight amendment--the railroad brotherhoods did endorse Coke, but we think that it wasn't just the building trades, but the AFL endorsed him. That would have included building trades and a good bit else. It was a rather curious thing when they made that endorsement. That was key to what I'm about to relate here, because it was not a normal thing for organized labor to be endorsing a guy like Stevenson. You might understand about them not endorsing Johnson because of Taft-Hartley, but it was the affirmative act on their part that seemed [curious]. Something was wrong with it, and it ultimately was fatal to Stevenson. It was one factor that was fatal.

But Stevenson came to Washington. He had arranged [the trip] through various friends. Of course, he was a Democrat and had virtually no Washington acquaintance, but through someone in Houston, I think it was, arranged that he would go to the State

Department and have a briefing from the undersecretary of state. I want to say that that undersecretary was Will Clayton, but I think Will Clayton was not there then. I mean, you know, the father of the Marshall Plan. And he met with somebody at Defense and around other places. Just a typical, good PR gimmick, a show of going around Washington that he was able to circulate here. They had pictures of him in the Texas papers with his three X beaver [hat] standing in front of the Capitol and all like that. It looked like a pretty good act.

But very strangely on the last afternoon he was here--he came and went by train, which said something about the times--he had a press conference for the Texas press in his hotel room. Jack Anderson from Drew Pearson attended. I don't know how the Stevenson people let this happen. As a matter of fact, the fellow that was in charge of the Stevenson trip and was with him was Booth Mooney, who later worked about twelve, fifteen years with Johnson, and Booth could handle the Texas press beautifully. We were sort of opposites during the campaign in 1948, and he was doing a splendid job. He was in some kind of a PR firm and that was his job. But he did a splendid job for Coke, except in this one instance. The press came in. Most of them were friendly with Johnson up here; Marshall McNeil, Sarah McClendon.

(Interruption)

The press, I think I mentioned these other names; Marshall McNeil, Sarah McClendon, Les Carpenter, I guess Walter Hornaday, who was the correspondent of the ***Dallas Morning News***, and the ***Houston Post*** had someone here, Robert Johnson. I think that

was pretty much the crop, a small group. But Jack Anderson came in, he not being of the Texas press. Nothing of note was being said by Stevenson. He was just telling the press how well he had been received and trying to put it over really on them talking about foreign policy, which was obviously a weak link of his. And Anderson interrupted and said, "Governor, what about your position on Taft-Hartley? How is labor in Texas endorsing you? What's your position on Taft-Hartley?" This is all related in virtually transcript form in a front-page ***Austin American-Statesman*** story by Les Carpenter, who was their representative. You ought to get this particular clip. It is nowhere else related in full. Stevenson, to everybody's astonishment, began to parry with Anderson. He really would not give an answer. So then Anderson said, "What is your position on Taft-Hartley?" Stevenson objected to the question in some form or other and said, "You get me off up here away from my notes, without my notes." So this went on through four or five exchanges. It's a fascinating thing. He never did answer.

This just set off--I won't say that all hell broke loose in Texas, because it didn't, but among certain of the industry and business types [it did]. See, Texas had just passed in 1947 the right-to-work-law. The CIO had started right after the war what they called Operation Dixie; they were going to unionize the South, what is now the Sun Belt. During the war and before, there had built up in the state a great deal of antagonism toward the militancy of the unions after the Wagner Act. There was a lot of what you would describe as entrenched wealth, somewhat more than the corporate types. This was their cause, this was their mission, was to keep the unions from taking control. You also

have to remember that in the context of the period, the British electorate in 1945 had defeated Churchill and the Conservative Party and installed the Labour government and were proceeding to nationalize steel and whatever else they nationalized. The accepted premise of many conservatives in this country was that this was what we were at the edge of. In fact Walter Reuther of the UAW and several other of the labor leaders were telling the conservatives that this was what was coming, that we were going to have a labor party in this country and it was going to rule the world.

