INTERVIEW IV

DATE: August 21, 1969

INTERVIEWEE: JOSEPH A. CALIFANO, JR.

INTERVIEWER: Joe B. Frantz

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

Tape 1 of 1

F: Joe, we're going to talk about various bits and pieces today, and I thought we'd go back and cover that period when you were concerned with James Meredith's efforts to get into the University of Mississippi at Oxford and the rioting that followed.

C: Yes. Okay.

F: So I'm just going to ask you how you got involved in this and give you the play.

C: I was then either Cy [Cyrus] Vance's special assistant or general counsel to the army. That was September 1962. We got into this--I shouldn't say we, I got into it on the Saturday before the Sunday night in which the rioting really hit its peak. Mr. [Robert] McNamara delegated to Vance authority for the Defense Department to handle civil disturbances. This had been done when Cy Vance was general counsel of the Defense Department and we were afraid that we were going to have trouble in Alabama about six months before--I forget what the problem was--and Vance carried that with him as secretary of the army.

F: Was this when Autherine Lucy tried to enroll?

C: No, that was--

F: That was later, wasn't it? I'll have to check up on it.

C: --later. That was later. That was the second disturbance.

We got into it late in terms of the procedures we subsequently developed.

F: Did you anticipate this kind of trouble?

C: I don't think we really did. At least I wasn't familiar with any anticipation of this kind of trouble.

F: Well now, how close liaison did you run with the Justice Department?

C: I personally ran no liaison with the Justice Department until after the riot. Vance did a lot of dealing with the Justice Department people, and with President Kennedy at that time, over the phone. Most of it was Sunday afternoon and the problems were related to--my memory is very hazy on this, but the main issue I remember was when to move army troops, if and when. We and the Justice Department both made an enormous miscalculation in terms of the time it would take to get from I guess it was the naval air station at Meridian, I'm not sure, to Oxford.

F: You mean you undercalculated?

C: We undercalculated. At the same time Kennedy, like Johnson subsequently until we had had experience with one or two riots, was very reluctant to move troops prematurely, didn't want to move the troops until the last minute. As a result, things were out of hand before we had enough force there to assure that Meredith could get in and that people wouldn't get hurt or killed.

The second problem we had was that we had virtually no communications with

the people in Oxford. We hadn't recognized the importance of communications to the point where we were unable to talk directly to General [Creighton] Abrams, who eventually went down, as I recall, and took over.

F: This ought to have been good guerrilla training for him for later.

C: There were two phone lines down there. One was preempted by the Attorney General and the other one was preempted by the White House, so we had no direct contact with our people down there for hours.

In the aftermath, President Kennedy was apparently deeply distressed about the fact that it took so long to move army troops once the order had been given to move them. We had to do a big study of time of movement and what have you.

F: Was the Eisenhower experience at Little Rock of any value at all to you in this?

C: Not much.

(Interruption)

F: We were at Oxford.

C: Yes. Oxford, I would have to say generally, was badly handled by almost all concerned.

F: I had just asked you if you could draw at all on the Little Rock experience.

C: We drew on it in the sense that it was the kind of thing, in my recollections, we took a quick look at the Saturday before the Sunday. Now, I also think that the people at the Justice Department had looked at it before then.

What I can't get fully squared away in my mind is Oxford versus Tuscaloosa. They kind of merge on me at this point in time. My recollection is that before Tuscaloosa things had improved quite a bit and we had lots of meetings. In fact, I do remember, as a

result of Oxford everybody changed their whole viewpoint. I was made sort of the civilian guy to watch over civil disturbances in the Pentagon and Abrams was made the military guy, and he and I had lots of meetings with Justice Department people. They got an understanding of our requirements for communications and advance teams in an area and what have you. At the same time we got a better appreciation of the political problems and the federal problems, if you will, of the President moving in troops.

We also learned out of Oxford--you remember at Oxford we brought in regular army troops as distinguished from the National Guard, and when we cut down the size of our contingent, we released the whole guard, leaving the regular army there. The army was there for the whole school year, because I remember going down the following spring with John Doar. The purpose of our trip was to talk to Meredith and talk to the army personnel that were down there and make a judgment as to whether or not we could withdraw all the troops.

F: Were you in contact at all with Governor [Ross] Barnett?

C: No, I never personally talked to Governor Barnett.

F: In a situation like this where the National Guard is involved, is there some sort of a delicate line between the Defense Department here and the adjutant generals in the state?

C: No. There may have been in--

F: Is he looked on as one of the tribe?

C: Oh, yes. With one exception that has nothing to do with his view on the racial issue, we never had any trouble with the National Guard once they were sent in. Once they were federalized and sent in they represented the federal government and they followed orders.

The only minor--there were two problems, I remember. One was in Mississippi. One of the generals, if not the general in charge of the National Guard for Mississippi, was also a federal judge so we could not use him. He was more than a federal judge; he was a federal judge that had been involved in some of this litigation. And the law provided for that. Actually there were a couple of problems.

Number two, I believe it was in Alabama where the real, the nominal head of the National Guard--I think the unit spanned Mississippi and Alabama--but the nominal head of the guard units for Alabama was just a lousy general. It wasn't a racial issue. We just didn't think he was competent enough to handle an operation like this, so we had to make some arrangement to sort of slide him out of the picture gently and get the next in command in charge.

At Tuscaloosa, after Autherine Lucy had been admitted, you remember it was a much smoother operation. There were some disturbances, but not too many.

F: It was more nearly symbolic, in a way.

C: That's right. We did leave the guard there for some extended period of time, and a couple of months after she had been admitted, John Doar and I went down on a mission similar to the Meredith mission to see whether or not we could pull them out. And while we were there, there was a bombing incident, which it turned out had been staged by a couple of young enlisted men in the guard who wanted to stay on active duty and were afraid we'd recommend that everything be called off. And we did, and we pulled the guard out of Alabama.

We did learn from Oxford: one, the need for communications; two, the need for time; three, the need to send advance troops in, you know, some small contingent of twenty or thirty guys; four, the fact that it was much better to leave the National Guard as the last troops in a place rather than the regular units, because there was usually more pressure to get the guard out. One of our basic philosophies in this area was to make the local forces assume control as long as possible before the incident and as quickly as possible after troops had been sent in to handle the incident. And we found that the pressures from businessmen who wanted to get back to their jobs, et cetera, et cetera, in terms of having the guard there was very good.

F: These were just local concerns really that--?

C: Yes, you know, you're a professor at the university or you're a businessman who wants to get back to his business, or you're an electrician or a plumber or what have you, and you're beginning to lose money and you want to get the hell out of there. Well, we want to get you out of there, too, and we want the local police to take over as fast as we can get them to take over.

I must say, in Tuscaloosa we were much more careful about segregating black and white soldiers, as a measure of cooling things off fast.

F: Are you talking about regular troops or are you talking about [the guard]?

