

INTERVIEW II

DATE: October 2, 1972

INTERVIEWEE: OSCAR CHAPMAN

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

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

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F: In 1956, when he [Johnson] was kind of a dark horse against Stevenson.

C: Yes, kind of. When did Stevenson run?

F: Stevenson ran in 1952 and 1956.

C: That's right. Johnson didn't run in either of those years.

F: No, no.

C: Well, it was in the next campaign when Kennedy ran.

F: Right, in 1960.

C: In 1960, that's right. I started out helping him.

F: Yes.

C: I endorsed him publicly. I was asked to be co-chairman of a Johnson for President Committee. India Edwards was on the committee with me, as co-[chairman].

F: Right.

C: She was a very effective woman. She had a lot of guts, too. She had a rather [inaudible] rule. She really would bear down on them. And she didn't pull any punches wherever she was or who she was talking to. She had a campaign, she had it and she stayed with it. She stayed with Johnson under very tough, tough circumstances there for a while, but she would beat them off. Some of her

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close friends would try to get her out of the thing, see? I think they didn't get to first base with India.

F: Had you worked with her before?

C: Yes, oh, yes, I had worked with her before. She was really a ten-strike for me, because I knew how to work with her. I had worked with her before.

F: How did you all sort of divide up the work and decide who did what and so forth?

C: Well, I'll tell you. It's like the old fellow's saying, "You just do what comes naturally." You see the people you can know and do know. It's your friends first, and you start to working them over. You start with a small group of friends and get another group here and another group here. My method of trying to assist in the campaign--it depends a lot upon your position you hold in the campaign. Now I had the experience of handling the eleven western states for the 1944 election for Roosevelt, and I had also handled the 1940 election for Roosevelt in the eleven western states. And in between that and now, Johnson missed the 1960 run, but Johnson . . .

I heard yesterday on I think it was "Issues and Answers," I'm not sure if that was the program, but this Manny Celler who has served fifty years in Congress. He'd served under five presidents, or six, five, I believe, and they asked him who was the best of the five presidents. He said, "Well, you have to break that question down in a way. Now, there isn't any question that Roosevelt left a historical background of record that will

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outlast anybody's because of the fact he did something that nobody else can do again."

F: Yes. Right.

C: You can't run for the third time anymore. And that gave him--

F: If he hadn't done anything else, that would have secured his place in history.

C: That's right. Exactly. Because he had more time to finish his program.

F: Right.

C: Unfortunately for Roosevelt, his last two years he was sick. I knew it. We all knew he was not well, those last two years particularly.

But then, my chance and opportunity to help Johnson really didn't come until we started our plan for the 1960 or 1964?

F: 1960 was the Los Angeles meeting.

C: 1960 was the Los Angeles meeting. That's right, Kennedy was nominated in 1960.

F: 1964 was the one up in Atlantic City when he picked Hubert Humphrey.

C: That's right. I helped him a little in that convention but he didn't need much help in that atmosphere. But in Los Angeles, Kennedy had really out-organized him with his own team, I think. I can tell you one of the examples of what was happening in some places.

Nobody knew it, but I had had a heart attack then. And I did not want to discuss it or talk to anybody about it, so I

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came back and quietly conserved my strength, did everything I could.

The doctor put me on something.

F: Did you have your attack out there?

C: Yes, I had it there. And it made it very hard for me. You see, when Johnson wants something he wants it yesterday. And I wasn't in the position to do things for him that I normally would be doing at a convention for a candidate. I could have done three times what I was doing actually because I couldn't tell anybody, I didn't want to tell Johnson, and I didn't want to tell anybody. I didn't want to discourage Johnson for one thing, I didn't want to discourage him. So that's one of the reasons I didn't want my own case discussed.

F: Did you just keep going?

C: No, I kept going part of the time. And then I got over it, apparently over it, thought I was. Then in 1964 or 1965, I can't remember which it was now, it's on my record here, I had an operation down in Houston.

F: Was that open-heart?

C: Yes. Dr. DeBakey. He did a miraculous job.

F: How did you happen to pick DeBakey?

C: Well, I knew about his record, his experience, and I knew a lot about him from his history, his work he had done. I had a very close friend of mine who worked on this scientific committee of his through President Johnson--no, Johnson didn't appoint him, somebody else appointed him. He came to me so highly recommended,

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and I thought, "Well, I can't last long this way, and I'm going to try to take a chance and see if I can't extend my life a little," and I went down there for about a week's tests and examinations. We went through a thorough testing, my examinations there, taking tests. When they got through with me, the final test they did take was the arteriogram test. That's the one where you put the tube right up through here (gestures), bring it clear through this artery on over to here, go over here, down to right here. Then you go down with this right up the rib cage. You disconnect this artery from down here, bring it on back out up here and take it across here over to the main artery right here. You take a great portion of the main artery and right here you open the heart right here on this side and push this one in. Then he put the other one--there's one on both sides, I believe. They are not necessarily essential to your living. And he went down and did the same thing to this one and disconnected it and brought it on up here, and brought it on around and pushed it right in here, right beside this one, right in the same incision he made. Put the two in there together and sewed them together. Well, when those two arteries got connected in there, they began to heal right away. After three days-- I think it was about three days, that was all they kept me in the intensive care ward--then they put me in

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another quiet room. I had a private room and of course I had a nurse for twenty-four hours.

Well, that of course started me on my way up again, but it took longer to recoup my energies than I thought it would. I had already cut the cocktail circuit here anyway, and I hadn't kept up with it.

F: So they were used to not seeing you around.

C: They were used to not seeing me anyway so it didn't make much difference here. And a lot of my law practice was out of the city in Mexico. As a matter of fact, I spent a lot of time in Mexico as I had more clients from Mexico than I did out of Washington.

F: You're not the one who funneled that money into Watergate, are you?

(Laughter)

C: No, I wasn't. (Laughter) We didn't have that much money in our whole campaign. That was more money than we had in our whole campaign.

Really, there was a newspaper man, a radio commentator, debating with another man last night about eight o'clock, I believe it was. One man was debating in favor of Nixon and the other one came along and he came on strong telling them about McGovern. He said, "This is what you say about McGovern," and then he quotes the things that they say. He said, "It comes down to a question

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either you're going to have a perfectionist in the White House or a thief!" He really hit that hard. I never heard a man hit the president so hard. Never in my life have I heard any president ever called a thief. And this man called him that; said, "The record is clear: he is a thief from top to bottom on petty things and on big things." He says, "When he got to be president, he got into the big money." Oh, he was rough on him yesterday. It was the worst talk I've ever heard given on any president.

F: Well, when you think really of the indignation that Harry Vaughan's deepfreeze, or Sherman Adams' vicuna coat caused, you know, that's like your giving me a tip alongside some of this.