Well, I'm saying those things because it is necessary to realize that the unions were far more provocative in Texas, and in the entire nation, then than they are now, and Stevenson would appear to be the natural ally of these anti-union forces. So suddenly he is caught equivocating, dodging and otherwise conducting himself in an inextricable sort of way on that issue. And Johnson, the New Dealer, the liberal, et cetera, is suddenly on the right side from the vantage point of these people, this type.

So Johnson came to Washington, as I say, for this special session. This was taking time out of a very short-fuse second primary in which he was 70,000 votes behind. I don't remember, maybe your note says when he came back from Washington.

G: I think it was about an eleven-day session.

B: My recollection was ten days, so. . . . Whether he stayed here the whole time or not I don't remember.

G: No, I don't think he did. I have that he left on July 31.

B: For Washington.

G: No, for Texas.

B: Well, okay. That gave him about four weeks. Okay, that's good. He wasn't up here as long as I was thinking.

But when he came back, let's see, he went over to East Texas and kicked off the second primary at a very small town. The reason he went to East Texas was that the Fergusons, Ma and Pa Ferguson, Jim Ferguson and his wife, Miriam, who were both governors of Texas, their base of support was in what is called Deep East Texas--one of their bases of support. Mrs. Ferguson wrote a letter to someone over there strongly endorsing Johnson. She was governor like in 1933, 1934, that was when she was last in. She was in office as governor two different times, separated by six, eight years. But despite the great length of time involved, which was from 1934 to 1948, there was a Ferguson apparatus over there. So she wrote this letter, and the effect of the letter, if you could circulate it, was to energize the Ferguson apparatus for Johnson. That was one of the few things that we had going for us. So he opened his campaign in East Texas expressly for that purpose, and the campaign sort of milled around for a little bit. The helicopter had been abandoned. That wasn't what you had to do.

See, there was a certain amount of conflict in the campaign strategy between Johnson and [John] Connally and Mr. Wild, Claude Wild, Sr. who was the de facto campaign manager although Connally was really the manager, the strategist. They were trying to convince the candidate that you're not going to win by going to the crossroads, small towns, the courthouse squares, that you had to go into urban Texas, metropolitan

Texas. He was very resistant to that. As a matter of fact, ten years later in 1958 he was looking ahead to his reelection to the Senate in 1960 and he planned his own itinerary around Texas. I was in Austin and had nothing to do with it, but I'd hold my head every morning because he was going to places like Sulphur Springs and these same towns in East Texas, and that wasn't where the people were. But that's the way he had grown up knowing Texas and he'd never really changed from it.

G: Was the urban vote even more important since [George] Peddy had gotten so much of the urban vote?

B: Well, Peddy principally got Houston votes. That's where he was from. I don't remember what his vote total was, but it wasn't very great. But anyway, we went out, he and I. I think he did this thing in that little town--

G: St. Augustine?

B: No, it wasn't St. Augustine. That wasn't where he made the opening speech.

G: I don't have it here.

B: That's an important event. He spoke there on I think it was like maybe a Friday night, or maybe it was a Monday night. The story appeared in the ***Dallas News*** the next day, and it said that the police chief or sheriff or somebody had estimated the crowd at twelve hundred, which was sizeable. However, Horace Busby, Congressman Johnson's press secretary, counted the crowd and said it was only seven-fifty. When I saw Johnson the next day, he was shaking his head. He said, "I wish I were an editor so I could fire you."

But anyway, we abandoned that approach almost as soon as--

G: Here it is, it's in Center.

B: Center, that's right. That's where it was. It was over in Tenaha, Timpson, Bobo and Blair country. That used to be celebrated on the Missouri Pacific Railroad. The conductor at some point would come in and say "Tenaha-Timpson-Bobo-and Blair." That later became a crap shooters' call, you know, "Eighter from Decatur, county seat of Wise."

We did an old-style campaign for a day or two, and then we went back to Austin.

G: Did he meet with Mrs. Ferguson while he was there?

B: No, she lived in Austin. He drove past her house every afternoon on the way home. I've forgotten whether he saw her or not, but her nephew, a fellow named Harvey Payne, who perhaps is retired now, but after this became the executive director of the Texas Bar Association, I think, and knew Johnson very well.

