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INTERVIEW I

DATE: February 28, 1979

INTERVIEWEE: BRYCE HARLOW

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: Mr. Harlow's residence, Arlington, Virginia

Tape 1 of 2

G: Okay, Mr. Harlow, I believe it's going to work for us now.

H: All right, good. It has occurred to me we might try to recollect how I came to know President Johnson to begin with and when and in what odd connections our paths crossed over the forty years I've been in Washington.

Probably the first time I became aware of a Lyndon Johnson was during the war when I was in General [George C.] Marshall's office. There were at that time, four, I believe, members of Congress who were very important to President Roosevelt--they were then members of the House--who were in great danger of being defeated if they didn't serve in the armed forces, because they were of draft age, they were of service age, and they had voted to induct people into the armed forces, and therefore were vulnerable to people running against them and saying, "And where were you when the draft went on?"

So these four people--and I'm fuzzy on this, you'll have to recheck this, but I know that one was Albert Gore of Tennessee, and one was John Fogarty of Rhode Island. And I think one was Lyndon Johnson of Texas, and one was Melvin Maas of Minnesota. These were

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all dynamic political soldiers, true to the faith of Roosevelt and could be counted upon to wage his fights in the House. So I had the task of giving a hand-conducted tour through the armed forces in time of war, in approximately 1943, for Albert Gore and somebody else, Fogarty I think, to get them in for a special basic training, and in for a special little advanced training, and then for a special shipment to a combat area, and a special escort through a combat area, special return to the United States and special discharge. So then they would be veterans who had served in combat, so they could approach the voters unassailably the following election year. (Laughter)

It was really, of course, a political charade, but that's the way politics is done oftentimes, and used to be done a lot more than it is done today. I think Lyndon did one of those. Now I'm not sure that's true. He went in as a commissioned officer. Albert Gore went in as an enlisted man. Melvin Maas was an officer in the Marine Corps. Fogarty, I think, went in as an enlisted man with Gore into the army. The other two fellows were in the naval service. But Lyndon I think was at that time one of them. I think I then first became aware of LBJ as a factor, because he was so important to the President, to get him that kind of political protection and coloration for his upcoming election in Texas. I think that's the first time I knew he was there, although I should have known earlier since I was in the House of Representatives as the assistant librarian of the House in 1938 and LBJ was in the House area at that time. But I was not aware of him personally for some reason then. At that time, of course,

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Sam Rayburn was majority leader and [William B.] Bankhead was speaker. So I think it was [during] the war that I first knew that Lyndon existed.

Then I became aware of LBJ quite emphatically and quite excitedly and poignantly in 1947. 1947, in January, I was hired as one of the four original professional staff members of the House Committee on Armed Services, which had just been created by--[there was] a violent fight over it--the merger, the forcible merger, of the old Naval Affairs Committee and the old Military Affairs Committee into the new Committee on Armed Services. I was one of the four professional staff members under the new congressional reorganization act.

Our presence on that committee staff was terribly displeasing to Carl Vinson of Georgia who had been chairman of the old Naval Affairs Committee for many, many years and was a great patriarch in Congress. He very much was opposed to unification and he was opposed to the unifying of these committees. So was LBJ, who was a disciple of Carl Vinson. According to Lyndon Johnson, he had three heroes in the political life of the United States: Franklin Roosevelt, Sam Rayburn, and Carl Vinson. Carl Vinson was the chairman of the old Naval Affairs Committee for many, many years. When he retired from Congress he retired after having served there longer than any man in the history of the United States, a record which still stands. He's still living in Milledgeville, Georgia at the age of ninety-four, and one of my dearest friends. He's like a father to me.

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So I was hired by the committee, which was in the Eightieth Congress, Republican controlled, one of those brief interludes of history in which the Republicans control anything. So they controlled that particular Congress. LBJ was on the minority side of the brand-new Armed Services Committee. A man named Walter G. Andrews of New York was the first chairman of the brand-new Armed Services Committee, and he was determined to make the committee work. The people from the old Naval Affairs Committee were determined to make it not work, because it was a shotgun marriage which they hated.

The professional staff was put on the committee and hired by the committee, and the Naval Affairs Committee members didn't want anything to do with them. They wanted to continue to work with the Navy Department for their staff assistance, as they had forever. The old Military Affairs Committee members wanted to make unification work, so they wanted to work with the staff and make the committee work.

So I was being used by the committee, being used principally by the struggling chairman who was trying to keep this bunch of Kilkenny cats hooked together. And I was the only experienced member of the staff, because I had served on the policy level in the War Department throughout the war in General Marshall's office, and had worked for many years previous to that, for three years, on Capitol Hill. So I knew the Congress and I knew the executive branch and I knew the military. I was the only experienced member of the staff and therefore I was being used a great deal and was helping to train the rest of the staff.

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My first realization of LBJ and the manner of person LBJ was was in connection with a little house-keeping sort of a bill that didn't amount to a tinker's dam which had come before the committee involving something for the armed forces, didn't make a bit of difference, routine. I was assigned to handle it and present it to the full committee and have them say, "Okay," and get rid of it. So on that particular day, I got before the full committee. This was still a great strain on any of the staff to do this because we were new, the committee was mean, and the committee was the second-largest committee on Capitol Hill, thirty-seven members, each one of them tougher than anybody around, a lot of them cantankerous as the devil, liking to pick on people. We weren't used to that; we were then a bunch of kids. We were doing our best and were kind of scared. So I got up in front of the committee and presented this little bill, which I had researched and struggled with and gotten departmental reports on and done everything you should do. I reported that there was no reason to have any objection to the bill. It was my recommendation that the committee be done with it.

Whereupon this "minority," close quote, member of the committee on the Democratic side [said], "Mr. Chairman, I would like to propound a question to the staff member." "The gentleman from Texas," said the chairman. "Have you checked this with the RFC?" Well, I looked at this member, whom I didn't know, really, who was Lyndon Baines Johnson of Texas. I was dumbfounded because there was no conceivable reason on earth to check that inconsequential little bill with the Reconstruction Finance Corporation.

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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I mean, why not check it with the Fish and Wildlife Service? It was ridiculous! I said no, and I made the mistake of saying it in a way which I'm sure reflected my consternation that you stupid fellow would think that I should check it with the RFC. One did not do that to Lyndon Baines Johnson. That was my first lesson dealing with Lyndon Baines Johnson. He looked at me, flushed, was instantly enraged and insulted, and he said, "Mr. Chairman it is quite obvious this staff member has not done his job. I move that the bill be tabled and the requisite information be obtained, and until then the bill be left before the committee."

The Chairman looked around, totally nonplussed. He was brand-new. He was a Republican. He had forgotten how to handle a bill anyway. No Republicans at that point knew what to do with a bill. He looked around for help. Nobody offered any help, and he said, "Without objection it is so ordered." I looked on with absolutely amazement. That was my first experience with the dynamism, the force, the "vigah," as Kennedy would have said it, and the almost irresistible leadership of Lyndon Baines Johnson, who was about the third or fourth-ranking Democrat on the committee.

So I went back to my knitting and I cleaned up my act. By which I mean I went through the absolutely ridiculous, useless exercise of calling over to the general counsel of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and saying, "Mr. Schmaltz, we have a bill, HR1174,"--or whatever it was--" and it has to do with this thing. What impact, what relevance, what impingement of whatever kind does it have on the

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Reconstruction Finance Corporation, please? Would you please examine it and call me back quickly?" "Is it before our committee?" "It has been before our committee and been put on hold until that question can be answered. It will be called up again before the committee next Tuesday." He said, "What? What's that got to do with the RFC?" I said, "That's for you to answer. I tried to answer it and got my block knocked off. You answer it!" (Laughter) He said, "That doesn't have anything to do with us." I said, "Don't give me that answer. Document it. Give me an answer in writing."

So I got an answer in writing from the RFC, which I sent at once when I received it in a very sweet letter to Lyndon Baines Johnson, saying that I have this response from the RFC which I am presenting to the chairman for his information, and which I will read to the committee when this bill is renewed next week, provided your hold is removed. He said, "Okay. Go ahead and move it. Move it." He made his point. He knew it had nothing to do with the RFC. This was Lyndon Johnson. He was teaching this uppity, snitty, insolent little staff member what Lyndon Baines Johnson was. He didn't give one damn about that bill.

I was learning Lyndon, that's what I was learning. That was the first experience I had with him, and it's vivid in my recollection, as you can see, because it was a little bit searing. Lyndon's encounters with you tended to be memorable, and so they were dramatic, they were searing; they were big; they were tough; they were exciting; they were out of the ordinary, because he was bigger than life,

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extraordinary, in all kinds of curious ways. So your recollections of him tend to go towards the spectacular because of the way he was.

My next one is of the same quality, same committee, about six months later. The professional staff now of the brand-new committee was beginning to become matured. The committee was becoming adjusted to living together, getting to know you. They were beginning to drop a little of their internecine warfare and were beginning to work like a committee should. It looked like maybe unification would survive after all. The committee was divided into eleven subcommittees, functionally, a mistake made by the brand-new chairman. So the bills were automatically referred to subcommittees according to the functional nature of the bill, which deprived the chairman of any power over the members in referring bills, a mistake that no Democratic chairman of a committee makes. It's the way the government ought to work but it's a bad way to work the government.

So we were in the Personnel Subcommittee, which was under the chairmanship of Congressman Bill Hess of Ohio. This is still the Eightieth Congress--Republican committees. The senior Democrat on the committee was Carl Vinson of Georgia. He was senior, ex officio on everything, of course. He was by far the seniorest man in the entire House, with the exception of Sam Rayburn, who ranked him by three months. So he was the senior, ex officio member of all subcommittees as well as senior on the full committee under the chairmanship of Walter G. Andrews.

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This bill had to do with the giving of navy vessels that were worn out or no longer of much value to South American countries, part of a friendship, good neighbor policy, "give away the navy" kind of a goal. So we had Admiral somebody on the stand testifying before the subcommittee. Here was Carl Vinson and here was the Chairman, Hess, and Lyndon Johnson too was there, and interested. He wanted to come in and play some games with it. And the subcommittee [was] rather generally in attendance, as a matter of fact, because the committee was still new and the members were really working at their job a little bit. So we took the testimony of the Admiral, and the Admiral started on a prepared statement which he obviously hadn't seen before he had gotten into the committee room.

He read it and then sat back with a smile, "I'll be happy to entertain any questions, Mr. Chairman." Whereupon Bill Hess said, "Are there any questions?" Carl Vinson said, "Yes, Mr. Chairman. I would like to propound a few questions to the witness." So here is the old "six-star Admiral" of the Navy. He runs his glasses down on that big nose of his and he said, "Now, Admiral, I want you to answer me some very frank questions. When did you first read this bill?" And the Admiral said, "Well, Mr. Chairman, naturally. . . ." "I want you to answer my question straightaway. When was the first time you read that bill?" "This morning, Mr. Chairman." "That's what I thought, Admiral. Now, Admiral, when was the first time you read that statement you just read to this committee?" "Just now, Mr. Chairman." "Yes, that's what I thought, Admiral. That's what I thought. Mr.

