INTERVIEW I

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INTERVIEWEE: OSCAR L. CHAPMAN

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

PLACE: Mr. Chapman's office in the Penn Building, Washington, D.C.

Tape 1 of 1

F: You started out in Denver, didn't you?

C: Yes, I started my public service in Colorado as an assistant to Judge Ben B. Lindsey, the juvenile court judge. He became the most famous juvenile judge in the world, and he was always in a controversial position.

F: My early memories--

C: You must have read his Companionate Marriage.

F: Yes, and the local preachers, you know, would inveigh against him.

C: They really did go after him, the ministers of all faiths, all churches went after him. You see, what happened, that book came out on the newsstand on Saturday. All the churches were holding services the next day on Sunday. So they all took their sermon that day [from that subject]. They were like newspaper reporters, all these ministers, trying to beat the other minister to it, making the attack on him first.

F: And they had to take it right off the top, too.

C: They had to take it right off the top and they took it. Where they were wrong--and the record shows they were wrong now, because many states have passed laws completely covering the principle he was

advocating in this. To show you a perfect example of it, they made it a secular case, and made it appear that he was encouraging loose sex life--like a weekend trip with a girl somewhere. Well, Judge Lindsey was as far from that as any man could possibly be.

When he went to California--you see, he was disbarred in Colorado--I had the pleasure of helping work on his appeal. And we got it reversed unanimously. It was too late for him to run again in Colorado, but he could qualify under the laws of the state of California by just two days! He went out there and ran for the superior court judge. Then you are assigned by the chief superior court judge to the division that handles different things: one would be criminal, another would be family problems and children's problems. Lindsey was assigned to the juvenile court section, and this was what he wanted.

But when he ran for election, his opponent proved his case completely. There was a Methodist preacher up there-- I can't think of the name--who had a radio program every Sunday night with this evangelist--

F: Aimee Semple McPherson?

C: Aimee Semple McPherson. She was carrying a program every Sunday night and I think one other time during the week, but anyway she had one, I know, on Sunday night. The minister either followed her or preceeded her in this attack on Lindsey on the air at this so-called church meeting. But it was the most political abuse of the freedom of the

air I've ever known.

But Lindsey won by the biggest majority any man had ever received in California who had ever run for office for anything. It was almost unanimous. It was fantastic.

F: They just advertised him, didn't they?

C: Oh, they advertised him so well, everybody wanted to know what this was all about. And as they went into it, this causing them all to study it very sincerely, and that was just what we wanted: to get the people to examine this thing. As they did, they began to believe that this man Lindsey's right. And this is the point we emphasized out there in that campaign. I went out in that campaign, took a leave from my office here, without pay, as assistant secretary.

F: You're always doing it without pay.

C: Yes, always. I took a leave of absence without pay and went out there to help him during his campaign. Roosevelt had arranged that for me, he and Secretary Ickes. I went out there to help him.

When I got there, we got information regarding his opponent who had come from Des Moines, Iowa to Los Angeles. She was a divorcee, but no one knew it. She carried her maiden name, always used her maiden name, had for fifteen years or more, so nobody ever raised it or thought anything about it. She was a perfect example to prove our case and that was this one point, that Lindsey in that book said that in effect where there were children involved the wife and the husband ought to be free to go in jointly and sit

down and talk with a judge about their case, and see if they couldn't settle it or see if they couldn't postpone it or do something to encourage them to get together, to give them time to get together again. She of course had harped on that pretty hard in her attack on Lindsey--that he was encouraging Saturday night sex parties by doing this.

Well, when I walked into Lindsey's office that day, there sat two men. One of them was about forty-five years old. He and his whole family, or his four or five brothers and a couple of sisters and his mother, had all moved from Denver to Los Angeles. In the meantime he had gone into the contracting business, the oldest boy had. He had gotten along in years by this time, and he'd made some money; he'd made a good deal of money. In the meantime his age was going on. We had gotten him and two other boys when he was around eighteen, for taking an automobile and driving it up to Cheyenne. When you drive a car up to Cheyenne, it becomes a federal violation because it crosses a state line. So I went up to see the federal judge and told him what I would like to do with those three boys. [I said] I would like to take them back to Denver and put them on probation to me until Judge Lindsey got back from the tour he was on. [I said] that's what I would like to do with them. He just visited with me about them, and he said, "Well, you at least are giving them another chance and you're putting them on probation to you." He asked me how it was done and how we did it and all and I explained it to him. He said, "I think I'm going to turn them over to you then." And he

turned those three boys, or four of them, over to me. I took them back to Denver. And one of them was this eighteen year old boy. Then later he had gone to Des Moines and made a lot of money in contracting work. The war had come along and interfered with everybody's life pretty much, but he made a lot of money. He looked Lindsey's address up in the press where he saw an ad for him and found his office, and came up to his office. He talked with me before he saw Judge Lindsey. The Judge was busy at the moment, so I took him in another room and had a good visit with him. I found out all about him, and found out who he was and where he was.

To cut his story short back to the Lindsey theory of Companionate Marriage, he said, "Look, you folks haven't attacked this woman yet. You haven't told the truth about her. If you will tell the public what she's done, she's proven his book to be a perfect example of the thing that he was talking about."

She had been divorced in Des Moines with no children, and she handled it exactly like Lindsey had recommended doing, almost using the same language in the book. She got her divorce by going in with her husband, and they sat down and talked to the judge, which incidentally was a violation of the law in most states. You were in collusion if you did that in most states. Now most of them have changed that. Most of them have switched this thing. In that state it was against the law.

So Lindsey just had a picnic. He advertised his radio program

for such and such a night, and he was going to explain to the people of Los Angeles how she had proven his case, the justification for his book. Then he told her life story. He told it in the third party's name and didn't use her name until he got to the end of his speech. He said, "Now do you know who this young girl was?" He had given the life story of this young girl. He told all about her. The good parts, he gave the good parts only, and gave her credit for being courageous enough to go ahead and revamp her life and relive it according to the circumstances. He said, "Do you know who this young girl was? That happened to be Miss Reedy [?], my opponent who is running for the juvenile judge." He said, "Now you read page so-and-so." He took a page in the book and he read that and he read her petition that was filed by her before the court out there and the judge's order in answering it. It was the most perfect thing. You couldn't find it once in a lifetime, a case like that, that fits your case to prove your writing and your theory.

F: You couldn't have set it up better if you'd tried.

C: Had we tried it, we couldn't have done it. It was one of those things. This fellow, as I've said, had made some money, and he said, "I want to help this man. This radio station is going to cost him money, because they're going to stick him for everything they can." So he hauls out a roll of bills that was enough to choke a horse to give me, and I wouldn't take them. I finally said, "No, I'm still a federal employee. Technically, I'm still on the payroll of the Department of Interior, although I don't draw any pay. I'm on a

leave without pay, but I still won't accept any contributions to anybody's campaign. I don't think the two go together and I just don't do it."

He [Judge Lindsey] read the copy from his book, a page or two. Then he read the judge's statement and her petition, and he put them together in such a fine way. It was just a magnificent job he did on that. Well, from then on out, she was laughed out of town almost because she couldn't answer.

F: No, there's no rebuttal to that.

C: There was no rebuttal to that. She had never told the people of Los Angeles that she had been a married woman, which was perfectly honest and all right to have told them. What she had done was a perfect case in point of Lindsey's theory, that that's what they ought to do to go and sit down with the judge and talk with him, and not be in violation of collusion or some other law. She had justification in talking to the judge, and so did her husband. They went in together, had this visit with the judge, and then they agreed on this order. It was the most perfect case I ever saw.

