INTERVIEWEE: JAKE JACOBSEN (Tape #1)

INTERVIEWER: DOROTHY PIERCE MC SWEENY

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S: This interview is with Mr. Jake Jacobsen, former Special Counsel to President Johnson during the years 1965-1967. Today is Tuesday, May 27, 1969, and it's approximately nine in the morning. We're in Mr. Jacobsen's offices in the Westgate Building in Austin, Texas, and this is Dorothy Pierce McSweeny.

Mr. Jacobsen, you are presently an attorney in Austin, Texas, and you have long been involved in state and national politics through your associations with Governor Price Daniel and with President Johnson. In the spring of 1965 you joined the White House staff as Special Counsel to the President and served in that position until the spring of 1967. Could we begin by your telling me a little bit about your background and how you became involved in Texas politics and the beginning of your association with Governor Daniel?

J: My title at the White House was Legislative Counsel to the President and not the Special Counsel. As to my background and how I got started in Texas politics, I was born in Atlantic City, New Jersey, and came to Texas during World War II. As a relatively young man and with very little interest in politics, I met my wife in Austin, Texas and went to law school at the University of Texas after the war. After I graduated from law school, I had to find a job. Fortunately, I became a briefing clerk at the Texas Supreme Court, a job which is not political at all. It's

purely a legal job, but obviously the judges are elected and therefore there are some political implications involved--whether you're a part of them or not. I was not a part of them. I was strictly a lawyer and a briefing clerk as the name implied.

I had become befriended very closely by the Chief Justice who then was Judge Hickman, one of the greatest, most able men I have ever known. After I'd been with the Court for a year, the judge decided the place I ought to go next was to the Attorney General's office and work for Price Daniel who was the Attorney General. Judge Hickman thought very highly of then-Attorney General Daniel and seemed to think highly of me and thought the two of us should be together. He therefore arranged for me to talk with General Daniel, which I did, and General Daniel hired me after I was with the Court for approximately a year--which, by the way, is the length of time people ordinarily stay with the Supreme Court as youngsters because it's a very low-paying job. It's more for the training and the honor than it is for the pay.

Governor Daniel hired me as an attorney. I know nothing about Texas politics at the time. I was a complete novice and really didn't care. I was a lawyer first and thought that my future lay in the field of pure law--the briefing, arguing, trying, type of law practice. He hired me as an assistant to handle appellate work in the appellate courts of Texas. I was assigned to the Trial and Appellate Division of the Attorney General's office. While I was in the Attorney General's office, I was promoted at different times and ended up at the end of Daniel's term as executive assistant to the Attorney General, still primarily engaged in the work of a lawyer. I did many, many things related to the law that

a person does in the Attorney General's office and tried many, many cases and wrote many briefs.

But slowly I became more and more interested in politics. Daniel was obviously in politics and he ran for reelection as Attorney General. I helped a little bit in the campaigns. Then he ran for the United States Senate. Actually while he was running for the United States Senate, we did little in the campaign because we were supposed to run the Attorney General's office while he was running for the United States Senate. However, we all did our share and tacked up posters and things like that.

M: What year was this?

J: This was in 1952, I think. Yes, this would be an election year, wouldn't it? Yes.

M: Yes. When did you first start with Governor Daniel?

J: In 1949. Well, we helped a little bit in the campaign but primarily we were running the Attorney General's office, running the law part of the office. After he was elected, he started putting together a staff and I really didn't have any place to go. I had some offers, but they weren't anything that I really wanted to do.

(interruption)

Daniel offered me a place on his staff, and although I did have some offers, I really didn't have any good ones, so I decided I'd take a stab at going to Washington and see what I could do. So he appointed me to his staff as Legislative Assistant and with Horace Busby--Horace Busby was the Administrative Assistant and I was the Legislative Assistant--and we went to Washington. That's when I really got into politics more so than I'd ever been in my lifetime before then.

I must say that while I was in the Attorney General's office--for example, we had political cases that came up. I remember two in particular. One was the lawsuits involving President Johnson's Senatorial election.

M: In '48?

J: Yes. The lawsuits must have gone over in '49--must have, because I was in the office at the time. Then we had the time that the Texas Democrats wouldn't put Adlai Stevenson and Senator Sparkman--or didn't want to put them on the ballot as Democrats. The Texas party wanted to put them on as something else and they went to court over that. We were involved in that case. Being ina political office, those things came up and I participated in them, but primarily as a lawyer, not as a politician. Although I had my own personal feelings about Senator Johnson, for example, and also about Stevenson and Sparkman, but that wasn't important. How I personally felt about it wasn't important at all. The important thing was to uphold the laws in the State of Texas.

M: Mr. Jacobsen, would you define for me your own political philosophy?

J: Yes. I would classify myself as--and terms, of course, have to be defined--but I would classify myself as a little left of the middle. I think that my background is such that I would lean toward the more liberal philosophy of government. I was very poor when I was a boy and made my way and worked my way through school and made my living most of the time. My sympathies would lie with the people who have to do the same thing I did. Therefore my leanings would be toward a more liberal philosophy of government--liberal in the sense that the government ought to do more for minority groups and for poor people and sick people and for the things and groups to which I think the government could be helpful. I'd say my political

philosophy would be a little left of center--except in matters of finance.

Now, in the financial area I would say my political philosophy would be more to the right of center in that I don't think--this is an extreme example--I think government should not interfere too much in business. I think business ought to have a freer hand than some people would think they ought to have. I would say, I'm primarily a pragmatist that--what is that word, empiricist--empirical philosophy in that you look at a problem and if it happens to fit in the area that I'm more liberal in, I'm more liberal on it. If it happens to fit in the area that my basic philosophy is more conservative, I'd be more conservative on it. I've covered all shades of that question.

M: Mr. Jacobsen, while you were in the Attorney General's office, how would you describe the political climate in the State of Texas at that point?

J: The political climate in the State of Texas then, as it was for many years after that, and still is to a great degree, was extremely conservative. We were a conservative state. Our politics was dominated by big business and by conservative thinking politicians. Price Daniel, for example, was about as conservative a man as I've ever met during that period. I would say our politics was dominantly conservative, ultra-conservative--anti-civil rights, anti-everything that might be considered a liberal issue.

M: When did you first meet Mr. Johnson?

J: I met him on several occasions when I was in the Attorney General's office, but those were occasions where many people met him and I don't think he knew me. I think he knew about me some when I got into the political-legal area but we didn't really know each other. I thought he was a fine man and a good Senator. I didn't agree with what I consider a large amount of opinion that thought he was an ultra-liberal and therefore there was

something wrong with him. I agreed with most of the things he did. I don't remember anything I disagreed with him on. But I really met him to where we knew each other when I went to Washington in 1952 or '53.

M: How would you characterize Mr. Johnson when you first met him, and his political thinking?

J: I would characterize him based more on hearsay than on anything else because I really didn't know enough myself to have formed opinions based on my independent thinking and judgement as I can today. Back then, well, all I heard about him was "He's a big liberal." He was for every liberal program and so many of my friends and colleagues were opposed to him. I must say when I first met him, I was pleasantly surprised because I'd heard so many bad things about him and I couldn't see that there was anything wrong with him. His political philosophy wasn't too bad and he was a fine man, a nice man, very outgoing and personable man. When I first met him, I'd characterize him as a very, very pleasant surprise to me. I guess that answers the question.

M: Did he have much of a state-wide reputation at that point?

J: Oh, yes. He had a state-wide reputation and it was good. Compared with most people who are running for state-wide office, he had a relatively good, relatively large state-wide reputation. He didn't have the same state-wide reputation as, say, Governor Jester, who was governor at the time, as I recall, or as Governor Shivers, who was in office then--but that's in the nature of things because they were a state officials whereas he was a United States official. Usually Congressmen and Senators are never as well known or generally aren't as well known as state officers who run state-wide.

M: Did he have much of a political organization?

J: My answer to that would be that I thought he did. I thought he did. I didn't know really but I've learned since then he had a good organization. But at the time I didn't know. Seemingly he had a good organization at the time.

M: Did he appear to be moving politically to the right to offset this reputation as a New Deal liberal?

J: Oh, I guess so. I would say I guess so mainly based again on hearsay and some little thinking of my own. We have to remember that a Senator is elected by the people in the state he represents and on issues that affected Texas; for example, where the favorable outcome to Texas was the more conservative side, I'd say he'd be for Texas because that's who elected him. On national issues, however, I didn't think he changed much. He still was for the what I would call New Deal type program which when it involved people, he would be for the people more than he would be for the big interests. But on the other hand, issues that involved Texas, such as depletion, for example, he would be for the position that the people of Texas would be for and that would be for the continuation of the depletion allowance and the growth and betterment of the oil industry which was one of the cornerstones of our economy down here.