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Chairman, I move that this bill be tabled. I move, in addition, that this bill not be considered again in this Congress, which means for at least two full years. Admiral, that motion will be adopted unanimously by this subcommittee. My motions always are. Now you go down and you tell the Secretary of the Navy that if he ever again sends an admiral up here as badly prepared as you, we will not only table the bill, we will table the admiral! Mr. Chairman, what is your pleasure?" "Without objection, it is so ordered."

So up got the Admiral with his entourage and walked out of the room and lost his fanny, lost his bill, lost his color, almost lost his rank, humiliated, embarrassed to beat the band. Little Harlow, new staff member, watching the committee, watching Uncle Carl perform and watching the power quotient develop around the place, learning, learning, learning all the time.

So they called up another bill. This was a little bill that I started to tell you about first. The committee now was edgy, bad-humored, obviously. They called up this little bill, which was absolutely nothing, like my old bill with the RFC problem in it. Well, the way I prepared for the committee meetings was to prepare a complete analysis of the bill for the members: who might be interested in it and who the witnesses were and what they would probably say and so on. Then I would give them a recommendation as to what to do with it based on a lot of work. Why did I do that? Because I was trained on the General's staff, and when you gave a paper to General Marshall you didn't give him a paper that said,

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"Here is what this is all about," period. You put, "and therefore these options would appear to be available: one, two, three, four, five. The one that is recommended is number four, and the following people endorse that and the following people oppose that." That's what you give to the chief of staff of the army allegedly. You don't do that in the navy. You do it in the army. Well, anyway, so I was doing that for the committee in my training.

So they come up with this little bill and I make the presentation because there was no witness. It was too small a bill and didn't make any difference. So here's old Uncle Carl Vinson sitting there, and here's Lyndon Johnson sitting there, and here is poor Bill Hess, who didn't know one end of the bill from the other. He was the subcommittee chairman and the Republican chairman; he didn't know what to do with it. And these two old war hawks from the old Naval Affairs Committee [were] dominating everything around. So he asked me to make the presentation of the bill, and I did.

I had passed around a memorandum; they all had it in front of them. I got through with that. It was a perfectly innocuous thing. Nobody cared if it passed or if it didn't pass. Stepped forward Lyndon Baines Johnson: "Mr. Chairman, I take total exception to this memorandum I have in front of me. I will not tolerate it, and I take exception to it officially as well as personally. I want the committee to consider officially the role of the professional staff on this committee. Mr. Harlow has given this committee its instructions on what it should do on this bill. I resent that personally.

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I resent it officially. I think every member of this subcommittee should find that intolerable and Mr. Harlow's conduct totally unacceptable. I want the record to show that. I want this on the record. I don't want to see it happen again. I want the staff's relationship to the committee totally reconsidered. I want what their function with the committee is to be re-examined and laid out carefully. I submit all that in the form of a motion, Mr. Chairman."

Bill Hess, who was a very dear friend of mine, looked at me and he said, "The gentleman from Texas insists upon that?" He said, "I most assuredly do." And he [Hess] said, "I ask the gentleman from Texas to withhold that motion until the next meeting of this subcommittee. Let me discuss the matter with the full committee chairman. This is a matter that goes beyond this subcommittee. It doesn't just involve this subcommittee. We're talking about the total professional staff, not just Mr. Harlow's handling of this particular bill. I would like to have that." Carl Vinson said, "Now, I think that's the right thing to do, Lyndon. It's the right thing to do. Let's defer it now." Well, that turned off Lyndon for the moment.

He said, "All right. All right. We'll defer it till the next meeting." Well, I was sitting there, right in the middle of this whole thing, absolutely astounded. I'd done a good, solid, professional, hardworking, patient, thorough piece of staff work to help the committee come to a sensible conclusion on a piece of nonsense and to have myself chewed out and kicked around like that was more than I could bear. I didn't want the job anyway. I had tried not to

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be hired by the committee; I didn't want to be hired by them. They had come and pulled me out of Oklahoma City, which was my home, where I was happily at work, to do this job as a public service. I didn't want to be there, and for them to kick me around for being there, working my tail off like that, just blew my mind!

So the subcommittee adjourned and Bill Hess came over to me. He said, "Bryce, I'm sorry. We'll take care of that." I said, "You won't either, Bill. I'm quitting. You won't take care of that. I'll be damned if I'm going to be here working for this committee and treated like that. I didn't come up here for that. I don't have to hang around this place. I've been around the Congress for years. I've been around Washington for years. I didn't want to come back here. Nobody is going to do this to me. The hell with it! Jam it, Bill! I'm going to Carl Vinson and I'm submitting my resignation. No member of the committee is going to talk to me like that." He said, "Well, now, just take it easy, Bryce. Come on, now, come on now, don't. . . ." I said, "The heck with it." So I went to my office. Bill went to Vinson and said, "I've got a staff member here that's blowing his mind." So Bill went to Walter Andrews, the chairman of the full committee, and the two of them went to see Carl Vinson to get him to calm me down.

So I was in my office. I went to Walter Andrews and told him I was going to go back to Oklahoma City. He said, "I heard about it, Bryce, and I understand how you feel about it, but you're not going back to Oklahoma City. You're going to cool off and you're going home

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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now. You just don't hang around here the rest of the day. You go home and cool off. Go play some tennis, do something. You're not going home. We need you here. You're the only experienced man we've got. You know that. You're not going no place!" I said, "Oh, yes, I am. I will not tolerate that, and he'll do it again. He'll do it again. He has jumped me twice. He likes to jump me. Well, he isn't going to jump me any more. I just won't put up with it."

Well, the next thing I knew, the phone rang. I was in my office sort of haphazardly collecting my stuff. I was quitting. And the phone rang. It was the House cloakroom. "Mr. Harlow, Chairman Vinson calling." "Yes, okay." "Harlow, Vinson." "Yes, Mr. Chairman." "All right now, you come to the speaker's lobby right now. I want to see you in the speaker's lobby right now." He hung up. Carl Vinson, you know, a call from him was incredible. That was the first call made to any member of the staff of the committee by Carl Vinson under the new reorganization. He had never called or talked to any of them, didn't want to have anything to do with them, you know. So here he was calling Bryce Harlow. This was big news, that Vinson would call any of us.

So I go to the floor of the House, go in the speaker's lobby and here's Carl Vinson. He said, "All right, now you sit down right over here. You wait a minute there. You just sit there." And he goes off to the floor of the House, and he comes in and has Lyndon by the arm. He sits Lyndon down on the other side of him, then him, then me at the table in the speaker's lobby. He said, "I hear you're going to

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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quit." I said, "That's correct, Mr. Chairman." He said, "I hear it's because of what Lyndon said at the subcommittee meeting." I said, "It's because of what he said at that meeting, and it's because of what he said at the full committee meeting, but mainly it's because of what he will say at the next meeting. I will not put up with it. Mr. Johnson, you can jump somebody else. You can't jump me. Just put that down."

He looked at me, and Carl Vinson looked at me, and Carl said, "Now Bryce. Bryce, now. Now Bryce, that's Lyndon's way of finding out who counts around here. It's a compliment to you, not an insult. Lyndon ain't going to jump you no more. He's tried it. He now knows what you're worth. That's right, isn't it, Lyndon?" Lyndon said, "That's right, and I'm sorry. It won't happen again." I said, "Now, just a minute. I don't need this job. I want you both to understand that. I didn't ask for this job. I want you both to understand that. I was asked to come here to be interviewed for this job from Oklahoma City where I was very happily employed. I want you to understand that. I was persuaded to take the job against my will. I want you to understand that. I took it as a matter of public service and I will quit it instantly. You just understand that." Lyndon said, "I do, and I respect you for it, and don't ever let that change."

That was my second encounter with Lyndon Baines Johnson. And I, of course, remember that vividly, again searing, again extraordinary. He resented the staff telling the committee what we thought they ought to do on a bill. That was for them to decide, and he was trying to

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
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use my paper as a lesson to the staff. Well, I was more careful in the future about that. There was some correctness in what he said. I wasn't writing the memorandum to the chief of staff; I was writing a memorandum to majarajahs from separate, totally independent congressional districts. Each one of them reports only to God, and so you have to deal with that differently.

Well, that was a lesson. But it was a lesson to Lyndon about me, which was valuable to Lyndon. Why? Because it made him like me. From that time on Lyndon Johnson liked Bryce Harlow and we became very good friends.

So, the third time, in 1948, I was a staff member of a special committee created to investigate the petroleum industry, chaired by Congressman Dewey Short of Missouri. Lyndon Johnson was the senior Democrat on this special committee, and we investigated petroleum. I had to write the committee report after enormous investigation. [It was] the first investigation which said we were going to have a terrible oil shortage, by the way. Lyndon Johnson then became a great factor in my process, because the committee report had to be written, and who was going to write the report? Nobody could except me. The members didn't know what to report after this long, long, thorough investigation. So we had an executive session after the hearings finally ended, after months and months of hearings. The chairman, Dewey Short, went around the committee room asking the committee members what they thought they ought to do. One would say this and would say that. Nobody knew what to think.

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
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Finally Lyndon said, "Mr. Chairman, maybe Bryce Harlow has an idea or two as to what we ought to do." So Dewey said, "Bryce, what do you think we ought to do?" I said, "Mr. Chairman, I wish you hadn't asked, because I know what you ought to do. You have testimony on this issue before your subcommittee, on the record, from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which is that you will not have enough petroleum available to fight another major war. That's on the record. Now then, what are you going to report? You're going to report that we have to correct that. You are charged with the security of this country in this committee. You can't put it aside. You've got to have a report that says you're going to fix that and that means doing some spectacular, terribly controversial things involving the petroleum industry." Lyndon Johnson said, "Mr. Chairman, I move that the committee instruct the staff member to submit within two weeks a rough draft of the committee's report." "So ordered." Lyndon, now my friend and believer.

Sure enough, I wrote them a report that was the damndest thing you ever did see, a rough, mean, dirty, nasty report that the petroleum industry resented violently and tried to get me fired for immediately. They made several efforts to get me fired for offering such a terrible report. And I had changed the report in two or three particulars where Lyndon called it to--

G: How so? Do you remember the changes?

H: On tidelands, on offshore drilling, you know. There were two others. There were three very controversial aspects that were red-hot in Texas that would have been very bad politically for Lyndon in Texas.

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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G: Was the depletion allowance [one of them]?