That, of course, put Lindsey over the top insofar as that was concerned. Then the court in the state of Colorado reinstated him.

F: Has an adequate biography of Lindsey and those times been done? I'm not familiar with it.

C: No, there hasn't been an adequate one, but there is one that's out now. I'm trying to think where I can get it for you.

F: I was wondering if it ought to be done.

C: It ought to be done, it ought to be done.

F: This man is fifty years ahead of his period .

C: Absolutely. He was fifty years ahead of his time.

F: I remember, as a kid, they used him for every charge. You know, if you just wanted to bring sin in the sermon, you'd mention his name and take off from there.

C: That's right. Well, you know, he was his own worst enemy because he would attack anybody, preacher, bishop, rabbi or anyone else that tried to attack him politically and then expect to hide beyond a cloak and not be attacked. He'd take their shirt off; he'd go after them. He had a lot of courage at a lot of times that would have been better and more expeditious for him had he not raised the question at that particular time. The timing was not good because it was just before an election, but of course he couldn't control the timing exactly himself, entirely. Circumstances more or less controlled that.

That was my public career in Denver. I worked there while I was going to the University of Denver. I also went to the night law school, Westminster Law School, which is merged with the Denver University Law School. It's all merged into one school.

F: You came up here in 1933 then as assistant secretary of interior.

C: That's right. I was sworn in on May 4, 1933, as assistant secretary.

F: You held that job longer than anyone else in history.

C: A rather peculiar fact happened. It won't happen again because the law has been changed. The Constitution now makes it impossible for a man to run for president more than twice. He can only serve two terms.

Well, Roosevelt served three terms and a few months on his fourth term. He was elected four times. Now his fourth term, I think my memory's correct on dates, I think he died on the twelfth of April of 1945. Remember January 20 was when he was sworn in then; it had been switched from March 4 back to January 20. That was to avoid the lame duck session we always had in between there. A lot of politics was carried on during that time.

F: Well, we nearly wrecked the country there, you know, in 1932, before Hoover could get out and Roosevelt could get in, with that lame duck group on dead center.

C: That's right. Almost wrecked the country, that system. Due to the system, that gave them a chance to practically wreck the country.

I stayed as assistant secretary until after Ickes and President Truman had some difference of opinion, and Ickes resigned. I was not appointed to succeed, but I was appointed as under secretary at that moment. They appointed Mr. Krug to be secretary, and I was made under secretary. There was a vacancy in my place.

Ickes first started out using his column he tried to develop attacking President Truman on practically everything. But it didn't get off, it didn't take. His attacks on Truman fell a little flat. It didn't take with the American people believing that Truman had done anything at any place dishonest or wrong. They might have differed with his judgment about something, but nobody ever thought of him as being a dishonest man. They just didn't, on Truman. That's all there was to it and you couldn't beat that. So he [Ickes]

ran that column for about a year and then he began to quit. The papers began to quit him is what happened. Then he began doing some writing, special articles and things.

Now rather interesting, Abe Fortas was under secretary under Ickes for a while, for a couple of years, I think, under him.

F: And, of course, so was Alvin Wirtz.

C: Alvin Wirtz was first.

F: He was very intimately associated with Johnson.

C: They were very close. Alvin Wirtz was a very good man; he was a very good man. I was very much impressed with him, both his ability and his integrity. I had complete confidence in him, with his integrity and his ability. He was a very, very good man.

F: Where did Wirtz come to the attention of--was it Roosevelt? I know officially it was a Roosevelt appointment, but was it an Ickes suggestion or a Roosevelt suggestion?

C: No, it was through Lyndon, then--

F: Congressman.

C: Congressman, I believe, first. I think he brought him to Ickes' attention and got them acquainted, visited with them quite a bit. Then just by sheer association for a short time in there he had Secretary Wirtz give him some advice not as under secretary but as a friend. He would ask him for an opinion on a dam or a reclamation project somewhere that was being built and whether it was for the benefit of the people or just the power company. And Wirtz was right

down his field when you got him on that.

F: I would presume that's where young Congressman Johnson got together with Ickes was on public power.

C: It was. That's where he got together the first thing. He supported us--I say us, I worked in that.

F: You're part of the team.

C: Well, I supported so much of that program and did so much of the work on it in the department.

However, Secretary Fortas became under secretary. He succeeded Wirtz--I believe that's the way it worked--as under secretary. He worked hard, conscientiously. Abe [Fortas], Alvin Wirtz, Tommy Corcoran were three of the real advisors to Harold Ickes, and they were doing a good job of advising him. I didn't agree with their political advice to Ickes as to timing. I didn't agree with their timing on these political things they were doing.

F: In what way?

C: Well, first, he didn't think Roosevelt was going to run that third time. He thought he might make a good choice himself. These boys really had been working for Bill Douglas, Justice Douglas. Then later when Douglas wouldn't consider it at all, then these fellows all pretty much turned to Ickes to try to help him in the convention, but it didn't jell. It didn't get the support that you have to have in order to make a convention successful for yourself. That is where I differed with them on their advice on what he should do or not do there at the convention. I had been a delegate in two or three conventions.

F: You were a delegate at the one that first nominated Roosevelt.

C: I was. I was a delegate at that convention, and I picked the man from my state to second the nomination. Instead of taking the honors for myself in doing it, I needed that support to be brought behind Roosevelt more solid. I wanted to solidify it. I knew where I stood in my crowd, so I then got together and got one of my friends in Colorado who was more or less leaning the other way to second the nomination. He was so pleased with that honor, he was one of the best workers Roosevelt ever had!

F: It made a convert out of him.

C: Oh, it made a convert out of him. He was speaking for Roosevelt before he knew it. It was just fantastic.

F: How did Lyndon Johnson first come into your sort of purview? You were already here.

C: I was here, and when Lyndon came here he got into the focus of Harold Ickes pretty quickly after he got here, through both Abe Fortas and Tom Corcoran. Lyndon was fresh as a congressman. He had a big district and he wanted to fill it with some credit, and he did. He did that. He worked awfully hard. And a cabinet officer can be extremely helpful to a congressman if he wants to go out of his way a little to help him, and he can approve or disapprove a big dam in his district if he wanted to, if they had one they wanted.

F: Rural electrification.

C: That's right. Now they wanted to promote and push rural electrification

in Lyndon's district. Lyndon had a dam he wanted built for the benefit of this rural co-op crowd, and he talked to Ickes and he sold it to Ickes in a strong way. Ickes helped push it through Congress. When it was finally passed, [Ickes] gave him credit for it, and in a very nice way.

But at that point the President had begun to take complete notice of Lyndon, and he was thinking of him as a very energetic and rather liberal fellow. The President was thinking of Lyndon from the point of view that he was a liberal. And I encouraged that kind of thinking with President Roosevelt myself, too, because my experience with him showed he was a liberal man.

F: What could you do to encourage it?

C: Oh, I would say to the President--now remember I wasn't married until 1940 and I was invited to the White House quite frequently. I had a very fine relationship there. They would have me working on some of Mrs. Roosevelt's pet projects that she always had all the time.

F: You were in that position of not having to report home at night.

C: That's right. I could go pretty easily and freely, and they took it on that basis which was very nice, and made it very pleasant for me and gave me an opportunity to talk more intimately with the family and with the President and Louie Howe. I talked with the President many times in one of these little very happy occasions of evenings, visiting in his company and presence, and I got a chance to refer several times to Lyndon's fine liberal support on public power.

