

INTERVIEW II

DATE: August 20, 1969

INTERVIEWEE: THOMAS CORCORAN

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

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

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F: Mr. Corcoran, let's get started again talking about President Johnson and go back and pick up the Sputnik episode and what came out of that.

C: When I saw all the drama about the moon, I remembered the circumstances under which I think Johnson began his devotion to this idea, which was the carrying power that carried the Sputnik landing on the moon through, despite the fact that other people at one time or another were partners in it. I particularly thought about this when I saw him down with Jimmy Webb at the blast-off to the moon, and I thought about it in relationship to the fact that in some ways I considered Mr. Nixon's taking the publicity advantage of the thing, doing the talking to the moon, in terms of the old fable in Aesop about the wren jumping off the back of the eagle.

I remember two or three things about the Sputnik episode that have always stuck in my mind. One is that I was at the Ranch with Lyndon the night that the Sputnik went up. Always in the back of Lyndon's mind and he used to say to me, "You know, I say no to you on Monday and I do what you suggest on Wednesday." Despite this caution even with me, which I think derived from some of his talks with Roosevelt, which in turn was one of the reasons I couldn't help Lyndon as much as I should have helped Lyndon. The

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night the Sputnik went up I was at the Ranch. Lyndon, always in the back of his mind, I am very sure, knew that somehow he had to make some progress and take credit for it on the civil rights front as the leader of the Senate in order to qualify himself as a candidate for president with the northern liberals. [So he] was deeply worried about what [Orval] Faubus was doing in Arkansas when Faubus was talking so rough about civil rights that he was making it impossible for any southern senator unless he took on the southerners to make the kind of progress Lyndon wanted to make as the majority leader in relationship to civil rights.

F: You don't think then that Senator Johnson was a late-corner to the civil rights issue?

C: No, I don't think Lyndon Johnson was ever a late-comer to civil rights. Senator Johnson used to talk to me about the composition of the electorate in Texas and point out to me that in substance, Texas, because of the way in which it was settled was as big a melting pot as New York, and that particularly he had always been able to have the support of the Negro and the Mexicans. His problem was not conviction about the thing. His problem was that the political necessity of keeping his base in Texas and not losing Texas if he had ambitions to be more than a Texan. So this time he was very concerned about the ruckus that Mr. Faubus was creating.

Just before this, there had been some kind of gas-filled balloon sent up in the sky, very high in orbit, on which there had been great advertising that you could see. Actually you could see that balloon across the sky. That night there had been a rumor that you could see Sputnik. Of course, Sputnik was so much further high up and, of course, we couldn't see Sputnik. But nevertheless, we went out and we walked up and down the

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Pedernales River, down toward the bridge, to see if we could see Sputnik.

As we walked along, I remember saying to Lyndon, "Lyndon, maybe, you know, Sputnik will liquidate Faubus. Maybe the way to handle the Faubus business is to get behind an answer to Sputnik and get the American pride involved in answer to the challenge of the Russians. See if you can wrap that around you if we can't in some way manage the liquidation of this civil rights business. That is, the Sputnik issue, if you grab hold of it, can very easily mitigate at last and may liquidate for you the civil rights issue."

From then on he went back and he took hold of this thing in the Senate. It was only his tenaciousness and his guts in seeing about the investigating committees, the preparedness committees, the tenacity with which he held on to appropriating that money during the difficult periods that made it possible--even if Mr. Kennedy talked about going to the moon--for us to actually get to the moon.

I particularly remember that night because the one who accompanied us on the walk was Mary Margaret [Wiley Valenti]. Somewhere about the turn of the bridge when we came up on the other side, the Fredericksburg side, the Lutheran church side, Mary Margaret lost her shoe. I remember the delicious argument we had over who should carry her. Mary Margaret was worth carrying. Now I wanted to tell you that one and I want to tell you another one.

I had a great deal of trouble with Mr. Roosevelt from 1936 on, and this had to do with Mr. Johnson. I had a great deal of trouble with Mr. Roosevelt from 1936 on about the terms of my own career. I was a lawyer and I wanted to stay a lawyer. In the 1936 campaign, in which I acted as chairman of the Republicans for Roosevelt in New York

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for the La Guardia-Norris Committee, I had an understanding with Mr. Roosevelt that if we won the election that I would be appointed the district attorney in the Southern District of New York, which was what I wanted. It proved impossible to give me that for the reason that the minimum wage bill, which was the last bill we had been working on, in 1936, had got stuck in the Rules Committee of the House and we had not been able to get the bill out.

I remember one incident particularly in relation to that bill. There was a fellow named Charlie West, a former congressman from Ohio, who was working on the bill and who was an unofficial administrative assistant, came along with me. The first administrative assistants had not been provided for in the Appropriations Bill, so I was lent from the RFC to the White House. And in accordance with the fact that I was on another payroll as well as the anonymity problem involved in particular, I very carefully never emerged as a White House man because any congressman on the wrong side of the fence would complain "what the hell was I doing with the money from the place I was paid from."