H: Depletion? Well. . . . I'm sorry, I don't remember. There were three things that were particularly bad for Lyndon in the draft report that he wanted me to change, and I got Dewey Short to agree to. We changed [them] because we wanted Lyndon's signature on that report. We got a unanimous report out of the subcommittee, violent as it was, controversial as it was, which was what absolutely dumfounded the petroleum industry, which was asleep at the switch. It didn't realize that we were giving birth to this monster over there in the Armed Services Committee.

G: Well now, what did they oppose about it? What did the industry oppose?

H: Oh, the thing talked about that we had to stockpile oil; we had to store it in salt caverns. We're doing that now, thirty-one years later. We recommended this in 1948! This report in 1948 is a terrific report, I say. Of course, I'm the author and you'd expect that. But it's a terrific report. We got the cream of the recommendations of the top people of petroleum in the entire world. We had fifty witnesses, fifty witnesses carefully culled from the petroleum industry of the world and America. [E. L.] DeGoyler down in Texas, the great DeGoyler, the great petroleum geologist, we had him. We had the top people of the world in petroleum.

Well, Lyndon signed it. It was really quite a blockbuster report. It still is. Something ought to be written about that report, because those members--I'm not talking about Harlow--who signed that report

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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in 1948 were shouting way out ahead of what we're now talking about thirty years later. It's all down there, thirty years ago, almost everything being talked about now.

All right, so again, again I had Lyndon in my mind, Lyndon in my soul, Lyndon in my awareness. This was 1948. Something else happened in 1948; he ran for the Senate. Or was it 1950?

G: It was 1948.

H: It was 1948, wasn't it? That's one reason why those three things were so important. Walter Jenkins was his AA at that time and Walter and I were close friends, and as far as I am concerned, still are. I haven't seen him of course for years.

So Lyndon runs for the Senate. He goes through the interesting experiences of that race, the fire in Bexar County and all that kind of stuff that went with it. Including some contributions that were never reported that I learned about, that almost got out, that would have blown Lyndon to pieces if they'd been found out.

G: What was that?

H: A contribution from one of the aircraft companies, a five thousand dollar contribution.

G: Was it Grumman?

H: No, not Grumman. Who built Atlas, Douglas? Avco? It was a contribution to Lyndon's campaign for that race that was never reported, five thousand dollars worth. It almost came out in our investigation of the B-36. It was in connection with the B-36 is what it was. Who

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built the B-36, Douglas? Yes. But that's what it was. I had to handle that investigation of the B-36, in which Lyndon was a big influence. In the course of that we uncovered the edge of this unreported contribution to Lyndon. This wasn't in the plan.

G: Well, how was the contribution conveyed?

H: I don't know, cash or such to Lyndon or his functionaries.

G: Of course they didn't have the reporting restrictions that they had later, then.

H: Well, but it was just as illegal as you can get. The problem was to keep it concealed, because it would have been a Johnson disaster. So I attended a little, very confidential meeting with Carl Vinson and Paul Kilday and Lyndon. They asked me to sit in on it for some reason. I didn't know why I was in it; I have no idea why I was in that meeting. The three congressmen agreed to handle the thing some way where it'd stay covered. I don't remember how it was done even. I just remember the incident and the amazement that they would include me in their confidence.

G: This was in 1948?

H: Yes. 1948. No, I think it was later. No, it was in connection with the B-36 investigation. Yes, in connection with the Avco investigation, which was in 1949. This is the first time I've ever mentioned that, ever, right now, to anybody. Because I didn't think it was any of my business really, and it really wasn't.

G: Before we go to the Senate I wanted to ask you if you have any other insights into the relationship between Lyndon Johnson and Carl Vinson?

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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H: I want to say to you, I've been lucky in my public service. A quarter of a century in public service I have, and I've served almost all of it on the policy level of the government. I mean it's just been luck. You can't plan a life like that. It's luck. It's been with the Congress. It's been with the White House, eleven years in the White House. And it's been with General Marshall in the war. You know, it's just lucky. The result of it all has been to throw me into contact constantly over those years with the prime movers of the United States and the world.

Lyndon Johnson is one I've been very lucky to know. Why? Because I knew Martin Dies. I knew of Maury Maverick. I knew very fleetingly Fiorello La Guardia. I didn't know, but I know his son intimately, Huey Long, and his son is a spitting image and a duplicate, carbon copy. And I knew Leon Henderson of the old Roosevelt stuff. I know Tommy Corcoran intimately, a very close friend of mine, and people like this. Well, there aren't many people like that. There are those special people. Those are spectacular people. They are cut from a different cloth than ordinary people. Lyndon was one of them.

Lyndon, the kind he's most like in a sense was Maury Maverick, where he'd sit down and he appears to be moving, seated, there's such vitality, such force. You see Maverick sitting at a dinner table and he's doing forty miles an hour. Lyndon, wherever he'd sit down there was a cloud of dust. Something was happening all the time, even if he were seated in the committee room. He was talking to the guys next to him. He was doing something. He was getting up; he was sitting

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done. He was going in and out of the committee room. His alarm clock watch, which he just loved to harass people with--I guess you know about that--[was] the damndest thing. It was a stunt, you know, and he always set it off at some propitious time to attract attention to himself. He couldn't stand not being the cynosure of all eyes. He had to be at the head of the table. He had to be looked at. He had to be listened to. And people had to do what he thought they should do. And ordinarily he made them do it.

How many people do you know like that? None. You never know anybody like that, because they don't make them. But, yes, they do, once in a millennium. That's Lyndon. And that's some of these other fellows. Every one of our toughest leaders is specially endowed in some way, which is why they're our leaders. That's why you have a Dwight D. Eisenhower, because of the energy in the man. It surpassed energy. When he lost his temper--Eisenhower--it was like looking into the door of a Bessemer furnace. Incredible! White-hot heat. Your mouth would drop open. You couldn't imagine a human being had that much energy! All right, he was president. Why was he president? Well, he could stand the gaff and the guff and the beatings and the nonsense and the fatigue and all that you have to go through to be president. And the vitality is such that it forced him to the top of the human heap, [the] same way that [it did] Lyndon. Lyndon just could not avoid being at the top of the heat, no way to avoid it. So he ran and made it to the Senate.

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But you were asking me that before he went to the Senate, what?

G: Any more insights on his relationship with Carl Vinson?

H: Well, you see, Carl Vinson and he played games all the time in the committee, tossing things back and forth to each other to the poor, clumsy Republicans, who didn't know how to run the committee because they hadn't run it for years. Carl Vinson and Lyndon had been running the committee for years on end.

G: Did LBJ defer to Vinson a great deal?

H: Oh, yes. Yes, indeed. Carl Vinson was terribly important to Lyndon. Sam Rayburn was terribly important to Lyndon. Franklin Roosevelt was terribly important to Lyndon. And he worked them all. He lobbied them, he politicked them, he used them. And they used Lyndon and his great capabilities. It was a mariâge de convenance in all of those instances. Oh, yes. Uncle Carl used Lyndon on the floor of the House on the great Seventy Group Air Force flights. Oh, yes. Lyndon would get in there and fight and people were afraid of Lyndon. Because he was ruthless, he was tough, and people would back away. It was that force, the enormous vitality of the man. But he said himself time and time again, Lyndon did say, that Sam Rayburn and Carl Vinson and Roosevelt, were his three heroes.

G: Do you recall any other reminiscences about Chairman Vinson?

H: And him?

G: Yes.

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H: Well, I'm going to tell you one--what is done with these reports?

G: They are transcribed and then we'll give you a copy of the transcript and you can restrict any portion of it for any period of time that you like. We do not make anything available until after you have given [written permission].

H: Okay. There's one little vignette that I've never repeated in my lifetime so far that in a sense belongs in these records, that I would not want to get out. Because as I guess you've sensed, I'm very fond of LBJ. I really am, and I'm very fond of his widow and Lynda Bird and Chuck Robb, Tom Johnson, Walter Jenkins, D. B. [Hardeman]. But there's a little kind of a thing that's not complimentary to him that nobody knows about that probably ought to be in the mix available only for scholarly background information. Because it is a little item relating to the character of Lyndon that is historically properly there and I agree is properly there, but I don't want it attributed; I don't want the participants' names attributed. And I won't mention it if that's impossible.

G: Oh, no. We can follow whatever restrictions you want on this.

H: Well, all right. Now this goes to Carl Vinson/Lyndon Johnson, their relationship, that's precise. I mean, you ask for it and that's the reason it has come to mind.

After the 1948 race was over, the next big thing in my young, exciting life was a visit to me by John Connally. Big John comes in to see me, in my office, at the Armed Services Committee. He wants

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to talk to me very privately so we go off into the committee room. I didn't know John Connally much. Well, the thing was, Lyndon Johnson wanted me to be his AA in the Senate. [He'd] just gotten elected to the Senate and he wanted me to go over to the Senate with him and be his AA, showing that I had really transited with Lyndon now. He now was for old Bryce. Okay? Which I think was somewhat of a conquest, considering my take-off with Lyndon.

Well, I said, "I don't know why I should leave the Armed Services Committee to go over and be an AA to a member of the Senate particularly, except that I do know Lyndon Johnson's something special and I also know that I have never served in the Senate. I have served in the House. Twice now I have been secretary to a member of Congress, 1938 to 1940, and I've been now chief clerk of a committee of the House for five years. But I've never served in the Senate and I think it would be good for me to have that experience, so I'm interested. But I'll have to talk to Carl Vinson about it, who of course is chairman, and I'm his main reliance on the staff of the committee."

I didn't say anything at all to Carl Vinson at the time. It was just a conversation with Connally, because Lyndon was trying to take Connally over there and he wouldn't do it. He wanted to go back to Texas. He didn't want to be AA to Lyndon Johnson. So he was trying to find somebody for Lyndon. I didn't say anything to Uncle Carl for a while. The next thing I know, Lyndon had me up to his office talking to me, trying to persuade me to be his AA. He offered me a piece of his television station stock. He told me that we'd go down there periodically,

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Betty and I, and we'd have a wonderful time at the Ranch. He held out all such goodies, you know, in addition to my pay, in addition to the excitement, all this kind of thing. And he did a good sales job on old Bryce. It was interesting. Of course he was such a magnetic guy, he could sell you anything. I found myself kind of getting weak in the knees and ready to go to the Senate.

So I went down to talk to Uncle Carl ultimately. This was on a Sunday; I worked mostly around the clock for Vinson, naturally, and weekends, too. So we were sitting down there on a Sunday morning, working away, and I sat back and said, "Mr. Chairman, I've got to take up an important matter with you and that's me. Lyndon Johnson wants me to go over to the Senate with him and has asked me to resign here and be his AA in the Senate. I have stalled him along now for several weeks, and I have to give him my answer now. I want you to know how I feel about it. I don't want to run out on you, Mr. Chairman. I really don't, and you know that. I don't want to cause you any problems and trouble by leaving. On the other hand, I think you can replace me and you can replace me by putting Bob Smart in my place, who's on the staff now. He's experienced and he can succeed me and you can roll right along. And I'd like to get some Senate service. Of course, Lyndon is kind of exciting to be around. What do you think of it, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to have your advice."

