INTERVIEW III

DATE: April 22, 1969

INTERVIEWEE: D. B. HARDEMAN

INTERVIEWER: T. H. Baker

PLACE: Mr. Hardeman's residence, Washington, D.C.

Tape 1 of 1

B: Sir, last we time had gone to the 1960 election, which brings us to John Kennedy's years as president. One of the questions that comes up is how active then-Vice President Johnson was in Congress. You were still with Mr. Rayburn and after his death in 1961, with Mr. Boggs during these years. Could you tell whether or not Lyndon Johnson was still using any of his expertise in Congress for the administration's programs?

H: Well, in the first place, I saw much less of Lyndon Johnson. He continued to come to the Board of Education, Mr. Rayburn's Board of Education, from time to time. In the early months in 1961, he seemed to be quite a changed man. In the years as majority leader, he would come to the Board of Education and be full of discussion about what had happened in the Senate or what was happening politically. He would many times dominate the conversation, but in those very early months he sometimes would come over to the Board of Education and mix himself a drink and sit over in the southwest corner of that room and hardly say a word. After a while he would get up and leave.

Once I heard Mr. Rayburn tell those in the Board of Education that he said to President Kennedy, "Lyndon seems so morose and subdued these

days; he doesn't have anything to say; he's quite changed. He seems very subdued." And Mr. Rayburn said that President Kennedy said, "Why, of course he is. He doesn't have enough to keep him busy. He's a man who likes to have a lot of things to do all the time. I spend a good part of my time trying to think of things that I can turn over to him to keep him as busy as I can, but you know, Mr. Speaker, under our form of government there is practically nothing that a president can turn over to someone else. The final decision has to be that of the president," or "it can be that of the president." And he said, "I'm doing the best I can to give him as much responsibility as is constitutionally possible."

As to his role in the Rules Committee fight, the fight to enlarge the House Rules Committee in January of 1961, my feeling was that he was working either personally or through Walter Jenkins in trying to get as many of the Texas delegation members to go along with Mr. Rayburn as possible. If he ever tried to influence anyone outside of Texas, I never heard of it.

B: Incidentally, how did they get Mr. Rayburn to agree to that?

H: To agree to what?

B: To the enlarging of the Rules Committee. Was he reluctant to--?

H: Well, he realized that something had to be done. He had been convinced by the deadlock between 1959 and 1961 that Howard Smith would, in order to get his way, block legislation even of a Democratic president. And he was very much afraid that unless there was something done to break this hold of the Rules Committee, that the Rules Committee would block

most of President Kennedy's proposed major legislation. And President Kennedy then would go back to the country in 1962 with a record of no accomplishment or little accomplishment, and we probably would lose control of the House and at the end of four years, Kennedy might be labeled a "do-nothing" president and might be defeated for re-election. So it was imperative that [there be] some change. He had been thinking about this undoubtedly for many months. He discussed the problem with Congressman Carl Elliott of Alabama in the fall of 1960, and there were two major possibilities. One was to increase the size of the committee, which was finally done, and the other was to purge Congressman [William] Colmer of Mississippi, who was bolting the ticket. You never know a man's motives, but I think that probably this was a tactical maneuver that he first proposed to purge Congressman Colmer and take him off the Rules Committee, and that of course is a very unpalatable thing for members to have to vote on. They don't like to vote to purge. And so some of his best supporters, particularly in the South, said, "Oh, no. If you will drop the idea of purging, we can get you more votes to enlarge the committee." And I suspect that this is exactly what he planned all along, because he said to Carl Elliott that, "No, the way to do it is add to the committee. You give the Republicans another member and you give the Democrats two more members."

But he knew that something had to be done and he had gotten by through makeshift methods for twenty years, but from 1959 to 1961 he was dealing with a Rules Committee where makeshift methods no longer worked.

So he realized that he had to take the risk of splitting the Democrats in the House, and he had to move and make some changes.

B: I guess mostly he was dealing with Judge Smith.

H: He was dealing with Judge Smith and Colmer and he had no influence with either one of them. Judge Smith would sometimes agree to things and that was fine, but on the very thing that you needed the most, the Judge might decide not to agree and if that was his decision, there was nothing you could do about it.

B: In general, is it really possible, Constitution aside, for a vice president to exert any influence over the Senate or the House, even a Lyndon Johnson in the vice presidency?

H: I think the capacity of a vice president to be influential even in the Senate is very limited. He's an outsider there even though he has been one of the great all-time senators. When he becomes vice president he's no longer part of the legislative branch, in spite of presiding over the Senate. He has no right to speak on the floor; he is looked upon as an outsider really by the members of the legislative branch. He's working for a new employer now which is the president. Of course, a man's friendships continue; a man's discussions in the cloakroom or over a drink can be influential. Vice President Hubert Humphrey played, I think, a useful role, but it's a limited role in the House of Representatives. The same thing applies except that his influence is still more limited because members of the Senate by and large are not very influential in the House, and I think it's true, vice versa, that House members are not influential in the Senate. They try to run their own shows and that's a full-time job.

B: Was there ever any hint in those years that some members of the Kennedy staff would not particularly like to see Lyndon Johnson have too much power?

H: I don't recall that at the time. I just felt, as an observer of politics, that there were people in the Kennedy entourage who really would never forgive him for his race against Jack Kennedy for the nomination and particularly for his attacks on Kennedy in seeking to get the nomination. I never felt that President Kennedy had that lingering unhappiness, but I felt that the people of the disposition of Bobby Kennedy probably had it. I never had the feeling that Larry O'Brien had anything but the highest respect and regard for Lyndon Johnson. And a man like Ted Sorensen, very intense man, intensely loyal, a man without too much humor--I don't know what his feeling was toward Johnson at that period, but he's the type of personality that might have also still been resentful of Johnson. Then there are the other people who had a candidate for that second place on the ticket who were still disappointed that Johnson was selected and that their favorite, whether it was Symington or whoever, didn't get it.

B: Was there ever any serious talk of dumping Johnson in 1964?

H: Oh, I saw just a little hint here and there in newspaper columns, but my own feeling was that it was completely unrealistic. Later on, I came to believe--and this was after the assassination--without any personal knowledge whatsoever on my part, that Bobby Kennedy probably was trying to set up a situation where he could have more influence in trying to

persuade Jack Kennedy to drop Johnson, but I never did believe that Jack Kennedy would do it.

B: One would think that whatever political motives that made Johnson a candidate in 1960 would still apply in 1964.

H: Well, Kennedy had not swept the country into his own fold; he had had a breathtakingly close race in 1960. He had reached a high peak of popularity after his handling of the Cuban missile crisis, but then in 1963 it seemed to me that his fortunes were ending because of the stalling of much of his legislative program. So that perhaps his race in 1964 might be as close as the one in 1960 and that he would need Johnson for the same reason that he needed him in 1960. Furthermore, there was not a logical alternative to Johnson that I could see. I don't know the name of an individual who would have been more useful to the Kennedy operation as a vice presidential candidate. I never did see speculation about someone that would be better politically or even better personally for Kennedy.

