

INTERVIEW I

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INTERVIEWEE: CLAUDE J. DESAUTELS
INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE
PLACE: Mr. Desautels' office, Washington, D.C.

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G: Let's start with the congressional liaison office and how it was set up.

D: Well, as you know, we were five, I believe. Larry [O'Brien] was in charge. I was his deputy and sort of a deputy-administrative assistant type. We had Henry Wilson who worked the southern states [in the House]; while Mike Manatos handled the Senate, David Bunn handled the eastern states and Irv Sprague who's now chairman of the FDIC, handled the western states.

The first thing in the morning all the congressional mail addressed to the President would come to me. I know one you ought to talk to is Jean Lewis[?]. Have you got her down? I'd glance through it and see what warranted a White House response directly or what should go to State or Defense for a draft reply. I'd give it all to Jean Lewis, who was in charge of all the presidential correspondence and at least they'd get an acknowledgement from the White House within twenty-four hours. That had been the rule through Kennedy and we carried on through Johnson. [They got] at least an acknowledgement signed by Larry, which I signed.

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Jean had a tickler file if we asked for a draft response [from an agency]. Then [when the draft came back] we'd make a determination whether they would come from the White House or whether we'd send it back and say the assistant secretary of state or defense or what-have-you signs it. But she had a tickler file where within forty-eight hours she had to have a response of one kind or another. If they were more or less routine we didn't bother, just send us a copy. If they were sensitive, we'd want to see the draft before it went out from Defense or State.

G: Was that sensitive with regard to the subject matter or the congressman or senator involved?

D: Mostly the subject matter, mostly the subject matter, because I had had some experiences in the Kennedy years and I'd been burned a couple of times. So we straightened that out and then we made sure it wasn't going to happen in the Johnson years.

(Interruption)

G: Was the office the same as it had been set up under President Kennedy?

D: Yes. The President didn't make any change. Gradually the personalities changed as people went someplace else.

G: Was the pattern something that had been drawn from previous administrations?

D: No, a total break. In the Eisenhower years, predecessor to Kennedy-Johnson, Bryce Harlow had been Larry's predecessor. Bryce was very helpful to us, very helpful. But Eisenhower's view of Congress [was] let the department agency handle them. I was on the Hill in those

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days in Eisenhower years. The only time I saw Bryce Harlow come into my office to talk to my congressman was when something that the President personally was interested in [was being considered], and usually picayune little things. The department agencies handled their own. Eisenhower's White House, I don't think their staff was that large. They had charts. They knew where all the bills were, but the department or agency handled them. He didn't feel that the White House should get involved unless it was something close to him personally. I think Bryce Harlow came to see my boss [about] declaring Gettysburg a national park or something, and my boss happened to be on the committee that was dealing with the national parks, Interior Committee.

So it was a total different concept when the Kennedy crowd came in.

G: Was it a creation of Larry O'Brien?

D: Yes. Larry created it. As I said, the country was divided by region and somebody was responsible for everybody in the East--New England, the eastern states, Middle West, up to Chicago, Illinois. Then I guess Irv Sprague took the western states from Missouri on, and all the South was Henry--in terms of the House; in the Senate it was only Mike.

G: Why was Sprague selected for the western states?

D: He's a California native. He had been with [Congressman John] McFall, [was] his AA for years, and we knew him. I'm not sure at what time, what stage, he came on board. Well, he was there when Larry and I

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went to the Post Office, that would be 1964, 1965. But the first one to come on board was Dave Bunn in the Johnson years.

G: Did these people handle both House and Senate matters?

D: No, just House.

G: So Manatos handled the Senate by himself?

D: By himself. He had a hundred senators to worry about.

Every Monday morning--see, Tuesday was always a leadership breakfast and the President had changed the format. We had established a format. Every Monday morning every department agency in town was to have to meet by noon. Sometimes they didn't meet and I'd be on the phone raising holy hell. [They were to issue] a status report: where their bills were, what problems they had if any, what amendments could they expect, tentative vote count if they had it. Like if you're in mark-up stage or hearing stage, any problems? [They were to report on] both sides of the aisle and target an individual if he's a problem. If he's one of our boys, why, we'll try to talk to him, and if he's on the other side we still try to talk to him. Because in terms of legislation we needed both sides, we didn't play party. I had to talk to both sides.

So then I'd prepare, of those reports, a summary for the President. Of that summary, Larry and I would get together late Monday afternoon or early evening to prepare--sometimes we knew in advance through conversation--an agenda: what the President should ask the Vice President, the Majority Leader, Mike Mansfield, in the Senate, Speaker [John] McCormack, you know, target what he should ask them and what

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he should request of them. Then Monday night I'd prepare that, and if he had left the office I'd take it up to his night reading table in the Mansion. You had that every Monday night, so he would be ready Tuesday morning at the leadership [breakfast] and say, "Mike, how about this? How about that? What are you doing on this?"

So, the correspondence was number one. The leadership agenda [was number two]. Then I'd prepare the guest lists. If he had an important meeting or I got a phone call, say, he's going to have a bipartisan meeting on this subject: Vietnam, Cambodia. Who should be invited? I'd prepare a list, bipartisan. He'd clear it and then I'd make the phone call. I'd tell them off record, hush hush, come in the back door, don't talk to the press, and we'd have a meeting.

Or a bill signing. When the bills that we were involved in [were passed], you would have a signing ceremony. Who should be invited? So I'd prepare that. Who should he recognize: the chairman, the ranking minority who had been helpful on the bill, the subcommittee chairman? So mention them by name. I think Bob Hardesty was involved in speech writing in those days. So Bob would call and say, "I'm preparing a statement for him to read involving H.R. or Senate bill so-and-so and who should he recognize? Who should he refer to in his remarks?" So I prepared the list of who should be invited. I would invite them. I guess Bob would prepare the speech and I'd give him the names of who the President should mention in his remarks. Of course I had cleared everything with Larry.

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- G: Did the agency liaisons do most of the work with congressmen and senators on their particular bills?
- D: Oh, yes. Sure. Now like every Friday you mentioned--I guess I've got some pictures someplace--like this one--we had a meeting late afternoon at four o'clock, of all the congressional liaison guys, and they gave us a verbal report where their bill stood and what they were doing about it. You just say that you're in mark-up and you're short two votes. Why? What are you doing about it to get the necessary votes? Who's causing the problem? What are you doing about it? We backstopped them. We helped them, assisted, but the prime responsibility was theirs.
- G: I suppose, too, that one agency could help out another if they [needed help].
- D: Oh, yes, like say a farm bill. Somebody in Commerce knew congressman so-and-so because he's from his home state, who happens to be on the House Agriculture [Committee] and we had a little minor problem with the congressman. But he's from Joe's home state and Joe used to know him well, maybe Joe worked for him before he came down into the administration. So you talk to him, too.
- G: At what point did Larry O'Brien get involved in dealing with congressmen? How severe would the problem have to be before he would go down himself?
- D: It would have to be pretty serious. In other words, the agency involved or the department involved in, say, a farm bill couldn't deal with a congressman or the senator. Henry couldn't deal with him, or

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whoever in the White House had that particular part of the country. Then eventually Larry would have to get in. Maybe I'd try first. By the time it reached Larry and I--we were aware from the start--we knew how serious it was.

G: How about the President? What would it take to get him involved?

D: Of course, he's the ace in the hole. We didn't want to use him too often, but a lot of time he did it on his own without [us asking him]. You know, he heard it, say, at the leadership breakfast. He just went back to the office and didn't even say, "Larry, should I call him?" he just picked up the phone and did. Any time. Kennedy didn't. Kennedy would wait for the word and [we'd] say, "Listen, you've got to do it, Mr. President. You've got to call Congressman X." But Johnson got in the habit, I guess from his leadership days, he'd just pick up the phone on his own and didn't tell anybody. We [never] knew here until we'd run something down on the Hill and he'd say, "By the way, the President called me this morning on HR blah-blah-blah. Geez, he must really be hot on this."

