INTERVIEW I

DATE: November 16, 1971

INTERVIEWEE: JAMES C. HAGERTY

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

PLACE: Dr. Frantz' office in Austin, Texas

F: Mr. Hagerty, I think we might just start this off by asking whether you knew or had at any time in your newspaper career run into Lyndon Johnson before you came into the White House?

H: No, sir, I didn't run into him until I came down to Washington with President Eisenhower, which would have been in January of 1953.

F: Right. How soon did you become aware of him? Do you have any clear cut idea?

H: Well, I would think almost immediately. Actually, as sometimes happens in Washington during that "social season," many times, it seemed to be many times, I would be escorting Mrs. Johnson at a dinner and Senator Johnson would be escorting my wife. We got to be, rather fast and suddenly, fairly good and close social friends, and that feeling between us has never ended. All through Washington and since then I've always maintained, and I'm privileged to maintain, a rather close friendship with Mr. Johnson and with Lady Bird.

F: This is rather subjective, but in 1953 he had just been chosen minority leader, a rather junior person really.

H: That's right.

F: Did you have any idea that you were looking at a future president?

H: Not at that time. Not at that time. I don't think I'm getting ahead of myelf here, but there was a--I'm sure we will talk about this a little later--very warm and close feeling between the leaders of the Congress, or the Democratic leaders of the Congress and President Eisenhower. Of course, Sam Rayburn, the Speaker, was an old friend.

F: Yes.

H: And Lyndon Johnson was an old friend. Both of them were for the first two years minority leaders and then for the last six the majority leaders. Throughout that whole eight-year period Mr. Eisenhower not only had a personal friendship with Mr. Rayburn and Mr. Johnson but a political friendship. That also was passed down to the members of the President's staff, and it was a joint political-social friendship. Again maybe getting a little ahead of times, both the Speaker, or Mr. Sam, and the Senator were perfectly candid and frank with Mr. Eisenhower as president. If he was going to get votes that he needed for legislation, they would tell him. If he was not going to get the votes, they also would tell him. There was no double talk. There was no rather crude partisan politics between the three men. I think I could also say in the associations that I had both with the Speaker and Mr. Johnson it was exactly the same way.

F: Did you get any feeling that the President felt that he could work with Mr. Johnson about as well as he could with Bill Knowland?

H: That's an understatement of the interview. He worked much more closely with Mr. Johnson than he did with Senator Knowland. Actually, and this again is something that is just a historical point, I've always thought that both Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Eisenhower suffered a great serious loss in the first nine months of their first terms. When Senator Taft died the Republican Party control in the Senate just went to pieces. When Sam Rayburn died during the first nine months of President Kennedy's administration the same thing happened to him that happened to Eisenhower in the Senate; it happened to Mr. Kennedy in the House. It is just an interesting historical fact.

F: I used to wonder if President Johnson used to be almost wistful--maybe he never thought of it--about the Eisenhower days and wished that he could have in the House and Senate the same sort of leadership that Eisenhower had.

H: I'm sure he did. One other question that you asked me there about did I have any idea that I was looking at a future president. The answer was no at the first, but, as you know, during the last part of his term Mr. Eisenhower wrote and discussed with people that Lyndon Johnson would be a fine president. So he had that idea.

F: Did he talk with you about it?

H: Yes, he did. Again, under the way that President Eisenhower worked wherever he went there was press, so wherever there was press there was a press secretary. I was probably the staff officer that traveled with them more than any other staff officer. We had hours and hours

in hotel rooms, on airplanes and cars to talk about everything under the sun.

F: Would he open up pretty well?

H: Oh yes, oh sure. You know he treated me or I looked upon him almost as I would look upon my father, and I don't mean just a father image. He treated me as he did most of his staff, or almost all of his staff, as a member of the family, and he didn't mean official family.

F: Right.

H: We talked about everything under the sun. Many times he would talk in the second term, towards the end of the second term, about who the candidates might be, and he always gave Mr. Johnson very high marks as a possible presidential nominee and a possible future president.

F: We're moving ahead.

H: Yes.

F: But did he ever express himself on Richard Nixon vis a vis Johnson?

H: You mean as being elected president?

F: Yes.

H: No, not that I can recall. If he did, it was, "If Dick is defeated, I would much rather see Lyndon Johnson." No, I don't think I ever heard him say that he favored a Democratic nominee over what he was sure would be the successor, who was Mr. Nixon.

F: Did he ever comment on his near miss as a Democratic candidate for president? Because as you know he was a lot of Democrats' choice in 1948 over Harry Truman.

H: Well, yes. We talked about everything on that. He just wasn't ready. He didn't think he should. He didn't think he should have left the service of his country at that time. While Mr. Truman denied it, Mr. Eisenhower told me, and I believe it because Mr. Eisenhower told it to me, that Harry Truman did offer to step down if Mr. Eisenhower wanted to run in 1948. As a matter of fact, that was the bone of contention among the two men for some time. It wasn't until Mr. Eisenhower got out of office and toward the end of his days that there was sort of a reconciliation between the two former presidents. But he just didn't think much of it at that time. In 1952 it was a little different, in 1951 really, a little different position. He was ready and able and willing to come back to run and leave the armed forces, which was his major career up to that time.

F: One of the early pieces of legislation in the first Eisenhower Administration was the Tidelands Bill, which of course would involve all Texans including Senator Price Daniel and Senator Johnson. Did you ever hear Mr. Eisenhower comment on that one way or another with relation to Senator Johnson?

H: No, I can't say I did, or at least my memory is such that I don't recall it directly, in answer to your question.

F: Did the President feel that Senator Johnson pretty well supported him in his foreign policy during this period?

H: Very much so, more so than the Republican members of the Senate in many instances. Foreign aid is a perfectly good example. I mean

the foreign aid bill got through the Congress by the major support of the Speaker and the Majority Leader of the Senate. Indeed at dinners where they were rallying forces Mr. Johnson or Mr. Rayburn or Mr. Eisenhower spoke, frequently at similar dinners, and the party discipline that both the Speaker and Mr. Johnson exercised was an awful lot stronger during the fifties and at that time than the Republican discipline in either the House or the Senate.

F: Would it be correct to say that President Eisenhower was not really a partisan party man to the extent that he would resent Democrats getting credit for things so long as the President got through what he felt was right?

H: No. Let me try to answer that in a number of ways. One, there was a widely spread myth--I deliberately use that word--that Mr. Eisenhower wasn't a good politician. I think he was a fine politician in the greatest sense of the word, in the usage of the words.

F: I can go back before that because I was in the British Navy in World War II, and I know what they thought of him there as a politician.

H: He could get along with people. He could get people in the room, and as I have often said I think politics is the art of government where you reach an intelligent compromise without the surrender of principle and integrity, and this is what he did. Over the years, the last six years particularly, he got 83 per cent of his legislation through the Congress that was controlled in both houses by the opposition party. Now he didn't look upon them as opposition in getting through his legislation. He did look upon them as political

opponents in an election for president.

F: Yes.

H: But not in the daily routine--well, not routine, not in the job of getting legislation through that he thought was for the interest of the country. Now what he did not like and what he did not understand, I think it was his upbringing as well as anything else, was the dirty, daily, cheap, political maneuvers. He never could understand how you could call a man a lying son-of-a-bitch on the floor and then go out and have a drink with him as soon as you finished. Well, he wasn't built that way. If he called somebody a son-of-a-bitch, he meant it, and he wasn't going to go out and have a drink with them.

F: That took care of that.

H: That took care of it. He didn't understand that, or didn't like it. But as far as a political leader, I think more and more as history looks back on it he is emerging as quite a good one.

Also you must admit that one of my major arguments with the news media people, with other people, is that I don't see how you can compare presidents without comparing the decades of which they were president. The fifties bear no relation to the sixties, and the sixties bear no relation to the seventies. Furthermore, in the international field let's go back just a minute and took a look. When Eisenhower was elected president it was only seven years after World War II. He was Supreme Commander Allied Forces Europe, period. In Europe he probably knew intimately all of the government leaders in the free world. In Russia they respected him. Furthermore, at

that time we had nuclear weaponry; the other side didn't.

In domestic affairs Mr. Eisenhower's greatest civil rights confrontation was Little Rock. Well, Little Rock is a tea party compared to Watts and Newark and what's going on now. So he was the right man for the right time. It was a period of "cool it," a period of little dissatisfaction. Our states were solvent, and most of our cities were relatively so. All of the problems that developed with Mr. Johhson and then in the seventies didn't exist in the fifties. It was a different period of time. It was a different period of time in the relationship between Mr. Eisenhower and the members of the Congress and specifically Mr. Johnson and Mr. Rayburn. They were personal friends before he ever became president, before he ever became a political figure. These men weren't going to change their personal friendships just because one happened to be president and the other was majority leader and the other was the speaker. There was a rapport and an understanding that he was the chief executive; they were responsible for getting stuff really through their houses. As I said before, if they were going to support it and get the votes regardless of how many Republicans voted against it, they'd get them. If they weren't, they would say, "Mr. President, you are not going to get the votes," and he didn't get the votes.

F: And he believed them?

H: And he believed them. It was a face-to-face, man-to-man arrangement that was based upon friendship, trust and I'm sure a great mutual liking for each other. I'm afraid that's changed now.

F: Do you know how Johnson and Eisenhower became acquainted?

H: No, I don't really know. I think when he became first a House member and then a Senate member when he came back from service in the war and after Mr. Eisenhower came back. Remember he was in the military for a while before he went to Columbia. Also, when Mr. Truman named him as supreme commander of NATO he was quite a few times testifying or up on the Hill on things, and I would suspect that's the way. Now Mr. Sam--that went back for quite some time. Furthermore, also remember that they were two Texans, and Mr. Eisenhower was also born in Texas.

F: I was going to ask you, did Mr. Eisenhower feel his Texas ancestry very strongly or was this just a mere statistic at the time?

H: No, I think he was quite proud of it. They used to kid each other quite a little, "us three Texans got to stand together." But he was also a Kansan with an Abilene background. But no, I think that he was very proud of it, in fact I know he was. I could tell you a story--it doesn't mean much to what we are talking about. But after he was nominated in 1952 we were out in Denver, and the politicos came out, the Republican National Committee, campaign managers and everything. In the first meeting they had with Mr. Eisenhower, when they were arranging the campaign schedule and everything somebody, I forget who it was, said, "Well, of course, you're not going to have to spend much time in the South." And he said, "What do you mean? I'm running for president of all the country." As you might remember, his very first campaign trip was into the South.