But in connection with that we got the bill through the Senate and that was the time when I first became very well acquainted with Justice [Hugo] Black, who since has been one of my very best friends. Ben Cohen and I worked with Black on this, as we'd worked with Wheeler and as we'd worked with Rayburn on the earlier financial bills. This bill did not come before Rayburn's committee. Every bill we had previously had had come before Rayburn's committee and before Wheeler's committee, but at this time we were working with the labor committees. We got the bill through the Senate later by

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getting Claude Pepper, who's always been a good friend of Lyndon's, elected as senator in Florida under much the same circumstances that we got Lyndon elected senator in Texas.

But we got stuck in the House. I remember one night I was sent down just before the closing of the House before the 1936 election by Roosevelt to try to see if I couldn't get names on a petition to make the Rules Committee let us have a vote before it adjourned. And Charlie West was supposed to be working with me, because Charlie having been a member of the House was committed to the House. I was a Senate man, but then Charlie was the House man. But for this job we were doubled up. And I went down on the Hill working like holy hell getting names on this petition. In some congressman's office, finally the White House telephone caught up with me and the President was on the phone. He said, "Tommy, how are you doing?" I said, "I'm doing wonderfully well." And he said, "Well, I want to congratulate you on how well you're doing, but this is what I want to talk to you about. Maybe I haven't told you but I'm much more interested than getting this bill through in keeping the issue for the next campaign. I want to say to you that I think you'd better lay off because I've sent Charlie West down to take the names off the petition as fast as you put them on. But you work so goddamned much faster than Charlie West that if we're not careful, he's not going to catch up with you and we're going to have a vote. And I would much prefer to have this an election issue than to have it through. Let's finish the bill next time." I said, "Well, I wanted to finish the bill before I went because it has in it the child labor provisions, which I promised Justice Holmes, who wrote the dissenting opinion in Hammer and

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Dagenhart [1918] that I would sometimes try to get done to vindicate him." "Well," he said, "I expect you to stay with me until we do get the bill through."

So, although I had an understanding with my firm in New York that I would go back after the 1936 election--if I didn't go in as the district attorney--I stayed. Instead of myself, I had appointed as district attorney--because at that time Mr. Roosevelt would do this for me--another young partner in the firm with me named John Cahill who became the district attorney and who later became the head of Cotton Franklin, on the death of Franklin.

So I made these arrangements to stay and we did get the minimum wage bill through the next year. But unfortunately staying I got tangled up trying to straighten Mr. Roosevelt's situation out on the Court plan. Then I couldn't get out. In the meantime it created a situation for me up in New York where, when I did get a chance to come out, the things in the firm, along with other reasons, was one reason why I couldn't get out of Washington.

But passing that, I had always had trouble with Mr. Roosevelt in 1940 on the same basis that r didn't want to be a politician. I wanted to be a lawyer. And by the time he lost control of things in the Court fight and found himself across the barrel with Farley and Flynn in New York, it was too late for him to be able to appoint me to the district attorneyship. Then when I later asked him to [let me] take the solicitor generalship, he felt that the Court fight got in the way. So he tried to get me to take other jobs like the under secretaryship of the navy, and I simply did not want [to]. I knew damned well if I didn't get out at this point I would be in political life all my life.

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F: A professional administrator.

C: I didn't want to be a professional administrator. I wanted to be a lawyer. But I'm getting to Lyndon. In connection with this, Mr. Roosevelt felt that in a certain sense I wasn't willing to stay with him and wasn't willing to obey orders. And in a conversation which [James] Rowe reported to me from Lyndon, Lyndon said that Roosevelt had said that the trouble between him and me was that I got credit for everything he did and that I wasn't above getting credit for everything he did, and for that reason he and I had differed. What we differed about was that I just simply did not want to spend my life in government. I wanted to get back to the freedom of the law. And when he wouldn't give me what he promised to give me--although I understand why a president can't keep his promises, I always say that promises of princes are presumptive--I just simply made up my mind that I wanted to live life the way I wanted to live it and not the way he wanted to live it. For that reason I understand Mr. Roosevelt's pique about the thing, but I had what I wanted and not what he wanted. I didn't want to be a politician. I like politicians, but just simply that wasn't my *chacun a son goût*, that just wasn't my *goût*.

Well, in the course of it, when Rowe retailed that story to me, I always felt that in a certain sense I wondered whether Lyndon had that feeling about me, too. For that reason, from that time on when I heard that story which Lyndon, according to Rowe, told to Rowe, I very carefully never pushed myself on Lyndon, although I am going to say this in all honesty: I think I was one of the best angels he had. I always tried, except on the particular case where I asked him to put my brother on the bench, to communicate my abilities to him through Rowe, whom I carefully reassembled in his place with Lyndon

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after he assumed the presidency at the time of the assassination.

At the time of the assassination, Mr. Rowe and Mr. Johnson weren't speaking to each other. It's a peculiar characteristic of the people who have been secretaries to Mr. Justice Holmes. I was reading about it in Dean Acheson the other night. [I don't know] whether we find a hero in the old man and do not have the capacity for adulation that is demanded of presidents. Dean Acheson had his problems with Roosevelt. With Lyndon, Mr. Rowe had his problems. I had mine. I don't think being a secretary to Mr. Justice Holmes is a good emotional preparation for being tale-bearer to a president.

F: Do you want to amplify on that for just a moment? Why?