G: An old NYA connection.

B: I think so. Do you know Harvey?

G: Yes.

B: Well, he was her nephew and he was her agent in charge of all these affairs that I spoke of. But I came in on Sunday afternoon to the headquarters and I had missed--it wasn't necessary for me to attend--a meeting of all the brain trusts of the campaign on Sunday morning. I had been out and I didn't want to get up, so I didn't go. I came in [later]. They had a present for me. The Congressman was going to fly on Monday morning to El Paso, and he no longer was going to have entourages and somebody had to accompany him. So since I was absent they had nicely given that black bean to me. And you know,

he was a terribly difficult man to be an aide to, by legend. I hadn't done it. Oh, I kicked and screamed, "I can't handle him; I'm not up to this." It was Connally's instinct and the instinct also of Mary Rather that it might be different, and it always was forever after, that with me he wasn't difficult. There's something, chemistry, he didn't scream at me and he wasn't making impossible demands.

As a matter of fact, we got to El Paso and we had to get up at four in the morning to catch a flight back to Odessa. God, I set every alarm that I could find and had the desk call me twice and all like this. I was supposed to get up and go out and get a sweet roll and coffee and bring to him. So the next morning when I woke up about four-fifteen, there he was sitting by my bed giving me the sweet roll and coffee. He just sat and watched me while I had this. It was hilarious.

But we went to El Paso. They drew in a lot of precinct workers--this was a new politics to him--and he had a meeting with them at the hotel. I don't think he went out on the street to shake hands or anything. He met with workers, and from then on that was the pattern.

G: Was he effective in that kind of thing?

B: Yes. Yes, very effective. Of course, he carried El Paso. He figured to carry El Paso because of the Mexican vote. He was very, very popular with Mexicans and very sympathetic with them, had been ever since his days as a school principal in the Mexican-American school. That was at Cotulla.

So he started out there. He flew back to Odessa, not to Midland. Midland was hopeless then, as a center of conservatives and Republicans. Odessa had more labor in it. He flew back there and met with labor, and I don't think Taft-Hartley came up. But then at some time during this week, former Justice Tom Clark's brother Robert in Dallas, who was a prominent lawyer there, was the negotiator on this. So some people came to Bob--I don't know who the people were, I never got a clear fix on that, but they were these conservative, anti-labor types. They came to Bob Clark with a proposal. W. Lee O'Daniel, in the thirties his launching pad for the governorship was the Light Crust Doughboys quarter hour on the radio each day at 12:45. The virtue of that particular hour--he was on the Texas Quality Network, which were the big fifty-thousand watt stations in Texas. This says a great deal about how Texas has changed. But the hour from twelve to one was the hour when farmers were in from the field eating lunch, and the hour when the small-town merchants were at home eating lunch, and that's where O'Daniel had built his audiences, as an entertainer, not as a politician. After he got into politics, he kept that hour for a long while. That hour, that time of day, was magical in Texas politics; it was regarded as such.

Well, the Crazy Water Hotel in Mineral Wells, the Collinses owned that, Carr Collins and another Collins. I don't know how they're related to the Congressman [James Collins]. I think he's the son of one of them. They had the time spot three days a week, I think, for the same kind of show that O'Daniel had had, but they offered that time [to Johnson]. See, you had a problem. Rainey, Dr. Rainey, had not been able to get on the

Texas Quality Network in 1946 and had filed an action against them before the FCC, which unfortunately he won after the election was over. They wouldn't sell time to him and you couldn't cover the state without that network. So they offered this time to Johnson with the proviso--it wasn't tight, but that they would have a fellow, and I forget his name now, write the scripts.