M: Do you recall who some of his early associates and advisers were during this period?

J: Yes. I recall some. I can't tell you how much of this is hearsay or how much this comes from later knowledge, but he had Ed Clark here who has been an associate of his for many, many years. Everett Looney in that same law firm, and he had a fellow named Mack DeGeurin who had worked for Johnson at one time. And he had Will Deason and John Connally and Warren

Woodward, I guess was in the crowd then, and Walter Jenkins. I remember over in Giddings he had a man named John Simang who was always his leader over there who just died the other day, by the way. That's about all I know.

M: The big money in Texas was really behind the growing oil industry as you mentioned. Did Mr. Johnson have many supporters in this group?

J: He had a few. He had a few. Not very many, I'd say. On balance, I'd say most of those people would have gone for any opponent he had because they thought he was too liberal. Even though he was for the depletion and the big issues they were for, he still was too liberal on spending and everything else for them. And I'd say he had relatively few. I'd say people like J. R. Parten, who was in the oil industry at the time, and Wesley West. None of the major companies, I would think, would have been for him.

M: Mr. Jacobsen, you've mentioned some lawsuits that came up referring to to the '48 election; I wonder if you'd tell me a little about what they were about and what the outcome was and your assessment of that election. It's, of course, quite controversial.

J: Yes. It was controversial. As I recall, and this is hard for me to recall because it has been a long time ago. The Attorney General was involved in the litigation in the federal courts only from the standpoint of representing the State of Texas and to upholding the election laws of the State of Texas insofar as they were applicable to that lawsuit. The big issue, I guess, was the counting of the votes in some South Texas box, but we weren't really in that--only insofar as it involved the election laws of the state. So therefore, we weren't deeply involved. Our participation was only to the extent of having the State of Texas there and presenting a position with respect to the validity and the constitutionality of Texas

election laws and then only insofar as that came up in the proceeding. The outcome, as I recall, was to uphold the Texas law and to uphold the count and to ratify the election of President Johnson. That's my recollection. I may be wrong about that. Perhaps I shouldn't even try to answer it because I remember so little about it. The man who would remember most about it from the Attorney General's standpoint would either be Daniel or Joe Greenhill, who is now a member of the Supreme Court--who was my boss at the time, by the way.

M: How were the Texas election laws brought into this?

J: I don't remember.

M: Could you say in knowing the Texas administration at that point if they were leaning--and I don't mean that this biased them--but were they leaning politically to one candidate or the other?

J: I think we tried not to lean because our function would have been derogated if we had come in as a political participant rather than as the attorney for the State of Texas. We tried not to lean one way or the other.

M: I was thinking more of the Governor's office.

J: Oh. I don't really know. Let's see. Let me think a minute. No, I don't know. You see, I was such a novice in politics I really didn't know who was for whom. So I just had no idea what the politics were.

Governor Daniel was--this is an aside and explains the reason why I wouldn't know very much in that area--Governor Daniel was a lawyer's lawyer, and a lawyer's Attorney General. He always told us that we had nothing to do with politics; that we were hired as lawyers and our function was to work from the law and perform as a lawyer would, impartially and as impartially as we could and that he would take care of the politics. So I really didn't have any knowledge of what the political leanings were.

I didn't much care.

M: Before we get off the subject, there was some talk of the fact that certainly Mr. Johnson would have been more preferable to the Truman Administration than Coke Stevenson would have been. And, of course, the case did go to the Supreme Court.

J: Yes.

M: Did you see any effect of the interest of the national Administration--

J: I didn't. There probably was. But I didn't see it. I wouldn't have had occasion to see that at all.

M: Can you think of anything that would indicate what had the greatest effect on that election outcome?

J: As I recall the thing that had the greatest effect, the greatest mistake that Coke Stevenson made was a trip he made to Washington on some kind of issue. He went up to talk to the NLRB or some silly thing like that and acted like he was already elected before the election was over. As I recall, this was probably the turning point. He was running ahead at that point. He made this trip to Washington, as I remember, and the newspapers made it a big issue that he was up there to start doing something and work out different problems involving Texas and he hadn't been elected yet. As I recall it was a terrible blunder and when he came back from that the tide started turning. Of course, I'd say primarily, as in any campaign, it's the hard work that had been going on all the time that really turned the tide, although this was a good issue to get hold of. Here was a man who wasn't elected already going to Washington to solve problems and do the things he might have done had he been elected.

M: As a Senator during this point, did you have occasion to work with him or deal through his office or through the office of the Texas Attorney General?

J: Very little. We had some communication with his office. We had litigation going on in Washington at the time. For example, we had the tidelands that was a big issue and was one of the principal issues in our administration. Although I didn't work full-time on that, like many of the other men in the Attorney General's office did, I did some work in it. We did have communications with Washington many, many times in connection with the tidelands issue both with Senator Johnson and Speaker Rayburn.

Then we had litigation involving the attendance at the various state schools by Negroes and this was all happening in Washington at the same time. We had communications as a result of the business of the Attorney General's office that had some Washington connection. I think the relationship between Daniel and Johnson at that time, as has been true ever since, was good. They were helpful to us and the work we had to do down here in getting us information and making appointments and doing the things you do through a Senator's office.

M: On these two issues, both the Texas tidelands and integration in public schools--the beginning of civil rights--where would you say that Mr. Johnson privately stood on these issues?

J: Of course on integration we never asked him to express himself on that, and I would assume that he would have been opposed to the position of the State of Texas which was to uphold the law, to prohibit the attendance at certain schools of certain minority groups. On the tidelands, I don't know exactly what he thought. I think he was not completely in accord with the position that Daniel took, that was such an uncompromising position that we had the ownership of the lands out nine miles in the Gulf. I think Johnson's position was more like Mr. Rayburn's position, that there was an

area for compromise, which Daniel would never accept. Although I must say to go a step further with respect to tidelands, when Daniel got to Washington, his big issue had been tidelands and Johnson was completely responsible for him being made a member of the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee which was the committee that was going to handle the bill. Although he may have personally differed to some degree on the philosophy of the solution to this problem, he never let that interfere with his being helpful to the person in Texas who was primarily responsible for the outcome of that particular issue.

M: With whom did you deal in working with his office?

J: I would say I dealt almost exlusively with Walter Jenkins.

M: I'm leading up to the '52 election but before we get there, are there any other issues or events that you recall now that stand out in your mind during this period when you were in the Attorney General's office and Mr. Johnson was the new Senator?

J: Not really. I think the only other thing that I mentioned briefly was this litigation involving the place on the ticket of Stevenson and Sparkman. I don't remember really what connection we had with Johnson on that although I do know he was very favorable, as were we, that they were the Democratic nominees who should have gone on the ticket as the Democratic nominees. There shouldn't be any hocus pocus about putting Eisenhower on there as the Democratic nominee and putting them on as some kind of independents or something.

M: Did Mr. Johnson's activity in the Leland Olds case as he was reappointed as chairman of the FPC project reflect back on Texas politics?

J: I know it did. And I can't recall the specifics. Surely, Johnson's position in that reappointment or the appointment of Leland Olds was

favorable to the Texas oil industry's position in that matter. As I recall, the real knowledgeable oil people always had a warm feeling with respect to Johnson's position on oil issues. Now, the run-of-the-mill oil person, as I indicated before, would have thought he was too liberal on most other issues and therefore really it didn't make any difference. I would guess that the Leland Olds issue, which I had completely forgotten, would have had a soothing effect insofar as the oil industry in Texas was concerned. As I recall, they were very strenuously opposed to this man and Johnson took a large part in seeing that he was not confirmed. My guess is that this had good part in what developed to be a real good relationship between Johnson and the oil industry. It developed into an excellent relationship and I would guess that had a large part in it. I would say that there are people who would know much more about this than I would--much more because they were there and they saw more of it.

M: They also state the case as sometimes being the beginning of a disaffection from the liberal side with Mr. Johnson.

J: Oh, that could be. The trouble with statements like that is that they are too dogmatic. The statement I'm about to make is too broad. But the liberals generally like to get some symbolic issue. This was a good one. It was one where it was the oil people against the people. Olds was a "people's" man and the oil people were against Olds. And I would say that perhaps the ADA-type liberal would have thought this was the beginning of a great disaffection. However, I must say this, for what it's worth and it's worth just what the background would indicate it's worth, that the liberals had to fall out with Johnson. There wasn't any way for them to stay with him. He represented Texas. Those two things just don't go together. You couldn't in those days. Now

you might be able to do it today. You've got Bob Eckhardt and Henry Gonzalez, who by the way, is also about to fall out with the liberals too, who can pretty well represent a state like Texas and be friendly with the liberals. Now, to get back to your question. Yes, I would say probably the Olds thing was the thing that happened at the time for them to grab. But if it hadn't been that it would have been something else. There was no way to be elected in Texas and to be reelected and to be friendly with extreme or the ADA or the real liberal.