C: Well, because I have found something, and I think this was true of Lyndon just as it was true of Mr. Roosevelt, as it was true of Mr. Truman, with whom I also had my problems. I think, in a certain sense, a president gets into his mind--and I think this is part of what I hear as the complaints about Lyndon, although I never had this experience with him--gets to the point of feeling that he is entitled not only to your complete loyalty but to your complete adulation. That is, I mean it is characteristic of all of them, and Roosevelt was no exception, that the king can do no wrong and you're supposed to say "yes, sir, yes, sir, yes, sir." You're supposed to think that even beyond his capacities as a political leader he is the quintessence of the human race in every respect. And after all, after you've seen the quintessence of the human race in Mr. Justice Holmes, there is always a slightly invidious comparison. (Laughter)

I want to get on to some other [subject] before I forget about it. I first began to understand that problem very early in life. There was a fellow named [Raymond] Moley

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who was the head of the brain trust. I had a very unfortunate experience sitting in the room with Mr. Moley and Mr. Roosevelt the night that they had a fight and the night that, in substance, Mr. Moley left the White House. Mr. Roosevelt was not a first-class economist. Mr. Roosevelt would get ideas and this idea he had had to do with the devaluation of gold and, in particular, with the relationship of that devaluation to the relationship to the British pound and the international business. He undoubtedly did send Mr. Moley to London with certain completely isolationist advices. You must always remember that the New Deal was economically completely isolationist. By devaluing the value of the dollar, we cut ourselves off from all relationship to Europe in order to raise the price level in this country. Of course, we discouraged imports and we encouraged exports and we locked ourselves into an economy.

Now, there's no question about it, as I listened to that argument that night, that Mr. Roosevelt had sent Mr. Moley to the London Conference with one set of instructions. The so-called internationalists had come back, and this included Mr. Hull who was also jealous of Mr. Moley and thought Mr. Moley should--but he [Hull] was an internationalist. He was a free-trader. While Moley was away, Mr. Hull got to Mr. Roosevelt and told Mr. Roosevelt that this was hurting him and it was the wrong thing. Then the usual game was always played, when this guy is arrogating your powers to him and he's pretending to be the president. This is something that is a weakness of all presidents, and it's one reason why Lyndon had so goddamned much trouble with the bright men around him. But I sat there while Mr. Roosevelt tried to tell Mr. Moley that Mr. Moley hadn't understood him correctly. This is the reaction always, the protective

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reaction of a president. Somebody else is always to blame for your mistakes, just as somebody else was always to blame for Mr. Roosevelt's Court plan. Mr. Hummings was to blame for the Court plan. Somebody's always to blame.

I sat there as a little boy about thirty-two and I listened to this. I listened to one of the most unhappy bawlings-out of a guy who had obeyed his orders. But it was necessary that he be expendable for the purposes of the presidential self-pride and rationalization of himself. Right then and there I made my mind up that I was never going to get caught in that position.

Only once did I ever have a showdown fight with Mr. Johnson and it's one that I think he is himself ashamed of now. There was a very brilliant chairman of the Federal Power Commission named Leland Olds. Leland Olds is the fellow who had been the director of the New York Power Authority. We took that absolutely moribund organization in the New Deal. We passed the Public Utility Holding Company Act that put in Title III the gas companies in it. Previous to that, we had pulled Mr. Olds out of his job as the chairman of the New York Power Authority, where he was interested in the development of the St. Lawrence River in particular, and we brought him down here to be chairman of that moribund authority. My partner, Mr. Youngman, who is on that door, was brought down out of a law office, a fine law office--I'm sitting in his chair right now--to be the general counsel of the authority. Leland Olds was one of the best public servants we've ever had, and he was important to Mr. Roosevelt in the organization of that liberal force in New York which supported Mr. Roosevelt against the Tammany bunch. He did carry out Mr. Roosevelt's ideas about the function of public power and

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about the regulation of consumer rates in all of them. Lyndon, unfortunately, in his position as a leader in the Congress, was also a Texan, which is exactly the same position we were in on the Faubus-Kennedy thing. As a Texan, with Johnny Lyle pushing him--

F: Who's Johnny Lyle?

C: Johnny Lyle was the congressman from Corpus Christi, and he's a nice guy. But somewhere back in the desperate talking of the Hoover time, Mr. Olds, like a great many intellectuals up North, had talked something like a communist about the necessity of taking over, if necessary, the productive facilities of the country. The Texans got up a brief on everything that Mr. Olds had said, and when Roosevelt sent up Mr. Olds' name for reconfirmation for a new term as the Federal Power commissioner, the Interstate and Commerce Committee of the House, on which I think Lyndon was at that time, did as dirty a job of trying to crucify this guy *a la* McCarthy as I have ever heard. Now I understand why Lyndon Johnson had to be a Texan, I told him to his face one day as we drove down in his car that I thought it was the rottenest thing he'd ever done and that he could take it or he could leave it. And, of course, Leland Olds was defeated for confirmation and later died a broken and a disappointed man.