This was Eisenhower. This was straight Eisenhower. He was really a very, very basically strong advocate of state rights, although when the Supreme Court made their decisions, as president he carried out the intent of the law. But he felt that this could be done better in our country at that time, that we were a confederation of states and the power was in the states. Well, I think also again at that time that this was a basic philosophy that both Mr. Johnson and Mr. Rayburn also were very much in favor of themselves, regardless of what political activities they might have taken that might not have seemed so. But they were very close. They worked together very well, and over the eight years Mr. San and Mr. Johnson were constantly in touch either in private meetings, either in bipartisan meetings or by telephone.

F: One of the early burdens that both President Eisenhower and Senator Johnson had to face was the problem of Senator Joseph McCarthy.

H: Yes.

F: Both were criticized for not being sufficiently aggressive in muzzling McCarthy. Do you know whether they ever worked together on this or whether they both sort of followed a rule that "give him enough rope and he'll take care of things." I'm thinking of the problem of Secretary of the Army Stevens.

H: I think it was the latter. I can't really say for sure how Mr. Johnson felt. I know how Mr. Eisenhower felt. He was not going to do two or three things, and I went all through this at every press conference I had.

F: I'm sure you did.

H: He was not going to raise the level of the junior senator from Wisconsin to the president's level, or worse, was not going to put the president down to his level. Whenever Mr. McCarthy injected himself into the presidential field, then he would slap him. But he was convinced, as was I--a strange thing, the company I'm now with is the company that was airing the McCarthy hearings, ABC, and each day that that went on our problems got less and less with Joe McCarthy. He was devoted, and I was, to getting him off page one, and the only way to get him off page one was to keep it low key, to not fight with him and raise him up as an equal, and sooner or later, as it did happen, he would be back on page forty-six. There were many of my friends in the news business at that time, many of President Eisenhower's friends, that thought he was handling this all wrong until it happened. Then they were very wise people after the fact and said, "Well, you handled it just right." I'm quite sure that Senator Johnson felt, basically, about the same thing.

F: You don't know whether the two men ever talked about that problem?

H: I'm sure they must have. They certainly didn't at any of the meetings that I was at, but as I say they talked privately quite a lot. I don't think either one of them would have probably talked about it in front of witnesses or a third person. Witnesses is the wrong word, in front of a third or fourth or a group of people.

F: You said they talked privately quite a lot. Did President Eisenhower tend to send for the Senate Majority Leader to come down and discuss issues?

H: Well, it wasn't as much as...yes, at times, yes. But it wasn't, with the exception of the bipartisan leadership meetings, on that formal a basis. I mean, hell, they'd pick up a phone and talk to each other. Many times the next morning the President would tell me that he had talked to Senator Johnson at his home.

F: Now Senator Johnson is a notorious telephone talker.

H: Yes. Mr. Eisenhower was not.

F: Was Eisenhower a match for him?

H: No, he was not. He believed that a telephone should be used to get your business finished in a hurry and get off it.

F: Ask a few questions and get a few answers and get off.

H: And get off it. That's right. No, he never was a lengthy telephone talker. But they did talk frequently in the evening, the President from his quarters in the White House and Mr. Johnson either at his home or his office. He used to stay around his office a lot later than Mr. Eisenhower stayed around his office. But they talked quite a few times. The President used to kid him, too, at the Gridiron Clubs or places like that about Landslide Johnson, by winning his first thing by a few votes, and in public he used to call him Landslide. The very way he said it was with love and affection, and Mr. Johnson sort of liked it himself.

F: Again, in this first administration you had the wind-up with the

French in Indochina, the fall of Dien Bien Phu, and so forth. Do you know whether the two men talked much about that? Were you privy to any of it?

H: Yes, I know they talked about the Dien Bien Phu, both privately and in bipartisan leadership meetings. They talked about it at considerable length. The French had asked two or three things. The French had asked for airpower help, and we were--when I say we, the Americans--and the President was not disinclined, but only if the British went along, and the British did not go along. Secondly, the President, and I know that he talked to this with the leadership people and I'm sure with Mr. Johnson privately, thought that they were out of their everliving minds to try to defend Dien Bien Phu with the enemy on three hills around you. As a military man it was just Godawful from his point of view, and as a matter of fact he personally related his own personal opinions on this to the French. But when the French get the glory of France at stake, that's the end of it. He even sent a message to Gallat on his feelings on this, but Gallat was a military man taking orders from his government and you couldn't talk to the French government people other than to express your dismay. They paid no attention. But this was a source of bipartisan leadership meetings, and it was a source of personal conversation with both the Speaker and the Majority Leader.

F: You sat in on some of these leadership meetings?

H: Oh, most of them.

F: Yes.

H: All of them.

F: Was this a case of the President going around the table? Did the President pretty well brief people present how it was?

H: It was a wide open discussion. No, no, it was a wide open discussion. Yes, of course he briefed them, I mean either he or the individual cabinet officer or the individual in the government that was handling that particular matter. Dien Bien Phu, for instance, would have been probably--well, it was both the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the National Security Council. They would present it, and Mr. Eisenhower at the end of their presentation, which in effect was a formal presentation, then would make his appropriate comments and go around the tables to anybody having anything to say. At the leadership meetings he would always address the Speaker first, usually by "Mr. Speaker," even though they were Sam and Lyndon.

F: Would Sam Rayburn speak up pretty candidly?

H: Yes, he sure would, and so would Lyndon Johnson.

F: There wasn't any undue politeness? They'd be explicit?

H: Hell no, it wasn't that kind of a meeting.

F: Not a deference sort of thing?

H: They wouldn't do that with Eisenhower. He wanted to hear the opinions, and I never knew Mr. Sam or Lyndon Johnson to not speak up and tell exactly how they felt.

F: Well, would the President argue with them, or did he just take their--?

H: At times, at times. At times he would say, "Well now, I disagree with

you, Sam or Lyndon or Senator or Mr. Speaker, and this is the reason why." At other times he would just merely say, "Well, thank you, I'm glad to get your opinion." It would depend. But it wasn't purely a pro forma meeting, nor do I think either the Senator or the Speaker thought it was pro forma. There were times when opinions would change within those leadership meetings, and the Republican members spoke up, too.

F: In the summer of 1955, two and one-half months ahead of the President, Lyndon Johnson had a heart attack.

H: Yes.

F: Were you around when the President got news of it?

H: Well, I must have been.

F: But it doesn't make any clear impression?

H: It doesn't make any. No, no.

F: Did he comment on it to you at all?

H: Yes, he made a statement at the time--I forget what he said--expressing his sympathy.

F: Apart from, let's say for want of a better word, a perfunctory statement that the President makes on an occasion like that, did you get the feeling that he was intensely interested in what happened with Lyndon Johnson?

H: Yes, and he called Mrs. Johnson.

F: And what this might mean for him?

H: Oh, yes, you know, I don't know who would have been the next majority leader. No, he was personally and officially concerned about it, and I

know that he and Mrs. Eisenhower called Mrs. Johnson.

F: On September 24, 1955, the President had his own heart attack.

H: Yes.

F: Was there any particular relationship between Senator Johnson and the President on this, do you recall?

H: Yes, I can speak on that. Let me try to first back up on this. In all of these times when I was traveling with the President we had a lot of time to talk privately about everything. We would talk about the Gettysburg battle, anything, and one of the things that any president, I am sure--I think every man as soon as he gets into the White House changes and becomes a part of our history and becomes vitally concerned, as does his staff in the office of the president. We talked many times about what happened when Wilson became sick, and where for eighteen or nineteen months Mrs. Wilson and Admiral Grayson tried to run the presidency.

F: You had a rudderless situation in a sense.

H: Where the Secretary of State was fired because he called a meeting of the cabinet. Mr. Eisenhower told me many times, and one time in front of Major General Howard Synder who was his personal doctor, that "If I ever get sick, don't ever put me in the position that Mr. Wilson was put in. Tell the whole story, and"--pointing to me--"you're the guy that has to do it." So when he got sick I was in Washington on the start of what was supposed to be a three week holiday, which incidentally was the last three week holiday I got, supposedly.

F: Your holidays never made it, did they?

H: No. Murray Snyder called me from Denver, he was assistant press secretary, and told me that the President had a heart attack and he was going to announce it in half an hour when he got the men back. So I had a half hour. Sherman Adams, who was our chief of staff, was in Europe. Jerry Persons was in charge of our liaison and was the next ranking staff officer that I could turn to. I had a lot of things to do of getting a plane, had to get Doctor [Tom] Mattingly from Walter Reed and everything. Jerry and I went over who he would call and who I would call during this half hour. I had to call the Vice President, Dick Nixon, and John Foster Dulles. Jerry took everybody else including Lyndon Johnson. Then when the news broke I was on my way to the airport shortly after that.

F: To go to Denver?

H: To go to Denver, and until we got Adams back from Europe I was the only staff officer out there. Lyndon Johnson called me two or three times in Denver: "Just how is he, Jim?" I would give him the bulletins, and I had an agreement with him that if anything had happened for the worst I would let him know, too, directly. But with the tone of his voice each time he called me you could tell that this man was personally affected, not only that he just went through one, but also that the President was there. I think that for the first two or three days--Adams got out the third or fourth day--I talked to Lyndon Johnson, he called me personally two or maybe three times. Then when Sherman got back we set up a system where we relayed all the bulletins back to the White House, and then

Jerry Persons, who was the head of our liaison there, kept in touch with Lyndon Johnson every single day during the critical three week period. Then after that, no, but when the President's life was in danger, when the scar tissue hadn't healed, Lyndon Johnson was kept informed virtually every day after that by Jerry Persons, who was head of our liaison with the Congress.

F: As far as you know, did the President ever confer with Lyndon Johnson on whether he should run in 1956?

H: As far as I know, no, and I don't think he would have. I don't think he would have.

F: This is a Dwight Eisenhower decision, isn't it?

H: That's right.

F: He doesn't need Lyndon Johnson's advice.

H: Well, not only that, the only ones that he did consult with were his own immediate family and the Republican Party. I don't think he would have mixed friendship and feelings for the Senator by asking him a question of whether he should run again as a candidate of the Republican Party. I just don't think it was in the man's nature.

