INTERVIEW I

DATE: April 19, 1971

INTERVIEWEE: JERRY HOLLEMAN

INTERVIEWER: DAVID G. McCOMB

PLACE: Mr. Holleman's office at 2909 Fredericksburg Road, San Antonio, Texas

Tape 1 of 1

M: First of all, Mr. Holleman, I'd like to know something about your background. Where you were born and when, and where did you get your education?

H: I was born in Childress County, Texas, actually on a farm but near what was then Arlie, Texas, A-R-L-I-E. That little place doesn't exist any more, so the address is sort of lost since then. We had an unusual situation in that on the east fence line of our farm was the Texas-Oklahoma boundary, the one hundredth meridian going north between the Texas Panhandle and Oklahoma.

It was twenty miles to the nearest Texas school and four and a quarter miles to the nearest Oklahoma school. So my father who was chairman of the school board succeeded in actually transferring funds and all of our pupils over into the Oklahoma school so that I went to school for twelve years just three-quarters of a mile over in Oklahoma. I got my high school education at Westview, which is in Harmon County, Oklahoma, the very southwest corner. In fact our farm was six miles north of the Red River on the one hundredth meridian. You can find it on any world map.

My college education was at Cameron College at Lawton, Oklahoma. I didn't get a bachelor's degree; I got an associate in science, which was eighty-three hours, in preparation for what was to have been a career in radio as a radio announcer or performer. Actually I started searching for a job before I completed my education, and I found at that point in 1940 that nobody wanted to hire an announcer that didn't have any experience. So how do you get experience if you can't announce someplace? I thrashed about for some time trying to get into the radio field; in the meantime married a young lady whose family lived in the same community--actually she lived over in Hollis, Oklahoma--Inda Scott, I-N-D-A. By the way, we've been married thirty-one years now, have three daughters, two married and one still at home.

About a year or so after we married, we moved to Borger, Texas, and it was there that I entered my electrical apprenticeship and became an apprentice electrician, because my secondary interest in school was physics. I loved electricity. This opportunity was offered me, and I grabbed it and completed a four-year apprenticeship in just under two years.

M: That was during the war years.

H: The beginning of the war, yes, before we got heavily involved. About 1941, 1942, 1943. I worked at the trade then until I was drafted. We lived in Borger. Shall I continue with the chronology?

M: Yes, you might just as well. You were drafted into the Army, I assume?

H: Yes. Into the Corps of Engineers, served in Italy and became a first lieutenant in Italy.

M: You came up from the ranks then?

H: Yes, from private to first lieutenant.

M: Then you got out when? In 1945?

H: In 1946.

M: Then what did you do?

H: We were torn between whether or not we wanted to live in Lawton, Oklahoma or Lubbock, Texas. Those were our two choices. Lubbock won out. So we went to Lubbock and immediately I resumed my trade as an electrician. The proper name for that is inside wireman, by the way. And I worked there for almost a year.

Actually, I became a member of the union, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, while I was in Borger, and the union was in Amarillo. I had never moved my membership from Amarillo; it was still in Amarillo. One day while working on one of the large dormitories out at Texas Tech the executive board of the union came out, and I thought I was in trouble. I couldn't imagine what in the world I was being called on the carpet for. They'd gone through their files and learned of my education and my background and my experience, and they asked me to become business manager of the union.

M: This is a CIO affiliate?

H: No, it's an AF of L, the old AF of L craft electricians union.

Frankly, this possibility had never occurred to me. I'd never thought about becoming a labor leader; that had never occurred to me. They came out and proposed this to me. I said, "Well, I don't even belong to this local. My membership is still in Amarillo." They said, "We think we can handle that. We can get the international president to suspend the constitution so that we may elect you business manager and financial secretary." So I talked it over with the wife; she wasn't too thrilled about the idea, but I decided to go ahead and give it a try.

M: Somebody must have been impressed with your ability then, to just pick you out.

H: Evidently so. I was elected in June of 1947 as business manager of local 850, IBEW, in Lubbock and took office about the fifth day of July, I suppose. I ran without an opponent and under special dispensation from the international president because I still hadn't moved my membership there. I served there in that capacity until, I guess it was, January of 1950.

But in the meantime in Lubbock, I made a lot of friends, some of whom were Lyndon Johnson's friends also. For example, Charlie Guy, the editor of the newspaper, the Avalanche Journal in Lubbock, became a very dear friend of mine. While he and I were not always of the same philosophy, especially regarding labor, we did enjoy very good friendship and mutual respect and admiration.

But while there, I also became head of the central labor union and head of the Building Trades Council and was, for all

practical purposes, to put it simply, oversimplified perhaps, the head of the labor movement in Lubbock and that area.

M: How strong was that?

H: As a matter of fact, the Building Trades Council in Lubbock were quite strong. Virtually everything that was built in Lubbock was built union, and I would say 97 per cent of all construction was union.

M: So it's a strong labor town?

H: Where the building trades unions were concerned. Outside of the building trades unions, Lubbock had very little industry. The only other unions that were there were the communication workers and the telephone company and a few other miscellaneous unions such as the projectionists with the theaters and a few like that.

M: One side note on this: Is this true of Texas on the whole also?

H: It was true at that point.

M: Is the union strength in the building trades?

H: Yes. The original basic strength of the unions in Texas came from your old craft unions: building trades, printing trades, and other special skill trades. It wasn't until during the war that the industrial type unions began to gain substantial strength in Texas and industry really began to blossom.

M: That also means you had some political force, I would assume.

H: Yes, as a matter of fact, in Lubbock--and this may sound strange-- in 1948 Beauford Jester was running for governor and was

elected governor, and an unknown figure by the name of Roger Q. Evans ran against him, totally unknown. He carried only one county in Texas; that was Lubbock County. By the way, labor was supporting him generally. But in Lubbock County, Roger Q. Evans carried it by 67 per cent. So, yes, we had a little punch in Lubbock, and it was recognized.

By the way, we helped Waggoner Carr become elected in his first election to public office, which was county attorney and from there on to the legislature, speaker of the house, attorney general, and so forth.

M: So then when you became business manager of the union in Lubbock, you also made your first political contacts? Is that right?

H: Yes, this is when I began to really become involved in politics, 1947. And it was 1948 when I suppose I met Lyndon Johnson for the very first time. This was at the state AF of L convention in Fort Worth, when he was running for the Senate. That was the famous eighty-seven vote campaign. I'm sure he doesn't remember that and I barely remember it, but I simply met him in a line of a lot of other people who met him and shook hands with him and visited for just a moment. That was my first encounter with Lyndon Johnson.

M: Did you support him at that time?

H: As a matter of fact, no. The old CIO supported Lyndon Johnson; the AF of L supported Coke Stevenson.

M: How can you explain that?

H: Well, I really can't explain it, because it doesn't make any kind of sense. Perhaps mainly because the leadership of the AF of L had developed a relationship with Coke Stevenson, a personal relationship, that they didn't have with Lyndon Johnson. At that point he was considered the brash young man who was moving up awfully rapidly.

Now the leadership of the AF of L, at that point, was not very liberal. They were pretty conservative, and of course, Lyndon Johnson was much more to the liking of the CIO leadership. So this division came at that point. He was, as a congressman, a Franklin D. Roosevelt right-hand man, and of course, the CIO thought highly of him. The AF of L should have supported him, but didn't.

M: I have read that in that campaign there was some confusion over the labor issue. Apparently Lyndon Johnson had voted for Taft-Hartley.

H: He had, yes.

M: And that this sort of went against the grain of the . . . ?

H: Of the AF of L, yes. The CIO did not let that outweigh the rest of their judgment regarding the man, the AF of L did. This was perhaps the real major factor in that he did vote for the Taft-Hartley Act, which labor later learned wasn't nearly as bad as they had thought it was.

M: You stayed in Lubbock then until 1950?

H: Until about January of 1950. I received a call from Austin from

a man who was the head of the AF of L in Texas, Paul Sparks, S-P-A-R-K-S. He wanted me to come to Austin as his assistant. Even though this represented a cut in pay for me, I could see that the opportunities were far better for advancement in that capacity than they were in Lubbock. I'd gone about as far as I could go in Lubbock.

M: You were still the business manager?

H: Business manager, and president of the Central Labor Council, and president of the Building Trades Council. But that's all there was.

So I took the cut in pay and moved to Austin and became assistant to the executive secretary . At that time, the executive secretary was the chief executive officer of the AF of L. The CIO had a counterpart also executive secretary who was the chief executive officer of the CIO.

I worked in that capacity until I was called back into the service. By the way, you will recall we weren't permitted to get out of the Reserve; we were kept in the Reserve involuntarily so to speak.

