INTERVIEW II

DATE: November 28, 1969

INTERVIEWEE: JOHN B. CONNALLY

INTERVIEWER: Joe B. Frantz

PLACE: Governor Connally's office in Houston, Texas

Tape 1 of 1

(Interview starts abruptly)

C: --filed him for reelection to Congress, and he was elected. Jimmy Allred and others--I've forgotten; I believe Dan Moody was in the race--then decided to run against [W. Lee] O'Daniel in 1942 for the Senate in that election. We can later go back and pick up and elaborate on any of these things that you want to. O'Daniel was reelected.

I suppose it was about June of 1942 that President Roosevelt called all of the members of Congress out of service. There were obviously an increasing number going on active duty; those who held reserve commissions and those who didn't, frankly, [who] were just going in for both patriotic and I suppose in some cases even political reasons, thinking in view of the tremendous mobilization of the country that they just had to go. So he in effect called them out and in a speech declared that their service as members of Congress was equally important than what they could possibly be doing wearing a uniform.

F: Before we move ahead, let me ask you one question for my future reference. Where did Mildred Moody get that intemperate feeling against Johnson? Was it strictly politics or did it come out of something personal?

C: No, I really think, so far as I know, it partially developed out of Johnson's friendship with Charlie Marsh. It doesn't predate my time and association, but I was never in on it particularly. Charlie Marsh, as I told you, lived in Austin, spent much of his time there prior to World War II and in the early days of the war. I don't know all the details and I won't at this point go into it, but he divorced Mrs. Marsh, and Mrs. Moody, as I understand it, had an intense dislike for Charlie Marsh.

F: So anything he was for she was against?

C: That's right. She was against anybody that he was friendly with. I don't know all of the details of the divorce and so forth.

F: Well, I never have found the political moment at which this happened, and I couldn't understand why.

C: Then it was aggravated.

Right after the war [began] I saw the President [Johnson] some in 1942. Then in the early part of 1943 I went to Algiers and came back in the late fall of 1943. I was then attached to the office of the Under Secretary, Mr. Forrestal, who was under secretary under Frank Knox. I was in the Navy Department proper until the early part of 1944 and wanted to leave the Navy Department. I told Captain Gingrich, who was then just Commander Gingrich actually, that I just did not want to stay in Washington too long, and I thought I had been there long enough in spite of the fact that I'd spent about ten months in Algiers and North Africa. He tried to encourage me to go to South America as a naval *attaché*, and I told him I didn't want to do that, I really wanted to go to sea.

To make a long story short, I went to a fighter director school at Saint Simons Island, Georgia, for about three months in the early part of 1944, and then was sent to

Quonset Point, Rhode Island, for additional training. This is really more personal than relates to President Johnson, so I won't elaborate on it. But then I was attached to a night-fighter group. We were the first trained controllers, called then fighter directors, and we received special training in controlling airborne planes. I had been assigned to a night-fighter group that was going to the Pacific aboard an aircraft carrier as their controller. We were actually going out as part of this night-fighter pilot group.

So I went back to Washington, got a few days leave over the weekend, and told Nellie. By that time we had had our daughter Kathleen. I gave up the apartment, arranged to get a friend of mine to drive Nellie and the baby home, and went back to Quonset Point preparing to leave the next day to go to the Pacific. I found out when I got back that my orders had been changed. I walked in and I said, "When do I leave?" They said, "You're not leaving." I said, "What do you mean, I'm not leaving?" This went on for some time, and they finally told me that they'd had my orders changed and rewritten and that I was going to be in charge of a training group on Martha's Vineyard. They were opening a new training school at Martha's Vineyard, and they were going to put me as officer in charge of this training group.

This created quite a flap. For the first time, I guess, one of the few times in my life, certainly the first time in the navy, I kind of blew my stack and just said I wasn't going to do it; I was going to sea, and they'd promised me I was going to sea. Fortunately, Nellie was still not gone; I'd only left her in Washington a few hours before. I called then-Congressman Johnson, he was back in Congress, and told him what the problem was. I said, "Now, I'm going to sea one way or the other, or I'm going to the brig." He was quite upset, so he said, "You just sit tight and don't say anything to

anybody, and we'll see what we can do about it."

So I never knew what happened. All I knew was that the next morning early I got a call to go to the Admiral's office over at Quonset Point, Admiral Durgan. I did, and he said, "I understand you want to go to sea." I said, "Yes, sir." He said, "Well, that's an admirable attitude. When would you like to go?" I said, "Any time, sir." He said, "What about right now?" I said, "That would be great!" So I took off and left and then didn't see--I immediately was detached and sent to the Pacific, and stayed there until the end of the war. I came back on October 3, was separated from [sic] terminal leave January 3, 1946.

I came back and was casting around about what to do and got to thinking about it and fooled around with it, and about this time I started the organization of a radio station, KVET in Austin, with a bunch of other fellows.

Then immediately after the war, I don't know what all had happened--[during] 1944 I was gone--but they got in a big political fight in the old Texas Regulars. They'd had a donnybrook in Texas; they'd had a mean national convention again, and I had missed all of this. But I came home and shortly got brought up to date. But out of this big fight in 1944, President Johnson had incurred the enmity of a great many of these people, and again this goes back to the Moody thing. Part of the reason, I think, that Mrs. Moody didn't like Mr. Johnson was two-fold, really--well, three-fold. One was the personal matter that I mentioned to you about his being a friend of Charlie Marsh's. Secondly, Dan Moody even as early as 1942 was pretty much on the conservative side of the political fence and didn't like Johnson.

F: If I recall, somewhat left behind politically.

C: Right. Moody ran third, as I recall, or fourth, in the campaign of 1942. He did not like the third-term idea, and consequently just didn't like Johnson, thought he was much too liberal and so forth and so on.

Now there's another element in it that also was important from their personal standpoint. There was always, I suppose, a business rivalry between Dan Moody and Senator Wirtz. This went back to the days when Dan Moody represented all the power companies and utilities, and Senator Wirtz was very instrumental in advising Johnson in the days of the creation of the electric co-ops in Texas. This was a bitter fight back in the late thirties. This was at the time they were building Buchanan Dam and developing the Colorado River, installing generating capacity. This got into very, very heated, bitter disagreements, and Wirtz and Johnson were on one side, Dan Moody and the utilities on the other side. This was another division between them. Then, as I say, there was always this strong rivalry between Wirtz and Moody, and again Johnson pretty much inherited that animosity so far as Moody was concerned, because Johnson was always very much in the camp of Senator Wirtz, very close to him. During Senator Wirtz' lifetime, I think he probably had more influence really, if that's the right word, on President Johnson than anybody.

F: He kind of played the advising uncle's role.

C: That's right. He never pushed himself on him, never tried to promote him--*never* did.

F: But most people lean on some older man like that.

C: That's right. The President respected his judgment, and Senator Wirtz was a very wise man as well as a damned good lawyer. So it was a natural thing for him to inherit, I think, the animosity of the Moodys for all these reasons.