F: Did the President show much interest in whom the Democrats would nominate in 1956, or did he just sort of take it for granted that he would be nominated and he would look after Dwight Eisenhower and the rest of it?

H: I don't think he would ever admit it, but certainly I don't think we had the slightest interest. I think he could have been re-elected on a Chinese laundry ticket, and I think he knew it, too.

F: He didn't look on Lyndon Johnson as a threat to his continuation?

H: No, no. We all felt toward the end that Stevenson was going to be renominated.

F: Renominated.

H: And we didn't think it was much of a contest. In 1960, though, if that is a follow-up question, he was very much interested. If he had had his druthers--as a matter of fact he told me this, that he thought Lyndon Johnson would be the strongest man that the Democratic Party could put up.

F: Of course, you've served one president very closely, but in your observations do you get the feeling that presidents would prefer that His Majesty's opposition pick a man that, in effect, they could approve of and could live with just because they do feel so strongly the continuity of the office of the presidency.

H: I think so, yes, I do. I think in the study of any president that I know anything at all about, and certainly--

F: They're not looking for the other party to pick a stick that they can blow down?

H: No, no, they got out of that office with a deep and abiding respect for the office of the president, as does anybody that works there, and a feeling that it's for the country. The man who is going to succeed them has a hard enough job, and in any way that they can help legitimately, not necessarily politically in a campaign but legitimately thereafter, they will. Of course, this raises another question. What do we do with a former president? We throw him away.

I would suppose that this question would have been brought much further to the front if Mr. Kennedy had not been assassinated. What do you do with a fifty-two-year-old former president?

F: Under ordinary circumstances he has got another twenty useful years around to make him useful.

H: Sure, and you know that there is only really one man, or two, who a president can really talk to, and that's an ex-president. Really. Mr. Johnson, for example, constantly was talking to Mr. Eisenhower. Well, it's like my job. I have free entree to the press secretary at any time I want, because whoever the press secretary is he knows that I understand the impossible job that he has. He can talk privately to me on his problems that a president can talk to a former president on. That's about the only one he can talk to, in that nature, and as far as I know, well maybe the only one that didn't quite do it that way was Roosevelt at first with Herbert Hoover. But before Mr. Roosevelt got out of his office he was talking to Mr. Hoover quite a lot on the reorganization of government and things like that. But ever since then the former president--now Mr. Eisenhower and Mr. Truman had that thing going--but ever since then Kennedy talked to Mr. Eisenhower, Johnson talked to Mr. Eisenhower, Mr. Nixon talks frequently to Mr. Johnson and to Mr. Eisenhower and Mr. Truman. The only thing wrong now with Mr. Truman is that you've got to get him early in the morning because he is getting a little old and his intellect wanders a little toward the end of the day. But, hell, they have established a staff officer

to handle former presidents and to keep them briefed on international matters and domestic, more international than anything else. But they stay in touch.

F: Was President Johnson closer to former President Eisenhower than President Kennedy was?

H: Oh, very much so, very much so by the nature of their friendship. Although President Kennedy religiously kept former President Eisenhower informed.

F: Was this a case of being more correct and less warm?

H: I think it's a case of probably leaning on the other guy's shoulder a little in the tough spots. Remember, the president of our country only gets the unsolvable problems. If they're solvable, they're solvable some place down the government line and never get to him. All our presidents get is Vietnam, Cuba, Berlin, all of these things.

F: Middle East.

H: The Middle East. They have got to have somebody to talk to, and the one that they can feel easiest with regardless of party is the man who was in there before.

F: Former President Eisenhower offered himself again in 1956. He had that problem in which he finally vetoed the natural gas bill because of excessive lobbying.

H: Yes, yes.

F: Now then, President Johnson represents a heavy gas state. So far as you know, was there any kind of consideration of Johnson's relationship there?

H: No. I do know that he had, on this one bill, Jerry Persons go up and tell Lyndon Johnson he was going to veto it.

F: As far as you know, did he get any static? Or did Johnson just say, "Thank you. I'm glad to know it," and let it go?

H: Well, I think when he got the message, as far as I know, there wasn't any static. He may have sworn a little at Jerry. But it was, "The President is going to veto the bill, period, and he thought you'd want to know about it in advance." Also he told Sam Rayburn the same, Jerry Persons did.

F: In that same period Senator Gore used to claim that you had usurped the powers of President Eisenhower.

H: That's a lot of nonsense.

F: Was he an indecisive president?

H: No, no, not at all.

F: Did he over-rely on the staff system?

H: I don't think that he over-relied on the staff system one bit. I think he used the staff system a little bit better than the others, but he was a product of the staff system himself. I don't know, and I say this quite honestly and frankly, of any backbiting or jealousy that any of us had in our staff, at least the top staff. At any time we could get to the President, at any time we could argue with him, discuss matters with him. You can only argue with or discuss matters with the President up to a point. When he said, "Thank you very much, but this is the way it's going to be done," you say, "Yes, sir," and that's the way it's going to be done.

No, the story about me grew out of his heart attack when Howard Snyder, when I was on the way out there, told some of the newspapermen that he told the President I was coming out and the President said, "Good, tell Jim to take over." Now what he was referring to is what we were talking about and what we had talked about many times about not putting him in a spot and not putting him in as another Wilson, and to tell the medical story. But as press secretary I never invented a word on my own. I was the parrot, or whatever you wish to call it, of the President. I spoke publicly when he did not wish to speak publicly; at all times I reflected his beliefs and his philosophies. If I had any question about a difficulty of not knowing an answer, if any newsman raised it at a press conference, if I didn't know it I would say, "I don't know, but I'll tell you at my next press conference." Then I would go in and ask the President for an answer. The same is true on foreign affairs, and again it's the fifties we are talking about. Hell, he knew Europe at that time probably better than any American we had. He also knew the leaders.

F: He wasn't talking about names--he was talking about people?

H: I'm talking about them personally. With Churchill, with Eden, with Macmillan, with DeGaulle, with Adenauer, hell, he could pick up the phone and call them. Again, on the domestic scene, with the percentage of bills that he got through, I think he was a pretty darn good leader in the best sense of the word. He didn't go around beating his breast and carrying on, but he got things done, <u>in the fifties</u>. I think that he was probably the proper man for our country in the fifties.

F: In 1956 Governor Earle Clements of Kentucky, who was the keynoter for the Democrats, called you the Eisenhower hatchet man. Is that valid?

H: Well, I guess to some extent it's valid. I was the man on the firing line.

I: You were the most visible?

H: Yes, sure. I was the man that was answering reporters questions and twice daily. As you got into a political campaign, in 1956 particularly, the questions got more political, and I was answering them more politically. So I suppose to that extent there is some validness in it, but that was my job. That was my job.

F: Who worked for whom in this case? Did John Foster Dulles run foreign affairs as his charge, or did the President?

H: No, the President ran it. But he also believed that the Secretary should be more visible. Also one other thing that changed a lot of things, like it's being changed in each decade, remember one other thing, that by the middle of his term jets came into existence and you had no excuse for remaining in your country and not going over to the other countries. Before that the Secretary of State if he went overseas would have to be gone for two or three weeks, and by boat it was impossible. But with the jets you could fly over and come back in two days. He thought that Foster should be a visible secretary of state. I know of no instance whatsoever when Dulles did anything that wasn't approved by the President. I would think that Dulles would himself admit that on European problems and

questions and military questions, things like that, that Mr. Eisenhower knew a lot more about it than he did. But he called the signals. The Secretary would in his field like I did in the press field be the fellow that had to bear the brunt, but it was the President's decision. You can't delegate this job. You just can't delegate it on the big, big important question.

F: The Senate, of course, is vital in foreign affairs.

H: That's right.

F: Did the President feel that Dulles got along all right with the Senate on this? Did Dulles seem to use the Senate all right?

H: Yes, sure, as much as anybody could get along with the Foreign Relations Committee. At times Dulles, like any secretary of state, had some tough times up there with Fulbright and the others, but that's part of the game. That's part of the thing. Actually I sometimes think it's wrong, I think it's all overdone. I think our cabinet officers of any president are forced to spend untold hours on the Hill going over the same testimony day after day after day. But this is the congressional prerogative, and you have to live with it. You have to live with it.

F: In the fall of that election year of 1956 you had early the Hungarian uprising, then you had that Israeli Suez crisis, the attack on Egypt, and so forth. How much attention did the President spend on all of this, and how much attention did he spend on the Senate?

H: Well, almost completely, particularly with the Suez. He interrupted his campaign in the last two weeks of his campaign, it happened just

before the election, and canceled out. On Hungary, despite a lot of outcries, there wasn't a goddamn thing we could do with it unless we wanted to send American troops into Hungary, either from Germany or airborne, and we couldn't do this without World War III staring you in your face. On Suez, he talked this over with the bipartisan leadership and particularly Johnson and Rayburn. He thought that the British and the French were ridiculous. In the first place, if a country makes an ultimatum, they should move one second after that ultimatum expires. They didn't move for three weeks, and they didn't move for three weeks for one simple reason: they didn't have the ship bottoms or the men to send them over there, and everybody including the Arabs knew it.

F: Didn't have anything to move with.

H: Didn't have anything to move with. Purely on a political side I think that the majority of people supported him in my own state.

F: New York?

H: We were concerned politically. We had every indication to believe that we would carry New York by one million two [hundred thousand], and there were some people that said, "Oh, this is going to be terrible. The Jewish voters are going to desert you." We carried the state by one million six, and four hundred thousand [of those] were Jewish voters that switched in support of the way that Mr. Eisenhower handled the Mideast, which was a pretty darn good example of whether he was supported or not in what he was doing. But it was a difficult time. You know, in these days of nuclear weaponry the fears that a president of the United States has, or any leader of a super power, is that

somebody is going to slip one of these smaller nations just one little one and they are going to use it. There was a question of who was going to get to the Suez first, the Egyptian Army or the Israeli Army that was following them. If somebody had slipped [Egyptian Prime Minister] Nasser just a little tiny one he'd have dropped it, and this is what worries the big powers and the presidents and the members of the Congress in responsible positions. But in all of these things he kept the bipartisan leadership I won't say completely, but almost completely informed.

F: Now Senator Johnson was frequently critical of the administration's foreign policy.