F: Lyndon had sought you out and gotten acquainted?

C: Well, it wasn't so much that he sought me out as I think I sought him out, too. Because we got to be friends through this group. We were all friendly and working together, and I soon discovered a factor in Lyndon that many congressman just don't have. Lyndon, I discovered, could accomplish a program in legislative matters more quickly and easily than any congressman I knew. Even fellows who had seniority of twenty-five or thirty years over him, Lyndon could out-maneuver them. Lyndon could maneuver his program in such a way he got support. But he always played the game with his colleagues on the basis of helping them, too. He tried to help them. They soon learned, his colleagues did, that he was a helpful fellow to have with you, that he could get some things done. Because then his relationship to the White House was growing; Ickes was becoming known. And during that period the Congressman was obviously going places if he had half a chance.

Then you lead up to the period when he ran for the Senate. Now, he was, I think, one of the younger men that ever became majority leader so soon after he was in the Senate.

F: He was the youngest majority leader in history.

C: Yes, he was, and he was one of the best ones we ever had. Johnson could get more done for you in a shorter time than any majority leader we ever had. In the meantime, I had developed my relationship with him, to very close, because I was very close to Sam. I was very close to him. He was kind of like my father. He advised me what to do and what not to do. I listened to him quite a bit, because

Senator [Edward P.] Costigan of Colorado was just like a father to me, and not just a political friend. But his unfortunate health situation broke on him in the early part of 1936 and he had to withdraw from the campaign. Well, he hadn't actually announced, but I had gone out there and opened his office, to run his office for re-election. Again Roosevelt arranged for me to have a leave of absence without pay to go out there.

F: You spent about as much time off the federal payroll as you did on it!

C: Yes, as I did on it. But they were all very good to me and I appreciated them so very much.

Let me tell you a little history of Johnson from a man's point of view that worked in the other branch of the government, the administrative staff, and not the legislative. I was in the administrative branch and naturally I was supporting Ickes and Roosevelt. This is before Truman came into the picture.

I got to be very close to Johnson. At least--let me say this--a man hasn't the right to say, "I'm close to John Smith," or somebody else. That's for him to say, whether you're close or not, but I felt a good relationship there. I had a fine feeling of a good relationship and I would go up on the Hill and see him about a piece of legislation. I can say to you now we never would have gotten through the whole civil rights program, that whole legislative batch of laws we got through in a short period there, if it hadn't been for Lyndon Johnson. He was the only man in that Senate that could have gotten that law through and not because others didn't have equal ability, but Johnson had both ability

and the desire to do it. And he did it. Now Johnson realized that he was paying a price politically for everything he was doing on that side, he was paying a certain political price. And probably, had he gone the other way, he might have been nominated for president a little sooner, I don't know. But you could never have gotten that legislative program through with any other man but Johnson. Because he had developed such a good relationship with his own colleagues of the South in the Senate and in the House; he had developed a strong relationship with all the boys in the House side, and he'd get support over there sometimes to help put the pressure on the boys on the Senate side when he wanted them.

They always comment about Lyndon twisting your arm for something he wanted. Well, actually, before he went from his office to the floor of the Senate, Lyndon would have gotten a main senator lined up with him before he got there. He'd be talking to him, and he's a tall fellow, and his arms would wrap around the fellow's shoulders, and it made a picture and a feeling of a warmth and friendship. Just the law of nature would bring the two together in a nice way. He'd put his arm on his shoulder and walk with him, and before he got to his office, he had him sold on helping him a little bit. "I need your help. I wish you'd help me a little on this bill. If you'd help me with this, it would really be a fine thing for us to do."

Lyndon did a beautiful job of turning those southerners for that civil rights bill. Now they didn't realize quite fully, I

don't think they did, the total impact of what that legislation fully meant. If it was implemented and carried forward administratively, you had a complete change in history in a major sector of our country. It was not just the South that was affected by this, this affected just as much the city of New York as it did Florida. People don't know that. They didn't know it at the time, didn't realize that it was that way. But I soon had an opportunity to see how that was working.

Johnson did more for me and in helping me with legislative things that we wanted corrected into law and legislation that we wanted to get through. Now this was all while Ickes was of course in there, and I was working right with them. I was kind of a foot man in some respects, taking things up to Lyndon and bringing back messages and so on to the Secretary.

Then the picture kind of changed again about that time. Ickes and the President got into a disagreement which I regretted very much, but before the next election came around, Ickes had changed his mind about Truman to the extent that he supported Truman in that campaign. He went out to Butte, Montana, and took a national broadcast for us on a national hookup and made a speech for President Truman. And he did that to everybody's surprise because he had been pretty vitriolic in his expressions about the President. But President Truman showed such good statesmanship in handling that kind of a thing. He handled it beautifully. He didn't try to take advantage of his powerful position and override Ickes about anything. As a matter of

fact, he treated him very decently as he would, and I had been telling Secretary Ickes that I thought he was wrong in his expressions about Truman. I thought Truman was going to be for the same things that Ickes was for. When he got right down to it, he would find that they were both be for the same things. I said, "He works through the organization more than you do, but in the end you two will end up supporting the same piece of legislation." And he did just exactly that, exactly that.

F: I suppose part of it was just an inability to transfer devotion from Roosevelt to a new man?

C: Partly, that, but Ickes was already getting somewhat unhappy with the situation because Roosevelt was so busy at that moment that every ounce of energy he had had to go into the picture for the war. He had to devote his energies, all he had left.

F: And Interior just kind of got in the backwash.

C: Exactly. These domestic issues like what we were trying to carry on, these big projects we were working on in Interior and in which Ickes was the liaison principally in that, Roosevelt just couldn't give it the time he had been giving it the first eight years, the first part of his tenure, the first six years anyway. He devoted a lot of time to those needs. He would see Ickes two and three times a week probably. But the President was so overwhelmed with his time in having to work with the allies and keeping them happy and working with us in the war effort itself. We had become the supplier, the storehouse for munitions for our allies. We were the industrial partner of this

whole group and we were really producing goods. Believe me, we were putting out stuff in this country that people never heard of, never dreamed of. In our production of airplanes which we wanted to speed up, Roosevelt turned his attention to speeding up his airplane production so as to have enough of them to afford to lose twenty thousand of them and still not hamper his destructive effort and capacity. Lyndon Johnson followed through that part of Roosevelt's public life on domestic things like public power, and Johnson's support of public power led him right straight into the White House doorway with his relations with Roosevelt.

Roosevelt was very fond of him, really genuinely fond of him. I could tell whether Roosevelt liked someone or whether he was just playing politics with them so he could use them. He didn't do that with Lyndon. He played right square aboveboard, just right, and in return he got strictly loyal service from Johnson to help. When Johnson told him he couldn't get a certain bill through Congress, "I wish you'd let it go, I can't get that through," Roosevelt knew that that's just what he meant; he couldn't do it. And he'd back off and he and Johnson would get together and they'd agree on some different strategy of approach or maybe introduce some other bill first that would calm off this whole thing.

F: Now Ickes was known as a kind of a prickly character, and I presume it was deserved, and I presume Johnson also knew just how far he could push him and at what point he had to soft pedal.

