

## INTERVIEW I

DATE: February 10, 1977

INTERVIEWEE: MARY FISH HASELTON

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: Mary Fish Haselton's office, Department of State, Washington, D.C.

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G: Let's start out, Ms. Haselton, with your background. You say you're from Kansas?

H: I was born in Kansas City, Missouri. I grew up in Topeka, Kansas. I attended Washburn University. I was a music major. My father insisted that I take a civil service examination because he felt--that was in the middle of the Depression anyway, during which time I had worked for the state NYA [National Youth Administration] program, both in high school as an after-school project in the library and then as assistant to the secretary of the state administrator. [This was] after I had made a movie for the Kansas administration; they had tested young people all around the state on their projects, and I was the girl chosen and someone else was the boy. And you know the usual thing; it was shown at the White House.

G: Is that right?

H: To Franklin D. [Roosevelt]. I was in college, as I said. My father kept insisting that I take the exam because he had made me take typing and shorthand, which I hated. I used to cry myself to sleep because I hated it so much. But I knew I had to do it, so I did it. Suddenly, he came home and said, "There is a notice up at the post office. Go take the

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exam." So I did; I made ninety-nine. I had a telegram from the War Department asking me to report within a month, if I accepted. I talked to the Dean of the Music School, who was my voice teacher, and he said, "You go." I talked to Anne Laughlin, who was an NYA administrator, she said, "You go." Between the two of them, they gave me their blessings and some funds. They loaned me some funds, and away I came. So I was in Washington and then went to Texas in 1943, primarily because I was engaged to a young lieutenant who was going overseas and his mother asked me to come down to Texas. His father had died. The father was my first boss in Washington and had introduced me to his son, and we became engaged, more or less, I think, because the son wanted to please his father. His father died, and he thought that he wanted him to marry me. That's the way it was.

So I went to Texas, and that was the beginning of the Texas episode. I worked for a doctor in San Antonio after I had left the Quartermaster Corps in San Antonio. I then came back to Washington and worked for the International Monetary Fund for a while. I had taken night courses throughout this time in Washington, from the time I had first come. To make a long story short, I was living in Austin and had been married to a local businessman. I divorced him because of religious differences. I needed a job. I had been active in the various civic activities there. I went to Jesse Kellam to apply for a job at KTBC. He sent me to the Senator's staff, Walter Jenkins in particular.

G: This was in 1953?

H: 1953, in I would say September or early October. Because I went to work immediately. The Senator was on one of those off-year election tours which he always did. I came on

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as extra. Before the year was over Walter had asked if I would go to Washington. I didn't want to go, but I did accept. Then at Christmas time the staff had gone home. This was two days before Christmas. Everybody had gone to their various towns or villages or cities, wherever they came from in the state. I happened to be the only one left in the Austin office. Early one morning the telephone rang, about nine o'clock. I answered it. The Senator was on the other end of the line. I had not met him up to that point except very briefly as he came through the office one afternoon. He said, "Who is this?" And I said who it was. He said, "Who's there?" I said, "Nobody but me." "Well," he said, "I need to do my Christmas shopping, and I need you to go with me." I said, "But nobody is here to take care of the office." He said, "Close the door, and I'll be in to pick you up and we'll go shopping." He didn't know me, other than I was a member of the staff. So, off we went.

He had heard an advertisement at seven-thirty that morning from one of the local department stores advertising long sleeved, nylon nightgowns. He had a list of all the names of the female staff members with proper sizes, which someone had prepared for him, I assumed. Off we went to the department store, and the sales clerk was really thrown to have the U.S. Senator come in and ask to see her stock of nightgowns, a particular style, in the various colors. He tried to match up the sizes with the color to suit the girl as he saw it. It was hilarious. Not really hilarious, but everyone was getting so uptight that it was unbelievable.

So I said to him sort of calmly, I hope calmly, "Mr. Johnson, please calm down. You can't go Christmas shopping two days before Christmas and do it in five minutes."

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Well, this was quite a surprise for the Senator, and he stopped dead in his tracks and looked at me. He didn't say a word for about two minutes. He said, rather more to himself than to me, "You're not afraid of me, are you?" I said, "No. Should I be?" He thought about it: "Well, no. But everybody else is, and I don't understand why." He did calm down, and then he started having fun. He started joking. The rest of the expedition was pleasant. It was interesting for me because I had not known the man, and he didn't know me. But we became acquainted very quickly under those circumstances. I didn't see him again until I arrived in Washington.

G: What did you do when you first got there?

H: I was working with the mail. I was working with Mildred Stegall and Berniece Grieder, his executive secretary at the time. She was an attorney who had replaced Mary Rather. Mary Rather had had to quit, as you well know, because of family circumstances. I think that he must have been looking for someone to replace Mary because he called me in practically the first day of my arrival and asked me to take this position, and I was very startled.

G: How did he describe it?

H: He said, "I want you to be my secretary." I said, "Well, you've got Miss Grieder in there." He said, "No, I'll just have to make different arrangements." I said, "But I didn't come to Washington to be your secretary, and I really don't want to be." I learned of course that you don't say no to LBJ and get away with it very easily. So he didn't talk to me any more about it. He talked to Walter Jenkins. He gave Walter the orders, and Walter carried them out. My desk was moved in there and Berniece's moved out. I was

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terribly unhappy about it and very upset because I knew that Berniece was upset, and I certainly didn't want to--

G: How was it explained to her?

H: I don't know. I was so upset myself that I didn't really know how it affected Berniece. I went in to him when I saw that I was really stuck. I really considered whether or not to stay or whether just to leave because this was really not what I had come to Washington to do. I finally went in and said, "Mr. Johnson, you've put me in here. Now, what's the job? What do you expect of me?" He looked at me and said, "I expect you to anticipate me." I thought, and I didn't say very much. I said, "All right, I'll do my best," little realizing what an order that was. I think that is quite a key to the man's personality, really, and to his whole work in the Senate. He thought in terms that no one else would have thought of. I had never had anyone say to me, "That is your job, to anticipate me." I expected him to say, "Well, your duties are such and such or such and such and such and such." But not with LBJ. Little did I realize what he really was saying until much, much later.

G: What was he saying?

H: I think that he was saying, "You just keep things running smooth for me. You keep things running so that I can do my work." The interesting thing was the choice of words. Because I think that in his dealings in the Senate he was anticipatory. He was sensitive to the feelings of his colleagues and to their needs, and how they would have to compromise if they were to go through. He thought in these terms. This was a natural expression. The way I went about it, of course, was not in those terms. I just proceeded immediately

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to do everything I could to try to make things as smooth as I could for him. I quickly sensed that when people ran in and out of his office discussing something and going in and saying, "Mr. Johnson, such and such and such and such," he would get rattled and he would start exploding at them. I thought, "This doesn't work." I did it once or twice myself and got the same reaction from him. I thought, "uh-huh."