H: Yes.

F: Did Eisenhower try to meet that? Did this ever nettle him personally, or did he just take that as part of the way the game is played?

H: No, he took it as part of the way the game is played. He also I think felt that Lyndon Johnson may have a point, but he just didn't agree with him. As a matter of fact, I heard him tell him that once. He said, "Lyndon, I just don't agree with you." It went: "Well, Mr. President, I have my feelings and beliefs, and you have yours." "Yes, that's right," and that was the end of the conversation.

F: One of the continuing problems through the forties and fifties that finally, at least in principle, got solved in the sixties, was this matter of federal aid to education.

H: Yes.

F: Which President Eisenhower believed in ostensibly rather strongly and

Senator Johnson believed in, also. Were you ever privy to any conversations between the two on this? As you know, President Eisenhower in 1957 [had] his school aid bill miss by one vote.

H: No, I was just trying to remember. No, not anything that I can say.

F: One of the significant things in 1957, of course, was the passage of the first real civil rights bill in three-quarters of a century, and in this again a certain amount of credit goes to Johnson and Rayburn leadership.

H: Very much so.

F: Where was the President in this? Was he in there working with them through it all?

H: He was working with them. I suppose with his background as a states right man he may have way down deep in his heart not entirely agreed with it, but the Supreme Court had made its decision and he as president had to enforce it. He did everything he could to line up votes, and, yes, he worked with Lyndon and Mr. Sam on that.

F: Did the President ever express himself on the so-called Black Monday decision in the Supreme Court in 1954?

H: Well, he like a lot of us at that time never could understand what the hell they meant by all deliberate speed. And yes, many times, not only the all deliberate speed but the way in which it was put into effect. I think Mr. Eisenhower believed, I know he believed that it had to come, particularly in the South, although he also used to point out to his northern friends that it occurred in the North, too. But he believed that it would have been much better

to do it through the school system gradually--kindergarten, first and second grade and then up that way rather than the sudden thrust in all classes. He was violently opposed, to his dying day, to busing as a violation of the personal rights of a citizen to choose where he should live and what school he should send his kid to. But the Supreme Court had spoken. He didn't know any more than a lot of us what the hell they meant by all deliberate speed, and I don't know if anybody knows yet. But he went as strong as he could to get it passed. He also moved in the District without laws and moved in the military without laws.

F: In 1956, of course, Mr. Eisenhower won on a second term rather handily and happily, but he did not get Republican control of Congress. Did this seem to weight on him particularly heavily, or did he feel that with the team you had leading Congress it was all right?

H: No, he never quite understood it. Well, I won't say quite understood it. Yes, he would have much rather, while he had a good working relationship with the Speaker and the Majority Leader, have had [his] own party in charge of the committees. You know and I know that that's where the power is in the Congress, it's in the committee chairmen. It would be much easier to have your party in control of both houses--or at least one.

F: Where President Eisenhower and Senator Johnson were concerned, when you had a piece of legislation that the President desired who worked on Senator Johnson? Did the President directly, or did he have someone like Sherman Adams or you?

H: No, I never got into the congressional side. Many times the President directly would call him or when he was down would bring it up. Then our legislative branch: Jerry Persons was the head of it; the main man in the Senate was Jack Martin, who was Bob Taft's administrative assistant and knew Lyndon Johnson very well; and in the house side it was Bryce Harlow.

F: There was a belief that Johnson could be talked to or with.

H: Could be talked both. You could sit down and talk and explain the President's point of view on any given bill. You're not going to sit down and explain a bill to him.

F: Yes.

H: I mean but you could and he would listen, and that he would listen and that he would give you an honest answer, which is the most important.

F: In the middle of all of this, of course, Sputnik went up which just stood us all on end.

H: Yes.

F: What did this do as far as the President and Senator Johnson were concerned? Did he feel that Senator Johnson kind of grabbed the ball and ran with it unnecessarily?

H: I think he felt that he might have run with it a little unnecessarily, but he understood what he was doing, you know, in that one speech he made about putting up one with the windshield wiper on it, chromium plated, and things like that. I think he looked upon that as a part of the Washington business or Washington game. Also, at the time I think quite a few of us believed that in time in the space program

Texas would get a big hunk of it, and that also was one thing that the good Senator was working on.

F: It makes a nice carrot.

H: It's legitimate. It's all right.

F: Was the President pretty well pleased with the Johnson-Dirkson relationship?

H: Yes.

F: Was he as close to Senator Dirksen as he was to Senator Johnson?

H: Yes, he was pretty darn close to Ev, and of course with President Eisenhower Ev really put some of his own personal political, even personal beliefs behind him to work for something that the President really wanted. Many, many times he'd say, either alone with the President or with the Republican leadership, "I don't know how you got me to do this, Mr. President, but you asked me to. I don't like it at all, but I'll do it." And he did. Again, you had to know the man. You had to know Eisenhower. You had to know the way he treated people. You had to know his personality. You had to know the very decent human being that he was. I speak only as a staff officer not as an elected official like these fellows were, but I think they had complete trust in him and knew that they wouldn't get a knife in their back at any given time. This makes a difference. This makes a difference.

F: You had several problems there in the latter fifites not of your own making, but you had Quemoy and Matsu, for instance. How deep was congressional involvement in what you were trying to get done there?

H: Not much. Not much. Some hearings, but they didn't have much to say about it or do about it.

F: How about our involvement in Lebanon and the Suez Crisis?

H: Well, Lebanon there was no problem on at all because before he moved he had a joint congressional leaders meeting and told them that we had received a request from the President of Lebanon--Chamoun--that he was going to honor. I don't remember Mr. Johnson. He must have spoken up, but I remember Mr. Rayburn said, "Mr. President, so that's your decision. Fine. Thank you for telling us about it. But it's your decision." And [he] left it that way. Suez, there was an attempt, a little attempt, not by Stevenson but by some of the political people in and around Stevenson, to try to make it a political issue. But they found out as fast as we did what the reaction was of the people, and they dropped it. So there wasn't much; there wasn't much.

F: In the formation of NASA, was Johnson involved?

H: Well, he must have been because it required legislation, I think. I can't remember that. I just don't know.

F: Right. He also passed in 1958 the National Defense Education Act, which was a landmark, really, again about ninety years late.

H: Mr. Johnson was involved in that and involved heavily. Again, I can't tell you how many times, but I know the President talked to him personally on this and also at the joint leadership meetings.

F: As far as you know, did they exchange memos? Did they sit down together and say, "Here's point one." I mean, what was their

modus operandi on this?

H: I don't think Mr. Eisenhower ever wrote a memo like that. Neither did Mr. Johnson write anything. Let me put it this way: in Washington, a professional, if he can help it, won't write any memos. You'll do it verbally or you'll also do it with a handshake. I've always found that by and large, and certainly in regard to Mr. Johnson in his relationship with Mr. Eisenhower, if a man in the government gives you his word, he'll carry it out. Now it may be difficult sometimes to get that word, but once he gives you that word and shakes hands with you and says, "Okay, I'll do it," then that's the end of it. They were very close friends and didn't have to write memos to each other.

F: Did you ever get the opportunity to observe the Nixon-Johnson relationship in this period?

H: Not very much.

F: Would you classify it as kind of cool and correct or warm and correct or [what]?

H: I would classify as more than cool and correct. At that time they were rather bitter political enemies, and I don't think either one cared about each other very much. Again I think it changes when a man becomes president. But no, they were openly on opposing political sides, and they kept it that way. They kept it that way.

F: Amidst all this you had this Bernard Goldfine-Sherman Adams situation. Did the President feel that Johnson tried to make a kind of undue amount of hay out of it, or was this pretty much of

a house problem?

H: No, it wasn't a house problem. It didn't turn out that way.

F: That's a problem with you, too, because, as you will recall, Persons moved over in his job--

H: Oh, an awful time with me. I think the President used it right when he made a public statement on it at the end there that he had been imprudent. I can understand it, I could understand it probably better than the President could. I came from New York where I worked for the governor of New York. I probably knew a hundred Goldfines in the garment business. You know, you do something perfectly normal to do and legitimate to do, and they want to send you a couple of suits. Well, I'd tell them, "Go to hell, I don't mean to insult you." First, Goldfine saved three towns when he [Sherman Adams] was governor by coming into the mills; then Sherman Adams stopped his oldest son from being kicked out of Dartmouth and then turned out his last year to be good. He was imprudent. He had to know that using hotel rooms--he had to know that probably Goldfine was writing it off as business expense. I don't care anything about rugs in the house or something like that. He also should have known that Goldfine was a name dropper. Yes, it bothered Mr. Eisenhower. He didn't like or didn't quite understand--understand it not the right word--didn't quite accept all the political attacks. Probably, I don't know if they ever talked about it, but if they had he would have had some rough things to say about it to Mr. Johnson. He put it in the same category as the Senate's refusal to confirm Lewis Strauss.

F: Well now, Johnson took a very active role in that.

H: Yes, he did. Yes.

F: Did that lead to friction, or was this just Johnson's prerogative to do this?

H: It was Johnson's prerogative, but he still didn't understand it. He was sore as hell when they didn't confirm, but he didn't blame it on Johnson as much as he blamed it on Senator Anderson.

F: What was the real issue in the Strauss non-confirmation?

H: I guess the real issue was complete and utter noncompatibility between Anderson and Strauss. They couldn't even stand the sight of each other, let alone the smell of each other. I think it was almost as simple as that. He was eminently qualified to be secretary of commerce.

F: We've had worse.

H: He had worked with distinction for his country and other presidents, Democrats as well as Republicans. It was really a personal feud and animosity, and feud is as good a word as possible on that. Mr. Eisenhower didn't like that either.

F: You're coming down towards 1960, which is going to be another election year. Now Eisenhower is not going to be the factor, but the Eisenhower Administration is a factor. Johnson is making a few speeches saying that the Republican administration lacks boldness and freshness and vigor and the usual words. Does the President just look on that as so much political talk, or does he take it to heart?