C: I'm talking about regular troops. In Mississippi we just poured the troops in as they came. There's no question that in a situation like that, the black sergeant with the bayoneted rifle was inflammatory in terms of the white people that were attacking. We, in Tuscaloosa, were more careful about where we placed black troops in terms of putting them in direct

contact against a white racist. But we never had any problem in terms of the loyalty of National Guard forces and their following orders that were given to them.

F: Within the National Guard, you didn't have any problem at all between blacks and whites who were in the guard?

C: No. But you've got to remember there were few, if any, black troops in the Mississippi and Alabama guards, because we were just beginning the process of getting the guard desegregated. Once the regular troops go in--just on your issue of friction--they take command. The guard is put under the command of an army general, and everybody understood that loud and clear.

F: As far as you could tell, was Governor [George] Wallace more practical than Governor Barnett? [Did he] have more sophistication with regard to what was going on?

C: I think you'd have to say yes to that question. Also you have to recognize that no governor wants somebody killed the way that French reporter [Paul Guihard] was killed at Oxford, or the kind of shooting that went on down there. Wallace wasn't about to destroy the University of Alabama. Barnett didn't seem to give a damn what happened to the University of Mississippi.

And feelings had cooled off. Even in the matter of that year between Meredith and Lucy, things had cooled off. You've got to remember that in the spring of 1963, when Doar and I went down to go to see Meredith, I remember walking along the university campus, Doar and Meredith and I, to go to the cafeteria to get some lunch and having guys still shouting out the windows at Doar and me, "nigger lovers," and stuff like that. And when we went to the cafeteria, everybody moved out, away from Meredith's

table. By the time we were dealing with Autherine Lucy there was none of that.

Also, there was a difference in the personality of the two people. Meredith is an iconoclast. He can be very irritating, I'm sure--you know, a zealous missionary.

F: I rather gathered that his principal attribute is courage.

C: Yes. Autherine Lucy on the other hand, within a matter of days, was playing bridge with the girls in her dorm and had no problem. And if you looked at her and met her, she's one of the prettiest black women I've ever met. You know, decked out in a plaid skirt and jumpers that all the girls [wear]; she was just another one of the girls. Meredith was by no means another one of the boys.

F: Well, he hadn't been in Harlem, I might add.

C: Yes, that's right. I think another thing that was learned was that--Meredith was in a separate room with troops in the next room, and communications people, and FBI agents, guys all over that campus, jeeps all over that campus. We didn't do that in Alabama. To the extent that we provided physical protection for Miss Lucy, we kept it discreet in the background. You know, we all learned. I think Governor Wallace learned and I think the federal government learned.

F: Did you personally have any difficulty working with Meredith?

C: Doar and I didn't, when we were down there. But he would not, over the course of time, refrain from doing things that were inflammatory and irritable. There's nothing he didn't do that he didn't have a right to do, but there are some kinds of people that would just try and cool it a little bit, and he wouldn't. He was a damned tough guy in that sense.

F: Did this, in your opinion, give any sort of leads to handling Resurrection City? Or is each

experience, to a great extent, independent of all the others?

C: Resurrection City was a--sure, we had leads on it, but it was a peculiar problem. We learned about dealing with this kind of problem through every experience we had--Watts, Chicago. My personal experience *vis-à-vis* Resurrection City was probably gathered mostly out of the August 1963 march--

(Interruption)

--when [Martin Luther] King made that speech about, "I have a dream." Resurrection City was handled largely through the Justice Department, although the President himself made the decision to allow them to use it. We set up a coordinating mechanism which was basically my office and Ramsey Clark.

F: As far as the White House was concerned, were you the man primarily responsible for the liaison work?

C: That's right, that's right. Now, with Resurrection City, unlike with a situation like Oxford or Tuscaloosa, or a riot in a city like Watts, we were dealing with people who were coming in advance, who wanted to demonstrate, and who were in the long run willing to negotiate for a permit from the city government of Washington and the General Services Administration. Those people, GSA and the D.C. government, were really the direct contact with the Resurrection City people in the public arena. And while they got enormously detailed guidance from us--my recollection is that I actually read the words of the permit and cleared them personally after Ramsey Clark had personally cleared them. Also, the President was familiar with a lot of the negotiations as they went along.

F: Is the permit in that a form or is it something that is done for that time only?

C: Normally it's a form with some blanks filled in, but for Resurrection City it was just written, and it was a--

F: Complete new document?

C: --complete new document and all kinds of things were negotiated. You have to remember we had to negotiate water and traffic arrangements, and what have you.

F: Did you hold regular meetings with people like [Walter] Fauntroy and [Walter] Washington and [Nash] Castro, and so on?

C: Yes, I did. I talked to them. I didn't hold as many meetings as the Justice Department people did by a long shot, but on critical points I'd talk to them.

F: Was your place considered kind of a command post, or was that somewhere else?

C: With respect to Resurrection City, it wasn't a command post in the sense that my office was a command post during the riots after King's death, where we had all the maps over there and stuff pouring in. It was more like a policy guidance command post. To the extent there was a day-to-day, hour-by-hour, operating command post, it was over in the Justice Department, and actually it was with the D.C. police, as I recall.

F: So to a certain extent your position was that of staying informed rather than making decisions, except in the more crucial--

C: That's right, that's right. Decisions like when we finally felt that we ought to work out an accommodation with [Ralph] Abernathy and get him out of there, and he wanted to get out of there 'cause it was getting difficult for him to deal with it, decisions on the time and place and whether we'd arrest him and how we'd arrest him, that kind of decision, we did clear.

F: He wanted to be arrested, I judge?

C: He did want to be arrested, that's right. That was his way out and that was satisfactory to us. We wanted to do it that way, too.

F: Did you have to go to the President with that?

C: Yes. I can't remember whether I personally mentioned to the President or Ramsey personally mentioned it to the President. One of us--

F: It was a presidential decision.

C: Presidential in a sense that--

F: That you made a recommendation--

C: --we made a recommendation and told him, in effect, we were going to do it this way. It was sort of half recommendation, half matter of information. He had made a decision that it was time to try and close it out as promptly as we could.

Now there was another piece of Resurrection City, which was namely the problem of all the meetings that the demonstrators had with the cabinet officers and the programs the cabinet officers had for the poor. That stuff was all cleared in my office. Jim Gaither, for a period of a couple weeks, did nothing but clear statements by cabinet officers and what have you, trying to put a program together for those people. And the President, at a cabinet meeting just before they arrived or just as they were beginning to arrive in Resurrection City, told the cabinet officers he wanted them to meet with Abernathy and to do what they could for him with respect to either administrative actions or possible legislative recommendations that would not increase the budget. The way I got into that was he wanted them to clear all that they were going to do through my office. That's how

I got into it, and then I just assigned Gaither as the guy to watch it.

F: Was to a certain extent this matter of taking administrative actions a matter of moving aside certain red tape problems?