From then on I adopted the policy of putting everything in writing and putting it in front of him. He would glance at it, and he would give me quick instruction. If I didn't understand his instruction, I would stop him and be sure that I did understand it. If I were taking dictation and I didn't understand it, I would stop him. The first time I did that, that surprised him. He said, "You're the first person who has ever come in here and stopped me when I was dictating." He said, "I like that. I'm tired of having these letters come back to me that I haven't said at all. You always stop me when you don't understand me." But people were afraid to stop him and to question him. But the thing that really astounded me, to get back to the papers that I would put in front of him, I always put things on one page, never longer. I'd put one down, he'd glance at it. He knew everything on it. It didn't take him any time to read it. I think he read it all in one glance. I never ceased to be amazed at the ability to do this.

G: And you are sure he absorbed it all?

H: Oh yes, he did. In fact, he would question you about details. If there was something more on there that should have been on there, he questioned you.

G: What was his mood in the office, just in the course of a working day? Was he generally pleasant or happy?

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H: It varied depending on the pressures that he would be under or the amount of mail that we had to answer. It depended upon the tightness of the votes that he was being confronted with. He was on the telephone all the time, of course, as you've heard from everyone else, I'm sure.

G: Did you ever hear him on the telephone trying to persuade another senator to vote?

H: Oh, heavens yes!

G: What arguments would he use?

H: He never expected this other person to do things that he himself wouldn't have been willing to do. He would say, "I know that you can't vote on this issue wholly because of the situation in your state, but after all, we do have to move forward. We have to do something. Let's see what we can work out that will be to everybody's benefit." He never expected any of those men to vote on issues that he knew would hurt them in their states. He would move them a little bit. He would move them forward gently, with skill. It wasn't this sort of cajoling thing that you have heard so often that he's been accused of as going around throwing his arms around them, "You've got to vote this way, or that way." It wasn't that kind of persuasion at all. It was really, I think, a very tactical kind of persuasion. He wouldn't expect a southerner to vote for the civil rights bill, for a civil rights act. But he would say, "We've got to improve the situation, and we've got to improve the situation in your state also." He would point out things that they could do in their states for the blacks educationally, or something else. I think this is the answer to the way he was able to move from a person who voted against the civil rights in his early career until 1957 when he maneuvered the first big civil rights act to his days in the

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presidency. Because he was able to move and to persuade various segments of the country and the men in those states.

G: Observers have pointed out that he could be using an entire range of arguments on another senator, and when one hit home he could immediately detect that and home in on this one point.

H: Well of course he had this marvelous facility for sensing. He knew his fellow human beings so well. He knew every one of them. He had analyzed their needs, and he knew their state problems better than they knew themselves. That's part of the answer. He had done his homework. He knew what they needed to do. He also knew what they could do that wouldn't hurt them in their states. There were many national issues that wouldn't make any difference in their states, particularly in the Senate. You see, a congressman has to answer to a district. A senator has to answer just to the state as a whole. The representative has to be more responsive on the local scene because he'll be thrown out of office in two years if he isn't. He can't look at it from the whole state position or from the national position even, as can a senator.

G: Did you get a feeling for his attitude toward Joe McCarthy in that 1954 year?

H: Yes, he was very skillful in that whole episode. He thought that Joe McCarthy had to go, but he did not want it done unless it was done with great dignity and completely solid. The reasons for the censorship had to be solid.

G: Did you ever hear him characterize McCarthy? Did he ever talk about the threat that McCarthy posed?

H: I can't remember the specific words that he would use. I remember his feeling toward



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McCarthy, which was one of great disgust, but which he did not project outside of his own immediate office or family. I do remember him arguing with fellow senators. I would often be coming in or bringing messages in, going in and out of the office. I remember the tone of the meeting.

G: He and Stuart Symington, who had been quite close for some years, seemed to differ on how McCarthy should be opposed that year, whether he should be confronted directly by members of the Democratic Party or whether they ought to try, as LBJ wanted to do, to stay back and let the Republicans take the lead so that it would be a bipartisan move against him. Do you remember their discussions?

H: No, I don't. I can remember Symington coming in a great deal during that period, but I don't remember and wasn't in on the meetings.

G: Do you have any other recollections of LBJ's relations with other senators, like Richard Russell, whom he was very close to?

H: That was a genuine friendship, genuine admiration. They were very, very close. Russell would be in practically every evening for a drink with him. Symington, he was close to Symington. I remember Symington coming in. He was one of the few who came in constantly. One thing that always puzzled me was his attitude toward Hubert Humphrey. When I say puzzled, I'm puzzled because he picked Humphrey for vice president later. That really stunned me because I was in Europe at the time. My recollection was that he had not been that fond of Humphrey. He had been fond of him personally, but he did not admire his particular qualities that much. He felt that Humphrey talked too much, for instance. He was always advising and telling him, "Now Hubert, just keep quiet, just

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don't talk about it, just restrain yourself." I can remember this, and I can remember him saying to Sam Houston over and over again, "He just talks too much. He's just a big blabbermouth. We've got to keep him quiet." So it was surprising to me that he did indeed pick Hubert Humphrey to be vice president. Of course, I realize at the time it may have been because of the pressures put on him by the liberal wing of the party in 1964. But it was unexpected to me.

G: What about his relations with Vice President [Richard] Nixon? Did he seem to get along well with Nixon?

H: I think he got along with him. I don't ever remember Nixon coming in the office. I remember seeing Nixon going up and down the elevator, personally. If he came into the office I don't recollect it. He had a very good relationship with [Dwight] Eisenhower and always spoke kindly of him. I think it was the office of the president that he was bound and determined to respect. I do remember that as majority leader he would say, "After all, we've got to support the president. We can't have a divided government." Of course, he would differ when he wanted to, but it was a supportive kind of difference. He wasn't out to veto it or try to take power away from the president. He wanted to be supportive of the president, particularly in areas that were related to foreign policy or the U.S. image abroad.

Many people felt at the time and later that he did not have a feel for foreign affairs, and I don't think that was so. I notice on here you have a reference to his meetings with [Secretary of State John Foster] Dulles. He would come back from those meetings, and he would make comments that led me to think that he knew an awfully lot

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about foreign affairs. I remember riding home with him one night in August 1954. He would make a habit of picking me up because I lived at the Broadmoor at the time. He was driving right past there, so he would pick me up in the morning and drop me off at night. Going home in the car one night, I said to him, "I think, Mr. Johnson, that you ought to be secretary of state." He looked at me and said, "Why?" I said, "Because you know how to negotiate, and that's one of the primary activities of the secretary of state." He said, "Well, I've never had anyone tell me that before."

G: Do you recall what he talked about after these meetings with Dulles? Were they related to Indochina?

H: No, he never did go into specifics. He was very careful not to discuss any of the details of these meetings. I don't ever remember hearing him in any of the range that I could hear. He may have to some of his Senate colleagues but certainly not to anybody on the staff. He may have to Walter, I don't know.

G: I was going to ask you to discuss the relationship between Lyndon Johnson and Sam Houston Johnson.

H: Well, that's a difficult area for me, as you might surmise. I'll attempt it. It's a difficult one to tackle.