H: No, he looked upon that like so much political talk. As a matter of

fact, one time Lyndon was in his office, and when he came in the President said, "I hear you made another speech yesterday, Lyndon. Do you really think we are tired and old?" or something like that. No, I don't think that disturbed their friendship any more than it disturbed Lyndon too much when the President would take out after the Democrats every now and then. I think those things are accepted--I think both men observed this--as long as they're done without personal attack. For example, the thing that made Mr. Eisenhower so damn mad in 1956 was when Stevenson accused Milton Eisenhower of being the mastermind of giving a hundred thousand dollars to [President Juan] Peron [of Argentina]. I don't know what speech writer ever gave him that because that was done under the Democratic administration. But the very fact that he brought up his brother's name in this attack, that Mr. Eisenhower thought was beyond the pale, and from then one hwas more inclined to go after Stevenson hard. He never felt that way about Mr. Johnson and his attacks because Mr. Johnson didn't go into personality. It was attack on the system, on the administration and things like that, as he was doing against the Democrats, but never on the personal side. As long as it didn't touch the personal side, well, that's part of the man's job, and Lyndon was then belatedly running for president.

F: Did the President ever express himself to you on whether he thought Johnson could get the presidency?

H: He thought he did--

F: He used the word belatedly, which is a precise word in this case.

H: Yes, it is. Yes, he thought that if Johnson was going to move he should have moved much sooner than he did. I would doubt he ever talked to Lyndon on that--maybe after the fact but not during. Or maybe even when he got to be President, but not during. You know, he started wrong, he started late, he had an organization that wasn't, and all of these things.

F: He was a reluctant bride.

H: Yes, Mr. Eisenhower thought he was too late. I recollect it became apparent quite a little while before the convention that Mr. Kennedy at least had the great edge. You know, there was Lyndon, and Adlai Stevenson was brooding around in the background someplace.

F: Just in case.

H: Just in case, but by that time he had gotten to be sort of like the Harold Stassen of the Democratic Party. But he thought Lyndon started too late.

F: In another tape I ran into a quotation that I want to identify, in which Eisenhower told Johnson that he ought not to do anything to reduce the power of the presidency because he might be sitting here someday. Can you corroborate this?

H: I think that's probably--I can't corroborate it--very likely. I never heard that exactly the same thing, but I've heard him say to Mr. Johnson, "Senator" or "Lyndon, you may be in this place one day." Now I've heard that, but not just the way you put it, and it wasn't in jest.

F: Yes.

H: Yes, I've heard it more than once.

F: Did he call him Lyndon sometimes?

H: Pretty much Lyndon. Lyndon. I don't know what Lyndon called him when they were alone.

F: Probably President.

H: Probably Mr. President.

F: That seems to go with the office. I've turn into this in the Johnson tapes with people who have known him since he was sixteen who immediately call him Mr. President. I mean, the office takes over.

H: Mr. Eisenhower's famous story was with Omar Bradley, who was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff the first full day Eisenhower was in office. He told the story to Ann Whitman in regard to it, and it's been published, too. Bradley came in to see him, and after it was all over--Bradley was his classmate at West Point, it was Ike and Brad all through since they were plebes together--he said, "I've just realized how much this thing has changed. Do you know that when Bradley came into the room he saluted, and he called me Mr. President all through the meeting?"

F: It do make a difference.

H: It do make a difference.

F: Right. You had another problem that kept cropping up and that was finally settled under President Eisenhower, and that was the admission of our forty-ninth and fiftieth states, which took a little bit of political jockeying to be sure that the new states knew who their

friends were, and so forth. Did the President feel any sort of irritation at the way this was delayed and was handled, or did he sort of realize that this was the part of the game?

H: No, he was very much for statehood for both the Hawaii and Alaska. No, I think he looked upon it as the normal delay in the congressional halls.

F: You advanced some trips for the President in here.

H: All the time.

F: Now was there anything in these trips which would involve the Senate or involved Mr. Johnson? I presume you have talked about this to other people or will talk to other people about it, as far as you and Eisenhower are concerned.

H: That would involve Mr. Johnson?

F: Yes.

H: No. You mean when I was overseas?

F: Yes, setting up the trip for instance to India, Pakistan and Afghanistan, and so on.

H: No, none of it would involve the Senator or be his business. As a detail two of us used to go, myself and Tom Stephens, who was the President's appointment secretary. He was responsible for the President's activity, and I was responsible for the schedule, the press and everything else. It is just a lot of hard work, everything from hotel rooms, proper briefing rooms for the newsmen to what kind of electric currency for the television cameras, what the currency exchange is, what clothes to wear, when we were coming, what the

weather would be.

F: Where the telephones were.

H: The telephone and everything else. No, this would not involve [Johnson]. I wish it had because one thing that I was constantly worried about with Mr. Johnson, I really mean worried, for the President was that he had an idea that short notice was the best security.

F: You are talking about Johnson now?

H: Yes. So I wish he had been in on some of these things because he had an idea that short notice was the best security. Actually, it is the worst security.

F: You mean you just don't have time to get things organized?

H: You don't get them organized.

F: Johnson's philosophy is that if he doesn't tell anybody where he is going until three hours before whoever's against him can't show up there either.

H: Not against professionals. We're talking about a luncheon. I was down in Mexico when Mrs. Johnson was coming down, and I was in the Secretary of State's office, Antonio Carillo-Flores.

F: Yes, I've interviewed him incidentally.

H: Eighteen hours, and the President was coming down. Well now, outside of Cuba, Mexico City is the center of the Castro Cubans in this hemisphere. There was a very voluminous book on the KGB about the infiltration and the training of Mexican guerilla-type people in North Korea and everything. They do things different than we do in our country. They have to grab everybody that they know is around

and put them into "protective arrest" until after the President leaves, for example. Well, you might miss an awful lot of them. They have to bring in a division more of troops. There were many trips that Mr. Johnson made outside of our country as president that I as a friend, but much more importantly I as a man who had worked in the office of the president--he scared me to death for the President. The Secret Service was not alone in that fear.

F: Did Eisenhower ever comment on this?

H: Yes, he understood it. But again, look, for a while before and during the invasion he had a sentry in his bedroom. He was used to security; he never argued with the security people. I mean, we did it. We followed out his wishes, but he never argued with the security people. He had a particular viewpoint and background on security that he understood as a military man. Most other civilian presidents are always arguing with their security, and Mr. Johnson was one of the best arguers on that. But it was dangerous. It was dangerous for the President. He is our president. He should have watched it a little more. Now you can argue, well, nothing happened. Sure, but something did happen in Dallas one day, and something could happen in the future. But there were several times when he went overseas, and I knew. The press secretary always used to cry to me about it when I went down there; you know, "Jesus, Jim--" and I said, "Yes, I know." But this is an aspect that you can't talk much about.

F: Right.

H: But he violated his own security many, many times. Many times.

F: In 1960 in Los Angeles John F. Kennedy was nominated for president and Lyndon B. Johnson for vice president. Did President Eisenhower watch this convention with a great deal of interest?

H: He didn't watch with a great deal. He watched it on occasions, and he was more than passingly surprised when Mr. Johnson became the vice presidential nominee.

F: Did he have any comment on it that you know?

H: As you know, yes, he said, "Damn it all, I thought he was listening to Mr. Sam." As you know, Rayburn was dead set against it, at least for a while. I don't know whether he was all the time, but he recommended or urged Mr. Johnson not to do it or not to take it. But yes, he was surprised. Although after he got over his surprise he told me and others--we had a staff meeting, I forget where we were, we weren't in Washington, we were someplace else, only a few of us around--that he thought after thinking it over that Lyndon would strengthen the ticket, and particularly in the South and Texas.

F: I presume there is no question that Richard Nixon was his choice.

H: There was no choice. There was no choice. Richard Nixon <u>was</u> his choice.

F: Did he feel that he did all he could and should to help the Republican ticket in 1960?

H: You can argue that both ways, and he did, after the fact. Where do you draw the line? How do you make the balance? One, historically--and we talked about this quite a lot; when I say "we," himself, with Nixon, with the Republican National Committee, with the staff--no

president has ever been able to pass on his vote-getting ability to another. Do you harm or help a vice president by putting your arm around him and saying, "This is my little boy. Now vote for him because I say so"? That's a very delicate point.

F: Or do you turn over all the onus that you've picked up and pass it along?

H: That's right. Very delicate. How do you do this? Do you go on the attack, when he finally went on the attack with Mr. Nixon's vote of full appreciation and support and suggestions? Do you appeal to your Republicans as an outgoing president? Or do you make "non-political trips" and appeal to the discerning Democrats and the independents without getting into the political arena? How long do you stay aloof? How long do you try to keep the support for your man that you have in the independents and the Democrats? When do you go on the political hard hitting circuit? Three weeks ahead, which was what was agreed? After the election was lost by a whisker? Then the Monday morning quarterback says, "Well, if he had done this five weeks before it might have made a difference." Would it have made a difference? Would it have alienated the independents and the Democrats that voted for him? Would it have put him in a completely political arena where he was only talking to his own troops? You tell me the answers to these questions.

But whatever he did was worked out in detail by him and us, the staff, with Dick Nixon and his staff. I worked closely during all of that period with Herb Klein, who is another old friend of mine.

Mr. Eisenhower followed out exactly the strategy and the plans that were formulated by himself and Mr. Nixon. Was it wrong? If he had done it the other way, would he have lost more votes than he would have gained? Who knows the answer? This was the best judgment of the President, of Mr. Nixon, his vice president and then the nominee, of the Republican National Committee, of the people running the senatorial and the congressional campaign, and this was the way it was decided. This is the way it went. So as I say, I can argue on both sides.

F: Did he look on the result as a repudiation of his administration or just simply as the fact that it's time for a change?

H: Oh, I think he looked upon it as slightly as a repudiation. Repudiation is too strong a word.

F: Yes.

H: And he was deeply, personally sorry.

F: It may have been irritability.

H: Irritability may be a little better word. He was deeply disappointed that Dick Nixon wasn't elected and said so probably since in his writings. But you get over those things.

F: Did he ever comment to you on the events in Dallas of November, 1963?

H: The only comment he made--and we had discussed this so many times--I mean after expressing deep regret, was, "Jim, as you and I talk, there are many times sitting in an open car going through city streets anything can happen to you." I have a feeling in that connection.

F: I think that this is an accepted verdict now that anybody who really

wants to kill the President can.

H: Since this is on Lyndon, too, I have a feeling that Mr. Roosevelt, Mr. Truman among modern presidents, Mr. Truman, Mr. Eisenhower were complete fatalists as concerns their own safety. I think Mr. Hoover was scared to death in the 1932 campaign, and I get that from my father who was political editor of the Times and covered it.