Well, Carl Vinson sat there and looked at me. And he spun his swivel chair around to where his back was to me, he looked out the window behind him from the old Office Building over to the new Office

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Building across the street. He just sat there silently for a full minute, I guess, with his back to me. Then he wheeled back around. He said, "Bryce, it won't work. You would resign within six months. Lyndon cuts his corners too close."

Now then, I've never told that story to a soul.

G: What did he mean by that?

H: That Lyndon was a little bit unethical and that I wouldn't accept it and would quit. That was what he was saying to me. And I didn't do it. And he was Lyndon's dearest friend, and he was his dearest friend, I mean, he genuinely was. He wasn't trying to cut him. He wasn't trying to hurt him. He wasn't trying to malign him. He was just saying that Lyndon was so driven, so relentlessly driven, by force and vitality and all the rest that the end justified the means inside Lyndon sometimes and made him do things that I would not go along with, is what he was saying. And I think he was right because I knew Lyndon very well. Of course, I'd been through the aircraft contribution episode with Vinson before that, of course. No, it was after that. That must have been 1948. That was before the contribution episode.

But I've never told that story to anybody. I never have, because I never thought it was a good story. I have always thought, however, it was an insight that was accurate into one phase of Lyndon's personality and character of basically being that of being so absolutely remarkably driven toward his purposes that he was willing to cut corners too close. Okay?

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G: How about the Seventy Group Air Force? Do you remember the struggle there?

H: Oh, yes.

G: He and Stuart Symington worked together on that.

H: Well, in those days he and Stu Symington made music together, big music together. You might check some of those contributions, by the way, from Emerson Electric. I never did that, but I imagine that would show some interesting ties in there between the two. It was a curious thing because, you see, Lyndon flipped. Lyndon was totally against unification. He was one of the leaders in opposition to unification. Stu Symington was one of the leaders for unification. They should have been mortal enemies. They turned out to be absolute pals for a time. But on the Seventy Group Air Force--now I have an episode on that that's interesting in moving Lyndon now into the Senate's leadership, that if you're ready for I'll give to you, that I suddenly remember involving the Seventh Group Air Force.

G: We can do that and then we can go back, if you like.

H: Well, there were these terrible struggles in the House over the Seventy Group Air Force. You see, what happened, Stu Symington hypnotized, mesmerized, captivated, totally ran off with Carl Vinson. You wouldn't believe it. I didn't believe it. I didn't agree with what Stu was doing to him, sort of like when Stu tried to make me an army general. You see, Stu was going around making staff members generals to buy them off, and he made a half a dozen of us generals around there. I refused to accept it; I was an army lieutenant colonel in the reserve and he

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wanted to make me an air force general officer. I told him to jam it. I told him, "Everybody knows an army lieutenant colonel is worth more than an air force general." He didn't care too much for that.

He and Hoyt Vandenberg almost ran off with all the armed forces, as you may know, which caused an elaborate investigation in 1949 of the B-36, which brought on an explosion in the armed forces. To save the armed forces from the air force is what it all came down to, and that was in the end, save the armed forces from Vandenberg and Symington. That's the basic upset that destroyed [James V.] Forrestal and so forth.

So Secretary Symington came over and even sold Carl Vinson on opposing the huge aircraft carrier. He wrote a statement for Carl Vinson to read on the floor of the House opposing the aircraft carrier which was terribly controversial at that time. Carl Vinson called me in to listen to Stu; Stu made the pitch that the Chairman had to oppose it, gave him a prepared statement already written for the Chairman to deliver on the floor. The Chairman handed it to me, said, "All right now, Bryce, you fix that thing up in the way I say it and bring it in here, and I'm going to go out on the floor and I'm going to give it. You go out there and do it right now and then come right back. And you fix that all up for me." I looked aghast at him. Here was Stu sitting over there--he had the chairman hypnotized. I said, "Mr. Chairman, are you sure you want to do that?" "Now you go out there like I said, right now, and rewrite that in the way I talk, and I'm going right out there and deliver it." I looked at him and said, "All right, Mr. Chairman, like you said it." Stu

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looked daggers at me as I went. He saw I was getting in the way. But I went out, rewrote it in Vinson's style, and gave it back to him. He stuck it in his pocket and went to the floor of the House and he read it. "Carl Vinson Opposing the Carrier." That killed it deader than a dodo, of course, that speech. Headlines, Washington, D.C.; headlines across the country: "Vinson Opposes Carrier." Killed it, the U.S.S. United States.

Well, in about six months I was back down at the office on my normal Sunday, working for Carl Vinson. Carl Vinson the only other person in the office, the two of us, down there working on some other thing. I was at my desk. Vinson was in his office waiting for me to give him something that he had told me to do, and suddenly he appears in my doorway and sits down in front of my desk. We're just there alone on Sunday morning. He says, "Now, Bryce, I've been sitting in there thinking. You've been working for me real good for a long time, done good work, good work. You ought to be real proud of what you've done here, and I am very pleased with your work. But you made an awful bad mistake one time." I said, "Mr. Chairman, I probably made more than one bad mistake. Which one are you talking about?" "That carrier. You shouldn't have had me come out against the carrier. That was a mistake. You shouldn't have had me do that."

I said, "Mr. Chairman, let's reach a contract, okay? I will defend unto death your right to say publicly that I got you to do that, if you want me to. I don't care; it's all right with me. But when you and I are sitting alone in my office, you will not make that statement without

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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my correcting you to remind you you did that on the urging of W. Stuart Symington, and I tried desperately to keep you from doing it and you forced me to do that. Now if you want me to go out publicly and take the responsibility for it, I will. Between you and me, that was your mistake, not mine." He looked at me, and his eyes got kind of big, and he said, "I declare! That's right. I had forgotten that." And there was a long pause and he said, "You know, that Mr. Symington is a very dangerous man." He never mentioned that to me again.

But now Lyndon and he, after that, or during that season somewhere, he and Lyndon both married completely with W. Stuart Symington on the Seventy Group Air Force, then the Seventy Wing Air Force, just went all out on it and passed it through the House. It couldn't have passed without them.

G: How crucial was LBJ here in this?

H: Very.

G: Do you recall specifically what he did?

H: Well, he was vigorous in the debates and everything else. You see, he and Vinson were symbols of the old Naval Affairs Committee. They were symbols of the old anti-unification bills, and for them to be out front shilling for the air force and its new power--"Air power is peace power" was the slogan--for them to be out there leading that charge was worth votes in the House chambers, worth far more than the conventional votes of the army advocates and that sort of thing. They were indispensable to it and they put it across. And they would put it across the resistance

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oftentimes of George Mahon. George was trying to hold down the thing and make it sensible and this air force propaganda in those days was kind of wild. It was really far out. What was the Seventy Group Air Force? Nobody knew, you know. It could be as big or as little as "group" meant. It was a slogan superbly drawn up by the air force and merchandised beautifully by Symington, who at that time was the most powerful person in Washington, D.C., by all odds. He went through a season of about two or three years, certainly two years, in which he was the most influential member of the executive branch.

So then Lyndon goes over to the Senate. Finally, John Connally escapes him and goes back to Texas, and he gets himself Walter Jenkins and others over there to run his affairs. Now Lyndon is just a member of the Senate. Well, Lyndon can't be <u>just</u> a member of anything. He's not over there a week before he's restive because he's not running the Senate. So we go over one day to a conference with the Senate on armed forces legislation and Lyndon, of course, is now on the Senate Armed Services Committee. Since he'd been on the House Armed Services Committee, they put him on the sister committee in the Senate. Lyndon is a member of the conference committee from the Senate now, instead of a member of it from the House. So in comes Carl Vinson and his boys from the House with Bryce Harlow, their principal staff aide. Dick Russell was chairman. In comes Russell with his troops, including Harry Byrd and the rest from the Senate side. We sit down in the Capitol in one of the conference chambers to have our conference session on this

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legislation, which was important legislation. It had to do with the basic authorization of either the Seventy Group itself or something that fundamental to the strength and the organization of the armed forces, a very controversial bill. There were strong feelings on both sides of the aisle, in both chambers, and between the chambers, so it wasn't an easily reconcilable bill.

Well, ordinarily a conference committee between the Senate and the House on anything dealing with the armed forces was dominated by Carl Vinson. He would simply take over conference committees and run them. Of course, the senators are supposed to run them, but never a conference committee with Carl Vinson. He ran them all. He would let a senator maybe start it off and open the meeting. Then he'd take over. There was no containing him.

So we were starting off in this conventional style. I think possibly Dick Russell in his statesmanlike way had opened the meeting, and Carl Vinson had just about cleared his voice and was ready to run off with it all. He and of course Russell had a tremendous rivalry, both being from Georgia. But anyway, he got a start on the bill which had to do with Seventy Wing Air Force or the Seventy Group Air Force. Harry Byrd suddenly said, "This thing is a shell game. This is ridiculous. It is terrible legislation. It is bad for the United States. It is bad for the armed forces. It misleads the American people. It's hypocritical. There's not a member of this conference committee who knows what it means. No way for them to know because there's no definition of

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terms. Seventy groups. What's a group? Nobody knows. Seventy wings. What's a wing? Nobody knows. Why do they say the words "Seventy groups?" Why do they say the words "Seventy wings?" It's a shell game! It's a shibboleth! It's an advertising slogan of the Secretary of the Air Force and we all know that, and we're just playing their game to mislead the American people. We should not do that." Harry Byrd, Senior, an institution, as patrician a patrician as ever patricianed.

Having pronounced this from the Old Dominion, he sat back, looking like a patrician looks. Suddenly the most junior member of the Senate conference committee, Lyndon Baines Johnson, who was attending I think his first conference as a senator, leaned forward and said, "Mr. Chairman, I make a point of personal privilege. I resent personally the remarks of the senior Senator from Virginia and I want an apology now, directly from the Senator. He has impugned the character and the motives and the intelligence of every member of the House of Representatives who supported the Seventy Group Air Force, of whom I was one. He has no basis for that. He cannot prove that. He is wrong. I consider that a personal insult and I want it withdrawn before the conference committee moves to any other business."

You could have heard yon a pin drop! This is the most junior member of [the committee]. This is a freshman senator--he hadn't been in the Senate long enough to do anything at all--challenging the great Harry Byrd, and demanding that the great patrician humble himself before his colleagues and the House members. I sat there, Carl Vinson at my left, up with the conference committee--[he] always put me there with him, shouldn't

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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have, [but] always did--looking at my old friend Lyndon, looking at the senators, remembering when he challenged me on the staff of the House Armed Services Committee, to teach me a lesson. I giggled inside myself and said, "You senators ain't seen nothing yet! Lyndon's doing it to you now like he did to little Bryce back in 1947."