C: Exactly. Johnson understood and knew Ickes well. Now with the

assistance of such friends as Abe Fortas as he had in there and Alvin Wirtz and, incidentally, Sam Rayburn--he and old Harold got along wonderful together. They were both crotchety with each other, but on a good friendly basis, it was a good friendly relationship there. Sam supported bills he never thought he'd support, and he had a majority leader in the Senate side to coordinate with him. So therefore Sam made one of the best floor leaders we've ever had in the House side because he had the fortunate coordination of the Majority Leader of the Senate, and that made him a strong man. It strengthened Sam's hand a great deal for them all to know that Lyndon Johnson was his boy. That's the way they looked at him up there. Because Lyndon had taken the advice of Sam and Sam had given him some pretty good advice, politically and otherwise.

F: When Ickes and Truman came out for federal ownership of the tidelands, they managed to push for this without ever getting in a confrontation with Johnson or vice versa. You did, too, I gather.

C: That's right.

F: How did you all handle that, just agree that you were on opposite sides?

C: That's all. That's really what it was. We just agreed that we were on opposite sides here and that there was no point in wasting our energies and efforts in trying to hurt one another when we were trying to find the right answer to this very important issue.

F: You never made it personal?

C: Never did. It never got personal with Sam or Lyndon with the Secretary

or myself at anytime. It was never personal with us.

F: Did you talk over this issue? Did they try to convince you and vice versa.

C: Oh, yes.

F: Do you think either one of you modified your views any?

C: Not a bit. I don't think either one of us did. There was a gas bill that was passed up there that was called the Kerr bill. I recommended to President Truman to veto that bill. I said, "Mr. President, you have no vote in the Senate, but you've sure got a good one here that you can veto. I'd veto this bill. You will then have carried out your obligation to support the issue that you've been supporting all the time which was Roosevelt's issue, too, and you've picked up and carried it on and you've committed yourself to it."

F: What issue?

C: The tidelands issue. Roosevelt had started that; he and Harold had started that public lands fight, the tidelands issue. But Lyndon Johnson had much to do with keeping harmony among that group, from ever letting them split up over the issue. Yet he held to his position.

F: This is a kind of issue that could make some lifelong enmity.

C: Oh, coming from the state he did, represented by the economic interests that he did, put Lyndon in an extremely powerful position in one respect and a very dangerous position in another. Now Lyndon--excuse me, Mr. President, but he's still Lyndon to me.

I wanted to lead up to this to tell you this: I would have supported Jack Kennedy for president if it had not have been that I

had given my word to Sam Rayburn. He asked me in his office. He had sent for me and I went up to see him, and he said, "Now if I get Lyndon in this race, you help him." Well, I was under obligations politically for things that Sam Rayburn had done for me, leaving Johnson aside. Johnson had, too, because he [Rayburn] had gotten Johnson to do these things for me in a lot of cases. So then I was beginning to go to Johnson and directly get him to do things for me. And they had done so many things at my request, things that I wanted so badly in order to make my administration a success. I wanted their help to get certain things through; if not I realized my administration would not be a success. It would be just a nonentity. I didn't want to be known as that.

F: You'd get your picture hung in the hallway and that would be about it.

C: Yes, that would be about it.

Well, I had the full support of Lyndon Johnson and Sam Rayburn all the time that I was in there, because the time schedule coincided so nicely. By the time he came in, I'd had a chance to get acquainted and know Johnson from the time he came in as a congressman when I was assistant secretary over there. I could do little things for him by the telephone if he'd call that could save him endless trips and letters and things and I could do things for him to help him on public land matters. Your state [Texas] is the one state of the union that has no public land, as you know. But consequently you operate in dealing with the reserves of wealth in your state primarily developed on the basis of, first, it was cattle and, then,

it was oil. And your oil hit a bonanza and brought Texas to the front in the economic sense of the whole country.

I did everything I could to help Lyndon when he got here to Congress. I'll tell you some of the businessmen in Houston who were probably never thought of down there as much of liberals or not, but Major J. R. Parten in Houston--

F: I know him well.

C: I knew Parten very well before Lyndon came in. I would sit down and talk with Parten and I'd say, "Tell me about your new congressman. I'm interested in him and I'd like to know more about him." And he said, "I'd like to tell you more about him because you folks up here don't know that fellow. He is a good meat-axe man for you whenever it's necessary, or he'll play the statesman role for you when it's necessary, but nobody's going to step on him." The Major was just talking like that, what a real, sincere hard worker Lyndon was, and that he was far more liberal than our liberals up this way would give him credit for.

This was one of the hardest things I had to do was to convince my liberal friends that Lyndon Johnson was far more liberal than they were. For instance his getting through that civil rights bill--there isn't another president who could have gotten it through. Roosevelt couldn't have gotten that through to save his life. He had used his power; it was gone, so he couldn't do it. Lyndon had

Lyndon Johnson because we had made it a point ourselves to shift that credit to him as much as possible in the public press and everywhere else we could.

F: Did he work with you on Hell's Canyon?

C: Oh, yes, oh, yes. He didn't like it, he didn't like it much. He told me he didn't think that was a good one, and he said, "I don't know whether I can get it through or not."

F: It was a bear by the tail.

C: Oh, it was. You see he had a hard case there to try to put across and let me say this: Lyndon did all any man could have done, under the circumstances. He couldn't have done more than he did under the circumstances.

Now, we were coming up close to the election.

F: Now which election are you talking about?

C: I'm coming up to the Kennedy election now, and I want to put this in the record for clarification because it's never been done.

I never had the chance to sit down and talk with President Johnson very well about that 1960 convention and how we didn't get enough delegates to put him over. I was committed, as I said to you, through Sam Rayburn, to do whatever I could do for Lyndon, and I would. Now I would do that because of my loyalty to Sam and to repay my political debts, but I had developed a sense of loyalty that I owed to Lyndon as well that had grown and developed along with it. So, therefore, I had to pay back my political debts. I have always believed that a man that doesn't keep his political

commitments won't keep anything else. I take a political commitment just as seriously as I do a business commitment, and, even if it breaks me, I've just made a bad deal, that's all, politically. But I never would change.

So, the Kennedy friends regretted that I couldn't support him in that convention. They wanted me. They had been kind enough to ask me to help them. I explained to him what my situation was, that I was committed to Johnson and I was of course supporting him. So we had a thorough understanding. There were no feelings there at all, because I was very fond of Jack personally to start with. I was very fond of him, and I would have helped him if it had not been that my commitment to Johnson was justified. I had every justification for supporting Johnson on his record, not just because of a personal loyalty to me or because I felt a personal loyalty to him. But he was entitled to my support because of his record.

I was going on the wave of a liberal whose public life here lacked a few months of being twenty years. I think that time element runs from January 20 to May 4; that is the time element that I lacked in twenty years in the Department of Interior. The reason that happened that way was the very fact that you could elect a man three times then. Then the Norris Amendment passed and the Norris Amendment completely changed the whole political structure of our political picture.

But now going back to what I started to tell, and I have to watch this that I don't get off track too much. If I get to wandering too

much, you tell me, because I get excited and extremely interested in these things.

F: Well, one story leads to another.

C: Exactly. And that is just what a person will do, reminisce over something you were very excited about in your lifetime. And I had a most enjoyable relationship there with what I considered the finest men this country ever had, and that was Sam Rayburn and Lyndon Johnson and President Kennedy.

F: Did you think that Mr. Sam thought that Johnson could get the nomination in 1960, or that it was just an outside shot?

C: He thought it was an outside shot.

F: But that he ought to try for it?

C: He thought that there was enough of a chance to justify the effort. Now, that's the way he felt.

F: You went to Los Angeles?

C: I went to Los Angeles, and I did what I could there to help him.

F: Mainly you just talked to people?

