

## INTERVIEW VIII

DATE: April 2, 1989

INTERVIEWEE: HORACE BUSBY

INTERVIEWER: Michael L. Gillette

PLACE: Kozy Korner Cafe, Washington, D.C.

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B: It's like the (inaudible) years when he was apparently plea bargaining or something with the district attorney, so he told this story about how he and Johnson and two other men, all now dead, had met on the day after the inauguration in 1961. They met in the garden at The Elms and they discussed--they agreed that somebody should be murdered, who subsequently *was* murdered, some government inspector or something. Everybody printed it, and what needed to be pointed out that wasn't pointed out was, one--

G: Johnson didn't own The Elms.

B: --there was six feet of snow on the ground at that time. You weren't going to be sitting out at a garden table talking about it. And two, he didn't own The Elms for six months after that.

(Interruption)

G: I wanted you to talk about the vice presidential trips, and particularly the trip around the world.

B: This one is--that's kind of difficult in this setting. There's so much on it, it's hard to call it up without sorting it out.

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G: Did he want to travel?

B: Well, this goes to the nature of the office of the vice presidency. Each vice president has to--in the *modern* context each vice president wants to do something, wants to find a way to define the office under his president and to define himself. Nixon traveled some. He veered off toward what may have been a special talent of his--I'm talking about Nixon now--essays and thoughts on foreign policy. I don't remember any of it now specifically, but while he was in the office he was accorded a lot of stature by particularly, say, Henry Luce and others of that level, for his thoughts about such things as foreign policy.

Johnson came into the office quite mindful of the Nixon precedents, to the extent that you can call all of this precedent. Now this is not what you were talking about, but you need this. The thing that was uppermost in everybody's mind in Washington about Nixon toward the end or at the end of the Eisenhower Administration and his campaign, was his ill-fated visit to Venezuela in which he was almost--he and Mrs. Nixon probably came very close to being killed in that thing. Now, the animus toward Nixon that eventually figured so large in his own presidency and the ultimate end of it was very, very strong and ferocious in reaction to that episode. It was as though Richard Nixon, as though the people--what was this--?

B: Caracas.

B: Caracas. That the mobs, the masses in Caracas had somehow or another been inflamed by this person Richard Nixon. It was an unreasoning thing that went right into Johnson's own office and among the Democrats of the Senate, to an extent. Well, when Nixon

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finally came back, he went from down there to Puerto Rico and he stayed in Puerto Rico a couple of days, talking to that governor, Governor Muñoz-Marin, and he finally flew in here. There was not a Dulles Airport at that time so he landed out at National. And over the dissent of some senators and I don't know how many others, he [Johnson]--and I don't think he was invited even, to be there--but he showed up out at National Airport up at the Butler terminal in the receiving line, [and] may have been the first one to shake hands with him. [There was] much Democratic criticism of Johnson for mingling with this fellow and to me it was--I wasn't up here, but it was the only thing to do because the attack on Nixon was not an attack on Nixon; it was an attack on America and on the--and not even on the vice presidency so much as on the presidency. We'd been at the point, almost, of going to war, with marines and everything else. The marines were on standby down there to go in, because the situation in Caracas was so absolutely hopeless in numbers and everything else. I have talked to the Secret Service agents. One of them who was there [who] was quite a key figure in it was Stuart Knight. They were holed up in a compound, and you had about I would suspect in those days fewer than twelve guns, meaning men with guns, and they were mostly pistols, to stash around. They were on twenty-four-hour alert. It was a bad situation. Johnson handled it that way.

But anyway, in his vice presidency it became an important consideration not to get into a Caracas-Nixon situation because, despite the fact that I seem to be speaking defensively, in actual fact Nixon's judgment was subject to question somewhat in even going or at least trying to go from the airport in Caracas into the city. They knew the

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mobs were there. As he had gone around Latin America to the different capitals there had been a rising level of demonstrativeness and protest, which, you know, it's staged. Well, something that's staged and manipulated can nonetheless be quite real even though it has been staged. And there's some Texas figure in this story. You would--the guy from Brownwood who was an ambassador--[Roy Richard] Rubottom.

G: Ambassador to--

B: I don't know where he was an ambassador to.

G: But how does he relate to--?

B: He was in the compound with Nixon there. Nixon got very emotional at some point and started chewing people out. It was Dick Rubottom, I think, and he chewed Rubottom out, [and] several other State Department types. Unfortunately, (inaudible) with one of these typical harangues about cookie-pushers. I don't know if he said cookie-pushers, but typical of the harangues that non-State Department people--the cold warriors like that who were against the State Department.

