

INTERVIEW V

DATE: March 14, 1990
INTERVIEWEE: DONALD J. CRONIN
INTERVIEWER: Michael L. Gillette
PLACE: Washington, D.C.

Tape 1 of 1, Side 1

G: Let's start with a discussion of LBJ's assumption of the presidency after the assassination.

Any personal recollections or insights here that are significant in how the new president handled the grief that came in the wake of Kennedy's assassination?

C: I remember the assassination well, and the body lying in state in the rotunda. I think if I had to comment as you're asking here, the transition there, I think, naturally is one of grief, but I don't really think that you can take the president, in this case LBJ--I don't think at that juncture you can really take and evaluate him much one way or the other. He's going through the same transition. Everybody's going through the transition. I think he handled it well. I think he was a gentleman about every part of it. Again, we're talking about history, but my guess is you would have found the same thing with anybody of the caliber of most of the presidents of the United States.

I don't recall any particular instance or particular situation with reference to the mourning period or any part thereof. Maybe I'm misunderstanding your question.

Cronin -- V -- 2

G: In terms of their dealings with Congress, how did Kennedy and Johnson differ in terms of how they dealt with Congress?

C: Well, I think simply here that again it's--we'll never know whether or not the same contributions would have flowed at the end of the same period of time. There's just no way we can ever measure that except by speculation. But they differed in that Jack Kennedy was much more popular than Lyndon Johnson with the Congress. There's no question about that. The charisma was totally different. For better or for worse, Jack Kennedy was more of a guy than a Lyndon Johnson.

Lyndon Johnson was much more serious, much more of a doer and--maybe history would record--much more of a statesman. That we'll never know, because time didn't allow one to really set the mark of the other.

G: In terms of cultivating relationships on the Hill, in terms of pressing for legislation, did you notice a change after Johnson assumed office?

C: Well, Johnson was much more aggressive than Jack Kennedy. On the surface he was. Again, a problem here is enough time didn't go by for everything to really fall into place for posterity. So we'll never really know. But Jack Kennedy had much more personal charisma about him than did Lyndon Johnson. They were two different animals. And if you look at their backgrounds, you can see the difference in the two animals--Hyannis Port versus Bonham, *et al.* Two different cultures, two different relationships, two different situations totally. And I think it showed in their day-by-day operations and that's what you were really asking.

Cronin -- V -- 3

G: Do you think that Lyndon Johnson mobilized the nation's sense of loss after Kennedy to press for key legislation that he was interested in, like the civil rights bill of 1964?

C: I don't think so. I don't recall any overt effort to accomplish that through that means. I don't think so.

G: There is some suggestion that in that bill, the 1964 bill, the difference between Kennedy and Johnson--their strategy on the bill--

C: Which bill?

G: The 1964 Civil Rights Bill which Kennedy had introduced and attempted to gain passage of the year before in 1963--that Johnson had made it a moral issue. That was his emphasis rather than a legal issue.

C: Well, when you say rather than, everybody just about that I can recall who advocated civil rights put it on a moral plane. If Lyndon Johnson put it on a legal plane I frankly don't remember any of that. Most everybody who was shouting on either side on this particular issue used the moral and the lofty rather than the gutter. We always used that argument.

G: States' rights.

C: Sure. Absolutely.

We emphasized over and over, not only in 1963 and 1964 but back prior to that when Eisenhower came up with his civil rights bill back in 1957 or 1958, along in there--we always made the legal argument along with the moral. But the main emphasis was on the legal because the moral frankly didn't stand up.

G: What was the moral argument against the civil rights legislation?

Cronin -- V -- 4

C: Again, you would go more to the legal in the arguments against the legislation. I think in response to whether or not the clergy *vis-a-vis* Lyndon Johnson's efforts and other related groups may have exerted a good deal of pressure, or a good deal of influence at least, in accomplishing the end goal of passing certain civil rights legislation. I'm going to say that I question whether or not that factor--and in this case some of the advocates [opponents?] of civil rights legislation--Russell Long--really read that signal right, because I think the time had come, I think because of World War II and [President Harry] Truman's order insofar as the armed forces. I think that the bus boycott in Montgomery--Rosa Parks, *et al.*--triggered a lot of that. I think all of these factors coming together precipitated a time whereby no longer could the so-called political leaders turn their back on this particular issue. I'm not so sure--what I'm saying to you--that anybody's rallying the clergy or rallying anybody--it may have hastened the day by some little bit of time, but I emphasize some little bit of time because I think the time was about ripe for this to happen. I think Dwight Eisenhower, while he didn't really give much impetus to this thing, he started the show going. He started the issue; at least he put it on the front burner where people could see it.