C: Exactly. That was nothing but chickenfeed to what these boys did, and they had done nothing that was improper up to that point. The public morale was at least that low. They were accepting it. The public didn't pay any attention to that. And Nixon is not going to let this one come to trial till after the election.

F: No.

C: He isn't going to let it.

F: I've always thought one of the remarkable things of the Johnson Administration, as active as it was and as large as it was, was the fact that you did not have a major scandal.

C: Not a single one. Johnson never had any scandals in his administration.

F: Now, you know, just on percentage, you're dealing with so many ambitious people.

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C: Exactly. Just on percentage, you'll run across somebody that'll do something like that.

Well, I'll tell you one of the reasons for that is this: Johnson had served in the Senate for quite a while, he had been in public life all of his life practically, and Johnson had a feeling and a very sensitive touch for anything unethical. People didn't know that because this press group, particularly the television crowd, would keep playing that up by just a word or two here and there, and just kept dropping coconuts on the heads everywhere they stopped, you see. And actually Johnson was more sensitive, with a sensitive feeling to anything that's unethical, than I think any president I ever knew. And I was very close to Truman, and I was very close to Roosevelt. But their ethics were not a bit better or stronger than Johnson's. I worked with all three of them in some way: I was assistant secretary and under secretary under Roosevelt, under Truman I was under secretary, then I became secretary, and I was continuous for twenty years lacking from the twentieth of January to the fourth of May, those are the days I lacked in finishing my twenty years in the department in the top spot in the department. It's the only man in history who's had that continuity. Of course you never elected a man four times before in history.

F: That's right.

C: And that was the reason, you see.

Then I had the continuity with Truman as vice president. I was



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very close with him, worked with him very closely and we got to really be good friends. I'm very fond of Truman. But the things that I regret that I can't do, wish I had more of the details, wish I had made memoranda of so many more things than I did. But I did not write many memoranda at all and that was one of my weaknesses or one of my strengths, I don't know which it is. Anyway, when I think back, trying to relate to you what the public thought of Johnson during that period, and what credit they were giving him, and as we go down the line, Johnson had a positive program that he worked on and put through. Nobody but Johnson could have put through that civil rights bill, nobody but him could have put it through. There isn't another man in the United States who could have gotten it through. You had to be the man at the right time at the right place. Four years later he couldn't have done it, but then he could do it. He had the power, he had the support.

F: He had to sense what is the right time to move.

C: That's right. Johnson had the greatest sense of timing on political judgments on any man I have ever met. He had the greatest understanding of timing this action to meet my next action over here. He knew how and what time to do these things and he could do it. But after I say all of that, I go back to tell you the basic thing that made Johnson was the fact that he worked so hard on his casework itself, on individual cases and work that he had to do, discussing legislation with people that he had to discuss in order to get those things through. You can't imagine a southerner from

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Texas getting that civil rights matter through as he did. Well, there isn't another man in America that could have done that.

You see, a lot of these things in Washington go by careful planning and careful cautious work, and some go by accident. Johnson had some of both, but basically it was his basic work that he did, physically and mentally. He read so much, so much more than people knew he did. He read so much more than they thought he did.

F: You know, he had a reputation as not much of a reader.

C: That was where they were wrong on him. They were wrong on that. There were several scores like this that you mention. I like for you to mention them and I can comment on them. That's one of the things that I wish I could correct on him. I happened to be close enough to him that I knew pretty well his little habits and what he was doing. And Johnson was a good reader. He read a lot, a lot more than people ever thought he did. A lot of people didn't dream that Johnson had read as much as he had. He was a strong, self-made man.

You know, you speak of a self-made man. There are two ways that they are self-made, people are done that way. One is like the Truman approach; one is like Johnson's. Truman, too, had read a lot more than the public ever gave him credit for. Now I want to say that Truman and Johnson did more reading to get their status in formal education. Both were limited in the formal education side, but I want to tell you that either one of those men read more, studied more, read more cases in which this country

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was involved in other countries' problems over the history, they had done more reading than a man like Dean Acheson, who was a Yale graduate and a brilliant man. He was a very brilliant man, but so was Johnson. Now the difference in Dean Acheson and Johnson was, Dean had a high degree on his examination record, but he didn't know how to put it to work for the people when he was appointed as secretary of state. He didn't have that kind of ability to put this across to the American people what the President's program is on this. Johnson could do it himself and so did Truman. They'd do it in their own language and in their own way. You could see what was happening if you were close enough to them and watching them work. Now, that was not to belittle Dean Acheson.

F: No.

C: I had a great respect for Dean Acheson and I was very fond of him. I thought he was a real statesman, a good secretary of state. He was a good man. But along with that, if either one of them had had a president in the White House and they'd have been in the secretary of state's office, they'd have made a lot more mistakes than these two fellows would have made. Their record will show that in history they both will go down pretty much together.

F: Do you get the feeling that these people, like Truman and Johnson, actually come nearer representing American aspirations and even American strengths than people who maybe have more urbanity but are more isolated?

C: There's no question about it. Part of that is a sad aspect. I'm

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sorry that they are as isolated as they are. It's unfortunate, but it's one of those things that can't be helped now. But they were isolated at a time when help would have meant so much to those who followed. They were both sick about the same time in their time of history. I can't help but mention the two together so often because--well, I never worked for Johnson in a cabinet and I did work for Roosevelt for thirteen years.

F: I am sure though there must be a transferability of experience there whereby even though you are not in Johnson's cabinet, you can know kind of what's going on simply because you've been through the same situation.

C: I've been through the same situation, indeed. As I told you, I had handled for President Roosevelt two of his campaigns, 1940 and 1944, I handled those two in the West. 1932, Jim Farley was the boss. And in 1936 everybody handled it! (Laughter) That's the way it was going. And it came down to 1932, Roosevelt was running in 1932, and we were running against the "Chicken in Every Pot," "Two Automobiles in the Garage." All that baloney was showing up so fast on Hoover that it was pitiful. Yet a lot of people believed it and listened to it.

Now I enjoyed my relationship with Johnson. I helped him in every way I could in his campaigns even when I was in the office with President Roosevelt. As a matter of fact, President Roosevelt was very fond of Johnson. He had said to me, "Keep an eye on that young Texan. He's going places. Let's help him." Now

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that's what he said, that's what he said to me.

F: Did you ever advise with Johnson on conservation matters?