B: Anything particularly associated with the selection of John McCormack as speaker after Mr. Rayburn's death?

H: No, I don't think so.

B: Cut and dried seniority?

H: I think Johnson could have had no influence there had he tried to exercise influence. That is strictly a family operation. No advice is wanted from the Senate; no advice is wanted from the White House. And interference in the selection of the speaker in modern times, I think,

would have hurt more than it would have helped. And I think Johnson was fully aware of that. Furthermore McCormack was never in danger.

B: He practically inherited the position.

H: He inherited the position, and the only possibility was whether Dick Bolling might run against him and when Dick decided not to, why then McCormack was home free. But I don't think anybody believed after Rayburn's death that McCormack would not be elected.

B: Just to keep the record straight, that's when you moved from the Speaker's staff over to the Whip's staff, Hale Boggs' staff.

H: That's right. I moved in the latter part of January, 1962 over to the Whip's office.

B: Another event of those years: were you in a position to see anything of Bobby Baker and his troubles?

H: Not after 1961. I think perhaps the last time I saw Bobby Baker was during the campaign in 1960. I rode out to the arena in Charlotte, North Carolina--on the train out to the arena with him. And I may have seen him just in passing a time or two after that, but I have no recollection of it. Certainly, as far as I can recall, I had no conversation with him after that.

B: Was it general knowledge or suspicion around Congress before the scandal broke that Bobby Baker was perhaps verging on the unethical if not the illegal?

H: No, not as far as I ever knew. I was caught completely by surprise. The only time I ever raised my eyebrows in all those years was on this ride out in the car. We passed a corner there in Charlotte and he just

said to me in an offhand way, "I'm getting ready to build a nice motel over there on that piece of land." And I didn't say anything, but I just asked myself the question, "Well, how in the world does a person on the staff salary build a motel?" But I never heard any accusations about Bobby's interference with legislation. Around Capitol Hill you hear all sorts of gossip at all times about members and about staff members, their love life, this, that and the other. But if there was any whispering about Bobby Baker, I never heard it.

B: It's curious. Based on what was later revealed, you wonder how it can go along without knowledge around about it.

H: Well, I have a theory. I know very few of the facts in the Bobby Baker case, but my own feeling is that you look back at the actual charges made against Baker and they were charges involving his activity after the 1960 election. The one exception would be this motel and the Carousel Motel--I don't remember when that opened--the one over at Ocean City. But I think the other charges, my impression without being an expert on this at all was that these other activities that he has been criticized for date after the 1960 election. And there is one body of thought that up until that time, LBJ had kept him so busy that he didn't have time for extracurricular activities, and after LBJ left, there was a different tempo and a different mood in the Senate and he had time to engage in other activities.

And then another major factor was when LBJ left, the strong man in the Senate was Bob Kerr. Now, I heard a lot of innuendo about Bob Kerr's activities in business for several years--uranium deals, deals in

connection with the Arkansas River, acquisition of land, various other things. That's why I say these rumors get out about people a lot of times when they're not true, but I never heard any rumors about Bobby Baker. But then Bobby's closeness with Kerr--I don't know when it began, probably had been going on for years and I didn't know about it, but certainly his closer operation with Kerr seemed to come after LBJ departed from the Senate majority leadership.

B: I've got a purely speculative question that you may freely ignore if you'd like. But you were in the Whip's office. Would you care to hazard a guess as to whether or not the John Kennedy legislative program would have passed in 1964 had there not been an assassination? Would things like the tax bill, Civil Rights Act, have gotten through that session?

H: I've always thought that a major part of the Kennedy program would have passed had he lived; that at the time he was assassinated and the newspaper people for a lack of any hard news were writing what we referred to as thumb-sucking pieces. They sit around in the corner and suck their thumbs trying to think up something to write about. [I think] that they forgot that there's a cycle in Congress, certainly in modern times, a burst of no activity in the first year of Congress until after Easter, then the easier legislation is put through one house or the other in the summer of that first year, then the tougher pieces of legislation have longer hearings and more involved operations so they seem to be held up. And then in the fall of the first year you go into sort of an inactive slump, and then along in the spring of the second

year of a Congress, you come to grips with these hard issues and you get them out of the way one way or the other in an election year. And I think that was what would have happened in the case of the Kennedy program had he lived.

I think the tax bill undoubtedly would have passed, perhaps not in the same form that it did pass in. I think civil rights legislation probably would have passed in some form or other, probably not as sweeping. There might not have been an FEPC provision in that bill. There are some things that I do not think Kennedy would have passed that summer that Johnson was able to get passed. One of the measures that I think Kennedy had no possibility of passing and that Johnson--I don't think he expected to be able to pass it either, John McCormack really is the man that I think deserves most of the credit for it, although LBJ certainly helped, and that was the Mass Transit Act. I do not think Kennedy had any chance to even get that voted on and Kennedy's programs, which did not pass in 1964--maybe they did, I don't remember. What became the poverty program, was that passed in 1964?

B: 1964.

H: Well, I don't think the poverty program would have passed. Kennedy had two bills: one was the Youth Opportunity Bill and the other was another phase of the poverty program, Community Action Bill I think they called it. And those to me were dead as a doornail and with good reason, I think, because the Kennedy Administration, the sponsors of the bills, really hadn't thought them through. I sat in an all-day meeting of a citizens committee trying to push the Youth Opportunity Bill, headed by

Malcolm Forbes of Forbes Magazine, including Bill Anderson, now a congressman from Tennessee, and Mrs. Arthur Goldberg and others. And we met all day long and I was invited to sit in. And the thing that struck me when I came out of the meeting was that these people really don't know--they haven't thought through the hard questions behind the bill. They don't know exactly--they're avoiding the gut issues here; they're trying to get the bill and then solve the problems after they get the bill. And I didn't think it would work, and I don't think it would have worked.

LBJ took advantage of the Kennedy assassination and the emotion aroused by it; he got a very catchy phrase, "the poverty program," he put the two together with modification and put them through. I do not think Kennedy would have got either one of those. But as I mentioned before, I think much of his legislation would have passed had he lived. I think the newspaper assessment and the historical assessment that he had run out of steam in Congress is not correct.

B: When you were in Mr. Boggs' office, did you stay close enough to Texas politics to understand what was going on in Texas in 1963? The Connally versus Yarborough--

H: No. No. The longer you stay away from the state, the less you know about it. A new generation of political figures comes along. I just knew what I had known for a long time. John Connally and Ralph Yarborough had very little use for each other.

B: Now, the question of course [is] where was Lyndon Johnson in that arrangement? He had been very close to Mr. Connally, of course.