I was up here in Washington frequently, and for a week at a time--periods when he first became vice president--and I stayed around. Especially after Moyers--you know, in four or five days Moyers was gone off to the Peace Corps. He didn't have anybody that he talked to about these things, about what he should do.

Within two weeks, three weeks at the most, I would think, something came through to him or he learned about the dedication of a bridge in Panama, a bridge I guess over the Panama Canal, and where it came from, I don't know. I don't know where the

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information came from to him that there was this occasion. But he came in; he was pleased, proud, a little haughty that he might go down there and represent this new administration at this bridge dedication. Well, I didn't say so out loud, of course, but I said, "Like heck you will. That's a volatile situation and you're going to fall right--there are too many American people, American personnel in the Canal Zone for Caracas to be repeated. That wouldn't be even what would be tried, but you can have a demonstration on the bridge that would permit critics here to say, 'Well, you know, Johnson's the same as Nixon.'" And in fact I felt that Johnson's own presence in Panama for any kind of an occasion would provoke it, not because it's Johnson but because it's the United States. So I called Tom Mann at the State Department. You've done Tom Mann. I called him because Johnson never did really know Tom Mann but for various reasons he trusted Tom Mann. I called Tom Mann and I said, "This is the situation that is developing and I don't want to give him poor advice, and I don't want to just advise him on the basis of what I know, but this is my reaction to it." And he said, "Oh, he mustn't go down there." He explained to me the feelings in the Canal Zone and what was stirring around in the Canal Zone at that time, which I don't remember what it was, and he said that certainly if it came to him he would oppose it. But a career guy in the department has no standing against something that's being pushed politically.

Well, I pushed against it as hard as I could. [I] may have been the only person around him who knew this was under consideration, which was a burden. He was peevish; he pouted, he wanted (inaudible) and I saw then that what he really

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wanted--maybe, I don't know; I think this--to keep it fair, this was still sort of unformed in his mind, but he wanted to do something. And so he was shopping around, and I was shutting him off from the first thing he had seen that he could do, and I don't quite know--it was one of those things like lots of things in government; it doesn't end; it just disappears and this just disappeared. And not long after that, though, I was back in Texas and he called and he was really pleased this time, because the President himself had spoken to him and you know that meant, "You stay out of the way, Busby. My friend John Kennedy wants me to do this." They wanted him to go to Dakar for the second independence day of Senegal. Senegal had two independence days. They had one independence day--and they had formed a confederation with Mali, which adjoins them, and after they had celebrated this, Mali, which was not nearly so experienced or progressive, if you can say that about Senegal--a desert country, you know. Well, Mali didn't like this idea at all so they broke off from Senegal and Senegal had to have another independence day. So that was to be in April, and he became very excited about doing that.

And then other things were added on. What would it have been; was it the tenth anniversary of NATO? Somebody wanted him to go to Paris, to NATO headquarters and make a speech on the tenth anniversary or whatever it was. Somebody wanted him to go to Geneva and meet with the--I think it was--what was that fellow's name, the establishment guy? Arthur? Oh, [a] nice little rotund, short fellow, Arthur something. Not John McCloy but. . . . And he was meeting in Geneva the Britisher, Lord Somebody

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or other, who played with Jack Kennedy when they were children and eventually came here as the British ambassador. He was representing the British, and so this was to be a show of administration interest in the--Arthur Dean was the man--show of administration interest in the peace negotiations--which I thought was probably a good thing to do--and then go to Paris and make the NATO anniversary speech. And I guess we did not go on to--I don't believe we went on to England that time.

Well, this was his first trip. One interesting thing about it, before we ever left, this is what got me caught up in these trips. He would go over; he would disappear out of his EOB [Executive Office Building] offices--well, he didn't disappear, he was gone and you knew where he was gone, most likely was over to the White House--and he was over at the White House wandering around, kind of, you know, your obedient servant just waiting for somebody to say, "Lyndon, would you go down and get the President an apple," or something. It was funny, and these guys, the Kennedy guys, mostly came from the Hill and they'd known him as the awesome majority leader and they were deferential to him, and yet at the same time they didn't want him to mess up anything of theirs, which there had been episodes about that along the way. And he was over there just kind of exposing himself to serve notice that he was on call. If you need somebody to go to Greenland, I'm here.

And so he came back one afternoon, "All right, this is the way they're going to play it." And I don't remember--he had a whole string of paranoid reactions to what he imagined somebody at the White House was setting him up [for], see. Well, this played

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out that we went to Dakar and word came--what had preceded this, I don't know--word came that we were to go to Spain to a military base there and meet with Spanish government officials. Oh, he just went up the wall. He said, "They got Henry Cabot Lodge's brother there as ambassador," which was true; (inaudible) he hadn't been replaced by the new administration so we still had a Republican ambassador. And he said, "I can see what they're up to. They want me to come flying in there, and dime to a dollar they'd have Franco out there to meet me." The reason that the brother of Henry Cabot Lodge--what was his name? John Lodge--and other people at the State Department wanted him to go to the base was that they knew that they faced or could face, potentially, some rough going negotiating about the base with the Spanish government. Like the Philippine government and others, they're always holding us up about those air bases.

