

INTERVIEW II

DATE: August 16, 1972

INTERVIEWEE: MARIE FEHMER CHIARODO

INTERVIEWER: Joe B. Frantz

PLACE: Mrs. Chiarodo's residence, Washington, D.C.

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- F: Does the job of being secretary to the Vice President carry any kind of Civil Service status, or are you just sort of at his pleasure?
- C: It was at his pleasure. The payroll at the very beginning was the payroll of the United States Senate. As president of the Senate he had a payroll there, and that's the first payroll that I was on.
- F: His staff was completely independent of the White House budget [when he was] vice president?
- C: Oh, yes. Oh yes, completely. The only way that he got into the White House budget, I would think, would be in his role as chairman of the Space Council. Now that would be executive office funds, in contrast to the legislative funds of the Senate. I did go on that payroll maybe six months later. But when I first came to Washington I was employed by the United States Senate at \$4800 a year, which is the lowest thing someone can come in on. I don't know as to whether or not it was a Civil Service grade at that time, I really don't.

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F: I don't either. You had that first kind of half starry-eyed and half-confused week. Did you ever have time to go back and really check out of your old life into your new?

C: I never did. My mother still at this moment has some things at home that she packed up from the sorority house that day. I guess the only thing that I did as far as going to check in at that life again was to take off one day to go graduate, for the ceremony, so my parents could see that. No, I never did. For someone who really was quite deliberate in all of her plans I would think about a decision for a long time I cannot imagine how I made this terrible transfer in my life. I did hold one piece of insurance: I would not give up that fellowship at Oklahoma until August. I held on to that without telling anybody.

F: All through the summer.

C: Yes, yes.

F: At any point did he ever tell you, "You're fine. You're in. You're here," or did that just come?

C: No, no, no. I don't guess that came until a year or so later, and then it never came; you just felt it.

F: You'd just get the sense that you had the job.

C: Yes. I knew that I had a job in that he didn't send me home, because we had said that it would be tried for a week or so. And then I also figured out fairly early that I felt that I could understand him. I remember I guess one of my first weeks there when Juanita [Roberts] and I were working in what was then called P-38, which is an office right off of the Senate floor. All of the phones were ringing, and there must have been eight. There were three gangly constituents at the desk asking questions. I looked at Juanita and I

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said, "My goodness, I can only do one thing at a time." She said, "No, you can't, you'll learn to do more," and I did. By the time we finished the White House, I had a telephone set with sixty buttons on it, and I could manage all of that.

F: Did you have kind of a secretarial hierarchy there with Juanita at the peak?

C: Oh, yes. When I first went into P-38, there was a favorite expression that the Johnson people had that he was always "stirring the pot." This is how he kept people alert. You never knew whether or not you were going to be slapped to the files, given a big assignment one day, or sent to Siberia. You didn't know what was going to happen to you. You were alert and on your toes. When I first went in there my memory is that there were five people in that little room: Juanita and myself; Geraldine Williams, the girl from Hillsboro who married Bob Novak; Colonel Jackson; and his secretary Lynn Machado.

F: Now, who's Colonel Jackson?

C: Bill Jackson. He was an army aide who was very anxious to do a good job. [Whispers] He didn't always succeed.

F: What became of him?

C: He was banished to somewhere.

F: That brings up something. I have heard that Lyndon Johnson never could bring himself to fire anyone

C: Now you're going to make him sound like [George] McGovern, and I don't want you to do that.

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F: Cno, but that he moved them into the basement or somewhere, found something else for them to do.

C: Yes, that's true. I really think so. When people say that today about McGovern, I call it weakness. If you say it about Lyndon Johnson, I call it kindness. That's because I'm prejudiced.

F: Yes, well, you can be forgiven that, I think.

Did you stay in Austin beyond that first week, or did you come back up pretty quickly? I don't remember.

C: We came up here very quickly.

F: How were you traveling in those days?

C: In a JetStar. Mrs. Johnson was with us and I think two Secret Service agents, I know Rufus Youngblood and Jerry Kivett. Rufus Youngblood at that time kept saying to me as a very young, frightened, starry-eyed [person], "Stop saying, 'Thank you, sir'." I remember my first sight of the Capitol.

F: You hadn't been to Washington previously, had you?

C: No. No. We landed at Andrews [Air Force Base], and there were no helicopters in those days; we drove in. Norman [Edwards] was waiting. We landed at Andrews, and I got my first look

F: Jack Valenti told me that the first night he came up here after the assassination, you know, he was in Dallas, they landed on the White House lawn, came through the White House, and went over into the Executive Office Building. He didn't know who was a butler and who was an official.

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C: I was lost that night. I have a long story about that. I got lost on that night. I was on that helicopter, too, but I got lost. But I'm stepping ahead, I'm sure.

F: Well, we'll come to that. Okay. So you landed at Andrews.

C: Norman, the driver, was there to meet us. I know that I was on the jumpseat. I remember it so well. It was a clear night, and it was my first view of the Capitol, white and shiny. We drove to The Elms, which is just, let's say, six blocks from here.

F: Was the Vice President interested in your reaction to things as a first-timer?

C: Oh, yes. In fact, it made him enjoy them more.

F: Did he kind of act as a tour guide?

C: That night I don't think so. I remember his being sure that I would see the Capitol and the Washington Monument. But it was very late. It could have been two or three in the morning, and I know he was tired. Mrs. Johnson, of course, being very kind, was being sure that I was comfortable on the jumpseat that night. I remember it very well.

F: And you went on out to the Elms, you said.

C: Went to The Elms. You see, I had no place to stay. I was just this little waif that they had picked up.

F: Your clothes were back either in Dallas or Austin.

C: I had very little clothes. I had a toothbrush. Mrs. Johnson, being so kind, made sure that I had that. I went to The Elms and went to bed. He told me to come to work the next morning, and I realized at that time that I didn't know where work was or where I was supposed to go, but I knew that I shouldn't ask him at that time. So I just got up early the next morning, and he had already gone because I think there was a leadership breakfast at

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the White House. I'm not sure, but he was gone. So I asked the kitchen help. I discovered they knew what was going on, and they got me down to the office some way; somebody drove me.

F: Now, which office did you go to?

F: Went to P-38. I just found my own way.

F: Took a cab?

C: No, the servants had to make a run down there for something, and I rode with them.

F: And had never seen that building before?

C: Never had seen that building.

F: That was a fine state of affairs to be turned loose in.

C: It's an unbelievable story. My memory's a little foggy on how we got together, but I do know that he brought me into the office and introduced me to poor Juanita. The last thing she wanted to see at that time was a strange little girl who probably couldn't even spell cat.

F: Somebody to break in.

C: Yes. That's just what she needed. Mary Margaret [Wiley Valenti] had left, and she was trying to step into an office where she really hadn't been, because she had been working, I understand, with Walter Jenkins.

F: Well now, where was Walter, over at the EOB?

C: No, that was the Senate Office Building then, not the EOB, which is the Executive Office Building. The Senate Office Building and the number was 5121, I'll never forget that that's where he had the workers. At that time I remember the names: Mildred and

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Glynn Stegall were still there. That was long before Glynn's death, of course. Of course, the P-38 office was really ceremonial, because it was right off the Senate floor, and it was where all the tourists came.

F: He just mainly received people there.

C: Right. It had three doors, which were a very frightening thing to Juanita and to me, because that meant he could come and go and we might not hear the buzzers. He would sneak out on us. I know many is the night that we would be sitting there working thinking, "Is he ever going to go home? Is he ever going to go home?" and he had sneaked out the back door and didn't know how long we had been there waiting.

F: Were there any kind of instructions handed down when you could go home, or did you just automatically wait till you thought he had gone and then wrap it up as soon as you could and go?

C: At that time you waited until he was gone, till you knew he was taken care of, that he had gone to a reception, that he had gone home. Of course, the first three months we were in good shape, because I was living with them, so he would always take me home.

F: Oh, you stayed out there three months?

C: Yes. Yes. That was because I had no friends in the city and I had no place to go.

F: Then what happened?

C: I was getting restless.

F: It must have been an awfully restricted life in one sense.

C: I'm really a very private person in that I've got to have at least an hour or so a day when I am by myself and I do my own things. I've always been this way. My mother said I was

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always a loner as a child. I felt very closed in. Not that they weren't kind to me, but there were too many people around, and I felt I was always on duty and I knew this had to stop.

F: When you got back CI suppose I ought to put "home" in quotes Cto The Elms, could you go to your room and hide away, or did you sort of feel that you had to be around to listen.

C: I couldn't go to my room. There were two reasons: first of all, to listen and to learn; and second of all, they were so kind that if they had a guest in the house you were to be part of them. You've got to be part of them. But I always think this is not the way to live one's life. Through a friend of a friend at that time CI think it was a very vague friend CI met a girl from Texas who was with the Department of State, and she was looking for an apartment. We found an apartment for six months together. Then she went overseas, and by that time I had gotten settled.

F: Did the Vice President make any sort of joshing or otherwise remark about your moving out on him?

C: I don't remember. I don't think so.

F: He probably kind of sensed it was time for the little bird to fly out, too.

C: Right. I honestly don't remember.

F: Where did you move to?

C: Well, not knowing Washington and not having much time to be off work We worked seven days a week, and since I was living there on Sundays I was really working there on Sundays. They had an unlisted phone number, which in Washington is just not done. But they did, so the phones were ringing constantly, and I felt since I was on the

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payroll, I should answer the phones. As a result, I felt I was always working, so I didn't have time to look for apartments. I told this girl friend of mine, the girl I moved in with, who name then was Marly Cochis, that she could find a place. I would just look at it, if it was all right with her, and share the rent with her. She found a place through an agent who, I have now learned, did to her what a lot of agents do. They'll take you to one part of the front of the building, but you don't know in this city what's on the other side of the building. They took her through the National Zoo to get to this building, beautiful drive, marvelous atmosphere, you could hear the lions if you wanted to open your windows.

F: [You could] see a little greenery.

C: Right. But on the other side of it was the most dangerous section of the city for two young girls to live in: Columbia Road, Adams Mill Road. The policemen there had two dogs instead of one. As I say, we lived there for about six months. I take that back. We lived there for a year and six months.