C: Yes. It was moving aside red tape. It was opening up new counties for the food stamp program. They were terribly disorganized. I can't tell you how disorganized they were, and really sadly incapable of following up their initial publicized meeting where the poor would shout at Wilbur Cohen, and Abernathy would make a speech and what have you. We then wanted to follow that up with they'd have some staff and we'd have some staff and we'd work out some kind of agreed demands or responses to their demands. Well, they just didn't have any staff. They had Marian Wright [Edelman], who was a lawyer here in town, and Peter Edelman I guess, who was then on Bobby Kennedy's staff. And that was the sum of their staff really.

F: Did they follow a sort of a protocol in this in advising you when they were going to appear before the Secretary of Agriculture?

C: Yes, we set up appointments. That's right. We set up appointments, they'd come in and they'd make their demands, and then we'd at some subsequent date make a response to their demands.

Originally we thought we could get Abernathy out with a fairly good amount of face-saving by responses to demands, but as--remember the weather was terrible--as Resurrection City turned into a mudhole, and the Health Department got worried about health problems, and we had a lot of alleged--I don't know whether it actually occurred--but we had a lot of reports of stealing and rape in Resurrection City, then it

became clear to us that we had to do something to get out. And it was clear to Abernathy. I think the only issue I recall with Abernathy at that point of time was that he wanted a meeting with the President and none of us thought he ought to meet with the President.

F: Did you ever talk to the President about it?

C: Yes.

F: What did the President say?

C: He didn't want to meet with him either. He went both ways on it. He was undecided for a while but he finally decided not to.

F: Just thought no purpose would be served from that?

C: I think. I don't want to attribute the views to people, but you can check them. I think Harry McPherson favored a meeting between the President and Abernathy. I know I was opposed to it. My recollection is that Ramsey was opposed to it.

F: Did you talk with Abernathy personally during this?

C: I talked to Abernathy on the phone, but I can't remember what it was about.

F: Is he someone you can talk with?

C: Well, it was a matter of telling him something, and it was about a two-minute conversation. I talked to Walter Fauntroy a lot. He is someone you can talk with.

F: Well, he is giving us some very detailed interviews. They are multiple and continuing. He's been very cooperative.

C: He called me all hours of the night during that. Fauntroy would be worried. I provided kind of a release valve for him when he couldn't get things at Justice. Not that I overruled Justice, but at least he had somebody he could talk to.

F: If nothing else, he could complain to.

C: Yes.

F: You went through the August 1963 march and then Resurrection City. Was there an essential difference between the two and between the leadership as provided by King and by Abernathy?

C: There was a tremendous difference between the two. The August 1963 march, in my judgment, turned out to be a very broad-based march--I forget how many, hundred thousand people, a hundred and fifty thousand, two hundred thousand people. There were more whites than blacks. There was a lot of clergy and the clergy was much less radical than it is today down there. There was almost a carnival air about it. Aside from one speech--I forget who was making it, whether it was Floyd McKissick or [James] Farmer, somebody--the speeches were not sort of violently conceived or intended to promote violence. And it was over in a day. Everybody went home. As a matter of fact, the major thing about the August 1963 march was that they had to get out. They went to enormous lengths. I remember meeting with Cardinal [Patrick] O'Boyle who wanted us to provide cots for the marchers, and Vance and Bobby Kennedy were unalterably opposed to providing--

F: Who and Bobby?

C: Cy Vance, who was then secretary of the army--were unalterably opposed to letting these people stay overnight. And we got them out of town the same day. Even though they were sick from traveling so much, we got them out.

Resurrection City: 1) they stayed overnight and for an extended period of time, 2)

they were an angrier group of people, 3) we no longer had the aura of a president who could do anything, 4) the passage of a civil rights bill helped, but it didn't change everything overnight and people were beginning to realize that it would take more than just writing a law to get things changed; and next, they were after more money basically for their programs and we didn't have more money, and we didn't have any way of getting more money.

F: Did you ever seriously entertain the idea of renewing the permit or extending it? Or was it foregone that you were going to close them out when the time was up?

C: There may have been some people that had suggested renewing it.

F: But the White House never--

C: I personally never, never--

F: Before it got underway, was there ever any--

C: There were arguments over how long.

F: --White House decision on whether even to permit a permit? (Inaudible)

C: Well, we made the decision to allow the permit. Yes, we did that.

F: But I mean, was this an arguable point, or did you know from the beginning that you were going to?

C: No, it is my recollection that it was argued out in front of the President. I'm sure there were people in the government that were strongly against issuing a permit, but I can't remember who they were.

F: There wasn't though a deep division on this? People just argued sort of--?

C: These are the arguments; this is in favor of it, and this is against it.

F: Did the President waver, as far as you could tell?

C: I don't really think so. I think--well, I guess we had more than one meeting. I had more than one conversation with him on it. But all the people--not that the President necessarily followed his advisers all the time--but all the people that were responsible for this action, and particularly Ramsey and myself, were all for giving out the permit. Now our reason was that they'd come there anyway, and we'd start off with them violating the law. That was number one. Number two, with the permit we could circumscribe what they would do and we'd get their signatures on a piece of paper that said they would do this. Number three, we'd be sure we had them in one place. For example, sitting back as a guy that went through a few riots, when I looked at the Democratic National Convention in 1968, the worst thing the cops did in my judgment was drive the kids out of Grant Park. They had them all in one place. They should have surrounded the park and kept them there. At least with Resurrection City we had them there. So that the crowd is a lot easier to handle in a situation like that.

F: Did the fact that you'd just been through the April riots give you any particular pause?

C: Oh, sure. Look, we were concerned. We had troops on alert. We called up the guard, as I recall, didn't we? Then we had the D.C. National Guard working and supplementing the police. I was probably getting ten or fifteen reports a day on Resurrection City orally, and then every night we'd get a report on it. The Secret Service people were very much opposed to Resurrection City. They were scared as hell that somebody would do something to hurt the President.

F: Did the President ever express himself to you on the possibility of their parking right in

front of the White House? You know, originally they wanted to be between the Washington Monument and the White House, where they'd be in full view.

C: Yes. I don't even think I went to the President with that one. I remember that now. Somebody came to me with that issue and that was an easy one.

F: Let's talk a moment about the riots. I suppose three good examples would be Watts, Detroit, and Newark. We'll leave Washington, which is a special case, since it's your own home ground. Was there any essential difference in the way these riots developed as far as White House involvement was concerned?

C: Watts was my first experience with a civil disturbance at the White House. That was when, August or September of 1965?

F: Yes. Getting a different vantage point here from what you say.

C: The President was at the Ranch. And it was a strange experience for me because, one--

F: Could you just sort of give a narrative on it and how it all developed as far as your involvement was concerned?

C: I can't remember how Watts started. I forget the incident, and I forget how it first came to our attention. Maybe it was off a ticker. But I remember calling down to the Ranch, talking to the President about it, telling him--

F: You called him instead of his calling you?