That's the second time. And the Kennedy thing was the first time when I realized what a crucifiable position Mr. Johnson was in between the troglodytic state of mind in the state of Texas related to oil and gas and the needs of the nation as a whole. Of course, this fight about whether you regulate a producer's prices has been going on even to this time. And this fight over the regulation of producer's prices was ultimately and deeply involved in the business of my appearance and my being investigated in connection with

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Tenneco. Because what the Chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission of the House was really after and where the troubles in the Federal Power Commission rose was the orders given to the Chairman of the Federal Power Commission, Mr. Kirkendall [?]: that he should stall and stall and stall and stall on all the proceedings about producers' prices until the backlog over at the Federal Power Commission carrying out that stalling tactic got to the point where the commission itself was an administrative monstrosity. Now that's the only row I ever had with Lyndon. But after that, I carefully sent Rowe down. Now, as I told you, Rowe had his row, too. But now I'm getting to the point.

When Lyndon finally came in as the president, I got in touch with Lady Bird. Now, up to this time Mr. Rowe had written Mr. Johnson a lousy letter which was not the right thing for Mr. Rowe to write, about which I've told you before. But I got in touch with Lady Bird, and she with me. We decided that now what Mr. Johnson needed most was somebody who had a political instinct like Rowe, who understood his problems, who understood political problems, who could in a sense stand in between and work with Mr. Johnson in relationship to all this Kennedy brain trust Harvard crowd they had. Because Mr. Rowe was himself, as he is now, an overseer of Harvard. So we had a very tearful and delightful reunion scene over in the old Oval Office the day after Lyndon became president. I remember it because the office was cleaned out of furniture completely and Lyndon was sitting there in what probably was a rocking chair talking. It was just Lyndon, myself, Lady Bird. And Lyndon and Rowe had an almost tearful reunion and Rowe again went to work for Lyndon. I think Rowe was probably more valuable to him in the years--in succession years--than any single man he had. But Rowe was my way of

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working for Lyndon, because after what Roosevelt had told him about my always trying to take credit for things, I always was so goddamned sure that Lyndon was thinking that way that I tried always to keep as far away from him as I could.

F: You and Johnson never did get to the complete break, such as he got to with Rowe?

C: Oh, no. Oh, no, Lyndon and I are the best friends in the world. Even earlier we hadn't gotten to a break. But you know he was a very difficult guy unless you were a complete adulator.

I remember that I had much more to do than appears on the surface, because I had first talked about this Kennedy alliance and persuading Lyndon. And I persuaded him, mostly through Lady Bird and then through Lyndon, that he should accept the vice presidency at the time when everybody else was saying that he would sell Texas out if he dropped the majority leadership to take the vice presidency. I've told you why, among other reasons, I was convinced that he should take it, and that the majority leader syndrome wasn't going to work anymore, that he had reached the peak as majority leader and all this assumption by the Texans that if they hung on to the majority leadership of the Senate and the speakership of the House, they'd run the thing.

Lyndon had a very good, old and wise friend who was head of the Elections Committee of the Senate who was my patron. That was Senator [Theodore] Green of Rhode Island. I've told you some about this before. When I went to talk to Senator Green about whether I should try to persuade Lyndon to take the vice presidency even if he lost the vote for the presidency--and this was before the showdown vote in which he lost the nomination--Green said to me, "I know what the Texans are thinking: that you

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don't give up the majority leadership for the vice presidency. But let me tell you something, Tommy, Lyndon has gone as far in the majority leadership as he can. The very brilliance with which he has manipulated and twisted and wheedled has got these vain and jealous people terribly jealous. They were all wondering whether he was going to be the president. Now that he's not going to be the president, he's not going to have the power as the majority leadership that he had before. When he tries to exert the same power over them in managing them and manipulating these votes in the Senate they're going to try to begin to tear him to pieces." He said, "Never forget what [Burton K.] Wheeler did to Roosevelt when Roosevelt foot-faulted on the Court plan."

So--I've told you some of this story--I went to Jack Kennedy. As I told you I had later been kicked out of communication with Kennedy by Joe [Kennedy] because I was quote "a Catholic for Johnson." And I told [Jack] Kennedy what I told his old man, I said, "I was loyally for Johnson for reasons that I knew I had to be and I wanted to be. You know damned well that, as you yourself have said, if you weren't going to be president, he should be the president. Now I'm going to tell you very frankly I'm going to suggest to Johnson--and I know Bobby isn't going to like it and I know your liberal friends aren't going to like it--and I'm suggesting to you that you're not going to win this election unless you take Johnson on for vice president."

F: This is long before Los Angeles?

C: This is in Los Angeles, after the vote on Lyndon. I had gone earlier to Sam Rayburn--I was out in Los Angeles--and I had said to Sam, "Sam, our chances that Lyndon can be nominated depend upon whether you can get Dave Lawrence of Pennsylvania to join

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him. And if the Pennsylvania caucus, which we were having, does not come out where Lawrence can deliver for Johnson. . . ." We had the Pennsylvania caucus a couple of days before the convention.

Now, Johnson asked me to go out to the convention in case we had to have a nomination speech, and I went out for him. But I began to learn damned soon that we didn't have a chance, and I began to talk to Connally and began to talk to Lady Bird.

F: Do you think Johnson thought he had a chance?

C: He did. One of the great weaknesses of Lyndon at all times . . . and this is a great man. What I said a minute ago to that guy, "I would rather be a lousy politician and have created something like the guy that built the Taj Mahal than stay forever in politics."