F: That must have made still another adjustment because up till then, things had been kind of automatic, ordered for you, since you were there in the household. You had your ride home in the evening, you knew where you were going to eat, and all that sort of thing. You didn't have to learn much about Washington. [You were] taken care of.

C: That's right. Well, at that time I knew two things. I knew how to drive from my apartment to the Capitol, from my apartment to The Elms, and that's all I knew. That summer, though, at The Elms was an interesting one, because Carolyn Kellam was there working as a summer employee. She took me in hand. At that time I didn't even had a driver's license, but she and I did a couple of things together, and she showed me the ropes as to

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where I should in the house. I always wanted to be helpful but I didn't want to be in the way. That's a very difficult thing for somebody who's a complete stranger to figure out, and she helped a good bit.

F: Now, she's got a longtime interfamily relationship. Was she free and easy with the Vice President, or did the office come between them?

C: No, she was completely free and easy, much more so with him as vice president than she was when he was president. I noticed a change in her demeanor with him as a president. But it was very much a family relationship. She was very close to Lynda Bird. Luci was at that time still taking in wild animals and that sort of thing, so that's the reason Luci was so kind to me, the stray. *Luci* was very kind to me, the stray.

F: Did you have any sort of supervision of the two girls? Did you get caught up in any of that?

C: No. No, none whatsoever. In fact, that never really came to be throughout the whole relationship except some recent things. And then one time when we were in the White House and Lynda wanted to go to Spain, they wanted someone to go with her who was a friend of hers who could help her make the right decisions and encourage her to do the proper thing. She was unhappy at that time. This was after George [Hamilton], in between George and Chuck [Robb]. In other words, [they wanted] someone who was solace but yet who would be sure that things were done right. That was turned down because the President said that he needed me more than he felt Lynda needed me, [that] Lynda just didn't need to go to Spain. And then quite recently with Lynda making the adjustment from White House daughter to wife and mother, and the President talking to

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me and saying, "You bubble with happiness. The world is so good to you. You'll be good for Lynda. I hope you talk to her a lot." That's the only time any kind of supervision was [suggested]. He would often teasingly say, "Luci became a convert [to Catholicism] because of you," but there is absolutely no truth in that. I never spoke to her about the religion until she had made up her mind, because I am not a missionary and never was.

F: Did you ever have a feeling that, given a little different set of circumstances, he might go over?

C: Mrs. Johnson would hate me but, yes, I think he'd like to. He has told me several times that one of the things he admires most I don't know if he admires it about today's church, but I know he did about yesterday's church is its discipline and the discipline that its people have. He could never get over the fact that wherever we were, I would be sure that I went to mass. He would question me. He said, "Do you do it out of fear? Are you afraid of going to hell?" I said, "No, I just want to go." We had very interesting long talks. I am a veteran of what the Secret Service calls "the long rides" around the Ranch. Many, many days we would go all day long, with just a stop for Fresca or something like that. For hours he would say nothing, which was his way of relaxing. You were never uncomfortable. You just knew that when he had something to say, he would.

F: He can be almost a compulsive talker, but he can get in these periods when he just wants, in a sense, to think his own way through things, can't he?

C: Oh yes, but I think he saves that for private times. When he has people around that I think he's not that familiar with, that he doesn't trust is not the right word, but let's say

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someone that he can't bare his soul to, he's going to talk a lot. I have noticed that he is quiet with his friends. He doesn't have to amuse his friends.

F: Is he quiet with the family?

C: Yes. I have a long discourse about the daughters because I know them so well. Perhaps I shouldn't [say this], but he doesn't understand them and they don't understand him, they really don't.

F: They present a wonderful public facade of understanding. Is this just a father's problem of teenage and then later daughters?

C: And then it was too late to catch up.

F: Of course, he was on the run so much. I can remember when he was senator, Willie Day [Taylor] would look after them or somebody would look after them. They were almost orphans, in a sense.

C: Yes, and they didn't grow together, and I guess probably that's what makes for deep and lasting relationships. There was no growth. And the daughters still don't. Luci does, I think, a little more. Luci's I think a little more tolerant and understanding, because I have the feeling that Luci and Lynda don't really know what a daddy is supposed to be, but they've read books that say this is what fathers are, so theirs doesn't measure up, at least to what they think.

F: Of course, I don't know many fathers who do measure up.

C: They loved him so much.

F: Evidently [he was] enormously sentimental about the key moments: birthdays, anniversaries, things like that. Did you ever have to do any shopping?

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- C: Oh yes, oh yes. In fact, I think I still have their sizes in my wallet; I just would always carry that around with me. Oh, yes. Any time we'd travel, he would buy something for them.
- F: He would tell you to be on the lookout?
- C: Yes, and sometimes he would say, "You go get something," or sometimes he'd say, "Bring back a selection." I admit, in the vice-presidential days it was more like, "Go get something," because we were not able to have someone bring some stuff in. Later it was quite easy to bring in selections, and he chose himself: "Wouldn't Luci like that? That color would be good for Lynda."
- F: Did the girls collect anything that made it easy for you to select. [For example,] somebody liked ceramic dogs and you can always get another one of those from another place?
- C: Clothes for Luci any time, books for Lynda, although he wanted to buy [Lynda] clothes because he wanted to encourage her to take a female interest in herself. Luci's much more vain than Lynda.
- F: I rather gather that Lynda for a long time was one of these young girls to whom clothes were just something for modesty, and that was about it.
- C: Yes, there were more important things in life. Lynda felt about clothes the way I used to feel about eating: eating's a bore. Just give me a pill, I don't want to waste the time on it. Of course the change with Lynda came with George Hamilton. I still fuss at Lynda now because she doesn't do something about her hair. I saw her the other night. But Lynda's now caught up in the [women's] lib movement.

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F: Has he father taken kind of a new tolerance of that?

C: I haven't talked to him about it. That I really don't know, because I haven't seen him in maybe nine months. We're going to go see him in a couple of weeks, spend a week with him.

F: I think he needs you.

C: Well, I hope so, that's what Lynda said. He was very kind, because he was saying, "Well, you know, I'm not feeling up to par, but you're always so restful so why don't you come on. Love for you to come."

F: Well, apparently he's been awfully selective in the people that he lets come out.

(Interruption)

F: Now let's come back to those early days when you were wide-eyed. I suppose you always remain a little wide-eyed, don't you, through the whole thing?

C: I made myself do that, because for some reason early in my time in Washington, I saw people with what I soon termed "Potomac Fever" that's not original, other people have used it people who were jaded and cynical and who, once their time was over, held on and went to long lunches with public relations men, telling about "How it was when I did this. . . ." This was distasteful to me early in the game and of course became even more so four years later in 1964, after I had been in the White House for a year. I realized that that's not the kind of life I wanted, not the kind of person I wanted to be, that I still wanted to get excited when I walked in that Oval Office. When somebody came through, by George, I was going to share in that excitement.

F: When you meet Senator X or Ambassador X, it's special.

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- C: Yes. I admit the only people I got tired of coming through were the movie stars. They bothered me.
- F: Did you get much opportunity to observe the Vice President in his relationship with the President at the time, President Kennedy?
- C: No. There was not much relationship that I could see. Now remember I was brand new. There was one White House line on that switchboard at the front desk that I was supposed to man. I know I asked Juanita about it immediately, and she said, "If it rings, why don't you let me get it." To the best of my memory, it rang four or five times in the first month I was there, and it rang only with names like Kenny O'Donnell and Ralph Dungan. Those are the only names I can remember. I think maybe once he talked to the President, and the President asked him to take a trip to the Benelux countries. Those are the only conversations I can remember, but that's ten years ago and I was really new. I don't know why I would remember the Kenny O'Donnell and Dungan calls, but there were those.
- F: Was it staff talk that he was sort of shunted to one side, or did you have those people who remembered when he was riding the crest as Majority Leader?
- C: You know, I didn't know the staff then, I have to say that. The only staff I knew was Juanita, because very soon after I got there, he moved those other people out of that office. Liz Carpenter even had been coming in and out, but he called Liz a disruption, because she did talk on the phone a lot and she had a loud voice. I know he moved her out and moved Colonel Jackson and Lynn out, especially after Geraldine got married. Then Juanita and I were the only people in there; we were by ourselves.

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F: When someone like Geraldine married somebody like Novak, who was critical, did he feel that Geraldine had gone over to the enemy?

C: No, he loved Geraldine; with his big heart, he really did. In fact, he and Mrs. Johnson gave their wedding reception. But I didn't get any feeling of that. I can remember that I felt that the President might have liked it better if Geraldine had married Mike Janeway, who was around at the time. No, I didn't get any feeling of that [from President Johnson]. I did, because I didn't like Bob Novak, but from nobody else.

F: Did the Vice President show much interest in what people did after hours?

C: Oh, my goodness, yes! Yes, very much interest.

F: Did he give you advice on where you ought to go and what you ought to do?

C: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. He wanted to be sure that I had a good time. I never knew exactly how much of a good time he wanted me to have. But I remember talking to Kay Graham maybe a year ago. She said, "You know, he used to worry about you a lot." I said, "What do you mean?" She said, "Well, he knew you were unhappy and that you wanted to meet someone. He always told me to be sure that you met my daughter's friends, and that sort of thing." I never knew that, though. I think they're very kind.

F: He never tried to matchmake.

C: Oh yes, yes. He tried to matchmake with Johnny Brademas. This was very early in the game; I didn't even know who Johnny Brademas was at the time. Not with the idea of marriage in mind, because he kept discouraging that. He said, "I just lost one secretary. You're young. I don't want to teach you the alphabet and then have you get married in a

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year." But he wanted me to have a good time. Especially later on there were lots of shared good times, which I'll tell you about.

F: Did you have the feeling that he felt that he kind of sponsored Jack Valenti and Mary Margaret or that this had been done behind his back?