C: That's my recollection on this one. Most times he got it before I did, but that's my recollection.

My relationship was new with the President. He didn't know me and I didn't know him. My most distinct recollection overall of Watts was that he was giving me less

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authority from the White House than I would have had if I had been McNamara's special assistant. I'll explain that in a minute. I remember that the President, he wanted me to get Nick Katzenbach and Bob McNamara--it was a Saturday morning--and get their views on what we ought to do. We had questions about--well, let's go back.

Governor [Edmund "Pat"] Brown was out of California and Lieutenant Governor [Glenn] Anderson was there. He was very slow in moving with force. And one of the problems with the state of California, or any state, in terms of using National Guard, is who picks up the bill. If the guard is federalized, the federal government pays the bill, and it's damned expensive with a big guard. And they were worried about that. The first thing that happened was that Anderson, or whoever was in charge out there, grossly misjudged the extent of the riot and the need for force to put it down, for a large presence. They began telegramming or calling the White House--and Lee White and I were the two people that worked on it--wanting federalization of the guard and regular troops.

The President wanted me to get the judgment of Katzenbach and McNamara on this, and Katzenbach and McNamara were up on Martha's Vineyard. The President was quite distressed at having both his Attorney General and Secretary of Defense up there. And I might say as a result of that incident, thereafter whenever McNamara traveled, the President made him have a JetStar right by him so he could get back fast.

Everyone was reluctant to federalize the guard and even more reluctant to put in regular troops. Now this was in part because, you go back--it wasn't just the President's feeling and he held that feeling very strongly, but it was Katzenbach, McNamara, Vance, and I that had been through every one of these things. Just by sheer accident we'd always

been in the job where we'd seen this at different levels, and we knew that once we got in there we'd have a hell of a time getting out. So the first decision that was made was that we would not send in regular troops. That was a firm decision. The second decision was that we would not--and that was a tentative decision--federalize the National Guard.

The third one was that the President--we wanted the state of California to call up the whole guard and get the whole guard down to Los Angeles. Anderson just was reluctant as hell to do that. Brown was in a plane flying back from Belgium. So the President had me--I remember distinctly because it scared the hell out of Governor [LeRoy] Collins. Governor Collins was running the Community Relations Service at that time. He was the undersecretary of commerce. He was in Florida. We sent a plane to get Collins. I remember it so distinctly because he was standing in the water. We had to find him on the beach. We got to his house, we got clothes out of his house, put them on the plane. We sent a state police car which found him on the beach, and he thought his son had been killed, because his son was in a nuclear sub[marine], and there had been a nuclear sub accident about two months before that, but it wasn't that. They took Collins in wet bathing trunks to the JetStar and he dressed on the plane. At the same time, Lee White was sent to New York, and, as I recall, he and Collins, or Collins, after being briefed by Lee White, met with Brown at Kennedy Airport in New York. The purpose of this was to get Brown to call the rest of the guard up, which Anderson wouldn't do, before it got dark in California, and that four hours flying time across the country was critical. And Brown, as I recall, did call the guard up from New York before he left New York.

The President was very . . . Well, during the day we then started to get requests; I

started to get requests from General Abrams, who ran this little army operation center. And the main request that we were getting from the National Guard of the state of California was for airplane transport into Los Angeles, for which they wanted air force planes, food, and some supplies of various kinds, water canteens, I forget what they were. That Saturday, in the afternoon, I had an enormously difficult time getting through to the President. He didn't want to talk about it; he didn't want to deal with it. It was a very strange thing. He'd be out on the Ranch or on another phone call or something.

F: Do you think he just had a feeling he could stay above it or out of it?

C: I don't know. To this day, I don't know. I'd get calls back from Valenti, so I finally told Jack that I desperately needed some kind of authority. Well, what I told Jack was, as I recall, if I didn't hear from them within an hour, I'd do what I would do if I were working for McNamara, namely authorize the air force to fly these people in and authorize us to give them supplies and make damn sure the regular troops didn't get involved in it--food and what have you. I guess the President called me back, very distressed at an aide putting something to him in those terms, and authorized the food and something like three planes. I forget; it was just some odd figure. [He] told me to clear it with McNamara before I did it. I did clear it with Bob. Bob told me there's no need to bother him anymore on whatever they needed short of the question whether we call up regular troops, bring regular troops in, that whatever I did he would assume was okay.

Abrams called me later, late in the afternoon or early evening Saturday, asked me for more planes. He said three planes weren't enough; he needed something like thirty or forty, I forget what it was. I just authorized the damned planes. After what I'd been

through with the Ranch, I just told them to go ahead and use them, to make sure that those guys didn't get involved, that all we would do would be to transport the guard.

The President read in the paper that Sunday about the airlift of troops, with twenty or thirty planes or what have you, and just was deeply distressed. I remember he called me up, woke me up, asked me that Sunday morning very early, asked me on whose authority did I do that. And I told him I just did it because it seemed to me consistent with the desire to get troops in. After he cooled off, he said he wanted to make a statement about Watts, and for me to get--I forget what the substance of it was. It came out basically as he told me it should be in that phone call, and for me to get Dick Goodwin to do a draft and get it down on the wire to him, and also to get a copy of it to Moyers who was in Austin, I guess, with [the] press corps. I had a hell of a time getting Goodwin, who was out on a sailboat, but we finally sent the Coast Guard after Dick. We got him. He wrote a statement, dictated it to my secretary. The time was so short that I then read it over the phone to Moyers, I remember. He and I had problems with one section of it. We scratched the whole section out.

F: Before the President saw it?

C: Before the President saw it. Gave it to the President. My recollection is I actually called it to the President, 'cause we were really running out of time, while Bill's people were typing it on a stencil. He approved it and put the statement out.

F: Could Goodwin turn out something very rapidly?

C: Yes. Goodwin was the best writer Johnson ever had.

F: I know he's the best writer. I didn't know whether he was also rapid.

C: He's rapid; he was very rapid. Goodwin was enraged at the changes in his statement when he saw it in the *New York Times* on Monday, called me up and gave me hell for changing it. Like all writers, he was very sensitive.

F: He had a feeling of the sacredness of his own prose?

C: Watts was then cooling off, and the next problems we had to deal with were what do we do. One was this question of paying the guard, and my recollection is we worked some kind of scheme out. We got some kind of an opinion out of the Justice Department and somehow or other helped defray the cost of the guard without federalizing them, or by federalizing them retroactively.

Secondly, what to do about Watts. Well, we set up a task force basically, of myself and people from all the domestic agencies and the Justice Department to put together some kind of a program package we could move into Watts fast. And that was very tricky business. The President was very ambivalent about that, as all of us were, in terms of you don't want to appear to reward rioters on the one hand; on the other hand there were a lot of legitimate complaints.