M: So Korea caught up with you then?

H: Yes. I got called back in October for Korea and landed at Pusan. As a matter of fact, we left here Christmas Day 1950, and I spent seventeen months in Korea. I crossed the 38th parallel five times.

M: What was your rank then?

H: First lieutenant.

M: They called you back in as a first lieutenant?

H: Yes. I was an inactive reservist, and after I got over there they told me, "You're not supposed to be here." I said, "Great, send me home." They were only supposed to be calling active reservists. but they needed fillers to fill in the blank spots. So they called inactive reservists for fillers.

M: You were in the Engineers, I guess?

H: Yes. So I spent seventeen months in Korea and came back then to my same position as assistant to Paul Sparks. I returned in April of 1952 from Korea. Paul then resigned his office in November 1953, about a year and a half after I returned. The executive board of the old AF of L in Texas chose me to fill out his unexpired term, and then I was re-elected by the convention.

Then when the merger of the two organizations, the AF of L and the CIO, occurred--the national merger was in 1955, but the Texas groups did not merge until 1957--I became president of the State AFL-CIO. Of course, in my capacity as assistant to the executive secretary of the AF of L and as executive secretary of the AF of L, my contacts with congressmen, state officials and others became heavier. I had occasion to encounter Lyndon Johnson two or three times during that period of time.

Our main encounter with Johnson came in 1956. This was the year that Sam Rayburn, in his attempt to take the Democratic Party away

from Allan Shivers in Texas, tossed Lyndon Johnson into the fray by designating him as the state's favorite son for president. I think that perhaps Lyndon was not too thrilled with that in the beginning, but he could not very well turn Mr. Rayburn down. So he was flung into the fight.

M: Did he ask for your support in that at all?

H: Oh, yes. We worked very closely with him and spent several afternoons and evenings out at the Ranch together and at the Driskill Hotel in Austin together. In fact, one of his problems was that he had a strong group of supporters over the state. Let's name one or two of them. John Connally, for example, was his campaign manager, but John had never been to a precinct convention. So he didn't even know how to run a precinct convention. You know, this is the basic thing you have to do to win a state convention. Kathleen Voigt, V-O-I-G-T, and I--Kathleen lives here in San Antonio--had considerable experience with Lyndon. She's teaching political science now out at St. Mary's. But we actually conducted classes for his campaign crew in the Driskill Hotel to teach them how to run a precinct convention.

M: You had had experience with this prior to this?

H: This is routine. Labor has traditionally been involved in party affairs.

M: You had been doing this since 1947 then?

H: Since 1947, yes. So these conventions were routine.

M: So you got with Johnson's people down at the Driskill and actually gave them lessons?

H: Taught them how to conduct a precinct convention. There were several of them, but the main one that I remember was John Connally.

M: Do you remember any advice you gave him?

H: It was mainly a matter of what takes place; what do you do in this event; what do you do in that event; what kind of resolutions do you prepare; the parliamentary procedure involved; what to do in the case that the opposition is trying to steal the convention from you; how to bolt and hold a rump convention; the whole range of tactics involving precinct conventions.

M: I would assume Connally was a good student?

H: Yes, they learned quickly. From that point on he didn't need any more educating; I must say he became an expert, too. But we worked very closely with them.

As a matter of fact, under Mr. Rayburn--and he had been working on this for a couple of years--we had been active in what was called the Democrats of Texas, which Mr. Rayburn set up to try to win back the party from Allan Shivers. You will remember that in 1952 Allan Shivers had taken the Democratic Party and endorsed Eisenhower for president, and Mr. Rayburn didn't intend for that to happen again. So before 1956 he began preparing in advance to see to it that this did not happen. By the way,

we became very close to Mr. Rayburn, too. Before he died I became very close to him and consider him one of the greatest men I've ever known.

M: Is it your impression that Sam Rayburn had a lot to do with Lyndon Johnson's training as a politician, giving advice and things like that?

H: Yes, he did. He gave him some very basic training, but Lyndon Johnson had a natural knack for this. There is that extra gland that a politician has, an extra sixth sense that he had, and I want to come to that later because it's one of the traits that really created the aura of power about him that was fictitious, except that it was real. That's a contradiction, isn't it?

M: Yes.

H: But anyway, in 1956 we waged the campaign.

M: One other question about the 1956 campaign: What was your relationship with the liberals, such as those down in Harris County?

H: We built the coalition. You see, the Democrats of Texas that Mr. Rayburn established was made up of all the liberal groups: the Negroes, the Latins, labor, the independent liberals, the loyal Democrats.

M: You were working hand-in-hand with Frankie Randolph in that?

H: Yes, all of those. We put this whole thing together; we broke the state down into areas; we raised the money and hired organizers to go out and get every county ready to win its county convention to

come to this 1956 convention. It was a tough fight because Allan Shivers didn't give up easily. For a while it was uncertain. But at that point we made a deal with Lyndon Johnson.

M: What was you deal?

H: The deal was that we would do three things. At that point, the Democratic Party in Texas had a convention in May and one in September. The one in May, about all it did was to name the national committeeman and committeewoman and the delegates to the national convention and to instruct them in whatever way it chose. The one in September elected the State Democratic Executive Committee. We wanted the State Democratic Executive Committee replaced in May, and we made a deal that if he would replace the State Democratic Executive Committee in May, letting each of the districts choose their own without nominees being screened by him or anyone else; let each of the districts select their own Democratic committeeman and state Democratic committeewoman, and Lyndon could then choose his own national committeeman and committeewoman. That was the understanding, the agreement.

Now that agreement didn't hold because at the last minute, the night before the convention about seven o'clock, he and Mr. Rayburn jointly announced that they were not going to replace the State Democratic Executive Committee.

M: Why not? Was there indication of why they changed their thinking?

H: We're not sure, because legally they had checked it out with the

best attorney that was available, John Cofer, Lyndon's right-hand lawyer, who did a substantial study on it constitutionally and under federal law and the whole works, and presented his opinion. I saw the opinion that they could legally replace the committee. We were never quite sure why they made this decision, but when they made this decision, we felt released from our commitment also.

M: He didn't call you in and say, "Look, we're not--"

H: He announced it to the press.

M: That must have angered you.

H: It did. As a matter of fact, we called our group together, and we met until about two o'clock planning our strategy. As a result, we elected Frankie Randolph as national committeewoman, and Byron Skelton of Temple as national committeeman.

M: What happened to Mrs. [Lloyd] Bentsen?

H: Mrs. Bentsen didn't come in at that point. She got defeated.

M: Yes, but wasn't he also supporting her?

H: He wanted her, and he was most unhappy with us because he said we welshed on our agreement. Well, the agreement was three-part and the re-election of the state executive committee and the committeeman and the committeewoman were the three parts to it. They were his, and he was committed to the re-election of the state executive committee. Because we knew if we were going to win the September convention, then we would have good

Democrats on the State Democratic Executive Committee come next September as well as November.

So we had some very strained times during that convention and relations became rather strained during that time.

If I may, let me jump ahead a little ways for a year or so. In his office a few years later, sitting with Andy Biemiller, who is the national legislative representative for the AF of L and later for the AFL-CIO-- we went to see Lyndon while he was majority leader--Lyndon made mention of this, that we had doublecrossed him. He and I had a shouting match, and that was just one of the cuss matches that we had. I pointed out to him emphatically that he had broken the commitment first because it was a three-way commitment. I spoke to him some fairly pungent words in West Texas terms that everybody could clearly understand as to what I felt about his position. And he hushed; he sat down and he got quiet when I reminded him of the three-point agreement and how it was first broken. He still wasn't happy with it. But that's ahead of time, that happened a couple of years later. Andy Biemiller, I remember, was scared to death, because I was standing up, pounding my fists on Lyndon's table and screaming at him, and he didn't think this was any way to lobby the majority leader of the Senate. It wasn't exactly the best way I could think of. We were wanting some legislation passed. But, as a matter of fact, in the long run it cleared the air between us pretty well. It helped, at least, to clear the air.

M: Back to 1956.

H: Of course, that convention ended with Mrs. Randolph and Byron Skelton being elected and relations being somewhat strained, Lyndon being the favorite son that year. The national convention was at Chicago.

M: Did he think and did you think that he had any chance?

H: No. We thought he had no chance. He didn't think he had a chance. But it seems that at the last minute he began to get some hope We were never quite sure what happened. He seemed to begin to believe he could possibly be elected.

M: Was there any incident that you think might of caused that?