C: Depends upon who he's telling the story to. No, not that he sponsored it. He said he felt that he made a mistake because he let Mayor Welch come to the Ranch one day with his helper, little dark-eyed "Eye-talian," as he would say, named Valenti. He and the Mayor were in the front seat of the Lincoln; he had Mary Margaret in what I call the drink-making seat in the back with the Scotch in between her legs, and the little "Eye-talian" sitting back there with her as the Mayor's aide. Before he knew it, June 8, 1962, there was a wedding. So he feels he had a little bit to do with it because of inviting Mayor Welch.

F: If he had had Mary Margaret up in the front seat, it might have changed Marie Fehmer's life.

C: Right.

F: What did he do all day? I know he was busy, but what was he doing as vice president?

C: The one thing that he insisted upon doing was opening the Senate. He felt that it was very important to be able to do that job well. He didn't want the vice-presidency to be a thing of "you're holding the office but you're not doing anything." He felt that one of the jobs of the vice president was opening the Senate every day, and by George, he did. I'll bet if anyone checks his record, he's got a better than anybody else on that.

F: I don't know if anybody's ever seen the current Vice President.

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C: Maybe not. He opened it every blessed day that he was in the city, never missed it.

F: Did he stay long there, or did he then turn it over?

C: Depended on whether or not he had an appointment back at the office. The office was, I'd say, fifty feet away from the chair. Sometimes he'd open it and come right back, other times he'd stay and see what was going on. I think more often than not, he would open it and come back.

F: Did he feel that he was now sort of shut out on the Hill and cut off from his former friends?

C: No. No, he loved it. He was still acting as majority leader, I think, I really do, even in the vice-presidency.

F: As the senior senator.

C: Yes, he was.

F: *Senior* senior Senator.

C: He was. He was operating as a majority leader. Remember, I was very new, but when I look back on it, I can see that.

F: Did he ever grouse to his staff about the fact that the vice president's job was not all it could be?

C: Being very honest, I'm going to say no, not that I ever heard of. But I don't think that at that time he would have said it in front of me. Remember, I was brand new, and in the city of Washington a vice president wouldn't have said anything like that in front of anyone that he didn't trust. I was three months, six months on the job. I was around a good bit, I admit that.

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F: Is there a moment when you feel you're trusted, or does the realization just grow, like the knowledge that you've got a job grows?

C: The realization just grows. I really wanted to please and do the right thing, and it was very hard to know whether or not I was at the beginning doing the right thing.

F: Was Juanita kind of a mother hen to you?

C: Juanita is a mother-hen type. I don't know how she did it. Obviously it was a very difficult time in her life. I don't think she was feeling well. I remember seeing her with bottles of pills and that sort of thing. And I was green as the grass, and that wasn't what she needed. She needed somebody who at least knew who Bobby Baker was. I didn't know anybody. It was a very difficult thing for her. She was very helpful.

F: Speaking of Bobby Baker, did you see much of him in those days?

C: Did I?

F: Was he in and out much?

C: Yes, he was. He was in and out a good bit.

F: Was he kind of a pleasant fellow, or was he kind of arrogant? In other words, did he throw his weight around?

C: No, he didn't throw his weight around, but Bobby is just one of those people who hurry a lot. He always moved very quickly, so he had no time for pleasantries, so you could never feel that you liked him. You had no chance to find out whether you liked him, because he would never bother with "Good morning," he would just say, "Is he in?" That sort of thing. I would say he was in once a day.

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F: What was the Vice President's reaction when Bobby Baker's charges came? Were you enough in the know by then?

C: I don't think I was, because I don't remember. I myself don't know what to feel about it. I do remember a long drive from The Elms to Ocean City for the opening of the Carousel. We went there. I stayed in the car when they went inside, because they just made an appearance and came right out, and then we drove back, the long drive. We did that one Sunday.

F: Just for a token appearance.

C: Right. I remember that. That comes up with a connection with Bobby.

F: Did he have any comments on Bobby overreaching?

C: No. I don't remember them. I would think that at that time I wouldn't have realized the importance if he had said it.

F: He loved to get on the Ranch and drive. Did he ever drive like that around here?

C: The only time that I remember his driving around here was Luci's birthday, July 2, 1962, maybe 1963. We came back from Texas, and we asked Luci to be out in front of The Elms because we had her birthday present, and he drove her Stingray home from the airport. Norman had brought it to Andrews, and he drove it from Andrews to The Elms. That's the only time I remember his driving in the city, except I think he drove one other time when we were in the White House. One other time, and I think it was when I had the Thunderbird, and we had been somewhere on a quiet visit to dinner. A couple of times we went, surprisingly, to somebody's house, and he drove my car, I sat with him.

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And the Secret Service^C they weren't very happy about it. It was a Thunderbird convertible.

F: I imagine they really tailgated him in a sense.

C: It was late at night, and he just felt like driving. I think that's the only time in those years that I saw him drive here in the city.

F: Did he ever complain about the restrictions on his movement?

C: Constantly. Wonderful stories! Yes, constantly. Who'd like it? Would you like it, really, if somebody always knew [where you were]? They even know when you go to the bathroom because they can tell where the lights go on in the house.

F: Yes, I have that on tape in one place.

C: They know everything. They don't mean to, but they just have to be there. As a result, I am sure there are some Secret Service agents who would think he was unkind, that he didn't like them. It wasn't that he disliked the individuals; he disliked their intrusion on his privacy.

F: I wonder if that isn't an occupational hazard that goes with all Presidents.

C: All presidents. And I hate it. I wouldn't like to have somebody around my house.

F: When he went to visit somebody on one of those rare occasions, hypothetically he would go see Marie Fehmer for dinner, he can't call up at six and say, "What are you having? I'm coming." Under the rules, he's got to give you enough notice that the Secret Service can get out there first, or not?

C: He was supposed to, but he didn't. You're talking about vice president days or White House days?

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F: Either.

C: They were completely different.

F: Well okay, let's talk about vice president [days] first.

C: In the vice president days, we were like a miniature staff, and I think that comes up in the traveling. It's so different when you have two planes, *Air Force One* and a backup, than when you have a little JetStar for which you have had to ask permission to use. At that time, the Vice President did not have a machine that he could just fly on. His military aide would check with the White House military aide to see if there were any aircraft available. Those roles, as much as the roles of the past presidents, have been expanded thanks to Lyndon Johnson. He did a lot for Eisenhower, Truman, et cetera. But travel in those vice-presidential days meant the Vice President, Paul Glynn

F: Who's he?

C: He was an air force sergeant who ended up as a valet.

F: Paul Glynn?

C: Paul Glynn, G-L-Y-N-N. His father was a professional man's man from Delaware, and Paul was just that. Paul could do everything. Paul took care of me, he fed us soup on the plane from a little bitty stove. Paul would pack his clothes; Paul would dress him, Paul would answer the phone. Paul was super, and during the vice-presidential days he did all the traveling, as did I. Sometimes George Reedy would travel with us to write speeches. We would travel with Rufus Youngblood and Jerry Kivett, and with either Paul Thornhill or Jim Cross at the controls. Now that's how we traveled. So that's quite different when someone goes somewhere and like you say, when someone goes to dinner as vice

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president. You can just see, it's a whole different ball game, but it really shows up in the travel. When you arrive at any place you had plenty of service, because the Secret Service could call ahead, and their agents in that local city could have cars and things.

But it's not at all like the White House. In the vice-presidential days he was really less formal about dinner. He would call up and just go over to somebody's house. I remember several times when he would call Mrs. Johnson and say, "I'm bringing eight people home for dinner." She'd say, "Fine. We'll open another can of beans." Which, of course, she didn't. She had people in the kitchen to do that. They were very casual about dinner.

In the White House Coh yes. I have two instances, two stories, of people who were my contemporaries, my peers. Once in the White House Mrs. Johnson was gone and he was in that great big white place by himself. He wanted to go have dinner. We were there late, and he said, "Why don't we call up Vicky and see if she'll feed us?" This was Vicky McCammon McHugh, who had married Simon McHugh. So I called her and she said, "Well, I don't have anything but steaks. Can you bring some club soda?" So we went. I picked up club soda from the White House mansion, and we just got in the car and drove. Another night Cthis is in the White House CJim Jones had recently become engaged to a girl named Olivia Barclay. She was quite wide-eyed and new to all this and worried. The President, teasing Jim, said, "I think I'll come see if your bride-to-be can cook." Well, Olivia had planned to feed Jim, but she hadn't planned to feed Jim and the President and Marie. She had a little bitty roast, and we stretched it. It was what I call "family hold back," because Olivia said, "Marie, don't eat much and Jim, don't eat much."

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But we just got in the car and went. The Secret Service stayed outside. One agent came inside and sat in Olivia's bedroom. The rest of them were outside. This [was] a big apartment building. So he did very much of what he wanted.

(Interruption)

F: Did he spend much time in the Executive Office Building?

C: Not very much early in 1962. Let's say from June, 1962 when I came because that's where he sent Colonel Jackson to work. Colonel Jackson and Lynn Machado went over there. It was a great big beautiful office in that building.

F: Was it where Humphrey's was, or was it different?

C: You mean, when he was vice president?

F: Yes. Humphrey was there on the second floor.

C: I think it was below.

F: It's actually a number one, of course, a hundred and something.

C: I don't know the number. I think he went to that office rarely. My memory is that he would go sometimes before breakfast or a meeting over there; he might stop by. But then we began to use that office during the Bay of Pigs crisis. During that time and right after it, I remember, Juanita and I did not know what was going on. All we knew was that the White House phone rang, that the Vice President got a call, and he left for a meeting at the White House. This was about four o'clock, I think. We never heard from him again. We were able to call Secret Service and find he was still at the White House. We later learned, of course, that he was in the Cabinet Room with the National Security Council, but we didn't know this at the time. We didn't know whether or not we could go home.

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This was one of those instances when we were just waiting there. We finally turned on the television and saw the President's announcement. But as a result of that announcement, the Vice President then used his office in the White House. We moved. We went over to the Executive Office Building. I went with him, and the two of us worked there I would say for two months. All day every day, that's where we went to work. I remember its length of time because the Secret Service had a difficult time getting a parking space for me in the Executive Office Building grounds. The Vice President was very kind; he knew that I had to have a place to put my car in that area.

F: Were they just all taken?