And we sent Collins out quietly to California because we were also worried about enormous conflicts we had between [Sam] Yorty and Brown and Anderson, all of whose hides were on the rack. Anderson was being accused of not calling troops up fast enough. Brown was being accused of getting out of the state. Yorty was just blasting everybody in sight and also being accused of--

F: You're not dealing with a team of Californians but with three different groups.

C: That's right. Also he was being accused of being the cause of the riots. Yorty, I might

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say--we talked to Yorty a couple of times, because he did things like he got on television and said that the marines were coming from a marine station, and they were not coming. We had to get that straightened out.

Eventually Collins, who was an awfully good mediator, got things at least fragilely worked out. We put together a tentative program of money and different kinds of programs we thought might help cool things off out there and sent Ramsey Clark out. I don't know whether he was then deputy attorney general or still in the Lands Division, I forget. Ramsey and maybe ten or twelve representatives from other government departments went out there working as best they could with the state and city social agencies, put together a package of things that ought to be done. They brought it back to Washington, and the question was whether we should announce it and how we should announce it. And we got back into this whole problem of how deeply does the President want to get involved, to what extent are we willing to take the risk of appearing to reward rioting, and what have you.

Ultimately, we made a kind of general statement, and I can't remember whether it was just that I--I think it was kind of a report from Ramsey that we just said we had approved, which put about a thirteen-million-dollar package out there, but more important than that, got some people out there to try and deal with basic problems. My recollection--I think it was Charlie Haar; it was somebody from HUD [Housing and Urban Development]. We got somebody from HUD that knew something about transportation to get out there and help straighten out the bus system of Los Angeles, which you may or may not recall was awful, and it cost two bucks and three hours to get

from Watts to the neighborhoods where people worked. We tried to get the state employment and city offices together to put together, in effect, one-stop centers. And we tried to encourage as much private endeavor as we could, everything from Budd Schulberg's actors studio, whatever it was, to banks and what have you.

At some point shortly thereafter, the question came up as to whether or not we should investigate Watts, or Governor Brown should investigate Watts. You had all the problems of, you know, is this a communist conspiracy, or are people trying to destroy it? What are the real problems?

F: Only Yorty knew.

C: That's right. And finally, we decided to let Brown do it and Brown was more than willing to do it.

F: Were the President and Brown quite amiable in their relations?

C: Up until sometime in 1968 when Brown wrote him a letter saying he disagreed with him on the war, my recollection is that they were quite amiable.

Brown ultimately appointed [John] McCone, asked McCone to be chairman of that commission. McCone called me and told me he didn't want to do it without the President blessing him. I said I didn't think the President would want to bless anything like that. I talked to the President about it, and the President initially didn't want to see McCone, but finally agreed to see him. McCone, in any case, just came on east and came to see me. I talked to him. Finally, the President talked to him, and on agreement that he'd never make it public that this had happened, and making it clear that we were in no way endorsing the commission, McCone, anything he might come up with, the way they

might conduct their study, or what have you, we said we thought it was a good idea. And that's how the McCone Commission got started.

There was one more trip out to Watts that Ramsey took with his little team a couple of months later, as I recall, but at that point in time, our attitude, we were really--

(Interruption)

The President wanted to stay as far away from the nuts and bolts of Watts as possible, and we adopted essentially a hands-off policy and had all announcements and things handled by Ramsey out of the Justice Department. In fact, the President didn't even want Ramsey to be known as his representative anymore, which was something we couldn't do. I might say that was not unusual for LBJ. He would start off just gung ho on something and then as time went on cool off on it.

F: Do you think he tired of a problem in a sense or soured on it?

C: Oh, I think it was a little of both. I think sometimes he was annoyed because the problems just didn't seem to go away. Sometimes he was annoyed--

F: He loved the attack but not the mopping up.

C: Yes. But also sometimes he didn't like the turns they took or the recommendations that people came up with.

F: That's something I wanted to ask you. You've got, starting in the late fifties with that first Civil Rights Act in three quarters of a century, Johnson involved in and sometimes a principal instigator of the most massive attack on civil rights in our history. And, of course, you're dealing with a period in which civil rights disturbances are just breaking out all over the place. Did he feel like a rejected lover in this sort of thing? Did he ever

really get a--reminds me of the old labor business of Franklin Roosevelt where he pushed labor and John L. Lewis became intractable, you know, and in a pet he said that famous, "A plague on both your houses," talking about business and labor and he was ready to wash his hands of the whole thing. I wondered if the President ever reached that stage or did he think it was something you keep working with?

C: The President used to say that he was deeply concerned that, as he used to put it, "the Negroes would start pissing in the aisles of the Senate." And what he meant was that during the Civil War, in the Reconstruction era when Negroes in large numbers had come to Washington, he said they urinated on the Senate rugs and they screwed themselves for another hundred years. The President used to be concerned that they'd take actions out of a misguided exuberance, protest or what have you, that would in effect destroy the civil rights legislation and the social programs he was getting placed on the books. I think that was the key to the way he began to feel about it.

He was so complicated. Sure, he used to get annoyed. He used to think they should be more grateful for what he had done for them. He never took the view--you know I used in a speech once I think a quote out of [Alexis] de Tocqueville, in which de Tocqueville points out that a reformer never survives his reforms, because what was once inevitable to the oppressed becomes intolerable as they see they're going to get out of it. He would never buy anything like that. He couldn't sit back objectively and do that. I think he must have known that what we were doing was stirring it up.

All our legislation stirred it up--the Community Action Programs, VISTA [Volunteers in Service to America]. He'd say, "Get the VISTA volunteers out of politics.

I don't want them involved in political activity when they go into West Virginia. Bob Byrd is furious," and what have you. And the problem is you can't take an intelligent college student or recent college graduate, send him down to West Virginia into some awful place in Appalachia and have him not--he wouldn't just teach kids how to read, or teach men or women how to sew or keep their house clean. He also recognized that in our system of government the most important thing they can do is vote and get involved in political activity, get that system changed, get the mayor changed, get the city council changed, get the county commissioners changed.

F: Get this precinct organized.

C: That's right. It was the same thing the President would do. He used to think the Voting Rights Act was the most important thing he'd done, and, for God's sakes, get them registered. We used to get weekly reports on the number of blacks being registered in the South because he wanted to make damned sure they got them registered. And that's the way to change the system within the system.

He was constantly concerned in 1968 that---I think he was in his heart concerned maybe that we had stirred things up too much, that CAP, Community Action Programs, the civil rights legislation, had pushed people to a point where they wanted everything right away and couldn't get everything right away. And he was very afraid--he used to say, "The pendulum swings very fast in this country. It could swing all the way to the right and a lot of what we'd done [could] be lost."

F: Go back to our Watts theme. Did you more or less have the same experience in Detroit? You've got a different problem in that you don't have a governor of your own party. Does

that make a problem? On the other hand, [he's] a fairly liberal governor.

C: Yes. Detroit was--

F: You've got your feet wet now.