I don't remember why Spain was tending to be a bad actor or threatening to be a bad actor. The towns where we had bases, Lord knows, there wasn't any other thing there for the economy. And the problem was not that the people wanted Americans out of Spain, nothing like that, but it was the politics in Madrid. But Johnson saw it only as an effort to embarrass him by saying that first crack out of the barrel, you let him go to Washington and he runs off with his natural ally Franco, because he is obviously a Texas fascist and ultra-conservative and all that kind--oh, he was furious. He chewed out--he was biting State Department people in the car like--it was one of those little things you drop in hot butter.

G: Had he gone to Senegal by this time? Was he--?

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B: Yes, this came up--

G: While he was down there?

B: While we were in Senegal.

G: How did the Senegal portion of it go?

B: Well, it went all right. First of all, we left here on Saturday afternoon before Easter and flew to San Juan, Puerto Rico. And Governor Muñoz-Marin was very high in favor in Washington at that time. Exactly why, I never knew. And Jim Rowe and others who had worked with him back in the Roosevelt days thought he was the sage of the Western Hemisphere and all like that. I don't think he was. Puerto Rico used to be really a more hopeless and stickier problem for us than we have any appreciation of.

Detour, detour, detour. My all-time most important professor in my life was Eric Zimmerman at the University of Texas, who was the first professor hired before World War II under the university's distinguished professors program. He was a Viennese, jowly, short man. Marvelous man, and he was a professor of resources but he also was the professor of geopolitics. And I have found myself, twenty years later, twenty-five years later, using what I learned in his courses and from him. It actively helped me understand what we were coping with. But anyway, Eric Zimmerman came from Europe in the thirties, I guess. He said people all thought he was Jewish, and he wasn't. He was a Lutheran. His brother had been Lutheran bishop of somewhere in Europe. But anyway, he came over here and came to Washington and Harold Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, engaged him to study Puerto Rico and make recommendations about what the United

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States could do about it and with it. And so he came in with his report, which was never published or publicized, which said the first thing you've got to do in Puerto Rico is birth control. And Ickes, who intellectually could perhaps agree with it, but he was out of Chicago, wasn't really a politician; he was anything but that. But he sort of said, "Herr Doktor, I have to tell you there's such a thing in this country as the Democratic Party and many of its adherents are Catholic, and we can't come out with birth control." The only--Zimmerman told me this, Zimmerman found out in 1948, or at the end of 1947, that I had been offered a job with Johnson, and I chanced upon him in the cafeteria at Congress and 8th.

G: Picadilly?

B: Yes. It was either Luby's or Picadilly at that time by name, and so he motioned me over. He saw me in the line and he motioned me to come sit at his table when I got through [the line] and I came back, he told me he knew about it. And he said, "You're going, aren't you?" [in a] heavy accent. And I said, "Well, I haven't made up my mind yet." "You are going. I didn't ask you. I am telling you. You are going. That may be the best man in Washington, Johnson. He's not a typical Texan. He's not like the other Texans." Out of which I found out later he was really saying Johnson was the only man in Washington who championed him. Johnson was big on birth control back then and never in his entire career, including as president, he never had any appreciation of the Catholic opposition to birth control. Just none. Just none.

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But anyway, Dr. Zimmerman was the first effort by the United States Government to deal with Puerto Rico. It had just been a cesspool down there. I suppose some of the things that he proposed were implemented but the report was never put out. But Johnson had this imperfect and inadequate but nonetheless not too-far-off-point understanding of Puerto Rico.

So we go to Puerto Rico on the night before Easter, and late at night we went with Governor Muñoz down to the old city, close to midnight. They were ringing the bells; typical Spanish celebration of the day or the evening or whatever, and we went walking around. There was no vehicular traffic allowed in the area. We walked around. Oh, he [Johnson] was so proud, he was so happy. Here were his beloved Spanish folk and there he was, vice president of the United States, and they didn't really know who he was but they did know who the Governor was, and so if the Governor was with this man he must be somebody. And Johnson was--oh, he was just--it was really fascinating to see how ecstatic he was. Here he was, he felt, abroad. One of the problems I had with him whenever we went to Puerto Rico or to Hawaii was getting right up to him, stay right with him until he gets up on the platform and say, "This is not a foreign country." Because his inclination [was to think], and he did it at some small functions, [since] it is night, flying over water and he wakes up; he's been flying five hours and he's down so he has to be in a foreign country. And everybody's got on costumes and all and so his natural inclination was to say, "It's good to be in your country." Well, my caution began down there.