G: Did it ever undercut your work? Did he ever make a side deal that you just didn't know about?

D: If he did he'd tell Larry. He'd tell Larry. But he might call a guy on his own and we'd hear it through the Hill. But if he made a commitment on something important he would always tell Larry.

G: Were there certain congressmen and senators that he preferred to deal with himself because of his closeness to them?

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D: Yes, I suppose mostly--well, of course, senators. But on the House side mostly the Texas boys, because they were his state. On the Senate side of course you had so many relationships from his years. Of course Bob Kerr was one of his good friends, Maggie Magnuson. He didn't mind picking up the phone and calling them. I remember one bill, one of the Great Society bills, George Mahon said to me, "Claude, he's been calling me on this. Claude, get him off my back! Just tell him I can't do it." I forget what bill it was, one of the poverty bills. "I just can't do it down in my part of the state," Texas. "Just tell him I can't do it and for God's sakes leave me alone. I can't vote for it." He was not on the committee because he was at Appropriations. So it was an authorizing bill. So he said, "I can't do it. I just can't do it if you want me to stay here. So tell him to lay off my back!" That's why I became aware that apparently the President had been calling George a great deal of the time on his own and we didn't know about it. There were a few incidences like that.

G: Were there any particular committee chairmen that he regarded as especially prickly or difficult to deal with that you had special instructions on how to deal with them, say, Wilbur Mills or someone like that?

D: Well, we had a very good rapport with Wilbur because we'd go to him and say, "You're marking up such-and-such a bill tomorrow, a tax bill," and he would detail exactly what he was going to do. So we knew--because I had some friends on the Ways and Means [Committee]

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and I still do have dinner with them occasionally. Of course, some of them are still there, some of them are not. But I would go to dinner with them. I had just seen Wilbur that afternoon, and he outlined everything that was going to happen tomorrow morning, that he had the votes. I'd go to dinner with the members of the committee, Democrats, and I'd say, "What are you going to do tomorrow morning? You've got your mark-up, right? What are you going to do?" "We don't know. Wilbur hasn't told us." "Well," [I said], "I know it, we know it in the White House, because he told me this afternoon. Larry and I went up there and he outlined everything that was going to happen tomorrow morning, and he's got the votes. You'll get your marching orders in the morning." Wilbur, in those days, was powerful; he was Mr. Tax on the Ways and Means. Fantastic.

G: How did Johnson deal with someone as conservative as Judge [Howard] Smith on the Rules Committee?

D: I guess he'd call him. No, he didn't have Rayburn. Rayburn was dead by then. McCormack was the speaker. Of course, the old Judge had the habit whenever a thing got a little too hot, he'd disappear and go to his farm in Virginia for ten days. We couldn't find him. If the Chairman's not around, there couldn't be a meeting of the Rules Committee.

I don't remember any instance with Judge Smith.

G: He must have been someone that would have to be dealt with on almost every piece of legislation.

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D: Henry had a pretty good rapport, I think. Henry had established a pretty good rapport with the old Judge. Somewhere along that way Barefoot [Sanders] came on board. Of course, Jake [Jacobsen] was there. But Jake I think, my recollection [is] Jake was dealing mostly with the Texas delegation. Barefoot sort of helped Henry, went across the board, all over the lot. Barefoot didn't come on until at least I think 1965. Or if he came in 1964, it must have been late 1964. My recollection was early 1965 or late 1964. Judge Smith, I guess Larry would talk to him once in a while, too. Henry had a good rapport with Judge Smith. I don't know whether Barefoot got involved with the old man or not. I don't remember, I don't recall.

G: Let me ask you about horse trading? This was a technique that Lyndon Johnson was noted for when he was in the Senate as majority leader, of holding up a project or something that a senator or congressman was interested in until he got the vote on a particular measure. Was this a standard feature or how did it work, to your observation?

D: Well, mostly Larry would clear it with him and say, "So-and-so, we need his support on this particular bill, but he wants such-and-such: a post office, a water project." Or Larry would advise the President, and the President would say, "Let me call him." But you've got to remember, in 1964 after he succeeded Kennedy he had a great deal of support up there because of the circumstances in which he took the office. So 1964 wasn't very rough. Then he got re-elected by an overwhelming majority in November, 1964 so 1965 was really the honeymoon period.

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When things got a little tough I guess started in 1965, Vietnam. Some of the members [supported us less]. In fact one was Tip [O'Neill], now speaker--you know, Harvard, Cambridge. [He was] one of the first to get off the bandwagon on Vietnam in terms of the House. I guess it gradually worsened. You've got to remember that Larry and I were gone to the Post Office, so Larry was still involved; he was still wearing two hats. Because one thing the President did, he never allowed anyone to use Larry's office in the West Wing. Larry would come in for an hour maybe every other day, or an hour a day, whatever it was. His office was still vacant, still there empty. So no one moved in to fill Larry's shoes, physically and. . . .

G: Well, how did the liaison work change? Did Henry Wilson continue to work with the southerners?

D: Yes, and in large part Barefoot more or less was acting successor to O'Brien.

G: And O'Brien was able to handle the overall coordination even after he went to the Post Office?

D: He had no choice. So Larry might be more knowledgeable, because by that time I was in the White House but mostly dealing with Jimmy Jones on appointments, that sort of thing, signing ceremony, who should be invited, and that kind of stuff. I didn't get that much involved in legislation after 1965. So when the going got tough--and, as you say, horse trading, the going got tough mostly because of Vietnam--I wasn't that much involved then. My recollection is 1964, 1965, both years were a honeymoon.

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G: Well, as a standard procedure in, let's say, 1964 and 1965 before you left, did you have some way of knowing what projects were pending of interest to various congressmen?

D: Yes, oh, yes.

G: How did this work?

D: Well, that had been done in the early stage of the Kennedy years. In fact, it's in Larry's book. A major from the Pentagon, would come in every morning to my office between ten and eleven, delivering a stack of awards that every part of the Pentagon was going to make that day--or Defense, whether it's navy, air force, army--anything above, oh, I guess all the way around a thousand dollars, and the district, identifying the congressmen and the senators. If it was really big, say, fifty million or something, I would pick up the phone and call and say, "The President and Larry want me to tell you that blah-blah award is going to be made today by the Pentagon and you had better get on the phone, Senator, Congressman, and get the word to the newspapers in your district." Because we had been burned in early 1961.

G: How so?

D: Early 1961, one day I got I think an eight million dollar contract or a big contract for some company in Cleveland. I called Steve Young, the senator from Ohio, East Cleveland. I guess then he was in his seventies. I called him, gave him the big news, saying it's beautiful. He said, "My God, this is my administration. This is my party. This is Kennedy. And by God I'm delighted. Tell the President on my behalf I'm personally going to call the editor of the Cleveland Plain

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Dealer." Twenty minutes later he calls back: "If this is the kind of service you're going to give me, forget it!" [Congressman William] Minshall, ranking Republican on the army subcommittee--it was an army contract--from Cleveland got it the night before. So he chewed me up and down. "You can tell Larry and you can tell the President"--in so many words--"to go to hell."

So I went in to Larry and told him. Right away we started procedures. We called the Secretary of the Army to come over to the White House for a meeting with the congressional liaison staff. We told him, by God, I guess the Pentagon hasn't realized there's been a change of administration. It's not Eisenhower anymore, it's not the Republicans, it's Democrats. Well, the brass--and I understand it--had given it to the Republicans for eight years. They had forgotten there had been a change. Then we called [John] Connally, who was then secretary of the navy, read him gently the riot act that "we want [to be] told first," quote. We told the Secretary of the Air Force, Gene Zuckert--he came over and [we did the] same thing. Three separate meetings. Of course, McNamara knew. Larry had discussed it with the Secretary of Defense.