Then in 1946--I digressed to bring us up to date--we kept hearing rumblings that Hardy Hollers was going to run. He had just come out as [a] colonel and had a rather distinguished war record, and he came out with the strong backing of Dan Moody. During the war, again many of the happenings occurred while I was gone, but Gordon Fulcher was the editor of the paper, the ***Austin American*** there in Austin, and Gordon I guess just prior to the war and during the war had started building a bunch of apartments out near the Phi Gam House on 27th Street. That was his first one; then he built some more. The story started circulating that the President owned all of those. Then about that time Mrs. Johnson came into an inheritance of some of her money in the early part of the war. They invested that; they bought a radio station from the Wests, and I guess it was during the war. Jim West, Sr., had started a competing newspaper with Marsh in Austin, the ***Austin Tribune***. He built the Tribune Tower. Then he also had a radio station there. The paper owned KNOW, or Marsh did. I've forgotten the precise date, but the Johnsons, with this money that Mrs. Johnson had inherited from one of her bachelor uncles, at that time bought this radio station. Mr. Jim West, Sr., had died, and I think he bought it from Wesley West, who was then really in control of that aspect of the family business, so they'd gone into business.

Well, the stories, and what the origin of them was I don't know, started circulating about how much Johnson owned. They accused him of owning everything in town. They accused him of owning all of Gordon Fulcher's apartments and his construction company, and they said Gordon was just a front for him. I recall very vividly they had him owning some lumber yard out on South Congress. So this continued on, and this was the basis of much of the bitterness that developed in the 1946 campaign. The President

[Johnson] felt very keenly about this and very strongly about it. It got to be such an issue about what he owned. Frankly, at one point Dan Moody is supposed to have said--I didn't hear him say it but I think he said it publicly and research would determine it--that Johnson was for sale on every street corner in Austin. I assume in one way this could be interpreted that, well, he was selling radio and you could buy radio time from him on every street corner in Austin, or he was just for sale on every street corner in Austin. So it got into a very, very mean, bitter campaign.

H: Hollers wasn't gentle.

C: No. Hollers picked it up, and it got to be a real brutal campaign. Of course, I got right in the middle of it, managing.

F: Back just in time.

C: Yes. I got back just in time to get right in the middle of it. I managed Mr. Johnson's campaign for reelection to Congress, and we ran into a lot of bitterness, a lot of things. I suppose it was about as mean a campaign as I ever was confronted with.

F: Now, the charge on the house out on Dillman.

C: Yes. Here again this goes back [to Marsh]. This house belonged to Mr. Charlie Marsh, and he sold it to Mr. Johnson. The opposition alleged that he gave it to him and so forth, which he didn't do. He sold it to him. And again, I'm just speaking from memory. I certainly haven't attempted to verify it, never did then and don't intend to now. But as I recall the stories, Mr. Marsh bought this house for his mistress at that time, and that's where she lived. This was one of the reasons for his divorce, which was a long protracted thing, because this went on for years apparently during the war. Mrs. Marsh did not want to give him a divorce.

F: A very complicated property arrangement.

C: Yes, it was a very complicated property arrangement and apparently ran pretty deep in Austin social affairs and so forth, none of which I was acquainted with at that time. But anyway, the Johnsons bought the house at 1901 Dillman Street. But this was just a further link, you see, into all of this talk about what all Johnson had bought and what he had and so forth and so on. The charges were pretty mean and the talk was pretty mean, to the point where all of us finally decided that the best way to combat this was to frankly take all of their books and all of their income tax returns for the last several years during the war up to 1946, and turn then over to somebody we felt everybody in town had confidence in, to let him see and in effect let him say whether or not he thought there was any shenanigans or any undue accumulation of wealth or anything else.

F: Just an independent assay.

C: Just as an independent appraiser in effect, or an objective observer. They were able to get Judge Ireland Graves to do that. All of the Johnson books and accounts and income tax returns were turned over to Judge Ireland Graves, who was then practicing law with Charlie Black. Judge Graves was a highly regarded, highly respected lawyer in Austin.

F: He was not in the Johnson camp?

C: Oh, no. No, if anything, I suspect he was a little bit on the other side. He wasn't in the Johnson camp at all. I didn't know that he was particularly identified, neither he nor Charlie Black, in anybody's camp. They weren't very active politically, as I recall. He kept them for quite a long while, and as far as we know went through them thoroughly, every detail of them, and traced the original money that they invested in the radio station back to the money that Mrs. Johnson had gotten from her bachelor uncle in Billingsley,

Alabama. I know something about that, because during my leave in 1942 I went with Mrs. Johnson to Billingsley, Alabama. We went back there to see her uncle, Claude Pattillo, one of her uncles who was still living, and went over a lot of this property that she had inherited and this timberland. We talked to the tenants. This is a book all in itself, this story of that trip to Billingsley, Alabama. But anyway, Judge Graves went through all these books and in effect gave the Johnsons a clean bill of health.

I never shall forget the opening of the campaign at Wooldridge Park. In those days, of course, they were still using radio, but primarily it was a personal-campaign type of operation, and they were still appearing in Wooldridge Park--"Get out all your supporters." We had a big rally set that night, and the President took a whole armload of records, which were the records that had been turned over to Judge Ireland Graves. It must have been a stack a foot high of books, ledgers, accounts, journals, income tax returns and everything else, and he carried them out on the platform there on that bandstand in Wooldridge Park. At one point during the speech he threw them down on the floor and said, "Now, they're here. Any of you that want to come look at them"--he in effect told them what Judge Graves had said and went over the charges and so forth, figuring that the best defense to these charges and whispers and rumors that had been going around was to just meet them head on. He said, "Now they're here for everybody to come and look at." Of course, there began a lot of whooping and hollering. The type of personal campaigning that was carried on even as short a time ago as that differs radically from what you have today with television campaigning.

F: Still the stump technique.

C: Still very much the stump technique. Of course, no one came up to look at them. But we

carried on this campaign all over the Tenth District. Really, I guess in a way this campaign kind of crept up on us, at least to some extent, because it was traditional for a candidate to close out his campaign in Wooldridge Park in Austin, the biggest city, the night before the election. After we knew that he was going to have opposition, that Hardy Hollers was going to run, we immediately went to try to book Wooldridge Park, and, sure enough, we found out that Hardy Hollers had already booked it. He'd booked it before he'd ever announced. So we started trying to figure out ways that we could offset his closing rally in Wooldridge Park the night before the campaign.

We decided the thing to do was to have a bunch of watermelon feasts. I went down to Bastrop County and bought about two thousand watermelons. We talked to Mayor [Tom] Miller and got him to put them in his icehouse so we'd have ice-cold watermelon. Then the last night of the campaign I think we had about five or six different places in Austin where we were going to have these watermelons. But it wound up that we had thirteen appearances scheduled the last day for Mr. Johnson. In the meantime we'd gotten hold of Gene Autry, who was then in his heyday--he was from Tioga, Texas--and I've forgotten just how we got him. But anyway we got Gene Autry, and he agreed to come down and spend some [time campaigning].