C: Yes. Oh, it's very precious there. But Secret Service was able to get me a space there. You see, up to this time I still had never seen President Kennedy, and I never did see him. The first time that I saw President Kennedy was November 21, 1963.

F: Very late in the game.

C: Yes.

F: While he was still there in the Senate, did the President have a constant stream of senators coming in?

C: Oh, yes. Yes, a constant stream. I remember George Smathers, Dick Russell. It's hard for me to pull out the names.

F: Was the Vice President the type who would run you out if people came in, or did he let you kind of have free come and go privileges as you thought it was necessary?

C: Free [to] come and go, once you were trusted.

F: Anything that Richard Russell had to say, he could say in front of Marie Fehmer.

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- C: Yes, which was very nice. I suppose I have a lot of regrets, because I know I learned a lot and assimilated a lot by listening to these people, but I cannot repeat any of those conversations, obviously; I often wished that I could sit down each night and write or tape, but do you know I was honestly afraid to? I really was, because I had no place to keep such, and I never ever intended to write anything of my own.
- F: But it was history.
- C: Yes, it was history.
- F: Lord, if somebody lifted a tape from you!
- C: Yes, I know. You see, I traveled so much and I was gone so much. So I never did.
- F: I suppose Mr. Sam [Rayburn] had already gone over the hill by the time you came on.
- C: Yes. Yes.
- F: So you never got to see him.
- C: That's right, I never saw him.
- F: Did you get the feeling that the Vice President was reasonably well satisfied with John F. Kennedy?
- C: Yes. I don't know that he was satisfied, but he taught me something very quickly. He had a lot of respect, if not for the man, for the office. I never heard him say an unkind thing about John Kennedy. I never heard him say anything other than "the President." He never said "Jack" and he never said "Kennedy." He said "the President." I remember that one phone call when I think [the President asked him to make that] trip to the Benelux countries. I noticed it because he used the reverence or respect that I use in speaking to him when he said, "Yes sir, Mr. President, yes sir. Yes sir."

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F: Congress is full of people who either were senior to him or who had sort of grown up alongside him on a long first-name acquaintance. I know when he was president, they called him "Mr. President." Did they do it as vice president?

C: No.

F: He needed the next frame up.

C: As vice president, there were a lot of "Lyndons" around. No, not as vice president. "Mr. Vice President" is hard to say.

F: As far as I know there was only one Texas congressman who ever called him Lyndon after he became president, and he never did that again.

C: Yes, that's right. That's right.

F: They say that it was in a group, and it just stopped the whole conversation. They all looked at him and he realized he had committed a gaffe.

Did he feel that the space and the civil rights charges that Kennedy had given him were really worthwhile?

C: He did.

F: He took these seriously.

C: I think he did, I really do. I know the civil rights he took terribly seriously. This is what I have learned from him: someone gives you a job to do and you do it well, whether or not you really like it. I'm not so sure he loved it or enjoyed it, but that was what he was told to do. He signed on that team. This is what I learned from him: You sign on to something, and until you sign off, you do what you are told. If you don't like it, get out of there. But I had the feeling that he was told to do this and he was going to do it well. I

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know I've learned this from him; it's one of the things I took from our association. Don't complain about it, go ahead and do it. If you have to complain about it, then you just leave or you quit.

F: Was he pleased when Kennedy sent him on trips, or did he look on that as an interruption?

C: Um-hm.

F: Um-hm which?

C: He traveled a whole lot as vice president.

F: And when he traveled, he liked it?

C: I used to say that I was gone 85 per cent of the time [when he was] vice president.

F: Did you go pretty much where he went?

C: Yes, I think I missed two or three trips.

F: What was your first trip? Did you make the Benelux?

C: No, I didn't make the Benelux trip. I think my first trip was Puerto Rico in the summer.

F: What was that like?

C: The trip? I don't even remember. I just remember I was so excited and it was so wild.

F: What do you mean, so wild?

C: Well, wild for me. I shouldn't say [wild]. He was a great person to keep you guessing, and I didn't know I was going until about two hours before the plane took off. This was still in my trial period, you see. I had only been aboard for two months. Why should he take me to Puerto Rico?

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F: Had you had enough information that Marie had some clothes ready to go, or did you take off with what you had?

C: I just was prepared. I figured, what would I lose? I'd have to unpack a piece of luggage, but if I didn't have to unpack it I would have gained a whole lot. I think that was the first trip, and then there was the Middle East trip.

F: When you went abroad like that, what did you do about the necessities of passport and shots and so forth?

C: That was the problem with the very first trip: I had no passport. The Senate photographer, who was a man named Frank Muto, took my first passport pictures and Dr. Calver [physician to Congress] gave me my shots.

F: What did they do then, rush your picture over to the State Department and right back?

C: Yes, Walter Jenkins took care of it, or someone in his office.

F: Were you associated with Walter much in these days?

C: No, I didn't because we were physically separated. There was a phone conversation with him often for taking messages. He was the busiest man I have ever known. I always worried about him because he had so much on his shoulders. But I never saw him because he was two blocks away.

F: You were pretty well restricted to where you were.

C: I didn't go anywhere except to the ladies' room. I ate lunch at my desk.

F: If you had time.

C: Yes.

F: Let's talk about this Middle East trip. Tell me about it.

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C: All right. That was the first big one, I think. It's a hard one. It's terrible, but perhaps we waited too long. We waited too long.

F: Some of these things run together, undoubtedly.

C: Yes.

F: Now is this the one where you took off down and crossed to West Africa?

C: No.

F: This was another one.

C: No, because I missed Africa. I have seen the other continents, but I missed Africa so it couldn't be that one. Let's see, that was Greece, and it was Turkey, Cyprus. . . . Oh goodness, I've got boxes of stuff downstairs that I have collected and I'm just going through, and I wish I had done this before I visited with you.

F: Well, we'll visit some more. Did you make the trip up to Norway and Finland?

C: Yes. Yes.

F: What did you do on these trips?

C: What did I do? Goodness. I would have to be up early in the morning, at least an hour before he was. That was to get *my* life organized, because once he woke up or once I got involved with him, there was no time for me to do my things. I used to have to try to explain to him that I didn't have anybody to sew snaps on my clothes and to take my shoes to get heels on them. I discovered the only way I could get this done when we were traveling was to get up an hour ahead of him. I could never stay up an hour later because I was too tired, but I could get up an hour ahead of him and get all that done. Then I would sort of check into the room where he was, and I would check in with Paul

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Glynn and see if [LBJ] had had breakfast, that sort of thing. Often I would just sit outside the door. I would be sure to pick up cards in the suite, you know, the routine stuff for cards and gifts and that kind of thing. After a while I learned whether or not I was supposed to go with him. Many times I would just go with him and sit in the car, at which time I was hopefully taking notes for a diary, which I don't think I did very well. Juanita was never very pleased with me on the diary, I know that. We had no training. It was a terrible thing that we didn't. Now that I look back on it, I would give anything if somebody had run us through a one-week course on what to look for. We're not dumb. If somebody had just told us.

F: You never really knew what it was he wanted.

C: No. That's one of the things I'm sorry we didn't do. I have several things I'm sorry about, that run from that to not getting all the Kennedys out of the White House after the assassination.

Anyway, back to the trip. I would follow him around all day in the vice-presidential days.

F: Did you ever see anything yourself except from the window of the car? I mean, did you ever have any free time to go nosing around?

C: Especially not in the vice-presidential days because we were so limited on staff. We didn't have that many people, and I was doing lots of things. I was the doctor and the nurse; I had all the pills. I was the White House Communications Agency; I had the recorder trying to record speeches, which is almost impossible, with microphones here and you're right here in the back, and you get nothing. There's just no way. I was the

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typist, so I had a portable typewriter. And then I was the link with Washington, so I had a big briefcase full of phone books, stationery, and that sort of thing. Before I met Andrew I said that the man who gets me is going to get a big strong girl because I'm going to have muscles like crazy from everything I carry.

F: You could have done an Olympic weightlifting stint.

C: Yes. I really tried to carry all that, and that's how Paul Glynn and the Secret Service and I became such good friends. I tried to tote it around and I didn't ask for anybody to help me. As a result they all helped me more than if I had begged.

F: Did the Vice President ever notice your struggles?

C: No, he just figured I should learn. That first year he put me through a lot of torture tests, he really did, just to see if I could make it. I could see it in his eyes. I just knew it was devilment on his part just to see how much I could take and see if I could make it. I never hollered help.

F: You needed that old German sturdiness, didn't you?

C: Right.

F: Did he keep tinkering with his speeches right up to the time he had [to make them]?

C: Oh gosh, yes. I have millions of stories about that. Of course, he could deliver a speech a hundred times better if he didn't have those silly cards. We went the whole route from a book with the speech in it, to small cards on a ring, to large cards on a ring, to small cards on a big typewriter, to large cards on a small typewriter, to **C**in the presidency**C**

F: Cue cards?

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- C: Yes, and the teleprompter. But he was continually changing. I shouldn't say he wasn't pleased with the drafts. Sometimes he really wasn't: he'd say the draft was lousy and the speech was lousy. But other times he just sort of kept thinking that he had time to change it so he would, to the point that we staff members finally learned if at all possible, distract him until he's ready to give his speech. He'll give his own anyway, and you've saved yourself all of this anguish of hurrying with the cards. Many a time on that little bitty airplane we would be landing, and I would have a portable typewriter in my lap and he would be talking to me. I would be doing the speech on the cards. Many times.
- F: Did he always demand clean copy or would he go with your interlineations and corrections and so forth?
- C: Clean copy early in the day, because he was testing me. It had to be perfect. I remember a couple of times when it wasn't so clean. My very first sight of the land of Vietnam came with his standing over me in his shirtsleeves with his tie loose, and he was dictating his arrival remarks. I was looking out the window as we were landing, because this was really quite exciting, and I made a mistake. I remember his saying, "Just tape over it." But he would never have said that five years earlier. I think maybe he got to the point after a year or so where he felt he had trained me and that he knew that I could do well.
- F: He could relax a little bit.
- C: I think it was like a child, or maybe like I learned when I was at the University of Texas about being a teacher: you can always loosen up, but you can never tighten up. So start out tight and then loosen up.
- F: On the trips, did you go out souvenir hunting?