So we went to Mineral Wells and he got the first script, and it bordered on being a polemic. It was about all the gangster side of unionism in Chicago and elsewhere, bombings and killings and scare stuff. There wasn't anything in it that was inaccurate, but I remember the Congressman--and I did not write for him at this time--he sat and looked at that thing and he held the script after he had read it like he didn't want to touch it; he held it out from him. And he was really in torment, because this was not him. At the same time, though, he was angry at labor for so clearly going against their own long-term interests by being for a conservative like Stevenson. And like in the AFL down there, he didn't feel the real issue was Taft-Hartley, it's the fact that that's where these conservative labor leaders came from. He said, "They're not interested in housing. They're not interested in job creation and all like that. They're not sympathetic with their members." So he finally agreed to do it. I don't know how many of those programs he used, six of them I think, maybe more, maybe nine, and he was on talking about labor. Now, I don't know that the labor broadcasts affected the outcome. They may have affected it, they may not.

G: Well, now, was this paid for by the group that came to Bob Clark? Was this part of the same thing?

B: Well, yes. It wasn't a group--it was a group, but it wasn't an organization. It was individual contributors, and they were kicking in money. They were kicking in more money than that once he agreed to do it. As I say, I don't know about the broadcast, but we reproduced the article out of the Austin paper that I referred to, Les Carpenter's piece, circulated it very widely. And it indicted Stevenson.

Then Johnson began what he was very good at when he was making a speech. He was very, very good at parody. So this time he would bring the Taft-Hartley thing into this image he had had earlier of Stevenson vacillating or letting the coffee cool, all like this. When he did speak before [a group], whether it was his workers or whether it was a little broader audience [he would parody Stevenson]. Most of his audiences most of the time in the second primary were supporters; that is the best sort of politics. When you're just running around speaking to an audience on the square or some audience that just comes to hear a political speech, you may be talking to people who are hopelessly beyond conversion. But when you're talking to your workers and motivating them, that's where you get good politics. It was the first such campaign in Texas. As I say, we were edging into the modern era, but we weren't quite there. It was several more election years in Texas before Texas campaigns began to stress organization, precinct work, that sort of thing. Prior to that it was just this romantic version, and Johnson was a political romantic in that he felt that you made a great speech, and you were William Jennings Bryan and the

people heard you, and then you kind of led a parade into the statehouse or the senate or something like that, a very romantic notion of political oratory's power. And he was never comfortable with precinct organization work and all like that.

But in these sessions, his parody of Stevenson, Johnson would lower his chin and make a double chin and [say], "You caught me away from my notes. I don't know quite what I think about that." Audiences just whooped and hollered when he was doing that, and in a very short time span there, basically the state's image of Coke Stevenson changed from this stable, solid westerner, cowboy-type fellow, judicious, all like this, and in a certain circle he was perceived very differently.

Now, there was a second factor at work here which was never measured. This was, concurrent with the second primary, the Berlin blockade. I don't remember whether the airlift started now; I think the airlift had started a little earlier. I'm speaking of the Berlin airlift. Anyway, it appeared to the public that we were getting awfully close to going to war. We hadn't been out of the war very long. If you consult the public opinion polls at this time in 1947, the American public by a strong majority felt that we'd be in another war in five years, with Russia. This was coming to a climax. Now, all over the country, New Deal Democrats--[Estes] Kefauver in Tennessee, Johnson in Texas, there were several more--were winning upset victories in primaries in that summer. Kefauver defeated the incumbent Democratic senator from Memphis, [Kenneth] McKeller, who was the dean of the Senate and a great power in Tennessee based on the Crump machine. And here was Kefauver, very liberal, supposedly very liberal.

What was winning, some poll work suggests this as a pattern although not specifically about Texas, you associated a man like Stevenson, once you began to look at him, as an isolationist. Those type people were the isolationists. And Johnson then in the second primary also began playing on the thing I've told you about in Stevenson's announcement speech, in which he had first put in and then took out in reference to the Marshall Plan, that we must not cast our pearls before swine. Those things began to fit together, and what you got the veterans, the young officers, guys who had been officers in World War II, lots of them were district attorneys, city attorneys, you know, somewhere on the political ladder. Many of them were friends of Connally's. They were in their thirties and had been off to war. Isolationism was in incredible disrepute, practically looked upon as treasonable by that point. They just went out and said, "We're not going to have this isolationist in there.: Johnson had a good image because he was saying before World War II started, before Pearl Harbor, that it's later than you think and all that kind of thing.