And then the blacks--and I don't blame them a bit--they saw opportunities come along, in the South especially, and they took advantage of those. I don't blame them on that. If I were of that skin I would do the same thing. This was a good time to come in and hit hard. I'm not so absolutely sure. What I'm saying to you is that any pressure from the clergy, certainly it didn't hurt, but I don't know that the facts weren't already in place that were pretty much determining the course and direction of this nation. Maybe

Cronin -- V -- 5

from a standpoint of time, maybe a little bit of time but not a whole lot. I think the time was there.

G: What was the thrust of Senator Hill's mail on this issue, do you remember?

C: Civil rights?

G: Yes.

C: Almost one hundred per cent against it.

G: Was it?

C: Yes, because the blacks of course we didn't hear from, but those we did hear from were almost one hundred per cent against civil rights in any way, shape or form.

G: Was Senator Hill lobbied by people outside Alabama in support of the legislation?

C: Not strenuously, no. That's what led me to say I'm not so sure that there was any concerted effort by the clergy and so on. You had Martin Luther King and the March on Washington. You had the black clergy involved in that and so on and so forth, and certainly that had its mark on the times. But I'm not sure it was a decisive mark. It was a heavy year.

G: I want you to just reflect on some of the events that caught national attention that occurred in Alabama that were related to this whole civil rights movement, and just if you have any particular insights or recollections from the way you saw it. And let's begin with George Wallace standing in the schoolhouse door to bar entrance to the university.

C: Well, we can start with the schoolhouse door but really it starts with Rosa Parks and the bus boycott. That's when the people of Montgomery really felt the pressures. Again, more so than outside clergy, because we're talking about the economics. And when you

Cronin -- V -- 6

go to the pocketbook that's where it's felt first and hardest. Here with that bus boycott--and I was in Montgomery at the time.

G: Where you?

C: Sure. People didn't come to work. The maids did not come to work. The cooks didn't come to work. So you had a paralysis which really was much more telling and much more feeling than standing in the schoolhouse door. That was a few minutes and it was over and everybody knew what was going to happen before it happened. But when all of a sudden these workers didn't show up for work--if they couldn't walk it, there was no way to get there and most of them didn't have cars. If there was no car somebody would bring them on to work. Virtually it closed everything down. Insofar as domestic help, there was none. That was felt.

And this continued day after day for many, many days. I forget now what it was, but something like eighty-three days or whatever this thing went on. And this is what they called the bus boycott, which was much closer to home than any of these other incidents you're talking about. That's where it really all began, and that's where the whites then stood back and mobilized. That's when the blacks through the leadership of Martin Luther King and some of the others at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church--that's where they started to get louder and louder. That's where the battle lines were drawn, with that bus boycott.

G: Do you remember anything significant in terms of the discussion among whites on how to deal with the bus boycott?

Cronin -- V -- 7

C: I don't remember specifically right now all these years later, but generally I think you could go from understanding at the low end of the pole--the very, very low end; a few understood it, not many--to outrage at the other end. I think if you want to measure on that same spectrum, you can go then from one extreme to the other, to "let them go altogether, replace them," which wasn't so easy, because if you replaced them there's no way for the replacement to get to work. They had you. That's what it amounts to.

I remember Senator Hill telling me that "Henrietta"--that was Mrs. Hill--"and I wanted you to come out and have lunch with us but we don't have a cook." This was for real. Entertaining ended, everything ended, and Montgomery is a very social-minded town. Most everything is in the home. There aren't the corner saloons and all that you find in the big city. And when there's no entertaining left in the home, it's all over. Everything's in paralysis.