So we'd get the notice first, we'd make the calls, and then the Pentagon courier--army, navy, air force--would go to the members by one o'clock. I'd get it between ten and eleven--maybe it was two o'clock. But I had until two o'clock, and our boys had got the lead. Of course we called the Democrats. We kept it up. Because McNamara got burned several times when he would testify before--his thorn was

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Margaret Chase Smith of Maine. Muskie would get the contract from Maine. She was the ranking Republican on Armed Services and had been very close to LBJ. So McNamara would come up and testify on this year's procurement program and she would say, "The junior senator from Maine got this contract several hours before I did! By the time I got a call up there they had it!" McNamara would say, "I don't know anything about it." Then she would write a letter to the President, which would come to me as congressional liaison. So I'd send that downstairs.

G: Was there ever any accommodation to someone like her in grant announcements?

D: One day Larry and I had gone out to lunch. We were at Sans Souci, which is close to the White House. I think we were just ready to have dessert and coffee and Larry got called to the phone. It was the President, Johnson. "McNamara's here. Just came down from the Hill. Get over here on the double!" So Larry said, "You take care of it. I'll sign the check, sign my name. You finish your coffee, I've got to get back on the double." He got back and of course, I got back, about five minutes later I left. We were through anyway. When he came back upstairs I said, "What's the matter? What's going on?" He said, "McNamara just testified before Armed Services, and Margaret Chase Smith read the riot act so bad that McNamara came down straight from the Hill to here to see the President and saying that 'This has got to stop. I can't handle her anymore.'" The President was on the verge of weakening and Larry backed him up and said, "No, we can't do

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that. We've got to take care [of Muskie]. We'll take care of Margaret Chase Smith. We can't bypass Muskie; he's too good a friend." So, no, we never caved in.

G: How about Dirksen? Did he get special accommodation?

D: Well, Dirksen, he didn't care so much about contracts and that sort of thing. What he wanted particularly [was] the regulatory agencies. As you know, they're composed of four or five members appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, so many of the majority party, so many of the minority. All he wanted was one of the minority to be one of his recommendations on every regulatory agency in town. So he could call Federal Power Commission, which doesn't exist anymore, where he could call FCC, where he could call this guy and say, "Hey, what about this application for a radio station or a TV channel, what have you?" So all Ev wanted was one guy on every independent regulatory agency in town.

That reminds me of another story. He called me one day, Strom Thurmond, raising holy hell. Remember, he came here as a Democrat, then became Independent, then he switched to Republican. In those days postmasters were appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. But if there was no Democratic congressman in the district, the senators, if there was a Democrat, would make the recommendation. The only prerogative a senator had if it was a Democratic state, like South Carolina [was] at that time, was his home town; he could pick the postmaster for his home town. So in the Kennedy years you had a call, he [Thurmond] wanted so-and-so to be postmaster of his

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home town; we got it done. He was a Democrat. Then he turns around Independent, then he becomes a Republican.

So I guess the postmaster died or something, or retired. Johnson is president. He makes his recommendation which is ignored. So one day he calls me: "Kennedy gave me my postmaster. Johnson won't give it to me." Well, how do you say to a senator, "You've switched parties." So you try to be a little tactful, a diplomat and I said, "Senator, when Kennedy gave it to you you belonged to the majority party." I didn't want to use Democrat or Republican. I said, "You were a member of the majority party. But now, you're a member of the minority party. You made the decision, not us." And I heard him yell to the big GOP guy down in South Carolina, Harry Dent--"Harry, what party did I belong to when Kennedy gave me that postmaster back in 1962?" I heard Harry say in the background, "Well, you were a Democrat. Then you switched later in that year to Independent." "Oh, oh. Well, I guess you're right. I belong to the minority party." I said, "Well, Senator, that's the policy. That's the rules of the game. You know it and I know it." He said, "Oh, thanks a lot, Claude." He forgot which party he belonged to. It wasn't Johnson. He had switched, not us.

But all Ev wanted was one guy in every agency in town.

G: How would you know? How would you be able to coordinate the need for a congressman or a senator's vote on a particular bill and the knowledge of what projects he had pending on the other hand?

D: The agencies and departments would tell us.

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G: Is that right?

D: Yes. Or, if they didn't tell us--no reason, they just forgot or didn't think--and we'd have something critical coming up, we'd say, "Well, don't you have anything in your department?" at the Friday meeting, with everybody present. "Isn't there something he's interested in?" "Yes, he's interested in something from Agriculture." "What?" "Well, it's blah-blah-blah." We asked the guy to go back and check it: "Go back and check your files, or have your people check your files and call us back." They would call back and say such-and-such.

G: Did you ever have any problem getting the departments or the agencies to approve a grant or a project that you needed a senator's vote on in order to get?

D: Well, if a project was supposed to be done, say, due for November, 1964 and you started screaming or inquiring about it, say, in February, we might be able to speed up the time schedule. Say, instead of November or October, whatever it is, can't you move it up until August or September? But we never asked if something was not in the mill, say, to build a new post office in Cleveland. If it is already on the drawing board, we might be able to speed it up a little bit by a few months. If there was no plans for it within the department we never said, "Well, you've got to have a building over there." But we would try to expedite it if there was already plans for it, if it was far advanced. That's by the time you heard about it, the White House would

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hear about it down the pike, really on the drawing boards anyway.

So it's just a question of expediting it.

G: And the Friday meetings provided the common knowledge of what was pending where, so you could [know] whose votes were needed.

D: Yes. The other thing we had [were] the White House tours. I never realized how important the White House tours are to a member. I don't think they were aware of it, but we had a quota. There was only so many people who could get in on a congressional tour: fifteen hundred or two thousand I think. LBJ enlarged it from what it had been prior. Maybe it was up to twelve hundred or fifteen hundred, something like that. But when that number was reached, particularly at this time of year--people are pouring into Washington--it was reached. The congressional tour office would say, "No. We're jam packed for Saturday morning the nineteenth. We just can't take one more body." They were very important to congressmen. You get on the phone to the White House congressional liaison: "Larry, Claude, Henry, I've got to have a party of four tomorrow morning. They've just got to get in." And if he was one of our friends we'd say, "Well, hold on or I'll call you back." Then we called the tour office and said what their names [were], turned in their names and said, "Put them on." If he wasn't friendly we'd say, "Well, gee, I'll check," and call him back and say, "It's absolutely jammed. They can't squeeze one more soul in there."

G: Did you have any slack built in so that you could accommodate a few more?

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D: Say the seating was twelve hundred, maybe the White House tour office would say no after eleven hundred and save a hundred more and the member would call us and say, "I've just got to get them in."

G: How about invitations to state dinners or White House dinners? Was this used?

D: Yes. All the state dinners would go from the State Department; State prepared them. They'd go from the State Department to the social secretary of the White House and the First Lady like for entertainment. They'd make a decision on who they'd want, personal friends of the First Lady or of the family. They'd put them on. Then it would come to me for congressional. I had two categories: congressional and political, people that had been helpful in the campaign. First Kenny O'Donnell had given it to me and Marvin Watson knew I had it, Jack Valenti knew I had it.

So I had the congressional. The policy had been made because up until Eisenhower it had been strictly Foreign Relations and House Foreign Affairs. We had said, "Why should we limit it to those two committees? All of those members have votes on the floor even if they're not on the committee. Those guys on Senate Foreign Relations and the House Foreign Affairs are probably sick and tired of going down there every week for a state dinner for some president or king or foreign dignitary." So Kennedy and Johnson had agreed that we should go anywhere, whether the guys were on Merchant Marine or Post Office Committee. Share the goodies. So I would put them on. Of course they had to be friends. The ratio was about--particularly after the

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1964 election--like four to two: four Democrats to two Republicans say from the House the same ratio from the Senate. Maybe [it was] a little less Senate, because you had a hundred senators, you didn't have that many. They all got to enjoy a state dinner. The congressman's wife would enjoy it, senator. So we went across the board. I'd slip in a few fat cats, maybe two or three.

G: Do you think things like White House tours and invitations to these state dinners ever yielded any real votes that you needed?