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- C: Not during the vice-presidency, no. I didn't have time.
- F: Was he a personal collector, though? Did he take souvenirs?
- C: Not until later in the game. I would say maybe in 1964, 1965 he started collecting paintings. I don't remember. He picked up one of his favorite paintings in Turkey on our first Middle East trip; [it was] called "Rain." Which still hangs in the Ranch office, I think. But these were gifts. Then it started being almost a mania, all the embassies would know about it, and we were inundated with paintings. It just got to where, you know, "Don't help so much!"
- F: You didn't go to studios. They brought them to the embassies when you got there?
- C: Yes.
- F: On these vice-presidential trips, did he have a preference for staying with people or did he prefer a hotel?
- C: Hotel.
- F: Did you just block off a floor, or something like that?
- C: No, no. The Secret Service would block off three or four rooms.
- F: But they were pretty close together?
- C: They were all together. The three of us always stayed together.
- F: Marie was never two floors away.
- C: Right, right. Very close together. But as vice president, he couldn't block a floor. They would block off a suite for him. The Secret Service would be on one side, maybe George Reedy or whoever was traveling would be on the other, and then Marie would be on the other. Or there would be a staff member on either side.

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F: Now he got a lot of public and semipublic meals. I mean, they may be officially private meals with the ambassador or with a local minister, or something. But what happens to Marie? She's not out in the kitchen eating while that's going on, How did you get in your meals?

C: Well, he picked the perfect girl in the world for that, because I didn't like to eat. I never worried about food; it never bothered me. Paul Glynn would feed me. That's why I say Paul did everything. Especially at the very beginning when I barely knew what room service was, I'd end up somewhere, Paul would say, "Have you eaten?" I'd say no, and he would say, "I'm going to order you a hamburger." Paul took care of me. Paul and Rufus Youngblood and Jerry Kivett were really terribly kind.

F: On those rare occasions when a meal wasn't scheduled for him, how did he get his meal? Did he go into the dining room and eat?

C: No, never. Room service.

F: It was sent to his room.

C: Never in a hotel dining room, and I can say that for sure. Never.

F: He never really liked to eat out himself, did he?

C: No. I don't think food was important to him as far as tasting it. You cannot call him a gourmet. He didn't enjoy the taste of a food or a wine.

F: The duck with sauce.

C: No. No, in contrast to my husband, who has a very different palate. He liked to eat because he was hungry. That's the reason he would take food.

F: Food wasn't much of a problem, then.

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- C: No. Just in case he didn't want a hamburger, a bacon, lettuce and tomato sandwich, or that sort of thing, Paul Glynn kept a kit, the biggest staple of which was Campbell's vegetable soup. We lived on it for months.
- F: On these trips if he had a free evening, did he ever want to go out on the town, do the tourist bit, or anything like that?
- C: The only time I can remember his doing that was in Las Vegas. He did it once in Las Vegas. We went out to dinner. We had several couples with us. I don't remember who they were, I think Lloyd and Ann Hand and Joey Bishop and his wife. That's all I remember in Las Vegas. I don't even remember why we were there; I think to address the Retail Clerks, or something like that. He gave me an hour off to go shopping that day, because I still remember the things that I purchased that day. He sent a Secret Service agent with me so I wouldn't get lost.
- F: Was he interested then in what you bought?
- C: Oh, yes. Oh yes, got to see everything.
- F: You had to trot it out and show it to him? [Did he ask,] "How much did it cost?"
- C: Yes. "How much did it cost?" and "You can't afford that."
- F: Incidentally, as you yourself move up and as he moves up, did he pay any attention to your income, or was that handled by another budgetary agency?
- C: He did pay attention to my income. As I say, I started out at \$4800 in June of 1962. I would think maybe six or seven months later, he put me on another payroll; that was taking me off the Senate payroll and putting me on the Space Council payroll. Ed Weisl was chairman of the Space Council then, and he put me in a slot which was administra-

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tive assistant to the president of the Space Council, who at that time, of course, was Lyndon Johnson. It did not carry a GS rating; it was an appointment. We secured my GS rating later in the game, which came about after he told me that he was not going to run again and when I told him I was not going to Texas, because he just assumed I would go back. After I told him he said, "Let's make provisions. You must take care of yourself.@ That's when we secured a GS rating.

F: Wasn't too hard to get, was it?

C: No, to tell you the truth. I just filled out some papers for John Macy, who was chairman of the Civil Service Commission. They were filled out in 1968. Mr. Macy accepted the fact that I had had three years of presentable government service and gave me career GS status.

F: Coming up to 1963 and the November date, did you have any notice that you were going to Texas?

C: I just knew I was. At that time I knew that I was taking all of the trips.

F: So that if you heard a trip was in the wind. . . .

C: I just knew about it.

F: You never advanced a trip, did you?

C: No. No.

F: But I presume you must have done sort of sample schedules and that kind of thing?

C: Oh, yes. Oh yes, all that sort of thing.

F: And I presume he took that same detailed interest in timing and places and so forth and tinkered with that, too?

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C: Everything. Incredible.

F: I sometimes wonder how he got it all in.

C: He did.

F: I know he did because of some of the details that he did follow himself with.

C: I knew that I was going on that. I'm trying to remember all the details.

F: You've got sort of a highly-placed layman's view on this. Did you have a feeling that this trip was to heal a Connally-Yarborough split or that it was a straight political trip, that Kennedy was making a swing because Texas was important in the 1964 campaign.

C: I really thought it was straight political.

F: I know the difficulty of segregating things in your own mind, but in these vice-presidential days did you ever get the feeling that the Vice President and Senator Yarborough had some tension between them?

C: Yes, I did.

F: Largely over appointments?

C: I don't know the reason why. The only thing that I would notice is that a lot of senators came in that office, but Yarborough didn't come in that much, and this was from the man's own home state. I knew something had to be wrong. There was a lot of talk around Washington and this is no help to you, but I never heard him explain. But there was some tension.

F: Did he take any notice in those vice-presidential years of "Lyndon who?" remarks and "Whatever became of Lyndon Johnson?"

C: Yes.

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F: Did that bother him, or did he accept that as part of the game?

C: I think it bothered him. Everybody says, "A man of that ego," but each of us has an ego, and no one in that position would like someone to say, "Joe who?" or "Marie who?" You have to be recognized. But as I say, I never heard him speak disrespectfully of the President. But I do know that Bobby Kennedy was quite unkind to [LBJ].

F: In the vice-presidential period?

C: Yes.

F: Did he ever comment on Jack making Bobby Attorney General?

C: I get the feeling that he did.

F: How was Bobby unkind?

C: Bobby never directly said anything to him, but I had the feeling that Bobby spread stories in Washington and that Bobby sent people after him.

F: What do you mean, sent people after him?

C: Sent Dungan after him on several things.

F: What do you mean, after him? I'm obtuse.

C: No, you're not. Well, maybe we should erase that, because this is all feeling and it's memory.

F: Yes, but I mean, to sort of look in on Johnson and figure out where he was vulnerable.

C: That and to find out what he was doing on the Hill.

F: Just kind of to know then to be that careful.

C: Yes, I really got that feeling. And that's a feeling. I'm sure that if we checked his diary there wouldn't be any calls from Bobby that said this sort of thing, but I got that feeling. I

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didn't like Ralph Dungan. I didn't like Kenny O'Donnell. I never had laid eyes on them, but I didn't like the way they operated.

F: You were aware of them.

C: Yes, from their phone calls.

F: Was there a feeling that the Kennedy staff sort of denigrated Johnson? Did the Johnson staff feel that?

C: Yes, I think so. I shouldn't speak for the whole staff,C

F: Did Marie Fehmer, then?

C: Marie did. Marie felt that Lyndon Johnson was holding the second highest office in the land. She resented the President's assistants speaking to the Vice President as if he were an errand boy, and I really got that feeling in the brief encounters that I was able to hear about.

F: Did the two staffs ever sort of cross-fertilize in a sense, or did they stay distinct.

C: Never; that I can answer for sure. The only contact that the Vice President's staff had with the President's staff was with the military aides in arranging transportation and with Walter Jenkins. Sometimes Walter Jenkins would talk to people on the President's staff.

F: But by and large most of the Johnson staff could just as well have been in Loveland, Colorado, or something.

C: I think that's true. Yes sir, I really do. Which is maybe the way it's supposed to be, but that's the way that one operated.

F: Back to November. So you're going to Texas. Why don't you just recreate that trip for me as seen by you?

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C: All right. I'm trying to remember. To tell you the truth, Dr. Frantz, at first I really blotted it all out and I tried to forget it. I wouldn't talk to Mr. [William] Manchester for a long while. I stalled on that, both because I didn't trust him and because I just really didn't want to think about it. I'm more foggy on this than I should be, really, but I remember, I think, flying into San Antonio the first day.

F: Yes, that's where it began.

C: We flew in the little plane. It was not a military plane; it was their private plane. Mrs. Johnson and Paul, I think. . . .

F: I don't recall, did you fly from there, or did you go down to the Ranch first and then overC

C: We went to the Ranch first. We flew from the Ranch to San Antonio, I think. He went to get a haircut.

F: In San Antonio?

C: Yes.

F: He didn't have a barber in?

C: No, he didn't have a barber in. No, he was still going to barber shops in those days. I remember. . . . Cliff Carter was around, I think. It's very foggy. It should be much clearer for you, because this is important. And I remember the President's plane arriving, and of course the lines and the music. This was the first time I had ever seen the President's plane. And then of course there was a larger plane behind it, which was the backup plane and which was the plane that we think of. It was the first time I had ever seen President Kennedy.

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F: Did the men greet each other cordially?

C: I think so, but I'm saying that only because I am sure they would have. I mean they're both smart politicians. But I don't know that I saw the greeting.

F: Did the Vice President seem reasonably happy with the way things were going on the trip?