I watched and waited. There was an answer from Byrd: "The Senator from Texas knows perfectly well that the Senator from Virginia has had no intent whatever to malign or otherwise impugn the motives or character of any member of Congress. He is talking about the nature of a bill that is before this conference committee." "I will not accept that response," said Lyndon. "If this matter is not resolved in this conference committee, in camera, this very day, I will take it to the floor of the Senate." "Well, now, Lyndon, you know perfectly well"--said now flustered Harry--"this is ridiculous." "It is not ridiculous to me, and therefore I submit to the senior Senator from Virginia it is not ridiculous." There was a pause and Harry Byrd said, "I guess that is true, if that is the way you really feel about it. Therefore in order that the business at hand can be properly disposed of, I apologize to the Senator from Texas and withdraw my remarks."

Lyndon had made his first big move to the leadership of the Senate. He had faced down Harry Byrd. He hadn't been in the Senate long enough to warm his seat. That's Lyndon. No other senator could possibly have done it. No other senator could have gotten away with it.

Okay, now we have him in the Senate. He went, as you know, spectacularly swiftly to the leadership and this Byrd episode was one example of why.

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By fear, by bludgeoning, by servicing, by seducing, by inducing, by all manners of incredible devices, he would instinctively dominate people.

G: Let me ask you a few things here before we [go on].

H: Okay.

G: Anything on LBJ and Forrestal that you feel we should put on there?

H: I don't recall anything very much. They were very close because of course he worked with Forrestal intimately on unification fights, but those were before I was involved. Forrestal shattered in 1949, wasn't it?

G: Yes.

H: I don't recall.

G: How about his efforts to get the air bases for Texas?

H: Well, I didn't have much of that. I was employed by the committee. That would have been straight from his office to the Pentagon. I didn't get much of that.

I think he did get mixed up some with the rubber business--with J. Russell Blandford on the staff--because wasn't there considerable rubber activity in Texas?

G: Right, yes.

H: Well, Blandford would have a lot for you on that.

G: I gather LBJ felt that Harvey Firestone was really behaving patriotically in that instance, if they were closing down some of those rubber plants.

H: Well, Blandford handled all that and could give you loads of stuff on that. Blandford is an enormously intelligent, competent person with a

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memory that's meticulous--he can give you chapter and verse and dates and detail that I can't do.

G: Where is he?

H: He's retired now. He was the third man to become staff chief after I quit. He was hired on the professional staff the same day I was. He was the last of the group hired in January of 1947. He's retired at Hilton Head, South Carolina, I believe. Can you hold one second?

(Interruption)

He knows a great deal about Lyndon and had a lot of business with Lyndon. He can tell you things that would be very useful to you.

G: Good. Okay. Now, for the record, let's mention the other two [staff members] also.

H: Well, Robert Smart was the man that succeeded me. Bob Smart's dead.

(Interruption)

The first chief clerk of the committee was Robert Harper--Bob Harper--Carl Vinson's man. When the new committee started off in 1947--it was created in 1946--Harper had been on the old Naval Affairs Committee staff as chief clerk. He was kept as chief clerk to help keep Carl Vinson quiet in the new, terribly irritated committee. So he was chief clerk. This Democrat from Georgia, with Carl Vinson in the Eightieth Republican Congress, was kept as chief clerk for Vinson's sake. All right. So then they hired four professional staff members under the new reorganization law. We were among the first professional staff hired by Congress. We did it the right way and the Armed Services Committee did it in the spirit

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and word of the new law. It hired these four men as careerist, non-political people to do the work of the committee, not the work of the chairman, not the work of any individual member. We were supposed to work totally objectively. So they hired Harlow from Oklahoma City and brought me back because of my work with the armed forces during the war and my prior work for Congress. They hired Robert Smart as the close friend and patronage in a sense of Dewey Short of Missouri. He was a Missouri boy, a lawyer from Missouri. He was a captain in the army during the war. He leapfrogged to air force general, thanks to W. Stuart Symington.

The next was John Russell Blandford, who was a captain in the Marine Corps, who became a Marine Corps major general, and so forth. Next guy was Clinton Brown. Clinton Brown was hired from New York. At the time he was working as a lawyer from the Justice Department. He had applied for the job. He was the only one who was taken as an applicant. He was employed because Congressman [W. Sterling] Cole of New York was the senior Republican on the old Naval Affairs Committee, and had they not had unification he would have been chairman of the Naval Affairs Committee. He had been waiting for twenty years to be chairman of the Naval Affairs Committee, and just as he reached out for it, the committee dissolved. It became the Armed Services Committee and he didn't have enough seniority to become chairman of it. So Walter G. Andrews became chairman of it and there was a man named Dewey Short of Missouri who was the number-two Republican. Then there was a man named Les Arends from Illinois who was

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the number-three Republican and W. Sterling Cole from Bath, New York was the fourth-ranking Republican instead of chairman. It absolutely blew him. He was the bitterest member of Congress I've ever known, to be denied. It meant he could never hope to become chairman.

So this man Clinton Brown was hired to assuage him, from New York. Brown got into trouble in the B-36 investigation because he had been a navy officer. He had been a lieutenant commander and got terribly partisanized in the investigation of the B-36. He got totally involved with the navy and did things a staff member shouldn't have done, got mixed into it, and was fired. He is the only member of the staff ever to be fired, I believe.

Then he was replaced by a man named [Charles F.] Ducander. Mr. Ducander was hired to assuage Congressman Overton Brooks of Louisiana, the second-ranking Democrat who was irascible, ungetable-along-with, and apparently destined to be the next chairman after the Democrats got back in and Carl Vinson passed away or quit. So they brought in Ducander to accommodate Overton Brooks and Ducander stayed there as long as Brooks stayed on the committee. Finally Vinson tricked Brooks off the committee. He had him made chairman of the new Space Committee, in good measure to get Brooks off the Armed Services Committee so Paul Kilday of Texas could succeed to the chairmanship. But Paul Kilday died. So therefore Mendel Rivers became chairman and then Hebert and now, of course, Melvin Price. That's the story of that.

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G: Anything on LBJ and Warren Magnuson, their friendship when they were both in the House together?

H: Warren Magnuson was not on the committee when I was there.

G: Okay. Shall we go to the Senate then?

H: Okay. Now you're going to get fuzz because, you see, in the initial part of the presidency, the first nine months of Eisenhower, I was handling the House principally because that's where I had worked. We had a defense reorganization plan pending in the House and naturally Harlow, fresh out of the Armed Services Committee, could go up there and sell when House Secretary Charlie Wilson and his Deputy, Roger Kyes, couldn't sell a ten dollar gold piece for a nickel, and were just getting cut to pieces by my old committee. So I was concentrating on helping them pass that defense reorganization bill. So the Senate side, where Lyndon was, was being handled mainly by Gerry Morgan who was my compadre under Jerry Persons, and Persons was working with him while I did the House. Morgan is now dead and so is Persons.

That's the way that was at the outset. Then in September of 1953 I was reassigned from working with Congress to writing the President's speeches and such, doing all of the President's writing. I did the President's writing as a full-time activity. The way Eisenhower did that, he always had just one writer; he didn't have a stable. So I did that totally for two years. Then we brought in Kevin McCann from

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Defiance College to succeed me. I went back to the Congress task. We brought in Jack Martin from Senator Taft's office and he worked the Senate with Gerry Morgan.

I was back working with the House of Representatives mainly, my old House friends, and had with me other people now. The staff expanded a little. Again I didn't have a great deal of activity with Lyndon, because he was working with Morgan and Martin and Persons while I was working with Sam Rayburn and John McCormack and Charlie Halleck and Joe Martin, the House members mostly, although I did work with Lyndon [some] because we were friends, but not much. It wasn't therefore, and I'm sorry to say this to you, really until mostly 1958 when I succeeded to the headship of the total White House congressional activities when [Sherman] Adams was forced out and Persons took over Adams' job and I took over Persons' responsibility for all the congressional work. Then, of course, charged with the whole bit, I started having a tremendous amount of activity with Lyndon. So most of what we're going to be talking about here is going to probably appertain to the latter days of the Eisenhower period.

Tape 2 of 2

H: He was a good bipartisan on foreign policy. He really was. He and Mr. Sam, raised in the old school, never believed, as they never should have believed and nobody in his right mind should believe, the old business about politics stopping at the water's edge. That's

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ridiculous. I'm saying that and I'd be happy to argue it with anybody. But they never believed that; they knew better. Even so they didn't play cheap politics with foreign policy. They would play politics with foreign policy and play hardball. Lyndon loved to use, just loved to use, Eisenhower's pet, foreign aid, as a shillelagh on Ike. He would hold it up deliberately to be the last item in a session of Congress and use it as leverage for making Ike do what he wanted to do on other things. He'd hold up the foreign aid appropriation and authorization to the end so that Ike would be held hostage. We all knew why he was doing it. He knew why he was doing it. Everybody knew.

G: Did it work for him?

H: Oh, yes, yes, [he made] all kinds of trades. [He] just used muscle, just muscle.

He also did some things which he really shouldn't have done, I think probably most people would say, overreaching politically in foreign affairs.

G: What, for example?

H: Well, I don't remember the details of this but he communicated directly with the leaders of the Soviet Union, didn't he? He sent a message on behalf of the Senate to a foreign power. Who was it? Wasn't it the Soviet Union?

G: I believe it was in response to something that Khruschev had--no, this was before Khruschev.

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H: No, this was, I think, a very gross action from the standpoint of intruding into the presidential arena in communicating with foreign powers. But, you know, Lyndon didn't recognize restraint on anything in life, and so he thought this was a good stout move to take and did it. It created a great commotion at the time. The detail of it now escapes me.

G: Do you recall President Eisenhower's reaction to it?

H: Yes, it was what you would expect, sulphurous.

In addition, Lyndon started playing this game of the LBJ state of the union message, as if he were president. You see, this had never been done before. This was pre-emptive politics. It also involved his stating out ahead of the President of the United States what our foreign policy ought to be. So you have here a genuine bipartisan on foreign policy? I say well, he was a good bipartisan in foreign policy, but he was not above being partisan as hell in foreign policy, play hard-ball with it. But by and large [he] would never do anything cheap with it, if I make myself clear. He wouldn't do that. He wouldn't stoop to that. He usually was dependable in foreign policy to do pretty much the right thing.

The best bipartisan of the Democratic leaders, though, was not Lyndon and it wasn't Mr. Sam, it was, very strangely, John McCormack. He was more willing to do something to forego a Democratic Party advantage or do something that would be kind of harmful to his own people, even from his own partisan point of view, if it would advance the country's interest, than either of the others. I don't think that was ever widely

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understood. But John McCormack was almost the picture version of what a bipartisan party leader should be on foreign policy.

Now I had an absolutely rapturous experience that I'll tell you right now--it's out of phase. I don't guess you care, do you?