D: Yes. But the best tool we had was the Sequoia, the presidential yacht. Outside the President and the first family I guess we had first crack. We used to use it from, say, about now, late April, mid-April, till--the weather permitted--November, or October at least. We used it at least twice a week. Nobody, nobody ever turned you down. You'd invite the congressman and his wife, or the senator and his wife. Nobody ever turned you down. If they did, it was really major. You could tell from the phone conversation, almost on their hands and knees [they'd] say, "No, I've got my most important guy in town tonight. I can't go," or "My wife is sick," or "I'm ill. I can't go, but please give me a raincheck."

G: Would this be to go out on the Sequoia with the President?

D: With the congressional liaison. All the congressional liaison staff and our wives were there. We'd leave around seven o'clock, sail down the river as far as Mount Vernon, turn back. We'd have a buffet dinner, they'd have drinks. We had an accordionist; we'd rotate navy-air-army, whatever, and we'd have a sing-song coming back. Because

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Eddy Boland--which Larry will confirm when you talk to him--Eddy Boland, you know, Irish, Springfield [Massachusetts], good voice, he loves to sing. You give him a couple of drinks and he's singing. The first half of the cruise or the trip the accordionist would rotate. When everybody sat down for dinner or finished dinner--they'd have it on a TV tray--then the singing would start, mostly familiar old songs that everybody loves, knows. You'd get Eddy started and everybody joined in. We'd dock around ten-thirty or eleven, had a great evening. Of course, the first part we were on the deck and it was still daylight and you talked to them about X bills coming up. But nobody ever turned you down. We'd use that twice a week. The President would say, "Go ahead."

G: How many congressmen would you take at one time?

D: Maybe thirty and their wives, sixty, and there would be five of us and our wives.

G: Would you focus on one particular bill or would you have a variety of things you were interested in?

D: A variety, because it went across the board. The guy could be on Judiciary and we wanted to talk to him on civil rights. He could be on Ways and Means and we wanted to talk to him on taxes. All the boys would circulate, see, the first part of the cruise and say, "Civil Rights is coming up, [in the] subcommittee. Pete Rodino, what are you going to do? Now, we need your help." We'd pinpoint--"I understand there's an amendment that's going to be offered by the Republican side." Manny Celler, Manny in those days would say, "Well, I got Bill McCulloch

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from Ohio," ranking Republican at that time on the House Judiciary, "I've talked to Bill and there's no problem. We're not going to have any problem."

G: Who would make suggestions on the members to invite? Would this be your office that would decide?

D: Larry and I.

G: Did you get any help from your leadership or the Whip's office or anything like that, suggesting that you invite this member or that one?

D: Once in a while they might call up. McCormack once in a while would call up and say, "You haven't had so-and-so yet." I remember one instance. I had no reason for me to go. The President was going to Palm Springs, California to meet with the President of Mexico. It's foreign affairs; I had nothing to do with that. But it was the George Washington recess. I had a cold, and of course, you couldn't take a day off. For three weeks it had been driving me crazy. I couldn't shake it. I'd take all the drugs that the doctor prescribed downstairs. I couldn't shake it, and I couldn't take a day off.

So one day when I heard of the trip and Congress was going to be gone--I think the President was leaving on a Wednesday, coming back Sunday--so I went to Larry and I said, "Hey, could I go to Palm Springs? I've got things to do, but I've got to get away. I need a couple of days in the sun to shake this damn thing." He said, "Well, if you don't knock off anybody. If there's an empty seat in the plane, it's all right with me." Kenny O'Donnell was still there, so I went around to Kenny. He said, "It's all right with Larry?" I

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said, "Yes, providing I don't knock off anyone." He said, "No, there's a place. I'll let you know what I think about it." But he didn't say no. So anyway I got the call and went out.

Well, I think in January--[John] Shelley had been the congressman from San Francisco. Shelley ran for mayor of San Francisco, got elected. So they had to call a special election. Phil Burton was elected, the first congressman elected since the 1964 election. So he's running as a Great Society guy, 100 per cent on the rope.

So we get to Palm Springs, and we're in a motel. The next day I think Pauline, Kenny O'Donnell's secretary, was along and a guy from the congressional tour who sort of advanced things and ran around for the President, for Kenny. He was on. There were two floors, a two-story motel. We're downstairs. Kenny's room is upstairs. So the next day we're down by the pool. I found out in Palm Springs nobody goes in the water. Californians don't go in the pool. The only people in the pool were the easterners, the LBJ staff. So we're in the pool and then getting some sun. And this guy who none of us knew comes over and says, "Are you Kenny O'Donnell?" He said, "Yes." He said, "I'm Phil Burton, congressman-elect from San Francisco. I just got elected in a special election to fill the vacancy of Jack Shelley's seat. It would be kind of nice to have my picture taken with the President while he's here." So Kenny said, "Well, you'll have to talk to Desautels. He's congressional liaison." But Kenny is the appointments secretary. I knew it and he knew it, that he was the one who would have to say, "Okay, you can do it at two o'clock."

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So he turns him over to me. So Phil said, "Well, you're congressional liaison. It would be kind of nice. I'm the first guy elected running as a Great Society guy." I'm saying, "Well, I'll have to see. You know, it's a pretty tight schedule. He's here to meet with the President of Mexico, for better relationships between the two countries." "Yes, but he doesn't meet with him twenty-four hours a day." "Well, no. But they're meeting a lot." "Yes, but they only meet once in the morning for an hour or two and they meet for an hour or two in the afternoon, so you got plenty of time." I said, "Yes, true, but he'll be in meetings. He's got to be briefed by the State Department and the National Security Staff here as to what to bring up at the next meeting, and review what took place this morning and then get himself ready for the afternoon. He's got a full day, a full schedule. That's the purpose of the trip. But I'll see what I can do."

Kenny said, after he left, "No way." So I finally told him there was no possibility. His next request was, "It would be kind of nice if the first congressman elected since the Great Society landslide last fall flies back with the President." "Well, let me see what I can do." "You can find one seat on the plane." I said, "Well, we've got a lot of people, the White House staff, the Secret Service, the whole State Department crew." "Oh, but you can find one seat." "Well, Phil, let me do what I can." Kenny says, "No."

G: Well, was the plane full?

D: We could have squeezed. But Phil was asking me for one seat. And he discussed [committee assignments] with me, since I'm congressional

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liaison--like he was naive; he's not naive, he's one of the sharpest guys up there. Phil was coming back, "How do I get on the committee?" "Well, you see the dean of your delegation"--at that time--"who's on Ways and Means." He had Cecil King. "You go to Cecil King, pay a courtesy call." "Who else would I go and see?" "Well, a courtesy call on the Speaker, Majority Leader. You know which committee you want?" "Yes. I want Interior." I said, "Well, Wayne Aspinall, my former boss, is the chairman. Pay a courtesy call on him. Tell him that you want to be on this committee and then talk to Cecil King that you want to be on that committee." Because in those days the majority party, the Democrats, made the assignments, to Ways and Means.

So we discussed that, and then he brings up the plane. Can he fly back? Well, I'll see. But I told him, listen, we're kind of tight. And we had the press pool, they've got to be on board. The doctor, the White House staff, that's a must. Those people have to get back. So Kenny says no. Oh, I don't know if he told me a flat no, but "It doesn't look good." I guess he started on Friday--we were there Wednesday. Thursday he started on the appointment. Friday he starts on the plane. Saturday he's on the plane. Now he's forgotten about the picture, he just wants a ride back. "So I can be sworn in at twelve o'clock noon on Monday."

So finally Sunday morning I'm saying, "I'll try. I'll try. I'm trying my best. We're counting noses." So Monday morning I said, "Oh, come on, Ken. You know, he's a member of Congress-elect and we're going to need his vote down the pike, and he did run on a 100

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per cent Great Society platform. Come on, let's give him a seat."
"Okay." So I call Phil. "You got a seat! You got a seat!" "How's my wife get there? I need another seat for my wife. I'm not flying alone! She's got to see me sworn in, otherwise I'll go commercial. I'll go on the Red Eye." Well, he had never mentioned his wife to me before. He had said one seat, "for me." He never mentioned her. Now I got to go back to Kenny and say, "I need two." So I went back to Ken and Kenny said, "No way. Why didn't he mention that from the start? Why didn't he say two seats from the start? 'My wife and I?'" It sort of made me a little angry, too, so I finally told him, "No. We could have squeezed you on, but you mentioned one, you didn't mention two." Well, he forgot that, just get her on. So I'm saying, "Sorry. We got one seat." Probably have to put that poor guy on a commercial flight, some low, third-grade echelon from the State Department. Have to have some guy cook that up. So he got a no.