C: He was happy but he was quite tense because he wanted to go. This was important to him to have this go off well. He was quite nervous, I remember that, quite tense. I shouldn't say nervous. He never got nervous, he just got tense, tight. That certainly looked good. The crowds were magnificent, I remember that. San Antonio is beautiful. I remember being on a bus. There was a dedication of some sort. I remember our bus making a turn and my seeing the President close up for the first time, because his car was coming one way and the bus was [passing by]. I never saw the Vice President; I don't know where he was. I guess he was in a car somewhere, because the President was not riding with him, he was riding with Mrs. Kennedy in San Antonio. I'm not much help on this.

F: Then did you go on to Houston?

C: Yes, on to Houston, and there was a banquet that night.

F: Did you go to the banquet?

C: Yes. I went to the banquet only to listen to the speeches, and then we came back up to the room.

F: At these banquets, did the Vice President eat?

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C: Probably. He wasn't supposed to, because he had been fed before, but I'm sure if they put food in front of him, he ate. It was a continual battle of weight, so we were always trying to feed him before something that we could control, rather than that awful, fattening banquet food.

F: Did he like to cheat?

C: On food? Oh, yes.

F: Was it a game, or did he just have a big appetite.

C: It was a game part of the time. And then I saw him sometimes say he didn't really realize he was eating. I remember a couple of examples. He was in a room talking to some people, and it was lunchtime. So somebody brought in a plate of sandwiches. I have seen him eat the whole plate and then say, "I'm kind of hungry. Have you got anything to eat?" I would say, "But sir, you had a whole plate of sandwiches. He would honestly look me in the eye and he'd say, "I don't remember eating them." I don't know if he was conning me, but I think he was telling me the truth: he didn't remember. Oh but no, he loves to cheat, that's a game. Especially at the Ranch, he can play that game well when Mrs. Johnson's not there to care for him.

F: I ate with him one night and she wasn't there. He kept ordering the dessert he liked, kept ordering more dessert. He must have had six that evening. Somebody I don't remember now who it was, may have been Willie Day and then one of the butlers, were saying, "Mr. President, you shouldn't have any more. I have orders not to [give you more]." [The President said], "Bird's in Arizona. She'll never know." I got the feeling that night that it was just kind of like a [game].

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- C: I was constantly adopting devices which I learned from Mrs. Johnson. The thing is, people are so kind and they could never tell him no, but it was the worst thing in the world for him. But if we would go to someone's house and there was a bowl of candy out, I would drop my scarf over it. If he didn't see it, it was all right.
- F: But he ate it because it was there.
- C: Yes. Oh, if it was there, his hand was in it, just like a child's.
- F: Mrs. Johnson must have done a good lifetime study of how to get the job done.
- C: She is a saint. She really is a saint. She is a most unusual woman. She really loves him. She'd have to, to put up with his shenanigans.
- F: Did anything untoward happen in Houston, or did things seem to go pretty smoothly?
- C: I honestly don't remember a thing.
- F: Then you came on up to Fort Worth.
- C: Fort Worth, yes.
- F: And again that went off all right?
- C: And we spent the night in Fort Worth. I remember a little bit about the night in Fort Worth, and I think only because there was a newspaper column written about it and I took such offense to it. I think some columnist said that Lyndon Johnson had met that night with his tong. I didn't even know what a tong was. After it came out, he kind of looked around and he said, "There's my tong: innocent Marie, Cliff Carter, Lady Bird. That's my tong?" There we were. We were just all tired and we were just sitting around.
- F: Did y'all stay at the Texas [Hotel]?

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C: Yes. The room was filled with yellow roses, which I just came to hate because we saw them everywhere. We were just beat. We were excited in a way because the day had gone well. I know he was pleased because he said he thought the President was pleased. There was some talk, I think, about the car problem with Yarborough, the seating together and that sort of thing; I don't think he was very fond of Yarborough at the time, but it was really sort of small, when you consider that the President of the United States had come there, and to cause any problems. But I don't remember, and I really think this is deliberate. I think I really shut all this out, because I can remember name or details about earlier things.

F: One question: Did he ever comment that you know of, that you can remember, about Connally and Yarborough's feeling toward each other? Connally among other things did not invite Yarborough to the Governor's Mansion reception that he would have had if there hadn't been the shooting. He arranged the guest list so that Yarborough's exclusion made some logic, but there was a feeling it was an affront.

C: If he did I don't remember, I honestly don't.

F: It might not have come up in your presence, but I can't believe he wouldn't have been aware of it.

C: I can't either, but I don't remember anything that was said.

F: Then were you on the Vice President's plane over to Love Field the next morning?

C: Right, which was a very short flight. Ours was a little shorter, because we had to land first, because you must be there and greet. So we had to land first and the press plane had

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to land first. That's why I think we picked up a lot of Texas congressmen and these people on our plane.

F: And what did Marie Fehmer do?

C: In Dallas? Got on the bus. I saw Mrs. Kennedy get off [the plane].

F: This is a bus for staff and dignitaries?

C: A city bus that was labeled "VIP." It had White House staff on it, and Liz Carpenter and Marie.

You know, I do remember back in Fort Worth a conversation with Jack Valenti on a bus. We picked up the morning newspapers and they were filled with that vile stuff about President Kennedy, terrible ads that some Texans had taken out. I remember how disturbed Jack and I were. I remember that back in Fort Worth, the newspapers. I don't remember how Jack got there or anything. I guess we picked up Jack in Houston, probably, the night before.

F: As far as you know, did Kennedy ask Johnson's advice about whether he should go to Texas?

C: That I would not have known, because that would have been a conversation, probably, with the President in the White House.

F: It wouldn't have come through your switchboard.

C: There weren't that many phone calls from the President. I was still very much in awe of the President as such. I don't remember that many [phone calls from the President]. And I remember his telling me at one time that the President had talked to him about this in

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the White House. Kenny O'Donnell was present, I think. About whether or not he should go to Texas. It was a White House discussion.

F: Okay now, back to the main thing. You're on a bus going downtown.

C: This is my home town now, remember. I'm from Dallas, and I know that my mother is going to be on the street. On the bus I'm with a lot of people I don't know. Liz is next to me, and of course she is gladhanding. I'm still quite shy, and I'm just going to sit quietly and take my notes.

F: Look out the window.

C: Look out the window and look for my mother. But I learned from Liz that Evelyn Lincoln was on the bus; Dr. Barkley, Mary Gallagher, Pam Tenure were on the bus, and a couple of men. It was not crowded. Evelyn Lincoln was talking to some local Fort Worth reporter, giving her interview on the bus. Liz and I were just riding along looking at the people. I saw my mother, who was in a big mob of people, and waved to her. Then all of a sudden we noticed some confusion. We didn't hear any noise; we were too far back, but we knew that something had happened. The bus stopped for a while, and people were running and screaming.

F: Did people surge about the bus, or did they stay out of the street pretty well?

C: Stayed out of the street, because the bus then started going again. The bus dropped us at the Trade Mart. We didn't know anything. We were looking around. The Trade Mart was a building that was new to me. It had been built since I left there. Liz and I sort of wondered, "What is this?" and "Wonder where the speech is?" Often they would take the dignitaries into another building, and they would drop us poor slobs somewhere else and

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we had to find our way, so this was not extraordinary. So we went to a door. I know Mary Gallagher and Evelyn Lincoln didn't know where to go. Feeling we were Texans and the hosts, we said, "Why don't you come with us? Let's see if we can find our way." But we didn't see anybody, no Secret Service, nothing. There was a Texas Ranger standing at the door, and he said, "Lady, you can't come in here." Liz said, "We're with the Vice President, we have to come in." He said, "Well, you can't come in here. The President's been shot." I said, "My goodness, that's a terrible thing to say."

F: Liz's face must have been a study.

C: Liz didn't believe it. She acted as if she didn't hear it. You know how Liz can just keep going. I said, "That's a terrible thing to say," and she said, "You said *what?*" He said, "The President's been shot." Of course, Mary Gallagher and Evelyn Lincoln just sort of . . . I don't know where Dr. Burkley was at this time, but he had been on that bus, I'm pretty sure. I'm not positive of that, but I'm pretty sure. So we just sort of stood around. We walked around the Trade Mart for a few minutes. There was nobody there, and we didn't know what to do. Nobody would tell us anything. There were no Secret Service agents around, which is surprising because whenever the President goes somewhere, they stay there and they guard it.

F: You didn't run into anyone with portable radios?

C: We could have been at the other end of the building, you see, it's a big building. We don't know where we were. I was from Dallas, and I said, "All right. If the President's been shot, they've taken him to the nearest hospital, which is Parkland. Why don't we ask the policeman if the President's at Parkland?" Well, the policeman didn't know anything,

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and he wouldn't tell us anything, so I said, "All right, we're getting to Parkland." Liz by this time was frantic. I just really didn't know what to do. So I gathered up Mary Gallagher and Evelyn Lincoln and I commandeered the Texas State Ranger car. I said, "Here's my problem. This is who I work for, and here are the President's secretaries. We don't know what's going on, but we know they are not here. If they have been shot, they are at Parkland. Will you take us there?" I still have his card. His last name was Goode, G-O-O-D-E, and I still have his card.

So he took us to Parkland, during which time I remember giving Mary Gallagher my rosary, which I always carried because I was Catholic. She was saying Hail Marys out loud in the car. They were all just frantic.

F: And Liz was probably saying, "Oh, my God!"

C: Liz was saying, "Oh, my God!" loudly. You're exactly right. I had forgotten it. I remember. Of course she was. Evelyn Lincoln was just pale. Mary Gallagher was saying her Hail Marys. And we were all piled into this policeman's car.

He took us to the front entrance of Parkland. Now Parkland is another large place.

F: Was it mobbed?

C: Not the front entrance at all. We were deposited there, so Liz said, "Okay, so here we are. You got us hereC"

F: Now what.

C: Now what? So where did we go? The main front desk to ask, which makes sense, but it's really kind of ludicrous when you think about it. They really didn't know anything, and

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they wouldn't tell us anything. So we wandered around Parkland and went back outside, finally, because we couldn't find anybody. The patrolman was still there, and he said, "Let's go around the back." Now somewhere in here we lost Evelyn Lincoln and Mary Gallagher, because then it was just Liz and I. I don't know where they went. The patrolman took us around the back, and that's when we joined the group.