M: Mr. Jacobsen, in 1952 Shivers became governor of Texas and Eisenhower and Stevenson the candidates for President. Was there any suggestion in the State Democratic party to have Mr. Johnson as a Vice Presidential candidate with Mr. Stevenson to represent the South?

J: Yes, I recall there was, but I was not a participant in any of the convention procedures at that time. Yes, I did hear and read that this might have been a feeling of those people in the Texas Democratic party who really cared anything about Stevenson. Now, there weren't too many of those as you'll recall. The great bulk of the delegates, who were really the people who take more interest in politics, were for Eisenhower. They really didn't care anything about Stevenson so they didn't really care who was his Vice Presidential nominee. They weren't for him anyway.

M: Do you attribute this to be the reason that it didn't go much further than that?

J: I would guess so.

Bear in mind that before 1952 and '53 I really didn't know anything about politics at all and what little I was learning at that time I was just a very, very beginner. I really got to learn a little about politics--if I know anything at all about it--after I got to Washington. I remember Governor Daniel said to me one time--we were discussing some political issue and he asked me my opinion and I gave it and he said, "Jake, I believe you're the worst politician I know." So that aside would show you that I knew very little about what was happening at the time.

M: I do have a notation of the fact that Speaker Rayburn did aid in getting the Shivers delegation seated over a rival challenging delegation and, of course, they did bolt the convention. Did this cause much friction in the state politics or what do you recall?

J: Well, yes, it did. Everything got confused as you undoubtedly know from your other interviews. Mr. Rayburn was helpful to the delegation, which was the duly constituted delegation. I would say that the reason Mr. Rayburn would have been helpful was that he was a great legalist and he would not be in favor of a rump delegation that had no real standing. Even though politically that might have been the most expedient thing. He would have been for the duly constituted delegation, which was the Shivers delegation. And, of course, they walked out and that pretty well set the tone for the politics of Texas where the bulk of the people were conservative and fought like Shivers did and that pretty well killed Stevenson here. I'd say that. Although he was pretty dead to begin with in Texas.

M: You mentioned the lawsuits regarding this election and the placing of the Stevenson-Sparkman names on the Democratic ticket here. Could you tell me

a little more about it?

J: Yes. I represented the State in that proceeding over in the district court in Austin. My function, again, was to uphold the Texas statutes insofar as they came into question during the course of the litigation. There was a lawyer for the Democratic party there and then there was Judge Cofer as I recall, Fagan Dickson, and some others representing the Stevenson-Sparkman people. I was kind of an in-between fellow who was there just to uphold the Texas law. I do remember that my personal feelings at the time was that these two gentlemen ought to get on the ticket as the Democratic nominees because they were the Democratic nominees. And my participation--as I recall, there were several questions that came up where I was asked to discuss a particular law and I did. But I didn't express my views in the courtroom as to how I felt about the ultimate outcome of the litigation because I didn't think it was proper for me to do so as an Assistant Attorney General.

I do remember that this was the first trial I ever went to that was covered by a Life photographer and that fellow was running around in court taking everybody's pictures and people would forget what they were going to say and get to posing and it was a big mess. But as I recall, the outcome was satisfactory to the Stevenson-Sparkman candidacy and they did go on the ticket as the Democratic nominees. It never went any further than that, as I recall. The district court decided it and there were no appeal. They had to hold up the printing of the ballots until the litigation was decided and then after it was decided, we printed the ballots and what have you. In a lititgation of that type you always have the Secretary of State involved because he's in charge of the election procedures in a

general election. Therefore, somebody had to represent him and I was doing that and somebody has to represent the State whenever state statutes are called into question and I was doing that. But as soon as the case was over and the judge ruled in favor of placing Stevenson and Sparkman on the ballot as the Democratic nominees, we went ahead and printed the ballots and went ahead with the election. That's my recollection.

M: What were they contesting?

J: Well, as I recall, the state Democratic convention went on record as favoring Eisenhower. Therefore, the position of the persons in charge of the Texas Democratic party was that therefore Eisenhower and Nixon ought to go on the ballot as the Democratic nominees in Texas because our Democratic state convention went on record as favorable toward them and that Stevenson and Sparkman ought to go on the ballot in some other column. Then Eisenhower and Nixon should have been the Democratic nominees and the Republican nominees and then there should be Stevenson and Sparkman--which is pretty absurd on the face of it. But the times were such that that wasn't too absurd to a lot of people back then and it led to litigation as a matter of fact. It came out good and right prevailed and the Democrats went on as Democrats and Eisenhower and Nixon went on as the Republican nominees.

M: Do you recall any role or activity Mr. Johnson or Mr. Rayburn had in this issue?

J: Yes, I recall that either they or their officers were vitally involved in trying to uphold the right of a Democrat to run as a Democrat in Texas because that would have looked awfully bad in Washington. It wouldn't have looked too bad in Texas, I must say, at the time.

There would have been a lot of people who would have cheered loud and long about that. But, yes, Mr. Rayburn anad Mr. Johnson were both vitally interested in seeing that--irrespective to the outcome of the election that at least Stevenson and Sparkman should have a fair run at it as the Democratic nominees.

M: In 1953 Mr. Johnson was elected the Minority Leader and Seantor Daniel had then been in Washington, and I assume you too. Could you tell me what you recall about his running for and getting the Minority Leadership of the Senate?

J: I was then a part of the second echelon people around the Senate and heard a lot of gossip and talked a lot about the matters such as that. I remember hearing that here was a young man who was pushing his way up and he would have a hard time getting elected. Most of us around the Senate felt that Johnson had worked hard and talked to everybody who needed to be talked to and done everything he needed to do and done his homework properly and had the votes to be elected and wouldn't have too big a problem. There was also soem talk that this was a young man and a Southerner and that was a big problem.

But I do recall this, that he was elected. There was a great question about whether Daniel would be seated in the Democratic caucus in the Senate. Daniel had come out publicly for Eisenhower and supported him, based on Stevenson's position on the tidelands. He engaged in direct correspondence with Stevenson on whether or not he was for Texas' position and Stevenson said no. There was a great question about whether or not Daniel would be seated in the caucus. I do recall very well that

Senator Johnson really took that problem on and was, in a large measure, responsible for Daniel's being, number one, accepted in the Democratic caucus, and number two, being accepted nicely. Johnson laid enough groundwork to where those who had some question about whether or not a man who would support the Republican nominee for President ought to be seated in the Democratic caucus were in the great minority and it really never came up. Daniel walked in and was seated, and I attribute that in large measure to the good work that Johnson had done to help Daniel and to help Texas get Daniel seated in the caucus. I would say that Daniel has been grateful for that ever since and I have been too. It was a very nice thing to do and typical of what Johnson would do. He's just a nice man. He would help a man who found himself in an awkward position. He'd just take over and hug him into the fold and help him along, and he did a tremendous job.

I also remember that Walter [Jenkins] and the other members of the Johnson staff were very, very helpful to us in getting moved to Washington, helping us get office space and letting us operate out of their office until we got our own business started and helping us set up the office. The Johnson team, or the Johnson staff, and Johnson himself were very, very helpful to us the whole period after we were elected to the Senate and before we got to Washington and after we first got there. They were very, very helpful and our relationship was always good. Johnson was primarily responsible for that becausehe certainly set the tone for what his staff was going to do.

M: In 1954 Mr. Johnson stood for reelection in Texas and, of course, he had come out for Stevenson and supported the Democratic ticket and Eisenhower was very popular in the State. Was Governor Daniel in any way helpful in

this election?

J: I think he tried to do all he could to help Johnson. I don't think that Johnson wanted him to do anything publicly. I think either Johnson asked or Daniel volunteered, I'm not sure which, to talk to some of the people who were big Daniel supporters and would have, all things being equal, been anti-Johnson. Daniel did help on many occasions talking to people, talking to those who controlled some votes or had some strength in getting them to be for Johnson.

M: Was there much question in anybody's mind that Mr. Johnson might not win the election?

J: No, not much. That was the time Dudley Dougherty ran, and there wasn't much question. There wasn't much question in my mind or in the minds of any of my people. As is typical of Johnson and with any good politician, they don't ever take their opponents lightly. He was always worried that none of his friends would do anything because they didn't think he had a chance of losing. But there really wasn't any question in my mind. There wasn't much question in most people's minds that knew anything about it that this fellow Dougherty could ever beat Johnson.