H: Well, yes. Of course, all of his emotional instincts and his ties of friendship were much stronger on the Connally side. He and Yarborough had not been happy with each other for a long time. Why, what started it, I have never been able to satisfy myself that I knew what started it. I don't know what started it. I imagine it is a chemical antipathy between the two men. On the other hand, Johnson had a major stake in seeing that Texas did not split into two camps and wreck the chances of the Democrats to carry the state in 1964. And furthermore, it seems to me that he had a very personal stake. If Texas were hopelessly divided in 1964, then those who wanted to dump him from the ticket would have some pretty good arguments to do so. Here's a man who can't even keep his own state in line.

B: Apparently Mr. Johnson as vice president and Senator Yarborough had some quarrels over patronage in Texas. Did not Mr. Johnson try to have at least a veto over patronage appointments in the state?

H: I never did know about the patronage. I heard that, yes. I heard that Yarborough felt that since he was the senior Democratic senator, the only Democratic senator, that he should inherit the patronage. Johnson didn't see it that way. He felt that he was vice president and he was the highest elected Democratic official from the state of Texas and that he was entitled to some of the patronage and was going to insist on it. But the ins and outs of it I never did know; I never did really want to know.

B: As you say, unless you live with that kind of situation from day to day, it is almost impossible to understand it.

H: Well, you get into all sorts of petty personality quibbles over this candidate and that candidate and the other candidate. These things usually are settled by them working out a modus vivendi between themselves, and I didn't care about the play-by-play reports. Now they did agree on things like the very strong push that the Vice President and Senator Yarborough gave to people like Judge Sarah Hughes to get her appointed federal district judge. They were as strongly united on that appointment, for example, as they could possibly be. There was no argument--I think I'm right on this--there was absolutely no argument, for example, over the appointment of a man like Barefoot Sanders to a federal district attorney job in Dallas. There were many places where they did not quarrel. But Johnson did insist, and I always heard that he had made this point to Kennedy, that if he became vice president on the ticket, that he was to continue to have a strong say in major patronage appointments. I am under the impression that, for example, on the appointment of the assistant postmaster general in charge of operations, Mr. McMillan was appointed; that Yarborough, Rayburn, and Johnson were all strong for that appointment. So the quarreling was over certain offices, but not all offices.

B: Where were you at the time of the assassination?

H: I was sitting in the Whip's office with a friend when one of our staff came running in and said he had just heard over the radio that the President had been shot.

B: Was it you who notified Mr. Boggs? I understand he was not in the office, I believe, at the time.

H: No, I did not notify him. I'm not sure how he heard it, perhaps on the car radio.

B: Did any special kind of activity on your part that hectic weekend and in the weeks after--

H: Well, yes, that was a very wild and exhausting weekend, of course. In connection with Hale Boggs, I think the first time I saw him after the news broke was that he sent for me and he was in the little Ways and Means Committee room up on the second floor or the main floor of the Capitol. He had written out in longhand a statement for the press. And he sent for me to ask me what I thought of it. He was very, of course, shocked because he was close to Jack Kennedy, he had been for many years, and it was an emotional attachment to Kennedy as well as a political attachment to Kennedy. He had just returned from some speeches down in Louisiana in which he hit out very hard at the right-wing extremists. He threw down the gauntlet to them in Louisiana. So he had written out this statement--he was convinced that he had been assassinated by the right-wingers. I'm not sure at that moment whether we knew whether he was dead or not. I think we probably did. But he'd talked in this statement about the "drums of hate beating louder and louder and now they have done it." He didn't say right-wingers, but you couldn't read the statement and get any other conclusion. And I remember arguing with him very vociferously to wait, "Let's wait. We don't know who did it. We may know in thirty minutes; we may know in an hour. Let's wait! I think like you do, I think this is probably a right-wing movement that has done this, but we don't know, and thirty minutes is

not going to make any difference on your statement. Please don't." Well, we couldn't agree on that.

And so, of course, the whole afternoon was wild. I was in and out of the Speaker's office and hundreds of newspaper people and politicians and so forth. And I spent just by accident quite a time that afternoon with Congressman Don Brotzman of Colorado. And he was telling me about some of the assassination problems that he had had when he was--I believe federal district attorney in Denver, or in Colorado. And we kept watching the ticker tape. We were watching it, I think, when we got the word that they had arrested Oswald. And so it was so chaotic there for several hours. Then, of course, there was all the arrangements that had to be made during the next forty-eight hours in connection with the funeral. Much of that work fell on our office.

B: Excuse me, the Congressman's assassination problems while he was a judge, you meant threats of assassination against himself?

H: I'm not sure it was assassination. He had tried the case of the kidnapping and murder of one of the heirs to the Coors beer industry, and we were talking about problems of proof and identification and whether there was a conspiracy and how many people were in on it. I had not known Brotzman before. He's a Republican congressman, he was a first-termer then. We just happened to bump into each other out in the Speaker's lobby watching the ticker tape and we got to talking and each one of us wanted somebody to talk to, and it was off the beat. So I was away from Hale Boggs for a part of that time.

B: During that weekend or in the next week, did anybody sit down and speculate on what kind of president Lyndon Johnson might make, or do you in that kind of circumstance?

H: Oh, I don't think anybody had time or had enough emotion left. Trying to remember back then is very tricky business. I had always felt that if Lyndon Johnson could ever get to the presidency that he would make a great president. I had great skepticism as to whether he could ever be elected president; I just thought the odds were against him. But I said many times to people that, "If he ever gets there, he has all the qualities to make a great president," and I think he made a great president. But at that moment, we were living from moment to moment. You had the cathedral service and the clamor of people to be invited to that; you had the arrangements for the rotunda; you had telegrams to members; the busing arrangements. Everybody was completely drained of emotion and drained of energy. We were just ready to drop physically. I remember thinking that he handled it very well when he stepped off the plane and made that very short statement to the nation. I thought he handled that in a very nice and very dignified fashion. And I thought he conducted himself through the ceremonies with the heads of state all with great dignity. I had no inkling then of the unhappy plane ride; I had no inkling that there was a scuffle about how they were to take the coffin off. That all came much later.

B: Did Mr. Boggs' assignment to the Warren Commission mean any extra work for you?

H: No, I was not involved at all in the Warren Commission. The Warren Commission came about, according to what Hale told many of us, [because] a

number of subcommittees and committees of the Congress decided to investigate the assassination. It looked like it was going to be a field day with the number of investigations--subpoenaing the same witnesses and each one trying to prove something different, and there would be utter chaos. So Hale said that he said to the President, "The only way to head this off is for you to name a blue ribbon commission that will make all these others keep hands off it. There is no alternative to it." So the President called him at home and told him that he had decided to name this blue ribbon commission and that "That means that you have to serve on it."

And then I remember a little incident--one of the individuals in the House was trying to, I don't know, he was making a speech for a resolution to appoint a special committee or something involving the committee, and Hale, on the spur of the moment, got up and, trying to head this off, said, "I can say on the highest authority that a blue-ribbon commission will be named and therefore we should cease our discussion of this right now," which did head off whoever was trying to do this. I know he said later on that the next time he saw him, the President said to him, "You know when you say 'on the highest authority,' do you know you're talking about me?" And Hale laughed and said, "Well, I had to say something right then and there or we'd have been in trouble."