F: Otherwise it's kind of a "que sera sera"?

H: That's right. I think Mr. Johnson had a little concern about his personal safety. I don't think that Mr. Nixon has as much. But I think Mr. Johnson had more of a non-fatalist approach than any of the presidents that we just named, and this may also be a reason why he fooled around so much with his travel plans.

F: In 1964 you don't have the kind of loose father-son or uncle-nephew relationship of Eisenhower and Nixon involved. This is just a flat Republican candidate against a Democratic candidate, both of whom President Eisenhower knows. Did he feel a great concern in this, or was he pretty much resigned to letting the body politic do whatever it wanted to?

H: Well, he knew, like everybody else, exactly what was going to happen. His loyalty was to his party, but I must say I don't think he was displeased with the overwhelming majority that Mr. Johnson got. Because it gave him, and again this relates to that office, the clear-cut mandate that he did not have coming from the assassination. He had to be elected in his own right to that office and not assume it by tragedy. So from that point of view I think Mr. Eisenhower,

as a former president, was very pleased to see Lyndon Johnson get this overwhelming mandate.

F: Did President Eisenhower after those events in Dallas ever express himself on the fact that Johnson did bring a continuity or that this was the American system at work?

H: Oh, yes, we talked about it many times. About twice a year I'd go down to Gettysburg on a weekend. The first day we would sometimes play golf, sometimes we wouldn't, depending on the weather. We'd just sit around and chew the fat. I would bring him up to date on what I knew was happening, and he would tell me some things. Incidentally, one of the things, well, my security clearance has never been revoked by any president. Because they knew I was talking with Eisenhower, and as a matter of fact I think he mentioned in passing to Kennedy before Kennedy was in office that he was going to see me quite often and one or two others. He always talked frankly to us, and he wanted us to have our security clearances kept. I saw Mr. Johnson several times alone as president, and we talked on some security matters. I would think Mr. Eisenhower was, for the office, pleased at the overwhelming mandate that Mr. Johnson got--and didn't use. And didn't use.

F: Mr. Johnson is a kind of all work no play boy. Mr. Eisenhower comes nearer living a more balanced life.

H: That's right. That's right.

F: Did President Eisenhower ever invite Mr. Johnson to play golf with him?

H: Yes, I think so.

F: Did he ever play, as far as you know?

H: Yes, I think they played after Mr. Eisenhower left the office. I think Mr. Johnson played so badly when the President was president that he didn't want to be in that same league or company. I think they played once in Gettysburg, but that was after Mr. Eisenhower got out. I think they played once some place else, I don't know. It wasn't any disinclination on either one's part; they just didn't get together.

F: The schedule didn't work. Did you see much of Mr. Johnson socially in these days.

H: Yes, quite a little. As I said, we were paired up quite a lot at dinners and embassy dinners and affairs that our wives wanted to go to.

F: At these dinners, did you talk shop with Mrs. Johnson or was it pretty much just chitchat?

H: You don't chitchat with Mrs. Johnson. She is a smart cookie. I mean that with full respect. I think she is a beautiful woman. But, no, no, she talks. She would talk about things that were going on.

F: Did she tend to probe like he did? You know, he is one of the world's greatest drawer-outers if he wants to be.

H: Yes, sure, you could feel the fingers in your mind, and sometimes you could answer them, other times you didn't want to, and other times you couldn't. I'm very fond of her. But it was mainly, well, let

me put it another way: she is a Washington pro, and at these dinners she would talk stuff about the legislation and bills and things that were going on in the world. She wasn't asking me what the President was going to do or what I was going to do or things like that. She wouldn't. I didn't want to leave the impression that she was trying to push you all the time. She is not built that way. But she knew what was going on and expressed herself on anything very well.

F: Were you privileged to be in on any of President Johnson's talks with President Eisenhower when various crises arose?

H: I wasn't privileged to be present. Because I still had my security clearnace, not on every occasion I am sure, but there were occasions when Mr. Eisenhower would talk over with me what he had talked over with the President.

F: Did they talk sort of diplomatically, or was it good, straightforward, no-holds-barred talk: this is the way it is, and this is the way it should be?

H: It was good, straightforward talk, particularly on the military situation in Vietnam where the two men--I was going to say did not agree, but where Mr. Eisenhower's--recommendations may be too hard, suggestions were not carried out or put into force by executive action of the President.

F: There is a tendency, as you know, to talk in cliches, and they're useful, save a lot of qualifying.

(Interruption)

F: Would you characterize President Eisenhower as being a bit more hard

lined than President Johnson?

H: I don't know whether the word should be hard lined or not. This was purely his advice as not only a president but as a military leader. I think I can state it simply. Before I state it, one of Mr. Eisenhower's favorite expressions, both in World War II as I understand it and certainly when he was president, was very simple: "Never resort to force if you can help it. But if you do, never use a little force, use it in overwhelming superiority." I think this is the basis of the disagreement with the two men, that if we had to move so many American troops in, go in and win it and get out.

F: Once you move, don't equivocate.

H: That's right. It was expressed as clearly and as forcefully and as simply as that on quite a few occasions. I guess that will always be the mystery of Vietnam.

F: Yes. As far as you can tell, you would agree that President Johnson valued President Eisenhower's advice very highly.

H: I think he valued it very highly. You had to know this man, Eisenhower. He was the most remarkable man outside of my father that I ever met. There was nothing sham about him, and there was no double talking. If you asked him a question you got an answer, if he was going to give you one. Again, going back to the relationship of a president with a former president, a president has to have somebody he can talk to. It's an entirely different situation than any other, and a present president will always talk to a former.

F: Johnson could level with Eisenhower?

H: Oh sure, oh sure. It was straight no nonsense talking, and this is something that presidents do. The political rivalry in the fifties between Mr. Nixon and Mr. Johnson is completely different now with Mr. Nixon as President and Mr. Johnson as a former president. They talk many times, and it's no bullshit. I mean it's straight, hard talk of the impossible problem that a president has on his desk. The only one man that he knows is sure to understand it is the fellow that just sat there before. It's a magnificent relationship.

F: Johnson's going to Eisenhower then wasn't a kind of a perfunctory courtesy, but it really was a sort of SOS signal.

H: Not only an SOS, but ever since, really, Eisenhower, because Truman didn't have a vice president, with the world situation that has confronted the United States the presidents have kept the former presidents very closely advised on foreign policy. Mr. Truman got a briefing by the head of the CIA, Allen Dulles, or by Foster Dulles anytime he wanted it. It was usually about once every six or seven weeks then.

F: Is this courtesy, or is this useful?

H: It's useful. Well, it's both, but it's useful. It's a shoulder to cry on and to get an opinion from somebody that has sat there before. In the sixties, it was Mr. Truman and Mr. Eisenhower. When Vietnam started, it was a lot more often than every six or seven weeks. As a matter of fact, there is an office set up now. General Bob Schulz, who was Eisenhower's military aide, has now been named by President Nixon, and they have a building in Washington now with

offices fitted up for an ex-president whenever he wants to use it. His [Schulz] job was special assistant to the president for former presidents, and with Eisenhower dead it's really just Lyndon. But he's [Schulz] down here by plane at least once a month--or out to the Ranch, not here. This was really started more by Kennedy and Johnson as an official thing more than Eisenhower, because we didn't have much to fill them in on, and you only had Truman. But not on domestic things except maybe a very few major important things; it's mainly international, the foreign policy of the United States.

F: I would gather that something like the Bay of Pigs, which turned out to be a fiasco, Kennedy goes to Eisenhower. There is not a lot of recrimination and cross-recrimination. This is just a matter of, "Here is a situation. I would like your estimate of it."

H: There is no recrimination. They're human. They make mistakes. As a matter of fact, I can't recall Truman, Eisenhower, Johnson--that's all we've had--any one of them making a strong adverse statement on the president or the then-existing foreign policy of the United States. I may be wrong, but I can't recall it. They may not support it, but they don't say anything. There have been many occasions when they have publicly supported it.

F: Okay, you get this Vietnam escalation. Does Eisenhower ever feel that what he is trying to do is perverted, or at least does he state it to you or does he take it for granted that the President has to face the situation and stay with his judgment?

H: Oh, yes, he can say, "Well, I wouldn't do it this way, but that's his decision." And it's only his decision.

F: So he doesn't sit up at Gettysburg and second guess Kennedy and Johnson in a sense.

H: Well now, I suppose presidents are human.

F: They all want to be smarter than somebody.

H: I suppose every president would say to himself, "Well, God darn it, if I was in this situation I wouldn't do it this way." But my point is I don't think they discuss it with people or I don't think they make public statements on foreign policy. Domestic policy is entirely different. No, I think the only one they discuss it with and the only one they can discuss it with is the president at that time. At least with Mr. Eisenhower, with both Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Johnson and Mr. Nixon he didn't mince any words. They are not doing a service to the then-president if they do double talk.

F: You must have seen Johnson and Eisenhower together, both of whom were pretty strong people. Did they kind of jaw at each other?

H: No, no.

F: Were they excessively polite, or did they just talk like that?

H: They were like you and I or friends would be. I never saw Lyndon Johnson talk to President Eisenhower like he would talk to me, leaning over and pointing at me and things like that. I never saw that, so maybe to that extent it was polite. But, no, they talked just like friends, only all they're doing is talking about problems that effect the lives of the whole world. Outside of that it was like friends talking.

F: To bring up a side issue, did Johnson ever chew you out?

H: Did Johnson ever chew me out? No. Sam Rayburn did once. We were coming into a bipartisan [meeting]. I had made a political speech, one of the few that I made before the 1960 election, about a year before, predicting it was going to be a dirty, lousy election campaign. He was coming in and said, "Jim, if you ever make another one of those speeches I'm going after you myself. Now stop the political nonsense," and so forth. Eisenhower came right by at the time, and he said to me, "What is the Speaker bawling you out for?" I said, "Because I made that speech." He said, "Well, bawl me out, because Jim showed me that speech before he made and I approved it." But, no, there was never any occasion to, and as I say, my relations with Mr. Johnson as senator, as president, as former president have been very, very fine.

F: I'd like to shift the focus slightly.

H: Go ahead.