G: You might start by explaining that you became a member of the family.

H: That's right. I left the job at the end of a session. I decided that I really didn't want to stay in Washington. I wanted to go back and finish up my work at the university. I wanted to get my degree, which I had never gotten, and which in those days wasn't so easy to do. So I quit the job. I told him that I just really felt that I didn't want to stay in

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Washington permanently, and that I had enjoyed working for him for the year, but I really wanted to go back to school. He said, "Okay, always do what you want to do. I'll miss you, but go." He didn't protest at all.

After I resigned, when I got back, Sam Houston camped on my doorstep. I mean he started calling me and calling me and calling me. I happened to live right next door to him. It was a curious thing the way I had an apartment next door in another house. He lived with his mother, and I just accidentally--in fact, I remember now that I got that apartment before I went to work for Mr. Johnson. It just happened that I lived next door. It all happened that I went to work, and there was Sam Houston there with his mother. So I had met him of course, and he knew that I lived next door. I would ride down with him to the office, or he would ride with me at times. But there was certainly no relationship, except that he worked at the office and I did, too. We became friends. But after I quit, Sam Houston camped on my doorstep. I eventually married him in the following January.

G: This is January 1955?

H: 1955. The Senator was not too happy about it.

G: You told him about it before you got married?

H: No, no, that was the point. We eloped. I kept telling Sam, "Why don't you tell him?" "No. He'll stop me." He was afraid he would stop him. I was very uneasy about this whole bit. Sam had been on the wagon that year I later learned, at least he wasn't drinking, and I didn't know the past history. Nobody had told me. Well, why should they? After all, I had been there a year, and nobody knew that there was anything

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serious. And there wasn't until after I had left the job. I was right next door, and he was with his mother there. It just didn't occur to me. I was naive I guess.

But the Senator was furious, absolutely furious. He didn't speak to either one of us. We heard nothing from him for months. The first we heard, literally, was a week before his heart attack, in July. One Sunday morning the telephone rang, I answered it, and it was LBJ. He said, "Honey, would you let Sam come up and see me? I really do need him." I said, "Well, of course. Why not? Who would make you think I wouldn't?" He said, "I really do need him." He didn't explain. He didn't apologize or anything. That was another one of his traits. He never apologized to you if he did something, but he would make it up to you in other ways. I put Sam on the telephone, and sure enough he wanted him up there. We got Sam to the plane that afternoon, and off he went to Washington. He wouldn't let Sam out of his sight that week. He kept Sam with him morning, noon and night.

Saturday morning came when he had this press conference. Sam was there. Sam noticed that his brother was edgy, very edgy. And he held the press conference really to accommodate the press, because this was the Saturday before the Fourth of July and they all wanted something that they could file so they could get off on a little holiday. He just did it to please them, for his accommodation. So he agreed to have the little press conference, and there was one little upstarty reporter that asked a question that triggered it. It was an improper question in the first place. I don't remember the details, but I remember hearing a story of how improper it was and that LBJ lost his temper and sort of blasted off at this reporter. It was right after that that he was going down to Virginia, to

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Middleburg. He wanted Sam to go with him, and Sam said, "No, I'd rather not go if you don't mind." So he didn't go to Middleburg. At least this is the way Sam told it to me. Sam himself went to visit some friends, the Barry Bishops, who live in Texas now, in Austin. So he was at the Barry Bishops' when he got the word that his brother was in the hospital, and he dashed over to the hospital and from then on was with him. I flew up the next day with the mother, Mrs. Johnson.

G: Do you recall getting the word that he had had the heart attack?

H: I can't remember how we got the word. I don't know whether the call came to Mrs. Johnson or whether it came to me. I really don't remember. Oh, I know how it came. It came to KTBC. I think it came to KTBC, and they in turn notified Mrs. Johnson. And we started making the arrangements. All I remember is that a rush packing and get on the plane and get to Washington. It was a private plane. We must have gotten ready within thirty minutes.

G: Was Mrs. Johnson apprehensive about flying? She had never flown before, had she?

H: Not that I remember. Of course, we were all apprehensive. I don't think that flying was the major question.

G: Some apprehension takes precedence over other.

H: Fully.

G: Did you think he'd be all right at that time?

H: Well, at that time he was very gravely ill. I think it was nip and tuck for several days. I never will forget, Sam and I were standing in the corridor at the hospital and Dr. [J. Willis] Hurst came out. We could tell he was alarmed. Sam dashed over to find out what

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was wrong. They said, "He's terribly depressed. He's just heard something over the radio that he's weeping." They immediately had bars put on the windows.

G: Is that right?

H: Yes. He was really in a bad state. I think these were the periods that Sam really served his brother best, in these periods of crises. The doctors gave the order that the radio was to go out of the room and that he was to have no contact with the outside world. Well, Sam immediately said, "This is just the wrong thing for my brother. He will die if you remove contact from his political life, because that is his life. He'll die quicker than if you let him have some communication." I think he was right on this one. Sam came out and said, "Mary, we've got some work to do." So off we went. He phoned Holmes Alexander, who was one of the newspapermen. I don't know where Holmes is now. I've often wondered. We spent the night. We stayed up all night drafting an article, the three of us. Somewhere or other--I mean I had the notes; I must have given them to Sam somewhere along the line. I don't have them. I've looked for them, and they're gone. But I had the notes because I had been taking shorthand from both of them as they'd both come up with an idea, and I'd suggest a certain phrase or something.

Between the three of us we put this thing together. He called the managing editor of the *Austin American-Statesman* and said, "If we air-mail this down or wire it down--I forget which, we may have even telegraphed it--will you get it out on a special edition or get it in a morning paper and air mail it back to me so I can give it to my brother?" Well, the article was a comparison of LBJ to FDR and the comeback that FDR made from his illness. I remember very vividly when we went to the hospital with that in hand. Sam

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had the copy. The doctors led him into the room, and he read it to Lyndon. Of course, Lyndon knew nothing about how it happened, and I doubt that he ever knew the story of how that came to be printed. But from then on he began picking up.

G: Did you see his spirits pick up there as he was being read the article?

H: And then he started calling doctors. He sat up, and his melancholia was gone. He started giving orders again.

G: Do you recall what it was he had heard on the radio that had upset him?

H: Yes, some commentator had said that, "LBJ's career is over. He had a massive heart attack, and this will be the end of a very promising career." Something of that nature. Had you not heard this story before?

G: You give it a different slant. Although the facts are the same, you emphasize certain things that I had not heard. Were there other stories or articles that you worked on during this period to give him?

H: Sam was always in contact with the press. A sidelight to show you the way he did work with the press and their respect for him: when I came into the Department of State I had to go through a security check. At that time Sam Houston was in the hospital in Baltimore. When I came in to be interviewed by the security man I was shaking in my boots, believe me, because I didn't know what I should and shouldn't tell him. I decided, "Well, you're on the spot. You'd just better play it straight." They asked me all of these peripheral questions, and finally they said, "Mrs. Johnson, where is your husband?" I said, "He's in the hospital in Baltimore." I didn't say anything more than that, and they said, "Never mind, we know the story." They wanted to know whether I'd admit to it, I



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think. That's all they wanted to know, if I was willing to mention it then I was clear.