So he got here on Red Eye, I guess. Monday noon he's paying a courtesy call. We have the reception. The only change Johnson had made--Kennedy's [reception] was [from] six to eight, the members only. We used to call them the coffee hour--but they didn't serve coffee, you know that. Johnson changed it to member and wife or husband, whatever the case may be, and it was an all night affair.

G: Now when was this? Every week?

D: Well, the size of the House was four hundred and thirty-five, both sides of the aisle. I prepared the list. We tried to do it--I remember we went through the mourning period for thirty days, so we

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started I guess in February. Now you had a Christmas party, a German party. The thirty days were up late December, just before Christmas. Everybody, every member of the House and Senate, was invited with their wives.

I guess in January we started the format. He changed the format to include husbands and wives. We'd get a briefing, they'd come in. I don't know if I've got any here; I've got them all at home. They'd come in. We'd gather in the East Room and then the President and the First Lady would be in the Green Room. They'd file in one-by-one or couple-by-couple, get their pictures taken [with] President Johnson and Mrs. Johnson. Then after everybody had been through, then he would take all the members into the Blue Room. They'd get a briefing from the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, OMB, and the Budget. Sometimes he brought somebody else in, depending on the key issue. The First Lady would take the wives or once in a while a husband on a tour. In the first year it was a tour of the private apartment, private quarters. That was 1964. 1965 she took them to the theater, showed them an historical film of the White House, the history of the White House. By 1966 I was gone.

Then after the briefing we'd all adjourn to a buffet dinner in the state dining room and more drinks and dancing. I remember one time I was talking to someone, and he [LBJ] was dancing with one of the congressmen's wives and he whirled by me and said, "Claude, dance! You're supposed to be here dancing." I was chitchatting with a member and his wife, who didn't want to dance. So I said, "Yes, Mr. President."

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So I said to somebody, "You want to dance?" and she said, "Yes."
He wanted everybody to dance. This would last until, oh, around
eleven or so.

G: How many members would be invited for each one?

D: The Senate I think we had three, so there must have been twenty
senators--no, a hundred senators--I think we had three for the Senate.
The House must have been at least eight or nine. They would go prob-
ably until March. We tried to do it twice a week. Of course, some
weeks his schedule didn't permit. '

Now I remember and I felt so sorry for Mrs. Johnson, she was
such a wonderful person. He had called me at three o'clock, called
Larry and I. He was sending a special foreign aid message to Congress
the next day, wanted us to brief the leadership, the key committees
involved, bipartisan. Prepare the list, prepare the list. I went
downstairs. I think this was January, because it was early. Either
January or early February. I prepared the list. He agreed to the
list, so I made the phone calls, told them all to come in the--well,
that's where it hit me. I went to Larry and I said, "If I tell them
to come in the back door--they're due in for an eight o'clock stag
dinner upstairs in the private apartment--if they come in at eight
o'clock that's when the House guys are leaving." We had a reception
that night at six to eight. Yes, we hadn't started the husband-wife
bit yet, so it had to be late January. That's when it was I guess.
We had changed the whole format and then that's when he switched it,
so it must have been the last of stags.

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So I said, "I'm going to have a traffic jam on the South Lawn. You know, the bipartisan group is coming in, the House and Senate, and then they're going to run into [the others leaving], 'Hey, what are you doing here?' 'Well, I'm having dinner with the President. What are you doing here?' 'Well, I was here for a cocktail party.'" So Larry said, "What do you suggest?" I said, "I'm going to tell them to come to the West Wing. Then the chief usher in the West Wing can call the butler, he'll tell me, I'll run over and escort them, put them in the private elevator, show them up to the third floor. They won't see each other." So Larry said, "Fine." So I did it. Kept running back and forth all night.

The last to arrive was Dick Russell, Georgia senator, key, and very close to the President, as you know. Bob [William] Jordan worked for him. Of course, if you can't get the Senator, somebody, the AA or the private secretary that you can trust, and the Senator was in an Appropriations meeting, I guess. So I couldn't reach him. I tried to get the members themselves. They thought he'd be back in ten minutes: "He's on the Senate floor. You can call from the cloakroom." Only in extreme emergency where you couldn't reach him did I tell somebody he trusted, somebody confidential, particularly on a subject like this. So I said, "Bob, tell him he's to come in the West Wing, stag dinner, eight o'clock. Hush Hush." He said, "Fine."

So the word is Senator Russell has just arrived, so I'm running over to the West Wing. So we're walking back and he said, "You know, I knew he had it all wrong. You don't come here for dinner and come

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in the West Wing. You go in the South portico." I said, "No, Senator. We had a reception tonight, six to eight. House members. We didn't want to create a traffic jam back there. They're going to say, 'Well, what are you doing here, Dick?' and you're going to say, 'Well, Joe, what are you doing here?' 'Well, I'm leaving. I came for a reception.'" He said, "Claude, he's overdoing it. He's doing too much of this. You know, I've been here since Roosevelt days. When you got an invitation to dinner with the President of the United States, [it's a] command performance. I don't care what you've got on schedule, you cancel. He's overdoing it." We were beginning to think he was overdoing it. So I said, "Well, you tell him, Senator. We've tried to tell him. He won't listen to us. He'll listen to you." By that time we're in the elevator, so I took him upstairs.

I came down. It was eight o'clock, maybe five after. So I came back down to make sure everybody had left. And our staff, everybody was gone. I look in the Red Room. John Lindsay, then congressman from New York, and Mary were there with the First Lady. The tradition was, the party's over, you got the Secret Service, you got the career people, the Marine band, and the tradition was they have a little party. There's plenty of food left over, some drinks left over. The First Lady would remember a congressman and his wife? Well, I'm congressional liaison, I felt responsible to stay there and assist her. I said to myself, "What the hell is the matter with you, John? You were invited from six to eight. It's five after. This is an imposition of the First Lady. She's probably tired, she'd rather go

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upstairs, relax." So finally--Mary Lindsay is a sharp one--I guess five minutes went by and she gave John a kick in the shin so he'd get the message. Well, he said, "Oh, my gosh, we overstayed." So they left and I went to the North portico and escorted them out.

I came back. She said, "You've been working, I noticed you tonight. You were running around." I said, "Yes, I had to get people up to the private dining room." She said, "The President left early." I said, "Well, he left about a quarter of eight. He's got a stag dinner upstairs." She said, "He's got what?" I said, "He's got a stag dinner, bipartisan leadership. He's sending a message to Congress tomorrow on the foreign aid part of the message." She said, "They're upstairs in the dining room?" I said, "Yes, in the private dining room." She looked at me and said, "Well, where am I supposed to eat?" I looked at her, the First Lady of the land. She said, "Nobody told me." I said, "Geez, Marvin knows it. I guess there was a breakdown between Marvin telling Liz Carpenter or Bess Abell the President was having this dinner." She said, "Well, what am I supposed to do for dinner?" I said, "Well, Mrs. Johnson, I will be glad to escort you to Paul Young or Sans Souci, wherever you'd like to go." She said, "Claude, I'd love to go, but you know I can't go." You know, she couldn't go. The Secret Service would have to be told and they'd have to check the restaurant that everything's all right. She said, "No way. You work awfully hard. Bruce, get him a drink. What do you want?" So he got me a drink.