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So then the next day, on Sunday, we took off for Senegal. I have no idea what the hours of the flight were, but we took off so that we landed in Dakar at night, nine o'clock or something like that, which I guess meant we didn't leave San Juan very early. There were two figures in Senegal. The President was Leopold--do you know the name?

G: I'll think of it in a minute.

B: Leopold something. He was a poet. He was a man who had served--see, the French, when they had colonial positions, the colonies all elected members of parliament in Paris, which was very prudent, and he had represented Senegal in Paris for quite a while and I think maybe was in the cabinet, an intellectual-type guy. And then there was a prime minister named Mamadou Dia. Mamadou became the first of the Johnson jinxes. Here he was brought on as the new light, the new future of Senegal and about a month after we were there he was in jail. Leopold didn't tolerate this. From then on everywhere we went a hurricane would come through. A typhoon came through Hong Kong right after we were there.

G: In Iran, an earthquake or something like that.

B: People had heart attacks. The Premier of Turkey had a--he was already pushing ninety, but he had a heart attack. Johnson was afraid--he said, "I'd hate to go to England." He was afraid he'd bring England down.

But anyway, we went to this place; of course you've got a black country with a French overlay. Since they were celebrating their independence from France you didn't have many French showing those few days. As we learned there and it's happened

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elsewhere, the first thing the government did was to sweep the streets of the beggars and the prostitutes and the lepers. They have lots of lepers. They literally swept the streets. You never saw such a clean city as Dakar was, or what we saw of it. But you had two, three days I guess of--it probably wasn't more than two. I guess we were there two nights and left the third day. He went to the embassy compound or the ambassador's residence, I guess; it had a big fence around it, big steel mesh fence. Lots of Secret Service was along--I can't say lots; there was no authorization at that time for Secret Service and Johnson didn't want it.

I've told you this story before. Eventually when Kennedy sent a message to the Hill asking for Secret Service for the vice president and his wife, et cetera, they delivered the message--he was in the chair and he recognized the messenger from the White House, as they do, and the guy brought the message down and he handed it to the Vice President, or to a clerk and he handed it to the Vice President. Johnson saw what it was and so he put it in his pocket. He wouldn't lay it out before the Senate. And that evening he called John Connally and me and we met him, or he came and picked us up. I think we were both at the Mayflower. And we rode around, stayed up until midnight saying, "You've got to put it out before the Senate." [And Johnson said,] "He just wants to spy on me."

But anyway, on this trip we had a deputation of Secret Service. Stu Knight was the head of it. Rufus Youngblood was there and John Paul Jones was along, who was one of my favorite Secret Service men. I never knew what happened to him. And a few others; I have no idea how many of them there were. If there had been two, Johnson

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would have said it was too many. It *did* help. I was delighted to have them. It made everything so much better, to have the communications, because there's no way somebody like me, as a civilian and everything else, could use a radio to any advantage at all and this all mattered.

So anyway, he went out to this fenced-in place around the ambassador's residence and they had a lot of--I didn't really see them that night but I saw them the next day. They had a lot of short, *extremely* roughed-up looking guys, dressed roughly, not all with ties; they were obviously security, what we call security now; you didn't call it security then, stashed around that fence. And I found out something, that these were Belgians and that everybody, all the governments everywhere, all thought if you really need some absolutely uncompromising security, get Belgians. Exactly what the history of that is I don't know, but we had them.

Well, he went to the house and then I went to my quarters, Doctor [Willis] Hurst and myself. Reedy wasn't along. I don't guess anybody else was along. My quarters were on a boat that was docked. They didn't have anywhere near enough hotel rooms there so they brought in a bunch of French ocean-going ships of some size. I don't know anything about ships. I couldn't tell you how they are, but several decks and lots of staterooms. I didn't get down there until after midnight. I don't think I slept. No, I didn't; I stayed up talking to somebody from the State Department, something about the next day.