C: I would speak to the caucuses of the various state delegations whenever they would meet, I would do that. Then I went over and spoke to the NAACP. I went over to speak to them and got booed. Of course, Kennedy had that all stacked that day.

F: Do you think they felt that were sort of downgrading what Johnson had done in civil rights, or that they were just so pro-Kennedy?

C: I think it was pro-Kennedy, and by the same token, it did take away from Johnson some of the credit that he was entitled to. It downgraded

Johnson a little, just by the very nature of the thing.

Now I want to tell you this, I did not do but a very little for President Johnson after that convention, because he doesn't know it, I've never told him, nobody ever knew anything about it, but I had a very serious problem with my heart. And I had to close down every outside interest that would take my energy at all. I couldn't travel alone. I couldn't go anywhere alone. My doctor just absolutely forbade me from even taking trips.

F: They put a clamp on you.

C: They did. And I couldn't go against that. With my wife knowing this she was frightened naturally of this, although she took it beautifully. And she'd help me. She'd go with me, if I traveled some place for them as I did once or twice. But I did so little for Johnson compared with what I had been doing for Truman in his 1948 campaign, because I probably did as much as anybody else if not more than most people on the Truman campaign of 1948. I helped in that campaign with terrific energy and put in my time on that and put my energy on it. Now since that day I had that heart attack--I say heart attack, a layman shouldn't use that word, because a pain in your chest can be anything; you never know until it's sometimes too late. Fortunately, I got it in time and Dr. DeBakey in Houston operated on me.

F: You had open-heart?

C: Yes.

F: Have you ever compared notes with President Johnson?

C: No, we never have. We have never had a chance to discuss this and compare notes. Johnson knows I was operated on, but a lot of people don't know what I was operated on for. Now this could be considered an open-heart operation, but it was not a transplant of a heart. This was a bypass of the main artery in my chest. It was completely blocking me off, and I only had ten per cent of the necessary oxygen going into my heart at the time I went into the hospital.

F: It's a wonder you made it at all!

C: That's what he said. "How did you get into the hospital?" And I said, "I just got here last night. I would have had this done much quicker had I known this. My doctor's letter that I brought with me to give you was to bring you up to date with his work so you'd know." He said, "That was a mighty fine letter and a very good one, and it was very helpful."

But Dr. DeBakey did an operation on me that was fantastic, one they had never done on a man over sixty-five years old. They had never done this. They call it the Vineberg Process. Vineberg was a Canadian and he had developed this process of bypassing hardening of the arteries rather than taking them out and substituting a plastic artery. The procedure was taking arteries from the chest and implanting them in the peri-cardium.

Now what he did was very simple. Take an architect's drawing board and draw a picture of this. You have two arteries one from up here (pointing) and one from up here, both of them exactly alike, coming right down like this to your ribs, both of them into your rib

cage. Now they are not essential to you at any time unless they happen to get real hard themselves. Well, the arterogram test gave them enough information to know exactly where the hardening in my artery was. It was right here on the main artery, about two inches. What they did, they took this artery down here, dislodged it all the way up to here, then crossed it over on this artery and then opened the heart on the side here and sewed that all up. Then they went down and just brought this artery around like this, put it into the same opening of the heart with the other artery and sewed the two of them together. That gave him a perfect bypass on this other place.

My risk was in the fact that you don't heal up as fast after sixty-five as you do before then. I was about seventy when I did this and I was seventy-five my last birthday.

F: And working. Working free, but working.

C: I'm working free and very good now. If I want to go someplace, my wife packs up and we go. I have to have someone with me at night, and a certain amount of watching myself.

Well, Johnson, I know, has never known that. He's never known why I didn't show up more in his campaign and do for him what I had been advertised or publicized around Washington with what I had done for Truman. That had gotten so publicized around the city here, about what I had done for Truman.

F: You did head a national lawyer's group for Johnson-Humphrey in 1964?

C: I did.

F: Did you work with the President on that or did you pretty much have a

free hand and were left on your own?

C: Oh, yes, I worked right with Johnson on it. I worked right with him on that. But I couldn't do as much, I still was recovering then from this other matter. I couldn't help him much. And it wasn't a thing I could talk about publicly, and so a lot of my friends may have gotten the impression, or Johnson's friends may have gotten the impression that I had let him down, that I hadn't done much. And I had let him down to that extent. I hadn't been able to do--

F: Well, you have to do only what you can do.

C: I could only do what I could, and I did just that, what I could.

F: Back in the Eisenhower days, you and Johnson, Senator Johnson then, worked considerably I gather, trying to get over the conservation message to Eisenhower.

C: That's right.

F: Was that a heartrending task, or did you feel that you did come across?

C: I think in the end we came across and got certain basic things through.

F: I don't want to embarrass you, for instance, by putting you in the position of talking about your successor, but I know Fred Seaton, as one example, at one time announced that the National Parks Service had all it ever needed to have.

C: Fred Seaton was like a lot of those people in the West up there who felt that the National Parks Service ought to be just a grazing ground for the cattle people. That's all he thought of it for. And he thought we were interfering with the cattle business, and we were maintaining a park supporting it.

No park was ever created that didn't have the support of the congressman of that district, no park. Usually, practically ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the congressman from that district would introduce the bill, most always. Some of the toughest fights we've ever had were on some of those cases where the congressman had introduced the bill himself and carried the fight. Now we had a long, tough fight in California because we had a water fight there mixed up with an oil fight, you see. That carried some implications of that tidelands fight. Now, the tidelands bill was intended to give a free hand to shore states to lease out this land any way they wanted to.

I maintained that we ought to keep it under the present leasing act and keep the management of it under the present structure. I believe more than ever that I was right. Because there was a way to divide that up where they've got it so the states for all practical purposes can pretty much control the oil from that state the way they can handle it. Texas has one of the best laws for the control of oil, the management of it, that any state in the Union has. You had a development there earlier than other states that gave you some experience of getting some leadership developed in the economy of the oil.

F: A very searing experience there in the hot oil period at the beginning of the thirties.

C: That's right. And you remember when we finally got that Connally Hot Oil Act passed, to keep them from shipping oil out of one district

to another, to keep them from violating the law as it was. The Connally Hot Oil Act was what that was known as.

Let me say this: Johnson had a fine relationship with President Eisenhower. At least that would be the interpretation I would put on that. But I wouldn't know. I don't know what they said or did except through things that Johnson had told me on one or two occasions.

F: Your role in all of this was as an interested experienced citizen.

C: That's all. By this time, you see, I was out of the government. I was only interested as a citizen then, and I was just trying to help. Johnson was doing one beautiful job of taking Eisenhower in. Instead of Eisenhower controlling this show, Johnson was controlling it, because Johnson knew Eisenhower and knew just how far he could push him.

That was one of the great things of Johnson. He learned people very quickly. If a man was in a strategic position, he would study that man, he'd know his record, he'd know what he'd done principally, and he'd know his interests. Johnson studied so much more than people realized. I don't think the people of Texas fully realize how much work Johnson put in study. He studied the laws dealing with these things, and when he got on the floor to speak on one of these things, to the surprise of so many of those senators, Johnson had the facts down to the end of his fingers.

F: Sometimes won because he was the best prepared man there.

C: He was. He had more experience in all of this than any of them there

nearly; second, he was more interested in how to do it. And he was the best prepared man there to do it. This was one of the major economic issues during that period. Johnson was the best qualified man in this whole Senate to really lead that kind of a fight for Eisenhower.

F: Did he ever seek your advice while he was president on matters of conservation?

C: Yes. You mean Johnson?

F: Yes.

C: Yes, I talked with him on quite a few occasions.

