

## INTERVIEW II

DATE: June 16, 1970

INTERVIEWEE: J. WILLIS HURST

INTERVIEWER: T. H. BAKER

PLACE: Dr. Hurst's office, Atlanta, Georgia

Tape 1 of 2

B: We're now up to the presidential years, sir. You were just telling me before I turned on the machine that your personal relationship with the Johnson family continued during those years.

B: Yes. My personal relationship continued throughout the time he was president. I felt not only that I served as his physician, especially in any matter related remotely to his heart, but that our friendship continued. I felt I knew Luci and Lynda and their problems and had many visits with them. I spent much time with Mrs. Johnson and the entire personal staff, meeting new people, including Ashton Gonella, and continuing with the friendship with Bess Abell and Liz Carpenter and Paul Glynn, many others that were there. It was a warm and comfortable relationship. I was asked many times, did I not feel awkward in this situation? I must say that I really did not, I think simply because the period of relationship started many years before, way back in 1955, and that because of the long period of association I never felt that I was out of place.

B: That also implies that at least you didn't see any real change in Mr. Johnson.

H: Yes, it does. I do recall my own little emotional problem of, what will I call him? Over the years I had called him "Lyndon," called Mrs. Johnson "Bird," and they had called me "Willis." As he became vice president, I fumbled around a little bit and would say, "Mr. Vice President." But I think, I'm not certain, but I think most of the time it was still Lyndon. But the moment he became president, I never called him Lyndon while he was president. I called him Mr. President. I called Bird, Bird. I did not call him Lyndon

Hurst -- II -- 2

again until some months after he was out of the presidency.

But I spent many nights there. I was in Washington on many occasions for different purposes. Occasionally it was because he had gotten me involved in some health committee. For example, he placed me on the Heart, Cancer, Stroke Committee.

B: That's formally the President's Commission on Heart Disease, Cancer and Stroke.

H: Yes. That was an active committee and we did a lot of work. And there were many other things, unrelated to him, that would take me to Washington. I would teach out at Georgetown University and I would teach at George Washington University, and felt totally free to call Ashton Gonella that I would be in town, and they always wanted me to stay at the White House. They were kind enough to make this a completely comfortable arrangement. They virtually insisted time and time again that if I'm in town I would stay with them at the White House. Most of the time I did this. I would have at least one, sometimes two, sometimes three meals with them there, and I would spend time in the President's room with him. He never liked to be alone, and would go over a huge bundle of papers each night. I would frequently sit there, he'd occasionally say something, but I was simply in a role of someone there that made him feel a little more comfortable at that particular time.

B: Was the position of White House physician formally offered to you?

H: Yes. The first time this was discussed was shortly after he became president. At that time Dr. [Janet] Travell was there; she has been Kennedy's physician. Dr. George Burkley and his very capable associate, Dr. Jim Young, both of the navy, were also there and were assuming very active roles in the care of Kennedy, in that traveling was hard for Dr. Travell. They had done a lot of traveling with President Kennedy. So at that time there were three people there: Travell, Young and Burkley. It was clear that this was more than adequate coverage and that some changes would have to be made. I don't know the details of it at all. It was periodically discussed with me whether maybe the

Hurst -- II -- 3

time had come for me to move to Washington. It ended up that I actually urged them not to pursue that. It turns out that Dr. Burkley then became the White House physician with Dr. Young as his assistant.

Later, Jim Cain and I did several things to improve the dispensary that's on the first floor of the White House. We had an X-ray machine installed. We suggested a system where the assistants to Burkley would spend some time out at the Naval Hospital in a more active role. They'd spend half their time at the hospital so that, over a period of years, they did not lose their skills in dealing with sick people.

Later, I believe it was in 1965, I was asked to come to Washington for a weekend. I suspected that I might be offered the position as White House physician. The President did offer the position to me. I felt I should not accept for several reasons. This was a very difficult decision for me. It was not a tough decision in the sense of determining if it would be wise for him or me, because I knew it would not be wise for him or me. The decision was difficult because he was the president, a friend who was offering me the position, and it was difficult to say no. I think anyone who says it would not be difficult to say no would be saying less than what they felt. The fact that he thought it was the thing to do made it difficult for me to say no to him. This was a very carefully planned approach on his part. He knew himself that I probably would not accept, but he wanted to give it his best effort and he's an awfully persuasive man. I had to plan my response very carefully else I would submit to his persuasive argument. He embarked upon a couple of days of devoted effort.

A humorous thing happened. He went to church many Sundays. This was one of them, and I went with him. Bird was with us. The Thornberrys were with us. I was sitting by the President in church, and Reverend [George] Davis, I believe, at the Presbyterian Church [National City Christian Church] was one of his favorite ministers. The minister was discussing what men should do for their country. The minister came down rather heavily that a young man must serve his country and continue to serve his country regardless of the request. About that moment I felt the President's thumb go about an inch into my back, indicating that, "Listen to him, he's telling you what you ought to do."

Hurst -- II -- 4

But I felt that I should not accept the position, for several reasons. I thought that over a period of time, although it would be extremely exciting because I would be where the action was, that my skills would deteriorate unless I was involved in medical action. Whereas I thought so much of him and Bird as friends, I felt that my role as a physician would diminish and, except for absolute minuteto-minute emergencies, in this day and time, I would be accessible in Atlanta. Here, in my institution, where I saw many, many patients with heart attacks per year, was where I should be in order to retain the needed degree of experience.

I had led him carefully through a period of total rehabilitation earlier in 1955. The fact that I was there daily would be a constant reminder to him of his first heart attack. Subconsciously this would be an emotionally disturbing situation that he might not himself appreciate. Also, being there all the time as a heart specialist would not look good to the public. I did not feel that my acceptance would be in his best interest.

B: Did you still have in mind the danger of a heart patient's dependence upon the physician?

H: Exactly, exactly. A constant reminder of someone that had gone through an event with him earlier. I felt that I could function being in town frequently and staying with him and seeing him in a little more detached position. If you're around all the time, you meddle more than you should. I think being his consultant was a better position to be in. There needed to be a doctor who knew him who could be a little more detached, to look and observe changes that might not be seen by a physician who sees him daily.

Then the other feature, which later turned out to be extremely important, was staying in my current role as head of a department of medicine at a respected medical school. By retaining my relationship with my colleagues in the country, I retained a degree of credibility that would have vanished if I had become an insider.