The next morning I went out--well, no, a car came for me and the Vice President wanted me out at the Villards' residence. Henry Villard was the ambassador. Henry

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Villard, a very nice man, descended from the Villards in New York, who among other things started *The Nation*, the magazine, and did a bunch of other things. Good, wealthy New York Republican types. I enjoyed him, and he and his wife were there and Johnson--the way the message had come to me, I knew there was a problem. I forget the particulars. And so I got out there and he's just in a sulk. I mean, he is as dark as a storm cloud in Texas. And the funny thing was he wouldn't tell me. I said, "Something's eating on you," and "No." And it took me a long time to find out what it was. What it was, was Mrs. Villard, who was sort of off the wall--I don't know anything about the woman--she had come in and given him a briefing when he arrived at their residence and said, "When you go out be sure to wear white gloves. You don't want to touch any of these people. They're bad; they're"--I don't know what she said, but, "Don't touch them. Don't let them get close to you," all that kind of stuff. Well, his lower-case democrat button had been punched because she was obviously a high-born, well born rich eastern lady, and he's so defiant I was afraid he'd go out and just touch everybody. Well, he really stewed through the morning.

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B: Howard Burris was along on this trip as military aide, usefully. Howard [was] quite fluent in French and helpful on several scores in that regard for me. So anyway we went to--he [Johnson] had to go to the government house, some kind of a curious, small building inside a landscaped park. It wasn't a capitol or anything like that, but it had some historical importance, and he had to go there and sign the book. That's something that he

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objected to from then on, strenuously. He always had to go somewhere and sign the book as required by protocol. He was always making speeches about if the United States ever falls, protocol will be responsible because it's so dumb. So anyway, he went over to sign the book. From the way you learn things on those trips, we had learned that the Russians had sent in--we had along about three or four--a couple of them were bachelors and a couple of them were couples--close Kennedy campaign friends. I mean, not close friends of Kennedy's but--the head person was a guy named Romeo from Rhode Island or something like that. I guess he had just laid money on Kennedy for years. So we had these political types along who were being rewarded with this trip. One or two of them had been strongly opposed to Johnson and so we had few nice little sessions like this, but--

G: Did he try to establish a more cordial relationship?

B: Oh, he didn't give a damn about that at all. He didn't even want them on the plane. They were political and he was very puristic about not having anything to do with people who had given campaign money, especially to the Kennedys. One of the guys was from California. I've never remembered his name. He later went on and got elected mayor of something out there and then got thrown out after a short while. But Johnson really went out of his way to rile that guy.

I'm the perfect pigeon because I'm the only man around Johnson and I'm obviously approachable. I can't be otherwise. And so these people come up, "Tell that fucking boss of yours such and such and such and such," mainly to go screw himself.

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G: Why? What would he say to them that would get them upset?

B: I don't know. Johnson could make a grown man angry just by the way he said hello, if he wanted to, if that was his purpose. And it was with these people; he didn't want them messing with him. Now he did have along somebody else and that was John Rooney, of the House. This was his special mission, was to take Rooney along and persuade Rooney that he needed to loosen the purse strings of Congress and let these people in the embassies have more money, because he wasn't giving them a dime. That came up bigger in Paris. And see, Rooney didn't support Kennedy for the Democratic nomination; he supported Johnson and he had his Brooklyn organization supporting Johnson. Kennedy had figured this out as a good move. It probably was. Nothing much came of it.

So we went to Dakar. I rode in from the airport with John Rooney and his wife, his beloved Midge or something. His first wife had died after forty years and he'd married another beloved lady, a sainted lady. We're driving in from the airport and there's a hill, a mound, looked like the Rock of Gibraltar had gotten out of place up there, and there was a light up on top of it, a rotating light. He said, "Busby, you know what that is, don't you?" I said, "No, sir. I haven't been here before." And he chided me for not having traveled--this was Rooney--and Rooney finally said, "Well, I'll tell you. And don't forget this. That's the westernmost point in Africa." That's what this light was. So I never forgot it. I never saw it again and don't really want to go back to see it.

But back to that day, we went along; Howard was along, the ambassador, somebody from the State Department. I think Johnson had maneuvered it so that Romeo

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and these other people were all in other cars. [We] may have had Romeo in the car with us; I'm not sure. He was a nice old man who never said anything and was absolutely no bother at all. But we went in and signed the book and Johnson thought it was all a lot of foolishness.

What I stopped on, before I detoured there, was that we had learned overnight that the Russians had sent in one of their jets--jet travel was just beginning then--with Jacob Malik aboard, was the head of it. Malik had been the head of the Soviet delegation to the UN at one point. He was one of their top-level diplomats, right up there with Andrei Gromyko and the others. I do not know what ever happened to him. Big man. And so he--this was just something to note, and I think that at this government house we saw Malik. You see, we had come with this kind of ragtag bunch that I was telling you about, I mean, no form to it. Johnson and Burris were the only two men along who were on the U.S. government payroll, which just confounds the hell out of foreign governments.

G: They want a position.