F: Did he ever try to get you back in government service?

C: No, he didn't. Because the line had been broken, you might say. I had opened my law office and I couldn't afford to go back into government service, and then to try to go out again. I was at the age--

F: Where you didn't want to make another start down the line.

C: I didn't want to make another start down the line. That doesn't imply any differences with us at all, because had I wanted something and wanted to do this, I wouldn't have hesitated to go and sit down and talk with Johnson. I knew him well enough that I could do that, and if he was committed on that to somebody else and couldn't do it, he'd say so to me. He was very frank. I never wasted time in trying to maneuver with him on anything because he was so frank with me. If he would tell you he was committed on something, he was committed and he'd

tell you so. I enjoyed working with a man like that because I'd gotten so tired of these fellows trying to maneuver you to get you to agree to anything. If they'd just sit down and lay it on the table to me and say, "Can you help me with this?", I could tell him whether I could or couldn't. But Johnson was the type of a fellow that you felt you could do that to. You felt you had a freedom of speaking to him frankly about your position on something. If you talked to him about it, he wouldn't hold it against you if you didn't agree with him, although he would regret it. He wanted you with him and he'd say so and he'd tell you he wanted you with him. But Johnson had a personality and the gift that a man is born with. It doesn't grow with you, you are born with it: the ability to approach another man.

Lindsey taught me one thing, the artistry of approach is your greatest asset. The artistry of approach to another man in talking to him on any given subject is your best opportunity; it's right then. Johnson had that. He was born with that.

F: Did you ever work with Lady Bird on any of her projects?

C: I didn't work very much with her on her projects.

Changing the subject, I was in a very peculiar position when Truman first came in, and a very ticklish position. The assistant secretary or an under secretary is sitting in a very touchy place, and the secretary is always subject to feeling that you are trying to get this job. Between you and me, that is why I was not appointed to succeed Ickes. I didn't want it at that time.

F: You needed that interim in there.

C: If I'd have taken it, I would have been crucified because look what I had done. You see you pay a price for your political judgments sometimes. I went to that convention in Chicago supporting Henry Wallace for vice president. But I had gone up to the Hill and talked to Truman the day before I left, and I said, "Now, Senator, if you're a candidate, I'll support you definitely, and I want you to know I will support you if you're a candidate. But if you're not a candidate, I want to keep the commitment that I have with Henry Wallace."

He said, "Listen, you've done the decent thing that a man ought to learn to do in politics: go and be frank with the other fellow. You'll never have any reaction from me about what you do in that convention, because I know. I can't tell you I'm a candidate. I can't tell you so, and I'm not a candidate." He said, "I'll be nominated entirely according to whether Roosevelt wants me or not, at the last minute. And he isn't going to tell anybody until the last minute." And he had it figured out exactly right.

Well, I got to Chicago, and I started as one of the floor leaders for Wallace. There were five of us: Senator Guffey of Pennsylvania, Claude Pepper of Florida and, let's see, there were five of us who were floor managing that convention for Wallace. Had we been able to get the vote that night before, we could have nominated him, but we couldn't get it because we didn't have the floor. They had the chairman. And they closed the meeting just at the right time. It was clever how they got it. I laughed. Wallace felt very bad about it, and I said, "Mr. President, don't let this affect your happiness or

life, your enjoyment of doing things for people that you do. You have a great facility of expressing things that are very liberal in the minds of most people. I think they think you are far more liberal than I think you are!" I said, "I made a commitment to you and I kept it. I wanted you to know that I did keep it. I told Truman about it the day before I left Washington." I went up to see him on Friday and then went to Chicago on Saturday morning or Friday night. I think I took a train and went out.

I got there and got with the Wallace group. We got organized right away, and the planning was going very well because there were a lot of people who didn't want the President to run, you see, for that fourth term.

You know, there wasn't any question that President Roosevelt at one time, I know, had Johnson in his mind for the possibility of either vice president with him or if he wasn't going to run, he might make an out-and-out run in support of Lyndon. I know he talked with me about Lyndon. He said, "You ought to get better acquainted with him. He's a fine young man, he's a coming young fellow." Roosevelt said that to me about Lyndon. He had met Lyndon and he felt like they got together very fast.

F: You know Johnson had taken a calculated risk in his run on an all-out Roosevelt program just at the time that this Supreme Court fight was on. It took a certain amount of courage and also good calculation, I might say.

C: It took a lot of courage and a very careful calculation.

F: His idea was that he could pick up all the Roosevelt votes where the others would scatter them.

C: That's right.

F: Did you get any opportunity to observe Johnson and Adlai Stevenson's relationship?

C: Only some. Not as much as I would have done, but I worked very closely with Adlai. I helped him in his campaign. I traveled in that campaign quite a bit. Now I did a lot of work for him. But Stevenson had a peculiar reaction to political organizational people. He had a feeling that they all had a special interest or were serving a special interest, and he didn't want to associate too much with them. He was quite sincere about it. He wasn't a hypocrite about this; he was very sincere. Stevenson would have killed himself had he been president, because he worried so about everything. His decisions, every decision he made, he worried about.

F: They were all agony.

C: They were all agony to him. He agonized over every little decision. I say little decision, they were not little, but they were the kind of things that you had to make a decision and go on.

F: Not look back.

C: Not look back, you've got to go. I had my problem because there I know he was trying to avoid any looking like an oil connection of any kind by staying away from Johnson as much as he could. Oh, he didn't stay away from him, but to me on the inside, and I worked on the other

side of the fence so completely, I felt he wasted an awful lot of good time and opportunity there that he could have used to a better advantage had he done so with Johnson in the very beginning, had Stevenson worked with Johnson and opened the door for him better.

F: Did you feel that Johnson's support of Stevenson, particularly as regards taking Texas, was perfunctory or enthusiastic?

C: I felt that Johnson was doing in his mind what he felt he was obligated to do for the party as a leader. He felt the leadership had a responsibility and they ought to exercise it; they ought to try to carry the party through. He didn't agree with everything he was advocating necessarily, but I think he liked Stevenson and I think Stevenson liked Johnson. But Stevenson's artistry of approach was not the right kind for Johnson. You see what I mean?

F: They just lived in two different worlds.

C: They lived in two different worlds. That's the whole truth. If I could have gotten Stevenson to have done two or three things that I wanted him to do with Lyndon--

F: For instance?

C: --Lyndon would have been up there in the front leading the fight for Stevenson. There wouldn't be any question about it in my mind.

F: What did you think he needed to do?

C: He needed to call him over, have breakfast with him, sit down and talk with him and get his advice and then listen to it.

F: I see.

C: He had to do that.

Stevenson, in my mind, was one of the great men of our time and he would have proven so had the circumstances--

(Interruption)

F: All right, we were talking about Stevenson.

C: I want to make it clear in the minds of the people who have the opportunity to read this record, to understand Stevenson better. I wish I could say the things and clarify the things I know were never understood about Stevenson by a lot of people.

Now, Stevenson was never quite as liberal as his conservative friends thought he was. But he was not as liberal as some of them were afraid he was. But Stevenson was a cautious man, and he was so conscientious that he never wanted to be caught with his feet off the ground, making statements that he couldn't support, or making commitments that could never be carried out and he knew it. He was so conscientious that, politically, he wouldn't do that, and there's where he and the conservative groups of the Democratic Party always parted ways in conferencing. He refused to make statements about something that he couldn't support or didn't think there was any chance for. Nothing but just political talk and you'd never get anywhere with it, and "Why waste my time trying to kid people about it?" Now he never would do that; he was just so conscientious about that that he turned his other cheek always. He

never would do it. While the more conservative person, or should I say the leadership of the Democratic Party, was in sympathy with at least making promises on things they won't accomplish, even if they can't. But he wouldn't do that, he didn't want to do it that way. He put the emphasis on the promise of something, and to him that's a commitment. You were just in another world with him.