G: No.

H: --with Lyndon Johnson personally on foreign policy that I think is a funny story, and I've used this in speeches a number of times as just a funny experience that I could tell. This was at the end of a session of the Congress, so it must have been in 1958, I guess. It must have been in October or November because of what transpired. But as usual the foreign aid package was at the end waiting to be enacted. Lyndon had gotten everything else taken care of and now at last he's going to pass the foreign aid so they could go home.

There was an amendment adopted in the House of Representatives to the foreign aid bill offered by Congressman Porter Hardy of Virginia, one of my dear friends in Congress, for whom I used to work when I was on the staff of the House Armed Services Committee. Porter had put into the foreign aid appropriation a rider which said that on the request of Congress any documents in the possession of the foreign aid administration--whatever it was called in those days--would have to be furnished to the Congress if the Congress wished, whatever it was. As unconstitutional a thing as you could possibly write. But the House whooped it through and it was in the bill as it arrived in the Senate. Okay, so the bill was now in conference between Senate and House, and

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the House was marking time. It was standing in a recess awaiting the conference report. The Senate was standing in recess awaiting the conference report on foreign aid, and as soon as they finished that they would adjourn--no more legislation--and go home. The session would be over.

I instructed the Department of State, Bill Macomber, Assistant Secretary, who was one of Lyndon's great buddies--Lyndon tried to use him against us, you know, and did. I kept warning Bill Macomber I was going to fire him, "You keep playing games with Lyndon I'll fire you, boy. You're working for us, not for Lyndon. Don't forget it. I'm watching." Bill and I are very good friends, but I had to keep warning him because in the Lyndon presence he'd get over too far. Okay, I told Bill, I said, "You go up and you tell Lyndon that we can't accept that provision in that bill. We just can't accept it. The President can't maintain his troth to the Constitution and sign that bill. No way. They've got to take it out."

Well, Bill was scared to death of Lyndon and kept toadying to Lyndon, so I had a hard time giving him backbone. Next thing I knew there was a call from the Senate and Lyndon was on the phone. This is now about ten o'clock at night and I'm in my office at the White House, naturally, and waiting to get all this out of the way so we can lock down the hatches and go away. And Lyndon said, "I've talked to Bill Macomber, Bryce, and it's okay with the State Department to make the following change. So this is what we're going to do and be rid of this problem." I said, "What's that?"

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and he told me. I said, "The trouble is, Lyndon, that's all right with Bill, but it's not all right with the President. And Bill isn't going to be signing the bill." He said, "Macomber said it would be all right." I said, "Put Bill on the phone for me, Lyndon, please." Bill got on the phone and I said, "Bill, I want you to leave the Senate chambers and come back downtown and go home. You leave this alone. You're out of order. The agreement that you're reaching with the Majority Leader of the Senate is unacceptable totally to the President of the United States. You mess with this again and I'll have you fired. Get out of there."

Bill left. I put Lyndon back on the phone. I said, "Now, Lyndon, the President won't take that. You know that, Lyndon. You know perfectly well he won't take that. That's not a compromise. That's simply rephrasing what you've already got in the bill. I'm smart enough to know that and you're smart enough to know that. Now come on. That won't do." "Well," he said, "the conferees agreed to it." I said, "Call them back together and do it over." There was a long pause and he said, "All right." So I hang up and sit back at my desk and wait. In about forty-five minutes Lyndon's on the phone. "Okay, we've got it all taken care of now. It's all rewritten and everybody's agreed to it. So here we go." I said, "What does it say?" He read it to me. I said, "Lyndon, that won't float. You know perfectly well that won't float. You haven't corrected the problem and you know it." He said, "How do you know that?" I said, "I know it like you know it. Intellectually I know it. Do you want me to go awaken the President? He's in bed. I'll go

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get him up. Do you want me to try it? I'll come back to you and tell you what he says." Long pause. Then he swore a little. "I'll be back to you." I said, "All right." So I hung up.

I waited about forty-five minutes, an hour, and LBJ's on the phone. "Okay, it's all set now. There can't be any question now." I said, "What is it?" And he read it to me. I said, "Lyndon, I'm sick of this. I don't know what to say to you, because I know you'll blow up and I hate to act like this, but that is unacceptable. There's no possible way the President can agree to that. You're still hanging onto the principle of what you started out with. You're refusing to make the adjustments you've got to make, which is to drop it. It won't float. Now Lyndon, I tell you what, I'll go get the President up. I can do that. They'll wake him up for me. I'll walk right over there and I'll walk right into his chambers and the valets will go get him up. I'll tell him, and I'll come back to you and I'll tell you what he said. Now I tell you what we can do. I can tell the President that you're in such a shape over there with that conference group that you can't correct this as a matter of face. You just can't do it. And the Congress is going to insist upon the provision. And the President then will say, 'Okay, and I will veto it. I understand that. I'll veto it without any personal feelings of vendetta or vindictiveness or anything of that kind. And I will immediately call the Congress back into special session, of course, to pass a suitable foreign aid appropriation.'" I said, "Lyndon, do you want a special session called immediately after adjournment? Because I'll guarantee you that's what's going to happen.

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The President, I guarantee you, will veto that. Now you can say, 'you're nuts and I don't believe you,' and you're entitled to say that. You know me from way back. I don't misrepresent, Lyndon, you know that. I think I know what Ike will do on this. I think you know I know, too. But let's go through the charade if you'd like. I'll get him out of bed and we'll do the whole thing. Or you'll go back again and you'll correct it this time. Which do you want to do?" He said in a muffled tone, "I'll call you back," and hung up.

In fifteen minutes he called me back and said, "We've taken it out of the bill. You'll have the bill down there in fifteen minutes." So they took it out of the bill. Now that was one of two times where I faced down Lyndon Johnson. Only I didn't face him down, it was Ike, because of course I couldn't face anybody down, never can, never could, never will. But the position I held faced him down, because he knew what I said was true, and he knew I could go to the President and that the President would do what I said he'd do.

G: What was the other one?

H: The other facing-down? Well, there was one man that Lyndon Johnson and Sam Rayburn hated, they lividly hated. I mean, they'd walk across the street to hate him. That was Bruce Alger from Dallas, the Republican congressman who roughed up Lady Bird down in Dallas, you remember, and all that. Bruce Alger was a real idealogue, a fellow to whom everything was black or white. He was as hard right-wing as you could get. Johnson and Rayburn considered him a blot on the Texas escutcheon. For them he was a constant affront. They hated him

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and wanted to beat him. Worse than anything on earth they wanted to get Bruce Alger out of that congressional seat in Dallas.

So I got a telephone call from Lyndon; it was initiated, of course, by Walter Jenkins. Walter got on the phone. It was the kind of thing Walter handled right along--patronage. This had to do with the Veterans Administration in Dallas, or maybe the Veterans Administration in Texas, the regional people and so forth. At any rate, these were good jobs, significant jobs in the Veterans Administration. Lyndon wanted to have one fellow put out and replaced by another person. Lyndon was very careful never to ask favors from the Republican White House. He didn't want to be obligated to us, you know, and he was very circumspect about that. He rarely asked a favor for that reason, because he didn't want me to ask a favor of him. But nonetheless, this was important enough to him to ask me to do that. [He] wanted me to do that very badly.

I didn't know anything about it, of course. So I called up the Veterans Administrator. I said, "I have a call from our big friend up there in the Senate, the Majority Leader, and he wants Joe Schmaltz out of there and he wants Jack Jones in there. What do I say to him? Do we or don't we, and why don't we if we don't, and what's the deal? Do you know anything about it?" He said, "Do I know anything about it? Of course, I do. Schmaltz, who he wants in there, is the livid, life-long enemy of Bruce Alger, ran against him, has been known publicly as his biggest enemy or something like that, big political

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opponent. The fellow now in there is Bruce Alger's political man, and Rayburn and Johnson have been trying to get him out ever since he was put in. That's what it is. What do you want me to do about it, Mr. Harlow?" It's from the White House.

I said, "Well, what are those jobs? Are those jobs civil service or political or what?" He said, "They're totally political. They always have been totally political until we came to power. Under all Democratic Administrations all of those jobs have been held only by Democrats, and all the Republicans who were in them beforehand were instantly thrown out after every election. We, in our brilliance in politics, have made them even. We have half Republicans, half Democrats, by order of your President Eisenhower, instead of playing it like you're supposed to and putting only Republicans in there. That's the way it is, Bryce." He said, "If you don't think I haven't had to eat that from the Republicans on Capitol Hill you're nuts. They're livid over it, but that's the way it's always been. We will not go over half. We're going to be decent and nice, we're going to have it half and half." I said, "Wait a minute. You mean to tell me that we've kept half of them, half the Democrats?" "Yep." "We haven't done it like the Democrats?" I said. "That's right." I said, "Okay, you've given me my answer. I've got it in hand now. I can handle this. Thank you very much. Forget my call."

So I called up to talk to Lyndon. Well, Lyndon was on the floor doing some big thing and would have to call me back, so I talked to Walter Jenkins. I said, "Walter, I got a problem here bigger than both

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of us. I don't know quite what to do with this. I want to make sure I understand what Lyndon wants me to do. It's very, very embarrassing really." I said, "Remember, you and he got on the phone with me a little while ago about this guy Jones who you want to put in down there to replace Schmaltz. I've been checking into it and I run across a thing that I didn't know about and that nobody in the White House is aware of. I haven't said anything about it yet, but the White House personnel fellow really ought to be notified of this and I haven't told him."

"I was trying to find out if we could do what Lyndon asked, and I discovered that these are totally political jobs, like your job up there on the Hill with Lyndon, Walter, and that they're supposed to be all filled with Republicans. Well, we haven't done it, and we got all out across this country several hundred of these people who are still Democrats holding these posh jobs. And they're political. I mean, they just throw them out and put in Republicans. There's no civil service restraint on it at all. But nobody around here knows it. Now if I go in there and I take this guy and throw him out"--I didn't mention Bruce Alger, because I knew that's what it was--"and put in Lyndon's guy, it's going to get out that these are political. They're going to check it and we're going to end up firing several hundred Democrats all across the country. And I wanted to know if Lyndon really wanted me to do that, because then the other senators and congressmen, the Democrats, will be all over us and I'll have to tell them, 'well,

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Lyndon wanted it done.' So I would like to know what he would like me to do about this."

There was this long pause and Walter said, "You son of a bitch." I said, "Oh, now come on, Walter. I wouldn't play a game like that with you. You know that. Just like I know you guys wouldn't play a game like that with me." Next thing I knew I had word from Walter, "Lyndon said forget it." So I faced him down.

The third advantage--I had a great advantage over LBJ: I'm so little and he was so big. Lyndon was six what, three, two?

G: Six three or four.