B: Yes. They want a protocol chart with counterparts. The atmosphere at the government house was, well; it was diplomatic, it was governments, all being governments, and this is kind of sticky with Johnson. So finally, after not really very long there, he thought it was a lot longer than it was, the President--no, that doesn't make sense. Maybe the Prime Minister, maybe the President of Senegal were there to shake hands with the people who signed the book. I couldn't even--I couldn't get in. They weren't letting perimeter people in to the book-signing thing, so I don't know exactly what went on in there. But we got in

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the limousine and actually, I had not ridden there with Johnson. I didn't want to. But he wanted me to ride away with him. So I was sitting on the jump seat in front of him and we came up to the exit, which was the gate we came through, and on the other side of the street--well, first of all, like most third-world countries everything is walls, which Johnson eventually picked up on, how the people who had anything were scared to death, [and] had the walls. So there were two tiers. We had never faced a foreign street crowd before. This is one of those kind of things that years later you sit and marvel at how you were dumped into something like this. You never had seen it, never been around it, nobody'd told you anything about it and somehow or another you become very dignified and arch; I think this must be what influences diplomats, and before long it looks like you're just total master of the whole--you could not be better, you couldn't handle it better if you'd done it a hundred times.

Well, anyway, there was a nice road, not a divided boulevard, that we came out onto, or we were going to come out onto and we were going to turn to the left as we came out. This put Johnson on the curb side. Then that road that extended from that gate went on down, I mean went on, not the way we were going but it went on back that way and it was, I don't know, a block or two blocks away there were great hordes and hordes and hordes of people being held back by troops with sticks--I thought subsequently they were whips; that's what they use over there. But there was some kind of a select group of Senegalese who were lining the curb to the left as we--they were not in the street, they were up [on the curb]. It was like there was maybe ten feet of grass lawn between the

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curb and this wall behind them and they were packed in there pretty good for about a block and a half, maybe two blocks. Totally silent. I noticed the silence because it seemed kind of ever so slightly eerie or something for that many people to be there and not anything coming from them, but it was like reverence or awe or something. Now we turn left, you've got the American flag, the standard on the front fender. Johnson picked up on this himself and he never went into another city the world over, any time, day or night, unless the flag was out there. And we had to take along quite a few flags because they cost sixty dollars apiece at that time. They're silk. But one ride into town, they're destroyed.

G: Is that right?

B: [As a] matter of fact, being prudent economically, fiscally, he and the Secret Service talked about it. In American cities, at least, where they knew the terrain, we'd come in from the airport and get almost, well, we'd get to the point where you could possibly expect to see people, and stop and the guy'd run out and put the flag in. For one thing, if you didn't do that in some cities where you--we didn't have those forty-mile-out airports at that time but you even so, you take a long ride in from the airport, by the time you got downtown, say in Chicago or somewhere, there wouldn't be any flag. It'd just be some yellow fuzz. But anyway, the flag told them who was in the car, who the car represented. They didn't know who it was. So we were turning slowly with some kind of a--I don't think the Secret Service let them put any escort out front. That used to be their fetish. They didn't want cars in front of the presidential car and they don't want motorcycle

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guides. The theory from security purposes being that that makes it too easy for someone to bomb a car and block the president, and that speed is critical to getting out away from an attack.

So there was nobody in front of us, just that flag, and this was not a--I can't say that this was not a Secret Service limousine. I'm not sure. Anyway, just as we turned, you could see these young people and they applauded very--a lot of restraint and not much sound. And I was sitting by the window and Johnson was by the window and the window was up. I guess he had lowered it just a tiny bit and there was a sound from one youth--one student, twenty years old. And I heard the sound. He was saying a word but I didn't make it out immediately. It was [imitates sound], sounded like his dialect. All over Senegal they speak French. Well, the tribes, backlanders speak tribal languages. Johnson said, "Stop." The driver stopped. He punched me. He said, "What did he say? What's he saying?" And kind of, Johnson said it and I said it at the same time; what the kid was saying was, "Kenneday. Kenneda. Kenneda. Kenneda." That's not quite right. It wasn't that close to "Canada," but it was a distinctively different pronunciation of Kennedy. The window came down, all the way, and he pushed me up against the front seat and he got over to the window and leaned out and waved right at that boy. Like some of the old hands said, there's never been a black crowd in Africa, a black people in Africa who had seen a white political figure acknowledge their existence. And I tell you, somebody told the driver to start on up so we started but going very slowly. Johnson kept saying, "Go slow." This applause and reaction to what he had done there--they went the full length of

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that two-block span of people and they started jumping, and you could see it way on down there, and smiling, my gosh. It was a very emotional moment for anybody, for me.

Because you sensed in the context of 1961 what you wouldn't sense today. The world was all expectations--not expectations, that's the wrong word. There was a new world to be made and this was my introduction to it and Johnson's.