F: Without embarrassing you, I've done a lot of interviews by now. You always show up in one or two guises: either the best press secretary that we've had in anyone's memory, which means really the best press secretary, or they will name somebody as the best press secretary since Jim Hagerty. Now then, without arguing that point or any undue modesty on your part, what do you see has happened to the presidential press relations in the period since you've moved in? We won't go back before you.

H: Several things, and this is nothing adversely with any of my

successors. I think I had a unique arrangement with my president. I had met him not during the war but when he was president of Columbia University. I met him quite a few times, because there were many instances in New York state where the governor of the state of New York was at the same affair with the president of the University. I got to know him.

F: You were attached to the Governor's press?

H: I was press secretary to the Governor. So I knew him. When he was coming back to run, he sent word to me through Lucius Clay through Dewey that he was coming back and he was going to resign from the army on such and such a date and he would like me to come down and go over questions that he was going to get when he went out to Abilene. So I went down there and was with him for three and a half hours. He had a list of questions as long as your arm, and we went over them with Milton Eisenhower, Lucius Clay, Cabot Lodge, Herb Brownell. I went out to Chicago with Herb Brownell and Cabot Lodge three weeks before the convention. We had two conventions that year; we had the credentials convention, and we had the other one. The second day I was in Denver after he was nominated. I was in my office, and he came in and said, "Come on, we're going out and play golf." I said, "General, I got these--" [Eisenhower repeated,] "We're going out to play golf." We went out alone. We took a cart, no caddies, and we hit the ball around for eighteen holes. In about three and one-half or four hours we worked out a working relationship with each other that he didn't change one iota for the next eight and

and one-half years. I knew everything he did.

F: He told you you were going to?

H: Yes, in advance. On the security matters, the National Security Council, everything; I brought it up. I said, "A lot of these newsmen are friends of mine, social as well as professional, they've known me for a long time. They will watch my eyes when they'd ask me one of these things, and I would prefer to say, 'I don't know. I wasn't at that National Security Council meeting.'" In this job you have to--I don't think I ever lied, but I sure split some hairs at times. If he made a decision and he didn't have time to tell me, even including John Foster Dulles, as Foster would leave the office he would say, "Foster, go in and tell Jim what we decided." And Foster would come around the back way and sit down and tell me what happened.

I could see him at any time. He knew when I came walking in that I wasn't going to ask him the time of day. But when I came walking in, particularly if anybody was with him, if it was somebody I could talk in front of, one of our staff, I would ask him. If it wasn't I would hand him a note, and he would just get up and go in a corner and I would ask him and get the answer. I had a complete and utter working relationship with him, and as it developed it was more like father and son. He trusted me, and I believed one thousand per cent in him. So I think the only other one that had a similar relation was Steve Early with Roosevelt. Steve had a war for four years, and a war was an awfully lot easier for a press secretary

than the daily damn things you get.

But I think it was entirely my relationship with him. I was a senior staff officer. As I said earlier, our staff did not get in the way of each other. I wouldn't handle Sherm Adams' job for anything, nor would Sherm Adams handle my job, or Jerry Persons in the legislature or the council. We each had our same thing, and then each of us reported directly to the man. I think this makes an awful lot of difference. Over the years, you know, I intuitively knew how he felt. But if I had the slightest doubt on any question ever asked me by any newsman I would say, "I'll get you the answer later," and I'd go on in and ask him. In addition, as we've talked about, on his movements he completely understood the advance knowledge that was necessary not only for security but for the newsmen and women and their families. We would always give advance notice. We always had time to make arrangements for the newspeople wherever they went, which helps a lot in your relationships with them.

F: A little bit like a divorce, which seldom comes over fundamental issues but simply because of minor irritations.

H: That's right. They may not like the color of their roommate's hair. Futhermore, I had come from a news family. My father was political editor of the New York Times; I was a political reporter. I had worked with most of the White House press corps in the Landon-Wilkie campaign as a reporter. I had also been secretary to Dewey in two presidential campaigns. A great many of the people in Washington during non-working hours were social friends of mine who would never

use a social friendship after working hours to ask me a working question. So it was easier. In relation to some of the problems that my successors have in that job, I had a lead pipe cinch because of the man I worked with and the working relationships that I had with him. I think that's it. I knew everything that he was doing at every minute of the day or anything he was planning or what was going to happen to him a week from now or how he was going to do something a week or ten weeks from now because he told me. As I said earlier, we had hours and hours and hours on end on trips and everything to talk about everything under the sun. His philosophy, anything from his basic philosophy to the football game of last Saturday.

F: You could personally write a script without consulting him?

H: Yes, but if I had any doubt, boy, I would consult him. I never made up anything.

F: Now that brings up something. You knew these people attached to the White House Press Corps. Pierre Salinger comes in from San Diego, Bill Moyers, George Christian come in from Texas, and so forth. Is this a handicap on their part?

H: No. Of course, Pierre knew all of it because he was on the Hill, and he was also a reporter himself. George Reedy was on the Hill as administrative assistant. Moyers probably had the toughest break-in job, because for a while they didn't think he knew what he was talking about in the field of press relations. George Christian had no trouble at all. He was a pro and had the temperament that was needed to work with his president. And Moyers, I think Moyers was more interested

in Moyers than he was in the office of the president.

F: Did any of them ever talk to you about how to be a good press chief?

H: Did anybody?

F: Any of these successors of yours?

H: Oh, yes, you talk with them all of the time. I also had a long talk when I was with Dewey, because he was a friend of my father's, with Steve Early. He said, "Maybe one of these days you are going to get down here, and here are some things you better do and here are some things you better not do." But, no, you have a rather small and exclusive society of former press secretaries.

F: You do.

H: No, the man that's in there works for the president of the United States, and regardless of who you are you do anything you can to help that president of the United States. For example, all of them, and this is nothing new--I didn't have anybody alive when I was in; Roger Tubby was a press secretary for one month under Truman in his last month, Joe Short, Charlie Ross, Steve Early were dead--Pierre or any of them would say, "Look, the President's going overseas. You were in London. You were in Paris. Come on down and tell me about it. Where did you put the press? Where is the best place to put the briefing? What officers in the government can you trust and what can't you in the government we're going into? What problems did you have in shipping film?" Most countries, for example, have laws which you have to get suspended, and they'll do it if you bring it up, that undeveloped film can't be shipped out of the

country undeveloped, and little things like that. I'd bring down my notes or send out to Abilene where they've got them all and then bring them down and show them what we did and what the exchanges were back from the President and what routine we figured out, what schedule we figured out and everything. And it helps. I did that for Moyers. I did this for George Reedy, George Christian and Pierre Salinger. Now Pierre has also done it, and George and I have done it, and Pierre and George and I have done it with Ron Ziegler. It's an apolitical respect for the office of the president.

F: Yes, this is the professional approach here and not the political approach.

H: It is more than professional, it is respect for the office.

F: Would you aruge then that there is no such thing as a fundamental conflict between the president and the press?

H: Oh no, no, no. There is always a fundamental [conflict] in basic discussion between a free press and a government, and I hope there always will be. This isn't anything new despite the fact that to read some of the people these days you'd think it was just invented.

F: Yes.

H: No, the news media job is to be a hair shirt, is to be probing on the actions of the government and the people in the government. There will always be friction. There will always be days when the president doesn't like what he reads in the paper. There will also be days when he is very sorry for the president of the United States, but you learn to live with them. My argument, even with my news

outfits at the present time, the only thing I cannot stand is unfairness and deliberate malice in news reporting. I don't care whether that's on a radio, magazines, news television or the newspapers. You get some of this.

F: Was there an eastern establishment press?

H: Well--

F: I say that knowing that Turner Catledge came out of Mississippi and Tom Wicker out of North Carolina.

H: Let me try to answer that the best way [I can]. They who are members of it like to think it is. I think it's greatly overrated in their own sense of importance. When you talk about it, probably it's more so in television because our major network news shows originate out of New York, and that's mainly because that's where our facilities are. But Cronkite, Howard K. Smith, Harry Reasoner, I don't think any of them are easterners.

F: Cronkite's out here.

H: I think that it's a whipping boy. I think it's something that the eastern establishment people like the New York Times or Washington Post like to keep up. I just believe that we are going to have a constant fight between the media and the government, but I don't see anything wrong in that as long as it is honest and fairly reported. I think also that with the advent of television and the drawing power of television and the limitation of the clock that television has, really, if you compare it to newsprint we are on a more of a tabloid form of newspaper than the New York Times.

F: You are dealing mainly in lead paragraphs.

H: That's right. I think that both the media and the government are exaggerating it out of proportion. I think some of the things Mr. Agnew said were right. I think some of them wrong. But I think we all overreacted like hell. It is nothing new. People forget Harry Truman's letters to the editors. People forget Franklin Roosevelt, in the middle of the war, giving an Iron Cross to John O'Donnell of the New York Daily News. People forget Eisenhower getting mad as hell when he woke up in the morning.

F: Kennedy eliminating the Herald Tribune.

H: Eliminating the Herald Tribune. They also forget that the president is a human being, and so are the members of his administration. I think it is a good thing. Where I would be deeply concerned is if there wasn't this friction. Then I would be worried.

F: Along that line, you became of course an executive of a major television network. Did President Johnson ever try to utilize your expertise in television?

H: Well, yes, but he did it with the three of us. In the beginning of his term Frank Stanton from CBS--

F: Bob Kintner.

H: Bob Kintner of NBC and myself had quite a few meetings with him [on] setting up in the White House what amounted to a White House studio television studio. We built one over in the theatre. I think we were foolish in hindsight because we kept our engineers on there on an almost twenty-four hour basis, in other words, kept it hot. Mr.

Johnson as president then got the idea he could walk into that studio at any given minute without any advance notice and be on all three networks at once. Well, it doesn't work that way.

F: You've got to move some people around.

H: We not only had to move some people around, we had to notify affiliates. We've got to do a lot of things. So now it's been more or less deactivated. Talking about press secretaries, one thing that both Pierre and I talk about quite a lot--now we had the room in the Executive Office Building for Mr. Eisenhower's press conferences when we started to film them; Mr. Kennedy used the State Department auditorium--[was that] neither Pierre or myself, and we kick ourselves all around the block for it, ever even thought of using the East Room in the White House for televised press conferences. Mr. Johnson did, and somebody in his outfit did.

F: You really did originate, though, the TV press conference for the President?