F: Or downtown New Orleans.

C: You bet your goddamn life.

But I remember going to see Connally and talking to him about letting me make a trade right now because I knew who Bobby wanted. Bobby wanted Scoop Jackson or he wanted Symington. And John, whom I love and who I told you I talked to on the plane to San Antonio the other day, said, "Oh, you're a defeatist. We can still make it." Then I went to Lady Bird and she wasn't so sure that she wanted to do it. She still hoped but she also had this feeling that she didn't want him to leave Texas. She was terribly surrounded by the feeling of the Texans that to be for Kennedy was to betray Texas. And there also was, unfortunately, a lot of dirty religious stuff going around there. The boys were passing around the hail, all the boys who were for Johnson, "The Holy Ghost from Coast to Coast."

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Well, with Joe Kennedy saying I was a son-of-a-bitch, because I was a Catholic for Johnson, as I told you, the issue of *Look* came out that day. Did I tell you about this?

F: No.

C: The issue of *Look* came on the convention, and there were four places across an open page: Clark Clifford for Symington, me for Johnson--and they put under it "A Catholic for Johnson." There were two other guys, and somebody for Kennedy. But I mean I was in this position where, one, the witch burners were talking about "The Holy Ghost from Coast to Coast." At the same time, I was a Catholic for Johnson and the Kennedy crowd was always suspicious as hell of me, and, fellow, if I ever walked on eggs--

F: You were just about to be cut off on all sides.

C: From everybody, from everybody. But I persisted in the thing. And I never forget saying to Lady Bird before we took the vote for Johnson, vote for the presidency--I can edit this, as I understand it?

F: Yes.

C: I said, "Lady Bird, I hope you're right and that you can win." And she was sitting right in the main box with the two girls. "I hope you can win. Let's see if you can win. But, Lady Bird, if you can't win, if you don't win, send for me and I'll see what I can do." I remember, after we lost the vote--and we lost the vote because Lyndon counted on certain satraps to deliver and the satraps couldn't deliver. Now one of the most important ones was [Ernest] McFarland in Arizona. He lost to young Udall, remember?

F: Yes, right. He had a dependency on the wrong satraps, didn't he?

C: But Lyndon had an idea that there was kind of a feudal system, if you had the satrap and

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if you had the senator. And in his mind, the guy that ran the state was the senator. I used to say, "It ain't the guy that runs the delegates. The guy that runs the delegates is the governor, Lyndon! Do you know the Governor of Arizona? He picks the delegates, not the senator. And you keep thinking that the satrap is the satrap who represents the state in the Senate. HE AIN'T, HE AIN'T!" Lyndon always figured that his organization was. And, of course, to some degree, he was right. But you see, as I told you, he never would let any of us go out, any of us, and organize at the grassroots, because he was so goddamned sure. This is part of Lyndon's secretiveness. He was so goddamned sure that he had the votes in his pocket because he had the senators all counted, so many votes from Arizona . . . And it wasn't so. But anyway, after the vote, I went down to the box. Lady Bird and the children were in the box, and Lady Bird was fine. I said, "Well, Lady Bird, I'm here." I said, "I'm sorry," or something like that. "Well," she said, "maybe, Tommy, I need you after all."

So then I went through what you've heard about in other places and did my little bit. But I never forgot--did I tell you what I said to Sam Rayburn?

F: No.

C: When Sam threw me out.

F: Okay, now Sam and Connally are dead set against his taking the vice presidency.

C: Dead set against it. I went in to see Sam--there were two sequences--and I didn't succeed with Sam. But I have a little idea that I put an idea in Sam's head that made him, eventually. The story is, and I think it's true, that when Hale Boggs and Virginia [?] said to him, "Otherwise we're going to elect Nixon. Do you want Nixon?"

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John Holton let me in and I told Sam what Green had told me about the majority leadership and how it was washed out, it would never be the same again. And he listened. He said, "Tommy, you know goddamn well that nobody can trust the Kennedys?" I said, "Exactly, Sam, but do you want Nixon?" "Well," he said, "I don't want to lose the senatorship." But I said, "We're already running for the Senate. We've got a special bill through the Texas Legislature to permit us to run for both of them." "If we take the vice presidency," he said, "we're cooked. And we don't have the power in the Senate." I said, "Sam, let's be Machiavellian and you're an honorable man. I guess I ain't. But, Sam, did you ever think about this? We'll elect Lyndon both vice president and senator. Then we'll go down and we'll trade with the Kennedys, and if we can't trade with the Kennedys down in Palm Beach, Lyndon will renounce the vice presidency and choose to remain senator. And, Sam, do you know who becomes vice president then? You do!" He said, "Christ, don't talk to me like that." I said, "You've always got the Kennedys by the balls if you want to be as ruthless as they are. So let's take it and don't withdraw from the senatorial business. It's too late anyway." He was elected senator, wasn't he?

F: Yes.

C: And I said, "Sam, we go down to Palm Beach and we talk with the Kennedys and we say, 'how are you going to divide up this power?' And if you don't choose to divide up the power, then we will renounce the vice presidency, even though we've been elected to it, and choose to remain senator and majority leader. Where then are you, Mr. Joseph Patrick Kennedy!" And I was right.