By retaining my honest relationship with my own profession to the best of my ability, I felt that I was believed, whereas if I were on the staff I might be suspect. I think that this proved to be of extreme value, maybe more valuable than President Johnson himself even realized. Because as I'll indicate later, when it came time for surgical proce-

Hurst -- II -- 5

dures, when the press would naturally bring up, "Will his heart stand it?" et cetera, "Will his heart tolerate it?"--I was able to say, "His heart is doing well, in my judgment; this will not be our problem. To the best of my ability, I think that he will survive surgery. Anything obviously can happen, but it is my honest opinion that the surgery must be done and I would anticipate a safe recovery from it." Well, later as I'm sure we'll get into [it], this statement from me as an outsider who knew him but who was not working directly under his wing moment to moment, almost eliminated any discussion of whether or not it was a wise decision to go ahead with surgery. In summary, I said, "A well patient does not need a doctor every day, and a doctor needs more than one patient to remain competent."

B: Did the Johnsons understand these reasons?

H: Yes, I think so although I must say at the time I felt that they both were somewhat disappointed. But if I can move the clock forward to finish that story. It was close to the time that he would leave the White House. Mrs. Johnson had often asked me to bring my wife and children for a visit. Two of them had done so already, so there was one remaining son that had not visited. So my wife, Nelie, and son, Phil, went up and spent several days. We were going out one night to the yacht on the Potomac, which was Kennedy's old yacht, as I recall. It just happened to be that my wife and I were in the car with the President. Mrs. Johnson had gone on with someone else. The chauffeur was an old friend that I had known since 1955. I became, I hope, friends to all the people, including Zephyr Wright, the cook and others, including the chauffeur.

The President was trying to get the driver to accept the position to be Senator [Richard] Russell's chauffeur. The driver had originally been from Georgia. He said he had a job. That was one of the conversations going on in the car.

The President looked into the distance and said, "A well patient does not need a doctor every day, and a doctor needs more than one patient to say competent."

I remember sort of nudging my wife at the time, because he was just looking off in the distance, he wasn't looking me in the eye at the time. But this was, without

Hurst -- II -- 6

question, his signal to me that he had thought about this, and that furthermore, my decision not to be there permanently was probably a sound one. But then he changed and he used his little needle a little bit. He needled me, "You know, I wanted you to come up here," or some such thing, "but you had other things you felt you ought to do. And now you've gone on to do all those things and I've been up here." That kind of Johnson talk. He was a master at such talk.

(JWH note: Readers should review all the transcripts because the story about the offer to be White House physician is told in several of them.)

B: You know, you mentioned one thing, or hinted at it. Did you find yourself, as the presidential years wore on, defending Mr. Johnson before your fellow physicians?

H: There is no question about that. And I had to assume a role of understanding, or trying to understand, their sometimes vitriolic remarks, not just from physicians but anyone who knew I knew him. I also would like to think that maybe I helped Mr. Johnson in some of that. You see, I could not have done so if I had been at the White House permanently. I hate to admit it, but some people, doctors and non-doctors, will stoop so low as to say, "Why didn't you let him die?"

B: I assume that's not hypothetical, that's an actual incident?

H: That occurred on many an occasion. How shocked I would be to hear someone who was otherwise a kind and gentle person say such a thing. It especially bothered me if it came out of the mouth of an attractive woman, who was gentle and kind in all her other activities. And I don't understand this to this day.

B: Is that necessarily a regional thing? Did all of those comments come from Atlanta, Georgia?

H: No, I think this occurred everywhere. I don't mean that large numbers of people would

Hurst -- II -- 7

do this, but there would be one or two on any trip I took.

B: Did you ever describe any of these incidents to the President?

H: I don't recall mentioning this to him. I do recall having a conversation with Mrs. Johnson saying, "They're saying some ugly things, Bird." But I'm sure that, as real professionals, they knew it. Remember, a president gets tons of crank mail per day. Even I got crank mail, and some obviously from psychotic people, completely detached from the world. Each time my name would appear in the newspaper linking me to the President, I could expect an avalanche of mail. It was always during those periods you could expect that someone would say something rather vitriolic. It bothers me a great deal. I don't think the comments would be directed at Mr. Johnson alone. It seems that some people must lash out at authority. This, of course, is a serious problem.

B: Did you ever find yourself, whether you wanted to or not, being drawn into politics? For example, I know you've been active in the American Medical Association, which opposed the President's Medicare plan.

H: No, I have not. No, I have not been active in the American Medical Association.

B: Oh, really? Oh.

H: No. No. No more than the fact that I'm a member of the County Medical Society. I have not been active in the political aspects of the American Medical Association at all.

B: Did Mr. Johnson, for example, ever ask you about medical legislation, the Medicare of Medicaid proposals?

H: No, no--

Hurst -- II -- 8

B: Or about the AMA's reaction to them?

H: No, he did not. I think he knew that he and I were at least on the same wave length, that somehow we needed better medical care in the country. I was not asked how this should be done. In fact, I think there are many ways it could be done, all extremely expensive. I certainly did not disagree with the fact that a start had to be made with some form of aid such as Medicare and Medicaid. I did not think Medicare and Medicaid was the end of it all and that one could solve a mammoth problem by one simple stroke of a pen. But we were on the same wave length regarding the need for more medical research, and better ways to deliver care. All of these things were part of what I believe and he believed. We never discussed methods. And to restate, I have not been active at all in the American Medical Association.

B: You mentioned that in 1964, the summer of 1964 I presume, there was a formal meeting of you and Dr. Cain and Mrs. Johnson about the wisdom of running for the presidency.

H: Yes. I had seen President Johnson off and on. Whenever I was at the White House I would examine him and find out how he was doing, and he would periodically say, "Well, I don't think I will be healthy enough to run again," or something to that effect. Now, my personal interpretation of that kind of question was that he was testing me to see how sure I was that he was all right. I did not believe he was really considering not running. I know that a different kind of interpretation could be placed on those questions, but he had always tested, and in the good active rehabilitation of people you have to be prepared for such questions. When you say, "Sir, you are doing fine," then suppose he says, "Well, I probably ought not to run for president." Then you say, "Well, I guess that's right, I guess you ought not to run." Then suddenly what you first said isn't so; you've got to be as sure as you can be when you give an opinion. When you say, "Sir, you are doing fine," then you must be prepared for any kind of testing. When he'd say, "I don't guess I can do this," I'd say, "Oh, yes you can. Whether you do it or not is your business." I told him this many times, "It's not my job to discuss *what* you do. I can tell



Hurst -- II -- 9

you your heart is doing well and whatever you would like to do, your heart will do the job for you. It must not be considered in your decision to do anything." So it was in that context that they were beginning to make a decision.