C: Oh, yes, many times. Let me put it in the words of Congressman Manny Celler, who was defeated the other day after serving fifty years in the House. He was chairman of the Judiciary Committee, which is a very powerful committee in the House. In answer to a question that the newspaper put to him yesterday asking about what man was the greatest president he had ever worked with, that's when he said, "You should break that down in several areas." He said, "When you come to Lyndon Johnson, Lyndon Johnson was worth more to me than all the other presidents put together. When it came to the help of the Judiciary, he would sit down carefully and discuss these appointments, these judicial appointments." He said, "He gave me more help personally as an individual, he gave me more help than any man that's ever been in the White House, so you can understand how I would feel about Johnson."

F: Reversing it slightly, but when you were secretary of the interior and he was a relatively new senator, did you all have much opportunity for a professional relationship at that time?

C: Yes, we did because the Department of Interior is a conglomerate of a lot of bureaus put together, and they are so mixed and so many of them. For instance, the Bureau of Reclamation is in the Department of the Interior. Well, the Texans wanted a dam down there some place. Well, the Reclamation boys had to visit, and we asked Johnson to send his fellows in and let them come in, their engineers, and go

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over their plats and over their charts and let us see what the plan is and let our engineers examine it. Then we'll have to do a field job on it, do a study on it. "Now, we'll follow it through for you if it's feasible. If we think it's feasible and can be done, then we will be able to follow it. If I get a favorable report on this, I know we can put it through. Ickes thinks a good deal of you, and he'll do anything for you." And he would, he'd do anything for Johnson.

He [Johnson] was really an unusual man. He was a man that had a great strength, widespread support through the country, and wasn't concentrated just on one group or the other. It was so well scattered and his help to the people when he was in the Senate. I would go to see him about a reclamation dam or power line and fish and wildlife reserve he wanted to set up somewhere in Texas, or somewhere else. He was always ahead of the other crowd. He was one of the best conservationists that I think we've ever had in the country.

Roosevelt started off the conservation program in the beginning of his term and he stayed long enough to get it established thoroughly in the minds of people. But when it comes right down to it, Johnson did more in the few years he had as president than Roosevelt did in twelve. Roosevelt started them off. You have to give him credit for initiating everything, but Johnson would personally work on them. He knew how to work with the structure on the Hill. His great strength was his knowledge of the power structure on the Hill. He knew where the power was in Congress, he knew exactly to what degree "I can depend on this fellow or that one." One of his greatest strengths was his

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ability to spot a man that's on his committee and soon work on him. If he needs a little convincing, Johnson would go to work on that, and he'd do some convincing.

And Johnson did more personal work than any one of the presidents did as far as personally working on individual projects for conservation. Now the conservation was pretty heavily centered in our Department of Interior. Ickes was a known conservationist.

I got a lot of my training and thoughts under him and I admired him for his stability in sticking to the issues on these things. Ickes got along with Johnson wonderfully. He got along with him swell.

There wasn't many of the southern senators that he did get along with, because it wasn't easy for him to get along with anybody.

But he did get along [with Johnson] and Johnson knew how to work with him.

F: I was going to ask, do you think that it was a case of Ickes making a special effort to get along with Johnson, or is it that Johnson knew how to sort of keep Ickes on his side?

C: Well, it's part of both. Ickes soon discovered that, in his mind, Johnson was really trying to help him with his department. That'd be showing up to Ickes, not through the press, not through the things like that, but Ickes would know that Johnson had talked to Senator so-and-so on this bill that Ickes was dying to get and working hard for, and Ickes knew what he was doing personally. That made him lean towards Johnson anyway, thinking that he was a friend.

F: He knew he had a good follow-through.

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C: That's right. On the other hand, Johnson by the same token, as I said, knew the power structure on the Hill. He also knew the power structure in the executive departments. He knew where the power was, and it's a shifting sand. He'd know right where that sand was going all the time. He was ahead of them all the time, Johnson was. He could work with a man on his committee for a few weeks and he could spot where that man is going for ten years, he could spot from his record what he was going to do. He had the best analysis of individuals on his committee that I've ever known a man to have. Now I could only say that based upon the fact that I talked with Johnson on so many things. When I was in the department and wanted some help on something, I'd go to Johnson. I'd say to Johnson for instance, "Senator so-and-so is going to try to kill our bill. Ickes is pretty strong for this bill and he's very sincere about it. He wants it badly." One time he said, "Why didn't he call me up before he introduced that bill?" I said, "He has never learned the basic facts of political life like you have. You would have called anybody that was needed from the elevator operator to the speaker of the House. You would have called any of them if you'd have thought they could give you one ounce of help because you knew where to put pressure. You knew everywhere to put the pressure." I've said this to Lyndon.

They probably may think I got cooled on Johnson because I didn't go to the White House much when he was there, but it wasn't that. I couldn't go.

F: It was a bad time for you.



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C: Terrible time for me, I was having a terrible time. He accepted that.

F: Did he knew it?

C: Yes, he learned about it later.

F: Did you all ever discuss mutual heart problems?

C: No, we never have mentioned it to each other. We never once mentioned it to one another.

F: You're both living proof that you don't have to give up just because you've had an attack.

C: You don't have to give up. You can live with them and reasonably comfortably, you can live with them for many years. If you take care of yourself, you can extend your life to just about a normal lifetime. Because I never dreamed I would have lived ten years more back in 1960. I thought then that I would never last to seventy, and I'm seventy-five years, be seventy-six October 22.

F: You look better than you did in August.

C: I do. I weigh more. I weigh 156 pounds. Johnson's heart attack gave me encouragement because I saw what he did after that. Look what he accomplished after he had had that, you see! Look what he accomplished after he had had his heart attack!

F: That's really where the bulk of his reputation was made. It had all been solid work until then, but he was just beginning to emerge good.

C: That's right. He was just beginning to surface to the public about that period.

F: Did you see him during his convalescence in 1955?

C: Not much, but I saw him. I saw him just once in his convalescence,

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because as a matter of fact--let's see, his was in 1955, wasn't it?

F: Yes.

C: Mine was just five years later. He didn't know it at the time, and I didn't tell it at the time, but I later got it across I think to him and tried to--

F: If you hadn't had your attack when you did, and could have really put in hard twenty-hour days at that critical period, do you think it would have made any difference? Or do you think the Kennedys had things too well sewed up?

C: They had it too well sewed up. Nothing I could have done would have made that much difference. I could have helped some. There were places I felt I could add some delegates to his convention vote. But on the other hand, I couldn't do for Johnson what I wanted to do and what I knew ought to have been done for him. It wasn't done and there was no one that seemed to fill my shoes in the areas in which I was pretty well operating, you see, pretty well established.

F: While Johnson was president, did he ever talk with you about his own problems concerning the Department of Interior or his relationship with Udall?

C: Yes, he talked to me. Only once did he talk to me about the department as a department and about Secretary Udall's operation.

F: Did he seem to be reasonably well satisfied with Udall's administration?