F: That's Sam Rayburn country.

C: Yes, I think that's exactly right. It was Mr. Rayburn's district, and I think Mr. Rayburn was the one who helped us get Gene Autry. Anyway, Gene Autry got in. We decided we'd better try to cover every bit of ground we could possibly cover, so I think we scheduled him [for] I believe it was eighteen stops that day. We sent him to every town; Kyle, Buda, San Marcos, on down to Bastrop and Caldwell and circled around and then

finished that night in Austin.

F: Did you try to have your candidate make most of those?

C: Oh, yes, the candidate made them all. I think he made eighteen appearances that day.

F: Now, I presume he had then the same qualities he had later, and that is the fact that he couldn't stay on schedule.

C: We had a tough time, of course. We had scheduled him so heavily.

F: Very finely there.

C: We had it figured out, but like always, if he's feeling good, and particularly out on the stump, he'll speak too long. He just won't quit.

F: Yes, and he has got to shake hands with every last person; he's not going to shuck anybody off.

C: Then everybody wanted to shake hands with him and everybody wanted to shake hands with Gene Autry. It was murder, just terrible that day, trying to keep on schedule. But fortunately that evening we'd planned these watermelon feasts in either four or five different locations around Austin, and so we started moving those watermelons out of there all day long, cutting them up into eight slices. This wasn't any easy job, to move about two thousand cold watermelons out and get then served and so forth, but we figured that was the best way to offset Hardy Hollers' campaign, when he was closing at eight o'clock down at Wooldridge Park.

So anyway it went off, and Mr. Johnson was running as much as an hour late for a lot of these appearances, and was, even that night. He got back into Austin late, and he was dead. He was just exhausted. But he finally started making just very short appearances and just saying a very few words because he was just as hoarse as he could

be; he could hardly speak at all. We finally got through that night, and of course Mr. Johnson was reelected.

F: Did you count Hardy Hollers' house?

C: Yes, we sure did. I've forgotten exactly how may people he had, but it was a very, very small number. As I recall, it was something like 128 or something like that. [He] just didn't have *any* crowd at all. That Wooldridge Park will hold twenty thousand, and he just didn't have any crowd except his campaign workers.

F: I might say for the record, it's just a natural bowl there, a theater-in-the-round sort of thing.

C: It's just a natural bowl, that's exactly right, with that bandstand right down in the middle. People used to sit on the grass on the slopes all the way around it, 360 degrees around that.

F: This was the big entertainment in those days. No air conditioning, so you liked to get out at nights, and no TV to keep you home, and no money for a lot of people, so it was the best cheap entertainment you could get.

C: And the people went to see him. I recall in about 1938 when O'Daniel first ran, when he moved into Wooldridge Park he had probably 25,000 people there. So this was a big hall, so to speak, even though it's an outdoor affair. It would hold a lot of people. But as I recall, it was a very, very slim house that Colonel Hollers had.

F: Did you have someone go around to sort of scout the opposition in these campaigns?

C: Oh, yes.

F: You always had somebody.

C: We always had somebody at nearly every speech, had somebody there to see what was

being said, to see how many people were there.

F: This is not entirely a frivolous question. No one ever got converted away from you, did they? (Laughter)

C: No, not that I know of.

F: Before we go on, let me ask you one semi-philosophical question. Take John Connally: He has come out of law school; he has built up no law practice, he has been away in the service now for several years, and he has done nothing. He is trying to get a radio [station] started; he's trying to get his own start in life, and at the same time he just gives over all his time to a congressman's campaign. Why?

C: I guess this goes back to 1939 when I first went to work for him. Even though we were both young men and even though he's eight years older than I, we had formed a very, very close tie, a very close friendship in the limited time, really, that we'd had together in the fall of 1939 and all of 1940. Then [during] the campaign for the Senate in 1941 we were together, and for about four months that he was in the navy we were together out on the West Coast. It was more than an employer-employee relationship. We had formed a very close bond of friendship, and I was extremely loyal to him and I think he to me during that period of time. I had absolutely *nothing* then, didn't before the war and still didn't after the war, yet he obviously was in trouble, and he was in need of help. I was only too glad to do it, although certainly I didn't have any financial storehouse that really justified it, because I was trying to organize a radio station and put it on the air and build it and having to borrow all the money.

F: Become a civilian again.

C: And really get back into civilian life. But it's like I guess it was later on, you realized a

job needed to be done. I again knew the district extremely well; I had traveled the district with him before the war and knew a great many of the people. He had in a sense been extremely kind to me from the very early days, and I suppose he never before or since has treated anyone as he did me. I'm sure part of this was a product of the times. I don't mean this to sound egotistical, but [by] the very nature of the times in which we lived we were drawn very closely together. When he first started he had a very small organization, and so I just spent endless hours with him at the office and at home, being a part of everything he did. It wasn't just, as I say, an employer-employee relationship.

F: What he wanted, you wanted him to have.

C: That's right. And conversely, he was trying to be as helpful to me as he knew how to be, and with Nellie. So we just formed that kind of a relationship which, as I say, the times permitted. Because his financial resources, although they were largely based at that point on what Mrs. Johnson had, weren't unlimited either. We were all living pretty much from hand to mouth and had gone through some rather critical times with each other, so it formed a bond of friendship that when he obviously was in trouble or we thought he might be in trouble in the campaign, I was delighted [to help].

F: You don't count costs, you go.

C: That's right. You don't look back.

F: I think your case is special, but all through his career, and I don't know whether I've seen the wrong people or not, it seems to me that whenever he beckoned for help, people went.

C: Yes, I think that's basically true.

F: You know, not many people have this quality.

C: That's right.

F: You help a lot of people and say, "Would you help me on this?" and they say, "I'd like to but"--

(Interruption)

F: We were talking about how Mr. Johnson beckoned and people came.

C: Yes, they always have. He's an amazing man in many ways, not the least of which is [that] at least until he became, oh, I'd say president--I would not even exclude his time in the vice presidency, although there might be one or two notable exceptions--he'd always been able to surround himself with people who had a high degree of loyalty to him. As I say, he's the type of fellow, particularly in small groups and working with few people, and this was what he did up until he became president, really, who has an ability to involve himself with people and to work with people to where he doesn't leave them with an employer-employee relationship. He becomes involved in their affairs and they in his to the point where they almost feel, not as if they were doing something for him, but they were doing something for themselves when they went to his assistance and went to his aid on whatever the problem might be. This is not to say that he was not a demanding fellow, because he was. It's not to say that he was not a selfish man in many ways, because he was. But at the same time that he was selfish in many ways, he was also extremely magnanimous and generous in many ways, extravagantly generous, I would say, at times.

F: [He] gave almost as much as he ever got.

C: Yes, that's right. He's a real paradox. Because at times he could be wholly self-centered, completely egotistical to the point of being both selfish and overbearing. Yet at other times he could and would be extremely concerned, very compassionate and, as I say,

extravagantly generous. His was a type of personality and a type of operation that where he was dealing with a few people on his staff, or wherever, he engendered a spirit of loyalty that everyone felt was mutual. He always made people feel that he was prepared to give more than he got if the occasion demanded it. Obviously, when he became president I think that began to break down because he was in a completely different environment.