I think the final point was that we did gather--Jim Cain and I, and Janet Travell was still there at that time, and I believe Larry Lamb was there. Larry was working in the aerospace school in San Antonio. He had seen the President occasionally when the President would go down for some official business or some such thing.

B: He's a physician, too?

H: He is a physician.

B: Lamb, L-A-M-B?

H: L-A-M-B.

Well, we all went over him and wrote a statement. I don't have a copy; I did not keep notes. I would dictate on the dictaphone in the dispensary after each examination, so many of those records are available. But these notes I didn't keep. But there is an official note that says that we felt he could run for the presidency.

I may get the sequence of events reversed, because I don't know all that was going on in the periphery at the time. The really important meeting involved Mrs. Johnson and Jim Cain and I. She wanted me and Jim Cain to meet her out at this retreat in Virginia. It turns out that's the same retreat where he was when he had his attack in 1955.

B: The Brown estate, the George Brown estate.

H: The George Brown estate. So we went out, and I remember we took a long walk. Jerry Kivett was the Secret Service agent assigned to her, and we walked, and I think either Luci or--I believe Luci and a friend were there, a friend from Austin. We had dinner. But then we sat for a long time in front of an open fire. Mrs. Johnson was making notes.

Hurst -- II -- 10

The questions were relatively specific about what did we really think about his health in running for the presidency, and again, I said that he was in as good a condition as possible. Remember this, he had had an attack in 1955 and this does bring on some worry about another attack. On the other hand, any man who is fifty-five or sixty, even though they'd never had an attack, may have an attack.

So the fact that someone has never had a problem does not put them in a completely immune position. You follow? Now this is something again the public never quite appreciates. For example, Eisenhower had never had an attack before, you see, but he had it during the presidency. And I would estimate that if we could look ahead three hundred years from now at presidents who are of the age range of forty-five to sixty-five, quite a number of them are going to have their attacks in office, even though they had no warning ahead of time. They are certainly no more immune than the general population, than the bank presidents and schoolteachers, everybody. This is an extremely common disease.

After that she wrote the famous note, you see, and I believe the note, although I never saw it personally, it probably said that he should go ahead and run. Apparently there had also been some discussions then as to whether or not he would run next time.

B: That was a note from Mrs. Johnson to the President?

H: That's right.

B: And you believe that they had at least among themselves, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, discussed, "Well, I might run now, but not in 1968"?

H: This would be my impression, putting many things together, but never having been told that personally.

B: In other words, that they might have been making a decision in terms of going for just the one election.

Hurst -- II -- 11

- H: I think as they made this decision, that they looked at more than the immediate problem of that election. In other words, I believe without them telling me now, that in that consideration they were also considering what their reaction would be four years from then.
- B: To ask a question that might occur to a reader of this, in the conversation with Mrs. Johnson and Dr. Cain at the Brown estate, did you get any impression that Mrs. Johnson might have preferred personally that he not run again?
- H: Let me say, I'm not sure she said it then. I think she did. But on several occasions, she would almost with a faraway look indicate that she really would prefer not to be involved at that top level. Although at the same time I recognized, and I know she did, that neither he nor she could avoid considering the top position because they had successfully climbed the political ladder. But I heard her say many times that she did not, by choice, wish to be in that position.
- B: Let me follow logically now to ask about this: You've mentioned a conversation you had with Mrs. Johnson in the fall of 1967--
- H: Yes, and I think it was October. This was I think one of the most important periods. I didn't know it then. I was visiting the White House frequently. They were extremely kind to me throughout all this period, always had time and interest. I think maybe, too, that during all that period, as someone who had known them intimately since 1955, that they knew, when I was there, that if they wanted to take their shoes off they did so, and so did I. There was no formality with us; it was sort of a comfortable kind of thing. By then, it had turned out through good luck and God's willing nature, that I had been involved in many crises where a degree of reasonable action had been needed. They felt that I could act responsibly and this brought a degree of comfort to the environment. When things were tense, I could, I hope, bring a degree of comfort to them because of my

Hurst -- II -- 12

long association. Many family problems were discussed that are not of national interest, problems that come up in any family, and I felt very much a part of them.

I rarely stayed at the White House unless they were there. I did maybe twice during those years. This time that I'm about to mention to you was one of the times. We hadn't planned it that way. I was to arrive on one day; they were to come back from Texas the next day. It turns out that he returned to the White House as scheduled but she delayed her return. I believe this was October of 1967.

As a rule, when I would arrive, Dr. Burkley would bring me up to date, along with Jim Young and Lay Fox. I knew all the butlers and the maids and all the people, and they'd all--especially if I'd known them since 1955--tell me exactly how the President and Mrs. Johnson felt. I didn't have to ask. They were doing their work to report to me how he was doing and so forth. Ashton Gonella, who was Mrs. Johnson's private secretary, and all of them informed me about the situation.

This time I sensed some tenseness. I also sensed from what they were telling me that the President was tense. He was one who exhibited a full range of emotions, which incidentally I believe personally is a healthy kind of state. Anger at times, plenty of humor, quick-mindedness, these are all signs of good healthy emotions. This time I felt from all the information I had gathered that he undoubtedly was very tired. I didn't often think he was tired. Everybody else thought he was tired, but I very rarely thought he was tired. I felt that I should try to do something about it. And you know you're limited in what you can do about it, really.

He returned the next day without Mrs. Johnson. I determined that he was bone tired. I was concerned about him. Lynda was talking to Bird on the phone up in Ashton Gonella's office, and I was about to depart for the airport. I thought I'd miss her. Lynda said, "Dr. Hurst is standing by me. Do you want to talk to him?" So Bird started out saying, "I'm terribly sorry I didn't get back," or something like that. And I said, "Gee, now, listen, let me talk to you. I'm concerned. Talk to me a minute about this fatigue, or what the situation is. I want him to go up to Camp David. I want him to do something, if he can." She said, "When are you leaving?" I said, "I'm on the way now." She said, "Can you stay until"--I think it was eleven or twelve o'clock--"I'm coming into Andrews

Hurst -- II -- 13

at that time. Could you meet me out there?" And I said, "Yes." So I changed my airline ticket, rearranged it so I would, as I recall it, go back to Atlanta about five o'clock the next morning. I thought this was odd in that I was going out in the limousine to meet her and talk to her at eleven or twelve o'clock at night. So did the Secret Service. They didn't say anything, but I felt they thought it surely was odd. Jerry Kivett will tell you now that he sensed something unusual.