C: Detroit was really a difficult problem. I'll give you our--what I know about it from the White House--viewpoint. But the critical elements of Detroit are known basically to Ramsey Clark, who held the direct conversations with [George] Romney that Sunday evening. I got into Detroit on Monday morning. I was home Sunday night and I had gone to bed early. I didn't know that all hell was breaking loose in Detroit, or about to break loose.

F: Riots are a little bit like murder, aren't they? They tend to build up on weekends.

C: Yes, it's funny.

F: Too much time at home.

C: Well, I got in on Monday morning. My recollection is we had a major price fight going on at the same time that we had Detroit. I don't know whether the price fight had become public or not, but I had a meeting starting at something like 8:00 a.m. in my office that Monday and I had--Ramsey wasn't there--but I had somebody from Justice, and I had Bob McNamara and I had the people that would ordinarily also be the people in [on] a riot, some of them.

The President called me and wanted me to come down to the Cabinet Room and said we were having a hell of a lot of difficulty with Romney making the request for federal troops. That people seemed to think, but nobody really knew, whether troops would be needed, and he wanted Romney to come in with a request. Part of the statutory

requirement for the request was that you are unable to handle the situation. I always thought this is where Romney got hung up. There's nothing wrong in saying that, but I think he didn't want to say it.

F: It hits the pride of some people.

C: I told the President that I was at that point in time holding a critical meeting on this price problem, and did he want me to break that meeting up and come down there right away, or should I send Larry Levinson down? He said to finish that meeting as fast as I could--typical Johnsonian fashion, get that done, drive that price down, whatever it was we were trying to do--and then get down there, but get Levinson down there right away. So Larry went down to the Cabinet Room. I came in after the decision had been made to send Vance on to Detroit, and after Romney had come in with a telegram that didn't really cut it. Vance went out there, I think with Warren Christopher, who was then deputy attorney general, and sometime that evening--meanwhile we moved troops close to Detroit. We didn't move them in; we moved them to federal installations around Detroit.

Well, after Vance was there a short time, I believe he called me or he called the President--we both talked to him so many times that afternoon and evening--and it was clear that we were going to have to have troops. At least he thought that's what we ought to plan on. So we started writing a statement. By this time, I used to keep on my desk a form executive order that could be used for dispatching troops at any time and the proclamation.

Also, we couldn't get Romney and [Jerome] Cavanagh together. They just were afraid. Romney was very wishy-washy. He'd tell Vance one thing and go out and tell the

press another thing. Finally we decided we'd have to go on the basis of a recommendation from Vance. We had no other choice. And Vance called in about, I don't know, a quarter of ten, just before we went on television with the recommendation. We were drafting a statement. The Detroit statement was actually drafted by [Abe] Fortas and McNamara, the basis of the one the President used. They sat in that little green office in the White House. And one of my regrets and one of Harry McPherson's regrets is, we were called in, the President wanted my judgment on the statement and he wanted Harry to kind of polish it up a little bit--was that we didn't fight hard enough, if at all, over all the references to Romney in the statement which made the Detroit thing seem so political. As you recall, we were severely criticized.

F: Did you sense it at the time, that this was going to skewer Romney a little unnecessarily?

C: Yes. Both of us sensed it independently. We weren't worried about Romney; we were worried about the President and how it sounded. Both of us sensed it. Neither of us made an issue of it. Subsequently, we both, when we were talking with each other, remarked how we felt at the time and regretted that we hadn't done something about it.

The President went on the air. The troops went in. I guess and then we all went over and had a swim or something and went over and had dinner. Pretty much everybody left. McNamara left. Fortas left, and what have you. I hung on with the President through the wee hours of the morning.

Detroit lasted for two or three days as I recall. Vance was out there quite a while, and I remember chronic problems with Romney and chronic problems with Cavanagh. And also, somehow or other we had a problem with the Vice President, because

Cavanagh at one point called the Vice President, and the Vice President made a statement similar to the one he made to Governor [Richard] Hughes apparently, indicating that we'd do whatever we could to help, or what have you. It was off of that statement that the President ordered all calls made to the Attorney General. [He] also ordered the Vice President to stay out of civil disturbances.

F: Have any idea how Humphrey took that?

C: He was the most resilient man I ever met. I'm sure he didn't like it, but I'm sure he took it well, as well as you could expect.

Out of Detroit we learned that we had to have some kind of formal procedure set up for governors. And as a result of it we sent out, at least on one, I think on two, occasions formal letters saying, "Here's the letter you write in; here's the telegram you send in. Send this in and we'll act on it." Anybody that asks for troops will get troops but they've got to meet the statutory qualifications.

I'm sure in the archives you'll find a very carefully reconstructed chronology of Detroit, because I remember the President told me to put it together minute by minute and I wrote one and I sent it over to Ramsey. And I was getting the times clear with Vance and Christopher, so that everything was laid out pretty carefully. That sequence of events is probably as well documented as the Gulf of Tonkin.

F: What about Newark?

C: Newark--it's just amazing. These things were all-consuming at the time.

F: It was a busy five years, my friend.

C: Yes. Newark--did we send anyone to Newark? I can't remember--

F: I don't remember that you did.

C: --whether we had a representative in Newark or not. I think Newark was handled by Hughes with the guard without any help from us. We may have, at some point along the way, in a manner similar to what we did at Watts, retroactively federalized the guard so that we could pick up the bill, because it's very expensive. Newark was really a matter, as I recall, of just watching.

I do remember after Newark had cooled off--my family had been on the Jersey shore for some time, and I hadn't been able to get up there, and I went up there, landed in Newark, got to the Jersey shore, and there was a call--I had tried to get the Vice President and I was unable to get him. The ticker had carried an item that said the Vice President offered Governor Hughes all the help that he needed. The President went through the roof. [He] told me to get him. I couldn't get him--

F: Hughes or Humphrey?

C: Humphrey. I got Hughes, and I told Hughes that if he wanted anything he could either call Ramsey Clark or call me, or the President. Those were his channels for any help. I might say Hughes was very good. I remember Hughes saying to me, he knew we had enough troubles, he knew the President had enough troubles, and to the extent he could he wanted to handle this himself. And as I recall Newark was after Detroit and he also wanted a good contrast with Romney.

(Interruption)

I arrived at the house, my mother's house, and the Vice President called just as I walked in the door. I told him that the President was distressed about the ticker and didn't

want him making any offers. He said he didn't make any offers. The Governor called him. What's he going to say to the Governor, that he doesn't want to do anything? And I said, "Well, tell the Governor to call me or call the President." That was about it.

We did set up another task force type operation for Newark. We did it in Detroit, too. By that time we were getting pretty good at sending people in to provide some help or programs.