M: Did Mr. Johnson discuss or members of his staff talk very much about his political base and broadening his political base at home? He had, of course, originally come in with a very slim margin.

J: No, they didn't talk about it much at all. We didn't discuss that at any great length. I don't recall how this came about or whether it was just the atmosphere or what, but I know that, as an assistant to Daniel, whenever anybody would say anything derogatory about Johnson, I would always try to picture him as a man they really ought to be for and not against. I don't

know how that came about. Nobody came up to me and said, "You do this." But I think because of the good relationship between our offices with the senior Senator and junior Senator, it just followed as a natural thing that we would try to convert our people into being more pro-Johnson than they were anti-Johnson. I guess you could call that expanding his political base some because just by the very nature of things most of the conservatives were for Daniel. Most of the anti-Johnson people were for Daniel and we would try to help Johnson with that crowd as much as we could.

M: In 1954 the McCarthyism issue began to develop and I was wondering if you recall very much about Mr. Johnson's activity in managing this and his involvement in this issue in the Senate.

J: I really don't recall. I recall that Daniel played a large part in the writing of the censure resolution and doing and getting the thing in the shape it finally got in to where they censured McCarthy. I would assume this, and really only assume it, because I have no independent recollection. I would assume that Daniel did talk to Johnson about it at each step of the way because they were friendly and did get along, but I don't have any independent recollection of the part Johnson played in that.

M: Two things occurred almost simultaneously in 1955. As a result of the '54 elections, Mr. Johnson became Majority Leader and also in that year he had his heart attack. I'm wondering if you recall much about the outcome of both of these two.

J: Of course the outcome of the first thing, the fact that he became Majority Leader as opposed to being Minority Leader, gave him a tremendous responsibility. I recall very well the grave responsibilities that this man had with respect to the coordination between the Senate--or the Legislative part of the government--and the Executive or the White House. He carried

the ball for the more sensible approach of supporting Eisenhower's programs and when we thought they were good. We only had one President and that happened to be Eisenhower. There wasn't another President for us to support and that only under those circumstances where the issue was such that the Democrats just couldn't go along did we ever oppose Eisenhower. We were primarily for the Administration's programs if they were in keeping with our thinking more or less. Also, he was great for correcting those programs to comply more with the majority opinion in the Senate--but not to just be opposing for opposition's sake. The change from Minority to Majority Leader greatly increased the burdens of the position of Leader of the Democrats in the Senate.

The heart attack was terrible shock and it happened that Johnson was out and at the same time, as I recall, Daniel was running for governor--during the recovery period. Daniel was always in Texas and Johnson was in the hospital or at home recovering. And Jenkins and I were kind of running the two offices. We'd meet and we'd try to get our bosses recorded on different votes and we were just kind of running the show, so to speak, because Busby had left by then, as I recall, and I was administrative assistant and running Daniel's office.

M: Did Mr. Johnson's relationship with Eisenhower as Majority Leader alienate members of the Democratic party?

J: It may have a few but not very many, because he just could sell the position that to be a responsible member of the majority, that you had to be reasonable with respect to your support or nonsupport for the President's positions. It may have alienated a few but I don't think it alienated too many, at least not in my view. Now, it may have alienated a good many people outside the senate circles but I didn't see much. I

think everybody was pretty proud to be able to say that we're not opposing for opposition's sake, that we're for what we think ought to be done, and we've only got one President and we're going to support him. I think that was generally the feeling among the senate Democrats.

M: During this period the issues on civil rights were really rapidly coming to a head and, of course, you had your 1954 Supreme Court ruling. How would you assess this impact on Mr. Johnson? What were your activities?

J: The Daniel position was completely opposite from the Johnson position on civil rights. Johnson was in favor of the passage of civil rights legislation and was always stronger in the area than Daniel was. Daniel was pretty strong in the opposite direction trying to uphold the law to permit segregation and permit equal but separate schools. Our positions differed completely. Daniel signed the Southern Manifesto and Johnson was opposed to it. We were just differed competely on that issue.

M: Did this cause much friction between the two offices?

J: Oh, no. Not at all. Everybody just understood the Daniel position was always goimg to be different from Johnson's in this area. There was no friction at all, really, but it's always a problem when you have two senators voting on opposite sides of the question. That pretty well separates them insofar as that issue is concerned in the eyes of the people at home. But there was never any doubt about Daniel's position nor was there any doubt about Johnson's position. It never created any problems there.

M: Well, back home this must have been a rather courageous step for Mr. Johnson to take.

J: No question at all about it, and I felt so at the time. Again, I must say my personal position may have differed from Daniel's on this, but that didn't make any difference to me. I was working for Daniel; I wasn't

working for myself. But I thought at the time that this was a very, very courageous position that Johnson took and that he obviously felt very strongly about it from a moral standpoint and not strictly from a political standpoint. When he could stand up and support a civil rights issue in the United States Senate when we felt the majority of people in Texas since they had elected Daniel and they knew his position had a contrary position, I thought it was very politically courageous.

M: Did it cause him much of a problem at home?

J: I don't really know. It didn't seem to. I guess he got lots of letters. I would think that he got lots of mean letters and that it made him pretty controversial at home. But obviously he didn't have any problem about getting reelected so it must have either blown over or it wasn't as much of an issue as I thought it was.

M: Mr. Jacobsen, there are a lot of things written about the fact that Mr. Johnson did have a conservative base in his home state, and was also attempting to become a more national Democrat as majority leader. Was this really causing much of a problem for him and his staff to disassociate themselves from the Southern--

J: Yes, this was supposedly a problem at the time. A majority leader of the Senate, particularly when there is a President of the other party, has the difficulty of being elected to represent a state but at the same time being responsible for the national image of his party. Senator McFarland from Arizona who was majority leader just before Johnson and got defeated for re-election. Any man who was in the majority leader's position was always compared with McFarland whom they say was defeated because of the national positions he was forced to take whereas he was still popular back home. So Johnson assumed a

position that everybody at that time thought was a two-pronged thing, in that first he always had to express himself on national issues on a side that was generally upopular with the people who supported him back home, particularly if he came from the Southwest or the South. His being majority leader I'm certain, among the less informed people, did create a problem in that they thought that he ought to always be on the side that Texas was on, irrespective of the fact that he did occupy some national position.

However, among the informed people, this was not really a major problem. They understood that he had a dual function and they understood that he had to take positions as majority leader that were not exactly in keeping with the thinking of the Texas people. The point is that the informed people of Texas were proud of the fact that they had a man as majority leader which gave us a position of national prominence and gave us a real strong voice. Johnson was a man of great strength in Washington and as a consequence, if he had to take some positions as majority leader that some Texans might not have thought were the kinds of positions that he ought to take as the representative of Texas, this didn't bother them a lot. And I think that although it might have hurt him from a general standpoint with respect to support and with respect to his conservative base, which is how you started this question, it helped him. It helped him and it helped us. I'm saying "us" as a part of this base that he had down here. I always consider myself part of it. I don't think in

the long run it hurt him, although it may have had some short-term effects on issues and it might have created some letters to be written to the Dallas News, which is the example of what I would think would happen.

M: Mr. Jacobsen, one of the reasons for asking this is that there is a lot of material written about the fact that this is somehow indicative of Mr. Johnson's early aspirations for a national office, and that he had to disassociate himself from southern identification.

J: My answer to that would be that this is a man who really never sat down and said, "I must disassociate myself from Texas, or from the South, or from any other place, if I'm ever going to be something big." I don't think this is the type man we're talking about. I think this is the type man who saw an opportunity, or saw a challenge, and who accepted and who let the chips fall where they may. The end result might have been that somebody wrote a column saying he's disassociated himself from Texas and that may have just disassociated him right there, but I don't think it was pre-planned. It just happened--if it happened, that's how it happened.

M: Yes. There's a lot of talk about Mr. Johnson's ability in the Senate and what is called the Johnson system and the Johnson network; all these are various titles for the way he managed legislation. Can you tell me a little bit about it as you saw it?

J: I can say this. That I never have in my whole life, before or since, watched a man fill a job and perform a function as well. He knew what he had to do; he knew how to get it done, and he did it. He was an excellent majority leader. I've used this expression in the past, I don't know if it's a good one or bad one, but it's mine. It was a real masterpiece. It

was witnessing a real performance to watch him work the senate. I've compared it with a man playing an organ--a very expensive, very complicated organ. He would play that senate just like a great organist would play one of these tremendous organs. He had everything functioning. He had his people in the right places. He knew what was going on. He made it a point to know what was going on. He made it a point to know who he had to talk to before an issue came up so that they would either not be as strenuously opposed or might change their position. He made it a point to know what was going on at all times and really operated as a majority leader ought to operate and function. That was as great a thing as I've ever seen in my life.