F: Let's go back to 1945 now. You're going to have a few months to yourself, not too many.

C: Again, in 1946 he was elected. During that time, really, I didn't work for him. I was running the campaign for him, but I went ahead in trying to build a radio station. I've forgotten the month we got our permit, but as I recall we went on the air in October. I remember quite well; it was October 1 or October 2. We were carrying the baseball games; we got the Mutual Network, and we went on the air carrying the World Series of 1946.

F: That would have been the first week of October.

C: I worked on that and worked in the station then as manager of the station, doing very little practicing of law through 1947 and 1948.

F: Now you had the station down the alley. He had no relationship with where you located?

C: No, not at all.

F: Just Dewey Bradford.

C: Just Dewey Bradford, yes. I never will [stop] regretting that we didn't buy that building, although at the time Dewey didn't really want to sell it. Of course, Dewey was a hell of a lot smarter businessman than any of us were. But we had a lease with it, and it worked out extremely well. We were happy not to have to buy it, because we didn't have any

cash anyway, didn't have any money. We were trying to rake and scrape and save every penny that we could.

F: Was there a problem arising from being a competitor of the Congressman?

C: No. There really wasn't. A bunch of us got out and sold radio advertising everywhere we could and competed.

F: Your staff was pretty well made up of people who had worked for Johnson, wasn't it?

C: Yes and no.

F: Willard Deason.

C: Yes. Well, yes, Bill was really not on the staff to begin with.

F: He came in later?

C: Yes, he came in later. Initially there was Jake Pickle and Ed Syers and I. Gosh, I've forgotten who all--fellows like Dave Smith and Bob Heller and Stuart Long were our newscasters. Stuart had worked for KTBC. So yes, we did get certainly some of his people, and a great many of us had at one time or another had some connection with him, either at the radio station or in politics. But we had no qualms about competing and no trouble competing, really. This carried us through 1947.

Then again in 1948 he was faced with a decision whether or not to run for the Senate.

F: I presume he talked it over with you.

C: Yes. He came down I think with his mind fairly well made up, and I was amused by a quote that I've seen in ***Look*** magazine out of Sam Houston Johnson's book. I haven't read it all yet, but--

F: I don't intend to.

C: I don't either really. But he said that--he was partially correct--Mr. Johnson came to Texas with his mind made up not to run, and that a bunch of young liberals talked him into it. He didn't name anybody. But Mr. Johnson came down, again the date I don't recall exactly, but it was obviously fairly early in the year.

F: He has got a different problem from 1941. In 1941 he can run and lose and he's still a congressman, but in 1948 it's either-or.

C: That's right, in 1948 it was heads up. O'Daniel was up, his term was over, but it was generally conceded that Governor Coke Stevenson was going to run. So Mr. Johnson had a very, very tough decision to make, and he had talked, I am sure, to a great many people. I know he did.

F: Do you think he was basically negative toward running when he came down, as Sam Houston says?

C: Yes, I really do. Of course, you never can be sure about him, you know.

F: Yes, I know.

C: But I think he had fairly well made up his mind not to do it.

F: You might say that everybody in retrospect who had known him in the past five years got some intimation on the March 31 speech because he had talked on all sides--

C: That's right.

F: --of everything at one time or another. If you look you can say, "Oh, he was trying to tell me something."

C: But in 1948 we got over to the Driskill Hotel. I never shall forget, we were in one of those end suites over there, and there was Jake Pickle, Ed Syers, Bob Phinney and one or two more of us; I think there were about six of us in the room with him. He was calling

and talking to this person and that person, and he was getting some encouragement and considerable discouragement. We were talking about how strong Coke Stevenson was and that they didn't think he could beat him and so forth. Well, again, we were a bunch of young fellows, and I guess we were prepared to charge hell with a bucket of water. We knew all the arguments pro and con, and all those arguments had been made about what he should do and why he should do it. We knew the obstacles that he was going to have and the hurdles he would have to overcome, and we frankly admitted that he was starting behind. But we in effect finally just almost dared him to do it on one hand, and on the other hand we accused him of not having the guts to do it. This went on all morning. He was interrupted by some phone calls, and we were in and out talking with each other, trying to figure out what else we could say that would be persuasive, because we all wanted him to run. He finally made his decision and said, "Well, if we are going to do it, why don't we call in the press and tell them?" And that was it.

F: Was, in that period, the average county chairman and other courthouse types in Texas fairly brutal and honest in his assessment, or did he tell you what you wanted to hear?

C: No, I think they were probably more honest, less sophisticated, if I can use that word. I'm not sure it's aptly descriptive.

F: "You won't carry X County," I mean, if he wouldn't.

C: That's right. They were fairly realistic and fairly brutal about it. Then, like now, they don't ever want to just come out and say, "No, you'll get the hell beat out of you here." But they say, "Well, you'd have a tough race here. You know, Coke's been here" or "He's got family here" or something. Governor Stevenson was a popular governor. He had served during the war, and there was a freeze on everything. You couldn't do anything.

You couldn't spend any money. You couldn't build any roads. You couldn't do anything, really.

F: He looked beautiful, economically.

C: Oh, economically [he] had a tremendous surplus in the treasury.

F: Nothing like it. (Laughter)

C: He had spent no money, and this fitted his image, fitted it extremely well, so he was in a very enviable position. But nevertheless, Mr. Johnson got in the race and we started girding up for what we knew was going to be an extremely tough campaign.

F: All you wanted at the outset was just to make the run-off, I guess.

C: Yes. Well, obviously we wanted to lead the ticket if we could. We also felt realistically that about all we could hope to do was to get in the run-off, because we thought we were starting way behind, that it was going to take a monumental effort to catch up, and that we were going to have to try to be luckier and smarter and more aggressive and work harder, because we felt like Governor Stevenson had everything going his way, which he did.

F: Did you sit around and look for a gimmick? You came up with a superb one in the helicopter.

C: Yes, we did, for two reasons. We, one, needed a gimmick, so to speak, but secondly, we needed the man to get out. We needed to move him. Governor Stevenson was well known. We didn't have television then. It took you longer to make an impact.

F: Stevenson had a more natural forum for the state of Texas, too, in the governor's mansion.

C: That's right. That's correct. And he'd been governor, been in the newspapers every day,

and even though the Congressman was well known in the Tenth District, he wasn't well known over the whole state except to a few leading people. In those days you couldn't make the impact in a relatively short period of time that you can now, even if you'd had the money.

F: Where did you get the idea for the helicopter?

C: I've forgotten. It was something new, and I don't frankly remember where the idea first came from. They were being made in Fort Worth, and we were able to get Joe Mashman, the chief test pilot of Bell Aircraft. So we got that helicopter and started off in it.

F: Did danger ever enter the candidate's mind?