Now, his reach was pretty long and they'd be dancing around and he'd reach out, and I don't think he ever touched a girl. I don't think there was any significance to it, but several times he'd have a young fellow there. These were not teenagers. There may have been some girl teenagers but mainly they were in their twenties, and as I say, until I started talking to you it never did occur to me, how did they pick them out to be there? They had to be university students or something.

That crowd was just berserk. They were reverting to tribal reactions or habits or something. I don't know how you would describe it, but by the time we got down toward the end you'd have little places where there were six, seven, eight, nine of them dancing in circles. I think Johnson wanted to say, "Stop your damned dancing and come over and shake hands," and he would touch them just often enough--he would manage to touch them. They were not expecting to touch him. They ran out to touch the car; I saw that a lot of places. They ran out to touch the car but if they were touching our door he got them. He was catching them. As I say, it's impossible to recreate what an awesome moment that was because that kind of moment had just never happened anywhere before.

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I was not only sitting in front of him, we were touching much of the time and this man was fully as excited as the kids. Really.

G: Did he talk about the significance of that?

B: He talked about the significance of it even while we were riding along, after we passed the end of the line down there.

G: What did he say?

B: We had a pretty good-sized distance to cover down boulevards on which there was rarely a person to be seen; a few. As I remember them they were all so far away they didn't know whether we were American or what. But he said, "See? That's what Kennedy means." He equated the whole meaning to Kennedy. The world knew America had elected a young leader, and that these youths were reacting to that. So we went back to this residence of his and he was pacing the floor, talking. He was jabbering. He was excited. I don't remember anything else that happened there that day. I think I went back to the ship and slept after not sleeping for quite a while.

Then we had to go to the formal dinner. So we went to the dinner and I was with Liz. So we drive up to the entrance, and here are--and this is something special in Senegal--here are these monstrous men who look like Hulk Hogan, only taller, six feet six inches, six feet seven inches. I don't know what strain they are. It's like, say, the Sikhs in India, very tall. But these guys were bulky. They're the interior-lineman type and they had huge and ugly curved swords. And Liz and I came up to the entrance and Liz was just a slight bit ahead of me, just a few feet, and I was walking along and she went past the

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head guard and I was just following Liz and bam! Here were four swords crossed blocking my path and I said, "Liz! Liz!" And she came running back and she grabbed me across the swords and started stomping her feet and saying, "He's mine," or something. So the swords went up and I got in and we got inside and Liz says, "When I reached across the swords and got you do you think maybe that meant we got married?" We had a lot of fun with that for years.

So we go into this huge ballroom, some kind of government building. Every country on earth--I think there were then a hundred, or ninety-eight--was represented there except two. One was South Africa and the other was Mali, their next-door neighbor. You have never seen a more fascinating crowd. I didn't, again, I didn't expect to really. You had people, you had diplomats, so-called, from the desert countries --I've forgotten what they are; Chad or something--who had walked several hundred miles in sandals. They were in lavish woven robes. You had all these exotic--of course, here were real live Chinese, and here were real live Russians and all like that, and here we were. The thing that most fascinated both the distinguished Vice President and me were these black guys coming through followed by, what is it, four wives? Five wives? Whatever the law allows. What is it? Five? Moslems. Those multiple wives were really studies in and of themselves.

G: How so?

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B: First of all, you're kind of appalled at the intelligence level. These are women with no--they don't know how to do anything except whatever their job was. One of them washes, one of them something [else]. But it was eerie.

I was standing off sort of to the side with Johnson and he was making his customary witty observations about what he was into. So I said, "Sir, the Russian, Jacob Malik, is back of you some little distance, and he has been watching you and I'm pretty sure he's coming over here." Johnson said, "Oh, well, that's just my luck. That's my luck." Little Lyndon over here in Africa making foreign policy with the Soviets. He didn't want to do it. So we hardly said it, and it was done; here came Jacob Malik. Malik was probably an inch shorter than Johnson but a much bulkier man, big man, intelligent man I suppose. He came over and he properly greeted him as Mr. Vice President and Johnson properly greeted him as Ambassador Malik, "Good to see you again." I don't think they'd ever met but they could have, somewhere.

So Malik said, "How long you come?" This was like penis envy. This was jet envy from the Russians. They wanted to know how long it took us to get there. They had come in after we did and they saw the plane, which was U.S. Air Force something or other. Johnson, I could tell, did not understand what "How long you come?" meant. He didn't know how many miles it was. I said, "He wants to know how much time." Well, I don't know how much time Malik had spent flying in from Moscow or the Crimea or wherever he came from, but Johnson just devastated him. He said, "Oh, four hours," when it was seven or eight, I don't know what it was. Malik reeled, and questioned him

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about this again, and Johnson said, "Oh, about four hours." Whether he knew what he was doing or not, I don't know, but he did it.