So we got in the back seat, driving back to the White House, which of course is soundproof, or reasonably so. And I simply said, "Bird, I'm worried about his fatigue. Now, I feel that maybe this is one of the rare times I'm going to tell you to see if he can get some rest." Her conversation was not as usual, and I noticed myself talking and I said--which shows our relationship--"Bird, you're not listening to a thing I'm saying." And then she jolted herself back into this world and she apologized profusely, which was not needed. She didn't have to apologize at all. But it was my way of saying, "I'm a little concerned about *you*." And I went ahead, I think, and said, "And I believe you are not reacting as usual."

There are a couple of sentences there I wish I could quote directly, but cannot. They're the lead-in sentences to what I'm about to say. But she said something about the turmoil; she said something about--which in effect was saying, implying, that he would not run. Now, she didn't say those words, but I was sensing that feeling. Obviously she was checking this out in the context of his fatigue. She was obviously trying to include another factor, the health factor, in the decision-making process that was beginning to go on at that time. I don't remember her sentence, but I remember my sentence. I said, "Now look, Bird, he's started too many things. I would question whether he would be willing to step aside, and I think this fatigue problem is transient. Let us hope so at this moment." Her response was, "Well, one always has things that you would like to see finished, and you never do all the things that you would like to do." (JWH note: The reader should read Interview V of this series and Page 573 in *A White House Diary*, by Mrs. Johnson.)

She asked me, as Johnson's doctor, if I thought he should not run because of his health. I answered that it was beyond medical knowledge to determine what results that

Hurst -- II -- 14

might have. Now, later, as I put it together, I believe that they were in the decision-making process. As I recall, and I haven't checked this to see if the chronology is perfect, but I believe that their weekend guest at the Ranch was [John] Connally, and as I understood later from published reports, this was the beginning of the decision. I think that conversation at midnight was one of the most unusual conversations I had with Mrs. Johnson.

B: Did you get the impression then that she was more eager than he to see the way out?

H: This was just Mrs. Johnson in the back seat of the limousine going back to the White House at midnight. She had asked me to stay on to have some sort of discussion.

B: But I meant did you perhaps get the idea that she was trying to get from you arguments to use with [him]?

H: I think now she was factoring in the health factor, you see. For the first time I had said something that would fit with their decision-making, namely that I believed he was bone-tired, and I could not predict the future.

B: Did you hear any more of it after this [incident]?

H: Did not, did not. Except I must say that now, putting it all together, my impression is that what I've told you fits with what I now think. I think the decision was being made for him not to seek reelection.

B: Is it your impression that the decision was made that early and just not announced until [March 31]?

H: I can't tell you that. I do not know. I just simply got the feeling, as I put it together, that this was part of the decision-making process.

Hurst -- II -- 15

B: Did the fatigue correct itself?

H: Yes, as I thought it would.

B: Fairly quickly?

H: Sure.

B: I think I should ask the question directly, because it was rumored at the time and probably will continue to be rumored: Was there any specific medical reason why Mr. Johnson should not have run for another term?

H: No specific reason. In other words, he was still doing quite well as far as his heart was concerned. He had gone through two surgical procedures that we have not discussed yet, but still, despite this, there was no one that could outwork this man.

B: If the question had been put to you as it was in 1964, strictly speaking as a medical man, "Can he run again?" would you have answered yes?

H: I could have said yes prior to the conversation I had with Mrs. Johnson [which I just] described. I was quite concerned about his severe fatigue when I talked with her that night on October 4, 1967. As I said, I pointed out that I could not determine what would happen if he ran and were reelected. Now, I don't know what all was in his mind, because I think he, from that October on, was playing a lot of his feelings closer and closer to his own vest, so to speak. I don't know whether his fears were increasing then.

B: You mean his medical fears?

H: Medical fears.

Hurst -- II -- 16

B: Fears of another attack?

H: Yes. I've got a feeling that he felt that his job had been done. That would be my real reaction to it.

B: To continue that further--I don't guess this is too hypothetical--would the recent attack, the attack of a couple of months ago, have seriously incapacitated a president? Is that a fair question at all?

H: Yes, I'm perfectly willing to answer that. I would have believed that the chances were good that he would have gone right through that problem as president.

B: Just as he did, apparently. Just from what I've read in the newspapers, it was not a serious [attack].

H: That's right. He had--well, on that, although we're getting a little out of context in that, we'll want to backtrack and pick up the surgical procedures along the line.

B: Yes, I thought we'd go back to that next.

H: In this case, two months ago, I guess it was May or April--

(Interruption)

B: Just for information's sake, there's been a break here of about fifteen minutes or so.

Sir, the next subject that sort of hangs together in one piece, the several major illnesses and operations during the presidential years. In January 1965 he was hospitalized with a bad cold, the gall bladder operation later that year, and in the fall of 1966, the abdominal hernia and the polyp in the throat.



Hurst -- II -- 17

H: Yes.

B: May I ask one question, at the beginning again: This is one of those questions that right now may sound slightly insane, but was there any major illness or threat of major illness that was not made public?

H: No, there was not. I think the public was informed of all his illnesses, minor and major.

B: It's difficult to imagine nowadays how such a thing could be, but the question and answer ought to be on the record somewhere.

I assume you were called in on all of these things I've just recounted.

H: Yes. Now, on the first one, which had to do with a cold, influenza, I recall I was in Florida on a teaching engagement at the time. Dr. Burkley checked with me two or three times, as I recall it, and things were going quite well. We felt that it would not be necessary or wise for me to fly in then. Because, you see, we wanted the truth known. Had I flown in as his heart specialist, then unfortunately the country at large would have said, "Aha, they're withholding information." The fact I did not go would offer support to the fact that he was doing extremely well.

B: For that same reason, do you hesitate somewhat to hospitalize the President of the United States? He was [hospitalized] in that case, as I recall.

H: Well, I would not say that. You must do what's best for him, and if it takes hospitalization to make the observations you want to make, that must be done. I think that's the only way to answer that question. But in a situation as I've just mentioned, when the heart was not involved, for me to go in even as a friend to give some help to the family, this would imply more seriousness than there was.

Hurst -- II -- 18

B: Then the next major illness was an operation, and I assume you were called in to ask, as you mentioned earlier, if the heart would stand it.

H: That one I must go into in some detail.

B: That was October, 1965?

H: Yes, October of 1965. It just happened that it was one of the times that I was already scheduled to be in Washington. I was to arrive in town at, oh, four or five in the afternoon. Mrs. Johnson and Lynda were out in Wyoming, in the Grand Tetons, somewhere in that vicinity. Mr. Johnson was returning from the Ranch. I was driving into the White House at the same time his helicopter was letting down, almost simultaneously. The first message I got, I believe from George Burkley, was "The President is sick." But my purpose in going was not that he was sick; I had already arranged that for other purposes.