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But at any rate, Sam threw me out of the office for talking about his personal ambitions. I said, "I don't think you may be ambitious," but I knew goddamn well Sam did want to be vice president. Sam wanted to be the veep worse than hell because I've told you that four years before when we had the Adlai Stevenson business and Sam went in to ask Adlai to make Lyndon the vice president and he came back and then Lyndon went in to ask to make Sam the vice president. Sam did want, and deserved, to have that position that Barkley had at the end of his life.

Now wait a minute. There was something else I wanted to tell you about.

F: I want to ask you one question. Do you think part of Mike Mansfield's--I presume we're agreed on this--mediocre record as senate majority leader was just the fact that it would have happened to any senate majority leader after the strong leadership that Johnson had exerted, that this position was bound to go down?

C: Well, I think that's part of what Green was saying.

F: I've felt one of the tragedies, in a sense, of both Kennedy and Johnson was that you did not have a Senate majority leader who had the power and the stature.

C: Now, this you know. In the time when Rowe was down there, Johnson used to say to me when I'd talk to him about how sad it was that he and Rowe had broken up, "Goddamn it, Rowe sold me on Mike Mansfield as majority leader, and then Mike betrayed me." At one time, I think one of the reasons why Mike balked was that Lyndon, in his high-handed way, used to get back to Mike that Mike betrayed him. There's one thing, as you know, about this strange breed of cat that I belong to, the one thing you can't do is kick them, or they won't react rationally. But I mean I think it was a combination of many

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things. I think it was a combination of Lyndon expecting that Mike would be just his bat boy and probably handling him that way. This was one, as I told you, of Lyndon's great troubles, that there were times when he could be as nice as he could be but there were times when he just galled me. Now he never did it to me. I never let myself be in a position except once and I'm not going to tell you about that.

So we got through the convention and we got him nominated for vice president.

F: Did you ever talk to Johnson directly about this before he accepted?

C: Oh, sure.

F: What were his feelings by that time?

C: He said, "If you can clear Rayburn, I'll take it." He was the one that sent me to Sam Rayburn. He said, "I agree with you, but I can't buck Rayburn. Rayburn's got to clear it." That's why I had that famous talk with Rayburn when Holton sneaked me into Rayburn's room. I didn't make the kill. If anybody made the kill, it was a combination of a lot of other people. I only opened the first conversation with Rayburn about it.

F: Did you talk to Bobby at all?

C: Oh, no, I was afraid of Bobby. I talked with Jack. I wouldn't talk to Bobby. I knew Bobby hated Lyndon's guts. Bobby was a different kind of a guy than Jack. Bobby was the worst kind of a stubborn Irishman. Bobby made up his mind about something, Jesus-living-Christ, there was no--Bobby had been at the conference with Joe and me, and I was always a friend of Bobby. There were some great things about Bobby.

I told you once, didn't I, about when poor old Jim Landis ruined himself?

F: No.

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C: Well, you remember when Jim Landis got indicted for income tax evasion?

F: I remember that.

C: Mr. Truman fired Mr. Landis as head of the CAB [Civil Aeronautics Board?] under the most despicable circumstances I have ever known. I now represent Pan Am. But I know at that time when Pan Am was outrageous in throwing around its money and its power, Mr. Landis required that Pan Am stop buying its way through everything, that Louis Johnson, who raised the money, and my friend, Sam Crockett, went over to the Honorable Mr. Truman the night before Jim Landis had been told he would be reappointed the chairman of the CAB and just fired Landis!

F: In the way, huh?

C: Just like that. Then Landis began to go to hell in a hack. I'll tell you that story later. I was Landis' friend and I was Landis' defender, but when he died after being convicted of income tax evasion--and he died under circumstances that suggested suicide in his swimming pool--three guys, and only three guys, of any political consequence went to that funeral of that convicted man in a little Presbyterian church in Rye, New York. They were me, Bobby, sitting beside me, and who do you think? Tom Dewey.

F: What a trio!

C: The guys that didn't have the guts to show up and let the press see them! And wasn't it a strange combination? (Laughter)

Well, anyway, after the convention is all over and I heard all of this storming about how the Texans were calling him a son-of-a-bitch and the rest of it--

F: Oh, it was pathological.

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C: --I went down to see him at Acapulco and I took my fat old political secretary with me, Mrs. Beal [?]. We went down to see him at Acapulco, and before we went to Acapulco, there was one guy down there named Bob Hill who was the ambassador to Mexico. Now Bob Hill was the ambassador because Lyndon Johnson put him there!

F: He was Eisenhower's appointee, wasn't he?