H: No, but he became deadly serious about his campaign. Actually his delegation went up expecting certainly to give him all their support as favorite son. And we all participated in the demonstration vigorously, marched around the convention hall at least three times acting like a bunch of damned fools; we wore our "Love That Lyndon" buttons and banners, and so on and so forth. Except that most of us went up with another candidate in mind, really, because we weren't taking him seriously as a serious contender for the nomination. As a matter of fact, neither was Mr. Rayburn. Mr. Rayburn didn't consider him a serious contender. And yet, Lyndon began to act right up toward the end of that convention time as though he was really getting serious about it. So that began to cause a little bit of strain.

M: Did Lyndon Johnson lead the delegation to the national convention from Texas?

H: Actually John Connally was the chairman of the delegation, but he was, of course, Lyndon's right-hand man.

M: Isn't it true then that Johnson supported Kennedy in 1956?

H: For the vice presidency?

M: Yes.

H: He ran against him for vice president.

M: I know, but didn't he later switch?

H: He later supported him. I have an item that I wrote on this point at home. Coming back from that convention on the train, I wrote it regarding how that happened. The Texas delegation was voting for Lyndon Johnson for the presidency. It became obvious before the first roll call was over that Adlai Stevenson was going to be the nominee. The delegation wanted to switch over from Lyndon and change its vote, cast its final vote for Adlai Stevenson and be on the bandwagon, because that's really what the feeling of the majority of the delegation was. Sure, they loved Lyndon Johnson, but they weren't serious in believing that he could win the nomination. But most of them did want to see Adlai Stevenson on the ticket as president. We were after John Connally, and John was on the phone talking to Lyndon, desperately trying to get Lyndon's permission to let them ask for the floor to switch their vote over to Adlai Stevenson. Finally the gavel dropped with Texas still voting for Lyndon Johnson for president, and it never did cast its vote for Adlai Stevenson. This angered the delegation substantially.

Then we move to the vice presidential campaign, and he decided that he wanted to try for that. And again he was quite serious in his bid for the vice presidency. But most of us were already committed and even wearing banners. For example, my wife and I--she, an alternate, I a delegate--were wearing the John Kennedy banners; and others were wearing Kefauver's and various other banners for vice president. We had no idea that Lyndon would seriously go for vice president, you see. But he decided he wanted to be nominated for the vice presidency. Remember, Mr. Rayburn was the chairman of the convention; he was the man with the gavel. Mr. Rayburn wanted Texas to switch its vote for Adlai Stevenson, because that was who he wanted to be the nominee for president. And he waited and he waited, and he waited--before he finally dropped that gavel--for Texas to change its vote; and Texas wouldn't change its vote because it couldn't get a release from Lyndon, because it was committed until he released it.

M: Would you hold this as proof that Lyndon was really serious about the presidency then?

H: This is part of the reason why I feel that he became serious about it. It just doesn't make sense. Especially if a man had in mind becoming the running mate of Adlai Stevenson, never having allowed his delegation to cast its vote for him.

Adlai Stevenson opened up the nomination for vice president. He didn't pick his vice president; he let the convention do it. He said, "Open it up and you decide who you want to run with me." Really, the battle for vice president was the battle that year. But here again, Lyndon was nominated and certain Texas congressmen, including Wright Patman, vigorously opposed Lyndon's running for the vice presidency. Mr. Rayburn didn't want him to run for the vice presidency. Mr. Rayburn didn't like Kefauver--well, at that point he wasn't too crazy about John Kennedy either, but he wasn't too thrilled about Kefauver. But he certainly wasn't serious about Lyndon Johnson.

As the voting began it became apparent, and I think this was on the first ballot, certainly the first or second ballot, and I do believe the first, it became obvious that Kefauver was going to be the nominee for vice president. So Texas, all of us, began to agitate: "Okay, we want to get on the bandwagon."

M: The same thing.

H: "We want to be with the nominee." So John Connally got on the phone again and started calling up Lyndon. Something very interesting happened. Mr. Rayburn did not wait for Lyndon to make up his mind. He dropped the gavel before Lyndon had a chance. Lyndon did change his mind and had given permission to John Connally to switch Texas' vote to Estes Kefauver, and Connally was waving the Texas standard seeking recognition from the Speaker so that Texas

could change its vote to Estes Kefavuer. Mr. Rayburn looked straight over at the Texas delegation and John Connally and dropped the gavel and said, "The voting is closed." He spanked Lyndon right then and there, because Lyndon hadn't listened to him.

M: Did Mr. Johnson ever make a comment about this to you?

H: No. This has never been commented upon by anybody, and I'm the only person I know of who ever actually put this in writing. I still have a record of these incidents. Because, you see, we were in very close contact with Mr. Rayburn during that convention. We would meet him under the speakers' stand as often as every five minutes.

M: Did Rayburn ever say anything about this matter?

H: No, I've never mentioned it to him. I've never asked him if he did it deliberately. I didn't choose to embarrass him. But I was there; I saw him look straight at that Texas standard with all of us screaming for recognition and John Connally waving it vigorously seeking recognition, and he turned and looked straight at us and dropped the hammer. It doesn't take an expert to read into that just what Mr. Rayburn was doing. He was spanking Lyndon for not switching his vote for Stevenson. So Texas that year ended up not voting for either of the nominees.

M: Then you come home; the September meeting has got to occur, right?

H: The September meeting was a very traumatic experience.

M: What happened there?

H: At the September meeting Allan Shivers was really not a factor, because we had beaten Allan Shivers so thoroughly.

M: He had been broken.

H: He had been broken. And the contest then developed between the Democrats of Texas and Lyndon Johnson. The contest was over whether or not each district would be permitted to name its own committeeman and committeewoman, or whether or not they would be selected by the nominating committee, which Lyndon Johnson had control of. Actually, the convention ended up in a real donnybrook, with Johnson being booed, Mr. Rayburn losing a lot of face and not really losing friends, but a lot of friends being terribly disappointed in him because he could have changed the situation. As it was, the results of the convention were pretty well stacked by Johnson, and the effort that people had put into it to try to win the Democratic Party for simply loyal Democrats, Democrats loyal to the national party, ended up with a Democratic Party loyal to Lyndon Johnson. We don't mind and didn't then mind loyalty to Lyndon, and I have supported Lyndon Johnson. But I dont't believe in a personality cult when the party is concerned.

M: Did your coalition, with labor and liberals and so forth, fall apart at that point?

H: Not at that point. It fell apart somewhat later; as a matter of fact, I dissolved it myself. Because at that point there developed, especially among the independent liberals--actually they became psychotic where he was concerned. Nothing, nothing that he could do was right! Nothing that he could do was good! Even

when he voted the way they wanted him to, his motive was wrong. They became hypocritical, and they would do almost anything to try to hurt him. I remember the last meeting of the Democrats of Texas that I attended. After that I told them that the organization didn't exist, as far as I was concerned and, for all practical purposes, it didn't.

M: When was that?

H: I can't pin down the date. It must have been at least 1957, probably 1958, about the time that this occurred. We had persons who wanted to get up and make speeches against Lyndon Johnson at our DOT meeting when he was becoming majority leader, and when we needed him desperately for things that were trying to be accomplished, battles that were being fought in the Senate. There was simply no point in pounding on him just for the sake of pounding on him. A lot of the independent liberals became unhappy with me, and I became quite unhappy with some of them because they became downright psychotic where he was concerned.

M: Your position was then that, "He's in power; we'd better work with him." Is that right?

H: Lyndon was not all bad; no man is all bad. I disagreed with some things that he did, but taken on the whole Lyndon Johnson has been a tremendous asset to this country.

Now in Texas, it's funny. You know, I went to the convention in 1956 thinking that I would like to see Senator Symington the nominee for president. And I mentioned this to the labor folks from Missouri. They said, "You've got to be kidding!" They didn't take him seriously at all. You know, a man is often without honor in his own home state. Some of the things that have gone on in Texas have caused a great many Texans to be most unhappy with Lyndon. But I tried to take a much broader view of it than that. I believe that a man should be given credit when he does well, and I will criticize him when he does wrong. But simply because he does a few things wrong, I'm not going to write him off for the rest of his life. For crying out loud, it's ridiculous! Because on the whole Lyndon probably accomplished more in his administration than even Franklin D. Roosevelt accomplished.

M: In 1956 when Johnson was more or less victorious in Texas in spite of all the action and trouble, where was his power? Who supported him?

H: Mainly--and here, I don't know whether this term is generally understood or not--but the "courthouse crowd." These are the county officials, those who had been elected to county offices and are centers of power within each of the various counties, who were generally Lyndon's support. Now he had strong support from oil interests; he had strong support from other interests. And he was always able to raise substantial amounts of money for his campaigns, which of course is extremely important. But except that

year that we worked together in 1956, he never did have an organization as I think of an organization.