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She and I sat down and chitchatted in the Red Room. Of course, the staff are helping themselves in the State Dining Room having dinner. I said, "I'll be glad to get you a plate and join you here, keep you company." She said, "Oh, no. No, no. I can't stay here. I want the staff to enjoy themselves, and if I'm around here then they won't relax like they should. They've worked hard." I said, "Well, what are you going to do?" She said, "I guess I'll get a plate and go up in my bedroom and eat off my lap." I thought, "My God! The First Lady of the land. He's got the dining room. Nobody told her unfortunately. She doesn't want to spoil the party for the staff. She's going to eat off her lap in her bedroom." My heart went out to her that night. I said, "I'd love to take you to Paul Young. I'll escort you. You won't go alone, I'll go with you." She said, "I'd love to go." The way she said, "I'd love to go, Claude, but you know I can't." Jail. She's in jail.

G: Were you going to tie this process into Phil Burton some way?

D: Oh, yes. Yes, I'm glad you reminded me.

Monday noon the phone rang. We've got a reception Tuesday night. The Speaker said, "Claude, you've got a reception tomorrow night, right?" "Yes, sir. Yes, Mr. Speaker." "Phil Burton is here, a new member I'd like you to know. San Francisco." I said, "Yes, I know him. I met him." He said, "Can't you squeeze him in tomorrow night?" By that time I had an opinion about Phil, so I said, "Gee, Mr. Speaker, we're jammed for tomorrow night. There's been no cancellation. If there is, I'll be glad to call him and invite him and his wife." He

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said, "Well, I wish you'd take a look and see what you can do." I said, "Well, I'll be glad to. If I can't get him in tomorrow night, there's no cancellation, I'll try to get him on one of the early ones that's scheduled for next week or so." So he said, "Fine. I wish you would give him priority, do what you can." I didn't. He had to wait a couple of weeks. He's a freshman and, to some extent, we didn't play politics. We had both sides of the aisle. But I had a ratio--I forget, two Democrats for one Republican, and the ones who were key, if a vote was coming up, obviously got priority.

G: If a member had voted a certain way that angered the President, would he punish him by denying him access to certain things or not approving legislation that he was interested in?

D: Well, of course, most of the legislation they were interested in was, say, pork barrel legislation types. That didn't come up that often. The big bills, we'd punish them in the sense that we might cut off when he asked for tours, say "Don't let him in." He calls congressman so-and-so. One of our pet guys was H. R. Gross from Iowa, who would always say, "You don't have any money," and always voted no on everything. H. R. maybe would get five when everyone else was getting like twenty-five a day, White House tours. H. R. might get two. Because a couple of times H. R. would get on his hands and knees and call himself, usually late, five-thirty, six-thirty, and say, "I've just got to get these two people on a tour tomorrow morning." And on the congressional reception, we might put them at the bottom of the list. The last reception when we had had everybody in, all our friends had

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been in, H. R. would be invited to the last one. Or the Sequoia, the last trip of the season you might include him.

G: How about travel on Air Force One? Was this also a plum that could be [used]?

D: Sure. The only trip I made with him besides the Palm Springs was Appalachia. I think there was some legislation here that kept Larry, because Larry would have gone normally. On these trips Larry would go. Larry was caught here so he said to me, "You go." I think we went to Hagerstown or Cumberland, Maryland, went to West Virginia, went to North Carolina and we stayed overnight in Georgia. No, they didn't fly; they were there. We'd tell them, we're going to be in--we went to Tennessee, too. We went to Nashville. We'd tell them that the President would be there on blah day. Of course, they probably knew it because Secret Service had been down there to advance it, so they got the word from home. "I guess the President is thinking of coming down here." We'd get calls, "Is the President going down there or to my district or my state?" We'd say, "Well, it's in the mill, but we're not sure yet. But we'll let you know whenever it's firmed up." I guess it was firmed up after the advance group had come back and made their recommendation to Marvin and Valenti. Then we'd get a call and say he's definitely going. Here's the schedule. So tell them.

Except I think maybe we took Jennings Randolph with us. I think maybe he was still here and we took him with us to West Virginia. But he got off there and went to Wheeling. He got off in Wheeling. But the rest were down there, and they met us there. In Georgia,

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Russell and Talmadge and the congressmen, the whole delegation was there in the airport in Atlanta. In North Carolina I know we had Dave Henderson, who's now retired; Carnegie, Horace Carnegie[?], they were at the airport, and L. H. Fountain. But they were all in that district. Maybe we hit it on a Friday or something.

The other trips, when he went to Palm Springs, Congressman [Edward] Roybal had called. That's right. He was going to be down in the district before--Los Angeles. Well, the meetings were in Los Angeles between the two presidents. But, "could his wife get a ride with us?" Well, Ed had been a good supporter. So I went downstairs. I guess I talked to Kenny, "Could we give this Lucille a ride to Palm Springs, and she'll get to L. A. on her own." So we took her out. So she flew on Air Force One. Well, Air Force Two, on the backup plane.

G: Did this sort of consideration figure into certain appointments, say, to the White House staff or agency positions or things like this, programs? Were members of Congress who were supportive able to get people that they were interested in appointed into the administration?

D: Yes.

G: Did this go through your office, also? How did this work?

D: Well, they normally would write to the President, which came to us. They'd recommend somebody for assistant secretary of agriculture, where there's a vacancy or somebody's going to resign. Larry would take it up with the President and say, "Well, we've heard from ten guys, or we've heard from three guys or one guy, and he's writing or he's calling." They'd call the President. The practice had been usually

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to refer to congressional liaison. "The President is in a meeting, he's tied up. If you'll hold on we'll transfer you to Larry O'Brien." They'd transfer him to Larry. If Larry was free he'd take the call, if he wasn't free I usually wound up with them, taking a call. They'd say, "I've written the President," and I'd say, "Yes, I know. We've seen the letter recommending so-and-so for assistant secretary."

"And I'd really like it. It means a lot to me. He's a very able guy."

G: How would you decide between a--

D: Competing candidates?

G: Yes. Well, let me set up a situation where you've got a member who is a good supporter, but not so influential, someone who's marginally a supporter, but who's extremely influential, maybe a committee chairman or something like that. Whose man would get the appointment?

D: Well, it would depend on the qualification of the individuals.

G: Let's assume they were about equal.

D: Equal? Well, if they were equal it probably would go to the strong supporter.

G: Really? Even though you may risk the. . . .

D: And also his seniority, his leadership, his position on the ladder of leadership. If he was a Wilbur Mills type, or chairman of Appropriations, or Dick Russell's candidate--you certainly wouldn't want to bypass Dick Russell--versus a freshman Democrat in the House.

Sometimes it was difficult. You got two chairmen on the Senate side pushing, say, Russell Long, Finance, and you got Dick Russell

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pushing for this guy. Then you may have Wilbur Mills or McClellan pushing for somebody from Arkansas. Sometimes it was tough.

G: How would this work out?

D: I suppose Dick Russell would win in one of those situations versus Wilbur.

G: Then how would you deal with Wilbur Mills?

D: Maybe we could try to find another spot for his guy.

G: I see.

D: Or maybe we'd say, "The next time we'll try to help you out." But we'd try to use the President sparingly.

G: Do you think he overdid it in his contacts with congressmen?

D: Yes. Because he had spent so many years, he knew so many of them, I think he did.

Well, to finish about Dick Russell, maybe I didn't mention that [point]. When he said to me, "He's overdoing it," I said, "You know about it, you're used to being invited here. You're used to command performance." He said, "Since the late President died, Ev Dirksen, Mike Mansfield and I haven't bought a bag of groceries since last November. We're here every week! He's overdoing it!" I said, "You're right." "Ev Dirksen, Mike Mansfield and I"--I'll never forget that line--"haven't bought a bag of groceries since November. We're here every week! He's overdoing it!" And I said, "You're right. We feel that way. But we can't tell him. We've tried, but he won't listen. He'll listen to you." He said, "I'll tell him! Get me upstairs, Claude. I'll tell him!"