G: Was this surge of support apparent to you at the time?

B: Yes. It was to me. See, we didn't have anything going for us in the first primary. I never felt any electricity at all. But in the second primary, you could feel it day by day. Now we were staying in the cities most of the time. But we weren't seeking crowds. I think maybe we did in front of the Alamo or something. But we weren't seeking crowds in small towns, and we were meeting in hotel function rooms, much more that type place. The crowds began to fill the room and overflow. And we were not smart enough in those

days, you didn't have television, and so you didn't deliberately, like today's advance men do, book a small room so you can get an overflow. But the people were coming on different, they were purposeful. Money was coming in much better.

Now the net of what I'm saying is that while Taft-Hartley served to divide the conservative establishment, to divide some of them away from Stevenson, in my view, it also demotivated, if that's the right word, some of them, many of them, the ones that were strongest for Coke. They were embarrassed and impatient with him about Taft-Hartley and confused to an extent, too, I think. They didn't know quite what it meant for their guy to be equivocating on what to them was such a clear-cut subject. And I think some of the men at the top--I know this happened to an extent in Houston. I'm talking about the wealthy figures which, all of them, had business bases. But I don't really think of this particular type as businessmen like Reagan's kitchen cabinet; that's wealth, it's not business. Some of them began--I'm sure they voted for Stevenson in the first primary and maybe did in the second primary, but they began to think [about Johnson]. You could tell, they wouldn't come to a Johnson meeting, but their right arm would come. That's always significant. They were thinking, look, Texas needs a good senator. We need somebody that's in, knows how to make things work, all like that. Coke is going to go up there for one term--he's past sixty--maybe a second term at most. He's going to be an outsider like O'Daniel. See, O'Daniel had been just valueless to Texas, because he was so far outside.

They began to see Johnson in a different light, and they were also affected by the international isolationist thing. Because as I say, the climate was different that summer

than it had been back in the spring and in May. I think the blockade began after I came to Washington in March, or maybe it had just started. But in the summertime we were having negotiations about it. You know, the airlift was a phenomenal thing, but it was very riveting as an attention-getter for the country. So that was coming. That and the veteran influence all came very much to the fore, and I rather suspect that in the [second] primary that you had a different electorate. The first primary you had--as Johnson said, people don't go out to vote for United States senator, they go out to vote for sheriff, county commissioner, things like that. So you had that vote in the first primary, which naturally went along with the known factor of Coke Stevenson, no sophistication involved there.

In the second primary--and this is what I sensed out of the crowds we were getting and the people we were getting--people that either hadn't voted or who didn't make much of an effort in the first primary, they were out. You had younger people, you had these veterans and their wives, and a good sprinkling everywhere of businessmen who felt Stevenson was more philosophically where they were, but that he was not the senator of the future for Texas. And then the Democratic Party thing was very strong in the tradition of these people. I'm talking now about the monied people. The Taft-Hartley thing fitted in, in that they could hold up their heads at the clubs and say, "I'm going with Johnson," because of Taft-Hartley. In other words, they didn't have to defend to their conservative friends his New Dealism. And I think that was helpful. But probably the international climate was what elected him, or the desire not to have an isolationist.

G: Was there a conflict within the Johnson organization about how hard Johnson would hit the Taft-Hartley issue?

B: I don't know. I suppose that there was some. I was never privy to it, because after this start in El Paso of me traveling with him--and, see, in the second primary it was all airplanes--I didn't spend a weekday in headquarters. I don't know what went on. I was always out with him.

G: Did Johnson ever use his ties with national labor to exert influence on Texas labor?

B: National labor, he had no ties with national labor. At that point, remember, you didn't have the two of them together; the AFL and the CIO had not merged. At that point their official position up here was that they wanted to defeat everybody who had voted for Taft-Hartley, and they weren't worth talking to. Now, as the campaign went on in that second primary, some national figures in the cabinet, like Jim Forrestal and Stuart Symington, a number of others, New York people, they took an interest in the Johnson campaign and sent money to it, because they wanted an internationalist vote, a strong defense vote in the Senate. They didn't want Stevenson. That was a force, too.