M: You mean a state organization ?

H: A state, county, precinct-type of organization that's built, as a structured organization. He never had that. He had some people in each county who really, when the time comes, will put together the campaign, go out and beat the bushes, and get the advertising done and all of these things, and manage to get the votes. But he's never had the kind of political organization that you think of when you think of powerful politicians. Daley, for example.

M: How could he get away with that? You'd think someone with an organization would beat him then.

H: You would think so, but at that point Texas had had its fill of the only truly organizational man that it had. That was Allan Shivers, and the state had its fill of Allan Shivers. There was no one else in the state who was in a position to challenge him in that regard, unless it would be Sam Rayburn, and Sam didn't choose to challenge Lyndon. After all, they were friends and worked together closely.

M: Did you have a peace conference with Johnson?

H: Actually the closest thing to a peace conference I had with Lyndon was this brawl that he and I had that I told you about a moment ago in his office, in the Senate Majority Leader's Office. I think it was one floor up from the Senate floor; this is where

the old office was.

M: You had gone to Washington to lobby?

H: Yes. We had this brawl. Now, from that point on--

M: This is 1958?

H: It must have been [1957] because it was 1953 and 1954 that the Republicans had the majority in the Senate. In 1955 the Democrats came back into the majority, and he became majority leader.

M: So then you went to lobby, and you had the meeting with him and he brought this up?

H: Yes.

M: And you had the shouting match?

H: We had a shouting match, and that probably came as close to clearing the air between us as anything that had ever happened. From that point on, our relationship was really pretty good. Whether or not he ever really accepted this and ever really forgave me, I'm not quite sure. There have been times when I've doubted it.

M: Did he support your legislation?

H: As a matter of fact, I don't even remember now what it was we were up there for.

M: But you could work with him?

H: Yes. And worked from that point on quite closely with him as majority leader; and found him always most cordial in his reception. In fact, as majority leader, we'd sit for hours and visit, just the two of us.

M: One other question about this last part of the fifties. Did he campaign for Adlai Stevenson in 1956?

H: He did, but with not too much vigor. It was not a vigorous campaign. Mr. Rayburn campaigned rather vigorously for Adlai Stevenson, but Lyndon Johnson campaigned only moderately. This is the way I would characterize it.

M: Did you and labor support Johnson in his senatorial campaign?

H: Yes, ever since 1948. Ever after that, yes.

M: That brings us up to 1960 and the campaign then.

H: There are a few things that I want to go on to before the 1960 campaign. Lyndon Johnson became majority leader in, I believe, 1955. When Eisenhower was elected in 1952, he brought in a majority of senators with him, so Lyndon became majority leader in January 1955. Immediately there developed around him--
(Interruption)
One of the things that I don't know whether anyone else will get into the history of Lyndon Johnson or not, and I want it there because it's important that it be there, is I guess I would call it an analysis of the anatomy of his power. Because as majority leader, he developed the reputation of being able to play the Senate of the United States just like a concert organist would play the console of an organ. He was pulling the strings; he was pushing the buttons; and the Senate performed as he played it.

Of course, nothing could be further from the truth. I've sat with him for hours at various times, and I saw why this reputation began to develop. I remember it was 1959 when, in the new office that he had just taken over just off the Senate Reception Room and had it redecorated, the Landrum-Griffin Act was up, and I was there trying to prevent its passage. We sat in his office, and he pulled out a roll call sheet, a narrow long sheet of paper with the name of every senator on it and a yea or a nay and blank spot for absent or not voting. He sat there and marked everyone of them, every senator, as to how he would vote, and he didn't miss one single one. He called every shot exactly as it would happen.

Most people, in seeing him do this, began to presume that he was causing that to happen. But he used to tell me time and time again, "The problem with the liberals in the Senate is they don't know how to count the votes." Here was a man who, among other tremendous talents, knew how to count the votes. And people began to believe that he wasn't just counting them, he was casting them! Because he would tell them in advance precisely what the vote was going to be, and they began to believe that he was the cause of it, that he wasn't simply predicting how these men were going to vote, he was controlling how they were going to vote. And this was not true. The man did not have that power. But because the aura began to develop around him of the power to actually control the Senate in this fashion, even some of the

senators began to believe it. There came a time when he was the most powerful man in the United States, while he was majority leader, more powerful than the president.

That type of power I can best describe in this fashion: If everybody in Texas believed that I was the most powerful man in Texas, I would be the most powerful man in Texas. Now people began to believe that he was running the Senate, that he was controlling it, playing it just like the console of an organ, and began to accept that and believe that he was powerful, the most powerful man in the United States; then he did in fact become the most powerful man in the United States! Not because of any special thing that he did to assume or grab power or take it. Now he did take advantage of this role, of course. He gave his State of the Union messages before the president did, and he did some other things. Good showmanship, good leadership for the opposition party. But as far as real power was concerned, no. No, he didn't have it. This is what I mean when I say it's fictional but real, the contradiction of the two. It was fictional in that it wasn't true, real power, and yet, when everyone begins to accept it as real, it becomes very real. This is my analysis of Lyndon Johnson's power as majority leader.

M: As Senate majority leader, could he ever translate this belief in his power into real power by manipulating votes?

H: Undoubtedly this belief in his power, this aura of power that grew around him, enabled him to influence votes he could not have

influenced otherwise. There's no question about it. Power begets power. It made him in the very real sense the most powerful man in the Senate and certainly the most powerful man in the United States. He was able to influence votes, twist arms, as he was accused of doing. Lyndon was a beautiful arm-twister. If you've never been given what we always called "treatment one" by Lyndon Johnson, you've never lived. He really turns the heat on. It is hot.

M: That raises something else. I've heard a lot about this Johnson treatment, and I've read some about it. Can you describe the Johnson treatment? You say he turns on the heat. What does he do?

H: He overwhelms you with his personality. In the first place, he's a tall man; he's a big man. He's a very articulate man, a man who knew his facts. He was difficult to argue with because when he said something you were pretty sure he knew what he was talking about. He would get right down in your face; he'd pull his chair up, knee-to-knee, and he would get his finger right in your chest, and he'd get his nose right up three inches from yours, and you couldn't help but back up. You couldn't help but retreat from this man. It was a combination of the sheer physical force of his personality, as well as the personality itself.

M: Did he ever do this to you?

H: Oh, yes. I have deliberately on occasion planted one foot behind me and said to myself, "I will not back up no matter what. And my wife has stood back and laughed as we stood belly-to-belly,

literally belly-to-belly, nose-to-nose, and talked. But the pressure of this man as he moved in on you, and he moved in hard, both physically as well as intellectually, was powerful.

M: You had this donnybrook with him. There are not too many people that would stand up like that. You must have realized what Johnson was doing?

H: I don't know whether you are going to censor any of this or not.

M: You can restrict it, if you need to.

H: I'll let you decide that.

In that donnybrook we had whenever he accused me of double-crossing him, I stood up and pounded his desk and I said, "Lyndon, you are a goddamned liar!" And from that point it got worse. But, as I say, that was the session that cleared the air. From that point on, we got along fairly well.

M: You also mentioned that Lyndon Johnson had sort of a sixth sense as a politician. What do you mean by that?

H: One of the manifestations of this was his ability to count those votes. He knew. He knew his Senate well enough that he could tell how every single one of them was going to vote on this particular amendment, on this particular issue at whatever phase it was in. He knew them. He had this extra sense that most of us never have occasion to practice and use and develop. But he had it. He could predict what people were going to do in a given circumstance, certainly the Senate. That doesn't hold true to everybody, of course. But with the Senate, I've never known a man to know his Senate as well as he did.

I remember one time--this was I suppose in 1958--we were at a convention in Fort Worth. Our main guest speaker that year was Hubert Humphrey. After the meeting was over we went up to our suite with about thirty or forty other people. He sat in the middle of the floor, and we had a question and answer session with Hubert Humphrey until the wee hours of the morning, and we loved Hubert Humphrey. We have ever since. We learned at that point that he and Lyndon Johnson were very, very dear friends, and at that point we weren't too fond of Lyndon, and especially some of the people present were not. They hadn't forgotten 1956. They were still mad as hornets. They didn't like some of the votes that Lyndon cast, and they didn't like what he was doing. He was majority leader at that point, and they felt he could be doing better as majority leader. They had begun to believe this myth about him--that he could play that organ to a better tune if he chose.