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- G: What was his response? Did Russell talk to him, do you know? What was the President's response when you broached the subject with him?
- D: "Well, I've known those guys. I've been up there so long." And he did.
- G: Did you ever have any chance to observe his dealing with senators and congressmen on a one-to-one basis?
- D: Yes, occasionally.
- G: There have been stories of the Johnson treatment and how persuasive he was in getting a congressman or senator to see his [point of view]. What techniques would he use?
- D: I'd say high road, say, civil rights. You know, "You're from the South. You've been against civil rights all of your thirty years in the Congress." I'd say that's probably a good one, I mean, we did get some votes in the South. "It is the moral, right thing to do. It's long overdue, and it's going to come sooner or later whether you like it or not. You might as well reconcile yourself to it." Because they'd say, "Maybe you're right, but I just can't do it coming from that district. I just can't." But we did get some votes. I'd have to look up the vote again, I don't remember who we got.
- G: Was there a special process of getting southerners to vote for liberal programs or civil rights programs?
- D: Yes.
- G: How would this work?
- D: Well, of course, Henry would feel the member first on the sensitive issues like civil rights. Larry would come back and say, "You can forget him." Or if there was some faint hope then maybe we'd put him

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on the reception [list]. And on the reception [list], not only [did] the President get a guest list, he knew who was coming, there would be intelligence. Like "You can expect him to bring up such-and-such," or "You should talk to him about this, civil rights. You should talk to him about civil rights. He's on the Judiciary Committee. Talk to him about it." If he can't help us, maybe he can take a walk and play golf that morning and not be at the committee meeting, the mark-up. Or if he can support an amendment. Maybe he'll still vote no on the final passage, but maybe he can support an amendment.

G: How often did it work out that way that you were able to get a member to be absent or to vote with you on a teller vote or something like that, even though they wouldn't go on the record as supporting it?

D: Quite frequently, particularly in a teller vote because in those days teller votes weren't recorded. You had to be in the gallery to see, and you can't take notes. If you're watching ten congressmen, you're probably going to miss four.

G: How were you able to observe who voted with you on teller votes and who didn't?

D: Well, we did. We had a couple of spies on the floor who would call in or I'd call them. "How did so-and-so vote?" "I don't remember, let me check." "Did you see how so-and-so voted?" "He voted aye," or "He voted no." And on the roll call votes I got a report on the first roll call, because in those days you had to call the roll and they went the roll twice, in case the member missed the first go-around. Then they would go in the well if they had missed both times,

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and say, "I want to be recorded." So I would get a report on the first roll, on the first go-around: "You got a hundred ayes, you got twenty nays. Only a hundred and twenty had voted. Now they're just starting the second roll." Then I'd get a phone call right away the minute the vote was over, giving me the final count. Then I'd give it to Larry and he'd either call or go downstairs and tell the President.

Yes, because one key vote some guys didn't show up. They were playing poker in the congressman's office. And we lost by one vote, on an amendment type thing. We lost by one vote.

G: Which issue was this, do you remember?

D: I think it was a labor bill, but we got it straightened out in the Senate. They adopted a Republican substitute, some amendment, a key amendment. But we got it changed in the Senate and then the conference, we had it straightened out in the conference. The House caved in, yielded to the Senate on that particular amendment. It was an amendment.

G: Well, I know you have a meeting. I was going to ask you how you used the leadership and your allies in the Congress as leverage to get members to support you who were reluctant.

D: Give me that again.

G: How you would use your allies who were, say, the supporters and sponsors of the bill or the House leadership or committee chairmen who were sympathetic in getting reluctant members to support a particular bill.

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D: Well, you know, you had the Tuesday leadership breakfasts. Say a civil rights bill is in trouble, with this one, this one, this one, this one on the committee. Give that list to the Speaker or let him make his own notes. The President would rattle off the names. We've got trouble with so-and-so, so-and-so, so-and-so. We're getting it from Justice. Henry is getting the same reaction. Barefoot was congressional liaison in Justice. I guess he was. Anyway, Justice would talk to him, whoever. I mean, the White House staff has talked to him. He's still adamant. We need his help on this amendment. "Now, Mr. Speaker, what can you do?" And the Speaker would say, "I'll talk to him. I'll get so-and-so to talk to him." They'd come up with a list of names at the breakfast. Larry would be there, so he would copy the same names that the Speaker would rattle off. "I'll have Dick Bolling talk to him." "I'll have this one talk to him," whatever.

Then Larry later in the day or the next day would call the Speaker and say, "Did you get a report?" or "Would you call me when you get the report on these three guys that you mentioned this morning?" So we'd get a report, say, "Well, I've been successful," or "mildly successful," or "I've been totally disastrous. He told me a flat no," or "He told so-and-so that I asked him to talk to." Now, the last shot is me. I didn't want to go to him myself. So I had Dick Bolling talk to him. Dick Bolling and McCormack didn't get along too well, so I guess it wasn't Dick, maybe. Carl Albert talked to him, being a border state guy. Dick Bolling had been close to

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Rayburn, had been Rayburn's protege, but I don't think he and McCormack got along very well. So I don't think it was Dick. But Carl Albert did a lot of this.

G: How about Dirksen? Did you ever prevail on him to get a Republican vote or two for you?

D: Yes. We had to pay the price, give him a FCC or AEC [appointment].

G: Can you recall any specific occasions where he helped you out on a particular bill?

D: No. No, he helped us quite frequently. Of course, Ev knew, and what deal he made with a senator, I don't know. I think none of us knew, we didn't ask, none of our business. But he'd come back and he'd say, "[Bourke] Hickenlooper will go along," say, on a foreign affairs problem. "Hickenlooper will go along," "[Leverett] Saltonstall is all right." Deals were made--well, not necessarily on a vote, but he knew that he had an IOU that he would cash in on a roll[?] whenever he wanted it. The President and Dirksen got along beautifully, so a lot of times the President himself would call Ev and say, "Ev, can you talk to Hickenlooper? Can you talk to [Alexander] Wiley? Can you talk to this one or that one and get them straightened out?" And Ev would say, "Well, okay. Let me talk to him and let's see what I can do." And he would call back either the President or Larry and say, "Well, so-and-so is all right." But right away he would ask for the vacancy. He might say, "In six months I'm going to call you, because there's a vacancy coming up on FCC," or FPC or FTC. He would call

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him whenever the time came, when a vacancy would occur. Now that was Ev's [goal], one guy on each regulatory agency.

No, I can't recall a single one.

G: Did Carl Hayden require special handling? Was there some formula there that he was interested in?

D: Of course, Carl was getting along in years. We're always very considerate of Carl, not only because of his position but Carl was a good source. I don't think he gave us any trouble. [Robert] Kerr could be a problem at times. A lot of times the President had to take Kerr himself.

G: But now Kerr was dead by the time Johnson took office, wasn't he, or shortly thereafter?

D: I forgot when he died. Maybe he died in 1964, yes. He may have died early 1964. But it seems to me he was here the early stages of Johnson.

G: Anything else on Johnson and Russell in this connection?

D: Well, of course, Russell had been his mentor, so he worshipped Russell a great deal. A lot of respect for him and his integrity. Russell was quite a guy. Well, the only thing I recall is what I referred to, "He's overdoing it."

G: Did Russell support more liberal legislation than his record reflects? Would he make himself absent?

D: Mike might tell you better than I. He might do it in committee. I don't think he could ever get Russell to take a walk on a floor vote,

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but in committee he might, or abstain. And of course, Carl Vinson; Carl was quite a guy, too. Because Carl would never fly. I guess it was Vietnam--no, it was Kennedy and the Bay of Pigs, I forget. But he would never fly.

G: Well, I'm interested in it anyway.

D: Well, he had never flown. I guess it was the Bay of Pigs. They were all home. [We] had to fly him [to Washington], tell him he had to fly. Air Force One is going to Florida, picking up [George] Smathers. Mansfield was down there because he was up for an election. It was 1962. It was going to stop for [William] Fulbright in Arkansas, go to Georgia, pick up Vinson and Russell.