Well, I saw him and he had abdominal pain and fever. Now, to shorten this medical story, there were three distinct possibilities that had to be considered. One was another heart attack, because occasionally pain may be felt in the upper abdomen from a heart attack. Another point was, you'll recall that it was known that he had kidney stones. That was the other point. The fact that he had been ill with some vomiting, the fact his temperature was a little high, the fact that the pain was a little more in the right upper quadrant of the abdomen, made me feel that heart attack was not the prime concern. The characteristics of the pain were not typical of his kidney stone colic. I felt that he might well have acute cholecystitis, a gall bladder difficulty. We made some X-rays and I was quite suspicious that on one of the X-rays I could see gallstones.

So with that information I thought he most likely had cholecystitis. I called Jim Cain at the Mayo Clinic, who is a gastroenterologist, you see, and asked him to come, that I felt we had a problem. I stayed up most of the night that night, although he went to bed and was reasonably comfortable. Jim Cain arrived the next day. I believe we made some more X-rays. He, too, came to the conclusion that this was cholecystitis,

Hurst -- II -- 19

cholelithiasis, which is gallstones.

B: Was Mr. Johnson worried or unduly concerned?

H: No, I do not believe that you would classify it as worried. He always regretted that illness occurred, and that this would shake up the country to a degree, but basically he was philosophical about that. His temperature subsided in a few days and we knew we faced the problem of deciding about surgery. We wanted the acute attack to subside, and then we must make the decision. As time evolved, there were three people involved, basically--along with Dr. Burkley, and Dr. Young, who was there--in making the decision. That would be Jim Cain, and me, and George Hallenback, who was the surgeon from the Mayo Clinic. So we came to the conclusion that he should have his gall bladder removed. Not that he wasn't doing well then--he was already up and around, doing quite well--but that a recurrent episode was highly likely. So plans were made for him to be admitted for surgery.

B: Once the decision has been made that the operation must be done, then is there a question of timing?

H: Well, within limits.

B: That is, is there a medical question? Can the President pick the time?

H: Within reason. As I recall this, it seems to me that he decided to do this after the Congress had gone home or something of that sort. In other words, he did consider the time that was best for the country, because there was no emergency then about the exact day it was done. We wanted him to lose some weight. A number of things were done in preparation, you see.

So he was admitted to the naval hospital. By then, too, George Burkley had designed a suite there, a presidential suite, that would be useful for all of the presidents in

Hurst -- II -- 20

years ahead. We planned this very carefully, as you can imagine. In discussions with the press, and making an announcement at his request at a dinner that just happened to be on the very day he was going to the hospital, I emphasized the fact that this was a common problem and that thousands of others in the country faced a similar problem.

B: You mean he requested that you go and appear publicly at social events so that it would be obvious that you were not concerned?

H: Well, not quite in the sense of requesting it. It just happened. For example, I remember the very day he was to go to the hospital--he went in as I recall late one night, ten o'clock or some such thing--that very day he had one of his dinners where he had invited a hundred people. He called on me to stand up and state what was about to happen. I indicated that his heart was doing well, and I felt the surgery would go quite well. As a side issue, I sat at the table with Frederic March and John Steinbeck.

From a medical point of view, I felt, as did Jim Cain, that we must not overtreat him. This may not make sense to those who read this document, but if you're in a setting where all is possible, you can also overdo. You can overtreat. There is such a thing as undertreatment and overtreatment, and we constantly put checks on ourselves. We tried to do the reasonable thing. We thought, although it is possible to do an enormous number of things, we will not go beyond what we think is good judgment. So at no point did we overdo, where you can begin to get in trouble. So the whole affair went very smoothly.

B: Were you in attendance in the operating theater during the operation?

H: Oh, yes. I stayed I think five days on that occasion, and my room was across the hall from his in the suite that was arranged for his care. I was up early to go over his clinical status the morning of surgery and stayed with him every second. I was in an adjacent observation booth and watched the cardiogram throughout the procedure. The anesthesia was beautiful and the surgery was excellent. There simply was no problem at all. He had an uncomfortable convalescence, but no more uncomfortable than other people with

Hurst -- II -- 21

removal of the gall bladder.

Again, one humorous thing came up. Bill Moyers was by then his press secretary. He was addressing the press over in the Naval Hospital auditorium daily, and I'd go over; Jim Cain would go over. This was a daily affair. One day I thought, well, you know, I don't think I'll go over there again. So I sort of hung back. The President was reading or looking at television, and I was standing nearby I think looking at television with him. Then he looked up and he looked around, nobody else around other than one nurse. Incidentally, this record ought to show that Nurse [Betty] Chapowicki was an extremely capable nurse who was with him frequently. I first met her on the Rome trip. She was a source of great comfort and obviously an extremely capable person. And I think she was there that day.

He looked around and couldn't see anybody else, and he said, "Why aren't you over at the press conference?" I said, "Well, I think they can handle it, you know." He said, "Oh, goodness, they're going to think my heart's gone bad. No telling what they're going to think. Get yourself over there!" Well, remember, I had formerly been stationed at the naval hospital, so I thought I knew my way around pretty well, but they'd rearranged things and it took me longer to get there than I thought. Then I had asked, "Mr. President, I can't just walk into that press conference like this. The thing is under way, television cameras going. It will look terrible for me to walk in at a press conference under those circumstances." He said, "You get over to that press conference!"

I couldn't find the way to go directly onto the stage; I had to go through the audience of press men, which practically filled the place. But the President had called Bill Moyers. He had a direct phone line over to him and said, "Dr. Hurst is on his way over." So when Bill saw me at the back of the theater, he said, "All right, here comes Dr. Hurst. He's just left the President and he can give you very up-to-date information," and I wandered up on the stage. He said, "Well, what is the very latest information on the President?" And I said, "He's doing extremely well." Then the press felt that they had the very latest information.

As the days wore on, the full staff was there, and government continued. He had made arrangements, obviously, to have the Vice President take over, if need be, during

Hurst -- II -- 22

anesthesia and during any period that he was deemed unable to function.

B: Incidentally, did you and the other medical men have anything to do in connection with that phrase "deemed unable to function"?

H: I guess not. I don't recall being personally involved in that particular series of words. It was clear, though, that we were supposed to give the signal.

B: Well, that's really what I meant. I could conceive of a time when your group would have decided that the President was now unable to function.