But Hubert Humphrey said this about Lyndon Johnson: "You can believe this or not, but Lyndon Johnson will be as liberal as the Senate votes will allow him." I learned that to be true, and I learned to believe that thoroughly. He counted his votes. And Hubert Humphrey said, "He will bring out as liberal a bill as his votes will allow him." I believe that to be true. My experience with him since then bears that out.

As a matter of fact, in later years, when he became vice president and John Kennedy was president and I was in Washington, I made the observation to a group of people one night that Lyndon

Johnson except on issues involving labor was more liberal than John Kennedy. And I believed it.

M: Why not on labor?

H: I really don't know, unless it goes back to his old prejudice of the fights that we had had, our failure to support him in 1958, the fight we'd had in 1956, and perhaps some of his own personal convictions. I'm not sure. But when I say liberal on labor--I really shouldn't quite say it that way, but rather "pro-labor"--he was not as "pro-labor" as John Kennedy, because labor is not always liberal. So who can say that he was more or less liberal than John Kennedy on labor, because you cannot always judge the labor issue on that basis. But other than that, I came to believe him to be a more liberal man, and I think history will prove this to be true.

M: Your role in the late fifties then, would you go in and out of Washington to lobby and then back to Austin?

H: Yes, I traveled back and forth often, regularly. As a matter of fact, with him as majority leader and Mr. Rayburn as speaker of the House, the national AFL-CIO, George Meany, called upon me quite often to come up and work with these two men who had become very good friends of mine and to whom I had ready access.

M: Did they call on you for advice also?

H: Rayburn and Johnson? I wouldn't say they ever called on me for advice. They got my advice on certain occasions.

M: We're at the last part of the fifties, and the 1960 campaign comes up. What kind of role did you play then?

H: We played a minor role, as a matter of fact, because in 1960 I had barely met John Kennedy. Here again, we were back in the same role of Texas supporting Lyndon Johnson for favorite son and Lyndon feeling that he really did honestly have a chance at winning the nomination. This was clear. I'm not sure at that point but what Mr. Rayburn even thought he might have a chance. But our role was strange.

By the way, there's one little incident that I think needs to be recorded in history. I made a bet one night in Washington with George Meany and Andy Biemiller, and I won two-hundred dollars. This was in April of 1960. The national convention was not until July or August, I forget when. I predicted that night that the ticket would be John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. They said, "Never happen. Never happen. Can't be." I said, "Put your money where your mouth is." So I bet each one of them one hundred dollars, sitting in my hotel room at the Congressional Hotel, just across from the House Office Building

M: What made you so sure?

H: Because I had that very day been in Lyndon Johnson's office; I didn't have the time to spare really, but he wanted to talk. We spent two and a half hours with the doors closed while he went over, state by state, the report that he had received from his lieutenants in every state. We went through all of the states, and when he finished his summary was: "John Kennedy has it sewed up. The race is over." And yet Lyndon

Johnson did not stop running for the presidential nomination.

All right. This is what I put together. This is my logic. No man runs for the vice presidency until after the president is nominated. After the president is nominated, then the race for vice president develops. Twenty-four hours it has to develop, maybe forty-eight at best. Lyndon Johnson stayed in the race. Now Lyndon Johnson never stayed in a race or in a contest that he knew he couldn't win. He counted his votes, and backed off until he knew that he had enough votes to win. Just like Hubert Humphrey said, "I'll go as far as my votes will let me go." But he stayed in the race. That told me that he was really not running for president, he was running for vice president.

M: Why would he want to be vice president?

H: I really don't know. I'm not sure of that, except that as majority leader he may have recognized the fact that with a Democratic president he would no longer be number one Democrat. See, he had been under Eisenhower; he had been number one Democrat. But he'd be at least number two Democrat, if not number three or four, as majority leader under a Democratic president. Weighing that factor in with the natural ego of the man and his own hope that he might succeed John Kennedy to the presidency, the possibility was there. After all, and I've put this question to any number of people who asked me, "Why did Lyndon Johnson accept the vice presidential nomination," and my answer has been: "If you were offered the vice presidency, would you accept it?" Of course

you would. Of course you would.

Then the argument changed as time passed. George Meany, for example, said, "John Kennedy will never offer the nomination to him." I said, "Oh, but he has to. He has no choice." Because win, lose, or draw, Lyndon Johnson was going to be in Washington. He was on the ticket in Texas for the United States Senate, an absolute cinch to win and remain majority leader. He was on the ticket for the vice presidency. He was going to end up being one or the other, possibly both. He won both races, as it turned out. But if he had not been asked to be John Kennedy's running mate, John Kennedy would have slighted him, and he would have had to live with an angered Lyndon Johnson as majority leader for four years. And John Kennedy was smarter than that. He had to ask Lyndon. He had to offer it.

M: So you thought your two hundred dollars was pretty safe, then?

H: There wasn't any doubt in my mind about that two hundred dollars. George Meany didn't give up in Los Angeles until within two hours before John Kennedy made the announcement, because George Meany and Bobby Kennedy fought it down to the bitter end, the very bitter end.

I sat back. By the way, that was the year when I was not a delegate to the state convention because we had been pushed out by the Johnson people, and I refused to be a delegate to the national convention. He [Lyndon Johnson] didn't forgive me for that; or he never quite forgave me for that, because he needed me at that convention. He needed me to work on the rest of the labor folks in the country, and I was not a delegate. I refused to be a delegate to the national convention.

M: This is 1960?

H: 1960.

M: Did you go to Los Angeles?

H: I didn't go to Los Angeles. I stayed at home and watched it on television, and waited for my two hundred dollars to come in. But Mr. Rayburn didn't expect him to accept it.

M: Had you supported Lyndon Johnson for president before all of this happened?

H: He had never run for anything but favorite son.

M: Had you supported him for that?

H: For favorite son, sure, but not seriously for the presidency. My candidate for 1960 was John Kennedy. Actually, my favorite candidate was Hubert Humphrey, and has been for a good many years. I worked vigorously for Hubert Humphrey in his race last time to no avail. But I'm a great admirer of Hubert, even though his mouth does sort of run loose at times. I love the guy. I think he's a great man. I think he would be a great president.

No, I stayed at home. Lyndon needed me to work with the labor delegations, and he was unhappy with me, quite unhappy with me. Mr. Rayburn was unhappy with me too, but he got over it real quick. Lyndon didn't get over it quite as quickly.

M: You could have gone as sort of a lobbyist or something like that?

H: I could have, without being a delegate, but I chose not to. I could not in all good conscience support Lyndon Johnson when I didn't want him. I wanted Jack Kennedy or Hubert Humphrey. At that point, I knew it had to be Jack Kennedy. So if I believed

what Lyndon had told me back last April, that Kennedy had it sewed it up, now to go fight another pointless battle for a favorite son when Lyndon himself had told me "It's locked up, the race is over," I don't like these kinds of pointless exercises.

M: So you just chose to stay home?

H: I stayed home knowing full well that both races were sewed up as a matter of fact--the presidential nomination and the vice presidential nomination.

M: Incidentally, in that two hour conversation you had with him when he was tallying the votes, did Johnson express any remorse about losing to Kennedy?

H: Not really. No, he didn't seem to be terribly upset about it. He was rather matter of fact about it. He didn't seem to be terribly disappointed. As a matter of fact, he kind of liked Jack Kennedy. He wasn't his favorite person by any means, but he kind of liked him, and Lyndon was a realist. He saw that the votes were not there, and he accepted that fact. But he went over it in total, and I do mean--I can't remember now whether it was forty-eight or forty-nine states, I guess it was forty-eight then,--but we went through every single one of them, state by state. He added up his votes, and he wasn't even close. He said "Kennedy will win on the first ballot before he even gets down to the T's in the roll call," and he did.

M: Then you went ahead and campaigned, I assume?

H: Yes. I worked almost full time in the Kennedy-Johnson campaign. I worked out of the state headquarters. My wife worked out of the

state headquarters. We spent considerable time and effort in that campaign. I had met John Kennedy before in my workings with the Senate and had visited with him on two or three occasions. I wouldn't say that I knew him well at all, but we had a speaking acquaintance. We had worked fairly closely on the conference committee effort on the Landrum-Griffin Act, and because I guess you'd almost say I was liaison between labor, Lyndon Johnson, Sam Rayburn, the conference committee--

M: You mean for the Landrum-Griffin?

H: For the conference committee effort between the House and the Senate on the Landrum-Griffin to work out the final version that was finally approved by the House and Senate.

M: Do you consider the passage of that bill a defeat?

H: Yes, we did at the time. It wasn't that serious really. Labor was vigorously opposed to it.

M: So you were somewhat disappointed over that?

H: Yes.