C: Yes, I think he was. I think he was fairly well satisfied with it. Secretary Udall made a good secretary. There were many things that

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different economic groups wouldn't like [about] him, but they wouldn't like anybody. They wouldn't have liked me any better. That's the way that thing went. Udall did a good job as a secretary. And when you follow a man like Harold Ickes that had made the kind of reputation he had, he's pretty hard to follow [for] any man. And I didn't follow him immediately afterwards anyway, I had waited seven or eight years between then.

You see, I was appointed in 1949 as secretary [of the interior] and that only gave me about three years, not quite four years I had served as secretary. I served as under secretary for three years.

F: Did President Truman ever talk to you about Johnson?

C: Oh, yes. Yes, we've talked about him. He was very fond of Johnson.

F: Even while he was president, he got to feel fairly close to him?

I know he did later after he was out.

C: Yes, even when he was president, he felt Johnson was fair to him, not that he would have done some of the things the way Johnson had done them, or what he would have supported. There were many things that Lyndon supported that I know Truman would not have supported. But, on the other hand, as I say, every man has to be at that place at the right time to accomplish these things. Well, Truman was here at his time and Johnson was here at the right time.

F: Getting back to Johnson as president and the Department of the Interior, did you feel that his coming from a state that associated with oil made any difference at all in his procedures?

C: Not at all. You mean a difference in Johnson's procedures?

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F: Yes.

C: No, not one bit. I don't think it made the slightest difference in the world in what the ultimate decisions came out to be.

F: You don't think even subconsciously he represented the Texas oil industry then?

C: No, people overplayed that so much that it lost whatever punch it had. That one thing was played up so much that the people began to feel like after a while, well, if everything is so bad as that, what's the trouble with Congress? Why can't they change it? These people are elected, they go down there every two years and every four or six years to represent us, now why don't they do it? Well, after carrying this argument on for twenty years or so from the time Lyndon got here, they always kept trying to hook onto him the question that he played the oil boys. Now you see, they're attaching that over to President Nixon. Now they're trying to make that issue stick on President Nixon. Now it's not taking, that part of the campaign is not taking on at all, because they've heard it so much. They've heard it so much and under so many presidents, they can't understand that if it's so bad, why is it so bad all of a sudden here again.

F: It gets bad every four years.

C: It just gets bad every four years. Up until that time we depend on them to be sure that they have a reserve supply of gas and oil to carry us through crisis. I say crisis, I saw one which I had something to do with in terms of the Korean War, during that period. We had some very close crises in there for lack of gas and oil and

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we had to do some pretty hard work to get that in. If I had not have appointed that one-hundred man committee from the oil industry, I'd never have gotten it organized in the world to have gotten that oil out in such a way as we did. Now you wonder what I did. Here was one thing I did: I appointed a committee of one hundred that represented every level of the industry. In every case, I insisted on the top man of that company. I would only take the top man, and then if he wanted to send an assistant sometimes, I would accept him for a few times, but we wouldn't just let him switch another man to come down, we wouldn't let him do that. Now they came in and they met regularly, these one hundred men. Well, what the first thing was that we did, the way I saw the effects of what I was doing, politically I was being crucified for that because of my so-called liberal friends and myself, they were criticizing me pretty heavily for working so closely with the oil industry. I know when the Democratic chairman called Truman on the phone and talked to Truman and told him what I had done, that I had appointed the chairman of that committee a Republican national committeeman from West Virginia. Now to tell you to be honest and true, this is exactly the way I ran the whole department from top to bottom. I absolutely didn't know what that guy was, I didn't know whether he was a Democrat or a Republican, I didn't know. But he turned out to be the national committeeman, the Republican committeeman from West Virginia, so he was very active in the party functionaries and working close with the oil industry.

But the Committee of One Hundred picked him. Well, if that

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Committee of One Hundred wanted him, that meant he was the most likely man that could unify the operations of the petroleum industry. And I didn't have the time--time was not on my side--to let me have the time to talk and visit and convince and twist the arms of all these oil people to get them to get together and stop squabbling and cut out the price cutting business and everything else. I didn't have the time. No human being could have done that. I had to have somebody that knew the oil business and I had to have somebody that was reasonably honest as I could find out. You can't find out everything about a man when you appoint him. You sometimes think you have and then you find out you haven't. But I was lucky. This man turned out to be a whizbang, he was really good. He was the chairman of the Committee of One Hundred.

I appeared before the War Production Board once to present the needs of the petroleum industry because they couldn't go before them personally. I as secretary of the interior would present their requests. [They] had been studied; I had a committee of five that would study the oil lease requests that would come into my office, the requests of all these oil people. There was something very unique about this. They worked on this thing as hard as if they were working on the payroll of the federal government. I don't know any one of those men, but I don't believe any of them, I don't know of anyone that I could think that would try to do anything to jeopardize his reputation or his country's interest in this crisis. Because we were in a crisis all around, far more so than the country knew. And we couldn't tell them or else they would have been scared

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to death if they'd have known what a close picture we were in there for a while; for about six months we were in a very tight picture with the lack of fuel oil and gas.

F: You don't want to give that much heart to the enemy either.

C: No, no, that was the point. You see, I couldn't tell that to the public, I couldn't tell that kind of thing. Neither would the President.

When one of these men, one of my Democratic friends that was politically minded, went to see the President, he said, "Mr. President, do you know what Oscar Chapman's doing?" "Well," he says, "I think he's doing a good job, if that's what you believe." He said, "Now, that isn't the point. He's doing a good job in some respects, politically he's crucifying you." He said, "How is he crucifying me?" "Well," he said, "Did you know that he appointed the Republican national committeeman from West Virginia to be chairman of that petroleum committee?" He said, "How did he get that chairman recommended?" "Well," he said, "I know he had the Committee of One Hundred representing the total of the level of all the industry, one hundred of these people got together and they recommended this man from West Virginia."

F: Do you remember the man's name?

C: Yes, he was president of that little oil company. Was it Plymouth Oil Company?

F: I don't know. It doesn't matter.

C: It was a medium-sized company.

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F: Do you find in not necessarily that crucial a problem, but in any problem like that when you name a committee that most people do not play politics with it but they just try to make as nearly intelligent and decent solution as they can?

C: Well, I'll tell you this. What's your alternative? Now you have to look at the total picture of what you are in, what is the frame of mind the country is in? Now you go in here and start appointing nothing but Civil Service employees that are already in the government, or you bring some in and appoint them as Civil Service appointees and put them in. And in about six months' time, or it wouldn't take that long, at least not more than six months, you would have the darnedest kickback you ever saw because, first place, you're putting together a group of conglomerates that are not specialized in this subject. They are not specialists in this subject, except as consumers, and they are the worst people in the world to pick as chairman of a committee who think they're representing anybody. They have no channels, not sufficient channels to speak, not enough today, where the consumers can have a voice in the policies as they are established and set here by executive orders and other things.