C: Oh, yes, yes. But again, we talked to Joe Mashman, who as I say was the chief test pilot for Bell, and he came down and demonstrated it to us. A number of us went up in the plane before the candidate ever got in it. He showed us what it could do, and none of us had ever been in a helicopter before. But when we'd get out to the airport he'd take it up and just cut the switch completely off, and the rotors would continue to turn and let you down fairly easily. Joe Mashman gave us the constraints and told us what he could do and what he couldn't do and where he'd land and where he wouldn't land. He very quickly disabused our minds [of the notion] that it was a dangerous thing. We frankly thought it was dangerous from the standpoint of other people, and this caused us great concern during the campaign, because he was going into all these little towns on the courthouse lawns, baseball fields.

F: Afraid people would crowd too close?

C: Yes, we were afraid people would crowd too close, and particularly we were worried about that tail rotor. It was a blessing and a curse at one and the same time, because it

had no fuel capacity, and very, very few places in those days carried one hundred-octane gasoline, particularly in the smaller towns. Now in the big cities you had no problem.

F: So you had to run a logistical train.

C: Oh! Oh! My God, the logistics of this thing were unbelievable, because we were running advance men ahead of him, just as always, to get stuff in the papers, to get the crowds there, to run sound trucks. In those days you were still running the sound trucks and playing the music and [hand]billing the crowds and telling people where you were going to land.

F: Lyndon Johnson will be here this afternoon.

C: Lyndon Johnson will be here at two o'clock at the ballpark, come out and hear him, good music, and so forth and so on. Well, to stay ahead of that helicopter we had to have about three crews, and then we had to fuel the cockeyed thing about every hour or hour and a half. We got out in all these stretches in East Texas, South Texas, and my God, we were running gasoline trucks all over hell's half acre. Occasionally they would be late, and then he'd blow a fuse. Our gasoline truck would break down, and they would be sitting somewhere without any fuel to leave.

F: Nothing worse than when you're through and can't go.

C: Oh, just terrible.

F: How did you handle the press in this? I'm talking about the city press that goes with you.

C: They just missed about every other stop.

F: They had a problem, too.

C: Yes.

F: In other words, at Fort Worth you're going to Weatherford, Mineral Wells, Ranger, [so]

they'll stop off in Weatherford and head for Ranger while you stop in Mineral Wells.

C: Yes, that's correct, and they were splitting up, part of them. Then the reporters would fill each other in on what happened at Mineral Wells if they were at Weatherford. They were kind of pooling their reporting because there wasn't any way we could haul them. This posed real problems for us, too, because we weren't sure what he was saying.

F: Yes.

C: We had to have our advance people, and that was the reason we had to have about three crews, because one of them would have to call us after each [stop]. So we were having trouble communicating, and our advance people would have to have wait after each appearance so we'd know back at Weatherford or Ranger or Cisco, wherever he was putting down, because we were having to put out releases on what he was saying.

It went very well. He worked, worked awfully hard. We soon found that the helicopter was a tremendous drawing card in the smaller communities, but even though it was a novelty it really did not have the impact in the big cities. We used it in the big cities.

F: But nobody was going to drive across town in a big city to see you.

C: No. We got to where we stopped in different parts of town. In a big city we'd make a number of stops--in Dallas or Houston or San Antonio. But we actually did not put the emphasis on that, because we just frankly didn't think it was the drawing card there that it was in smaller communities.

F: You covered a lot more ground, and in one sense there was a certain efficiency about it: You didn't have nearly the kind of overnight train, bus and hotel problems that you would have otherwise if you'd go out and come back. From an economy standpoint, did it make

it a great deal more expensive or about the same?

C: No, it wasn't a great deal more expensive. No, because I guess we were able to lease it--nobody knew what it was worth. Of course, Bell was interested in promoting the deal.

F: They were glad to have it seen.

C: It made national news with him traveling in this helicopter, from their standpoint.

F: Did they charge you for their pilot?

C: Oh, sure. You bet, they charged us for the pilot plus a fee. They didn't give it to us by any manner or means. But it was not a prohibitive leasing arrangement that we were able to work out with them.

F: Several country people have told me over the years that the Congressman always lost his hat to the crowd coming in. Is that true or not?

C: No, he didn't always lose it.

F: "Lyndon Johnson's hat is in the ring."

C: He'd occasionally throw one out to them or something of that kind, but there weren't any great number. I don't suppose he lost over ten or twelve during that whole campaign.

We got through the primary, and as I recall--and again I'm just speaking from memory--he and I had gone to San Antonio the night before the first primary. He had worked his heart out down there with Owen Kilday, who was the sheriff, and gone from box to box all over that town, particularly the Latin boxes. We'd stayed up late the night before and got up early the next morning, and he went out again. This was actually on election day. Then we'd driven the car to Johnson City that afternoon for him to vote. This was in the first primary.

F: This is the end of June.

C: No, this is the second primary I'm thinking of now. He had lost the first primary, as I recall, by about 76,000 votes.

F: Good and respectable but still second.

C: Yes, very respectable but still second. Let me back up a little bit. During the run-off election it was obvious that Governor Stevenson had the best of both worlds. He was a conservative and was appealing to the conservatives on the basis of his own fiscal management of state affairs. You could talk all you wanted to about [how] he couldn't have done anything [anyway] because of the war and the restraints and rationing and so forth, but this didn't carry any great [weight].

F: The record was still there.

C: The facts were that the surplus was still there, and you weren't going to shake those people loose. On the other hand, he was also getting some of the liberal vote because of Johnson's voting record on labor matters.

F: Taft-Hartley.

C: He had supported the Smith Act and the Taft-Hartley, which was very much an issue in those days. So in the run-off, after analyzing the position that we were in, it was obvious that we had to separate Governor Stevenson from some of his support, one way or the other. We had to appeal to the large body of independent voters. Obviously Mr. Johnson had his record, and he was prepared to live with it and support it and defend it, but we had to somehow draw Governor Stevenson out. So in the run-off election, and I think Senator Wirtz was largely the architect of this, Mr. Johnson used radio quite extensively. Nearly every day at noon he had a fifteen-minute program on radio. I believe it was fifteen minutes; it was either five or fifteen. His entire run-off campaign almost was

directed to this one point, talking about Governor Stevenson: What would he do? Was he for Taft-Hartley or was he against Taft-Hartley? The people had a right to know.

Then Governor Stevenson, I think, made the great mistake of his campaign. Obviously, Mr. Johnson was talking about foreign affairs, his knowledge of foreign affairs and international affairs. He was hammering on that quite heavily, and Governor Stevenson felt, apparently, that he had to show some awareness of it, some familiarity with it. So he decided to make a trip to Washington and spend a few days, and had arranged some visits up there, with whom I don't know.

F: Get a little national exposure.