He [Vinson] had fought against the authorization of these big jets, and our big argument was Khrushchev could fly from Moscow to Paris nonstop; Eisenhower had to stop in Newfoundland or Labrador to refuel. So we wanted a big jet. He had come along. He had that treatment, Rose Garden, with Kennedy. He had finally voted for the planes, in support of it. Because I'll never forget, I went to a meeting in his office after he had agreed to support it. He called in the counsel and he called in Les Arends, the ranking minority, and said, "Tomorrow morning I'm going to offer this amendment. The President has got to have those jets." Les said, "I can't support that. I'm on the record; I've said it publicly. But I'll tell you what I'll do, I won't be here tomorrow morning. I won't talk to any minority. I'll be at Burning Tree. I won't talk to any minority, any Republicans. On the floor I won't even speak in the debate.

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I'll vote against it, but I won't talk. I won't talk to anybody. I won't try to influence any member on my side of the aisle." And Les kept his word.

So we had flown Vinson, never been on a jet in his life, always went home by train like Rayburn. And McCormack had never flown. Russell said to Carl Vinson, "How did you like that flight?" "[That's] my plane." Then he said when the thing was over, the crisis was over, "You're going to let me fly back on my plane?" It was his plane. Once or twice I brought him on a Jetstar. Maybe it was Johnson, Laos. "How did you like that Jetstar?" "My Jetstar. You're going to send me back on my Jetstar?" He fell in love with Air Force One, and Jetstar. Then we had no problem flying him.

And McCormack same thing, had never flown. Because when Rayburn died he was already in Kansas City by train, on his way, knowing that death was close, nearby. He went by train. So when the Bay of Pigs came up, we had to fly Saltonstall and him on a Jetstar from Boston. And his wife Harriet, he always had dinner with her, every night of the year. [We] flew him on the Jetstar. Harriet kept calling, wanting to know if he was going to be home for dinner. He stayed here a week. I guess they stayed five days, they went home on Thursday, but on a standby basis. The only one we couldn't get rid of was Wiley, who was up for election and knew he was going down the drain. He kept bringing out a daily press release that the President still needs him for consultation, the President asked him to standby. So he stretched it a little bit; he stayed here the whole week.

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G: Let's look at the legislative program. I guess the first major piece of legislation that Lyndon Johnson introduced was the War on Poverty, the Economic Opportunity Act.

D: That's when we made the Appalachian trip.

G: Do you know how Phil Landrum was picked as the sponsor of that and how he agreed to sponsor the Economic Opportunity Act?

D: No, I don't recall. I guess Henry would have known, maybe Larry still recalls that. Well, Phil had changed by that time about Johnson. He had become a strong supporter of the administration. Henry had been working on him. It started in the Kennedy years, the trade bill. The first key test was the trade bill, and he swung with us on that. By that time he was pretty much on board. Remember, he was on Education and Labor, he hadn't gone to Ways and Means yet, I don't think. So he was natural, and he was high enough in seniority and he had the respect of the South. If you could get Phil--and Joe Waggoner who just retired--Phil could swing votes in the South. If you can get Phil sold you had a substantial number--except the diehards--of senators. So, in that sense I recall that Phil had been on board. If you could sell him--and I guess Henry and Larry did it, and the President--you had a substantial amount of support in the South.

G: Lister Hill, I gather, was approached in the Senate, but he declined to sponsor it and you ended up with [Pat] McNamara. Do you recall the approach to Lister Hill and why he was unwilling to sponsor the bill?

D: No, Mike and Larry, either one, are the ones who would probably recall that better than I.

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G: Did you have a problem with Adam Clayton Powell, who chaired the committee?

D: Yes. We had a problem with Adam Clayton. I forget the details now. The problem with Adam is that he was so much of a playboy that you couldn't depend that he'd be there, and he was chairman. I remember many times on a Sunday afternoon--I remember one Sunday vividly; it was snowing and we were in the White House. I had to call Adam saying, "Are you going to call a meeting Tuesday? And you be there?" I had that meeting on Tuesday. Because I remember he got on the phone and he said, "Where are you?" Because with a White House phone you could be at home and call. I said, "I'm at the White House." He said, "Claude, you're stupid. Here I am by the fireside, it's snowing outside, I'm drinking martinis. You're crazy to be in there." I said, "Yes, indeed."

Then he spoke at a church on a Sunday here in Washington, and he kept changing his unlisted number, he told the congregation, because LBJ is calling me all the time. Well, maybe it was LBJ a couple of times, but a lot of times it was Larry, Henry or I, saying, "The President wants that meeting on Tuesday morning. Now report that bill out. You're going to be there. You're going to call a meeting of the committee." But I'll never forget that Sunday: "You're stupid to be in the White House. It's snowing outside, I'm by a fireplace and drinking martinis."

G: He seemed to antagonize the Republicans on that committee.

D: Adam?

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G: Yes.

D: Yes. Once you got him there, from our point of view, he was 100 per cent, just fine. No problem. But could you get him there and depend on him? Oh, yes, he could antagonize people; it was easy for him to do.

G: Was his support conditional on a million dollar grant to HARYOU?

D: I don't recall. If there was, I wasn't involved. I'm not familiar with it.

G: Did he usually have a price for supporting it?

D: Sometimes maybe. Not all the time.

G: Now I gather one of the main issues early on in the OEO program was the church-state issue. You had some members who had large parochial school constituencies.

D: Yes. [James] Delaney, Queens. We had that problem with him before.

G: Hugh Carey another one, I suppose. How did you deal with this?

D: You probably would have to ask Joe Califano. I think Joe got very much involved with that. I don't recall. I recall the problem we had with Delaney. Delaney had killed the bill because of that, couldn't do a thing with him, in 1962. That switched around in 1965.

G: [Harold] Cooley was presenting a problem, too, in 1964 with the OEO act. Do you remember what the problem was there?

D: No, and, unfortunately, you never did tape Henry, did you?

G: Yes, we did get an interview.

D: Oh, you did? Henry must have given you that. Henry had the [information], and Larry would know.

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G: Do you recall the circumstances of the Adam Yarmolinsky affair, where a meeting in the Speaker's office took place with the North Carolina delegation?

D: Larry was there, and maybe Henry. No, I wasn't there.

G: Did you get any feedback on what happened?

D: I guess I must have at the time but I don't recall. Henry and Larry were filling me in on that, because I wasn't there. I must have had a feedback. The one good thing about the congressional liaison, we communicated with each other. So I'm sure I knew, but I don't recall it now.

G: Now on that bill you picked up some votes from the Republicans and you got sixty southern Democrats to vote for OEO.

D: Largely through Phil. Phil was very helpful.

G: Do you think the Congress understood the implications of community action when they passed that legislation?

D: I think so. And Phil, you know, he knew exactly where the bodies were. He knew how to count his colleagues in the South. If he told you, "I'm going to bring thirty or thirty-five," or "I've talked to these guys and they're going to be all right," you could depend on it. Phil was that stalwart, that strong a guy. Phil would never kid you or lie to you. If he didn't know, he would tell you. If he said, "This guy's with you, or I can't do a thing with him," you could count on it. Joe Waggoner became that way, too.

G: Edith Green must have presented some problems on this legislation.

D: Yes, I don't recall.

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G: Well, one thing she was interested in was the women's job corps. The original provision had nothing for women in the Job Corps. Do you recall the issue there of inserting that?

D: No.

G: How would you deal with Edith Green?

D: I think Larry dealt with her. Chuck Daly did for a while. Chuck left in January of 1964. Because he made a comment one day in the gallery. He was watching the debate and he said something foul and what he didn't know was one of her staff guys or staff persons was nearby who knew who Chuck Daly was and heard the remark, heard the comment. She called Larry, and she barred Chuck from ever coming into her office for a while. Larry told Chuck he'd have to crawl on his hands and knees and go up and make his peace with Edith. That must have been 1962, 1963 I guess, 1963. He eventually made his peace. I guess she got along all right with Sprague and Dave Bunn.

G: Did Shriver have a problem with Edith Green?

D: I guess he did. She could be very difficult at times. But when she was on your side, she was a sweetheart.

G: Shall we stop here? I know you're getting close to your meeting.

D: Yes.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I]

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