I went out there to spend three days with him when he was governor.

F: In Springfield?

C: Yes. I stayed there three days, and I spoke at the Lincoln Day celebration they always have there, at a luncheon. I was invited to speak. And I went up and spoke at this luncheon, spent three days there with Stevenson. I did this under Truman's guidance in which he asked me to see if I couldn't persuade this fellow to run and make his announcement, or let a few of his friends know he's interested, so we could be prepared to help him. He said, "He can't walk in and take this office. He's got to prepare for it."

(Interruption)

Truman had a very deep appreciation of Stevenson. He knew that they operated on a different wavelength, politically speaking. But he had a great confidence in Stevenson and he thought he would make a good president. Truman believed that. He didn't see anybody else that could be as good as that. And I went out there at the request of Truman.

F: Back in the Johnson presidency, did you ever observe Stevenson's relationship with Johnson?

C: Yes, I did. I think it improved a great deal as Stevenson, through circumstances, was thrown closer to Johnson. I think Johnson made a good impression on Stevenson as their relationship developed and their contacts developed and their discussion developed on certain issues.

I had done this, by the way. I had made a very strong, strong representation to Stevenson when we had gotten down pretty close to the time of the convention. I was out in Springfield again, and I had given him a fifteen-page memorandum on the tidelands issue. I gave him the whole history of it, and stated in the strongest terms I know how that I felt by the basic principles of good economics for the country and especially the people of Texas that he should not come out on that issue and support the tidelands bill that was before Congress. I said, "I have been fighting for it ever since I have been in government nearly. I have been doing everything I could to help beat the tidelands bill, but it's been introduced." And I told him that, frankly, I would have to reconsider my situation completely if he made a public statement to Governor Shivers who was coming up for lunch the next day.

F: Yes, I remember that.

C: [I said] if he made a public statement to Shivers at the luncheon tomorrow, I would have to consider my situation because I had spent a lifetime fighting on this issue, and I believe it so sincerely, that it's a principle that I think is of such magnitude, I have no intention

of changing for anybody. I will fight that issue all the way through. And I would have to oppose you on that issue if you ever came out on it.

He was very sweet about it, he was very nice about it. He said, "Well, Oscar, you know more about the history of this issue than I do. I have not had a chance to read that fifteen-page memorandum, but [Carl] McGowan--he's here on the circuit court now, by the way--says that it's a very fine memorandum." We had sat there that evening before Governor Shivers was coming up that next day for lunch. We sat there in the Governor's office that night before for more than two hours or more discussing issues that I was quite certain that Governor Shivers would bring up, from my point of view, than any of the other issues he'd bring up arising from other departments of government. But from my department, he's going to raise the big questions he'll want your [Stevenson's] commitment on. Both of those are primarily on oil, oil and gas. I said, "It's an issue that is very complex. It's not easy to simplify and boil it down to a simple phrase where he can just answer it off the cuff. You've really got to understand the economics of this thing to fully appreciate what you want to do or should do." Well, he was very appreciative of that.

Still I didn't feel that I ever adequately got Stevenson's thinking around towards President Johnson as I wanted him to. I didn't feel that he had gone quite as open and free with him as I wanted him to be. I felt that he could have gotten so much more out of Johnson, had he worked with him a little differently. It was only a matter of

approach because when they did get together, and after they had a chance to talk about a given issue or something, they soon found a way to accommodate themselves on the issue. They were not as far apart as they thought they were. I knew that in the beginning, having worked with Johnson and having worked with Stevenson. I knew they were not as far apart as the whole impression that had been given to the public.

Stevenson was riding on a high, popular note at that time, for changing parties, wanting to change administrations. He was riding on that popular side of the public issue at the moment. But those things don't last long. Very few do. If you make that your basic issue, it won't last long with you. You soon wear it out. You've got to have something deeper than that. You've got to have something more basic and fundamental to government and to people to go to the country on when you go to talk to them.

And just that fact alone that you ought to change presidents is not enough to justify your running. I said, "I know that Truman's not going to run and [because of] the fact that he's not going to run you can have his support now, if you handle it carefully. You can have his full support. I know he'll give it to you or he wouldn't have asked me to do what I have done tonight--talk to you." And I said, "You are going to live to see the day when the front page of the Chicago Tribune is going to praise Truman as being one of the great presidents of our time." He said, "That will be a long life for me!" I said, "No, it's going to surprise you. It's

coming sooner than you think."

Well, you know, the old Chicago Tribune, after Truman won that 1948 election, was so completely buffaloed. They were so absolutely buffaloed and flabbergasted at Truman's carrying that election. They really believed that, the Chicago Tribune people, I know some of them, and I know they really believed that Truman was going to be defeated. They were just as certain of that as anything, just as tomorrow's sun's going to rise. They believed it. It was fortunate. They didn't believe Johnson could be elected, the Tribune didn't.

But you've got to be at the gate when it's opened. If you're there, you can go through. Johnson was at the gate of history and it opened at the right time for him to go in. Two years later he couldn't have been elected and four or six years before he couldn't have been. This time changes on you politically. It doesn't follow a calendar. It has a calendar all of its own. It's a fascinating thing to study, the political change that takes place in our country, and that's what makes our democratic system so sound basically. We have a chance to change our leaders without a violent physical revolution. We can have some violent arguments, but they never go to the extent of thinking of breaking up your country or anything of that kind. Even though we've had a lot of disturbances this last four or five years, it's never gone to the root of a real revolution where you wanted to change the government. They want to change the personality, the leadership. That's all. It's never gone beyond that.

Some people were very frightened here when these young people came here for this big May Day March. They were frightened that that might be the real thing that was leading to a real revolution. Well, I tried to console my friends by simply saying, "Forget it, don't worry about it at all. Encourage them, let them take part in our Democratic system. Just stay in there and work with them. Don't turn them loose." You don't turn something loose in a green pasture if you want to control it, you've got to work with them. And we're missing a great opportunity here now if we don't work with these younger people in the transition of our thinking and of our planning and so on." Now I don't mean by that you've got to support George McGovern to make that come true, or that you have to support Nixon to make it come true. Under the present circumstances, you have to work it out in your own mind as they go along and if you have any encouragement on either side, have some influence in trying to bring them along the road that you think is the safest road for the leadership of your country.

That's not easy to do. In the final analysis, it's sometimes a hard thing to do, but if you stay with it, you can win it. This country has been so fortunate that we've had some good men that were president at crucial times.

Now, President Eisenhower I personally liked. He was in an ideal position for the minds of the people at that time. He was just ideal for it, I could see it. The people not only wanted a change, but they wanted a person who was not interested in war and stirring things up.

Eisenhower had gotten across, or that Crusade In Europe of his, his book, got across very nicely that he was not for war, that he was opposed to war. And here comes a general that can pick up his credits now as a great leader and a great general, and he can get credit for it on the other side.

F: He's been there and he knows and he wants no more of it.

C: It was just one of those things that just hit the people exactly right.

F: As a former secretary of the interior, what did you think of Johnson's program in the field of conservation?