C: He was going to get some national exposure, and he was going to get briefed by a few people up there on international problems. That was the purpose of his trip, supposedly. Well, about that time Mr. Johnson was also hammering on this Taft-Hartley thing. Marshall McNeil was a reporter for the Scripps-Howard newspapers, and Marshall was a tough, smart, able reporter who knew Texas politics and had followed it for years. When Governor Stevenson went up, why, Marshall McNeil attempted to interview him, and Governor Stevenson was not interested in giving any of those Washington reporters an interview. Again I'm speaking from memory of now twenty-one years [past], but Marshall McNeil caught Governor Stevenson in his hotel room, and in effect just barged in, I think, while Governor Stevenson was taking a shower. He started popping questions to him while he was in the shower and asked him how he stood on Taft-Hartley. Governor Stevenson replied that he wasn't prepared to answer that question because he'd caught him up in Washington without his notes, or something to that effect.

Well, of course Mr. Johnson then took this and just *really* ran with it. We talked

about the forty-eight-hour indoctrination in international affairs and this quickie course in foreign relations. Then after this story came out about being caught up there without his notes, this was real fodder, and Mr. Johnson bore down on it very, very heavily. But nearly every single day on the radio his entire pitch was primarily on this labor thing.

F: "Where do you stand?"

C: Yes. "Where do you stand? Here's where I stand. I supported the Smith Act." I think there was a Connally Act that Senator [Tom] Connally had passed, and, "I supported that, and I supported the Taft-Hartley. Now, where are you?" It was this type of campaign. It obviously began to tell; it obviously began to take effect.

We knew it was going to be a very, very close election. In the first primary we had analyzed the vote immediately after the first primary, and Mr. Johnson had gotten hurt in the country boxes, the smaller counties, but had run well in the cities. So after this run-off campaign, the night before we'd wound up in San Antonio, as I related a moment ago--[he] got up early the next morning and did it again. Within the limits of the law at that time, he went to these various ballot boxes. Not in the boxes, obviously; he went on election day as close as he could get in the neighborhood of the boxes. We were trying to see that we had people out with cards and literature and everything posted at every box in Bexar County. We worked there, and then we drove from San Antonio to Johnson City, where he voted.

He and I were coming back into Austin late that evening, and he was pretty dejected. He was tired, just completely worn out, as I was. He said, "I'm afraid we've lost it. I think we've hurt ourselves in these big cities that we carried before. I think we've lost ground."

F: What did he base that on?

C: Basically on the type of campaign that he'd run in the second primary, that this was where the labor vote was and he'd made an issue of it, that he thought he'd solidified these people against him and that they had gotten more active. They had been perhaps somewhat passive in the first primary, but nevertheless he'd made them the target and made them the whipping boy, so to speak, in the run-off, and he thought that the lead that he'd made in the cities in the first primary would diminish. I said, "Yes, I think that's true. I think you'll run poorer in the cities, but I think the rural boxes will more than make up for it. I think you've gained ground in the rural counties of this state, and I think they'll more than offset any losses that you have had in these cities." And that's precisely the way it turned out.

We got back in that night, and we started getting the returns. It was very, very obvious that it was going to be a *very*, *very* close election. I think I covered the next few days in the last interview we had.

F: We talked about the difference between 1941 and the 1948 campaigns.

C: That's right.

F: The fact that there were the delayed returns this time that you called in the first time, that let the opposition know what they had to turn in.

C: That's correct. This time we did just the opposite. Wherever we had any influence, we never let them report to the Texas Election Bureau. Yet we were keeping a very, very close tally. We had a whole bunch of us on the telephones just calling, calling, trying to get these votes in and trying to find out how many votes were out and where they were. And we kept our own tally. We were actually calling in to all of these counties,

particularly the rural counties. This is where, you know, they're slow about reporting and everybody is very casual about it. We were actually calling in; we were talking to our campaign manager in that county, or we were talking to the county chairman, or we were talking to the precinct judges. And if we found a precinct [was] out, we would call it and say, "What was the return from your precinct? Why haven't you reported? When are you going to report?"

F: I presume you and Mr. Johnson saw to it that the state was thoroughly organized. You didn't even neglect places like Presidio and Loving County.

C: We weren't completely successful, but we tried to have somebody in every single county, and even beyond that.

F: Your man had been told.

C: Down into the precincts wherever we could. By and large we had people in all these counties that we could call, and many, many times they actually went to the courthouse and got the returns, where they had not been reported to the Texas Election Bureau, and called us. Because in a great many cases, as you know, the Texas Election Bureau just had somebody, generally the editor of the paper or editor of the weekly in that county, that they got to call them. Well, some of them, if some of the returns were late getting in or they were incomplete or something, sometimes they'd call, sometimes they wouldn't. We actually had somebody go over to the courthouse and check all these boxes as they came in, so we frankly thought our count was far more accurate than the Texas Election Bureau's. As a matter of fact, we thought we won the election by about 230 votes.

F: Did the Congressman blow hot and cold on his chances in an election during a campaign, or was he generally optimistic, [or] generally gloomy? What was his attitude? You've

been through every kind of campaign with him now.

C: Oh, he'd blow hot and cold occasionally, although if I had to say one or the other I would say he was always an optimist. By and large this was true. The only time he reflected any pessimism was when he got tired, just bone-weary, and things weren't going right, or we weren't getting releases out, or he wasn't getting pictures in the paper when he went through a town, or some mechanical problem, why, he'd get despondent. But by and large I would say that he was an optimist. The only real doubt that I ever saw him express which I thought was a genuine fear, not fear but was a sincere feeling on his part, was in that car coming back from Johnson City that night.

F: That was justified. That was close enough.

C: Yes, I think it was justified. I think he was absolutely sincere when he expressed the thought that he had probably lost the election.

F: He had a problem during this campaign of gallstones [kidney stones].

C: Oh, yes.

F: Do you want to get into that?

C: Yes. Strangely enough, every campaign he ever got in that was hard, I guess he had some trouble.

F: Partly emotional and partly an overextension of his physical being?

C: Yes, I think both. In 1941, as I told you, he got sick and went to Scott and White.

F: In 1937. Appendix.

C: 1937. Appendix. In 1948 he got sick and was in great pain and wound up in Dallas, just couldn't move, just couldn't go.

F: You were down in Austin?

C: I was in Austin. He was and had been in great pain and thought he had kidney stones, but he wasn't sure. We had made arrangements--he had, largely--to get Jacqueline Cochran's plane, Mrs. Floyd Odlum, really. It was a plane she flew. He'd arranged to get Floyd Odlum's plane to fly him to Mayo Clinic to get them to check him over to see what was wrong with him. He was going to leave from Dallas. As a matter of fact, he had made these arrangements before he'd said anything to any of us about it.

F: Is there a certain belief there that he can triumph over the physical self?

C: I guess so.

F: Mind over matter.

C: Yes. But he always had a very strange approach to the news media when he got sick, for some reason. Shortly after he'd made these arrangements and made the decision to go, we knew he was obviously in great pain. He had been almost impossible to live with on the telephone. We didn't see him, but we all talked to him three or four times a day and he was just eating us all alive in the campaign headquarters. We had taken an old house there on 8th Street. We had a big old colonial house that we had rented over there, and that's where our headquarters were, in the next block. We were operating out of there, and we knew something was wrong with him. He was in great pain, because his attitude and temper were such that it was unusually difficult to make his continuing commitments on this campaign tour.