B: How close were Mr. Boggs and Mr. Johnson? Had they been close before?

H: Oh yes, all through the years. I don't know, I suppose Hale first met--I don't know when he first met Lyndon Johnson. Hale and Lindy Boggs, as far as I know, have always been very, very close to the President and

Lady Bird on a personal basis, a social basis. It extended to the children; Lindy was very close to both of the Johnson daughters, had a major role in their weddings. In turn, the President attended the weddings of both of the Boggs' daughters out at the Boggs' home. And they were back and forth on a personal basis over a long period of years. It was a family relationship in my judgment.

B: Just for the record, is Lindy L-I-N-D-Y?

H: Her name is Corinne, but everybody calls her Lindy, L-I-N-D-Y Boggs. I don't suppose there was any woman closer to the President and Lady Bird through all the years than Lindy--and Hale. But President Johnson and Hale Boggs, they're both strong-minded men and they're both men who have a temper, temperament, and the President sometimes would give Hale the silent treatment as he would give everybody else. But I know Hale had a great respect for the President and a great liking for him. They are very candid in their assessment of people, and they knew each other's limitations--each other's strong points and each other's weak points.

B: What was it like from the vantage point of the Whip's office, that session of Congress in the spring of 1964?

H: Feverish activity, because the tempo was so fast. The first time I saw the President after the assassination was about the tenth of December. It was the night of the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah--I believe it's Hanukkah around there. Anyhow, that was the night that Hale Boggs was supposed to interview the congressional fellows of the American Political Science Association who wanted to work in his office that coming spring. And he had agreed to meet with them late in the afternoon.

Well, it was a wild day and Hale would come down and before he could start meeting with them, the Speaker would send for him and he'd have to go back upstairs. This happened three or four times, so Hale said to me--we haven't covered this, have we?

B: No.

H: Hale said to me, "Take them in your office, or keep them in your office and give them a drink and I'll try to be back down in about fifteen minutes." So we were all in there having a drink, this was about seven o'clock, and I remember that it was this Jewish holiday because one of the boys was Jewish and he was supposed, under the Jewish faith, to be at home with his little boys at six o'clock. He wasn't going to make it and he was very worried about it. And we happened to be standing up for some reason, and one of the candidates was the assistant to the majority whip in the Pakistan General Assembly, a man named Shan Suddin Ahmed [?]. And for some reason we were all standing up with our drinks in our hands when I heard Hale's voice call out: "Silence, everyone, the President of the United States!" And in came Hale Boggs and the President of the United States! He shook hands, and I was so flabbergasted that I couldn't think of the names of a lot of these fellows in the room. There were about eight of them, I think, in the room. And I fell down on the names.

So the President went around the room and each one introduced himself, and when he got to Ahmed, he stopped and told Ahmed how much he'd enjoyed his trip to Pakistan and how much he liked the country and how much he liked the people and so forth. He stayed just a few minutes, but well, there with Ahmed, and when he swept out of the room as he does, why,

Ahmed was completely dazed. He said, "I've been in this country ten days and the President has already been to see me!" There was a great chain set in motion. The press got this and Newsweek picked it up, and Ahmed was invited by the Pakistani Ambassador to come have lunch with him. And the Ambassador said, "Why haven't you been to see me before?" And Ahmed said, "I've been over here about three times and all I got from your people was the brush-off." And so then the White House called him, and the President had received a letter from some man who had served with somebody named Ahmed in India during World War II and he wanted to know if it was the same Ahmed. So the White House was calling him, and Ahmed was quite the center of attraction for a while.

Lyndon Johnson had come up that night unannounced to the John McCormack Board of Education to bring the Speaker a picture. The President had come up to Speaker McCormack's Board of Education and Hale said to him, "I have a bunch of congressional fellows around in my office. Would you come around and say hello to them?" Well, the President was very familiar with the congressional fellowship program because he had had congressional fellows in his office and on his staff, and he had, I think, a very high regard for the program. So he said, "Sure." So that was the reason that he came around that particular night.

The first business contact that I had with the President was quite accidental. The President was trying to get authority to sell wheat to Russia. This was the week before Christmas in 1963. And it was a very volatile issue. And the House met all night long. And the Republican ban on selling wheat to Russia prevailed by, it seems to me, like five votes--

very close margin. We were in the middle of a terrible snowstorm and the House had been meeting from noon until five-thirty on Saturday morning, and we were all absolutely dead. But many of the members had already started home or had gone home for Christmas. And so at six-thirty in the morning, Hale came down to the office--we went down to the office--and Hale said, "I'm going to try to get home. Will you get on the phone and phone everybody that didn't answer the roll call and run them down wherever they are, and tell them to come back to Washington immediately?"

So we had gotten the last roll call, or some of the last roll calls, and we were compiling a list of the absentees and started phoning some of the absentees at six-thirty in the morning. And the phone rang. In the meantime, I was by myself for a little while and I looked up and John Monahan, the assistant to Speaker McCormack, was walking in and he was as tired as everybody else. He took off his coat and he said, "I'm here to help you." I was very grateful for it. And the phone rang, said, "This is the White House. Jack Valenti wants to talk to Congressman Boggs."

And I said, "I don't know where he is. I think he's somewhere between here and his home. Is there anything that I can help with? This is D. B. Hardeman," and they said, "Just a moment." This voice came on the line and I recognized it immediately. This was about, I guess, six-thirty or six-forty in the morning. He said, "D. B., what happened up there?" And I said, "Well, Mr. President, we got our tail whipped." "What was the vote?" And I told him the vote. "Who did we lose?" And I said, "Well, I didn't check the roll call carefully. I don't have the last roll call, but we lost a lot here and a lot there." "What did we

lose in Alabama, say?" And I said, "Well, I heard so-and-so answer 'no,' and so-and-so, but I don't know who else we lost." And he said, "What about Texas? What about so-and-so in Texas? What about so-and-so in Texas?"

And I told him the ones that I had heard answer the roll call one way or the other, but there were many that I just didn't know about. So he interrogated me about many different members, and my information was perhaps not very helpful, but he stayed on the phone about twenty minutes. Apparently he had just waked up and Jack Valenti had given him the news that he had tasted his first defeat as president on the floor of the House.

So then we worked all during that weekend, and there was a wild day on Saturday. And they finally decided to have another vote on it on Tuesday, I believe, or the day before Christmas--Christmas Eve. I'd had very little to eat that day, and I was completely exhausted. I hadn't been to bed for about forty-eight hours or something like that, and I walked in the apartment and the phone was ringing. And it said, "This is Larry O'Brien's office. They want you at the White House at ten o'clock tomorrow for a meeting in Larry O'Brien's office." That was Sunday at ten o'clock.