G: Do you remember any other ways in which the boycott affected you?

C: In my case, that didn't really affect me because at that time I was single. At that time I was single and had a car and lived in an apartment there, away from home. So I didn't really feel the effects of it as residents of Montgomery would have had at the time, because at this particular time I was with Senator Hill going back and forth to Washington. But we were down there during the period of the bus boycott, and I remember we drove up to Birmingham on Thanksgiving for dinner with Senator Hill's sister and brother-in-law and so on and so forth, and that was all the talk there was around the table. It wasn't about Thanksgiving and the Pilgrims. It was about these "damn niggers, and do you know my next door neighbor doesn't have them," and so on

Cronin -- V -- 8

and so forth. That's what the whole thing was about. It worked. In my opinion it worked.

It didn't affect me at all because I ate out and lived in a one-bedroom apartment.

G: Anything else on Senator Hill's involvement or how this touched him or anything he might have said or done with regard to the--

C: No. Actually he disliked the inconvenience. Senator Hill was a Hill of Montgomery, which is the old aristocracy of Montgomery, and he was accustomed to being waited on and expected it. If I had come out of that particular background I would have too. All of that of course was put in jeopardy--was threatened and/or ended temporarily--because of the bus boycott. So I don't recall precisely--I'm sure he didn't like it. Insofar as overtly going about to try and undo it, he did not.

I don't recall the exact dates of the Montgomery bus boycott. Rosa Parks worked for the Montgomery Fair, which was about two blocks from where I lived at the time. She was a seamstress as I remember for the Montgomery Fair. I don't remember the chronology of that whole boycott but, you see, we were out of session maybe a couple of months, so that at the most by the time we got situated and opened up the office in Montgomery we didn't have much time before we came back up here. So while Montgomery was on fire, we really were not there all that time. And insofar as feeling the effects of it, we didn't.

G: Now let me ask you about the schoolhouse door.

C: Well, let me back up on that and say this to you in case you didn't know it. Maybe you do; maybe I've already said it. George Wallace at one time had the closest record to

Cronin -- V -- 9

Lister Hill's in the state legislature. George Wallace was considered a liberal in the state legislature. I knew George; still do if he recognizes anybody these days, but I knew him well back in those days. George would frequently call up here to our office--to Washington--and ask for copies of this or that bill which the Senator had put through in the U.S. Congress, because he wanted to try and move the same legislation in the state legislature. I think it still stands--but this would be an area worth developing greatly. At one time, and I think it still stands, George Wallace's legislative record was closest to Lister Hill's of anybody in the country. That may still stand.

I give you this backdrop because I've never been convinced that the schoolhouse door was all that meaningful. I think it was symbolic and I think George was a good enough politician to read the people. I happen to think he knew before it started that there was no way of succeeding. When you deputize the U.S. Army and you're going to war against the rest of the world, there's no way you can win. Whether it's right or wrong I think George is smart enough--George Wallace is smart enough a politician to have known that that would have to be an effort and I think it was the right effort. And then I think he promptly and properly stepped aside and the students were enrolled. That doesn't mean I was for the enrollment or against it but I think that's what happened.

G: Anything about Senator Hill in this episode?

C: No.

G: Did he get involved at all?

C: No. Senator Hill--let me say this to you. Senator Hill throughout all of these so-called trying times, and I think they were trying--Senator Hill did his best to stay to one side.

Cronin -- V -- 10

And that may have been right and it may have been wrong, but he was able largely to circumvent--now that's not allowing for the fallout. There was plenty of fallout on that. There were people who were not saying to our face, "Hey, why aren't you up there shouting like the rest of them? Why aren't you defending our southern way of life?" and so on and so forth. We weren't saying that, and there were plenty of those, because it showed up in 1962 when we ran for reelection and darn near got beat. So there had to be a lot of that underneath that really hadn't come out, in the minds and in the hearts of the people, if in their hearts they were doing as they felt.

I'm one who happens to think that there's no way anybody, including Lyndon Johnson, Jack Kennedy, whomever--there's no way in the world you're going to change the South overnight. There's no way. When you talk about Montgomery, Alabama, time I think will take care of a lot of things, but no way overnight. There's no way brother to sister or father to mother; there's no way that you're going to change that.