Anyway, he got to Dallas and was going to leave from there. Again, we ran into this same old problem of what you tell the press, and I again insisted and maintained that we had to tell the press, had to tell them where he was going and why he was going. And he objected to it very strenuously.

F: Now, obviously, he isn't going to show up for some announced speaking engagements.

C: That's right.

F: So it's not a case of covering up like you might if a man were sick at home and just didn't show up at the office for a few days.

C: No. It was inconceivable that a candidate for the United States Senate could leave Dallas, Texas and check into the Mayo Clinic--

F: Go to Minneapolis or Rochester.

C: --and to be gone for several days from a campaign tour and people not ask why and where. We told him that we were going to make this announcement and did make it soon as we were sure he was going. He went into just a rage again.

F: You never really got clearance to make it? You just made it out of necessity?

C: Yes. We made it out of necessity, what we thought was necessity. He just went into a rage again and said he was going to withdraw from the race. The last conversation I had with him, why, he just ate me out alive again about it. It was kind of a replay of 1941. Obviously he was sick and in great pain, but he was brutal with me in his conversation. You know, he gets worked up, accuses me of selling him out and just not doing anything and not listening to him and overriding his judgment. [He said] that he was the candidate and, by God, we sat down there and did nothing and we ate three square meals a day and we slept in a bed and we kept him on the run; that he knew more about what was going on than we did and that after all it was *his* business and *his* campaign and he had a right to run it the way he wanted to, and so forth and so on. He just was unmerciful in the way he talked to us, and me in particular, because I took the responsibility for it.

Then he called Warren Woodward. Warren was traveling with him then, and

Woody called me and told me he was just fit to be tied and he had told him to call the press in, that he was going to withdraw from the race. I told Woody just to lock the door. He was in bed. He was in great pain. I said, "Just lock the door and tell them to shut off the phones." He said, "I've already done that. I've got all the calls transferred to my room." And I said, "Well, just lock the door and be damn sure nobody gets in there, and don't let him see the press." And so, fortunately, then he went on to Mayo's.

F: Who soothed him in this, or did he just not get access to the press?

C: He didn't get access to them. He took off. We kept him away from the press and kept them away from him, and he went on to Mayo's.

F: I would presume that as soon as you made your announcement the press tried to find him.

C: But we made it about the time just shortly before he was getting ready to leave, so they really didn't have too much reaction time. Woody and them just fended everybody off of him and got him out of the hotel. Since he was going by private plane there wasn't any way they could check up, and they didn't catch him before he left, as I recall. We put out the announcement, and the press was, I think, very understanding about it. They didn't make any attempt to pursue it. We told them where he was going and why.

He went to Mayo's and had these kidney stones removed, and all of us were distraught. We thought it might take an operation, and if it had taken an operation he'd be out for the rest of the campaign. We just didn't know, but we felt we had no choice but to take it, whatever came.

F: Now he is only forty years old, so there's no question of his physical ability to fill the office, is there?

C: Oh, no.

F: This wasn't raised by the Stevenson forces?

C: No. There really was never any question about that. We were fighting, again, for the maximum exposure. Because as little as you think of it today, your coverage was primarily radio and newspapers; television was no factor in 1948. Our problem was getting the man known, getting people to see him, being exposed to him where they felt like they knew him. That was the thing that was bugging us, as to whether or not this time out would just knock us into a cocked hat on that account.

F: Did you think there would be any sympathy vote?

C: Yes, we thought there might be some. But it was not a night-before situation, so that the timing on it was such that--

F: It would be forgotten by the time [of the election].

C: Yes, you'd have a reaction set in, so you couldn't count on any sympathy vote, really. But anyway, he went on up there. But our conversations, again, had been just as they were in 1941. They'd been so heated that believe it or not, and this sounds I guess childish on the part of both of us, we went for about ten days when we didn't even speak to each other.

F: Now, you've got to get on with the campaign. How do you do it when the campaign manager and the campaigner aren't speaking?

C: Well, that's right. He was talking to everybody else in the office and I was too, and we were relaying messages through everybody in the campaign headquarters. But I was saying to the speech writers, "You do this and do that," and I was saying to the itinerary people and the organization people, "You all do this and do that." And then he was relaying back word, but we didn't speak to each other for ten days.

F: After one of those little bouts, does he just pick up one day as if nothing had happened?

C: Yes, we just picked up.

F: There is no eating crow or no rearranging?

C: No, we'd just go right back and start talking as if nothing has happened.

F: You don't refer to it?

C: No, never did refer to it. Of course, in later years we got to where we would joke about it, even later in the campaign, later that year we'd joke about it.

(Interruption)

F: So you picked up and the campaign went on without a hitch.

C: Yes.

F: Do you ever have any trouble in a campaign like this with some--not necessarily younger person--but some person who wants to enlarge his own image, maybe, with the press, leaking the fact that there's a little bit of dissension in the family?

C: No, we didn't really have too much of that. This was one of the strange things. I guess in both 1941 and 1948 we had a bunch of young people in the campaign by and large who were in the headquarters, and we were just there trying to do a job.

F: You were trying to get on with it?

C: Yes. I guess in a way we were very, very unsophisticated. Oh, we'd leak or try to leak things. Frankly, we'd try to plant things, but it was always for some political purpose, really, either to help us or hurt the opposition. But I don't recall that there were any instances of anybody particularly doing that to further their own cause. None of us had any objectives really that were to be served. I don't recall that any of that went on.

F: Okay, so you have sweated out the election returns; you've got an eighty-seven-vote margin; you've got a contest on your hands. Are you active in that?

C: No, not really, except I met with the lawyers.

F: Were you in that Fort Worth meeting where you all got together?

C: Yes. Oh, yes.

F: Whose idea was it to bring Abe Fortas over? Irving Goldberg?

C: I think it was probably a combination of Senator Wirtz and Mr. Johnson together. You see, Senator Wirtz had been under secretary of the Interior in 1940 or 1941. I've forgotten when he got out. It was sometime during the war.

F: He was in there two or three years.

C: When Harold Ickes was secretary.

F: And Fortas had been there.

C: Fortas was assistant secretary; he was under Alvin Wirtz when Senator Wirtz was under secretary of the Interior.

F: It was just fortuitous, though, that Fortas was in Dallas at that time? It had no relationship with the contest?

C: I'm not sure of that.

F: Well, it doesn't matter.

C: I'm not sure of that. I don't recall that it was fortuitous; maybe it was. But Arnold, Fortas, and Porter--both Senator Wirtz and Mr. Johnson knew them all, because Thurmond Arnold was chief of the Anti-trust Division of the Department of Justice in the thirties.

F: He's one that got away from me, incidentally.

C: Paul Porter, we had known. I had known him, and I had known Abe Fortas back in 1939-1940, and Paul Porter was the fellow that Fred Vinson had brought up from Kentucky.