Malik said something to the effect that--he got right down to business--that his government was so disappointed that the new President showed so little interest in negotiating on arms. So Johnson gets all tense, "All right, now. I'm not going to get suckered by this guy. Russian diplomats are as bad as American diplomats." And he started tensing up and Malik kept coming on at him. No, you know, he wasn't being aggressive beyond--well no, he was. [It was] not the way two diplomats would have talked to each other, I don't think. Maybe he did. But he was pressing Johnson and Johnson couldn't hide, couldn't run. He had nobody around him except me and what kind of support am I? Nothing I could say, anyway.

Well, Malik thought he was scoring points. Somewhere I have all this written out; I've forgotten where. Malik was really pressing and Johnson knew that he himself was being pressed to the limit of his abilities, I guess. Malik's theme was, "Why are we wasting this time?" Well, out of a clear, totally blue sky, Johnson said, "Our first Secretary of State and our third President, Thomas Jefferson, once said that 'a certain kind of spring will make for an interesting fall.'" Well, this a Jefferson quote that I had dredged up out of the Jefferson books months and months before, [a] couple of years before. Jefferson went off on his expedition to New York, in which he was setting up the Virginia-New York coalition, and he said it was a botanical expedition. He was studying the trees or something. In this context, pressed by somebody, I can't imagine who, he had

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made this statement, which usually is free-standing in collections of Jefferson statements, about such and such a spring will make for an interesting fall, the subtlety having to do with politics.

But here is Jacob Malik, schooled in all the Soviets' finest traditions. He's dealing with this lunkhead American politician, and Johnson threw that at him and it was like he had thrown a two-by-four right between Malik's eyes. Malik was stunned. Nothing in his experience and nothing in his understanding of the language and nothing in his study of American history prepared him for what was undoubtedly a very grave pronouncement, and so he retreated. And I told him, "You shouldn't have done that to that man." And he was kind of unaware of what he was doing. Because he was really under pressure, you know. He was fighting for his life, so to speak, to hold his own in that situation. And Malik never came back. Malik said, "I'm going to give this guy a wide berth."

G: So he physically walked away at that point?

B: Yes, you know, a diplomatic thing like that. Walking away is--well, I mean (inaudible) party. You leave on--you know when your moment to go has come.

G: How many--

B: So soon after that happened, one of the President's minions, his personal somebody, who I had gotten acquainted with simply to the extent to know who he was and that you could react to him, he came over. The President had a long table back in a nook made by exotic side tents [?] in this big hall, and he was going to have dinner. So these minions came and asked the Vice President to come, and then--oh, this was very important to the true

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diplomats around. They came and got Johnson first and they came and got Malik second.

The seating, I guess Johnson was on the same side of the table as the President and Malik may have been across from him, but there wasn't any protocol thing there. I don't know

who the other countries were who were seated. And Johnson was seated beside Leopold.

He had served in the parliament in Paris and so he had a white wife, as did many of the African leaders in the French colonies. Pudgy little old lady.

But anyway, he was talking to Johnson. He said that having your own independent republic was all right but then you had to allow votes. He said, "First thing that happens"--and he ticked off several countries that had preceded Senegal--"the women want to vote, so you give them the vote, and then they want to vote on polygamy, and they always vote to throw it out." He was very gloomy that polygamy was bound to go because of democracy. Anyway, that was the big event up to that point and that was the start of his career out on the road.

G: How many people were at that big ball?

B: I would have no way to tell you. I couldn't see all of them from any one vantage point. It was a government building, which I would think was not a hall for ceremonies. I don't think Senegal had them or could afford them. More likely it was a government building that they'd taken all the desks out of. As a matter of fact I'm sure it was. I went out with one of the Secret Service men and we were stumbling around--we were looking just to see what we were in and we found a couple of corridors off that hall that had tables and things stacked in them, so that was--our conclusion could be wrong. It might be something else,

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but you just have to--you just know--there were a thousand, I'm sure more than a thousand people there.

But it was my first exposure to something like that and you have to learn that when you have big affairs like that with diplomats, you've got lots of bodies there. You've got lots of people there but they're not really people; they're countries. And there's no casual intercourse. If you're in their sphere of influence or something, they'll come on in a civil way. But you have to learn that it's not a friendly way; it's not like a Texas barbecue.

We went walking around the place once and Johnson was speaking to everybody that looked like they were authoritative enough to be spoken to. Just nodding. And a very uneven response. I suppose all of them had to know he was the American. But some of them just didn't respond at all and others--I don't know where they were from--Europe, I guess.

G: Fascinating. Great story.

(End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview VIII)

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