G: You've talked about the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Let me ask you to discuss the Selma march, which is--we're having an anniversary this year of that event.

C: Right, just did.

G: [What is] your memory of that?

C: Well, my memory of that is not--my memory is good, the situation was bad. I don't know all the nuances of how it was authorized and so on and so forth, if it should have been authorized. I happen to think it should not have been. The black point of view would be that, "We had to keep pushing forward," and maybe they're right. Strategically I think it was wrong. I think there was an inflammation at that time that was just inviting disaster

Cronin -- V -- 11

and that's what you had. You had some killings along the way and I think--Eisenhower was great for the cooling off period; of course, he let things cool off for about eight years. But I think that would have been an awfully good time for a hiatus on all this stuff, right at the time the march began.

I think the people who fired the shots and so on--they were wrong. But I'm not so sure that the march was right. Because I know some of the people there. I know the mayor, Joe Smitherman; know him well. While those people in that day and time were certainly not for the civil rights movement, I think they did more than the public knows, perhaps, to contain that as well as it was contained, and I really think it was contained. That could have been an all-out . . .

G: Any insights on what they did to contain the violence there?

C: Well, I don't think there was a great deal done at that end--at the Selma end--but I happen to think that George Wallace helped contain more of that than he gets--than he wanted credit for, because I don't think he wanted any credit. But Joe Smitherman was the mayor then and he's the mayor now. I know Joe well. You see a lot of Joe. I think while in that day and time Joe was certainly not a flaming liberal, Joe would have been against this particular movement at that time. I think he's mellowed some. I think all of them have. Again, that's what I said a little earlier; it takes time. You're not going to change it overnight. But I think Joe has mellowed. I think the whole situation there has mellowed, it's changed and so on and so forth. But at that time I think Joe Smitherman did a lot to contain that.

Cronin -- V -- 12

I think a fellow named Joe Pilcher who was a good friend--he's now deceased; died a year or two ago--I think Joe Pilcher did an awful lot in every way he could. But these were limited times. I think they contained it to where--I forget; I think you had a couple of killings along the way. But it could have been a lot worse than that. And I'm going backwards and repeating. I think that was the wrong time for a march on Montgomery. That just was not the time. But again strategically the blacks may have said, "Hey, we'll give a few lives but we're going all the way." That may have been right.

G: Any recollections of what Mayor Smitherman and the other fellow, Joe Pilcher, did to limit the violence?

C: I would say their efforts in a very, very inflamed situation--and I mean inflamed because Selma's a hotbed anyway, Dulles County. That's a real hotbed of now racial unrest. At that time--before all this began of course it was a real hotbed of white and black. There was no violence; everything was quiet. But it didn't take long for the spotlight to come onto Selma, and it didn't take long with the spotlight there for the outside leaders--the Lowrys and these kind of people--to converge, black and white, on Selma and keep that spotlight focused. There's no doubt about it.

Smitherman, Pilcher and this element, while they certainly were one hundred and one per cent southerners in that day and time, they, as I recall it, exerted--and there's been some evidence of that here--exerted as much influence as they could possibly get by with in Selma, Dulles County, to hold things down, to contain it. For the third time I say, I think two deaths along the way was pretty good for that day and time. It's lucky

Cronin -- V -- 13

that some of those rednecks didn't just get out and turn that thing upside down. They were lucky. I think two deaths is--it's too bad but I think it's small for those times.

G: What was Senator Hill's reaction to the Selma march?

C: Well, Senator Hill's general reaction to the Selma march and to the whole civil rights spectrum I think was probably more understanding than the average guy. While he came from a conservative background, an aristocratic background which is generally conservative in Alabama at least--from Montgomery--he pretty much early on when all of this began, analyzed it. And he analyzed it right--that the bottom line is, if politically, morally and all these things that I contend are very difficult to separate--have them whichever way you want--that somewhere along the line this was going to happen. In this case we're talking about integration. And that you could postpone it for a while, perhaps, while people were adjusting and taking stock, but that eventually in the spectrum of civilization this was going to happen about now, give or take five or ten years either way.