So I went down and at that meeting with a number of people there, of Congress and others, they decided to charter a plane out on the West Coast to fly across the southern part of the United States picking up missing members and bringing them back in. I left that meeting and went up to the Hill upon the instruction of that meeting, and we sent out telegrams to

all members. We sent, as I recall, telegrams to their homes in their districts, to their offices in the districts, to their offices here, and to the homes here where we had home addresses. You never have all the home addresses of congressmen either in their districts or here, because they won't give them to you. But we did the best we could, trying to get people back in here. They decided to send a plane down--[Congressman] Dick Bolling was down in the Virgin Islands, the French Virgin islands, and he was on the Rules Committee and they needed him to make a quorum on the Rules Committee to report out a special rule to authorize the new vote. So I was told at this meeting that they had told the Governor of the Virgin Islands to send a small plane to this remote island and pick up Dick and bring him back. Dick wouldn't come back, so they sent the plane back the second time. And this was typical. So then Speaker McCormack had to get Congressman Colmer to leave his sick wife in Biloxi, Mississippi, and catch that plane and fly back up here to report out a vote on the wheat bill. It was a week of feverish activity.

Then, Jake Pickle had just been elected to Congress, and he flew all night long to get in here. The House met at seven o'clock on Christmas Eve morning to have the decisive vote on the wheat sale to Russia. And so Jake and Warren Woodward, who had been one of LBJ's assistants, and their wives came into our office and wanted to know what to do to get Jake sworn in so that his vote would count on the wheat sale to Russia.

John Connally had certified him--as governor--that he had been elected at one minute after midnight, and had wired the Speaker and had

wired the clerk of the House. The wire had not arrived at the Speaker's office and the clerk of the House didn't bother to come in that day, and so we had no proof of the certification. So we had to rush around, various people had to rush around, and McCormack had to get Halleck to agree not to challenge him because he lacked the certificate of election, and Halleck agreed. And then Wright Patman as the senior Democrat from Texas was supposed to walk down the aisle with Jake to swear him in, and the Speaker was frantic to get him sworn in because the vote was coming up immediately and we couldn't find Mr. Patman. So I asked George Mahon if he would walk down since he was number two in seniority, and Mahon said yes, he would, but where was Wright? So he walked down with Pickle while he was sworn in and Mr. Patman then appeared and felt that his prerogatives had been raped. So it was wild and woolly.

But then in the middle of all this snowstorm, the Monday night during all this confusion, if I am correct, or maybe Tuesday night--the record will show this--the President about three-thirty in the afternoon sent word up that he was giving a reception that afternoon at the White House about seven o'clock, I think, for the members of Congress and some of the staff members. So we went up to the White House and he climbed up on a chair--I remember thinking he ought not to be up on that nice chair, but he climbed up on this chair with his shoes in the dining room and made a little speech about how the Congress had responded and wishing them a merry Christmas. It was the most beautiful occasion I've ever seen at the White House because all the Christmas lights were on; the Christmas decorations were up, and he mixed and mingled and so did

Lady Bird with all the members and it was a goodwill gesture that was very, very useful.

B: And probably needed. Wasn't there a certain amount of resentment in the Congress at being pushed that hard?

H: No, I don't think so. He was still on his honeymoon then. His first major test was over the agriculture bill.

B: Before you get into that, one question that occurs. Who pays for chartering a plane like that?

H: That question was raised at the time, and I was told that the Democratic National Committee paid for it.

B: Some of the planes that were sent out for members of Congress on that occasion were military planes, weren't they?

H: This was very interesting. Gerald Ford, who is usually a cautious man, in the middle of this angry afternoon--it was one of the angriest afternoons I ever saw on the House floor that Saturday afternoon after this all-night session--everybody's nerves were frazzled--Jerry Ford got up and made the charge that the Democratic administration was using military aircraft to bring their people back and that he had phoned McNamara's office and demanded the facts on it immediately. Well, this brought an angry roar and I think Carl Albert went to the phone and was assured that that had not happened for any Democrats and so forth and so on. And this was before the plane was arranged for; that was arranged I think the next day, maybe my sequence is wrong, but I think that's correct. So there was real anger between Democratic and Republican leadership over this charge. And it developed that planes had not been used

to bring Democrats back, but William McCullough of Ohio, the ranking Republican on the Judiciary Committee, got up and very sheepishly said--this must have been on Monday or Tuesday after this plane had been arranged to bring the members back--that he wanted to state to the House that he couldn't get back any way because the airlines, so many of them, were grounded and that he went to the air base close to his home in Ohio and got them to fly him in a military plane. So it developed that the only member that was brought back by military aircraft was a Republican who himself requested it, and Gerald Ford had popped off and made himself look very foolish--the only time I ever saw him look foolish on the floor of the House.

B: The Democratic flights then were the charter--

H: The Democratic flights were the charter flights. I remember some of the Democrats from the Detroit area three times tried to get back to Washington and every time they got as far as Pittsburgh and either had to land in Pittsburgh or turn around and go back to Detroit. The weather was terrible. So the House adjourned then about eleven o'clock and people made a mad scramble on Christmas Eve to get out of town.

B: Before I interrupted you, you were getting ready to say something about the agriculture bill.

H: Well, the agriculture bill had already been scheduled for House action before the Kennedy assassination, and it was a patchwork bill; it was a bundle of compromises that nobody was happy with. Everybody that was supporting it was doing so with grave reservations and reluctance. But it had been scheduled before the Kennedy assassination. So then President

Johnson found this out and the House leadership found itself in the very unpleasant predicament of the first major test of the President was on a bill which could fall apart at any moment, a bill which really nobody wanted to vote, nobody was enthusiastic about the bill, and yet here was a new president in great jeopardy that on his first test with the Congress he would meet a stinging defeat. And this might be the end of the honeymoon. The first defeat always makes the second one easier and the third one still easier. So there had to be frantic efforts on the part of the House leadership and the President to swing enough people into line to pass that bill. John McCormack, that was one of his finest hours. He understood the argument that he had to use, and he used it with all the force at his command which is a lot of force--that "I don't care what you think about the bill, you cannot allow this new Democratic president to be defeated on his first major test. You've got to waive your objections and you've got to support this bill. We cannot allow our new president to be defeated on this issue."

My estimate was that he changed sixty-five votes on the bill. A study by a political scientist named Randall Ripley, now at Ohio State, being I think overly conservative, I think he estimates McCormack alone changed about forty-five votes. And of course the President and the President's people were working as hard as they could and the bill was saved. But he was in danger of being defeated on the first test. It was not a bill that was his bill; it was not a bill that he scheduled; it was a bill that had been scheduled before the assassination and he was simply the inheritor of a bad situation.

B: The honeymoon lasted pretty much through that session so far as it appeared from the newspapers.

H: Well, I think the honeymoon lasted through the end of 1965 and might have gone on indefinitely had not the Vietnam War intervened. It wouldn't have gone on indefinitely, of course, it never does, but I think it would have lasted longer if our escalation of Vietnam had not come about.

B: You campaigned for Mr. Johnson in 1964, didn't you?