M: Can you think of some occasions where this was exemplified?

J: Oh, gosh. I remember the day--the simile came to my mind about a man playing a pipe organ, and that was the day we had a great issue up. The senate was full. I can't remember what the issue was. But he, in advance, knew who was supposed to speak for and against and who was supposed to answer this question and who was supposed to answer that and built up the proper crescendo to the time of the vote. He just really ran that thing, not in the sense of pulling a string and telling a senator how he was supposed to vote, but in the sense of building it up to the proper pitch and getting the vote when it needed to be gotten. Then on the other hand on a day when local bills were up and he knew somebody had a bill--I don't know if they called it a local bill or uncontested bill, the consent calendar, that's what they called it--and he knew somebody had a bill and that one particular person would block the consideration of that bill. He'd sit around and watch and watch and that person would leave the floor and that bill would be the next one up and it'd be through before

that man could get back from the cloakroom. But he just knew everything about what had to go on in that senate, and he did what he had to do to make it function as a body ought to function and to give it the strength it needed because you've got so many individuals with so many individual thoughts that the thing could just kind of go asunder. But he always managed to pull it in and get it all wrapped up in a nice package and to make it an independent body--give it is proper strength. It was something the likes of which I've never seen before and it taught me more than anything, I guess, in my whole life had taught me.

M: Was there sort of a basic strategy or tactics that he used in running the senate?

J: I'm sure he did. He met with his people and his proper committees but the strategy depended on the situation--just like everything I think this man does. He doesn't walk in and draw a circle and say, "That's the way I'm going to operate, and now, I'll operate within that circle all the time." Well, a circle is a very nebulous thing. You do what you have to do under the circumstances in order to get accomplished what the Senate ought to do. I'd say he had a plan, certainly. He had his assistants who were very competent. He had Bobby Baker. He had Walter Jenkins. He had all the Reedy staff and the Democratic Policy Committee staff, and he had lots--Gerry Siegal. He had a lot of good people. Gosh, these were competent, excellent people and he has worked with them. They had their own strategy with respect to any particular issue. But then he did a tremendous amount of work with individual senators, talking and getting it all worked out. He had a wonderful operation.

M: He also gained the reputation during this period as a wheeler-dealer in getting the legislation through.

J: He may have. I would say if he were from New Hampshire they wouldn't have called him a wheeler-dealer. I think those terms--they're derogatory terms, and they come from the fact that Texans are wheeler-dealers and this is a big thing. And of course, he's a Texan, therefore he's a big wheeler-dealer. He properly did what was necessary to run the senate on a day-to-day basis to accomplish what the majority of the senators wanted to accomplish. As I say, if he'd been from somewhere besides Texas, they wouldn't have called him a wheeler-dealer. They'd have called him a great negotiator or something. They'd have had another term for it. But sure, he talked to a lot of senators. Sure, he discussed things with them and tried to persuade them. You use all the tools you have to try to get the job done. He did it well, and I think the term wheeler-dealer is--although it was meant to be derogatory--is complimentary in that it meant he got it done. He did the job of majority leader and did it well. And that involves a lot of talking, negotiating--the various things that I guess you visualize when you think of wheeler-dealer.

M: Well, I think also the implication is that you have to trade.

J: That has been a part of legislation, I suspect, since Julius Caesar or since a legislative body was first organized. Of course, there's trading that goes on. Of course, that's part of the function of a legislative body. But you don't trade things that you know are improper. All things being equal, yes, you might say, "Well, you've got so-and-so you want to get done, and we want to get this done, and we'll help you do that and you help us do this." But that's a kind of compromise, I call it, or negotiating that keeps a legislative body operating. And that way everybody's independent such as they are in any legislative body.

M: How would you describe Mr. Johnson's relations with the Republican leaders

of the Senate?

J: Excellent. They were excellent because they were all pros. He knew the job they had to do and they knew the job he had to do and they got along well. They may have disagreed but it was a friendly disagreement. It was a professional type disagreement and he and Senator Taft got along well. He and Senator Knowland got along very will. They had respect for him and he had respect for them.

M: Along this same line, how would you describe Mr. Johnson's relations with other members of the Texas delegation which would, of course, include Daniel and Mr. Rayburn, the Speaker?

J: Again, they just couldn't be better. He understood their problems and he understood that they might have to vote contrary to the way he would vote on some issues. But he was a pro and, in the best sense, he understood and he was willing to assist and willing to disagree friendly; in a friendly manner and was willing to help them get their things through the senate and the house members. Of course, he and Mr. Rayburn were just as close as they could be and worked together very closely. Mr. Rayburn's philosophy, I would say, was so much the same as Mr. Johnson's. Or it might be that Mr. Johnson got a lot of his philosophy from Mr. Rayburn in the first place. But they agreed on so many things and the relationships were excellent.

M: Who was most influential in the delegation?

J: I guess Mr. Rayburn and Mr. Johnson. I guess together they exercised more influence than anybody else. Mr. Patman was always pretty influential. That's pretty hard to answer. They're all independent people and they all went their own way. Mr. Rayburn was tremendously strong and Mr. Johnson was strong. I guess between them they were the strongest people in the

delegation.

M: Did the delegation meet together very often?

J: I think they had a luncheon once a month. That's my recollection, and still have it. They would meet at that luncheon. Sometimes it would be an executive luncheon and then they would talk about things just independently when they would meet.

M: Did Mr. Johnson, in his position of power, wish that the delegation would support him?

J: I can't answer that question. I just don't know. I imagine he did. If I've a guess, I'd guess he did. He never told me. I would guess that any man in that position would wish that he had support from his delegation all the time. But on the other hand, being a pro and being a man of great understanding, he pretty well could go down that list. If you're any kind of politician at all--politics are based on people. The best politicians know people, and if you've got to deal with a delegation as much as these people had to deal with each other, and if you have to work with the senate as much as he had to work with that relatively small group of people, you know every one of them as an individual. You know what their likes are; what their dislikes are; what their philosophy is; you know, what they think on a particular issue. And you can pretty well go down the list in advance and say, "Well, John Dowdy isn't ever going to vote for that. I'll never get his support on that." So you just forget him. Or, "So-and-so is going to go along with me." Of course, you wish you could get their support on every issue, but you know you can't and you know your people and therefore you capture votes accordingly.

M: Did the Texas delegation as a whole benefit from having Mr. Johnson?

J: No question about it. No question about it. I want to be realistic, and

I don't want to be a dreamer, and I don't want to be superlative; and I don't want to be an acolyte. But I would say that in my estimation, President Johnson was never better than he was an majority leader of the senate. He did everything I can think of right. He helped Texas; he helped the delegation; he helped the individual members of the delegation; he ran the senate well. The senate did more than they have probably ever done since or ever did before. Just everything you can say about it was well done.

M: Was there much competition between the senators' offices as far as--?

J: Yes. There is always competition between senators' offices.

M: Would you describe that?

J: That was a source of great humor and great challenge to me. The competition comes not on big things but on little things. Like announcements in Texas and who can say they got something done. The practice originated, I guess, well, I don't really know--I think with Roosevelt. But anyway, the departments used to make their announcements of Texas projects generally through the senators' offices and through the congressman whose district the project was in. It was always a great spirit of completition to see who could get the information first and get it in the Texas papers first and hopefully get to say, "Daniel announced so-and-so" before Johnson got it down here and the paper went to press. Well, this was more of an issue between the staffs than it was between the individuals, and I was operating my office with very little help. We hardly had anybody. I was the only man, I think. I might have had another one, a young man or two, but I was the only man assistant. And Johnson had a tremendous office. But I guess my advantage was that I got along with people real well, and I had certain people who called me first because I had arranged for them to

do it. I used to beat them,percentage-wise--it was probably a small percent, but even one percent is bad--but I used to beat them on these announcements pretty good. I heard later that Johnson would call his staff together and he'd say, "There sits that damned Jacobsen over there with nobody helping him, all by himself, beating us to every announcement that ever comes out. Every time you pick up the paper you see that Daniel announced something, and you guys are just sitting over here doing nothing while he's just working getting these announcements out."

This was really the competition involved, and that was a friendly type competition and the Johnson staff used to kid me a good bit about me causing them to catch hell and everything. But other than that--and that was friendly--our relationship was excellent. We shared announcements sometimes and when constituents would come up we'd see them together and work on their problem together.

M: Did Mr. Johnson advise Senator Daniel as far as how to work the senate--as far as when he wanted legislation?

J: Oh,yes.

M: Can you think of some examples of this?