M: What was Johnson's position there? Did he sympathize with you?

H: Not very much. He had counted the votes. "You haven't got them."

M: So that was it?

H: That's it. He said, "You get the votes and you'll have your way, but you get the votes. I'm not getting them for you, and you haven't got them."

M: So the only way you could have fought that was to go to each senator?

H: Labor just didn't have enough votes in the Senate.

M: You would have had to go to each senator and say . . . ?

H: Yes. Win them all over. Of course, we had a strong suspicion that he could have won over some, if he had chosen, that he didn't choose to win them over. Frankly, and neither one of them said this to me openly, overtly, and yet it came through to me pretty clearly, both he and Mr. Rayburn, and particularly Mr. Rayburn, felt that in order for the Democrats to win the presidential nomination in 1960, they needed to give labor a slap on the wrist, politically speaking, that this was necessary. This, I believe, was Mr. Rayburn's theory. He never did say it just like that, but I've put all of the things he did say together. And we spent hours and hours and hours, including down in the "Board" room sipping his bourbon together. But I believe that they were persuaded that, in order for a Democrat to be elected president in 1960, the Democrats in Congress needed to slap labor's wrist.

M: In the 1960 campaign did you travel with the delegates or did you stay in Austin and organize?

H: I worked strictly Texas.

M: That's what I mean.

H: During the campaign itself, I worked strictly Texas.

M: What did you do then? Did you help organize precincts or what?

H: This was a matter of voting at this point. We had their nominees; the precinct battle was over. It was getting out the votes for the--

M: You were just working to get the votes.

H: We again patched back together this old Democratic organization we had, all of whom were quite vigorous in their support of the ticket, especially for John Kennedy. We put it back together, put it back to work into the precincts, because we had built it right down into each precinct. Every precinct had its organization to grind the votes out, and they ground them out, vote-by-vote, telephone call by telephone call, hauled them to the polls, any way they could get them there.

M: What did you do? What was your job right then?

H: Put this all together to make that organization work.

M: So you checked around the state with your people?

H: Supplied them with materials, made sure that each of these local organizations was functioning and that each of them had their precincts, and in some cases in the major cities their bloc workers trained and organized.

M: A question about the organization then. There will be a state Democratic organization. Are you working within that as a labor representative, and then do you contact labor people in the

precincts to get the vote out, or are you working with the party itself?

H: I was president of the state AFL-CIO, but I had left that office physically. I don't mean I had resigned it, but I was given an office over in the Kennedy-Johnson state headquarters office in the Littlefield Building in Austin. I spent most of my time either there or out in the field, putting together this county-precinct-block organization that we had once had under the old DOT with the Negroes, Latins, labor, liberals, et cetera.

M: You put the coalition back together?

H: To grind out that vote. Right.

M: Was that tough work?

H: Not for Jack Kennedy. Many of these people were not very thrilled about voting for Lyndon Johnson for vice president. They were delighted to vote for Jack Kennedy. They went back to work and worked for the ticket vigorously.

M: The campaign was won, and Kennedy is now president. Somewhere in here you get appointed as assistant secretary of Labor. When does that come?

H: It came about January 6 of 1961. Before Kennedy became president, I got my call.

M: Who was it that called you?

H: Arthur Goldberg.

M: And offered the position?

H: Yes.

M: And you, I assume, readily accepted?

H: I accepted the next day.

M: Thought it over?

H: Yes.

M: Whether you wanted to move to Washington or not?

H: And I also put one condition on it: that I would accept it provided I could have the employment security post. You see, basically there were three assistant secretaries: one was over employment security and manpower; one was over labor-management relations, and one over--No, there were really two assistants, but there was this special assistant for international labor affairs and for women's affairs, but they didn't carry quite the rank of the two assistant secretaries. I wanted manpower and employment security, and talked to him the next day, and he said, "Fair enough." I said, "Okay, let's go."

M: So then you move to Washington.

H: Yes.

M: In that period of time as assistant secretary, do you have much contact with Lyndon Johnson?

H: No, not just then. Of course, immediately upon going to Washington I went to see Lyndon, paid my respects to him, as I always did. I went immediately to Mr. Rayburn and paid my respects to him. Of course, my appointment had been announced, and Mr. Rayburn obviously was quite pleased. Lyndon, I think, was truly pleased, even though he had had nothing to do with this. This has been

misrepresented by several columnists as to what his role was in my appointment, but he had absolutely nothing to do with it.

M: Then what was the basis of your appointment politically?

H: Actually, it came through George Meany. Jack Kennedy gave George Meany certain appointments. He said, "You can have one assistant secretary of labor, et cetera, so who do you advise?" It stemmed largely from the yeoman service I had done over the past two or three years up there working on a national basis, and the fact that we had a vice president from Texas and a speaker of the House from Texas. That was pretty important. George Meany and I had a good relationship also.

M: Did you have any contact with Lyndon Johnson as vice president?

H: Yes.

M: What was that?

H: Most of it coming in the area of the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity. When Kennedy issued the executive order creating the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity, he made Lyndon Johnson chairman of that committee, Arthur Goldberg vice chairman, and Jerry Holleman executive vice chairman. I was the guy who did all the work. In that capacity I worked very closely and spent a great deal of time with Lyndon Johnson, because he took this task rather seriously. A lot of people figured that because he is from Texas that he would be a sort of typical southerner. But even as far back as his 1948 campaign, he had shown his colors in this regard, and they were quite liberal. I knew that to be a fact. As a matter of fact, it came as a terrible shock to the

Negro community when I, a Texan, was named executive vice chairman of the committee, but they later became quite grateful for that fact. We did work closely on the committee.

The only problems we had on the committee were in the matters of budget. I think--and here again I'm guessing, but you get to where you can add up figures pretty well over the years, but in my opinion--when the President's executive order came out having to do with equal employment opportunity, Lyndon made some commitments to certain key southern senators who were important to the administration that, while the effort would be vigorous and the President was quite serious in this regard, he would puruse it with all vigor, but to assuage them somewhat, the budget would not be increased. You see, Eisenhower had had a committee for equal employment opportunity also, with almost no budget.

Lyndon and I came into conflict in this regard because I was not content with that small budget. I wanted a far more vigorous program than that budget would permit. Finally, we worked it out together. We borrowed people from other agencies, and we built a staff to really begin to develop a program.

M: Did Johnson support you on this?

H: Yes.

M: He was as interested in equal employment opportunity as you were?

H: Right. We had a somewhat different approach to it. He tended to rely more heavily on what has now become known as the jawbone approach.

M: What's that?

H: Jawboning: talking industry into doing the right thing. He was a strong supporter of what was called the Plans for Progress, in which each of the major corporations of America were called upon to develop and submit to the committee what their plans were for bringing about equal employment opportunity in their corporations; a time table for it; what it was going to end up being; what the ratio or balance, so to speak, would be. But all of this voluntary.

I must confess that I didn't have much confidence in the voluntary approach, so I put my emphasis and built into the program, a mandatory approach of equal employment opportunity. While he is doing apporach over here, I was doing the mandatory approach without him knowing everything that was going on.

M: Did President John Kennedy support you?

H: Vigorously.

M: Were there any programs in which you were in contact with the Vice President?

H: Not really. This is the main one. We met often. We were up on the Hill often together. Of course, whenever he was elected vice president he had to resign this seat he had just been elected to in the Senate, and Texas had to elect a replacement for him. He and I saw a good deal of each other; President Kennedy, he and I saw a good deal of each other in that campaign, which, by the way, we lost. But we did see a good deal of each other there. No,

socially and in our work saw a good deal of each other.

M: The tape is about ready to run off, so why don't we pause here.

Tape 2 of 2

M: Shortly after this, you resigned your position as assistant secretary, I assume. What is the story about that?

H: Arthur Goldberg, who was the secretary of labor decided that he wanted to give a party at the Department of Labor for Lyndon Johnson, the vice president. It was very common knowledge that Arthur wanted to be on the Supreme Court. I think he already had the commitment from Kennedy, but I don't know that he had the support of Johnson. So he wanted to give a party for Lyndon Johnson at the Department of Labor building. He called me into his office one day and told me of his desire and said, "I want this to be Mexican food. Can we get this catered from San Antonio?" I said, "Well, Arthur, I don't know. It's a pretty good-sized project. How many people do you have in mind, first?" "Well, forty or fifty." I said, "In order to have it catered, it will have to be flown from San Antonio up here. You can't very well ship it any other way. The ingredients will have to be brought up here and prepared here, or some such thing. To cater it is a little difficult."