H: No, I didn't campaign for him. I was asked to go out again as an advance man, and I felt that I was too old and too tired for that. I had done it in 1956 for Stevenson and I had done it in 1960 for the ticket, and I thought that was enough. I was very tired; at the end of 1964 I was sick and tired both. I didn't know I was sick, but I was tired, and so I just told them I could not go out on the road.

So then I got a call, I'm not sure who the call was from, I think perhaps Mike Feldman who had been Kennedy's counsel and retained by Johnson as counsel, and told that the President wanted a group of people to meet down at the White House and talk about tactics, and to meet in his office every afternoon at five o'clock. So I of course accepted that invitation; Congress was still in session of course, and so I attended a number of those meetings which later became known as the "Five O'Clock Club."

B: That's what I had reference to. Who then was involved in that besides yourself?

H: Well, Evans and Novak have a list, as I recall, that's pretty fool-proof. I haven't read it in several years. It was a floating group.

One person would be there maybe two days a week, or one day a week, or three days a week, or maybe not at all that particular week; then next week they would be there every day. I don't think I ever made a list of them; I remember some of the offhand. Leonard Marks, who was later head of U.S. Information Agency, was there--I would say was, I don't know whether he was formally titled as chairman, but he certainly was one of the most active members. Tyler Abell was there; Ernest Cuneo, head of Newspaper Editorial Association, was frequently there; Abe Chayez who had been counsel in the Defense Department, I believe now teaches up at Harvard Law School was there. He was an old Truman hand. John Sharon, who was later Clark Clifford's--or maybe at that time was Clark Clifford's law partner. Tom Phinney, Mike Monroney's staff. Pat Moynihan was there from time to time. Bob Wallace of the Treasury Department. Milt Semer, who was general counsel of I think Housing and Home Finance or maybe of Housing and Urban Development itself--I don't remember, but he was an old hand around Washington. Mike Feldman, of course. I never did make a list. My recollection is that Evans and Novak had what seemed to me to be a pretty complete list, but they were there as I was. Maybe I'd be there three days a week or maybe five days a week or maybe none in a particular week.

B: The Evans and Novak account indicates that that group was kind of a "department of dirty tricks." Is that substantially correct?

H: Well, I never did think the group was accomplishing very much. I was in a minority on that, I think. The purpose of the group was, as I understood it--and it was like everything in politics, it was never

spelled out too clearly--was to try to make quick responses to small tactical situations. Goldwater would say something and we would want to get somebody on the House or the Senate floor to answer him and maybe prepare a speech for him and get the newspaper publicity arranged for it or get somebody on one of the quiz programs. Or certain signs had appeared at a rally and we were supposed to have in a hurry, have some signs made for Goldwater's next appearance that night or the next day. I didn't think of it in terms of a "department of dirty tricks." I don't remember any dirty tricks that were ever thought up, but there wasn't any moral reluctance. I just don't remember any ever being thought up.

I know they wanted one thing that I demurred on, and they got it done anyhow. They wanted to have a member of the House attack Bill Miller, the congressman who was running for vice president, on his connection with a company in Lockport, New York. He had drawn some fees from them and they wanted to make it into a conflict of interest situation. And I argued against it in the meeting because I said that whoever made the speech would be out of order under the House rules; he would be attacking a fellow member which was not in order and is not kosher; that I thought it was a flimsy charge that would backfire. So I just sort of eased--they wanted me to do this, and I just sort of just didn't get around to it. Later they got a member from California to make such an attack, and it seemed to me that he got a pretty good kickback on it. It seems to me, but I'm not sure, but it seems to me a point of order

was raised and the Speaker had to call him down. It was an abortive effort, whatever it was.

But oh, such things as trying to get an editorial in a certain publication or in a certain newspaper or an editorial on the air or various things of that nature.

B: Your reference to quiz programs, does that mean the Sunday morning TV programs?

H: That sort of thing. I don't remember any specifically in connection with this, but the sort of thing that, say, "Well, so-and-so is going to be on--Bill Miller's going to be on "Face the Nation." Let's try to get somebody to ask him about the Lockport Steel case. Who can do that, or who can try to do that?" You see, that sort of thing.

B: Did Walter Jenkins' troubles take you by surprise in that campaign?

H: Yes, completely, absolutely shocked. I was driving home from work, and I heard just a sort of a snatch of a radio broadcast and I wasn't sure what I had heard. And I got up to the apartment and turned the radio on and heard--this was, oh, six o'clock in the afternoon, something like that--that the charge had been made on a Los Angeles radio station, I believe, or something. Then, of course, the story unfolded that night.

B: I've heard some people suggest that there may be an element of frame-up involved in that.

H: Of course, I don't know the facts at all. Yes, I heard that charge made many times during the weeks following that. And I heard people say third and fourth-hand that the President had said to them that it was a deliberate political frame-up. It had this element in it that seemed

very curious to me, that the head of the Morals Squad and his assistant just happened to be upstairs on the first floor of the YMCA at the time this took place. That to me was one thing that was never, never explained. And I of course never saw any of the reports or anything else. But I heard the charge made many times that this was a part of the Goldwater campaign and that they had other things of this type planned if they got away with this one.

B: Were there rumors of additional kinds--

H: I just heard the rumors. It's an old technique that was used in Europe to document your enemies. Senator Tom Hennings told me that Senator Joe McCarthy, when he first started getting Texas oil money, the first thing he did was to try to build up a personal dossier on everybody in Washington that could stand in his way. And he was ready to blackmail them or anything else. Now, I don't know. Hennings told me that personally. But this is an old game that has been played by fascists and communists both, and people went around saying this sort of thing. But I have no way of knowing whether it's true or not. I do know that one of the newspapermen told me about being approached by--you know, it's always "them," trying to plant with them, with this press association, a very scurrilous story on Hubert Humphrey, and they threw him out of the office. But he said this fellow had been all over town trying to plant the story and nobody would buy it. So there would have seemed to have been smoke about this being part of the pattern.

B: I've also heard it said that on past the election of Mr. Johnson's

Administration, in the sense of running the White House, really was never the same after Walter Jenkins left.

H: Well, of course, I wouldn't know because I was not in the White House then or later. Certainly the degree of trust that he had in Walter and Walter's great ability undoubtedly was greatly missed. Furthermore, no public official can come through this without being shaken up, not only about this situation, but also a worry that "maybe there are some other things going on that I don't know about." There's an old saying in politics that the perfect politician is the one with no known living relatives; and so very often politicians are crippled by some financial misdeed or something of somebody that's close to them and they had no reason to be suspicious of. This is the nightmare of politics.

B: I know you're acquainted with Bill Moyers. Did you see anything of the relationship between him and the President?

H: Not during the White House years. I had known Bill, known him well, from the time that he first came up here. And I worked very closely with him during the campaign; I always thought of him as a close personal friend. He's one of the people that gave me that picture up there. For example, we walked together behind the Johnson car in the parade in Chicago. We walked the whole route together and so forth. But after he went into the White House--

B: When was that, sir?