J: Well, the tidelands is probably the biggest one. Johnson just helped Daniel every day on it--I think I've mentioned this. We went to Washington with one big issue and that was to pass a bill to relinquish the federal government's rights to our offshore lands. And the day we got there, or shortly after we got there, hearings were starting on this legislation. Daniel introduced the bill and we were brand new and had absolutely no knowledge of how you proceed on matters of this type, and here was a major piece of legislation that we were primarily responsible for. In addition to carrying on the hearings and getting the record full of information that

would back us up on our position, we also had the technical functions of how you proceed. What do you do next! We had to place great reliance on Johnson for many of the things other than the legal, technical parts of the legislation. We had to rely on him for many of the proeedural matters and get his help on getting other people to do things that we needed to be done. He was tremendously helpful. He was always available when we needed some help.

M: How often did you personally see Mr. Johnson during the senatorial year?

J: Almost every day. I would go over to the floor, and I would see him and say hello to him or see him in the hall. But we didn't have any conference or anything. We just said hello and every once in awhile we would talk.

M: How well did you get to know him during this period?

J: I felt very well. I had the feeling that he took a liking to me. I certainly liked him. I certainly got to admire and have great respect for him. I also had the feeling from what he said, from what I heard from other people, that he took a great deal of liking to me during this period and respected my ability to do the job that I had to do. I felt that I got to know him well during this period, and we had a relationship that would strengthen and we were good friends, I felt.

M: Do you recall some occasions of being with Mr. Johnson that come to your mind just now thinking back?

J: Oh, just one that I can think of. It was an election night down in Texas. We all got together in his majority leader's office over in the Capitol. I happened to be there and I was helping with mixing drinks and was working around. I felt like a part of the whole thing, people were talking to me and I would engage in conversations with him and Mr. Rayburn and Daniel. And everybody else was there--mostly Texans that night because we were

awaiting the outcome of some Texas election. I forget which one it was. I can't think of too many where, on a social basis, we were together. I'm not very socially active myself and therefore I don't accept very many invitations. There were times when we could have been together. They were not direct invitations from him, but there were occasions where I knew he was going to be there and I was invited. I just don't go to many parties. That's part of my nature so I can't recall any specific instances other than that.

M: Did you come to know Mrs. Johnson during this period?

J: Very little. I just really didn't know her very well at all.

M: Dir Mr. Johnson have many non-Texans on his staff and advising him?

J: I guess Bobby Baker and Jerry Segal were the two I remember most. There probably were others but I don't recall them.

M: What were Mr. Johnson's relations with the press like at this time?

J: I don't know. The answer is I don't know. I used to see him talking to the press before he would go in session every day. They'd come in and gather around his desk and talk to him. They seemed to be good. I wasn't as much aware of that problem then as I am now. That might be the answer to that.

M: I'm about ready to move on to the 1956 elections when Senator Daniel ran for the governorship of Texas. Perhaps before I leave it, if I just give you an open question and ask if there's anything specific that you recall about working in Washington in regard to Mr. Johnson during the senate years.

J: No, I don't think there's anything I haven't covered. The thing that stands out in my mind about it is the great admiration and respect I developed for this man. I think what I've said is just full of that and that's really what stands out in my mind about him during this period.

M: Mr. Jacobsen, in 1956, Texas politics really factionalized into three camps with Speaker Rayburn and Senator Johnson wanting to insure the Texas delegation would support the party candidate. They wanted also to take control of the state Democratic party away from Mr. Shivers who had bolted the party in '52. Price Daniel was running for governor against the liberal candidate Ralph Yarborough and they, of course, followed the state conventions in May in Dallas and the fall governors' convention in Fort Worth. I'm sure you were very actively involved in these and I wonder if I can just get you to recall these events.

J: As a practical matter and as a factual matter, since Daniel was a candidate for governor, and since we were in the Democratic primary, we didn't get very involved in that May convention. Well, we didn't think it was proper for a candidate to get into that. Of course, you lose more friends than you make in those things. In those conventions--those are terrible. So we really didn't have much partin the May proceeding where Johnson beat Shivers and took over the delegation, and almost lost the convention and all those things that happened. My information on that is second-hand. I was not present and we really didn't take much part in it. We were too busy running our own campaign and the result showed that we needed to be. We just barely did win! Actually all the time that the senate was in session in Washington, I had to be there because Daniel was home, and I was busy up there. I really didn't take much part in the activities until after the senate went out of session, then I came down and actively participated in Daniel's campaign against Yarborough for the governorship.

M: How did Governor Daniel feel about Mr. Johnson being the favorite son of the delegation?

J: You know, I don't really recall. I'm not sure. I don't know how he felt personally. He sure didn't express himself publicly. He stayed out of it,

in other words, which is a smart thing for a man to do, I guess, at a time like that--not to mix your own race with something else that's going on. So I don't know what his position was on that.

M: Did you think that Mr. Johnson was a serious candidate for perhaps the Vice Presidential spot with Stevenson?

J: I don't know what I really felt then. I guess I hoped he wasn't. I hoped he wouldn't get into that and get himself cut up in that useless campaign. Eisenhower was going to win anyway. I guess I hoped that. I don't know ehther I thought he was serious or not. Well, if I thought anything at all, I thought he wasn't but that was purely in my mind. He didn't talk to me about it.

M: Did you have any conversations up to this point with Mr. Johnson about perhaps future political offices that he might occupy?

J: No.

M: Any indication that--

J: No. We never talked about anything at all. What conversations I had with him, the subject of this just never came up. I wasn't that close to him. He wouldn't have talked to me about it anyway.

M: I think perhaps I better pass on to the fall governors' convention.

J: There's not much I can really say about this May thing. I followed it just like everybody else did. I had my own views but I really was not a party to anything because I wasn't a delegate or anything else. There really isn't much I can say about that particular thing because we were not involved in it at all. My sympathies were however they were, but really we didn't get involved. I had so many friends on both sides of that. A lot of the Shivers people were people I'd worked with in state government for twenty years. A lot of the Johnson people were friends of long

standing; some of them I didn't even know. But we didn't get involved in it at all so there's really not much I can say about it that would amount to anything about that May convention. I followed it with interest.

M: Of course, the upshot of it was that Mr. Johnson was the favorite son candidate. The committeeman and committeewoman of the convention were Byron Skelton--

J: It was a big mess.

M: Byron Skelton and Frankie Randolph.

J: That was a big mess. They lost. That's what happened to them. They let them stay around the convention so long until all their friends went home and Frankie Randolph got to be committeewoman. That's all that happened at that convention. That's what I really learned from the convention. As a technician you don't ever let your convention drag any longer than you can help it because your friends leave early. They get bored and they go home. But the hard core stay and if you ever let anything get to a vote too late, you're dead. That's what I learned out of that convention. I had to work with Mrs. Randolph many years after that as a result of that. But I didn't have anything to do with her being elected.

We really got in it after Daniel got elected and we had the governors' convention in 1956. And that was at Fort Worth and theoretically we were in charge of that convention because that's the convention that writes the platform on which the governor runs against the Republican candidates. And that's the convention that certifies the results of the election and really, if it's a close election, they can go either way. We arrived at Fort Worth and by that time we had Congressman Pickle in our fold. He had been Daniel's campaign manager and George Christian was in the fold then. He had become Daniel's press man and we had many meetings. We worked at

great lengths with George Sandlin who represented Shivers, who had all the records in the Democratic party prior to the May convention. He was going to turn them over to us. We worked at nights. We went over the delegation lists and tried to see where our problems were--tried to do everything we could in advance--bearing in mind that Pickle, of course, was an experienced hand. He had run conventions before. He had been around. He knew what the heck he was doing. I knew absolutely nothing. I had never been to a convention before I arrived in Fort Worth, and I was the secretary of the darned thing. George Christian knew a little more than I did. He knew more because he'd been a newspaperman and had covered conventions and knew a little bit about it.

But here we were. We were going to run this convention. I was the secretary of the convention who theoretically runs the thing. He sets the agenda and gets the committees to meet and gets all the paperwork going. And a convention just lives on paperwork. It's just like you eat food. A convention eats paperwork. It starts with nothing, you know. A convention is an assembly of people who are elected to attend. It's got no procedure. It's an autonomous body. They start every convention brand new. They just organize themselves and, of course, the basis for the whole thing is paper, and how you organize five or six hundred to a thousand people into a body who's going to do something. And here we were. I'd studied and I'd studied and I'd talked to Vann Kennedy who'd been <u>the</u> secretary of conventions for many, many years before. I tried to educate myself as well as I could as to how this thing functions. And theoretically I knew it. I knew how you did it. I knew how you took seven hundred people and got them in a room and started the procedure to make them into a body and make them start acting as a body. And I knew what the paperwork was and I had a lot of

competent help there. In fact I had people--girls particularly--who had worked conventions before, who knew how the paperwork was supposed to flow. They helped me a lot.