Now, I don't believe that you will find any better group as a whole. Sure, you'll run across some of them that will maybe overplay his hand and look like he's too favorable to some friendly oil competitor or oil friend. You finally check it out and you find out when you get through with it he hasn't really been favoring the



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fellow in particular. He may have just been acting, presumably, on the other side, really not being a help to his own company by doing this. But he wouldn't get any credit for doing it, because they'd say he was in there representing the oil companies. They'll still do that, they're still going to do that, they're not through talking about this yet. They'll talk about it for another seven or eight years, and about that time it'll run its course. It's going to take about another ten years before it runs its course. Then I think that people are going to settle down on that question and begin to look at the truth and the facts as they are and not as they are presented, politically speaking. To present the facts as they are and let the people decide. I have a pretty good faith in the total advice that is given their government by their senators and congressmen and their friends of the government. They have a pretty good sense of what's fair and they like to see it played fair. If a man is caught doing something of that nature, they pretty much wash him out, the public does, they'll do it for you. And he'll be washed out of public business as far as any public kudos are concerned. He's not going anywhere, because he'll be through in a little while. Now that's just the status of the picture as I see it. First, Johnson coming from an oil state couldn't have handled that oil thing any better, I don't think. I had a great deal to do with that before he came in, but they followed my policy. They never changed that one. They followed my policies and I had followed Ickes' policies. Ickes had done a pretty darn good job

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of getting most of the oil people mad at him so they were glad to see me or anybody else come in! But again, they overplayed their hands, that was their trouble at one time. I'll tell you that name of the chairman of that committee of one hundred oil people was Walter Halloran [?] from West Virginia. He was the national Republican committeeman. Now I can honestly say to you I did not know what his politics was. I had no idea.

F: You couldn't tell from the results. He just ran a good committee.

C: You couldn't tell from the results, to save your life you couldn't tell. And I could catch a fellow playing favorites with these committees very quickly, and I've had a lot of committees.

But I will always appreciate President Truman's supporting me in that fight. I told the President, "Mr. President, this oil thing is hard enough to handle with all the cooperation I can possibly get from the administration. If I'm going to be cut to pieces by our Democratic committee and our political friends, and expect me to run it and do a good job, a creditable job, as the management of this program, I'll tell you now I can't do it. Either I'm going to have to run the department or you'll have to let them run it through some stooge of theirs. You've got a choice." And I said, "I'm no stooge of theirs, and neither am I an enemy of theirs. I try to play fair with them. I know something about the oil business, and I know how they operate. They get what they can when the getting is good, and every other businessman does."

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F: Truman saw your viewpoint?

C: He did see my viewpoint and he told this particular fellow--unfortunately he's dead now, I don't like to comment like that on a fellow when he's dead, but the chairman of the national committee was a senator and he was going in to see the President with two good marks up for him, being chairman and a senator. Well, that didn't add one single thing as far as the President was concerned. He wanted to know, "What have you got here that you disagree with Chapman about? What is it?" He couldn't tell him except this one case.

And he said, "I'll bet you Chapman didn't even know the man was a Republican." I knew he was going to do that, at least I had been tipped off on that, so I wrote a memorandum for the President on it and gave him a memorandum about it.

F: All of my adult life, the 27 1/2 per cent oil depletion allowance has been an issue. Is this a fundamental issue or is it one of those sort of superficial ones that won't go away? Of course it's been reduced lately, but--

C: Well, let me say this. I don't think it's going to go away per se. I think it will go through a period in which they will campaign on it about another year, another term. Then I look for it to begin to turn the wheels around, and unless by chance, McGovern, if he should be elected, would no doubt make a real effort to modify the whole tax structure on oil. President Nixon will follow the policies that he has followed in the past four years. He will be favorable to the oil people, but I don't think you will find him, well, say,

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breaking his neck to try to help them as opposed to the interest of the other fellow. Because Nixon is a shrewd political man and he's no fool. He knows what is a lasting thing and what blows away with the wind. Now this issue will go away someday, I hope. But if I'm wrong, our own friends ought to get together and watch for the opportunity to organize a little support for a modified change if it's needed. What's needed now. I tell you, you've got to be an economist to tell. I know more about the oil business than just the average fellow walking down the street, but not much more. And to try to advise a man, the president of the United States, on petroleum matters, you've got to be an economist. You've got to understand the basic principles of the economics of your country. If you don't, you can't give him very lasting advice. What you may give would be short-sighted.

Now that's where every president is in that spot when he gets under that. Now, how they can get it reversed and changed, I don't know.

F: Did President Johnson ever talk to you about the difficulties of reconciling the need for a continued flow of oil reserves from the Arab countries and getting along with the commitment to Israel? Because you're got a basic contradiction there.

C: Absolutely. Yes, I had talked with him about that, not very much, but out of the course of the years we had some talks briefly about them. I've never had a real good talk with him about it. I would like to have had, but I didn't have a chance to. Now, you see, in Johnson's term of office I was not in the government and so I'm

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[at a disadvantage].

F: It kind of caught you at something less than your best, didn't it?

C: Well, it did. You see, I was not at my best position to even try to advise Johnson. He goes to the White House and I had left the Department of Interior, and I'm not any particular help to him in that way. He couldn't have reappointed me as secretary of interior. That would have been a political mistake to have done it, and I would have told him so. I'd serve under Johnson, be delighted to serve, but not back in the Department of Interior. That would be a bad spot.

F: Did you all ever discuss an appointment for you?

C: No, we never talked over one, we never discussed one of any kind. Because I had more or less dropped the hint to some of the boys close to him that I was not looking for reappointment, I wasn't looking for anything, any appointment of any kind.

F: You don't want really to get back into that?

C: I don't want to go back into that. I just wanted to quit and open my law office.

F: Yes. Did you plant any seeds in Lady Bird's beautification ideas?

C: Well, I have talked with her about it. I did talk with her about it, but that was really her idea. It was mostly hers than anybody else's. She caught the scent of this beautiful rose. She's proud of it. She got it. She was out walking one day and she saw what a beautiful place we could make of this: this is the capital of the United States, we have lots of money to spend, we ought to put some on this. Not too much, but put more than we're putting in it, to get it going.

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And that's what she wanted to do.

F: As I don't have to tell you, effective government is the reconciling of irreconcilable differences, to some extent. Now then, over in Interior you've got one between what you want to do in conservation and what the Corps of Engineers wants to do.

C: Plus what Reclamation wants to do.

F: Yes.

C: You've got all three of those.

F: Did you ever talk with Mr. Johnson on this that you recall?

C: Oh, yes, we discussed that.