H: This was the weekend before the election in November of 1960. But I saw Bill a time or two when he came up with the President, when the President delivered speeches to Congress. But I was never in the White House, I

think I'm right, except for that--well, I was there on that "Five O'Clock Club," and then that Christmas reception. And then in February of 1965, the President had a meeting one night of the Democratic leadership, of the Whip and Assistant Whips and a couple of staff people, and I was down there for that session. But I was never in the President's office itself while LBJ was president that I can recall. And I was never in Bill Moyers' office. I would see him once in a while, but always just on a casual--I guess I talked to him on the phone a few times.

B: I was asking because apparently Mr. Moyers and President Johnson parted with some bitterness that both of them still find it difficult to talk about.

H: Well, I never did know. I have not seen Bill since he left; I've never had a chance to talk to him about it. Of course, I've never had a chance to talk to the President about it. I wouldn't talk to the President about it.

I was sorry that Bill left because I thought the President needed him very badly, but I was sympathetic with him leaving from Bill's own point of view. Bill had served him long and faithfully; Bill is a very independent man. He's a man who is entitled to make his own career. I heard that the President was unhappy when Bill decided to leave him and go to the Peace Corps. But men in public life, most of them you know, can't understand why any staffer would want to do anything except to serve them. And the officeholder himself has a motivation and has a potential reward that the staff man doesn't have. And Bill Moyers and Horace Busby and others came to the President's aid when he became

president under tragic circumstances and stayed on and on and on, and I would strongly defend Bill Moyers' right to do exactly what he did. And if he had ever talked to me about it at the time, I would have advised him to do what he did. No man is indispensable or should be indispensable to an officeholder. And whether there was bitterness or not, I don't know. But Bill Moyers served him exceptionally well, it seems to me, and if there was a bitterness there, until I knew more of the facts, I'd be on Moyers' side.

B: Back to politics again. Is it true that the Democratic National Committee in 1964 and 1968 had fallen on hard times?

H: I've never known them when they weren't having hard times.

B: Well, more so than usual.

H: I can't imagine them being short of money in 1964.

B: Well, not only money, but in organization.

H: Well, of course, I worked for the Democratic National Committee part time for two years. And I suppose they're a necessary evil, but I just don't have a very high opinion of the role of national committees in either party in the middle of the twentieth century. It seems to me that when they're out of power, they spend all their time raising enough money to pay the salaries of the help and pay the rent. When they're in power, they don't have say about it--the say is all down at the White House. That applies to the Republican National Committee as well as the Democratic National Committee. They do some housekeeping chores, but it seems to me that the main existence of both national committees revolves around raising money. Any major decision, when your party is in the

White House, all major decisions are made by the president. And I don't blame the presidents--I'd make them too. When you're out of power, the national committee is, oh, I suppose it's some sort of a link or an information center of sorts, but the national committee chairman doesn't speak for the party. He has no authority to speak for the party when it's out of power. That was the quarrel between Paul Butler and Lyndon Johnson and Sam Rayburn, and I think they were absolutely right in that. Frankly, I just never have seen too much major good that was done by either national committee in my time, except fund-raising, and they pay their way on that.

B: I'm down to the real general questions now, and I'm almost done, you'll be happy to know. You mentioned earlier that you had known Mrs. Johnson for a long time. Would you count her as a major influence on her husband's career?

H: Well, of course, I can't answer that, not knowing the personal relationship. Certainly, with everybody that I've ever known that I've ever heard express an opinion, she has been a great, great asset to him in the opinion of everybody I've ever heard talk about it.

B: She's a pretty good politician herself, too, isn't she?

H: Well, I've often thought that if he had listened to her judgment more often on things, he might have avoided some of the headaches he had. I've always thought her judgment about life, not just politics--she has what Sam Rayburn loved so much. She had common sense, and he said, "When you've got common sense, that's all the sense there is." And she has it. She has demonstrated, as first lady, what people who had known

her before had always know about her. Her judgment just seems to be first-rate on everything she undertakes, socially, politically, personally. I have heard more people talk about the way she responded to the Walter Jenkins crisis. She went immediately to that family which had been part of her family, and she put out the most beautiful statement, the most understanding statement. And I think that everybody that I heard mention it spoke of her with appreciation and awe. When many a politician's wife would have waited to see which way the wind was going to blow, she didn't. She did the human and the wise thing. That's just a sample of her reaction under stress. I just never have heard anybody criticize Lady Bird.

B: I have now run out of questions. Is there anything you think ought to be covered that we haven't, anything else you'd like to say on this kind of record?

H: In my opinion, he used the telephone more than any president in our history to try to persuade members of Congress to vote for things that he wanted passed or that he wanted killed. He was not afraid on legislative matters to commit the full personal prestige of the presidency on individual members. I'm not sure how this worked. Larry O'Brien could tell you exactly, but it's my impression that in the House, for example, we would decide after these numerous conferences in the Speaker's office that there were perhaps thirty people that would be highly useful and maybe determinative if the President would call them personally. And that list would be made up by the Larry O'Brien staff and given to the President in order of importance, and that he would go as far down that

list and make as many calls as his time would permit. I don't recall ever knowing of that being done in the Kennedy Administration. President Kennedy used the phone a great deal, but it was usually for a specific thing. I don't recall hearing of President Kennedy using such a list and making five, ten, fifteen, twenty-five calls on a piece of legislation.

B: Was there ever any danger that that kind of clout would be diluted by being used too much? Did you try to reserve that kind of thing for an absolute necessity?

H: Well, I don't think anybody in the United States if the president is trying to get them to do something they don't want to do--there's not anybody that doesn't puff up a little when the president of the United States calls.

B: No matter how many times he does it?

H: No matter how many times, no matter whether you turn him down or not, no matter whether he puts the blowtorch to you or not. There's something self-expanding about the ego when you get a call from the White House; it doesn't have to be the president. There's an almost mystical awe about the White House, something akin to the Royal Palace. The only man I ever heard of turning down a call from the president was [Congressman] Clarence Cannon, the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, refused to talk to Kennedy, but there are not many Clarence Cannons, and he wouldn't do that--I've never heard of him doing it but once. No, it's very difficult to say no to a president of the United States. The fact

that Johnson would do this was just a measure of the extra hours and the extra energy that he put into the office, it seems to me.

B: What about the weaknesses? You've praised the President highly. Does he have weaknesses?

H: Oh, of course he has weaknesses. He's a man on a gigantic scale, intellectually, physically, emotionally. I think people do not see some aspects of him. One is that this man is a deeply emotional and a sentimental man--a very deeply sentimental man. He's a man to whom tears are not foreign. He's a man of so many moods, a kaleidoscopic man. One of his weaknesses always, I think, was in his lack of understanding of how to work with the press. It always seemed to me that he never had a sure sense of press relations; that he either courted them too strongly or he gave them too much of the cold shoulder; that he confided in some of them too much, or that he was too inaccessible. He never had, it seemed to me, a sure sense of press relations. Now, I don't expect any president over a long period of time to have good press relations; I don't think it's possible if a president is doing anything, because the president and the press had two different jobs to do that are--there's a built-in conflict there.