I guess when we went in, we knew we had problems because we'd looked at enough delegations to see that if we had a majority it was a bare majority of delegates. But we knew if we got down to a vote, we could win a vote because we had enough delegates, enough votes, to win on any issue that we could get up. What we didn't really anticipate and what we didn't count on was the difficulty of getting something up was the sheer strain--

[End of tape]

INTERVIEWEE: JAKE JACOBSEN (Tape #2)

INTERVIEWER: DOROTHY PIERCE MC SWEENY

May 27, 1969

M: Mr. Jacobsen, you were discussing the '56 governors' convention.

J: What we really didn't anticipate, and what we weren't ready for at all was the rowdyism and the ability of a minority--a large minority in this case--to really stymie the actions of the majority. Although we knew we had the votes, the question was how we got there. We had several very, very difficult questions of seating delegations. Now our majority, of course, depended to some extent in several areas, where there was a contesting delegation, as to which delegation we seated. There would be Daniel delegation and an anti-Daniel delegation. Well, obviously, we were planning to seat the Daniel delegation and we had arranged our procedure whereby we had a majority vote on the credentials committee, and on every other committee for that matter. But we had to get these jobs done in order to get the convention organized and to get it organized in a way favorable to us, bearing in mind that a convention goes into temporary organization and a permanent organization. They have to seat the delegates and the ones that are contested before they get the rolls of the convention going and then once they get the rolls set up they move. Well, we had our committees appointed, and we had our committees meeting. Now, during the time the temporary committees were meeting to determine the rolls of the convention and the agenda and these things, which I'd already written out in advance, we had speakers. We called on different politicians to speak, and we had our temporary chairman--I forget who that was. Gosh, I didn't

think I'd ever forget whoever that poor man was.

As we'd bring people up, the general activity on the floor of the convention was just getting completely out of hand. The Yarborough people were smelling blood! They could see that if they did certain things they could win that damned convention and elect Yarborough governor, because he'd throw out two or three boxes and heck, that would change the whole vote. They were beginning to see that things were not as bad as they might have thought they were. They, the Yarborough delegates, were beginning to work that floor good and move in. Every time a man would get up to speak they'd boo him to where he could hardly talk. I remember when Johnson got up they booed him so loud he could hardly speak and had to speak over the booing and finally got them quiet. They booed Mr. Rayburn; they booed everybody! They were just completely out of hand. Without a proper police force there, there's no telling--somebody might have been killed.

But, anyway, the thing was just getting worse and worse and worse. We were trying our best, time was passing. The very lesson I'd learned from the May convention was just preying on my mind constantly because hours and hours were going by during this temporary organization. I could see people who were completely disgusted with the rowdyism and the drunkenness and the meanness of the Yarborough people. They just wanted to get their wives out of there. They wanted to leave. They didn't want to sit around that miserable place and be insulted. I could see exactly what I'd learned out at the May convention happening to me in this September convention. I just kept at it, worked and ran and I just lost complete track of time. Daniel, of course, wasn't in the convention hall, Daniel was in the other room. We were in contact with him by phone.

And some time during the course of this thing, everybody could see we were in trouble, and Johnson just took it on himself--and he could see that things were going bad--and he got upon the stage. Gosh, I remember that so well. I just felt like I was saved. Here came Johnson and Walter Jenkins and John Connally. John was trying to help us anyway, but his group just moved in to assist us and I just thought, "Oh, my word, this is just the saving--this is the difference between life and death. I'm dead without them." And he set himself up backstage, got a few folding chairs. He sat down there and I started checking things with him.

Well, the difference between winning and losing was an outfit from El Paso County. There were two delegations. One was headed by Woodrow Bean and the other was headed by our people. Woodrow was not our man but he was friendly--but he was not our man. And it came, the time of the credentials committee--by the way the chairman of that committee was Raymond Buck, I remember that--the time came for that contest to be heard and we called Woodrow Bean upon the stage, or he came up and he said, "Well, I'll tell you something. If you'll seat me I'll be for you. And it will be a popular thing among the liberals of this convention if you'll seat my delegation." And we swore him to a blood oath that he would support us on every issue. One of the main ones was seating of the Houston delegation, which was a tremendous number of votes. He said, "Oh, yes, I'll vote with you on the seating of the Houston delegation." We talked about it and we thought about it and we agreed that we would seat them and not seat the delegation headed by our people or the conservatives.

The credentials committee voted to seat the Bean delegation.

Some time during that time Johnson said to me, "Now, don't let that credentials committee adjourn. Let them recess and stay there." So I ran

downstairs and--one of the functions of the secretary is to pass messages and get everybody to do what they're supposed to be doing, because in this room you don't know what they're doing over in that room, and I was the one that was supposed to know everything and coordinate it.

Well, I went down and told Raymond Buck that not to adjourn but to recess and to keep his group together there because we weren't sure what might happen. Well, the pressures on him were awful. He was obviously deciding the convention right there, down there in his room. And he let them adjourn and they disbanded and they all went their separate ways.

Subsequently Woodrow Bean came back up on the stage and said, "I told you something and I can't deliver." He said, "I told you I'd support the seating of the Houston delegation you wanted; my people just won't go along with me." And we said, "_____ and you're lying," the usual things you say in a time like that when you're under pressure. Johnson said, "Now, Woodrow, I'm going to teach you the greatest lesson in political integrity you've ever learned." And he turned to me and said, "Get that credentials committee together again." And I tell you I started working and I worked. It took me well over an hour to find them all, to find enough of them to have a quorum, and we proceeded to unseat the Bean delegation and to seat the conservative delegation in El Paso.

Well, that was the turning point in the convention. We did it, but it took forever. It was late at night and we were still in temporary organization. I finally got enough of them together and finally voted to unseat Bean, to seat the conservative delegation, and we then proceeded with the convention.

M: You must have met a great uproar at this type of procedure.

J: Oh, gosh, the rumors were all over. It was terrible! In the meantime the Yarborough people were mad--oh, gosh. I remember walking in the back of the room--one of my friends walked in the back of the room. Conventions are run on rumors, you know. The people down on the floor don't know what the hell's going on. They hear things. And I had my own rumor team. I had a team and when they'd come I'd say tell them so-and-so. They'd all spread out in the audience and start a rumor that Yarborough had conceded or just anything. I had them working all the time.

I remember one of my friends came back. I was standing back in the hall and saw one of my friends. He was a big labor leader, and he was talking to another of his friends. He said, "You see that wavy-haired, good looking son-of-a-bitch on the platform," (that was back when I had wavy hair)? And he said, "That's the son-of-a-bitch that's doing it to us!" It was just a terrible thing. We were getting booed and we were getting threatened and just had everything happen that could possibly happen. I'd say fortunately we had our stabilizing influence, and it was number one, Daniel over in his room talking to us on the phone, and Johnson sitting back there giving us instructions to kind of keep us in some kind of shape to where we knew what we were doing.

Well, the upshot was we unseated Bean. We seated the conservative delegation. Then we seated the proper Houston delegation and by then everybody was gone and we just had barely enough people in the delegation to cast the votes of the delegation. We had our test vote and we won our test vote and we had control of the convention. That is, numerically. Vocally, we never had control of that convention. The numerical minority was much more vocal than the numerical majority and they booed us and they hollered at us and they threatened us and they did everything they could

do. We finally had prevailed and we went home. But, gosh, that was the most miserable night I've ever spent in my life and if it hadn't been for the assistance we got from then-Senator Johnson I don't know what would have happened. I really don't. We might have won anyway, but it would have been hard. It might have lasted two days, but he was a great help to us.

M: Mrs. Randolph wasn't invited to the convention. Didn't that cause quite a bit of--

J: I'm sure that did, yes.

M: A problem?

J: I'm sure that caused quite a bit. If she'd been invited and had been there, it would have been a greater problem. So you can't say that was a mistake.

M: She was the committeewoman. How did you manage to do this?

J: I don't remember for sure, but I imagine we just didn't send her an invitation.

M: Whose suggestion was that?

J: I can't remember. If I had to guess, I'd guess it was sort of a unanimous opinion of those of us concerned with the convention.

M: There was also talk about the fact that people,delegates, were entering illegally from all sorts of places.

J: Oh, they had all sorts of schemes. These are the things that I learned at this convention, and we never had one that bad again because I had better security and everything. But they were printing the counterfeit passes, and they were slipping people in there who had absolutely no business in the hall at all, and it was just pandemonium. It was unregulated pandemonium. People were coming and going and sneaking their friends in

and going out. It was just terrible. It was the perfect example of how not to run a convention.

M: How were you able to unseat these delegations that had been elected?