H: Yes. Well, when we got down, and again this is evolution and evolution of communications. When Mr. Eisenhower came in the presidents were still going through this nonsense of holding press conferences but nothing could be contributed except in the third person. Well, this is ridiculous. Furthermore, there was only one transcript made by the official White House stenographer that appeared in the press room about seven hours after the conference. I would walk up to Mr. Eisenhower first on the transcript and--

F: Was it thoroughly deodorized by then?

H: Well, no, it was too late. So first I talked to the White House correspondents who were pros and had been covering many presidents, and we worked out where we let a commercial firm come in and then the newsmen bought the copies from them. That was first. Then we let radio come in. Then finally in 1954, October or so, the television people and the film camera people came down to see me and said they were going to start experimenting with fast film, which was the forerunner of Tri-X and the rest, for three months. They thought they could work it with just little floodlights in a room without arc lights. They came back three months later and said, "Yes, it works!" I told the President, and he said, "Well, set up a phony press conference, a dummy up there, let the cameras in and take a look at the rushes and see how it looks and tell me." So I went in and took a look at it, saw the rushes. We had a couple of our other staff look at it, and I went in and said, "It works." He said, "Fine, put them in for the next one." I did that, and one of the newsmen said, "What kind of beer is going to sponsor it?" I reminded him in turn that this was the second half of the twentieth century, and "We are going to use all forms of communication for the President." But that's the way it works.

Actually, while it has nothing to do with Mr. Johnson particularly or the president, I think we are a little out of kilter out of Washington. I think that with the president and with television that we have given an advantage to the office of the president that is not equalled by the Congress of the United States. I think right now the

Democratic National Committee is stupid--I've told them this, it is not secret--every time the President goes on asking it in the name of the Democratic National Committee. They ought to ask for it in the name of the Speaker or the Majority Leader. If Lyndon was still down there as Senate leader he would have asked, and as a matter of fact he did as majority leader. But you don't give it to a political committee to answer the President on Vietnam or the economic situation.

F: You get in your separation of powers.

H: That's right. It is a little out of kilter at the present time, and it causes some of us a considerable amount of concern.

F: One curiosity: President Eisenhower's syntax was not always a thing of beauty. I have heard it said that he was shrewder than most want to give him credit, that some of that was kind of purposeful obfuscation to get around answering the question. Is that true?

H: No, I don't think it was purposeful. First, he was the best proofreader I ever knew, and in writing. But, look, two things can answer that. He speaks like most of us spoke. If you listen to it, you wouldn't get the wrong syntax idea. Secondly, a president at a press conference has probably the most difficult mental acrobatics of anybody in the country, because while a man is asking a question he has to have his mind tell him, "Is this classified material? Has anybody announced this before? Can I say it or can I not, and if I do what is going to be the end result?" He has to do this all while some guy is standing up there asking a question.

F: Plus the fact there is no sequential development.

H: No sequential, that's right. Mr. Eisenhower would start a sentence like I do and then stop it and then start something else, and sure, your syntaxes get mixed up. But syntaxes of Joe Doaks, millions and millions of Joe Doaks, get mixed up a little, too.

F: You ought to hear some of the wails from some of these people I've sent transcripts to: "Do I talk like that?"

H: That always happens to me. That's right. As a matter of fact, Scotty Reston wrote his column about this in the New York Times one day, and just by luck I looked up and I sent him the question that he asked Mr. Eisenhower and said, "Scotty, do me a favor. Pause [?] your question, will you?" He wrote back just one note, "Touche." But, you know, when you're on your feet talking, if you heard it on radio or saw it on television, you're beautiful.

F: Lyndon Johnson once said to me that he thought Dwight Eisenhower was the most underrated of presidents, that he thought he had a deeper and more enveloping grasp of what went on in the country and in the officialdom than anyone else he knew. Would you comment on this?

H: Yes, I think he did. I also think his heart bled for the little guy, and that was based on one thing: he was a captain for seventeen years between wars, and he knew what it was to meet a family budget. Lyndon Johnson knew what it was to meet a family budget. Mr. Truman knew what it was to meet a family budget. Mr. Roosevelt didn't. Mr. Kennedy didn't. Mr. Nixon did, but he's pretty well off now. But, no, Eisenhower did. And again, it was

the times as well. In foreign affairs he had this advantage of the period in which he was president. When he either told or threatened a foreign country they believed him, and he had the stuff to back it up with. You know, Korea, he sent word first by the end of the second week he was president to the other side through the Indian government that they'd either sit down at Panmunjom and work out a truce or there would be no Yalu River and there would be hot pursuit of their planes wherever they came from, and they believed them. Well now, can you imagine Mr. Johnson or Mr. Nixon using the same ploy in the sixties or the seventies?

On domestic affairs in his worst political reverse in the congressional elections of 1958 he walked into the press conference, everybody was loaded for bear for him, and in the first question he used it as to take advantage of saying that he was going to watch the Congress and they were going to go on a pay-as-you-go basis, and every goddamn bill that they put in, if they didn't have a tax to go with it or the money to swing it he would take a dim look at it. Well, it didn't sit well with the Congress, but it sat darn well with the people around this country. In my book he was a very good politician in the proper use of the phrase, which has been somewhat distorted at the present time. Lyndon Johnson was a fine political leader in the Senate, but I don't think you can run that office of the presidency as you run the majority leadership of the Senate. Same with Mr. Nixon, I don't think you can run the office on pre-conceived game plans.

F: Did Moyers or Christian ever talk to you about the so-called credibility gap?

H: Oh, all the time. Every time I saw them: "What can we do about it?"

F: Did they think it was real?

H: Yes, particularly on some of the things that the President said.

F: But they didn't see any way out?

H: Well, how are you going to stop him from saying that one of his ancestors was at the Alamo?

F: Yes. I got a batch of phone calls on that when that came in.

H: What are you going to do when the man says it? Any more than what are you going to do when Mr. Nixon in discussing the Manson case pulls a legal booboo.

F: Yes, it's done.

H: It is done. Any president doesn't like to have the newsmen break a story before he takes action. Most presidents live with it. It used to drive President Johnson right up the wall, and this is why he got more secretive and more secretive and more secretive. It was almost a personal thing to try to outguess him, and again, I don't think that is the way to run the office.

F: Yes.

H: Now I can understand him.

F: You can sympathize with him even if you don't approve.

H: I can sympathize with it, but you know they are not all that important. With Mr. Johnson, you would walk into his office and he had the AP, UP and INS tickers right behind his desk in his office.

F: And three channels [of television].

H: What for? What for? But that's his way of doing it, and I don't disagree. How can you disagree with the way a man does his job? It is his business. But, sure, we used to talk about it. Every time I went down there the press secretaries would say, "What the hell did you do on the same kind of thing?" "I didn't have many of them."

F: Did Eisenhower ever speak to you about Johnson and Santo Domingo?

H: Only briefly, and that was ten days before he died. I went up to see him in Walter Reed, and I was supposed to stay for twenty minutes. But he was all wired for sound with the corpsmen in the other room. At the end of twenty minutes I got up, but he called the corpsman in and said, "How is the machine running?" He said, "All right," so I stayed another fifteen minutes. Only in passing, and that was he understood what he had to do but he thought he sent in too many troops, too much personnel for what was necessary to be done. But it was just in passing. It was in connection with his often--

F: Kind of like using a two-ton truck to haul a load of hay.

H: That's about a better definition, although that isn't what he said.

F: Yes.

H: But that's what he meant. But he didn't fault him. He did not fault him for moving. The only other thing that he said was that the President just couldn't stand another Cuba in the Caribbean. It was just in passing in something else that we were talking about. We talked about the military. He always asked me how my boys were. My older boy is a lieutenant colonel; he is a regular. He has had an

interesting career so far. He was a U.N. military observer in the Mideast during the Six Day War. He was Art Bull's [?] operations officer on the Syrian frontier and then went down to set up the operations in the Canal Zone after the war. Then he was at Khe Sanh when it was rough. He was then major of the 16th Marines, sending out the patrols and counting them when they came back, which must be an awful job. Then he is teaching school; now he has just been assigned to the War College up in Newport, which is a good assignment.

But one of the things that bears no relation--well it does bear a relation to Mr. Johnson--is I have a great, great admiration for, and I met a lot of them in Washington in eight years, our military officer corps. I have much more of a respect for them, and I don't see how they could keep quiet about the way they were trying to fight that war in Vietnam. You know, but they did. They did. I don't know really of any officer that has [spoken out]. Herbert isn't quite in that category of saying what they should do: "Look, we are fighting the war with three hands tied behind our back." I don't know that any officer has said that. I have great admiration for them. They are not a bunch of trigger-happy people. I don't know of anybody that hated war more than Eisenhower did. As a matter of fact I don't know of any officer, I don't know of anybody that has been in a war that is particularly fond of war. I'm sure Mr. Johnson went through some terrible, terrible agonizing days, hours, months.

F: Did President Eisenhower ever express himself on Secretary McNamara? He was a different breed of cat in the Department of Defense. I've got some interviews with some military people who have expressed themselves.

H: Yes, more on the expression that was popular at that time on the whiz kids that had no goddamn business in the Pentagon, that were brought in and that were telling the Chief of Staff and everybody how to operate the military. He didn't think much of that. (Laughter) That's putting it mildly. Yes, sure, and another thing with the Pentagon with Mr. Eisenhower--I heard him in a cabinet meeting once when Charlie Wilson was Secretary of Defense, and he said, "Charlie, don't tell me that. I know where every bald headed major is in the Pentagon." He did and they knew it, and he never got any double talk from the military while he was there. As a matter of fact, most of the high ranking members of the military were personal friends. They didn't give him any double talk.

F: During the Kennedy-Johnson years, of course, you have got civilian commanders-in-chief now. Is there any tendency on the part of the professional military man to run to the ex-chief Eisenhower who does have a professional knowledge of what they're up against?

H: I would say no. I would say that this violates the military code, particularly if you are talking about running to an ex-commander-in-chief over the head of the present commander-in-chief. No, I don't think they would do that.

F: Their channels are too well known.

H: No, I don't think they are built that way. I don't think they are built that way. Now, you know, if they met him under--

F: On the sixteenth hole--

H: Sixteenth hole or at Burning Tree or over a drink, they would say, "Jesus, I wish you were back" or "I wish somebody was back" or something like that. But, no, they don't play the game that way.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I]

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