They said, "Don't worry about it." I must have had a pained expression or something.

They said, "Don't worry about it. We know all about him. We know the respect with which he is held on the Hill. We've talked with some of the press people. You don't have anything to worry about."

G: That's interesting. Do you recall anything about LBJ's mother during this period while she was up there while he was recovering from the heart attack?

H: She was very upset, of course. We all stayed at the house. We were with her a great deal. She was at the hospital a great deal, too. Lady Bird was at the hospital all the time. We were at the hospital a great deal, too, but not in his room. I didn't go into the room very often. Sam went in alone mostly. I went in a couple of times.

G: How long was he in the hospital?

H: I think about three weeks, three or four weeks, and then at home in Washington for about five. Sam and I were there during that time. He didn't want anyone else to come in the house. He wouldn't let anyone into the room except Sam and me and Lady Bird. No one else was allowed in the room. And the little dog was with him, a little dachshund.

G: The beagle?

H: The little beagle. Except for the dog and the three of us, no one else.

G: What was his mood at that point?

H: He was rather melancholy. We did our best. We'd try to keep his spirits up. Sam would come in every evening and talk to him about an hour after he came back from the office and give him all the news about the office. My particular job was to take all the

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messages on the telephone and relay messages back and forth. I remember he was interviewed by I think it was Walter Lippmann for *U.S. News and World Report* at that time. I'm not sure whether that was Lippmann or not, but I do know that it was *U.S. News and World Report*. I somehow or other connect Lippmann to it, but I may be wrong.

G: He had a visit from President Eisenhower while he was in the hospital. Did he ever talk about that?

H: Oh, I know he did, but I don't remember any specifics.

G: He had a visit from Vice President Nixon at the house. Do you remember that? I think the day before he flew home.

H: The day before he flew home. I could very well not have been there. I don't remember it. I certainly think I would have. I must have gone out.

G: Did he get involved in politics at all? For example, at that point the natural gas bill was being brought up.

H: Oh, he knew everything that was being brought up, and he was giving orders right from his bed.

G: Do you recall any particular pieces of legislation that he was concerned with while he was recuperating? Say the natural gas bill or anything like that?

H: I remember the gas bill. I wouldn't have remembered if you hadn't mentioned it. I do remember now that he was concerned with that. I just don't remember what else.

G: You flew home to Texas with him?

H: We flew to the Ranch with him and stayed that fall with him at the Ranch and then came

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back to Washington in January. We drove back. He wanted us to fly back with him, but we decided we'd had enough of that at that stage and wanted to get away. You know, enough is enough of this close relationship. We drove back, taking our time.

G: I want to ask you some more questions about the heart attack. One reporter noted that although LBJ stopped smoking that he always kept a pack of cigarettes nearby to test himself while he was recovering. Is that accurate? Do you have any recollection?

H: I don't remember. I know he didn't smoke, and he limited his drinking. I think he had one slim scotch in the evening. He was on a diet, and he had Lady Bird on the diet with him. I remember Juanita Roberts being at the house planning all of the diets. I remember that very much. That was a little later, not at the beginning of his recuperation, but about the last week or so while he was in Washington she began the diets. Finally there were people coming in the house all right, but not allowed upstairs.

G: How did the heart attack change him?

H: It mellowed him. He was a little more reactive to other people, a little more conscious of other people's [feelings] than he was before.

G: Did it slow him down considerably?

H: At first he would swim a lot. He had music. He did a lot of reading, which he hadn't done in a long time.

G: Do you remember what he read?

H: Mainly biography--history, biography. He had music piped everywhere at the Ranch. It was at the swimming pool, you name it. By the time January came around, by the time he got back to Washington, he was in full swing.

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G: Did you go with him in the fall of 1955 when he made that speech at Whitney, Texas?

H: No.

G: He also attended something at Fort Worth for Sam Rayburn. I am just wondering if you saw any of these maiden political--?

H: No. Those of us in the family at that point never went with him on these trips. We stayed very much in the background.

G: You drove back to Washington. Let me get you to talk about the differences between the two brothers. How were they alike and how were they different?

H: On the surface, at that point at least, one would think that Lyndon was much the stronger of the two physically. Certainly his physique was stronger. He was taller and much more muscular. Sam was tall. He was 6'3", I think, but very slim, very delicate looking, blond, where Lyndon was very dark. Their features were very similar. You knew they were brothers all right, but one was fair and one was dark; one appeared sturdier than the other. Mentally it's very difficult. Mentally, I would say, in many ways Sam was sharper than Lyndon. He had a tremendous intuition. Lyndon did, too. They were almost, I would say, telepathic. I can remember instances in the next year.

We were in Washington in 1957, then we went back to Texas for a while. We didn't stay in Washington the whole time. And it was during that period that Sam and I would be talking about some political issue, because Sam didn't think about anything except politics, as did his brother. They had been reared by a politician. Their father was a politician. That's all they knew. Sam was the lawyer. He graduated from law school at age twenty. He couldn't take his examination until he was age twenty-one. His father

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pushed him into Lyndon's footsteps when Lyndon was the secretary to the King Ranch [man, Richard] Kleberg. They were very similar. To get back to what I was about to say, there would be times when Sam and I would be discussing politics or issues that were obviously before the Senate because he read every paper he could get his hands on. We would be discussing a certain topic or certain subject or certain situation, and the phone would ring. Lyndon would be on the phone asking Sam's advice about it. It was uncanny. It was really uncanny.

G: Can you recall any of these in particular? What the issues may have been?

H: It usually had to do with personalities, say for instance [Ralph] Yarborough or Allan Shivers or something like that. It would have to do with political maneuvering. What was the appropriate time to do such and such? Or how should one do such and such?

G: Can you recall any particular advice that Sam Houston gave his brother in this area?

H: If I had a handle on all the particular issues at that time. No, I don't remember specifically. I think I said to you when I first met you today I had erased it out of my mind so long, and I deliberately did it; so that much of the detail I've lost.

G: Then you feel that Sam Houston's advice was not only sought after but it was quite valuable?

H: I think so. I think that he gave his brother a certain kind of psychological support. I'm not sure other people were aware of that, and I don't think that his brother would want anyone to be aware of it. Because after all he was the public figure. He was the leader. He was the one who projected the position. I would go so far as to say that, depending on the issue, anywhere from thirty to sixty per cent of issues at hand were discussed between

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the two.

G: Let's go back to their youths. I know you were privy to a lot of discussions of the Johnsons' growing up and their parents. I would just like for you to discuss your observations in terms of what has been written since Doris Kearns's notations in her book [*Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream*] about the family relationships and their youth.

H: That's a hard one. There are many opinions. I know how the family themselves felt about themselves. When I say that, I know how the mother felt. I know how the sisters felt.