As time passed the party grew until it became about two hundred people. He stillwanted Mexican food from Texas. I said, "Well, Arthur, I don't know of any restauranteur in Texas who could afford to give this to you as a gift." He said, "Would

you set about to raise the funds to cover the cost of the Mexican food?" I contacted several people in Texas, one of whom was Billy Sol Estes.

M: Why did you contact Estes, among others?

H: Estes was a constant, longtime contributor to the Democrats of Texas, to Mr. Rayburn's efforts to win the party away from Allan Shivers. He was a constant supporter and contributor to Lyndon Johnson, to Ralph Yarborough, to every other cause that we'd ever supported. And he had the money.

M: And you thought he'd be willing to do it.

H: Heck, there was no point in making five phone calls when I knew I could get a thousand from this guy, and I knew I could get a thousand from two others. I called three men, and I got three thousand dollars. Nobody knows who the other two are and they're not ever going to know. Now Arthur began to get awfully nervous about this point. But the party was had.

M: Was the money all consumed at the party?

H: The money was consumed with that and the congressional banquet given by the national Democratic women. As it developed, he did not have the food flown from Texas. The Ambassador from Mexico furnished the food. Now here's an area that I may should not get into either. But enough time has passed that it shouldn't be difficult. Which is one of the reasons for my resignation, because it involved another country, but this is one of the reasons for my silence at the time.

M: The money was all spent on the party?

H: That and the big congressional banquet given for the Congress by the Democratic women.

M: So between the two the money was all spent?

H: Right.

M: One other thing: Is this sort of thing common?

H: It's done all the time. Nobody can afford, well no, there are those who can afford, a banquet of this size, but they are few. But dancers were brought in from Mexico City, entertainers from Mexico City. Other organizations, including at least one labor organization, contributed to this dinner. There were various sources of funds. Arthur put in some money of his own.

M: When you're putting together a large banquet like this on the Washington political scene, this sort of gathering--

H: Complete with cocktail party, hors d'oeuvres, you ought to get twenty dollars a head.

M: But this sort of gathering of funds is a common sort of affair.

H: It's very common, and it's very common to raise your funds from whatever your normal sources are, from persons who contribute to the giving of this kind of a party. This is quite common. And this is what irritated me with Arthur.

But the party was had and it was a great success. The thing went well. By the way, I still have some of the momentos for which this money was spent. For example, Arthur wanted a Texas and an American flag on every table; these were round tables with five people sitting at each one and a tremendous hall full of round tables. So I bought a Texas flag and an American flag and a vase

and put them on each of the tables. This was part of it, and I still have some at home as a memento.

Anyway, as time passed after the banquet, Billy Sol's empire began to crumble around him. And Arthur began to get nervous. He came to me one day, and he said, "Jerry, I want the records to show that I put up all the money for this banquet." I said, "Arthur, if that's what you want, that's all right with me." I didn't know it, but he had called a press conference within thirty minutes of that time, and got up and swore on oath that he put up all of the money for the banquet.

All right, what do you do! Now, the government of Mexico is involved; at least one national labor union was involved; other individuals were involved; Arthur Goldberg was involved. Nobody, nobody asked me to resign. Of my own decision, I wrote out my resignation and turned it in. I could have told the truth, but the way I had it figured was this: If you want to edit this somewhat, you may, I would have been a horse's ass either way I went. I could have stayed in Washington, but in doing so I would have hurt the Kennedy-Johnson Administration because I would have hurt one of its sharpest, its best images, Arthur Goldberg, and I chose not to. So I decided to come back home, take my lumps, and be quiet about it.

M: How did the information get out that Estes had contributed money? Where did that ever leak out? You know, Goldberg has gone--

H: Billy Sol boasted of it to some of his friends--that he had contributed to the party.

M: And this got to the press?

H: Yes.

M: Which put the pressure on Goldberg, for what he had already said.

H: Yes. The pressure began to develop, and they began to question where the money came from, that he came to me and said, "I put it all up myself." That's when he called this press conference--after the pressure began to develop.

M: So then Goldberg says that he put the money up?

H: Yes. He had his checkbook there to show where he had written checks and all this business.

M: But there's still no heat on you, is there?

H: The only heat that's on--at this point?

M: Yes.

H: You see, I was the channel through which the thousand came, I had seen the contribution.

M: But Goldberg was already trying to cover for you on the thing.

H: Not for me, no. He's trying to cover for himself. He's letting me take the rap for the thousand dollars. So the question was: What did you do with the thousand dollars?

M: I see.

H: I've still got some of the things at home to show what I did with the thousand dollars, some receipts for it and some other things.

But here again, my problem was: Okay, where do I do the least damage? At that point, I was pretty sick at heart with Arthur Goldberg and some others, and I decided to take my lumps, come home,

and start rebuilding my house. That night after my resignation a man, who has since become prominent in national affairs, came out to my house as Arthur's emissary.

M: You're not going to mention his name?

H: I'm not going to name him. As Arthur's emissary, he came and said, "Okay, Jerry, what do you want? Do you want money? Do you want a job? What do you want?" I said, "All I want is to be left alone. If anybody gets on my back, if anybody gets on my back, I'll tell the whole truth. Just keep them all off my back. Tell Arthur."

I had demanded an immediate investigation by the FBI of my activities as assistant secretary. I had Arthur's commitment that he would release it to the press as soon as it was completed. It was done jointly by the Department of Labor and the FBI. And he refused. If he had released it, then the focus would have come back on him: the press would have asked, "What's this all about then?" But he chickened out and would not release it. So I took the lumps, and I've got the scars to show it. But I've done reasonably well since then.

M: Did either John F. Kennedy or Lyndon Johnson say anything to you at this point?

H: I asked repeatedly for an opportunity to see the President [Kennedy] and was not granted the opportunity.

M: And the Vice President?

H: The Vice President presumed my guilt and did not speak to me. As a

matter of fact, he sent his emissary to say, "Now, we want to make it clear that Lyndon Johnson had nothing to do with your appointment as assistant secretary of Labor." And that's the last message I've ever had from Lyndon Johnson.

M: You mean you've had no letter, no contact with Lyndon Johnson since?

H: Not one single contact since that day, the day of my resignation. And that contact was--this was George Reedy--"Let's understand that Lyndon Johnson had nothing whatsoever to do with your appointment as assistant secretary." I said, "George, the record's clear on that. He didn't."

I made repeated trips back to Washington to try to get Goldberg to release the results of the investigation.

M: Did the FBI investigate?

H: Oh, yes.

M: But the results were never released?

H: Right. There was FBI full investigation and full clearance, complete clearance or I would have already been charged and tried.

By the way, one newspaperman figured the story out. If you'll go back to about the latter part of May, 1962, the Houston Post printed the story.

M: Who was the reporter, do you remember?

H: I should never forget his name, but at the moment I have.

M: Was it a Washington reporter?

H: Yes, he was their Washington reporter. He got the story, and he

printed it in the Houston Post. Later, I got a call from the Dallas News; actually, it was the farm editor of the Dallas News calling on behalf of the publisher. He said, "Jerry, we have the whole story, but we have been asked by very high sources not to print anything, and we have agreed not to print the story. But we want you to know that if you ever need a full page of the Dallas News, it's yours. Name the day."

Arthur was appointed to the Supreme Court. An emissary came to me from Senator McClellan. If you'll check back into your history, you'll find this to be true--the timetable I'm going to tell you about. Senator McClellan sent the word back to me, "You are the one person who could block Arthur Goldberg's appointment to the Supreme Court. We will wait three weeks for you to step forward. We cannot wait any longer." I sent word back, "Don't wait." But they waited three weeks.

M: Then did McClellan know the story too?

H: McClellan knows the story, all of it. He knew it then, my lawyer went to him and told him.

M: But you chose not to say anything even then? Why?

H: Arthur Goldberg represented one of the main public images of the Kennedy Administration. He did more traveling, more speaking; he was quoted; his picture was in the paper; he represented a very substantial image of the Kennedy-Johnson Administration. To destroy that image would have only done harm to the Kennedy-Johnson Administration. I knew when I went up there I was expendable. I was a

second lieutenant once, and I know what it means to be expendable.

M: But neither Kennedy nor Johnson ever--did they know?

H: No. If Jack Kennedy ever knew the whole story, I'm not aware of it. If Johnson has ever known the whole story, I'm not aware of it. But I've never heard a word from either one of them.

M: Strange. Did you ever hear anything more from Arthur Goldberg?

H: No, sir. As a matter of fact, whenever the three weeks finally passed and the committee was coming to the final vote--they'd waited out their three weeks as they'd told me and just for the hell of it, I went back to Washington to attend the committee hearing, just to make Arthur nervous.