C: Yes, but he was a congressional liaison man to the Hill. He assisted the secretary. And with the help of Johnson and the help of Green, it came to a point where [Allen] Dulles wanted to--we had an opening for the assistant secretary of state for Latin America and it should have been Hill. Hill was the only guy who had managed to be a decent liaison to Lyndon, and the only reason that Dulles had managed to get along at all was that Lyndon very decently and patriotically played ball. Lyndon as a majority leader, majority leader of the country, didn't try to pitch the State Department. And as a consequence, through Lyndon's influence--and I invoked Lyndon's help on it and Green's help on it and we had the power. Green was the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, and one of the worst things Lyndon ever did was to suck Fulbright's ass, was to ask Green to leave the chairmanship of that committee. That's why we've got Fulbright! Lyndon wanted to play Fulbright on the civil rights business down in Texas. This is what Lyndon always would do. The Foreign Relations Committee was the prize committee. When Lyndon wanted something he would put you on the Foreign Relations Committee! The result of it is, we have a Foreign Relations Committee that's made up of the Morses, all the people Lyndon wanted something from: "I'll put you on the Foreign Relations Committee if you'll vote for me," and Jesus! As a result, we've got the goddamnedest conglomerate gagbag-bag

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down there.

F: Is Johnson a little naive in thinking that in politics there's gratitude?

C: Yes.

F: Because I don't believe there is.

C: He does. I don't.

F: You do it because it's good, but--

C: But he thinks you've got the guy forever. If you give this guy this, he'll be with you forever. You put Fulbright on that and he'll always vote with you.

F: He never came around on civil rights, much less foreign policy.

C: But, anyway, getting back to Hill. Anyway, Hill was the ambassador to Mexico and I remember I went down to Hill and I went to a meeting of the important Americans down there and I reported on this convention. I said what a great patriotic guy Lyndon Johnson had been, for the unity of the country and for the Democratic Party Lyndon had accepted this second place and had sacrificed. I was lying in a political way, the great power of the majority leader and the rest of it, to pull the Democratic Party together with this decent attitude toward Latin America and all the rest of it. Then Hill and I get in a plane to go down to Acapulco. I remember it was a BOAC [British Overseas Airways Corporation] Comet, the first one I was ever on. He and I stayed together in some place, some motel or some hotel, in Acapulco, and of course Lyndon was down in the [Mexican president Miguel] Alemán place. Now the gal, I've got to remember her. Poor, old Ashton [Gonella] who was the best secretary of his time, Ashton was there.

God Almighty, the way Lyndon was sulking! He'd made a mistake and I was to

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blame for it. He should not have taken that vice presidency. He sold out his birthright in Texas for a mess of pottage and all the rest of that crap. All of the agonizing, anguishing two or three days that I've ever known, we went through it. He was under that pressure from Texas, I mean.

F: He was reading the Texas editorials.

C: The Honorable Mr. Hill had brought some newspaper men along. Now Hill was trying to help. Now Hill was not the brightest guy on God's green earth, and he particularly had a guy named Kennedy from the *New York Times*. Well anyway, Lyndon had a press conference in which, goddamn it, he made a mistake. He had a mike at the press conference and somebody behind the scene. Now, if he had a mike like this, that's one thing. But when the guys found out that he miked them without their knowing they were being miked, they were madder than hell.

We were out somewhere. It was out on a lake and he apparently saw me out of the corner of an eye and he gave me hell, "Do you realize if those newspaper men saw you here. . .?" And I said, "What's wrong if they see me here, Lyndon?" Well, anyway, he got so goddamn ugly that everybody just packed up and went away and on the way this guy Kennedy was on the plane. Kennedy asked me whether there was any pressure on him from Texas. And trying to make a hero out of Lyndon for my people in the North, I said, "I know that the Texas people are not cursing him, but blaming him for having sold out the narrow, parochial interests of Texas, for the greater interests of the nation. But I think it's something for which the nation should be grateful."

I was not quoted, but that's what Kennedy wrote and it was the right thing for

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Lyndon politically. Well, he got so goddamn mad with me about it he cut me off the list, and the next time he invited me to the Ranch, oh, a little while later. And I've never been to the Ranch again. I remember I called up from Austin, and I said, "Now, Lyndon, I'm here and I'd like to come in and I have my boys with me." He said, "There's newspaper men here and I don't want you around when newspapermen are here." Now he'd do things like that! On the other hand, he's one of the greatest presidents. You heard my speech about the Taj Mahal.

F: Yes.

C: He has done more, really. But I said about him down in Houston a little while ago, "This guy's going to be one of the greatest presidents the United States has ever known because no matter what you say about him, he puts certain ideas so goddamn far up the beach that no tide will ever float them off." And that's right.

F: Did you take any part in the 1960 campaign? The one with Kennedy versus Nixon.

C: That was the big campaign, the one we won, isn't it? I'll show you what I did. I have long ago learned--I have raised so goddamned much money in my life. I have been in so many goddamned campaigns in my life that I know perfectly well--I had Rowe in the campaign up to his neck, but I worked very hard on something. I'll tell you what it was and I'll show you what it was. I learned long ago the most effective thing for the money that you could do in a campaign was to get one newspaper ad, a full-page ad, in which you really stated the guts of the issue. Then you got a mat made of that ad and you raised the money for the first one. And I got an old guy named Berling [?], an old Republican, to head it. It was from Republicans, "Mr. Goldwater, here's where we get off. We