G: Let's start with the mother.

H: All right, the mother did not ever like to discuss family situations in any sense of unpleasantness or criticism. For instance, there were problems as they were growing up, as there is in every family. There were undoubtedly problems between her husband and herself. The only clue I have on that one is the fact that she and the girls, in Johnson City when the children were growing up and the father was in politics, lived in one end of the house and the father and the boys lived in the other end of the house. I don't know whether anyone has ever told you that, but I have heard this from Sam Houston and I've heard insinuations from the sisters, you know, slight mentions of it. The mother never did say this. She, as you know, did the family genealogy. I helped her a great deal with that. I was in Austin at the time she was doing the genealogy, the Johnson book [*A Family Album*]. I typed every page of it. She also was doing one on the Baines side and also some on the paternal grandmother, Sam Ealy's wife, who was related to the

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Vanderbilts.

G: Sam Ealy's wife, was that Ruth Huffman Baines? Is that her name?

H: Ruth Huffman Baines was Mrs. Johnson's family. I've forgotten that name. The one who [inaudible]. That side of the family, they came down from Tennessee.

G: Are you saying that she tended to--?

H: I've gotten away from the point. The point was that I never heard her ever speak in any term of her husband except perfection. I know that he drank a lot, which she disapproved of. There were lots of things that he did that she disapproved of, but she never said it herself. I never heard her say it. I only heard her say what a fine man he was. I remember as I was typing the pages that she wrote about him, I kept saying, "Why doesn't she say how human he was?" She never brought in any of the little humanities.

G: Did LBJ and Sam Houston talk about him as a human being, the father?

H: Oh yes indeed, very colorfully. He must have been a very colorful figure and very much a man of the Hill Country.

G: Perhaps they acquired a lot of their own color from him.

H: I think it's obvious. Certainly, because Mrs. Johnson was a very cultured lady of the South, of the old tradition, and perhaps that explains what I'm referring to when I say I've never heard her criticize any of her family, including husband or children. They had no fault, not that she was willing to admit to publicly.

G: Did you get any other indications of almost a competition between the two parents with regard to how the children would be raised or what interests they would pursue?

H: That's difficult to distinguish here. I think the father was dominant in what the sons did.

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After all, they both followed him in politics. They knew nothing else, even though the mother was a writer and she liked to have them take speech and all these other things and tried to instill the finer things of life, so to speak, into them. And she did to a certain extent, let's face it. They did appreciate some of that, but they didn't follow it. Neither of them went into that. Neither did the girls. Interestingly enough, the girls, not a one of them while I was there would ever wash a dish. I can remember many Sunday dinners when we lived next door, I would be the one. I would get up and clear the table and wash the dishes because I had always done that all my life. I had been trained to do that. But the girls never turned a finger. I did it, because I knew if I didn't do it Mrs. Johnson would have to. Which made me wonder often, how did she train them as children?

G: Did you get to know the sisters very well?

H: Oh, yes.

G: What were they like?

H: Josefa, the one who died, was the sweetest of the three in many ways. She had more difficulties than the other two. She had many of the problems that Sam did. I was abroad when she died, so I don't know the circumstances there, except that I heard that she did have a cerebral hemorrhage. Rebekah I got along with very well until the time that she disagreed about Sam's hospitalization and took him out. Up until then we had a very good relationship.

Lucia, well I guess the only way I can remember Lucia is because at the time of the mother's death the mother had stipulated Sam as the executor. Sam wasn't really in any condition to go through and sort out all the personal memorabilia, *et cetera*, or to



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divide up all the material and the household goods, dishes, china and what have you. So I was with him, and I did it with him. Lucia was there and objecting to the fact that an in-law was in any way involved in this. Sam said, "Look, she's my wife; I'm the executor, and you just get out of here and leave her alone." However, Mrs. Johnson had willed me sort of an early American sandwich plate glass set--it was beautiful turquoise--which Lucia had always wanted, and when Lucia had found out that Mrs. Johnson had given that to me she just had a fit.

Another thing, at the funeral Lucia wouldn't allow any of the in-laws to sit with their respective husbands and wives. The Johnson children were to sit on the front row with their husbands and wives behind them. And me with my independence, I said, "Uh-uh, I'm going to sit beside my husband." And I did. He was in a wheelchair, and I thought I had every right to sit beside him. What I finally did to resolve the crisis regarding the plate glass sandwich set--I appreciated the fact that Mrs. Johnson had thought enough of me to give it to me--I decided to give it to Lucia's daughter, Rebekah, who was her grandmother's namesake. I thought that was the appropriate thing to do. Lucia never said thank you. I've never heard from her to this day. It was just too much.

G: What were the sons' relationships with Mrs. Johnson?

H: Interestingly enough, Sam was the protective one of the family. He was the one that was protecting all of the family against Lyndon's outbursts. You see, they were all resenting Lyndon's paternalism and the fact that he was really trying to be their father instead of their brother. They were all resenting him. They were always fighting with him. He would fight with all three of the girls. They would all have their fights, and Sam was the

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peacemaker. He was always the one who would come in and make peace. If Mrs. Johnson would get upset over something Lyndon had said to her--not meaning to hurt her, it was just his way--Sam would always be the one to straighten it out. And the girls didn't like Lady Bird, which Sam thought was ridiculous. And it was. He always stood up for Lady Bird in every situation.

G: In talking earlier you mentioned that Mrs. Johnson, LBJ's mother, was sometimes nervous around him because he was--

H: Well, he was overwhelming. After all, her livelihood, her upkeep was dependent on him. He supported her.

G: Can you give me an example of what we're talking about?

H: There was something about the house. I forget what it was. There was a duplex apartment that was in her name. I forget the details of the arrangement. But at any rate, he was more or less controlling what happened to it. She would get upset every now and then. There were certain things she'd want to have in the house or she'd want to repair or something, and he would complain about it. Even worse, even more important, if Lyndon were having a fight with Lucia or Josefa or Rebekah, Mrs. Johnson would be very upset. She didn't want her children fighting. Well, no mother does. She would be very nervous about it. In the end, usually she would be pressuring the girls to make peace with their brother.

G: Did you ever see an indication of what Doris Kearns describes in her book as love alternatively given and withdrawn by the parents?

H: No, I didn't see that, because by the time I entered the family, of course, Mrs. Johnson

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was in her late sixties or early seventies. She died at seventy-four or seventy-six. She was very dependent on him at that point. No, that I don't remember.

G: So, you went back to Washington in 1956, is that right?

H: I went back in 1956. Sam broke his leg.

G: That was, I guess, in 1957?

H: I don't think we went back in 1956. That's where I'm confused. Because it was 1956 we were in Texas, and that's when the telephone calls would come through. We went back in 1957. He broke his leg in early 1957, and from then on we were in Washington.

G: You must have gone to that National Convention in 1956, though.

H: Indeed. Yes. That's it now. We were living in Johnson City. He wanted us to live in Johnson City and work with the bank director there. I can't remember his name. He was a good friend.