H: Four. At any rate, the way he dominated people was a technique. One was nose-to-nose negotiation, where he'd take that huge head of his, huge corpus, and lean it forward right into your face, and he'd talk to you nose actually to nose and he would just push people over that way. Dominate them! He couldn't do that with me because it would make his back hurt because I was so little. (Laughter) If he tried to get down to me and nose-to-nose me I could stand there with him until he finally had to sit down. So I had this advantage over Lyndon in our pleasant dealings, and essentially our dealings were always very pleasant and very prized as far as I was concerned.

Where does it take us now?

G: He used to rib, I think, President Eisenhower by saying that although he represented the loyal opposition he supported the President more than the President's own party.

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H: This was a political ploy of his and Sam Rayburn's that was always laughed about and I used to kid around about. What happened was, you know you make a strength out of a weakness if you can, in politics, obviously. You make a strength out of anything that you can use in politics. But they couldn't override Ike because of his popularity, so they made a plus out of working with him, because if they didn't they might lose control of Congress. So they ran on working with Ike as a platform in 1954 and 1958, saying that "We worked with the President. Vote for us. We are with Ike," because Ike was so popular. It wasn't because they didn't want to run Ike down, because they wanted to. They wanted badly to run him down. They didn't want to work with Ike; they wanted to kill him--politically I'm talking about. They wanted to kill him politically. They would have happily and joyously, but they couldn't. "We like Ike" remained the catchword throughout Eisenhower's years. Everybody voted Democratic and said, "We like Ike."

So Lyndon and Sam were caught with that. So what they would do is about once a year they would trot out Senator Bob Kerr of Oklahoma, old Bob--he used to work for my dad. He was a close friend of mine. He, too, tried to hire me at the Hill. So old Bob, [they'd] run Bob out because Bob was the slashiest of the slasheroos in Congress. He could run anybody off the Senate floor, including Lyndon, with his debating toughness. They would run Bob out there to unload on Ike because Bob didn't give a damn. He didn't like Ike anyway and would just walk out and accuse Ike of everything in the books, of being stupid and no good and having the wrong programs for

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America and all the rest. Then everybody'd stand back and see what the reaction was. If everybody said, "Hey, you know, that makes a lot of sense and so forth," then Sam and Lyndon could start cutting up Ike. But Bob would end up getting chewed up by everybody for attacking this nice man Ike. So they would put it back in the deep freeze. Then Lyndon and Sam would run on the record of, "We work with him," in order to save their control of Congress.

So it was a political ploy. We knew that at the White House. And it was to our advantage to have them work with us, so it paid off both ways. It kept us from getting a Republican Congress, but it didn't hurt us in that sense at all. Ike was never regarded as a Republican by the American people anyway. We couldn't make them look at him as a Republican. It drove Ike nuts, you couldn't make the public view him as a Republican. He used to complain to me all the time about that.

G: Well, I gather that Bill Knowland was considerably more, let's say, isolationist in internal affairs, for example.

H: Bill Knowland had the best voting record for Eisenhower in the Senate of any member of the Senate, but because he split with the President on about three big things everybody thought he was against the President all the time. It just wasn't so. That's all.

G: Anything on the relationship between Knowland and Johnson?

H: Not that I know of. I think Johnson thought he was stupid. I say that just offhand because I can see Lyndon feeling and saying that. I think he felt that; I think he thought that. He used him. He used him just like he used Bob Anderson all the time.

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G: How did he use Knowland?

H: Oh, dominated him in the Senate and ran everybody around and made him do things. He used Ev Dirksen, too. He used Bob Anderson. I had an experience I remember--it must have been the late fifties--in which we had a postal pay increase bill or some kind of a postal bill up, pay increase I think. As usual the postal workers were up bullyragging Congress and should have all been fired. It was really almost like Paris in 1789. They were up there grabbing members of Congress and threatening them. It was hairy. All the postal workers, they were up there dragooning the members of Congress, forcing them behind the pay increase to the absolute abiding, total disgust of Eisenhower. He couldn't imagine allowing that to go on or the Congress allowing it.

At any rate, they passed a very bad pay bill through the House under that kind of pressure. It got over to the Senate and I told the President, "Well, let's filibuster. Let's kill it through filibuster." He said, "You can't put one together." I said, "Let me try." So I called up Barry Goldwater and I said, "Barry, would you be willing to take the lead or the cutting edge of the filibuster if we can hook it together and kill this crazy bill?" He said, "If you can get enough people committed to do it, I'll do it. But you're going to have to give me people signed up on it. I won't do it and then get cut down." I said, "Okay, let me see what I can do." He said, "You've got to have Ev Dirksen's approval." So I got hold of Ev Dirksen and Ev said, "You can't get a filibuster going on this thing." I said, "I can, too, if you'll cooperate. I can't if

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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you won't. Are you going to cooperate or won't you?" "I'm going to tell the President." "The President wants it done, Ev. Are you willing to stand up or not?" It got testy. Ev and I were old, very close friends, but we started getting a little bit testy about this one.

Well, finally I told Ev that the President wanted to do it and we were going to do it, and he had to go along with it. He couldn't run out on Barry Goldwater and these other boys and Carl Curtis and all these old right-wing Republicans up there and whatnot. He couldn't do that, and [run out on] the President. Okay, next thing I knew Ev said well, he'd do it. He said it wouldn't work. He was very grumpy about it.

Next thing I knew I had a call from Bob Anderson over in the Treasury Department, Secretary of the Treasury. He said, "Bryce." I said, "Yes, Bob. What can I do for you?" "Why," he said, "I've had a funny call from Lyndon. He said there's somebody in the White House, he doesn't know who it is, that has this crazy notion that they can mount a filibuster on this postal bill, and it's a disaster for the President. He's trying to stave off this disaster for the President. He doesn't know who it is and asked me to get on it and try to help Eisenhower avoid this disaster."

I said, "That's interesting, Bob. Do you agree it's a disaster, Bob?" He said, "Well, I'm sure it is. Lyndon is certain that [it is]." I said, "Bob, would you still think it's a disaster if the President was insistent that it should be done?" "Well, I don't know about that." I said, "Would you think it was a disaster if Everett McKinley Dirksen had promised--let me say that again, Bob, I don't think you understood me.

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Would you still think it was a disaster if you knew that Everett McKinley Dirksen had promised to support it?" There was a long pause. "And Barry Goldwater had promised to lead it? Or would you still think that Lyndon's telephone call is as disingenuous as you think?" He said, "Bryce, it sounds to me like he was talking about you, wasn't he?" I said, "Yes, and he knows that, Bob. He knows that. He knows little Bryce is doing this. And he knows it will work. But he doesn't want to be embarrassed with the postal unions, Bob. He wants to use you to turn me off. You will have to talk to Ike to turn me off." "Well," he said, "forget it, Bryce. Sorry I called." I said, "Bob, in the future, Lyndon's going to keep calling you like he has all these years to try to determine Republican politics. You'd better stop letting him do that." He said, "That's right," and he hung up.

So then we had a big meeting at breakfast with Dirksen and so forth. Dirksen by now was very angry because I was taking the position that I knew better about the Senate than he did, and he couldn't tolerate that. I understood that. I did know better about it than he did and I knew that and I think he knew it. But that was intolerable. He told the President, "This will not work. It would be a wrong thing for you to do. Lyndon Johnson is going to be absolutely enraged over it. It's too costly. You mustn't do it." In other words, he was really shilling for Lyndon.

So Ike pulled back and we walked back together, the President and I, to his office after the breakfast. He said, "I'm sorry, Bryce. Ev is one of the greatest fellows I have ever known. There is only one weakness in the man that I can identify." I said, "What's that?" He said, "No

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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spine." (Laughter) I said, "Well, Mr. President, I'm just sick. You could easily have won that, no question about it. But Ev Dirksen had done something he shouldn't have done. After I talked to him about the filibuster he went secretly to Lyndon, which was a violation of loyalty to you, and told Lyndon what you were trying to do on this bill, which the Senate Democratic Leader should not have been told. That's what got Ev in trouble and it armed Lyndon and let Lyndon go to work on it and mess it all up. And Ev Dirksen did that deliberately. It was a bad, bad thing to do. He couldn't get away from that and so he had to save his own shirt and that's what the whole story it."

Well, that was another experience with Lyndon playing hardball. It was the way it was, always. You always played hardball with Lyndon. It was always a lot of fun, and it was always on something that was pretty significant. He was used to having his way.

G: How would you contrast his style of leadership from Bill Knowland's?

H: Well, Bill Knowland just couldn't possibly do what Lyndon did. His style was totally different than Lyndon's. Well, Lyndon Johnson's leadership technique, as far as I know, is unparalleled in the Senate, back to Henry Clay.

G: Why? Why was he effective?

H: It's the magic of what leadership is. Leadership is not definable. I've had to try to do that in words many times. I drew up a definition of leadership for General Marshall, 1943, during the war, and I'm told it's still today in one of the army manuals, because he signed it. Defining

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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leadership is nearly impossible. It's an imponderable. There's a whole book on it by Dick Neustadt called Presidential Power, in which he tries to describe Roosevelt's leadership. It was the textbook that Kennedy tried to make everybody read, you remember. Kennedy said it was the thing his staff should study, because he thought maybe he could do it like Roosevelt. It's a mixture of fear. It's a mixture of reward. It's a mixture of admiration. It's a mixture of being cowed by a much more dynamic personality. It's a mixture of wanting to follow. It's a mixture of greater intellectual force and power and tightness and discipline. It's a mixture of indefatigability. It's a mixture of an endowed energy. It's a mixture of diligence, working harder than the person next to you. It's a mixture of being a good fellow, but reserved simultaneously. You're one of the boys, but you're bigger than any of them. You're different from them. All that's leadership. All that gives leadership. It's being in the right place at the right time, where when you have those things, then you can be put into a position that will let you be a leader because of the power of the place you occupy.

I know that's a lot of trashy comment, but that's what it is. There's no way to say one thing is a thing. What were Lyndon's techniques? It was all of these, but supremely effective because of extraordinary gifts of those kinds. Where did he get them? I don't know. It had to be inherited and it had to have been developed by his lifetime. But I've never seen his equal in domination of people by sheer force of personality. Never seen his equal and I've rubbed up against the greatest people this country has produced for twenty years running.

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G: How important was his sense of timing on legislation?

H: I think it was not as important as with most men, because his timing became the timing of the legislation usually, because he was so dominant.

G: But I mean, you've given the example of him holding up the foreign aid appropriation until the end of the session.

H: Yes, yes.

G: Well, that was a question of timing, knowing when he had sufficient votes to bring a measure up.

H: Oh, yes. But this wasn't holding for enough votes. It was holding to blackmail Eisenhower.

G: Do you recall any other examples?

H: Well, certainly the confirmation of Lewis Strauss.

G: Do you want to elaborate on that?