H: Well, it was very clear that we would have to function in that capacity, only the physicians could. So that that would be part of the responsibility of a medical team under these circumstances.

B: And it was just assumed that the team would do it, in some sort of collegiate process?

H: Oh, yes. Exactly. And I suspect that it would have been me and Jim Cain, because we had known him longer than the others. The two of us would probably have been the decision makers.

Well, he had an uneventful recovery from that. Then as months go by he would be the very one that gets a small hernia in this area of the incision. He's always had, I must say, a very lax abdominal wall. As a matter of fact, he's not as fat as people think; he's a big man, six- four or so. His abdomen looks fat, but it's actually a very relaxed abdominal wall. And we've tried to recommend ways to strengthen this; he has difficulty in doing sit-up exercises and things that you could do to strengthen the wall. But I'm sure that because of that, that the incision did not hold as you would hope, and therefore as time passed, the hernia got a little bigger.

Now back again, though, to the first operation. The decision was also being considered whether or not to remove a stone in the kidney that we had been observing

Hurst -- II -- 23

since the Rome trip that I mentioned, when he was vice president. So since the surgery was in the abdomen, the decision had to be made whether or not to have a superb urologist there, if things are right, to go ahead and remove this stone that was actually in the ureter, which is between the kidney and the bladder. He had other small stones in the kidney substance, but this one was one we had been watching. Since the gall bladder portion of the operation went well, we felt that this was the time also to remove that small stone. It would have been acceptable not to have done so also; it was not the urgent part of the surgery, it was not the prime purpose of the surgery. So you can see why the press would be a little disturbed that here we go in for gallstones, and the next thing you know we're also bringing out a kidney stone, whereupon they say, well, they withheld all this information from us. But it was not emphasized in the beginning because that was not the prime purpose of the surgery. But the fact he had kidney stones was old. It had been known for a long time.

Well, as time goes on the hernia gets bigger, and also he begins to develop some hoarseness. On examination by physicians at the naval hospital and Dr. Wilbur J. Gould in New York, it was felt that the benign-looking lesion on the larynx should be looked at under a microscope. So as time goes on we've got two problems going then: the apparently benign lesion on his larynx was making him hoarse, and the hernia had developed in the area of the abdominal incision.

B: This may be totally irrelevant, but one suspects that Mr. Johnson might have done a little needling about the hernia that appeared on the scar.

H: Not of course with me, and I don't think with Dr. Cain. I don't think he said very much to George Hallenback. I don't think he really felt that this was anything too unusual. I don't recall any particular needling.

I remember a funny little thing that George Hallenback said after the gall bladder surgery. President Johnson said, "Well, what did you think when you were operating on the President?" George Hallenback, who is a very competent surgeon, said, "Well, Mr. President, I thought this is one time I better not goof." (Laughter) But this is symbolic of

Hurst -- II -- 24

Hallenback's personal confidence in his own skill. Someone without security in his skill would never have made such a statement as that.

B: Is that not the scar that was publicly displayed for the newspapermen?

H: I believe when the President displayed his scar was after the first operation. The second one, J. Gould removed the lesion on the larynx and Dr. Hallenback repaired this hernia, and he had a good recovery from both of them. But where the photograph was published showing this huge scar was after the gall bladder operation, I believe.

And that's interesting, I don't know why he did that. I was also interested that the public had a peculiar reaction to it. They thought he shouldn't have done it--a lot of people did. Some didn't think it mattered. In a way, I always thought that the President was himself. The fact that he liked Texas chili was the way he was. The fact that he liked ground beef and a bell pepper as a favorite meal is the way he was. Some thought that this was uncouth. But that's his upbringing, and I admired the fact that he made no pretense ever. He loved his family, every one of them, and brought all of them periodically to the White House. He took care of Sam Houston, who's had his ups and downs and problems. He did not pretend, nor did Mrs. Johnson. Now, I'm saying all this before trying to explain why I think he was uninhibited in showing his scar. That's the way he is. Now, he feels like when he gives himself to the country, the country to a degree owns him. His showing his scar is like he's as human as about a million other people that have had an operation who talk about their scars. He's no different.

B: I gather that your relationship with the press during this whole period was not exactly comfortable.

H: Well, let me say this, they never treated me unfairly. I felt that I could handle this very well. That was no problem. There were periods when it was excessive, and then even when things were going well, you know, once you've been identified in this role, even if I went away to teach at another university, the newspaper was more interested in what I



Hurst -- II -- 25

had to say about the President than what I had to say about the medical subject. I guess if you want to use the word uncomfortable, there were only two areas there that would make me uncomfortable, but I don't want you to get the impression that I was frightened of the press, that I couldn't handle the press, that I felt incompetent with the press. Not that, I felt I could handle that.

But the two areas that I felt were difficult would be when the press is moving in and asking this, that or the other question, I was always mindful of the fact this man is a patient. It is not up to me as his physician or any of the other doctors who are seeing him to shoot their mouth off at every opportunity about the President, and the opportunities were daily many times. So during the periods when things were happening, I wanted clearance from his press secretary. I wanted the press secretary to know that we were stating the truth to the best of our ability; in a sense teaching. I didn't want anything unsaid that would be misleading. Say enough of the truth to communicate accurately at all times. I always checked this out with George Reedy, with Bill Moyers, and George Christian as well, although very little happened after Christian assumed that role.

B: Did they generally advise you to give full disclosure?

H: They would advise to give full disclosure; never was I asked to withhold information. They advised me to be as accurate as possible.

B: Was there ever any information you withheld on your own judgment?

H: No, no. But I was uncomfortable because at times I could not check with Bill Moyers or could not check with George Reedy. When nothing acute was happening, reporters or writers would call me for information. It took me a while to know that it would be permissible to my patient for me to say simply that he was doing fine, there were no problems. That was enough for a reporter to get something. He couldn't overinterpret it.

B: But that was a case where a "no comment" would be subject to misinterpretation?

Hurst -- II -- 26

H: "No comment" is impossible, because they would really think the worst if they had reasons to think the worst. A couple of weeks ago this came up again. I told a reporter, "I'm not here to discuss the patient. I will tell you he's doing very well, but that's all we'll need to discuss." And that's the way it came out in the paper. The reporter said that former President Johnson is "doing quite well and the doctor did not comment further."

I did discuss these matters with Mrs. Johnson and President Johnson, and we sort of evolved the idea that I'd do the best I could. They trusted me, and they knew I was not getting involved unless the move came from the press in the proper way. So it worked out well.