While I'm not certain in my own mind that he ever agreed or disagreed totally, I think he pretty much accepted what was going to happen and that this affected this legislation that you're about to talk about--the education and so on and so forth. As I previously said to you, it cut across everything going on in the Congress whether it was sponsored or endorsed by the South or the North. Civil rights was an issue. Integration was an issue. And every piece of legislation that was introduced, the first thing both sides would look at was, "What's the implication of this from a civil rights point of view?" There was no way of avoiding that because you knew it was going to invite a

Cronin -- V -- 14

battle one way or the other, either on your side or against your side. This was the temper of the times, so that the first bill that you'd pick up you'd read it not so much for the content--"Where are civil rights in here, or are they in here?" If not, it's a clean bill. Now we can consider the merits of the bill. But we can't even look at it if it gets into this other issue, not directly but indirectly, collaterally, or whatever. If there's some long-range possibility this could happen, some opponent politically is going to come after you and say, "Hey, you let that pass," or "Hey, you endorsed that," or "You were for that. And don't you know if this bill passes . . ." So you had to be extra sensitive if you wanted to stay in office.

To all of that now, the guy who went the other way was George Wallace. He didn't have to be sensitive. He flat out came out against integration. What was his inaugural speech, "Segregation today, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever," and that was it. Now once you say that you don't have to tiptoe through the tulips; you're all right in a state like Alabama politically. You're set.

G: Any insights on the impact of the Selma march in the Congress, the Senate especially?

C: I don't think so. That's one man's opinion. I don't really think--you see again, by this day and time you had an inflammatory situation that neither side was willing to bend on. By force of votes, one side had to bend, but neither side politically was going to bend or could afford to bend one way or the other. But this was at such [a] pitch at the time of the Selma march, I'm not sure that the Selma march added or detracted much--that's what you're asking me--not really.

G: There was a great deal of national television coverage focusing on the events there.

Cronin -- V -- 15

- C: Well, there are those who feel that that was really the reason for the march. It may well have been. I'm not here to say either way. I don't know. Supposedly it was an honest effort, but all the TV stations were called weeks in advance and so on and so forth, so somebody knew.
- G: Anything on that aspect of it?
- C: No, only what I've just indicated. I don't remember precisely but I think it was a--we heard about the Selma march a couple weeks before. So there was nothing spontaneous about it and it wasn't supposed to be, plus the fact that permits had to be gathered for the march. Sheriff Jim Clark, who was one of my old buddies of Dulles County, Selma--Jim Clark was sheriff at the time and they got some bad pictures of him clubbing people and so on and so forth. There were a lot, myself included, who felt that the situation was inflamed enough at that time that you didn't need a march and if you had a march it's only for one purpose and that's the media gain out of it. And maybe again, as I've said earlier, maybe the blacks felt that we've got to push on and trample a few bodies in the process and keep going. And maybe they're right.
- G: Anything on President Johnson's "We shall overcome" message to Congress at this juncture?
- C: The only thing that I remember about that message, which may have been well received--honestly received--by the media and the press, was that the southerners did not care for that at all. The southerners by this time, a good number of them--your Dick Russells and so on--felt that Lyndon Johnson, number one, had deserted the South, and--I don't know where you're originally from, but I've never considered Texas part of

Cronin -- V -- 16

the South. Maybe it is, but I've always thought of it differently than I have Alabama. I consider Alabama part of the Deep South. I've never considered Texas--maybe because it's so far west, or geographically it's so big--but I've always felt that Texas was kind of off by itself there. It was really neither North nor South. But those who wanted to take advantage of the desertion argument of course kept it a southern state. They had to in order to make the charge. A good many felt that there was some hypocrisy there.

G: How did Senator Hill feel about Johnson's espousal of the Voting Rights Act?

C: I think Senator Hill felt that there was some bit of hypocrisy there, not because a Dick Russell or a Sam Ervin or the southern group issued a statement to that effect the next day, not because of that.

Tape 1 of 1, Side 2

C: But I think in his own heart--leaving out all the politics of it, I think in his own heart he never really felt at that time, he never really felt that Lyndon Johnson was that sincere about, "We shall overcome." And therefore, hypocrisy.