G: Judge [A.W.] Moursund?

H: Judge Moursund, in the insurance business. I was learning the insurance business. Sam could care less. He didn't want to live in Johnson City. He didn't want to learn insurance. Lyndon wanted us to live in one of the ranch houses. Oh, Sam just wouldn't do it.

G: He wanted to go to Washington?

H: He wanted to go to Washington. He wasn't going to be stuck in Johnson City, ever. I was loving it. I would have stayed there happily. It was an interesting little spot.

G: You flew to the convention then?

H: We flew to the convention. Suddenly, the word came through that we were to go. And particularly, I didn't know until the very end. When we got to the airport I wasn't

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dressed, I didn't have any luggage. Lyndon said, "Get on the plane." I said, "But Lyndon, I don't have any luggage." He said, "Go on." On I went. I had to buy a new wardrobe in Chicago, which I didn't mind. They had sales, and I blissfully went off shopping.

G: Do you recall any episodes at the convention?

H: I particularly remember one episode. The Johnson box was next to the Kennedy box. Lyndon was instrumental, whether it's known or not, in getting John Kennedy nominated as vice president. He was working behind the scenes to get John Kennedy nominated. I don't know whether that was as a stop [Estes] Kefauver move. I don't know.

G: What did he do, do you recall anything in particular?

H: I knew, because Sam had told me that was going on. I was sitting here and Jackie was here. In fact, it was closer than that. I was sitting here and she was sitting there, and there was just sort of a rail along the seat, a chain rail. She wouldn't speak to any of us. I tried to turn to her, and I tried to speak to her. I tried to make small talk. I tried to do everything. She was having nothing to do with anybody in the Johnson box.

G: I wonder why?

H: From then on, I had no use for her. I just thought that was snobbism which was inexcusable. Jack was always very nice. I met him many times, and he was always very pleasant and very nice to all of us. But not Jackie.

G: Did you get the feeling at all that the vice presidency might go to LBJ himself?

H: That was an interesting one. I was in Washington, and I had already come to work for the State Department. But I took leave and I stayed home the day of the convention because I just did not want to miss seeing it on TV. I knew I didn't dare go out to the

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convention, having just come into a government department. I came in in March, and this was in the summer. I could see what was happening out there on the television set. I knew that LBJ was getting hell from everybody over the vice presidency, even thinking about it. I kept hoping and hoping and hoping all through the convention that he would take it. I could tell how much pressure he was getting not to. When the announcement came out--it came out the night before--I woke up early the next morning, and I waited until California time I thought was a reasonable time to call him. I called him, and I congratulated him. I got through right away. I thought I'd have difficulty getting through, but I didn't. I got right to him.

I just told him, "Lyndon, I am so proud of you for accepting." He said, "Honey, you're the only person who has told me that." He said, "Why do you say that?" I said, "Well, I'm proud of you for doing that, but I think it's the only thing you could do." He said, "Why?" I said, "Well, if the Republicans win or if the Democrats win, you don't want to be majority leader. If the Republicans win, you're going to still be majority leader. I think you've done the only thing you can do politically. I'm proud of you for doing it. I know how much opposition you were having." He said, "You're the only one who has said so. You're the only one. Now, I've got a bunch of nitwits out here." He said, "Get me some help down, get some of your friends at the State Department. Get somebody. See if you can't get me a speech out here, an acceptance speech." I nearly died. I thought, "He must be kidding." I said, "Lyndon, you're kidding." He said, "No, I'm not." He said, "I've just got a bunch of dumb nitwits." He knew I had some friends that were speech writers. So I called a couple of these guys that were over here in the

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State Department, and I said, "You won't believe it, but this is what I've been asked to do." So we all got together, and we wrote the speech and we telephoned it out. It wasn't delivered exactly as we had written it, but it was pretty close.

G: Is that right? Who else worked on it?

H: It was a chap who had been in the foreign service and who was then out. He had been doing some consulting. He had been working with LBJ on foreign affairs.

G: What was his name?

H: Samuel Graham [?]. He was a friend of Sam Houston's. I think he was still in the department. I think he was later out and then went into AID [Agency for International Development]. He called some other people, too. He called some people on domestic things. I don't know who they were. But we got the issues together. But that just completely floored me, and even when I look back on it I don't understand it because of all the people he had out there in California. But he was mad at them. He felt that they had given him the wrong advice.

G: There must have been two or three different versions of that speech and people working on it.

H: Of course there were, and I'm sure it was melded. But as I said, there was an awfully lot that we telephoned out. He told me to telephone straight to Mary Rather, and I did. Some of it was paraphrased, and some of it was rearranged. We were expecting him to speak before Kennedy. At least it was reversed whichever way it was. They had to change that because we had referred to something that Kennedy might have said.

G: Unless you have any other family recollections that you want to talk about--

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H: Oh, nothing I can think of.

G: I know you have a lot of thoughts about Lyndon Johnson as a majority leader, as a compromiser. Let's just talk about him as a politician. First of all, do you have any observations about his speech-making, either in the Senate or when he would speak to groups?

H: I always felt that he was an extremely effective speech-maker in the Senate. I've heard him on the floor; I've heard him speak to private groups; I've heard him speak to large groups, and the one thing that really floored me when he got into the White House was the fact that he didn't come through as a good speaker. The TV was just dreadful. I finally concluded that it was just strictly because he was trying to project the image that all the PR people were asking him to do, and it just wasn't LBJ. There were a lot of things, of course, that happened. I've had a lot of questions in my mind as to what happened to the man, because the way he operated, or the way it was projected that he operated in the White House, is not the way he operated in the Senate.

G: The difference being?

H: He was sure of himself. He was his own man in the Senate. I think in the White House he didn't feel that he was his own man early enough. For instance, when Kennedy died and he came back to Washington he asked all the Kennedy people to stay on. I know why he did that, of course. He did it primarily because he felt the country was going through a trauma. He didn't know what was behind it, whether it was a conspiracy or not. He didn't want to give any impression to foreign governments that we didn't have continuity, and to reinforce that continuity he wanted everybody to stay in place. Which

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I think was a generous thing to do, but it did not serve his interest. Because any president has to have his own people, and he has to develop his own policies if he is to succeed.

G: But before, when he was majority leader, he spoke more on an impromptu basis?

H: Oh, much more. I mean, he was sure of himself. I think that when he came into the presidency there were so many advisers around and the issues were great, and as I said, the country was going through the trauma, that he didn't assert himself the way he did as a senator. Certainly during the vice presidency he never asserted himself.

G: What was the best speech you ever heard him give before he became president?

H: I didn't hear very many of them, of course, because I was usually in the office. I remember one he gave at the Democratic dinner in 1954. It was excellent, really excellent.

G: Was this in Washington?

H: In Washington, yes. I've heard him speak to small groups who would come, and he would gather in to one of the caucus rooms and speak to them. He was always very open, and they responded. He was perfectly natural.

G: Now, let's talk about him as a legislator, as a compromiser. What were his characteristics here?