But I think that some of the things that he did in connection with press relations--I felt, for example, that he overexposed himself on TV, radio, and the press. Mr. Rayburn said one time, "A politician has got to have publicity; it's his life blood, but he can damn well get too much of it, because the people are smart as hell and they know good and well that a man can't be doing something important every day in the

year." And I felt that the President was--it's like an appearance of the king; he certainly should appear, but his appearances should all be highlighted. And I felt that there were too many bill signings, too many--going to Harry Truman on Medicare and going to Ellis Island on immigration were great, but there were many of those that I thought could have been dispensed with to his own advantage. I thought the walks around the White House lawn with people trailing him madly were just not helpful.

Maybe he tried to do too much--I don't think so. I think a president in the modern time has to be very much of an activist, but the more times you go to bat, the more times you're going to strike out. That's the penalty you pay for being an activist. A story said the other day that thus far Richard Nixon had scored two bunts and no hits. Well, he has got a pretty good batting average, but he hasn't scored yet. Johnson scored many times, but there were also some--relatively few, but there were some strikeouts.

I thought many times that he was probably unduly sensitive. All public officials have a large ego; you can't stay in public life and survive in public life without believing very, very strongly in yourself and your own fate. But I felt that he was more thin-skinned than he should have been. And a lot of times when people say things you don't appreciate, you just brush them aside and don't let them worry you. I think the President--that's not anything you can impute fault to him for, that was just the nature he was born with. But I think that was one of his weaknesses as a president.

People have said on the Vietnam War that he was too stubborn. Well, I don't buy that at all. I think he did what any self-respecting president of the United States would have done under the circumstances. The fact that in hindsight we see that he got bad advice or bad information from some people--I don't know who; I would say perhaps the military--they told him they could do things that they were not able to do. I do remember that meeting at the White House with the whips. I don't know whether we've covered that or not.

B: Not the subject matter.

H: Well, the President wanted a meeting--this was early in 1965, I would think the latter part of February; the White House Calendar will reflect it. And he invited down the Speaker, the Majority Leader, the Whip, Deputy Whip, Assistant Whips, and a couple of staff people. It was a fascinating evening for me. We were to meet in the Red Room. It was all set up in the Red Room. Well, the President came in late and he looked around and he said, "This setup is no good. This is a mess." And it was a mess, crowded and just inappropriate. So he made them change it all around, and we met in the State Dining Room. And he and all the members who could crowd around sat at this great enormous table, and a few of us sat in chairs over on the sides. And the President started off by apologizing for being late. And he said, "I was in approving the bombing targets for tomorrow in Vietnam." And he started saying, "There is never any let up in the office." And hanging on the west wall of the State Dining Room was this big portrait of Abraham Lincoln, and the President waved toward it and said, "He walks these

halls every night. His ghost walks these halls every night. You have these problems with you twenty-four hours a day. There's never any escape from them."

And then he started in a monologue of what he apparently had told the Joint Chiefs of Staff. And he said, "Now, don't you be talking to me about fighting eight hundred million of them," referring, I suppose, to Communist China, "when you haven't proved to me by a damn sight that you know how to lick fourteen million of them. So don't you be talking to me about any eight hundred million of them. I don't know how to fight a war, I wasn't trained for that, but you were, and if you don't know how to fight and win a war, then we've wasted a hell of a lot of money on your educations. But don't you be talking to me about fighting any eight hundred million." And he went on on this monologue.

Then he started talking to the people assembled about the importance of winning and winning on Capitol Hill. Medicare was in a critical state then in the committee, and the committee had adopted a couple of amendments that he didn't like. He was saying, "We've got to undo this." They were trivial amendments about the inclusion of fees or something. And I remember him slapping his hands together--he said, "You've got to Johnny-at-the-rat-hole. You've got to be Johnny-at-the-rat-hole all the time," and everybody laughed, you know. And so then he singled out a member from Alabama, who had just put through a bill with great skill--Bob Jones. And Jones had gotten this bill through in a brilliant handling of legislation. And he said, "I don't know how you did it. Brilliant! Masterful! I've never seen anything greater since

I've been in Washington! I want to congratulate you. It's just marvelous! It's just great!"

And then he turned to somebody else and he'd chide them and say, "I'm going to pick on you now. I'm going to pick on you. Why didn't you do this? Why didn't you do that?" And so forth and so on. And then I remember he bore down on something and Dan Rostenkowski, the congressman from Chicago, who was a big hefty fellow who is now chairman of the Democratic caucus in the House, and I was sitting next to Danny. Here Danny came out of the Daley machine and so forth, but the President made one of these points. And Danny leaned over to me and said, "God, he's tough!"

But there was this great range of emotions displayed, from near anger to ribald humor, to history--appeals to history; it was a very fascinating intellectual and dramatic display. It was a performance that--I don't like to call it a performance, but it was an evening that held you on the edge of your seat. This man had such a knowledge of all these little developments of issues and such a knowledge of the problems involved and these changing moods, the lights and shadows were constantly changing, you know. It had to be seen to be believed, but this was the man showing all these phases of his personality.

So the meeting finally broke up. It was a long meeting and the President said, "Well, I apologize. I'm going to have to leave now. I've kept Senator Dirksen waiting for about forty minutes," or twenty minutes or whatever it was. And so as the meeting broke up, Senator Dirksen wandered in. And he was down there to talk about civil rights.

The President had won him over to support, or was going to eventually win him over to support cloture.

Well, the President the night before had delivered a speech in Congress. And it was a very--I think that was the "We Shall Overcome" speech, if I'm not mistaken, and it was a terrific speech. So the members were crowding around him, and I happened to be standing right close to the President. Dirksen had wandered right up to him. Members were saying, "That was a great speech last night, Mr. President. That was a great speech!" And Dirksen cut in and said, "Too damned long!" And the President wheeled on him, irritated obviously, and he said, "Well, when you get interrupted forty-one times by applause, of course it's going to be long." And Dirksen stood his ground and said, "Huh! Still too damned long!" But the obvious relationship between the two men was very easy and very close.

But it made an indelible impression on me. He was talking that night about the whites of the world were outnumbered by the people of other colors and how we couldn't just be an island with all the good things of life when the rest of the world didn't have them, that we had to realize this, that we were very much the minority in the world and we'd better understand this. He was talking in global philosophical terms as well as minute terms about a specific amendment on a specific bill. I don't think anybody could have seen him in that without recognizing that this is an absolutely unbelievable human being, aside from his presidency or decisions. He undoubtedly has one of the--

End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview III

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Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interviews of D. B. Hardeman

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, Maury Maverick, Jr., of San Antonio, Texas, Executor of the Estate of D. B. Hardeman, do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title and interest in the tape recordings and transcripts of personal interviews conducted on February 26, March 12 and April 22, 1969 at Washington, D.C., and on January 19, 1977 in San Antonio, Texas, and prepared for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

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