C: I felt that Johnson in the field of conservation--I started to make a comparison, but that's always dangerous. But I found that if Johnson were given the full and adequate briefing on a given subject dealing with conservation per se, he would come out on the right side almost invariably. Now Johnson did some things for the conservation side of the public issues, things that they wanted to do--the leadership wanted it, and a lot of the people wanted certain things done to protect the conservation of our resources. I think beyond a doubt Johnson went as far if not further than anybody else could have gone during that period.

Now that's the time he puts his arm around Fulbright's shoulder and walks with him over to the office from the floor and talks to him about a certain issue he knows, say, that Senator Fulbright and the President don't happen to agree on some issue. Johnson would know, he

knew when to use that personal prod, that personal approach, he knew at what point to use that. He never used it at the wrong place, but he used it an awful lot. He knew how to use it.

I think, you sit down with Johnson--and I've had this opportunity to listen to this on one or two occasions with him--and talk about certain conservation issues. And if he were given the right information, the history of this particular problem on conservation, he'd be on the right side of that issue when it came out of the Senate or wherever it was coming from if he had been properly briefed on it. Now you can't be briefed on everything. With the magnitude of these things, you can't be briefed on everything, but you can be briefed on most of them. Johnson was briefed on a lot of these things. And when it came to conservation, I had a good opportunity to talk with him about things of this kind quite freely and he was very generous in talking with me about them. And I felt if the issue came up, if the opportunity came up for a certain issue, he could get it through better than anybody else, through that Congress. Now, you see, it's all right to say you're for something if you are just making a speech off the floor of the Senate, but it's another thing to be majority leader and take the responsibility of getting the other ninety-nine senators with you.

F: Buttonholing them.

C: Yes, there's a lot of work that has to go into that. There's a tremendous amount of work, physically, to go into that kind of a job and do

it. I don't know of any man in the whole United States that was better fitted to do that kind of work than Johnson. He was the best leader on that that this country has ever had, and he was one of the most effective leaders that we ever had.

Now Congress didn't support him as well as they should in his last couple of years when he was president, but nevertheless the people in this country are going to wake up, just like they had to on Truman, and find out that Johnson, when they get all the truth down, they'll find out that that man had done more for a lot of these liberal causes than they had ever dreamed of. They don't realize that he's done it, in the first place. Right now they don't, because they don't know it. Now Johnson is not getting credit for the good things he did as they try to abuse him for some errors that he may have made. They blamed him for the war [Vietnam]. They're trying to find somebody to blame it on. They've been searching all around to find somebody.

F: You've got to personalize this.

C: Yes, you've got to personalize it. And they're fishing all around trying to find somebody to blame for this war in Vietnam. That's the craziest thing I ever saw in my life. The fact of it is, that war should have been closed a long time ago. We shouldn't have that war on our hands now at this late a date. The size of that country and the size of our country and the relative economic strengths, it's just unheard of that we would carry on such a war in such a way.

F: Longest war in our history.

C: Yes. You never heard of such things before in our history.

Let me go on with Mr. Eisenhower a bit. He took advantage of his political situation here to get the Korean thing settled. It was ready to be settled, it was meant to be settled. And he just happened to say it at the right time and then say, "I'll be over there, I'm going to settle it with you." He didn't waste any time at all with the semantics about it. "We're going to have a cease-fire and have a settlement right away." And those people believed him when he said that.

Right now, I don't know, I can't quite judge yet which way the people are thinking strongest about the present situation as to whether the administration is frank with them or whether the gap, the credibility of public statements, has become very weakened. Now that's going to be the principal issue before they get through this campaign whether the issue is taken advantage of or whether it can be. I don't know whether it can be or not. It's the basic one that they have to fight on if they can do it. I don't know whether they can do it because we are all on both sides of this; we're all, both Democrats and Republicans, in that same boat.

For instance, I don't think Johnson could have stopped that thing right at the time he was in. I don't think he could have. I don't think they would have considered anything then.

F: This is all hindsight, and you can't outguess because you can't play it both ways. I've had the feeling though that if Johnson had pulled out in the early stages of the war and the North Vietnamese had come in, they would have accused him of being another Neville Chamberlain and having

reneged on Kennedy and Eisenhower and on all of American history. So he stayed in and he gets accused the other way.

C: Exactly. He simply has to take the other abuse. You can't have it both ways, and you can't play it on the hindsight of a Monday morning quarterback. Johnson could have pulled them out. He could have gotten them out. The North Vietnamese would have wiped them out in about thirty days because they were not good fighters apparently. I don't know. They don't have enough supplies and enough people there to carry that fight.

Now there isn't any question that the Russians are pouring in a lot of the stuff there to help them. But if Johnson had done that, we can pretty much tell you what the North Vietnamese are going to do, and if they do that, Johnson over here within thirty days would be accused of treason.

F: Treason, selling out to the communists.

C: That's right. "You've sold out to the communists."

F: We would have reared a new Joe McCarthy in there who would have come up and proved a sell-out again to the enemy.

C: That's right. That's the background on the atmosphere you develop for a Joe McCarthy to come forward on, and they'll come too.

F: Incidentally, now that we've brought that up, did you have any opportunity to observe Senate Majority Leader Johnson maneuvering during the McCarthy period?

C: Yes, I did. He played that with a very, very cautious approach. He was not enthusiastic about doing anything to stop McCarthy one way or

another. He stayed out of the line of fire on that all he could, because he had been accused of that once himself. So he pretty much stayed out of the line of fire all he could on that fight while McCarthy was in there. But when the time came, he waited until the time came when he could be effective, and then when that time did come Johnson was effective by letting those who were carrying the fight on McCarthy --by giving them a free hand to go right through on anything on the floor they wanted. He'd allow them to put through almost any resolution they wanted. He could have stopped them had he wanted to, and he didn't.

Now, that's the basis that makes me say that he handled it with caution and with care because he realized that he would be attacked sooner or later on that same basis if he didn't. I felt that he had done all he could on that, although I would like to have seen more done in that area from his leadership point of view. But, as I look back on it now, I don't believe he could have done it without hurting his effectiveness of his leadership. It would have hurt the effectiveness of his leadership, because he led on so many other issues he got through that was so brightening in our whole picture that we were trying to portray for the American people why we were economically in a little trouble, but it wasn't serious and we were coming through, and with leadership like this, we were going to hold it level.

Now when Johnson became president, he might have pulled those troops out and gotten away with it, but not for long. They would have turned on him in a very short time, the very leadership that was praising him for wanting to do it now would turn against him as a

traitor before the thing was over. That's why you connect the two things together. You go back and Johnson played it very cautious. He played that extremely cautiously. So much so that a lot of my friends felt that he was too cautious on McCarthy, more cautious than was necessary, that he should have given more leadership there.

Now you've got to weigh what you've got. What is your program and what are your plans? What do you hope to accomplish in the next few years? You'll be president for a short time and what do you hope to accomplish in that time? Johnson weighed this picture over in the very beginning of the period when the McCarthy thing was riding at its height, and he handled it with the greatest of caution just as if he were handling a box of dynamite. Now at the time I kind of felt that he ought to have done a little more in opposing McCarthy, but, as I look back on it, he got farther and accomplished more by handling it the way he did than if he had gotten into the fight.

F: Probably fewer permanent scars.

C: Yes, yes, it would have [left scars]. Then I look back on it and I don't see where he could have gained anything for the cause in which he'd represent, let's say, the liberal, he couldn't have gained anything for the liberal group by doing that. Plus the liberal group, they don't stand out when it comes to a joint fight on this question.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I]

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Mrs. Oscar L Chapman (Ann IC)
Donor

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