F: What do you do, just try to balance? Juggle?

C: We discussed this while he was in the Senate. I was over there as assistant secretary and under secretary. I talked with him in those years about how that could be done and how it ought to be done. I said, "You just can't pick up a pencil and write a note to somebody and say, 'I'm hereby transferring Reclamation to Agriculture,' or 'Corps of Engineers to the Interior' just to put them together." I said, "That's not putting them together. They'll carry the same program that they've had. They won't be doing a thing in this world different." I said, "What you've got to do is to have it approached from an economic base and have a good economist sit down and devote about twelve months to preparing a memorandum on this, study it. Or else it's a very important bureau that spends millions of our dollars. Spends a lot of our dollars on dams and canals and things of that kind." And we were building power lines.

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Now, I went to see Johnson once about a power line. I never will forget this. I went up to see him once; I wanted a power line in my budget. And I got it into the budget all right and got it up on the Hill. That means getting it through your Bureau of the Budget's approval and everybody else's, and then you get it up to the committees. You drop it on the committeeman's lap. There's always a sponsor for it. You get that lined up first. So you get your sponsor for it to put the bill in. He drops the bill in and then he starts his fight and we begin to prepare a memorandum for it. We'd give him the memorandum about the project and all the study that we've got about it. We will have made by that time, by the time a case reaches that point in legislation, a complete economic study and feasibility study of that project, so we'll have that already done when I drop it on his desk. Therefore, when I put that piece of legislation on the chairman's desk, I'm at that point committing the department and myself to supporting it. I'm committed for it and I'm asking their support for it.

I had a very good time with my appropriations. You spoke a moment ago about during Johnson's administration that there was never a real scandal. There never was any of any kind. I'm happy to say that my record in the Department of Interior, as secretary of the interior, can only match his to this extent: there wasn't a single investigation of anybody or any bureau or any part of the department while I was secretary. There was not a single one.

F: That's remarkable because that touches lots of districts.

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C: There isn't a single department in government that hasn't had one. Every department has had one. I did not have a single investigation from Congress, committee in Congress, investigate something you've done wrong which they disagreed with, and something unethical that you may have done. There are several ways to get into trouble with them.

F: Or something you haven't done!

C: That's right, or something you haven't done. You can get caught either way. I was doing some research on that system, oh, quite a few years ago, and checked it, and I found that we didn't have a single resolution that was passed in Congress to investigate me or any top official in my department or anybody else in the department, nobody. There was not any of them ever called up and abused like I've seen them do some of these fellows. And then I saw now-Secretary of Defense here, Laird, is one of the toughest operators he's got in that cabinet. And he's going to quit, he isn't going to stay. He feels like he's found out where the power lies and he doesn't like it like he thought he would. Practically every secretary of defense finds out that after three or four years. They find out where the power is.

F: It's not in the secretary?

C: It's not in the secretary! You know, that's a thing that any new man has to learn. The quicker he learns it, the faster his reputation goes up and he becomes the spotlight right away. Johnson made a reputation here that is solid and valid in every respect of a man that could accomplish any desirable piece of legislation that



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he wanted. I say desirable, if it's a good piece of legislation, he can get it through. Now, that doesn't mean that all of them agree with him. Some of them don't. But Johnson knew when to trade with a congressman or senator. They speak of that--I'm not speaking of it in terms of downgrading a man's reputation for trading for votes. You try to persuade every man you know to help you get some votes sometimes to get a bill through Congress. You have to work pretty darn hard to get it. But they always tried to downgrade Johnson to me on the grounds that he was a man that traded all the time. Well, I say to you, what man ever got to be majority leader of the Senate that didn't trade to get there in the first place? Now I know the old rule of seniority plays in their favor, these older boys, as it comes along, and it saves them a lot of hard work now to be there. But in the meantime they assume a lot of responsibility when they take on those assignments, and they are pretty darn tough to handle. A man that don't know how to handle his colleague over here, John Smith, just doesn't have the respect of these people. You've got ninety-nine people in there listening to you making a speech about some given subject, and if you see a fellow on the floor--I've seen Johnson do this many times--go up to a man, put his arms around his shoulders, and it's easy for him to put his arms and let them drop over a man's shoulders because he's a tall man with long arms and he just put his arms over one of his shoulders--

F: Just envelope him really.

C: He does take you in. I mean physically and mentally, he takes you in.

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He'll talk to that fellow for three or four minutes and he's got an agreement with him right away before you know it. And Johnson knows what to trade. He knows he's got something in that bill he can afford to trade out and he's willing to trade it out when the time comes. He knows when to trade and there's nothing bad in that, if you go to get a bill through and you're interested in that bill and believe in it, and you believe in your bill and I believe in it enough to go and talk to a congressman or a senator to vote for it. And he's got an economic, feasible project in his district that ought to be built anyhow, why shouldn't you go ahead and tell him you're going to build it? I don't mean just horse trading back and forth political stuff. You can carry that to an extreme and become ridiculous. Well, people soon find you out if you're that kind of a trader. Johnson never traded the people off, he never traded them off.

F: Did he ever talk to you about the possible reorganization of the Department of Interior?

C: Yes, we had only a brief talk. He talked to Ickes quite a bit about that and he discussed it with--

F: This has been, you know, something that never really happens but continues to bother people.

C: It does bother a lot of people, and to bother a man like Johnson, because, to him, he could see the incompetency that is created by this kind of a conglomerate that's put together like this. It isn't

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put together on the basis of any sound operating basis. It's just thrown together because of, in most cases, some friendship some way.

F: Right. Dealing with Indian hospitals and land and--

C: Yes, you're dealing with over a half billion acres of land, public land in Alaska and in the United States.

F: Then you've got the Forest Service over in Agriculture, where you can't get at it, you know.

C: Forest Service in Agriculture where you can't get at it at all. They locked that up. You can't get at that at all. And the Indian Service, there's no more reason for it to be in the Interior Department than it is over in the Welfare Department or somewhere else. Which means so many of those bureaus were put over there not because of any great economic savings or study was made.

F: Just got to be put somewhere.

C: It's just got to be put somewhere and they just put it there. A lot of it that's there now, Secretary Ickes wanted these things. He tried to get more of them, he tried his damndest to get the Forest Service transferred over to him and put it under the Land Office. Well, as a matter of fact, it really belongs in the Land Office.

F: There's some logic in it.

C: There's logic in it. There's more public land in the public land side of this operation than there is Forest Service, and yet they put the Forest Service over by itself, and put the rest of it all over in the Interior Department. They don't know where to draw the line or what principle you use to draw the line on on Forest

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Service land as different from the public land itself. They'll get into a filibuster in a committee about a thing like that, and they'll talk it to death trying to get somebody to sponsor and support a real proper reorganization over there.