I happen to think all of politics has to involve a good bit of hypocrisy or you never succeed. But there were those who felt that this was a little much, who sincerely felt that, not just politically felt it.

G: Anything on the efforts to pass the Voting Rights Act?

C: Senator Hill and myself--not that that counts much--and I think a lot of other people who don't really realize it feel that the Voting Rights Act was probably the most important piece of civil rights legislation of all of it, more so than eating at the same counters and the commerce clause and all that stuff. More so than all that, because once you

Cronin -- V -- 17

enfranchise a people the efforts and the goals are unlimited, and I think that's what happened here. I don't know from Lyndon Johnson's point of view, because I wasn't part of his group, but I think that he did more to integrate the people with that one bill than he did with any other piece of legislation. And he may not have intended that, I don't know, but he did. Because economically and every other which way it cuts across every line. I think and I know Senator Hill thought that.

G: Was there any consideration of how the black vote in the wake of the Voting Rights Act would affect Senator Hill's status in Alabama?

C: Well, there was. We had to do the dance between where we was and where we're going. To do that dance, you've got to fairly well recognize where you've been and whether or not you like the tune that you're dancing to. So we had to speculate--and I grin because, you know, 1962, which was before the Voting Rights Act--1962 was the election we almost lost. We didn't run in 1968. He retired in 1968. So we'll never really know how much that Voting Rights Act did or didn't do. We'll never know that. That may be just as well.

I think probably in answer to your question, we probably broke even. That's what you're asking, did it help or hurt basically. And this would have been 1968, which we didn't test. We probably broke even. There were those I think who would have felt one way and those who would have felt the other and they probably canceled each other out. We probably broke even.

G: Anything else on the passage of the legislation, or the struggle in Congress and the Senate to get cloture, which they ultimately achieved?

Cronin -- V -- 18

C: Well, they ultimately achieved cloture. I think one time they got cloture was the first time in the history of the Senate. I think cloture was enacted in--I don't know if formally or whatever--along about 1917. It goes back--but I don't think it had ever been invoked in all those years, which was nearly fifty years. But cloture was invoked twice, as I remember, in the process. As I recall that civil rights battle, we were divided into teams. I think there were four teams and I was a team captain for one of the teams. Lister Hill was the head of one of the teams, and that means his guy, who does his legislative or speech work or whatever--somebody has to, and of course I was the fellow who caught that. So that we had to keep material for the members of our team if they were to call at any time, and frequently they did and say, "Tomorrow I'm up and I don't have a speech," then it was our job--my job in this case--to see that one hundred pages were ready for this fellow, or sixty or whatever he wanted. If he says, "I'm going to go X number of hours and I'll need one hundred and twenty pages," then we had to have a hundred and twenty pages.

In most cases except a situation such as I just described, where it was impossible overnight to do much with substance, you couldn't. In most cases though, the substance was there, as you've heard me say before. We made good legal argument. We made some moral argument along with it but basically it was legal argument and we made good argument.

G: So you would write these speeches?

C: That's right. That's right. And those were trying times.

G: Did the speeches tend to get fairly redundant after a while?

Cronin -- V -- 19

C: Yes. You can only say so much. You can go into the moral--that's why I paused and hesitated on the moral versus the legal. It's hard to separate those. But, yes, they got redundant. But we made some good speeches, if I may say so. We made one that started out North, South, East, West and I took the commerce clause and all these various things and really wove them in with James Madison and we went down the line and I must say it was a great speech. We lost the battle but it was a good speech. So yes, they got redundant and yes, they became burdensome. We organized, and we kept our end of it, and each of the others did, by and large, and we got beat.

G: You've already discussed the 1964 act, the act that preceded it--the Voting Rights Act--the omnibus Civil Rights Act.

C: That was before the Voting Rights [Act], wasn't it?

G: That was 1964 and Voting Rights was 1965.

C: Right.

G: How did the 1964 act affect the presidential election that year? Any thoughts on that?