But the other area that did concern me and one that I struggled with is a very personal one, and that is I work hard in the profession, I try to do a good job. I wish I could do a better job. I write, I teach in many universities. I've been lucky and had many nice things happen. Within my professional world I wish to be called upon because of medical knowledge, not because of whom I know. Suppose I am asked to give a lecture at another university. I'm not quite sure really why I'm being asked to do so. Is it just because I happened to be in Bethesda in 1955 when a man had a heart attack who later became president? Accordingly, I would tend to minimize my relationship. I want an authentic reason to be invited to visit and teach and lecture.

B: I think that's a perfectly understandable and probably very common reaction.

You had mentioned earlier, and many people have mentioned it, that the former President is a man of moods which sometimes appear to be extreme moods. Occasional depression, perhaps more frequent anger.

H: Well, I don't know really how to answer that except say that I think President Johnson is a complex person. I think I would be less than honest if I didn't say that I've enjoyed his friendship in doing my best to serve as a medical consultant to him, but one reason he is a fascinating person is this point that he's a complex person. I mentioned earlier that I thought he knew more psychology than any other person I'd known, including those

Hurst -- II -- 27

trained specifically in psychology. You can't get around the fact that whatever he does is enormously successful. You must never forget that. Therefore as I worked with him I could see the way he would extend his leadership to our relationship. I mean, he is a superb conversationalist, because there are so many facets to his personality. I've mentioned earlier, too, that I think perfectly normal and extremely interesting people do display many emotions, ranging from anger, to humor, to unpredictability, to all kinds of things; up to a point this of course is entirely normal. Now, whether or not you want to say that *his* swings in all of this, his emotional swings, reached the abnormal state, would be a very debatable issue. I would be unwilling myself to say that these were outside the normal range. I would think that part of it, a great part of these swings, he learned over the years as a way of extracting maximum work, maximum loyalty, from those around him. Everyone would be wondering what is up next, and to a degree this kept people on their toes. No staff has ever worked harder for a man, and every staff he ever had worked harder than any other staff of anybody else. I didn't say it was easy for them. They, too, had their unpredictable sides, because if he's unpredictable, they're unpredictable. This makes it tough.

B: Were you ever yourself on the receiving end of that kind of anger?

H: My relationship I sense was different--I started to say very different, but clearly different from that of those within the White House itself that stayed there. In other words, I don't think that I would be immune, but the role that emerged and one that I made the definite choice to follow, would also put me a little bit outside that sphere. I think the people who saw and felt and were on the receiving end of some of the wide swings were almost always those that are around all the time. I can recall, for example--the story goes, I didn't hear this--that he was needling George Reedy a great deal at one point. The very day--nobody knows to this day whether this was planned or not--that he needled George he gave him a new automobile.

B: I've heard that story.

Hurst -- II -- 28

H: Now, I don't think this was when he was president.

B: Senatorial days, I think.

H: Well now, if you think about a minute, if it's the same day, there he knew full well that car was coming, and he had George, I'm quite sure, wondering what in the world is happening and very upset because he'd been chewed out, but all the time, right that very minute there was a new car coming for him.

B: You're suggesting that this is a technique rather than any kind of involuntary mechanism?

H: I think there was both. I think that part of this was technique, I think part of it was unpredictable. I think he always recognized loyalty. He never forgot loyalty. He won't forget a staff that sticks with him. It does not mean that the staff one day may not be overworked, but I think all of them were very loyal people.

B: Did these swings get more frequent or more pronounced as the years wore on, particularly the White House years?

H: I couldn't say that they did, I really couldn't say that they did. I think he had all emotions available to him and displayed them periodically. And I for one would like to be on record as saying that if one has to choose between what we call a flat affect, that is an individual--I'm speaking personally now--but an individual who is the same all the time and doesn't care enough about something to get mad about it and doesn't cry when the event calls for sadness, when he doesn't laugh good when the event calls for it, that I'm more concerned about this flat kind of reactivity than I am an individual that goes through the full swings. The latter is an interesting person; that also is the one who commonly has high intellect.

Hurst -- II -- 29

B: I'm out of my depth here, but isn't there a certain amount of emotional catharsis involved in just letting go when you want to?

H: Yes, I think that's exactly right. He could make people cry by telling a sad story. I've seen him in a foreign country bring the workers in the embassy together, see them all only once, and show such devotion to this country that he'd have them in constant tears. I've seen him take a congressman that had been against him and knowing that it's his birthday, recognize him as a good congressman doing a good job and have this man, who a minute before was a non-Johnson man, pull out a handkerchief and dry the tears away. I think I know him; he is a person of high intelligence, a profound judgment for the timing of events, a psychologist without knowing he's a psychologist, a winner in a face-to-face argument ninety-nine times in a hundred, a manipulator of another man's emotions. He is enormously skilled and persuasive. He is a legend right now.

B: Have you noticed any changes in him in the time now since he left the presidency?

H: I'd like to reflect on that, because I saw him a couple of months ago. I was in New Orleans at a heart meeting and I got a call about ten o'clock--my wife was with me--and [he] says, "How about coming down to the Ranch? I'm having a little trouble, I want to talk to you." So the next day at 5:00 a.m. we got up, took a plane at seven, got to the Ranch and spent Saturday and Sunday. We rode all over the Ranch, not once but two or three times. He loves every inch of that Ranch. All during those years, the Ranch was *the* place where he felt comfortable. This was his; he grew up there. He had a strong attachment to the soil in that area.

He was having some chest discomfort. I think a part of it was clearly angina pectoris, which is one of the complications of coronary atherosclerosis. Here I felt, in the beginning, that I had hoped we would not have to put him in the hospital, but as it evolved it was wiser to do so. And this settled down over a period of the next week. Then he's out now and back to almost full activity, only having occasional discomfort. I just can't express how well I think he's adapted to the new role. He is busy with his

Hurst -- II -- 30

television appearances, the [Walter] Cronkite shows. He's writing his book. He's involved with the Library. He's involved with developing the Lyndon Johnson [School of Public Affairs].

Tape 2 of 2

B: You were mentioning that--

H: He had adjusted--

B: Adjusted very well, active in all things. The last thing you mentioned was the College [School] of Public Affairs at the University of Texas.

H: He's still active in all these, including writing his book, and the television productions that he's engaged in, the Johnson Library, and the Lyndon Johnson School of Public Affairs. He's extremely interested in the latter. He also, we must remember, is a superb businessman, and he has many business interests, including working and actively looking after an enormous ranch. In fact, he has two ranches. But they are enormous and there's much to be done and he is involved in it daily. He knows all the cows that are there and all of them that are sick and all of them that need to be cared for and all of these things.