And we had enormous problems in Newark, even though [Hugh] Addonizio and Hughes were both Democrats. Addonizio is the mayor of Newark. We had enormous problems between the two of them. They didn't want--it even got into questions of who was going to go where in terms of touring the city and the damage and stuff like that, and what was going to be done afterwards. And I remember getting some pretty tough calls from both of them about it, you know, "If you do put together a package of A, how's it going to be announced? Who's going to announce it?" and what have you. My recollection is essentially we were neutral on the side of Hughes basically.

F: On the whole, was the President fairly generous in letting local people make the announcements rather than their coming out of the White House?

C: It varied. He recognized the importance of doing that.

F: He was sensitive, then, to their problems.

C: Yes. He wasn't beyond leaking stuff--

(Interruption)

--to congressmen or local people so that they could announce it in advance. The big things, though, for the most part, he preferred to handle from the White House.

F: Just that much presidential leverage that it brings.

C: Yes. And also, we did like to have, particularly as problems started to pile up, some good news occasionally.

F: I wanted to intrude one question here and that is, before I forget it, you were in 1964 still with Mr. McNamara.

C: That's right.

F: Did he ever seriously, so far as you know, entertain any idea of being a vice presidential running mate?

C: No. No. I know that the President did. Well, I shouldn't say that. I know that the President thought about it. How seriously he thought about it, I just don't know. McNamara himself never, as far as I can determine.

F: It was not a part of the Defense Department gossip?

C: Oh, it was part of the gossip, but I think the President probably talked to Bob about it. I think Bob indicated he didn't want any part of it. I also think that there was some checking around done with Democratic politicians and labor people, by the White House I assume, and they were not for McNamara.

F: Do you think the fact that McNamara probably discouraged such a bid gave the President the green light to go ahead with his "no cabinet member [shall be a candidate" statement]?

C: No.

F: Or do you think he would have probably done that anyhow?

C: I think the President was looking for a way to--I mean, I don't know what he was doing,

but I assume he was looking for a way to eliminate Bobby Kennedy and that was as good as any.

F: Did you get much static from Bobby over your handling of these civil rights problems? He is now a senator, no longer your attorney general. You didn't overlap the attorney generalship at all, did you, of Robert Kennedy? That is, after you--

C: No, he had gone; he was in the Senate. No, I don't think we did. I think he was pretty good on that.

F: Were you involved in the formation of the Kerner Commission [National Advisors Commission on Civil Disorders]?

C: Yes.

F: How did you happen to pick [Otto] Kerner and how did you select the remainder of the commission? Have you got that [book]?

C: No, I don't have that book here. I don't know who was on it. I forget. The Kerner Commission followed upon--was it upon the Detroit riots?

F: Yes.

C: I realize this will be totally contradicted. My best recollection of that--I mean how the commission got started--my best recollection of that commission is that the President wanted a commission to look into this problem, because I was opposed to a commission. I'd never seen a public commission work out unless we had a pretty good idea about where it was going to go before we got started, like the postal corporation commission [Commission on Postal Organization], number one. Number two, every commission of that type that I'd seen established was started with great gusto and enthusiasm by the

President and he always soured on it. But in any case, the decision was made. And I was worried about the problem that later some of the snottier people in the country said, "The President's answer to the Detroit riots is a prayer and a commission. Cities burn and the President says a prayer and sets up a commission."

Kerner was selected because he was a governor who had been a National Guard general and therefore knew the guard problem. Number two, he had handled a disturbance in Chicago about a year earlier with the guard quite well. Number three, he was a Democrat, loyal to the President, who wanted to be a judge, and therefore we felt we had enough leverage on him--I'm being really candid now--to control him. [John] Lindsay was put on because we needed a Republican and he was a mayor and we ran into a lot of trouble with Lindsay on the commission.

F: Well, his thinking would not be Neanderthal neither.

C: No, that's right. The others I really forget. Katherine Peden, the choice was down to two women, and she was one. And I remember I thought that whole commission was a loss for me because I--the President asked me which of the women I wanted, and I forget who the other one was, but I said the other one, and he said, "Well, we'll go with Katherine Peden."

(Interruption)

F: When he named a commission like this, and he was naming quite a number of them--

C: Now if you had the others, I could tell you why they got on.

F: But in general, does he have some kind of formula he goes down? Does he call in a group of people who are interested and say, "Whom do you suggest for this?"

C: This was done fast. The Kerner Commission was set up in a matter of two or three hours.

F: What does he do, come bubbling in wanting a commission and say, "Get me a bunch of names"?

C: Finally he agreed to set up the commission and then we needed names. The President actually picked damned near everybody on that commission, and if we had a list--

F: Well, we can get a list sometime and come back.

C: Next time you come over or something I'll tell you why each person was picked.

F: I think that would be worthwhile.

C: I went through that with him that afternoon. I sat there when he called everybody and got them all. Then the question became getting an executive director, and I remember Dave Ginsburg had gone on the first vacation he was going on in ten or fifteen years, and I caught him in Seattle, Washington, in a hotel room somewhere, or Portland, Oregon, I forget which. He finally agreed to come. It took some doing. Didn't get him until early on a Sunday morning. I talked to him. Fortas talked to him. He wanted to talk to Fortas, so I called Abe and told him we had to get him, and he finally agreed to come back. And he got back there in time for Monday and agreed to be the staff director.

F: In something like that is there ever any haggling over salary?

C: No. Well, Ginsburg took no money for that, and the reason, obviously, we couldn't pay him anything like what he was making in private practice. And number two, he wanted to be free of all the conflict, you know, all the problems you have.

F: He just wanted to do the job.

C: He just wanted to do the job. I mean the private conflict problems, too.

F: Did Kerner move in with some energy or was he a titular head?

C: Kerner was a weak chairman. The first stuff they put out on the guard we wrote. We wanted it because we wanted to change the guard and we wanted to show action from the commission because we were getting criticism that it was just a commission, so we wrote the recommendations we knew were good for the guard. Vance and I basically wrote them, as I recall. Vance came in, testified before the commission. Four or five hours later the commission made recommendations on the guard, we announced them, you know, quick action. Kerner turned out to be, as I said, a weak chairman. Lindsay began to dominate the commission. The President felt he used it as his own stepping stone and was using it possibly to criticize the President.

The substantive recommendations of the commission--and on this you'll also get a lot of controversy--really came out of task force reports that we had gotten from academics over the prior years. But it was one of the most difficult commissions in terms of the President. You remember, he never met with them to receive the report. The report leaked out. The whole thing was a mess.

F: Was this, as charged in the papers, because he was dissatisfied with what the commission was reporting?

C: I think--you really have to ask him why. I said publicly once that I thought the basic problem the President had with the Kerner Commission Report was this two separate societies, black and white, and that he felt the report would be divisive for this country, and in those terms was a very dangerous document. Now I said that publicly once, and he called me up on the phone when he read it in the paper and said I shouldn't go around

saying what he thought. I said it on the basis of comments he had made to me.