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cannot follow you down the road to nuclear war." I got a first-class guy out of McCann-Erickson to write it for me. I had done this for Roosevelt in 1936, too. Then I got the mat made and then I'd go all over the country to guys and say, "Listen, I'm not asking you to throw away your money in something you don't know about. You and I know perfectly well that nine-tenths of the money that's contributed to political campaigns for unspecified purposes is wasted on a lot of flurry of organization. Listen, brother! Will you raise me a syndicate to print this ad? Here it is. Now, I'll show you the pull from that first paper. I'll give you the mat free. Now here. Will you put up the money for this and will you put it in all the newspapers?" And, boy, that way for Roosevelt and for Johnson I got it all over the country. Now when Lyndon heard I was doing it, he wanted to see the ad. I said, "No, brother, you're not going to put your cotton-picking fingers on this one. I'm going to run this ad, and I know that it's right. Because if you start to rewrite my ad--" And he wanted to see it. I went over to poor old Jenkins and I said, "I don't care whether he's mad as hell. What are we going to do?" He said, "Let's print the goddamn thing and say you didn't get the message." So we printed it.

Then he saw it and then he called me up and said, "Listen, I want you to get that reproduced here, here, here, here," and in particular he sent me to Gardner Cowles who was for him. And with Gardner Cowles, we got it printed over the whole goddamned Middle West, and we got it printed all over here.

You see the game is, if you're a professional in this business, you're playing for leverage. You waste money by the bucket. But what you do, you find something that's specific and then you say to a sophisticated guy, "I'm not going to ask you for ten

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thousand dollars just to dump it in for contribution. I'm asking you for ten thousand dollars to put this in fifty newspapers. And here it is!"

F: And he himself can look at it and say, "Here's what I bought."

C: This is what I bought! I'm not just dumping it in to be lost, see. And I ran that in Roosevelt's--it was called Roosevelt's. . .

No, listen. I think this is one of the greatest guys that ever was. I think that if nothing else is ever done--I am not so sure the Democratic processes can last. We always used to talk about the fact that one of the reasons why the Anglo-Saxon mind could not permit any single power to dominate all the resources--you've heard me talk about this before--of an entire continent, whether it's Europe or Asia . . . And I've got a lot to tell you some day about the Asia business. In my mind, Korea is Norway, Japan is Belgium, Formosa is Portugal , and this is the Mediterranean or the Straits of Malacca. But this is to say, you can't afford to let any power dominate all of Europe whether it's Louis or Philip or Hitler because the diversities are so great within such a mass that there isn't any way to coagulate them under any leadership unless it's totalitarian. There isn't enough time nor energy nor capacity to organize democracy politically over such an enormous mass with so many diversities, and it has to be totalitarian. The minute it becomes totalitarianism it threatens you.

Now, I'm beginning to wonder whether the same thing isn't beginning to happen here. The media add to the velocity of the disagreement. I'm beginning to wonder whether we want to be able to get out of it. If we do get out of it, we get out of it through education and there is an intermediate step where the education just simply pours

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gasoline on the fire of adversity and of velocity.

F: Turns loose your intensity, really.

C: That's right. It's going to be luck whether we pull it off, whether the education beats the catastrophe, I don't know. But some other things bother me; I'm terribly bothered by this drive against the military and the martial spirit and all the rest of it. We are getting to the point where we either choose national security or illegitimate Negro mothers. Now, frankly, that's it when you slice it down. But I mean talking with my Rhode Island crowd--I'm a Rhode Islander--about who we're going to appoint to Annapolis. Now, Rhode Island is a navy state--Newport, you know. You can't get first-class boys to accept those appointments anymore. Now, in the old days, you got a lot of first-class southerners because there wasn't any dough, and this is the way you got a college education. This is why Eisenhower went to West Point.

F: "This is the best education you can get."

C: Even yesterday I was up in the Time-Life Building looking at the moon exhibit, and Collins had an interview. "I went to Annapolis or West Point because I needed an education and this gave me a good education." But nowadays, Lyndon and I have done so goddamned much--and I'm the guy who put the education bug in his head.

I remember it came in Lehman's funeral. MacArthur and I were riding down with him, and I said, "Lyndon, get on this because this is again like the liquidation of civil rights. Become the education guy because every mother wants her boy to go to college." But now, you know, everybody can go to college and if they can go to college, that old reason why you took the vigorous route of the military academy is gone.

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The other day I was over in the Pentagon and I was saying to a squat, little old guy who's a great friend of Lyndon's, who was Stennis' law partner--his name is Means Johnson. He used to be the head of the War College at Newport and that's why I knew him so well. I've known him for years, and he always has the backlog of coming into this office as a lawyer. He's a lawyer who went into the line. He was Radford's chief of staff at one time. I said, "Means, why do you have the *Pueblo*, the spy plane, the fire on the *Enterprise*, the *Evans*? What's wrong?" He said, "Do you know this navy gets more technologically complicated all the time?" But he said, "The smart guys that we used to get because they needed a college education aren't going to Annapolis anymore." And then he said, "You go through this ROTC furor and at least we were getting the smart guys because they were worried about the draft. Taking the ROTC course, the guys that would have gone to Annapolis--even a better grade--now that's out. This over-education facility that we've made available now may for the moment cripple us like hell in getting the kind of superior manpower we need for ever-increasing technologically complicated navy." You know, when you disturb the ecology, you have your troubles.

F: You get rid of the predator and the bugs eat the livestock.

C: Sorry, maybe I've talked too much today.

F: No.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview II]

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