C: I don't really know the answer to what you've just asked. I am certain that somebody has compiled data that would tend to answer this. If I had to speculate I would say that it probably had very little effect on the elections, because I think your cast of characters by then were pretty well known and I think their potentials were pretty well known in this area of civil rights. I don't think there was much room for surprises. I think Jack Kennedy's philosophy was--well, he may have been a little bit an exception because there are those who never really felt that he was much for this civil rights stuff. But I think Lyndon Johnson's were pretty clearly known. I personally, from being up here at the

Cronin -- V -- 20

time, I don't think they had that kind of an effect on the election. It's a question of how much issues have crystallized by a given time. It's difficult for me because I'm here in the midst of it, but I happen to think that they were pretty well crystallized by then. Now the unknown is--just as the unknown would have been if we had run in 1968--maybe they hadn't crystallized and maybe there would have been some results that would have been shocking. I don't happen to think they would have been that shocking.

G: Did Senator Hill play a role in the presidential election?

C: No.

G: Was he asked to or did he just--

C: Well, I'm not sure he was asked to. You're talking about Lyndon Johnson's--

G: Versus Barry Goldwater.

C: Barry Goldwater was on our committee, number one, and Senator Hill and Barry Goldwater were not unfriendly. They were friends. But I think more of a consideration was the fact that there was civil rights legislation involved that was not popular in Alabama, in the South. And Lister Hill had to pretty much take a stance and did take a stance against Lyndon Johnson in this regard. I'm not sure that Lyndon Johnson really wanted a Lister Hill out front. I would think he did not.

G: Lyndon Johnson was quoted as saying at the time of the passage of this civil rights legislation that he was afraid that he had just delivered the South to the Republican Party. Was this the effect of the--

C: I think it was.

G: Elaborate. Tell me about that.

Cronin -- V -- 21

C: Well, I think if you look, again, at numbers--well, first of all, it was the Republican Party that the South broke away from because of the Civil War, the war between the states. The Democratic Party really was not the South's party. The Democratic Party historically has always been too liberal for the South. The South has always been more conservative historically. So in my opinion the South never really embraced the Democratic Party with an open heart. They had to have a party and so they had a party. They couldn't have Lincoln. As a matter of fact, in Montgomery, Alabama, when they came out with the three-cent stamp--this goes back some years; we were in the Federal Building, the Old Post Office Building in Montgomery--the three-cent stamp had a picture of Abraham Lincoln on it. We bought three one-cent stamps and put on each letter that required postage rather than the frank, so that we wouldn't have to lick a stamp with Lincoln's picture on it.

Now this is the same party whom you're suggesting would embrace civil rights, all these bad kind of things? So Lyndon Johnson of course knew what he was talking about there. There's no doubt about it. That hastened the day. I'm not saying it was the only thing that delivered [it] *per se*; you could take that argument apart in some instances. But by and large I think that was an honest statement, that this was the beginning of the two-party system in Alabama. And in the state of Alabama we've got a Republican governor. So, yes, it was.

End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview V

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON LIBRARY

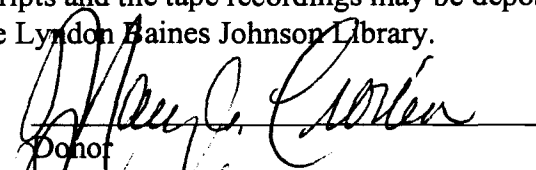

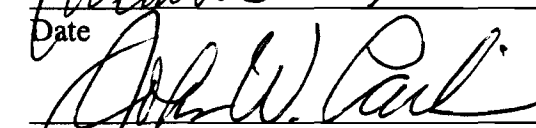
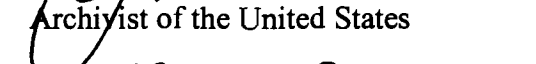
Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interviews of

DONALD J. CRONIN

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, Mary Cronin of Bethesda, Maryland, do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all rights, title, and interest in the tape recordings and transcripts of the personal interviews conducted with my late husband Donald J. Cronin, on September 14, 1989; December 4, 1989; December 14, 1989; February 15, 1990; March 14, 1990; March 29, 1990; April 17, 1990; and May 16, 1990, 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 researchers.
- (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 the tape recordings may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.


Donor

Date

Archivist of the United States

Date