He also was worried about this problem of making recommendations for enormous programs that just couldn't ever be made into law, and the problem of rising expectations and low delivery. We got all the money numbers out of that report so that we avoided that problem.

And he himself waxed hot and cold on it. I have heard the President talk to Negro leaders and others and say what a great report it was. On the other hand, I've heard him tear it to shreds.

F: Does he on something like that talk to the chairman of the commission or to the executive director or whoever's responsible for the eventual report and try to give any guidance or get his ideas incorporated?

C: Early in the game he talked to Kerner and Ginsburg and me. From that point on, all conversation was with me. We may have met once more with them; I'm not sure. You see what happens with something like that is in the fury of the moment when you set it up, then you write a little charter for it, which really usually comes out in the form of a presidential charge. We called all the commission members in on the Monday. The President gave them a charge which I'm sure is in the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*. And it's a charge to look at the face of the country, just look at everything and come up with recommendations on everything. Well, they went about doing what he told them to do.

F: Of course, one basic problem is that he doesn't give the charge on Monday morning and get the document back on Tuesday.

C: That's right.

F: The thing stretches out over months and years.

C: Also, after a while, we had difficulty in financing that commission. I remember Charlie Schultze and I had to call in cabinet officers and order them to give it money. It was overstaffed. It *was* overstaffed. But I always felt personally that Ginsburg was essentially loyal to the President and tried to do the best he could in a very difficult situation with a very difficult-to-handle commission. That commission impacted in a lot of ways.

Fred Harris was on that. That changed Fred Harris in my judgment. It was that experience that made Fred Harris so much more aware of urban problems than he'd ever been before and moved him significantly to the left, in my judgment, in his domestic programs.

F: This is getting ahead of the subject, but as long as you bring it up, did the President stay on an amicable footing with Fred Harris?

C: Harris was never an intimate of the President. The President liked him and actually wanted to give him a little publicity and thought he'd be good and loyal to him, what have you, and that's why he put him on the commission. He wanted to give him some coverage. In 1968 I think things cooled considerably. I remember Harris was calling trying to get appointments with the President and the President didn't want to see him. That was a combination of so many complicated things. I think it was in part the Kerner Commission Report. I think it was in part the fact that the President thought Harris was one of the people urging Humphrey to split with him on the war. In part it was as simple

as, you know, there was a new team coming in to run the Democratic Party, and Harris was one of the symbols of that team. But they cooled. They cooled. How permanent and deep that was is very hard to tell because the President cooled on a lot of people and was just high as hell on them later on. There were very few things that I'd call virtual permanent rifts, like Moyers and the President, or Goodwin and the President, where he really, really cooled.

F: Did the rift between Goodwin and the President come after Goodwin left or before? I suppose that was as deep as any.

C: I have to say that in terms of its becoming deep and permanent, it was after, because remember, Goodwin came back in January of 1966 and helped write that State of the Union Message. That was the last thing Goodwin ever did though.

F: Did the President ask him back on that occasion?

C: Yes. We recommended it. I remember Moyers and I urged him to get him back. But I was going through my own files, and I noticed that as late as March of 1966 Goodwin called me and said that he felt that we weren't getting the Vietnam situation across clearly enough and it was creating enormous confusion, et cetera, et cetera, in the country, and he thought the President ought to go on television and lay the policy out. So it came after that. I think it came as Goodwin got closer and closer to the Kennedys. I suppose the clincher--I don't know what the clincher was. The clincher was not just Vietnam; it was the [William] Manchester book when Goodwin represented the Kennedys.

F: What about Moyers, just too much ambition?

C: Yes, I think the President saw it that way. There was some cooling going on in the last

month or so, couple of months, that Bill was at the White House. He stayed through the end of 1966, so he worked on drafting the 1967 State of the Union Message. That was kind of the last thing he did. I think that was really deep. I think the relationship was so close; it was like a father-son relationship. I think Moyers was one of the very few people that the President gave a significant amount of personal trust to, outside of Mrs. Johnson. I think he felt betrayed, because I think he began to feel that Moyers was using the press to promote himself and not the President. I think mostly it was like a father whose son had gone off. That, in my judgment, was very, very deep. Deep on both sides and a lot of hurt on both sides.

F: From your viewpoint, was Moyers using the press to promote Moyers or was this the President's innate suspicion of publicity? As you well know, you and I could issue perfectly innocent statements to the press and the President would have hit the overhead.

C: Sure, sure. I think it was some of each. I don't think there's any question but that Moyers did an effective job for himself with the press. Let me give you an example. Also, it'll show some bias I may have. But I would read stories that said Moyers was working like hell on the legislative program. This was in late 1965. Well, Bill did nothing on the legislative program in late 1965, nothing. I did everything. I don't say that to build myself up, but I went in there and I got the most minimal kind of guidance from him the first couple of days, and that was it. I'd occasionally ask him a question about something. But I'd read stories saying he's working hard on this program or that program, or this message or that. He was doing everything. Well, he wasn't doing everything at the White House. So yes, Bill did use the press to build himself up. He may have been too young

or immature for that kind of a job at that time. He wasn't the right guy. I wouldn't be the right guy to be a president's press secretary; I'd get too much involved in the substance of the problem. George Christian was perfect, just perfect.

F: George never got involved with policy at all either.

C: No. He may have on the foreign side, I don't know. I'm sure he had a lot of private conversations with the President. He wasn't interested in showing that, by God, he really knew the housing program, and he put that housing program together, and he did this and that.

The other thing that you have to take into consideration when you think of Moyers and the President is Bill was getting desperate in terms of his home situation, which wasn't unusual. There wasn't a guy on the White House staff who didn't have a hell of a problem with his wife, including me and everybody I knew on that staff. Everybody. And he made some decisions virtually to--by God, he was going to leave there at seven o'clock at night and that was it, and he was going home to his wife because he didn't want to lose her. And I don't blame him. And I think that also entered into his decision. I think I've told you before, I would have left after the legislative messages got to Congress this year if Johnson had run and had been re-elected, because it was just too much.

F: Just a question of how long--

C: Yes.

F: I think we'll quit.

C: Okay.

End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview IV

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Addendum to the Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interviews of

Joseph A. Califano

Interviewed by: Paige Mulhollan, Joe B. Frantz and Michael L. Gillette

I, Joseph A. Califano, hereby remove the restrictions on the use of the transcripts and recordings that states, "During my lifetime I retain all copyright in the material given to the United States by the terms of this instrument. Thereafter the copyright in both the transcripts and tape recordings shall pass to the United States Government. During my lifetime researchers may publish 'fair use' quotations from the transcripts and tape recordings without my express consent in each case." of the sixty-three personal interviews conducted with me by Paige Mulhollan, Joe B. Frantz, and Michael L. Gillette, currently at the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library. (see attachment for interview details)

Joseph A. Califano Jr. — Donor

5-28-19 — Dated

Susan K. Donius

Director for Presidential Libraries

July 17, 2019 — Dated