Every bureau chief has built his own powerhouse if he's in there very long. When he gets his powerhouse built, then he can go to town. If Ickes had had two places, Secretary of Defense or the Health and Welfare Department, he would have made two departments out of those places! He would really have made a department out of the Defense Department.

F: I would have liked to have seen him working over some of those generals.

C: Oh, I'd have loved to have seen him attack that.

F: And without taking any sides, it would have just been a nice contest to watch.

C: You know, at one time he wanted that. He loved Interior work, but at one time he really wanted that. To me, I didn't want just any kind of a job here. I wanted certain [things]. I liked the Interior Department. It had all of the bureaus that I had been crusading about on one thing or another.

You see, I had been somewhat of a crusader on all of the minority issues that you see these days talked about, and here the Office of Education was in the Interior Department of the United States when I came in. I went to a board meeting. I was on the Board or Trustees of Howard University. You see, they were under the Office

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of Education, Howard University. That's practically an all-black school, not quite; there are a few white fellows in there. But it was supposed to be a black school. Congress appropriated twenty million last year, I think, for that school to run on. It was only about five million when Ickes and myself got hold of it. We pushed it on up and made it a first-class school, and made a first-class record.

Then you go from that picture of a school like they--you wonder what's the Office of Education doing in the Interior Department? No particular reason; there's no particular reason at all for the Office of Education to be in there. It belongs in the HEW more than it would any of the established departments. Now, this building spree we've got on--that's going to wipe us out sooner or later. That isn't going to last long because what you're dealing with here, you're dealing with a charitable person that's in need on this side. And he needs help, he needs some help.

Well, you as a contractor and a businessman, that's how you make your living, you've got a bunch of contractors under you and you want to keep them busy so you bid for these contracts with the government. You bid to build one of these buildings over here at Howard University, for instance. You bid on that, you bid on this Metro transportation thing here, you bid on that to get it. You get it and, after you get it, it's tied up under the red tape of the bureaucratic rules and regulations that are laid down by those boys that have never run a business in their life, not on any subject. And you know sometimes

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when these fellows are up before Congress for confirmation, they make a mistake so often of trying to impress that committee that they are an expert on this particular subject or that particular subject.

You take a committee of twenty-five or thirty members of Congress and there'll be one on that committee that'll know more than you do about it. There'll be one, and the rest of them will follow him, because they've worked with him and they'll know what his thinking is. They either like it or don't like it, and vote it down every time he brings it up, or they'll vote anything he brings up. They'll do that because they've learned to know this man and tell by the questions he asks the Secretary of the Interior. They asked me some questions, "What would I do with the rum plant that we had in the Virgin Islands, if I ever became secretary of the interior?" I said, "I helped work for the settlement of that eighty thousand dollars that was owed our government in taxes by Denmark." They owned it, you see. And I said, "I worked to get that through. I still think it was good. But what was good yesterday may not be good tomorrow. You can't set this in a mold that's going to stay forever because, first place, the only thing that should stay permanent and solid for the people is the programs that will continue to stay for the benefit of the people. Where does the greatest benefit for the people come from? Some think it all comes from the government. Well, even so, it's just coming out of one of your pockets and putting it in the other one, that's what you're doing. But you don't understand the economics of all of these various things that have such an

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implication on the community. You build a big project in some place in Texas, it may be large or small, but according to that size it'll affect the economy to some extent.

Now, the thing that the people have got to learn more about is to learn more about the economic phase of our government and its relationship to business. And they'll find out that the injustices that they complain of are quite different from what they are really talking about in a way, because you can't spend all this money to do all these things that you've got on the program over here because here you've got a lot of Oscar Chapmans running around trying to put a new program in this year and Agriculture's running in another program. We're all trying to get a new program in, you see.

Now you can't do that unless somebody can pay the taxes, and you can't pay the taxes unless you're allowed a reasonable earning on your money. If you can't be given that privilege under some decent controls--not restrictions, I don't like restrictions, but decent controls, just enough--you cannot have a government control over industry and keep your economy level. You can't do it. It's been tried too many times. We've tried to buy our way through this maze of gobbledygook we put out here in these memoranda and these statements and everything here from different departments. And when you look back over it ten years later you wonder, "Why in the world did I sign that thing?" You read back and you find some memorandum in there that struck your fancy and you were impressed with it and you signed that piece of legislation you sent up on the Hill.

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Now, again I say, if you don't understand the economics of the country as a whole, you ought not be in the cabinet at all because a cabinet officer has so much strength, so much power. He can do so many things that a lot of them don't do but they ought to be doing, they ought to be working on some things they're not working on. But a cabinet member's strength only lasts as long as he has the good will and working relationship with the President. When that working relationship with the President is not present and ever-existing, then you are no more good. You're through. You can't put through anything. So a man ought to have sense enough to quit when it reaches that, he ought to quit.

F: Shifting slightly, I want to ask you one more question. Did you ever observe Johnson's relationship with Adlai Stevenson while Stevenson was UN ambassador? Did either one of them ever talk to you about it?

C: Yes, I have.

F: Was it reasonably warm?

C: I talked to Stevenson more than I did Johnson about that, one reason being the circumstances, physical: I was in Washington and he had gone back to his Ranch to get ready to be the president. But when Stevenson was appointed, let's see--

(Interruption. Long blank space on tape.)

C: I think your point is well taken there. I think there was some basis for Stevenson believing he might be able to get it.

F: Secretary of state.

C: Secretary of state. He was not bitter about it. I talked with him



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about the subject. We discussed it after he'd been in a while. I was over at the White House one day when we presented a sculpture of Mrs. Roosevelt, a bust.

F: This was to Kennedy?

C: No, this was Johnson.

F: This was Johnson.

C: Johnson had come in then. And we took this sculpture and Johnson made the little presentation of taking it for the government, made a little acceptance speech, and Stevenson made a little speech. After we got through there--I didn't get to talk to President Johnson at that moment, he was being so crowded, there were so many people crowding him, I didn't have the heart to try to take his time--Stevenson asked me to go up to his hotel with him, and I did. He said, "I just wanted to talk to you, Oscar." He said, "I miss our visits." I used to visit with Stevenson a great deal on a regular basis.

I was very fond of Stevenson and I wanted to see him reach his goal if he wanted to, but I told him if his goal could not be reached "through any channels that are open politically for you now, it's just that they're not open. And your option for it is very limited." We talked for a while and he told me then that he was very discouraged over how the State Department's attitude was towards running of the

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United Nations, and otherwise, in effect, going around him. They were doing that and putting him in his place. He was very discouraged, Stevenson was. He was very discouraged and unhappy about that. He didn't like it at all.