F: You began to see people you knew.

C: Yes. I saw lots of chaos, lots of cars. I saw the car that President Kennedy was in.

F: Was it a mess? Did you see it fairly close?

C: Yes, it was a mess. I saw it too close, because we pulled up right at that emergency entrance. You see, I never went into Parkland from that back entrance, because as we pulled up, they were ready to move him.

F: Oh, he was still in the car?

C: No, they were ready to move Lyndon Johnson. Let's see now. I'm afraid I'm going to tell a lie. Not a lie, but I'm going to give you something that's not a fact.

F: Fact is whether you can prove that it's not a fact.

C: I'm trying to remember whether or not I ever got into Parkland, in that back room, and I can't remember now.

F: The Secret Service must have thrown a cordon up there.

C: Yes.

F: Or was the FBI running the show?

C: Secret Service. Of course, the FBI could have been there, but I wouldn't have known them. I knew the agents, but again we just had Rufus and Jerry with us. All these other

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men were strangers. I don't think I got into the back of Parkland, because I think as we drove up, they were ready to move Lyndon Johnson back to the plane.

F: Did he see you?

C: Yes, he did. We were worried about whether or not all those new agents would let us get near and would take us. He saw us, and he sent someone to get us in the motorcade, I'm fairly sure of that.

F: Were you still riding in the same ranger's car?

C: The same ranger's car. I remember their taking him out, and I saw Mrs. Johnson and Homer Thornberry go out. Then we followed their motorcade on up to *Air Force One*.

F: You are on your way to Love Field.

C: To Love Field, right. We really don't know what's going on. Liz is still saying, "Oh, my God, you're right." I just remember that I guess I was very quiet, but at that time I didn't know what had happened. I didn't know whether or not the President was dead.

F: You knew, though, that he had been shot.

C: Yes, I knew he had been shot because I saw the car. I didn't know whether or not we were going to go make a speech for him. I remember thinking, "Gee, does Lyndon Johnson become acting president, or what happens?" I remember that sort of thought. But I did not know that he was dead. I remember getting to the plane, sitting in the car waiting for instructions, and I remember seeing him run up the steps, I mean literally run up the steps.

F: You got on the plane before he did?

C: No, no. He got on first.

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F: Oh, you saw him run on.

C: I saw him run up the steps, I saw Mrs. Johnson run up, and I saw other people run up. And then I know someone came to the car and told us to get out. And this was a completely new aircraft to us; I had never seen it before.

F: Do you think he had sent for you?

C: He told me later that he had sent for me, that he had told Cliff while he was in that emergency room, and I think that the stories will say this too. You know, he had the forethought to wonder where in the world Marie and Liz were in all that chaos. Can you imagine, that man was worrying about his people, especially the women, who was going to take care of them? Gloria Steinem would hate it today, but I don't. But Lyndon Johnson worried about what happened to the women.

So I remember going on the plane, and it was very dark. I couldn't imagine. It was hot outside, in the middle of the day, and it was pitch dark on the plane. I remember Rufus Youngblood going on and going through the plane and ordering everybody to slam those shades down. He was mean, he was cruel, he was yelling at us, and I didn't know what was going on. This plane was all different, and there were couches and there were doors, and there were strange faces. I had never seen these stewards before. I thought, "My goodness, here we are. What's going on?" No one ever told me, "The President's been shot." No one ever gave me that information. I just looked at the faces once we got aboard. And that seems to be when it hit everybody, when we looked around and there were all the Kennedy things. That's when I knew. Golly, so much happened then.

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The plane was divided into sort of three areas. There was an area at the back by the door where there were some seats, and then there was a hallway and a bedroom, or a stateroom-office type thing. Then there was a sofa room with chairs, and then there was a wall and there were seats, and then there was the cockpit and the front door. For the first hour or so, as far as I got was the sofa room. I didn't know about the rest of the plane. During that time, I know we called Walter a couple of times in Washington. I remember hearing the Vice President say, "Do you know whether or not this is some sort of plot? Are they out to get a lot of us?" He was very much concerned at that time about whether or not it was a plot. I remember he asked that all the TV's be turned on in the plane. And I remember the search for Sarah Hughes. It was at that time that he began to feel a little strange, in that he was in public as far as all these strangers were concerned, all the Kennedy people.

F: Was he sort of barking orders, or was he being very deliberate, as he can be?

C: No, he was almost whispering. But he was getting uncomfortable, because all he had with him of his people were Liz and myself, Mrs. Johnson, Jack [Valenti], Cliff [Carter]. And he thought and very justifiably said, "Is there someplace that I can make a phone call or two?" There was no private place except the bedroom, and I think this is where this misunderstanding has come about with people saying that he had taken over the plane. Here was just a man who needed to make maybe the biggest decision of his life and didn't want to make it in a circus, just like you might like to go into a phone booth instead of talking out in the middle of an airport. So we went into the bedroom. My memory is that the beds were made up; two single beds were on either side of the stateroom. There was

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a desk and a chair, and the desk was facing one of the beds. He sat on one of the beds, and I sat at the desk in the chair, where the phone was. We started looking for Sarah Hughes, and it wasn't easy.

F: Who phoned Sarah?

C: He did. This was when he knew that he had to take the oath of office there. This decision was made after he talked to Bobby and Walter Jenkins.

F: Did you hear any of the Bobby conversation?

C: Didn't overhear, I heard the President's end of it, but I didn't overhear anything that Bobby said, because I was just there

F: Kind of a hard conversation for both of them.

C: Can you imagine? Yes. And it seemed to me that the President would call Walter back in Washington, if he could, on things to get Walter to try to talk to people rather than to have him to make the call directly, which makes good sense. I know there was some confusion about who said he should take the oath of office in Dallas. I don't remember his pushing for it. I know some people say he was pushing for it. My memory is that the decision from Walter was to take it in Dallas, because the country should not be without a president for three hours. That's my honest memory. This big, tall man was very quiet, strong, quiet, and treading very softly. There was nothing blustery or take-over or unkind about him.

F: How were the people? Were they quiet, or was there open sobbing?

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- C: You see, I didn't get past that door to where the people were. For the first hour, I was only in the back part of that plane, and for some of that, I was in that bedroom making these phone calls.
- F: You were airborne before you ever got
- C: Before I ever saw the other no, I wasn't, because I had to go to the front section of that plane where the typewriters were and take the oath of office over the phone.
- F: Who gave that to you?
- C: Katzenbach. I think Bobby started it and turned the phone to Katzenbach.
- F: That must have been a hard thing. Were your fingers a little numb? Were they good to you?
- C: They really weren't. I was all right. I broke up later that night, but I was all right. You got that feeling from him. He taught you that, by George, you can do anything. If you tell yourself you're going to do it, it can be done, and there's no such thing as whining and saying, "I can't do it." You never thought of yourself. There was a job to be done. And he did all this to you. If you let him inspire you, by George, he would one way or another. He would knock it into you if you were going to exist around him very long. But I remember taking it and typing it as I took it with the phone on my shoulder, bending my ear to it and typing it.
- F: Clear connection?
- C: Clear connection. And then I remember asking Mr. Katzenbach, "May I read it back to you?" Which I afterward thought may have been a little cruel, but yet I wanted to check it.

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F: What was Katzenbach's voice like at that time, was it controlled?

C: I'd never heard it before. It was controlled; he was like steel. Bobby's was not when he started. I remember when he started, I kept thinking, "You shouldn't be doing this."

F: Did you see the swearing in?

C: Yes, I did. I have the picture, that sort of thing, but my head is down because I was reading the oath of office as he was taking it, sort of in the back.

F: There was no stumbling on that? That went right through?

C: Went right through.

Joe, I would like to clear up the bedroom thing with Mrs. Kennedy coming aboard. We really didn't know that plane. Now remember, he had gone in there to make phone calls. He didn't know where the phone was, didn't know how to operate the phone. I knew because I had used it on the other plane. And we were in there using the phone.

F: What's different about it?

C: The airplane phone?

F: Yes.

C: In the receiver, there is a little gadget you have to hold down. And then you would also have to know that some of the lines were ground lines, some were Signal Corps lines to the Signal Corps board here in Washington, and some were White House lines to the White House board. He certainly could have figured it out, but he shouldn't have to, and I did that for him.

We were in there making the phone calls. He had asked to be notified when Mrs. Kennedy left the hospital, because there was a lot of confusion of course with this has

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been in all the pressCthe body, that sort of thing. But she had said she was bringing it. It was during this time, too, that I heard hammering, and I couldn't figure out what the hammering was. I was afraid it would bother him when he was on the phone, so I asked one of the stewards, "What is the hammering?" He said, "They are removing seats in the rear of the plane so the coffin can be back there."

F: They must have done that pretty quickly.

C: Yes. Anything can be done. Nothing is impossible. It can all be done.

No one notified us that Mrs. Kennedy was coming. Obviously if they had, the arrival would have been different. But we were still in there making phone calls. I don't know how they slipped up or how the Secret Service missed it, but we were not notified. The only thing that happened is that he started to leave the bedroom to go somewhere, and I followed him. As he opened the door, there was Mrs. Kennedy. Well now, you see what a misunderstanding that can bring about to her. She was entering her private bedroom. She was surrounded by her husband's friends, who saw a stranger, in his shirt sleeves yet. It was hot on that plane, no air conditioning on the ground. So she saw the stranger in his shirt sleeves in the hallowed ground. So you can see what that started. It was the first time I had seen her, with the blood all over her and that sort of thing.

F: Was she a real mess?

C: Yes, her skirt was a real mess. The top of her was not a mess, but her hair, her skirt, and her legs were a mess.

F: Let's come on back to Washington, and then we might let you off the hook for the evening.

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C: Okay. Aboard that plane, when she came aboard we, of course, scurried out of that bedroom. It was really embarrassing.

F: Well, if you had had any warning, among other things, people would have met her.

C: We did not have any [warning]Cand we askedCor he would have met her, and he would have had all of his staff cleared out of that area, that would be her private area. We would have noticed the rest of the plane. You see, we hadn't seen that plane before.

F: I don't guess he had ridden in it either, had he?