Well, I think two or three things came out during that visit that make me feel he had adjusted beautifully. We discussed in riding around the Ranch, nobody but the two of us, his reaction to some of the books that his own staff had written. I detected no real bitterness, though some are not complimentary. He recognizes that for them to sell something, they've got to say these things. He's not bitter, but he feels that some did not show the character that he had hoped they'd show. But not bitter. He would say Liz Carpenter's book is the most accurate at the moment, but he had a very humorous relationship with Liz. Liz would say many things about him. They loved each other very much, I think. The point he made there is, "Liz's book is the best, but you know, I don't really think she was running the country like she thought," something of that sort, you

Hurst -- II -- 31

see.

B: This is the kind of thing where we kind of have to ask you these questions for fear of condemning someone unjustly. How does he feel about George Reedy's book, which has been recently published?

H: It was just coming out. He had some galley on his desk when I was there with him last, and I would feel that he did not like it too much. But not bitter, not bitter. This is the point I want to make. Not bitter or vindictive in any way.

B: Eric Goldman's?

H: He never mentioned that.

B: He never mentioned it?

H: In his discussions of these books, I feel that he had his feelings tucked away. He said little about the authors. He was not bitter at all.

The two or three other things I think were very useful in assessing his current adjustment: I've forgotten how it came up, but he did not question that he would have been elected had he run against Nixon. There is no question in his mind, none. How much the margin would have been, I don't know. But he thinks he would have won. In other words, he doesn't feel that he ran from a situation where he couldn't be elected, and I believe he believes that. I think this offers moderate comfort to him, that he in all seriousness thinks that he would have won that election.

B: Is there any tinge of regret in that?

H: Not a bit, not one bit of regret.

Then, as you know, he is building, or has built, a kind of a pavilion near his home

Hurst -- II -- 32

that as I understand it is to house a few items that suggest the Old West, and a few of the personal items of his own. This is a sort of a little park area that they're developing. I believe it's across the river.

B: I think it is the Lyndon Johnson State Park.

H: All right, and he's developing this, which is not to be confused with his Birthplace, which is also being developed. But he goes up there frequently; we went twice I believe during that visit. He wears his dark glasses and he walks up there. There is always a crowd there, and they're from Minnesota, Wisconsin, you name it, they're from everywhere. When they recognize him, you really know that the average citizen in this country has enormous awe and respect for the presidency of this country. It's hard to separate that from a person. But make no mistake, when he walks up at this place, the faces of these people would be filled with admiration. And I think he gets a great deal of satisfaction out of this. He does not feel the American people, as a group, had the distaste for him that some of the newspapers would have people believe. He believed it was his day-to-day relationship at the handshaking level, that he would have won the election and that the people have high regard for him and the presidency. This is, I think, unshakable.

B: Have you heard him discuss his withdrawal, the reasons for it?

H: No, except that I feel that he meant just what he said, in essence that he thought a negotiated peace in Vietnam would come quicker with him not involved, that he had moved it up to a place and that maybe the next person would be able to move forward. I think in many respects it was an unselfish effort to end the war in Vietnam.

B: Can you make an estimate of Mrs. Johnson's contribution to his career? It's implicit in about everything you've said.

H: Well, I could speak for hours about Mrs. Johnson. First of all, the road to her poise and



Hurst -- II -- 33

stature and presence was not an easy one. As a matter of fact, it was on our African trip that she gave her first public speech after he had been in major office. In the early days, as I understand it from what has been told to me, she was very much in the background. But as years went by she learned more, and she became extremely knowledgeable and was always thinking of the best for the country, a patriotic person of high order, searching for the excellence for the country, beauty for the country, the greatest, most wholesome reactions that could be conceived of she wanted for the country. And she steadily improved herself and worked hard at it until, by the time he was vice president, she was emerging as an extremely powerful--though she did not seek power--a lady of enormous capacity and emotional maturity; she kept the even keel throughout his vigorous, active life. She related beautifully to her children, who adored her, and they all adored him. But in the setting of this enormous turmoil of public life, she was able to assist him in thousands of ways and I'm sure in her own way led him in many ways. I think that he respected her judgment enormously. The two girls, I would think--I knew them from the time Lynda was twelve, Luci was eight--were pretty solid girls in the midst of the turmoil.

B: Does Mr. Johnson have a real family feeling?

H: Oh, intense, I think. The girls and Mrs. Johnson and the President have a family unit that is extremely strong. And to do that within the midst of the hectic life that he lived I think shows the strength of each member of the family, and particularly of Mrs. Johnson, for bringing really solid unity to the family.

B: We were talking earlier about the emotional swings. Is Mrs. Johnson something of a balance wheel?

H: Oh, no question about that, an absolutely stable person that knew him so well that she could shift his emotions without anyone perceiving it. I think he would be the first to tell you that she has had a profound influence. I think she's one of those unusual women that

Hurst -- II -- 34

improved in maturity, emotional stability, knowledge and even beauty as the years went by.

B: How is she now after the presidential years?

H: She's fine. She's just fine.

B: Is she happy to be away from all that?

H: She's just as happy as she can be, just as happy as she can be.

But I think John Gardner, who was secretary of HEW, who is somewhat of a hero of mine, summed it up. One of the last events--in fact, the last public speech he ever gave as secretary of HEW was at the dedication of the Children's Hospital in Washington, where Mrs. Johnson was to be the speaker and he was to introduce her. It's his last speech. It's a short little speech. But there's one sentence in it that I think deserves some attention. He simply said that we are lucky to have Mrs. Johnson among us because she makes us better people.

B: That sounds like a fitting place to come to an end.

End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview II

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON LIBRARY

Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interviews of

J. WILLIS HURST

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, J. Willis Hurst of Atlanta, Georgia, do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title, and interest in the tape recordings and transcripts of the personal interviews conducted on May 16, 1969; June 16, 1970; November 8, 1982; February 27, 1984 in Atlanta, Georgia; and on October 30 and October 31, in the LBJ Library in Austin, Texas; and prepared for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

- (1) The transcripts shall be available for use by researchers as soon as they have been deposited in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.
- (2) The tape recordings shall not be available to researchers.
- (3) I hereby assign to the United States Government all copyright I may have in the interview transcripts and tapes.
- (4) Copies of the transcripts but not the tape recordings may be provided by the Library to researchers upon request.
- (5) Copies of the transcripts but not the tape recordings may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

Donor

*J. Willis Hurst*

*Oct 22 1996*

Date

*John W. Carl*  
Archivist of the United States

Date

*11-8-96*