H: Well, I mean he killed him off by waiting and waiting and waiting until the votes had eroded away from Strauss so he could kill him. He got the deciding vote out of Margaret Chase Smith, himself, after pledging to the President to leave the issue alone.

G: Do you think he was persuaded by Anderson to do this?

H: I don't know why he did it. He told Eisenhower in my presence he would not bother it at all, pledged that to the President, and then he didn't. He didn't leave it alone. I don't know why. But he did it to accommodate Clint Anderson, bound to have been that. And Anderson said he'd leave it alone if the nomination was moved over to the Commerce Department, and then he didn't.

G: What argument would he use with Margaret Chase Smith? How would he enable her to. . . ?

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H: Oh, we thought he took care of her Portsmouth Navy Yard, a straight trade.

G: Yes. Were these sorts of things usually a straight trade or were they more complex or indirect?

H: There was no usual thing with Lyndon Johnson. I sound like I know him better than you do, and I know I don't. But there was no usual thing about [him]. That's one of the fascinations of the man. Ingenius. I mean, he'd find things you wanted you didn't know you wanted. And he'd give you things that you needed that you didn't know you needed. He could seduce you, he could induce you, in ways that you could not possibly conceive of. He could scare you to death just by his bulk. He could scare you to death because he was going to come and get even if you didn't do what he told you. Or he could just make you absolutely drool over great rewards as yet unrevealed. A tremendous master at playing on people's desires and emotions and fears and whatnot to get them to do what he thought they ought to do, and make them do it or make them want to do it.

I have a story for you. This is a secondhand one, but it's as accurate as all the stories I've told you. This is now in the Johnson White House, so I'm telling you a Johnson White House story. One of the people present at this meeting in the Cabinet Room is Jennings Randolph, who is determined to have Lyndon Johnson speak at an affair in West Virginia. Jennings is an old friend of mine. He couldn't get an answer out of the President: would he or wouldn't he come up and do this talk. That had been going on and on, and Randolph has now become profoundly embarrassed. He can't answer the people in West Virginia. So while they

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
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are there--they finally take up the business that's at stake in the Cabinet Room, some legislative item or something, and they dispose of it and now they are adjourning. The President is going to go back in the Oval Office out of the Cabinet Room. Jennings intercepts him at the doorway and says, "Mr. President, I'm sorry to bother you with a personal matter at this point here. I realize I probably shouldn't do that. But I'm in really bad shape on this speech thing that I've got going with you on West Virginia. I've just got to have an answer on it. Can you give me an answer?"

LBJ's fuse was very short at the moment, which was not necessarily unusual, and he said, "So! You need an answer now, don't you?" "Well, I kind of do, Mr. President." "Well, you have your answer. No!" And just went right into the Oval Office and shut the door, leaving Jennings Randolph quivering like a Model T Ford. You remember how big and bulky Jennings is and he was just shaking all over, just completely devastated. The President, obviously profoundly angry said, "You want an immediate answer. Your answer is I won't do it. Okay, you got your answer." So he had blown the whole thing.

So my buddy who told me this story--he was one of the top White House staff people--took poor quivering Jennings Randolph out to the car, put him in the car, and he went off in a state of absolute travail. So my friend comes back in the White House and goes to the President. He said, "Mr. President, you have just about killed the senior Senator from West Virginia. He's completely distraught." The President said, "I know that.

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I'll let the son of a bitch soak for about three days and then I'll do it. I'll do it. I'll make the speech. He needs my help. He's got to be elected. But he's never going to push me again, is he?" That's Lyndon. I'm quite sure Jennings Randolph never pushed the President again. That's Lyndon. He was able to do such things and teach people how to work with him.

G: When he was majority leader and President Nixon was vice president, how did they get on together?

H: Well, of course they despised each other. I say each other--Lyndon despised Nixon, just despised Nixon. So did Sam Rayburn.

G: How was this evidenced?

H: I don't know.

G: Did he talk to you about it, for example?

H: I'm sorry. It's funny; I can't answer that, I don't think. I know it. I've always known it, always knew it. I don't quite know why I knew it.

G: Do you think the resentment stemmed from--

H 1954 campaign, basically, where Nixon said there were a lot of communists and said what Nixon swore he never did say at all--Nixon swears that to this day--but was reported he said that the Democratic Party was filled with communists and that the Democrats were disloyal, in effect.

G: Twenty years of treason and all that.

H: So that Rayburn and Johnson, who were then the party leaders because they didn't have the White House, felt that or understood that Nixon had maligned the loyalty and patriotism of the Democrats. So at least they took that position, whether politically or really, I don't know which.

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At any event, they developed a hatred of him that never changed. Sam Rayburn, you know he wouldn't sit beside Eisenhower.

G: He was really offended by that, I guess, more than LBJ.

H: No, no, no. He wouldn't sit beside Eisenhower because Eisenhower turned Republican. I know because I tried several times to seat him by him in the Cabinet Room in the bipartisan leader meetings. He belonged in the seat to the right of the President, as the ranking member. And I tried to slide old Mr. Sam over there. Mr. Sam and I were really close friends. I was a much closer friend of Mr. Sam than of Lyndon. I'd meet the old fellow, you know, and greet him and bring him in the Cabinet Room. Of course the President wouldn't come in, as all presidents don't, until everybody is there, and we're waiting for everybody to get there.

Mr. Sam was usually the last one to show up. He hated early morning meetings, just hated them. He'd come in late, grumpy. I'd take the old gentleman over and try to sit him down in the secretary of state's seat, the senior seat. I'd get him about halfway down half the time before he would say, "That's the President's seat, isn't it?" I'd say, "Yes, Mr. Speaker." "I will not sit beside an apostate to my party." [He'd] walk clear around the room and not sit there, sometimes not even sit up at the table, sit at the back. That's how he felt about it. So you can see what conversations Lyndon and Mr. Sam must have had about Ike, between the two of them and with others, too, for that matter, I'm sure.

G: Did they ever try to create friction between Ike and Nixon?

H: No.

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G: You don't recall?

H: Well, not in my presence. Now I was involved in endless discussions between Rayburn, Johnson and Eisenhower, frequently with Bob Anderson also present, just the four of us, up in the second floor of the Mansion over drinks. We would do this in 1958 to 1960. I got Eisenhower to agree to let me do that about once every six weeks. We would do it under cover of darkness, secretly. It never leaked. I told the President, and he'd say, "Well, why do that? They don't want to have anything to talk to me about or they'd talk to me." I would say, "It's to flush the plumbing out, Mr. President. It's to flush the plumbing out. It gets all constricted with partisanship, with suspicions, with irritations, and so forth. You men like each other, fundamentally, very much. You have politics between you. You are going to need the Speaker of the House desperately and the Majority Leader of the Senate desperately, perhaps tomorrow, because of some great world development. You don't know. And when you do and if you do, you must be able to have me get them on the phone, or you get them on the phone yourself, or get them down here and not have it messed up by suspicions that you're just playing games. They must know you're straight. And this is the way to do that. About every six weeks get them in and have some drinks, sit around and tell some jokes and get relaxed and talk about your mutual problems on a basis where no one will ever hear what any of you say. Then when you call, they'll respond." So he did that for two years and had lots of meetings.

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G: How did those sessions work out? Were they successful?

H: Beautiful. Beautiful.

G: Were they generally politics or some legislative issues?

H: Mostly politics, a lot of it legislative, but mostly politics. They talked about colleagues. Ike would talk about some of these awful Republicans. They would talk about some of these awful Democrats, you know. They would run down Kennedy, and he would run down some Democrats. They'd run down Republicans, and he'd run down his own side. They'd talk about everybody and everything, with total abandon. They'd go away feeling pretty rosy and good, and they would be good for another six weeks.

They were very good meetings. No notes kept. I'd have a book with me but I'd flamboyantly put it on the table, leave my pencil on it, closed, just to have it available if all of them wanted me to make a note of something. But otherwise nothing. Bob Anderson sitting there involved in it, too. Sam Rayburn told me that he was the smartest man ever to come out of Texas. They loved Bob Anderson. He could be in there, too, you see and help with it. It was a very good arrangement.

I tried to get Kennedy to do that and I would like to get Carter to do it, if I could get Frank Moore to listen to me. They ought to do that kind of thing; they ought to get Johnny Rhodes and Howard Baker up there to that second floor of that White House and sit down and chew the fat with them. But the trouble is, Carter won't drink. You know he won't have a drink with them. They won't get relaxed and informal, apparently. Apparently he can't do that. That's what he needs, to be able to do that.

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Lyndon B. Johnson Library Oral Histories [NAID 24617781]
More on LBJ Library oral histories:
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But he ought to get some one. If he had [Bert] Lance still with him, Lance could provide the informality while the President sat over there and teetotaled and they would be all right. But they won't have anybody, as far as I know, to do that. Well, Bob Strauss could do it.

G: Shall we take a break here?

H: Yes.

[End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview I]

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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, Bryce N. Harlow of Harpers Ferry, West Virginia 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 the personal interviews conducted on February 28, 1979 at Arlington, Virginia and May 6, 1979 at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, and prepared for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

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TELEPHONE NO. (415) 957-1976

July 1, 1974

Mr. Harry J. Middleton, Director
The Lyndon Baines Johnson Library
Austin, Texas 78705

Dear Mr. Middleton:

Thank you very much for your letter of June 14, 1974.

I regret the delay in replying. Your letter was addressed to me at my permanent home in Virginia, but on May 22nd I came to San Francisco to become the Executive Director of the San Francisco Twin Bicentennial. We have a year's backlog of work to make up and I have been as busy as I have ever been in my life.

I have very carefully worked over my March 24, 1969 interview with David McComb.

I was in error in my prediction towards the end of my interview that the Nixon Administration would appropriate less money for construction subsidy to the ship building industry than the Democratic Administrations had. As a matter of fact, the present Administration has appropriated quite a bit more. However, they are doing this at the sacrifice, of course, of many of the programs that the Democratic Administration considered more important. Furthermore, as you know, the Nixon Administration has run the biggest peace time budget deficit of all time.

In spite of all of the above, the signs and portents at the time of my interview (March, 1969) were that the Nixon Administration was going to emphasize economy and combating inflation, and so my view then was that they would not appropriate so many hundreds of millions of dollars for the merchant marine. I recognize that it would be inappropriate for me to now change what I said in the interview on this matter, as it is meant to represent the facts as I remember them on the day of the interview. If possible,

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I would like you to add this letter as a kind of post script to the interview.

As originally requested, I would like for my interview not to be available for examination by anyone except persons who have received my express written authority to examine it for a period of ten years from the time of the interview, or until March 24, 1979.

I would appreciate it very much if you would send me a copy of the interview as you file it.

It is a great honor and pleasure to serve as one of Lyndon Johnson's appointees, and to have been interviewed for the Lyndon Baines Johnson Oral History Project.

Sincerely,

John Harllee

John Harllee
Rear Admiral, USN (Ret.)
Executive Director

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