C: He had never been in it. You see, it was against the law for them both to ride together, against Secret Service law, let's say, and that's the law of the land for them.

F: That can be enough.

C: Yes, that's enough.

I remember the swearing in. I remember his having lunch before the swearing in, to eat something. He hadn't eaten since breakfast, and it was two o'clock or so. We made him eat something. And then I remember our just trying to hide and not be there. We really didn't want to be there. We didn't belong there. So Liz and Cliff and I went up, after takeoff, to the front of the plane and sat at the front, in that front section for the staff, for the whole flight. This, I later felt, was a mistake. Somebody should have been back there, listening and watching. Again, if we had been trained. Well, at that time we didn't needC

F: Listening and watching for what?

C: Watching him, watching what he was doing. I heard his conversation with Nellie Connally, and I heard his conversation with Rose Kennedy. Of course, they were superb

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conversations on his part. But someone should have been there. Liz was in and out a little bit helping Mrs. Johnson, but Cliff and I stayed. Maybe Jack was in there a little bit, I don't know.

F: Did people talk in low tones throughout?

C: Oh yes, whispered. I didn't wander up and down the plane at all, because I didn't want to in any way . . . I certainly sensed that I didn't belong there. And so did all of us. Cliff Carter dictated some of his notes to me while they were fresh, and I wrote them down. I had to type once or twice, but I felt that I may as well have been typing in the Pope's chapel. I hated the racket, but I had to type the arrival statement. I didn't type anything else, I don't believe, but he had to have something typed up.

F: Did he give that to you standing over you?

C: No, he didn't. He wrote that in the room with Liz, he and Liz.

F: Longhand.

C: Mrs. Johnson wrote that out, and Liz brought it out. We just sat. You didn't know if you should walk back and forth in there. My feeling was, "He knows I'm here. If I can be of help, he'll ask." But yet I feel I should have been there watching for that three-hour flight.

I remember some people on the plane, the Kennedy people. They were sitting at a table, because the plane was set up so there were two or three tables with four seats around them. I know there were some press office girls, Chris Camp was there, and I think Mary Gallagher was there. I remember worrying a whole lot as to whether or not I should offer to get them some food. On one point, I thought it would be very kind to be

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sure they ate something, and on the other point, I said, "I want to be careful, because I don't want to act like a hostess in their house." So I finally decided, "Well, I still want them to eat something." I remember going over to them and saying, "I'm going to have some soup. Would you like to have some?" I know Chris Camp wouldn't speak to me, and Mary Gallagher said, "No, thank you." But that's the only contact I had.

F: Was Chris just so torn up, or did you actually feel an antagonism?

C: She was just torn up. She was torn up, and she's what I call a very formidable female. She's tough, but she was just broken up.

F: So you arrived here.

C: Arrived here.

F: The flight, I judge, was uneventful as a flight?

C: Uneventful. It was very quick, as far as we were concerned. We arrived here in Washington, landed at Andrews. There were lots of lights. I remember his saying, "Get everybody together." In other words, he didn't want his people to get lost. He was very kind about that. I remember asking the Secret Service agents, "Where do they go?" And they said, "I don't know. Do the best you can." We did not know who would be at the airport, what kind of helicopters would be there, if Secretary Rusk's plane had arrived, and I think it had, if they were going to be on the ground there.

F: Was Johnson the one that turned them around?

C: I think Pierre Salinger turned them around. I'm pretty sure of that. We knew there were going to be meetings at the White House that night, so we knew we should try to get there, but we didn't know how. I remember getting on a helicopter, I remember the

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statement, I remember a lot of lights, I remember seeing a lot of press people there. It was about this time when I was fading. I think I had just about had it.

F: I guess Andrews was under pretty tight security in its way.

C: I'm sure it was; there would be no way I could tell it.

F: You didn't have just a mob of civilians.

C: I don't think so. I don't think so.

F: Most people were there for a purpose.

C: But it was hard to tell because of all the lights, you can't see. And the helicopter's making a lot of noise, so you can't hear. So you have no way of telling. I do not know whether or not I rode on his helicopter; I think I did, but I'm not sure. But I ended up on the White House lawn. [I had] never been there before. This was on the south part of the White House, the back lawn. I remember going through the diplomatic reception room and wandering around down there. Then I wandered through the West Wing, looking for people. I couldn't find anybody I knew. How I got separated from him or from Jack or from Liz or anybody, I don't know.

F: You were kind of like a tourist that wandered into the wrong house after everybody had gone home.

C: I must have wandered around there for ten or fifteen minutes.

F: That's pretty halfway scary.

C: It was, because I thought, "Gee, suppose I trip something, the Hot Line or [something]." I really know nothing of how it operated. I had never been in there before. I had been in EOB next door, but I had certainly never been in the hallowed halls. So I went all the

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way. I was in the West Basement, wandering around there. I wandered through the Cabinet Room. I hadn't the foggiest idea where he was.

F: Oh, you went upstairs?

C: Well no, the Cabinet Room is in the West Wing. I didn't go in the mansion at all.

F: Oh yes, that's right. Yes.

C: I thought, "Now goodness, what am I going to do?" The thing I can't figure out is why I didn't see someone and ask them. That would have been the most reasonable thing for me to do, but maybe I didn't. Maybe I did see people and just didn't ask. But why would Secret Service or somebody let me wander all around that building?

F: They must have all been off in another part or something.

C: Yes. But I finally ended up on what they call West Executive Avenue. That's the little avenue between the [White House and the] Executive Office Building. That's where I used to park, so I knew that, and I saw a White House car there. I knew they were black Mercurys. I had used them once or twice on some of our trips. When I had to meet him at Andrews or something like that, we were able to use a White House car. Again, this was a privilege that we had to ask permission for. The military aide would speak to the White House military aide.

F: That must have galled Johnson in a way.

C: It galled me. It galled me to think that the Vice President's staff couldn't have a car. It wasn't that we were using them to drive around town. It was just like I, as his secretary at the time, had to get to Andrews; how was I going to get there if he was coming from somewhere else?

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I saw a White House car. I don't remember the driver. I know I didn't know the driver, but I think I just told him, "I'm Marie Fehmer and I work for the Vice President, and I'm lost and I don't know where I should go. So would you take me home?" He must have been alert enough to catch the name and that sort of thing, so he took me home. I arrived at my house, and of course all my roommates were there. By that time, I had moved into a house with three girls, looking for some kind of normalcy. I wanted to live like the rest of the young girls lived in Washington, so I lived with three other girls, all of whom had security clearances because they worked for the CIA. I just happened to find them through someone I was dating at the time. They, of course, were all up, and they met me at the door with two messages saying, "There have been two phone calls. The President wants you to come to the Executive Office Building right away." That was the first time that I really

F: Heard "The President."

C: Yes. "The President wants you to come to the Executive Office Building right away." So I put my luggage down and looked at one of them and said, "Will you take me to the White House?" So one of them I guess it was midnight? I don't know, but I know it was pitch dark I got in the car and drove me to the White House. I said, "I don't know how we get in, but why don't you just let me off at the southwest gate. The guard will know me there, because I had parked there all the year before." I went up to the Executive Office Building office. There for the first time I saw Juanita, who was in the room. There was another desk there that they had saved for me. Dorothy Territo, I think, was there. People were in the other rooms, but those were the only people who were in the

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anteroom. And then, of course, he was in his big office. That night there were a lot of phone calls. There was the writing of the notes to the children, which was the first thing that he did.

F: Did he do that himself?

C: The idea was his. Juanita gave him some thoughts verbally, but then he sat down and did it himself.

F: It was handscripted?

C: It was handscripted. I'm sure, knowing Juanita, she got xeroxes of them. Now she may not have, but having had her association with Dorothy Territo, she was much more . . . thank goodness. Thank goodness for that. She drove some of us crazy, poor lady. I know she must think we all hate her, because she was so precise in getting everything, but I think the Johnson Library owes her a vote of thanks. That night was just. . . .

F: When did you quit?

C: I don't know.

F: Way late?

C: Whenever he went to bed. Whenever he went home to The Elms. I would guess it was three or fourCthe Secret Service records will sayCbut not until he went home.

F: What did you do mostly?

C: Phone calls; many, many phone calls.

F: Was he making them too, or were they mainly incoming?

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C: He was making them, too. Half and half. We were quite busy. Each one was taken note of, and there was no, let's say, clean apparatus for doing that sort of thing, so it was sort of makeshift, and it was quite difficult.

F: Were things hurried and flurried, or were they pretty deliberate?

C: I think they were deliberate. He always set the pace. We may have all been hurried and flurried inside, but we were quite . . . except for Jack. Jack was always up on the ceiling. I used to tease Jack about that all the time, Jack and Liz.

F: And Jack's rather high voice has that quality of rising.

C: Yes.

F: You've been a very explicit and full witness. I think I ought to give you some rest. We probably ought not to end on this somber note.

You had mentioned to me earlier about something you remembered at the time that the Vice President spoke to the President's Council on Physical Fitness. Let's put that in.

C: Oh yes, I'd love to tell that. I just remembered it. I'm sure that I'm going to have three thousand of these that we should all get.

F: We'll get them.

C: This was a speech in New York City, and this was in the time of the vice-presidential days, and we were traveling with a very limited staff. We had George Reedy, Marie, the Vice President, two Secret Service agents and Paul Glynn on the JetStar, and here we'd go. President Kennedy, of course, established the Council on Physical Fitness. He wanted his country to be filled with outstanding examples. George Reedy and I both

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heard the speech. We were sitting there in the front row, George listening to his words coming out that he had written, and I trying to operate a small, battery-operated recorder. After the speech, the Vice President couldn't resist telling us that he almost had to interrupt his speech, because here he was in front of God and everybody, talking about how great it was to be physically fit, when he looked at the examples he had from his own staff, and he saw sitting in front of him Marie, the ninety-pound weakling, anemic, sad-looking, and George Reedy, the three hundred-pound [inaudible]. But it almost cracked him up in the speech when he thought about it.

F: He could have ruined a point there. Thank you, Marie.

[End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview II]

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MARIE FEHMER CHIARODO

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