You have this kind of experience in politics. A political campaign is all nebulous, highly nebulous. You're running around. I think that's why today's politicians are so hooked on opinion polls, it's the only thing tangible. It's not tangible, but they can at least hold a piece of paper in their hand. We had some polls, but not intensively in 1948. But when we got into I'd say the latter half or latter two-thirds of the run-off campaign, I tell you, it was tangible. You knew you were moving.

G: And did Johnson sense this, too?

B: Yes, you couldn't miss it.

G: Now, right after the first primary when he was 70,000 votes behind, was he discouraged by that? Did he consider [withdrawing]?

B: Oh, he certainly didn't consider withdrawing. I think somebody, Stevenson probably, said he ought to withdraw in the press or something like that, as I recall, but that was wholly against him. No, I think in the first primary Johnson sort of felt like--well, you remember I've told you that his attitude was partly that he didn't want to run for Congress again. He was basically giving up his political career, and he was not as good a candidate in the first primary. He worked, but he'd fight with headquarters. I don't think he believed he was going to get anywhere. I mean that there was a doubt in his mind. In the second primary, after he came up here, after Stevenson said what he did about Taft-Hartley, and after Johnson was up here and saw Stevenson going around the State Department and all and knew he was over his head, I think he then became really determined that it was important to the country that Stevenson not be here, or important to Texas at least, and to the country to some extent. His act got together better.

G: Others have described a meeting--

B: Let me interrupt you for a minute.

(Interruption)

I don't remember. I remember there was both a meeting down at the headquarters and there were some sessions out at his house. It would depend on who you talk to as to what

impression you got. With some people he was discouraged. It wasn't so much that he was discouraged, as was there any sensible prospect of catching up? He kind of set out without having a strategy that he was sure of. What turned him on, though, was that almost immediately after that first primary he left to come up here. Well, up here is where I think he got his energy back. What was being said between him and Connally while he was up here, I have no knowledge of it. I do not now have any impression that he was morbid about his future.

G: Connally came up with him?

B: No. He came up by himself or with Mary Rather. But I didn't see him really [depressed]. Now, I'd seen him down, deep depression, in the first primary, and made a point always of avoiding him when he was in that mood because that's when he was the most difficult. But in the second primary--and I was with him daily and was out on the road with him--I just never felt that. I felt it some over in East Texas at the start, I mean myself, because we're shooting a peashooter at a rhinoceros. But then when we basically changed the tactics in the campaign, I felt much better about it.

G: Did the press change at all as a result of the Stevenson gaffes?

B: No. Now we didn't have any of the--we had the ***Dallas Times Herald***, which was an old deal. We had the support of the ***Houston Post***.

G: Were the writers themselves more likely to be supportive than the publishers and editors?

B: It depended on one thing, whether they were out of Austin. I'd say that if you didn't count weekly papers that Johnson had more editorial endorsements than Stevenson. And again,

it was partly a function of this age thing that I've spoken about. You had a lot of the editors of the Texas papers, Marshall, Cope, was it?

G: Yes, that's right. ***Marshall News Messenger***.

B: Millard Cope. Charlie Duval in Kilgore; a guy in Tyler, Charlie Guy in Lubbock, the Harte-Hanks papers, which were then, as now, the big chain. They were all sort of just under the big city papers--and the papers down in the Valley, the ***Corpus Christi*** [***Caller***], Bob Jackson at Corpus Christi--all over the state they were for Johnson.

The traveling correspondents, and we never had very many, they were all from the big papers. Margaret traveled slightly with us. They were my friends out of the Austin bureaus. They had covered Coke and they tended to be for Coke, but I never found any unfairness toward Johnson. Allen Duckworth was the big political writer in Texas, and he was for Coke, but he didn't sharpen any knives on Johnson that I saw. I just didn't have any problem with the press. Johnson, of course, he had a funny love-hate relationship with newspapermen all his life. They were always his closest friends here and in Texas.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview III]

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ACCESSION NUMBER 99-06