H: I went into this a little bit. I started thinking about this in 1972. When I was at Oxford I was asked to do a lecture at All Souls College, and I did. It was a seminar in federalism. I went through and showed how the U.S. Senate in particular was born out of compromise. It was an instrument of compromise because the big issue within the states at the time of the forming of the Constitution was states' rights. States were jealous of



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their own prerogatives. They wanted to protect their interests. They had been used to dealing very independently of one another. They were far away from England, and they ran their own affairs. They had done things on their own. There was no sense of having to do anything with their neighbors.

Suddenly you have the Confederation, which didn't work because it wasn't strong enough. Then you had the Federation, and it was because of the compromising that was done at the Convention, the compromise between the House of Representatives representing the popular side, the popular vote, a segment that was based on number of votes--a representative who represented so many people in a district--and the Senate, however, [where] each state had two. It was based on equality of all states, where in the House it was based on the number of population within the state. Also remember that our founding fathers did not believe in democracy. They didn't intend for us to be a democracy. We were a republic, and the representatives were to represent the voters. They were to speak for the voters.

Now the thing that I would observe is that now it has become a response to the voters rather than a leading. Now our founding fathers intended that our congressmen and our senators lead the people and speak for them, speak on their behalf. First of all, people weren't that [inaudible]. They were afraid of the voice of the common man; therefore, the Senate was born particularly out of this compromise and was an instrument of compromise because of the states' rights issue particularly. I like to think--maybe it's because I know the man so well and worked with him, and after all I had a great deal of regard for the man--that LBJ really is a perfect expression of what the founding fathers

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were about. He was a compromiser, and has been called so by critic and foe alike.

G: Did he have a set position to start with that he would alter in some way or change? Did he achieve these compromises within a given political philosophy of his own, or was he more thinking in terms of, "What do, say, forty-nine of the senators want here? What can I get passed?"

H: I think he had his own philosophy. After all, we remember him as a New Dealer under Franklin D. Roosevelt. But then when he became a senator he had to represent Texas, and Texas was basically conservative, even though it was a Democratic state. You had about five factions in there. He had to represent Texas.

G: Also as a majority leader he was representing the--

H: As majority leader he was representing the nation, too. He was representing all the states as majority leader. I mean, he was assisting in representing them, let's say. He was leading the entire body. I think basically LBJ was a progressive. His instincts were progressive. He was a populist.

G: Did he ever characterize himself and his political philosophy?

H: Oh, yes. I remember particularly there was a biography that Booth Mooney did. At the back there was a statement of, "First of all, I'm an American . . ." Well, take his time in the Senate. This was a Republican president. He didn't do anything that he felt would hurt that president if it would be detrimental to the good of the country.

G: His concept, I guess, of a responsible opposition.

H: It was very much a concept of responsible opposition. To get back to the question of how he would plan a campaign or how he would take a position on a vote. Let's take the civil

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rights issue. He started out in his early days representing Texas voting against civil rights. He gradually, very gradually changed that. He couldn't do it overnight.

G: You were there in those years when he did seem to be swinging to a position more in favor of civil rights. What do you think influenced him?

H: Well, I think he felt the time had come when it had to happen.

G: Do you think it was a change in his own beliefs with regard to civil rights?

H: I don't believe his own-beliefs had ever changed.

G: Really?

H: No, no. I think that his own beliefs had always been that there should be equality. Go back to the time he taught school in Cotulla, Texas, for instance. Go back to his NYA days, when he was trying to help the little man. Even when he was working for Richard Kleberg, who was a dyed-in-the-wool conservative, he still did a great deal for the little man. When he became a representative in his own right he did everything for the little man. He answered every letter. He did everything. Anybody who worked in his office would recognize a letter, a request that came in there from anybody, I don't care who they were, it was taken care of. Lots of things happened, but all those little people in Texas got taken care of. Now he represented the big business interests, too, the oil and gas lobby for instance, *et cetera*. He never let them own him. He never let them dictate. He maintained control, and that was the secret on that one. They never dominated him. No one company ever really dominated Lyndon Johnson. I can remember when he would tell Sam Houston or John Connally or some of the people who were raising campaign funds, "Send the check back."

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G: Is that right?

H: "I don't want it. I don't need it."

G: Why was that?

H: He didn't want to be beholden. That's how he was able to maintain and how he was able to run his own course.

G: But he obviously took some money from some sources. Why would he take some from--?

H: Because there were others that he knew that if he took it they would expect certain things of him, and he wasn't about to do it.

G: What company was that, or what person?

H: I don't remember.

G: You don't remember. I wanted to ask you, getting back to civil rights, about the Southern Manifesto and his refusal to sign that. Do you recall that? Where the other southern senators [signed]? This was after the Brown decision.

H: I certainly don't remember.

G: And then in the 1957 Civil Rights Bill, it was seen by some as half a loaf.

H: Well, of course. The extreme progressives, the extreme liberals wanted it all at once. What LBJ did was say to them, "Look, you can't get it all at once. Take what you can get." Then he would say to the other side, "Look, I know this is further than you can go," or "There is only so far that you can go." And some people, he knew they couldn't in a million years vote for it, but he could get a certain amount of support. He could ask them not to oppose certain elements that had nothing to do with their state.

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G: Do you recall any particulars here of him, say, dealing with Russell on the Civil Rights Bill?

H: He dealt with Russell on it all the time.

C: Can you remember anything in particular?

H: No. Because, as I said, none of us were in on those conversations. That was the year, 1957, that Sam Houston was in a body cast and we were at the apartment. I must admit that taking care of him at that time was a great deal. I remember the Sputnik going up, and I remember that Lyndon came by and they would talk every night. Sometimes I would listen, and sometimes I didn't. Sometimes I would have other things to do. I knew they would like to be alone, too, part of the time.

G: You don't think that he was reserved around you, do you?

H: On certain things. There were certain little sensitive areas that he didn't want anyone to hear. He didn't want any women around. I think that he did not mind my knowing a lot of things, but there was a line. There was a line beyond which he wouldn't talk about if I were in the room.

G: Really? Do you think he used his staff effectively?

H: Do you mean in the Senate days? I wouldn't call him the best manager in the world. I've had quite a bit of management training over here in the department. He didn't motivate you. He didn't delegate responsibility to you. You did a lot of work, yes. But maybe it's the nature of the institution, too. After all, a senator is an institution within himself, and everything that the staff does is just to maintain that institution. All the letters are for his signature, for instance; you never sign anything in your own name. Of course, we'll get

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back to where we started, the fact that people were so afraid of him. They were afraid to speak up. There was a tenseness. At the same time there was tremendous loyalty; also, those people wouldn't have given up their jobs with him for anything.

G: And some of them stayed with him an awfully long time.

H: I think that you will find that most people who stay with a congressman or a senator for that long within themselves do not have the temperament or the potential to be leaders in their own right, or they wouldn't be there.