But Johnson didn't have any tone of ill-feeling that I caught at all because he had the same reaction about Stevenson that I think that all of us who really loved Stevenson [had. We] were very fond of him. We regretted that he couldn't communicate better to the political structure of the country. He could communicate with a certain element.

F: Came across superbly there.

C: Yes, perfect. But he couldn't quite reach where the power rested, he never could hit that bull's eye in there. Johnson learned that. The first thing he did when he got to Washington was to learn where the power rested and in whom.

F: You were instrumental in getting a bust made of Stevenson and presented. Tell me about that. Were you able to go to the ceremony?

C: No. I couldn't go to some of the things I'd even done. No, I couldn't go to that ceremony. Now you know, in a bust for President Johnson, I'm sure that the top officials of the party are going to take care of that if they haven't already. I don't know if there's been any talk about it or not.

F: I don't know either.

C: I'd like to find out. For instance, what I would like to do would be to--first, you've got this memorial library you've got down there at

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the University. I want something a little bit different from that. All the late presidents have libraries, Roosevelt and Eisenhower and Truman.

F: I guess it goes back to Hoover.

C: It goes back to Hoover, yes. They all have libraries. That's a good thing; it's very good to keep the papers of that particular regime available for the public record. But on the other hand, I want to see something for President Johnson here in Washington where the people when they come here and they see the busts that we have around here now, the historical figures, I'd like to see Johnson's bust among them. And it ought to be among them. Now look what we've got for Lincoln and Jefferson. Certainly Lincoln and certainly Jefferson, Jefferson more so than anybody else, was very strong in the field of education, and libraries relate themselves to education. And that's very good. But I look over here every day at the mall and see Jefferson's monument over there, and I look down on the other side and I see Lincoln down there. I wish something of that kind could be discussed, but I don't know who's close to Johnson down there that's handling personal things of this kind. Somebody ought to take this up and begin to quietly decide on what he wants on a thing like that. Would he want another one besides the Library or would he think that would be too much?

Now remember Congress has appropriated money for a lot of these things. I would like to see Johnson's acquired from a lot of poor people, a lot of people, because he did more for them. Outside of

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Roosevelt, he did more for them than any other president, you see. I'd like to see them have a bust here in Washington. It was the poor people of this country that elected Johnson and Truman both, it was the poor people that elected them. The lower income group elected both of those men.

F: Well, you know, of course, he was totally ignored at the Democratic National Convention, but I had a feeling a lot of those people were there because of policies that had been set in motion during the Johnson Administration. Otherwise they never would have made it.

C: That's right. They wouldn't have been there at all. If Johnson hadn't have plugged up the holes in some of these structures they were building around, none of them would have been there hardly, would have been to the convention. So that's the thing that I'm concerned about, where are they going with this kind of thing. Well, I could talk all day.

F: I've taken a good share of your afternoon.

C: No, I could talk all day on Johnson. I just wish that people in the country knew him as I knew him. I wish they knew how much he had contributed and against odds with his health for so long. I have a sympathy for that. I just would like to make this contribution trying to tell the people who do research on books for the future, that they try to see a little, just a little spot on this record of what Johnson did do. Because not enough of our leaders are saying the things they ought to be saying right now about Johnson. It ought to be written about him now, but they're not doing it, not enough

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of them. There ought to be more of them written.

The other day I had a very interesting experience. A friend of mine sent me a clipping of a newspaper from San Francisco. What's the paper in San Francisco?

F: The Chronicle?

C: Chronicle. There was a paper there, half a sheet, it wasn't an ad, half a sheet, with a picture of Judge Ben Lindsey that I worked with in the Juvenile Court for eight years. I saw where the power lies then. He's the first man who taught me that if you're looking to help this group, find the power wheel. He taught me that, Lindsey did.

[He was] the man who wrote Companionate Marriage, his best-selling book; he'd written very few books. There's a man who has now written his biography on Lindsey and they had this picture in The Chronicle with two pictures: one of the Judge and his wife; he married a very young girl for his age, and then another picture taking up the other part of the ad of the paper, another picture of the Judge with Our Gang kids. You know the picture they used to have? He had his picture taken with Our Gang. I loved that.

Well, Judge Lindsey--here that was in 1920 that I started to work with him, worked for him until 1928. I won't go through the political hassles we had during that time when we were fighting the Klan so hard there that year. Lindsey was the only Democrat that got through, all the rest of them were beaten by then. Lindsey took the Klan on. He was the only Democrat in the whole place.

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F: This was in Colorado?

C: In Denver.

F: In Denver.

C: Yes. He was the only one. And I was happy to say that I lived long enough in good health that I got the Supreme Court of Colorado to reverse its decisions on Judge Lindsey and to reinstate him to the bar. They had disbarred him and had already fined him too. I got such a good committee together and working, and we put such heat on the court that they reversed themselves 100 per cent and reinstated Lindsey and everything.

F: That alone justifies your having been here, not to mention other things you've done.

C: Well, then I come along down the road here with Johnson in Washington along with these big fellows and had this wonderful opportunity to work with important people. I never met Roosevelt but once before his election. I saw him just one time and that was when he ran for vice president; I saw him that year.

F: You mean with Cox?

C: Yes, with Cox.

Lindsey was a great mentor of mine. He was a great hero of mine. I was so happy to get the record straight out there and get him reinstated and completely wipe the record clean. When I took the bar examination, I refused to retract my statement that I had made to the public that I did not agree with the Supreme Court's decision, thought it was 100 per cent wrong, but I believed most of the Court

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were innocently led into a fight that they don't realize started twenty years ago. The next question the reporter asked me, "What was that fight?" Well, that was when Judge Lindsey sent the Chief Justice here to jail! (Laughter) I made that statement, and they tried to make me retract it. I said, "How can I retract it? It's printed on the front page of your paper here." I had gotten that old paper out of twenty years before, Lindsey had sent this old Chief Justice to jail. And here he had me up there haggling with me because I had made that statement, and he was jumping all over Lindsey. We beat the living pants off of him when he ran for ten-year office. We beat the pants off of him when he ran again. And interesting enough, we beat him with a man that was in Congress here during Wilson's administration who voted against Wilson for the war, and he was so unpopular he got defeated when he ran again. But he waited until the gate was open and he was there the next time. And at the right time, he was [re-elected].

This has been a pleasure to visit with you this afternoon.

F: Well, thank you, sir.

C: Johnson is a man that you could enjoy spending all day to visit with anybody about.

F: Right.

C: I wish I could talk like this to all of the people. I wish I could talk with them.

F: I'll give you all the opportunity I can. Thank you, Mr. Chapman.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview II]

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Mrs. Oscar L. Chapman (Ann C.)  
Donor

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Date

Dorothy King  
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