Porter was certainly one of the principal cast of characters in the third-term campaign, so we'd worked with him a very great deal in the campaign for reelection of all these Democratic members of Congress that I told you about, in 1940. I'd known Abe Fortas as well when he was over at Interior and I was in Mr. Johnson's office in 1939 and 1940. They'd organized their law firm, and they had a great regard for Abe Fortas, probably felt closer to those individuals than anyone else in Washington at that particular time. Whether or not he was in Dallas by happenstance, I frankly don't remember. I would doubt it, but maybe so. But I would say the two principal attorneys other than Abe Fortas were Senator Wirtz and Everett Looney, and then they brought in a number of other people with them.

F: Who made the decision to get John Crooker, Sr., to do the courtroom work?

C: I don't remember that.

F: I've talked to him, but he's past remembering.

C: I would say it had to be one of the two, I guess either Senator Wirtz or Everett Looney. At that point both sides were building up, amassing a huge legal force. My gosh, they were trying to involve every lawyer in the country on one side or the other, and did! I recall L. E. Jones did a *great* deal of the briefing on it. I don't know how many lawyers got in on this, but there must have been fifteen or twenty on both sides, and they were just scrambling and running and operating out of first Fort Worth and then Austin and Houston and Washington. It was a madhouse.

F: What did you have to do during all of this? Supply information?

C: Yes, basically I was sitting in, trying to give them information, give them the facts on which to base their petitions and so forth.

F: Did you feel pretty good?

C: Well, I thought it was close. Of course we were also continuing to work strictly on a political basis, where most of my work was then concentrated, because the State Democratic Executive Committee had not met, and you didn't go on the ballot unless they certified you. So the battleground changed from the electorate to the sixty-two people on the State Democratic Executive Committee.

F: Were you buttonholing them?

C: Oh, yes, sure. Yes, we immediately started touching base with every one of those people all over the state.

F: How did they seem to stack up in the beginning? Did you have to do much persuasion?

C: Yes, you had to educate them first. You had to try to tell them what was happening, and they wanted to know what the situation was, what was going to happen. Obviously it was chaotic. No one knew what was going to happen.

F: Were they mainly approachable?

C: Oh, yes. We obviously had had *entrées* with a great many of them. A great many of them had been in the campaign on one side or the other. Some of them we knew were going to be against us; some of them we knew were going to be for us to start with. So we just finally resolved it down to trying to find the pivot people, and convince them that fairly and squarely we had won the election.

I'm not the best source for all that went on. You know your memory dims over a period of years. But the first thing that happened, I believe, was Gillis Johnson in Fort Worth, of the Cantey, Hanger, Johnson, Scarborough and Gooch firm, went over to East Texas, he and somebody did, and got that injunction out of Judge Whitfield Davidson to

prevent Johnson's name from going on the ballot. This was done at two or three o'clock in the morning. He rode all night to get over there. Much was said about that, and about an order being issued at that time of morning. Then that's when the decision was made [that] we had to go to higher authority, and that's when the decision was made to ask Justice Black to set aside that order. So that was done. Then, as I say, we started working on the executive committee, and as I recall the vote we wound up twenty-eight to twenty-eight on the executive committee.

F: Just like the election.

C: That's exactly right. It was incredible. This whole thing was unbelievable. Each side was trying to convince the other that they had won, and with that close a vote I'm sure both sides felt completely justified in their claims that they'd won. There were a great many charges during that time, of course, of box 13 in Duval [Jim Wells] County and all this kind of business. The ***Dallas [Morning] News*** was one of the leading newspapers; they owned the Texas Election Bureau, and they were very much pro-Stevenson. So Mr. Johnson was not getting the best of news coverage out of this whole thing.

As a matter of fact, again my memory is that during the time that all these votes were coming in, between the time that the election was actually over and the election bureau was getting the informal results--it's about a week before those reports are officially made from the counties to the secretary of state--why, there were charges and countercharges. Even when the returns were coming in, some of our people, at least, thought that the papers and even the radio, the wire services were not releasing the returns as they came in until they got enough to where Stevenson was out in front. So that when these final votes came in it looked like something phony had gone on, that

there had been some rigging of the ballots and rigging of the election. I don't know that that occurred, but nevertheless that feeling certainly existed.

F: You've got the feeling of the fiefdom, too, that the Parrs had.

C: Oh, yes. No question about that. From a publicity standpoint and emotional standpoint, you had everything in the world running against you because of the fiefdom and the Duval County and the so-called controlled vote and so and so on. Actually their votes never changed from what they originally told us they were going to be; they reported some, but they never reported complete. And this was true, so far as I know, about box 13. But I remember Donald Thomas went down to Jim Wells County and went into it thoroughly. I never went. I never went to Jim Wells County or Duval County either one. Donald Thomas did, and he's probably the best source of information in the state of Texas if he remembers, because he was down there, I guess, a week or longer.

F: Do you know where he is?

C: Yes, he's in Austin. He's in [Edward] Clark's law firm. But Donald Thomas was in on that. He was one of the lawyers that was involved. Everett Looney sent him down there to find out what the hell had happened, to be sure that there wasn't any hanky-panky going on. As I recall, Donald stayed down there a week or longer and went into that whole thing up one side and down the other and satisfied himself that there wasn't anything about it. We were, of course, looking toward an election contest. That's what we thought was coming.

F: Trying to be sure you knew all the facts.

C: Yes. We were just trying to find out ourselves everything that had happened. The idea that we knew, that any of us ever knew what happened in all of the 254 counties in the

state, or in those counties, [is foolish]. Actually, we knew no more than what they had told us, and from what they'd told us we felt we were on very sound ground about what those returns would show. We never had any doubt about it.

But in the aftermath after the election and after all the furor was raised, well, then we began to backtrack and check things every way in the world we could until we got to the executive committee. Because we knew we had a battle, not only a battle of the ballots, but we had a battle of public relations in trying to convince these sixty-two people on the executive committee that this had been an honest election and that Mr. Johnson had won it, although by a very slim margin. But then the first vote in the executive committee was twenty-eight to twenty-eight, and we found Charlie Gibson from Amarillo in the men's room, and we got Charlie back in there and he broke the tie. As I recall it was twenty-eight to twenty-eight, and I think it wound up twenty-nine to twenty-eight.

F: That's close on time and vote.

C: Just couldn't have been [closer]. It's like fiction. If you have written it, nobody would have believed it.

End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview II

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

## LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON LIBRARY

### Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of

### JOHN CONNALLY

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, Idanell Connally of Houston, Texas, do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title, and interest in the tape recording and transcript of the personal interviews conducted with my late husband, John Connally, in Houston, Texas on October 1 and November 28, 1969, and June 30, 1988 and prepared for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

(1) The transcripts shall be available for use by researchers as soon as they have been deposited in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

(2) The tape recordings shall be available to those researchers who have access to the transcripts.

(3) I hereby assign to the United States Government all copyright I may have in the interview transcripts and tapes.

(4) Copies of the transcripts and the tape recordings may be provided by the Library to researchers upon request.

(5) Copies of the transcripts and tape recordings may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

Mrs. John B Connally 7/28/03
Executor Date

John W. Carlin 9-2003
Archivist of the United States Date