M: Did you see him?

H: No. He knew I was there, though, because I went over to the department and visited with Bill Wirtz and others.

M: You just stopped in to talk to some people?

H: Yes, to let them know I was there.

M: Incidentally, did you know Wirtz well?

H: Yes, very well.

M: Do you have any insight into his difficulty with the administration?

H: Well, yes, but I'd rather Willard told you his own story. I think he'll level with you. He was a man terribly torn.

M: Yet he stayed on a good long time?

H: Remember, he was a law partner of Adlai Stevenson, a dear friend, and a campaign manager for Adlai Stevenson. He had his wounds from Lyndon Johnson, from Jack Kennedy, from Bobby Kennedy, from the whole works, and has scars to show it.

M: From what I've read, he ended up pretty embittered by the end of the Johnson Administration.

H: I can well imagine. Here again, I don't want to tell his story for him. I have a very high regard for Bill Wirtz. Bill was the kind of man that I could talk to. By the way, I was scheduled to become under secretary and then later secretary of Labor under Kennedy, if Kennedy had lived. But Bill was the kind of man who would accept constructive criticism extremely well, and this is unusual in a man of this stature. I remember one time I raked him over the coals pretty hard for what I felt was an injustice done to one of his own representatives of the Department of Labor that he had sent out to do a task. He allowed the opposition to chew this man up pretty badly, and I told him, "You're wrong. Never permit this to happen,never let them chew him up in this fashion."

M: And he accepted that.

H: He accepted it. He said, "You're right." What had happened was, he held a special hearing, putting this representative of his on trial, and let the opposition come in and present their case. And I said, "This is not a trial de novo. This should be a substantial evidence trial. You should presume that your man was correct in what he did. This is not a trial de novo by a totally impartial jury."

M: To pick up your story again, you came back to Texas. Did you come

to Austin?

H: No, San Antonio.

M: You came to San Antonio, then, to pick up the broken threads.

H: Right. And became vice president of Fed Mart Corporation, in charge of all of their labor relations. They are stretched all the way from California through Texas, New Mexico, Arizona.

M: All right. This is touchy, too, but you had just resigned under a cloud, at least as far as the public is concerned. Why did Fed Mart pick you?

H: Mainly because of Morris Jaffe in San Antonio, I had known Morris; Morris was my friend. He was president of Fed Mart. And not for a minute did he believe Arthur's story out of Washington. He didn't ask me. He said, "Jerry, I'm not going to ask you what happened. As far as I'm concerned, there's not a doubt in my mind that you didn't do anything wrong. I don't know what happened, and if you're ever ready to tell me, fine. I'd love to hear, but until you do, I don't need to know." That kind of friend you don't forget easily. I've told Morris the story and he's sure got lots of credit coming from me anytime he needs it.

M: And so you went to work as vice president of Fed Mart?

H: Yes, vice president of Fed Mart Corporation handling all their labor relations through their entire chain and managing their Texas properties.

M: Do you ever run into Billy Sol Estes?

H: No, I have not encountered Billy Sol, and I must confess that this bothers my conscience some, because Billy Sol was a naive man in

many respects. Billy Sol has been totally misjudged by the public and largely by the press in that they presume that he embezzled a lot of people out of money. But let me suggest to anybody who's interested in finding out the true story; neither the Justice Department nor anybody was ever able to convict him of embezzlement. That's not what he was convicted for; because the loan companies that he was borrowing the money from knew exactly what he was doing, and the farmers whose papers he was using to borrow the money with knew exactly what he was doing--he was paying them a fee for the borrowing of their credit. Everybody knew what was happening, so nobody was being defrauded. They couldn't bring a case against him. He was sent to prison because he carried one of those unsecured mortgages on an airplane with him from El Paso to Los Angeles. He crossed the state line with a fake mortgage, and that's what he's in prison for. The stories in Time get twisted, and people get ideas and thoughts and no one seeks the truth.

M: Then you worked for Fed Mart for awhile, and then what happened to you?

H: I had pretty well concluded that I wanted to do this anyway--in fact, this goes back a way--but I started in my own business in December, 1964.

But let's go back to 1960 for a moment. During the year of 1960 I had made up my mind not to run for re-election as president of the state AFL-CIO, but to enter into the practice of labor relations representing management. This is not uncommon. As a matter of

fact, most companies go to their union to get their industrial relations man. Most industrial relations men with major corporations came out of the union.

M: That makes a certain amount of sense.

H: It makes a lot of sense. In 1964, I had wanted to do this for some time, and I went to Sol Price, who is chairman of the board of Fed Mart and to Morris Jaffe and said, "Look, here's what I'd like to do. I want to keep Fed Mart as my major client. I can't afford to go out on my own and live for however many months with no income." They said: "Great, fine, you've got us a client." So they stayed as a major client on a regular monthly retainer, which enabled me to struggle through those early months while I was building my business. I remember Sol Price saying to me, "Jerry, the only thing I fear about your going into business for yourself is that you'll not aim high enough. You're capable of making one hundred and fifty thousand a year, but I'm afraid that you will not aim high enough." I said, "I've got news for you, Sol. I'm already aiming there."

M: So that's worked out all right for you.

H: My business has been extremely successful.

M: And you've had no political contact or connections since your resignation?

H: The last message I have ever had from Johnson was through George Reedy. I have never seen him since, I've had no message from him directly or indirectly.

M: Have you been involved in politics outside of the Kennedy-Johnson 1960--

H: Yes. I really find it difficult to get terribly interested in local politics in San Antonio. I enjoy the state races.

M: So you've been involved in some of the state campaigns?

H: I've been involved in several of the state campaigns in these past eight years.

M: One thing I failed to ask earlier. Did you have anything to do with that conflict that John F. Kennedy had with Roger Blough on the steel situation? Were you around at that time? Was that after you left?

H: That was after I left.

I'm sure you must have it from several other sources, but I've never known two men to hate each other worse than Lyndon Johnson and Bobby Kennedy.

M: Yes, I've heard that. Have you got any examples of that?

H: I've talked to Lyndon. I've heard him too many times. He hated Bobby with a passion.

By the way, I don't know whether this has ever been told or not, but there are many people in Texas who know it to be a fact. Byron Skelton is aware of this, as are some others. But whenever Jack Kennedy came to Texas in 1963 . . .

M: At the time of the assassination.

H: Yes. The word was announced that he was coming to Texas, and I called Washington three times and talked to members of his staff. Told them, "Please, don't come to Texas right now." Now, my concern was that he would be embarrassed, it never occurred to me that

he would be assassinated, but that he would be embarrassed because others had been embarrassed very recently, including Adlai Stevenson when he was spat upon in Dallas. I didn't want him coming down here being embarrassed at that point.

The word that came back to me from Larry O'Brien and others was that Bobby was insisting on it. And the word was that Bobby was insisting that Lyndon be dropped from the ticket in 1964 and that the tour of Texas was to determine whether or not he could carry Texas, and this trip was at Bobby's insistence. My word to them was, "Bobby is going to destroy his brother if he's not careful." Frankly, the assassination didn't cross my mind. I called Byron, and talked to him, and asked him to call the White House. I called others. And I know Byron did call. He was national committeeman at that time. Others called asking him not to come. But Bobby Kennedy demanded that they come. He wanted to show his brother that Lyndon Johnson was not popular in Texas, and that he couldn't even carry his own home state, and that he sould be dropped from the ticket. He hated Lyndon and was equally ruthless.

M: How did Johnson get along with John F. Kennedy?

H: Fine. They actually got along very well. John Kennedy was a man totally devoted to and preoccupied with his task. Now that sort of person tends to neglect his wife, some of this friends, and the Vice President. Now, Johnson felt neglected and was neglected, but not because Jack Kennedy didn't care for him or deliberately was doing it. Here was a man who was concentrating upon and devoted to the

task at hand. That causes a person to be neglectful of some of the courtesies that he might otherwise extend.

During the time that Lyndon Johnson was vice president, it was my impression from him--he never said it--that he was an extremely miserable man.

M: And why would that be?

H: In the first place, the Irish Mafia despised him. They looked upon him as a country bumpkin. And the feeling was mutual. He didn't care much for them either. Bobby hated his guts. Any time that a member of the staff could relegate Johnson to an insubordinate, inconsequential role, they would do it; anytime they could put him down, they would do it. He felt this. He saw it. They were not even subtle with it. He had pretty good reason to be unhappy, but he was thoroughly miserable.

M: Well, I've come to the end of my questions.

H: I've come to the end of my story.

M: This is a good time to quit then. Thank you very much.

H: Fine.

M: Thank you very much.

[End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview I]

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