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H: I think one of the main qualities that I remember particularly is if I were to get exasperated with him in that first year because of the pressures--the pressures were so great on you. You worked long hours; I can remember working eighteen hours a day at times--he always had all this exuberance and enthusiasm. If he asked you to work, you knew he was working, too. And he was probably doing ten times more than you were doing. So he never expected more of you than he was of himself, which I think was one of the reasons that people stayed with him.

G: Do you think a lot of it was make work, or do you think it really needed to be done?

H: No, it had to be done. Of course, many senators and congressman did not answer all their mail. He wouldn't allow one piece to go unanswered. I'm sure you've heard this story before, of how he used to go down on Sunday's and check everybody's desk. It was true.

G: Oh really?

H: Oh, yes indeed. Not every Sunday. But every now and then he'd decide to check it. If he found some mail on your desk, you really caught hell. He wanted everything done

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yesterday. I look back on it now, and I do not know how we put out what we did. I can remember actually being responsible for eight hundred pieces of mail a day. I would have to sift it according to issue. Much of it I would write a form letter. I would say out of the eight hundred about seventy-five I would dictate personal replies to, and these would be signed by him. The rest of them were signed on the robo-typer. I seldom got a letter back that he didn't sign, which I really was thrilled with. It made me very happy. And he read them; he would catch them. Of course, I know some letters Walter would sign.

G: Particularly, I guess, if LBJ were out of the office.

H: Yes, but I can remember many times going over to the Senate floor with a stack of mail for the Senator to sign, sitting there with him on the floor while he signed them. It was a thrill to go out and sit in the chamber.

G: He didn't miss much that was going on on the floor, did he?

H: He didn't miss anything. He was always there.

G: Did you ever see him in operation there? Did you ever see him maneuvering on the floor?

H: We were so busy in the office there wasn't much time, but every now and then I would go over and observe for a while. Or when I would be sitting there, if I would have the mail there for him to sign, if something was going on or somebody came over and said something to him, he'd get up and go over and he'd talk with so-and-so. And he'd go back out in the cloakroom and talk to somebody else. Oh, he was moving all the time. He never stopped. He never sat. Oh, he'd sit, but not for very long. I sat there

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sometimes for an hour or so while this would go on. I'd be sitting there, and I was enjoying every minute of it.

G: Did you get an opportunity to see him at work on other senators on those occasions?

H: Yes. But it was sort of a quiet discussion. He'd say a few words to them. As I said, I think that he would be nudging them substantively. You know, "Well, now don't you think you can accept that?" "How can we change this so that it is acceptable to you?" "What do we need to do to change it so you can accept it?" That kind of thing. Some of the language would be changed, and somebody would get up and propose an amendment.

G: Did he often describe these needs as personal needs, like he needed to have this bill through and if this other senator could help him out on getting the bill through? Explain how much hardship it would be on him if he didn't get the bill through and such and such? Did he make personal pleas like this?

H: I think there was some of that, but I don't think there was as much of that as there was, "Well, don't you think this will help?" "Don't you think this is the kind of thing that will help your state?" or "Can't we do something that will help your state?" "How can we make this acceptable to your position, to your state?" Oh, I think there was some of what you were saying, yes, but not to the extent that people have accused him of. He used all tactics. He did some of that. But, as I said, he did not expect them to vote for something that they couldn't live with.

G: Was there much *quid pro quo*?

H: I would say there was some, sure.

G: Getting one senator to support something and in turn another would support?



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- H: Oh, sure. But nowhere to the extent that it would be harmful to this other person in his own district, that it would do something to him to make him ineligible for re-election. That's the one thing that is absolutely verboten. You never went to that extent. He would never expect them to vote on something that he knew was going to hurt them in their state, unless it were a very minor kind of thing he felt that they could explain to the voters and obtain the voters' support. Sometimes that happened. They could go home and obtain support after the event. But it couldn't be an extreme position in that case.
- G: I was going to ask you to talk about Bobby Baker and LBJ's relationship with him.
- H: Bobby Baker was a very young man. He had been a page. He was very bright and quick. He came to LBJ's attention very early. LBJ used him, put him on as secretary to the majority. LBJ was very aware of the fact that Bobby needed supervision, and I can distinctly remember him telling Sam Houston to watch him very closely. I remember him telling him this right after his heart attack when he had Sam going to the office.
- G: This was when he was still in the hospital or was he at home?
- H: No, when he was at home. He kept telling him to watch Bobby. I remember when he would come by the apartment when Sam was in the body cast. He came by nearly every night. On his way home he stopped for a few minutes. They talked a lot about Bobby then. I did hear some of those conversations. LBJ kept saying, "I'm worried about Bobby. I have to watch him. I wish you were up there, but of course you're not." He really didn't have anybody at that point, and I think even less later, who could watch Bobby the way he felt he needed to be watched. He was conscious of the fact that Bobby was cutting a wide swath.

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G: Did he ever discuss Bobby Baker in terms of Baker's ability to count votes?

H: Oh, yes indeed. That's why he had him. Because Bobby could run errands, and Bobby knew every senator's vote. He knew how they were going to vote. He was able to do it. He had this particular ability to get around quickly and to count them. There aren't very many people who have Bobby Baker's capability. I doubt that anybody in the Senate today could do it.

G: Can you recall any particular bills or issues on which Bobby Baker supplied necessary information?

H: He was in on all of them. Oh, yes, he would call over from the Senate.

G: How much time did Bobby spend in the office?

H: In LBJ's office?

G: Yes.

H: Oh, practically none. He was always over in the Senate.

G: He'd just come in on occasion?

H: He'd just pop in if he had something he had to talk to him [about] personally that he couldn't do by telephone. But the Senator wasn't in his office that much either. He had committee hearings in the morning. He would be in the office maybe a couple of hours in the day. We would take people over to fleet him on the floor. If important people came in to see him, we would take them over and he'd come off the floor and talk to them. Of course, he had an office over there, too. He had an office right upstairs. I remember it was twenty-three, one of them. Bobby and [LBJ] did most of their work right there on the floor.

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G: In the cloakroom, I suppose?

H: In the cloakroom. Senator [Robert] Kerr was very much in the picture at that point. I never knew all of those details, but I would be pretty sure that Kerr had a great deal to do with Bobby's final mistakes.

G: And when he said you had to watch Bobby, he was referring to the tendency to use the Senator's office for business?

H: I don't know what he was referring to. All I know is that he would say, "You have to watch him." "You have to watch him or he'll get in trouble." This is the way he would put it: "Keep him straight." This is the terminology he would use. And Sam would get on the phone; even when he was lying in bed with a body cast he would get on the phone and talk to Bobby every day for hours. He kept this thing going with Bobby by telephone, trying to keep him . . . Of course, Bobby had no idea that LBJ was putting Sam up to it. Sam always pretended that he was just trying to give Bobby some advice. Bobby knew Sam was lying there at home, and he was happy to talk to him to help keep him interested and occupied.

G: Is there anything else you'd like to add while we're here?

H: I can't think of anything. I'll probably think of a million things later.

G: I probably will, too, and we'll have a follow-up. Thank you.

[End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview I]

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