J: Well, as a practical matter, in many instances where you know their problem, you arrange to have a rump delegation--whoever happens to be the rump. You try to work out a legal basis for the delegation that wasn't elected to be elected. In other words, the ones who were elected did something wrong, which was fundamentally wrong, and consequently the people who weren't elected should have been. And you work up these cases. You do it sometimes premeditatedly. You know you can't win so you work one up. In other cases it just works out that way. They get these conventions, and they unseat somebody and the other one rumps and has their own convention, and it just comes to you. But generally you try to have a legal case on which to base your opinion. But as a practical matter what you do is you count your votes and see who you need to see. Conventions are about as pragmatic a thing that I know of. There isn't much philosophy in a convention. It's mostly winning.

M: What did you base your case on in regard to the El Paso and Houston delegations?

J: I don't have the slightest idea and couldn't care less. I don't remember what they had trumped up. I'm sure that the right won, but really I didn't have any idea, didn't care. I just knew we had to seat the ones to get votes, that's all. Convention procedures are--and this is not the place to go into detail--convention procedures are a problem. It's a party matter. It's a subject that could be reformed, as you know, from what's going on up in Washington right now. They're trying to reform the national convention procedure which is a lot more sophisticated than our Texas

convention procedure.

To me it's purely a matter of winning. If you can win, you win. And you win by whatever means you've got to win it by. That's all I ever wanted to do, all I'm ever--I'm not ever going to another convention. I've had them all, but my philosophy was that you win. If you don't win you lose, and you can't afford to lose. There's just no way to lose if you've got control from the start; if you control the party machinery you win a convention. Whatever it takes to win it, you win it. And that's all I ever knew about running conventions. I didn't have much great political philosophy about the convention procedure.

M: Mr. Jacobsen, are there any other things or facets about the '56 convention that you recall? This did, of course, have kind of great political ramifications in this state.

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The highlights of the '56 convention, of course, were many, most of which don't relate to President Johnson in any way, and therefore they wouldn't be apropos. This isn't the place to review them. However, with respect to President Johnson, as I recall, he was sitting with the delegation from his county, and we had placed them on an aisle. I remember he was sitting on the aisle. Prior to the time he came up on the stage to help us, we were consulting with him from time to time during the proceedings of the convention, and that's how he got mixed up in the running of the convention. I didn't mean to give the impression that he injected himself into it. We were constantly going off the stage and coming down to where he was sitting to ask him questions. It became obvious

that we needed his help and we were asking for his help. It was a lot easier for him to operate from backstage than from down on the floor where, in a convention, as I've said before, rumors are so bad and people would see me talking to him and they'd say, "Oh, oh, they're fixing to do so-and-so." So actually it was better for him to move up on the stage and do about the same thing he was doing from his seat in the convention hall.

And I also remember that after that convention was over I got the nicest letter from Senator Johnson--one of the first I'd received from him--to the effect that I was the finest secretary that he'd ever seen at a convention. Of course, that was very complimentary, if true, and--but complimentary nevertheless and I prized that letter very much. I would say that he, at that convention--I don't want to overstress the importance of that occasion--but it was an important occasion, and it was a turning point in Texas politics. He at the risk to his own political well-being and political future agreed to assist us against a very, very strong minority, many of whom were Johnson people. I would say that that was an act of great political courage, an act that was most favorable to Daniel and most helpful to him and at a great sacrifice on Johnson's part, and obviously was done as a result of Johnson's underriding philosophy or basic philosophy, that a person who finds himself in a position as a result of following the proper procedures of a party should be supported whether there's a strong minority or not. I think this was done with the possibility of great harm to Johnson himself. I think it's a great tribute to the man for having stepped in at a time whenhe had little to gain from what he did, and much to lose. He did really save the day for us. I don't think there was any doubt about that.

I shall personally always be grateful to him for what he did. I think

he deserves great credit for having done that and for having carried out the obvious mandate of the political party. Now it was a close mandate. Daniel didn't win by very many votes, but obviously he was the winner. Here was a man who stepped in at great risk to himself to carry out that mandate. I think it was a great thing and I think it shouldn't be overlooked--it shouldn't be overstressed, but it certainly should be considered a real act of courage on his part at a time when it might have been politically expedient to do like we did in May, and just stay the heck out of it.

M: Mr. Jacobsen, my notes show that you served with Governor Daniel from '56 to '58. Then you left to open your private law office here in Austin.

J: Yes, that's right. I stayed during one term in the governor's office. Then I left to become his campaign manager in the '58 campaign, and I just never went back to the governor's office after that. I opened my own office for the practice of law and didn't go back to the governor's office. George Christian took my place.

M: In this period from '56 to '58, do you recall some of the contacts between the governor's office and the majority leader, Senator Johnson, and the issues?

J: Yes. I don't recall any particular issues that came up during that two year period that we worked on together with Johnson. Our relationship had become very warm by that time and there were many contacts between Daniel and Johnson and Daniel's office and Johnson's office. We were a part of a cohesive group by then, having served together in the senate, and his having helped us so much, and there were very many contacts. We did coordinate many things. I can't remember any major issue, though, that occurred during that period of time that would stick in my mind as being

something to bring up specifically. I do remember, though, that whenever anything came up in Austin which related to national politics or Johnson we'd always stay in touch and try to keep him advised and vice versa. Whenever we had a problem that involved national issues we would call his office and work with them. But other than social occasions, I don't recall any specific major issue that came up where we had to work together.

M: Let me ask you again here, was Mr. Johnson's rising political fortune evident, or his ambition evident, or was there a move afoot by his own people to begin a campaign for him, possibly for '60?

J: Let's see. Now, '60 was the year that--

M: He was up for reelection and was also--

J: Well, yes, this came up, yes, later. But you asked me about the period '56 to '58. There really wasn't much at that particular time that we talked about. Subsequent to '58 there were matters that came up and we had things to work together on. But during the '56-'58 period I don't recall anything specific.

M: Why don't we go on to the next one? What was your capacity?

J: Well, '58, when I left the governor's office, of course I opened the law office and I was practicing law and doing pretty well. One night, and I don't remember when this was specifically, President Johnson had somebody call and ask my wife and me to go to dinner with him and his wife and some others at a Mexican restaurant down on First Street. We, of course, accepted and we met them there, him and Mrs. Johnson, and Mr. Kellam, I think, and some others. I don't remember who was along. We had a most enjoyable evening. That was really when I started knowing Mrs. Johnson a little better, that night and other occasions.

During the course of the dinner that evening, he was most gracious, just a kind man. I enjoyed myself tremendously. He asked me how I was getting along. I said, "Well," and he turned to Mr. Kellam and said, "You know, we ought to put Jake on retainer over at KTBC; I think it would help him in his practice." I said, "Why, it certainly would, and I would certainly appreciate it." And as a result of that conversation, and some with Mrs. Johnson, who was actually running the station, I did go on a retainer for KTBC and have been ever since, except when I was in Washington. And it has helped my law practice, being in a position of telling people you represent the majority leader or the Vice President, or whatever offices he occupied, gives you a certain standing in the legal profession because people trust his judgment. If he'd selected you as a lawyer then they think you ought to be pretty good. That was really the beginning of what became a more and more close relationship between us. I'd work at the station, I'd visit with Mrs. Johnson, visit with him frequently. When we had to determine what--you see, he had to seek reelection in 1960, and he also had a chance of being the Democratic nominee, or certainly the Vice Presidential nominee. At the same time many of us had considerable doubts about whether or not the Democratic nomination--first of all, whether he'd get it; secondly, whether it would be worth anything if he did get it.

Of course, by then the discussions about Johnson's being the

Democratic nominee were warming up. It may have started in '58, I don't know, but it was certainly real warm in '59. We were organizing a Texas group to run the "Johnson for President" deal. I think the cochairmen were--I was one of them; I forget who the other one was, maybe Larry Blackman. But the chairmen were Daniel and Rayburn and whoever the third leader in Texas politics was at that time. I guess it might have been Yarborough. Anyway, there were three chairmen and then we had a group under them that ran it, and I was one of the two that ran it.

We had an organization down here in the Littlefield Building that was really the Johnson for President headquarters. The primary purpose of that organization was not to operate on a national scale, although we called ourselves Johnson for President. The primary purpose was to align the Texas delegation very strongly behind Johnson as a favorite son and to really be sure it was a strong delegation and no dissents, no questions raised because we had a chance to really get the whole thing done. We organized a very fine organization. We went to work on the May convention real early. We distributed films and literature and instructions of how you carry on precinct conventions. We wanted to be sure that in the May convention of that year that we were really there and we really had our strength and it was a good convention and it was a big Johnson convention.

We did a lot of work. We raised money by selling little pins with Texas hats on them that said LBJ and earbobs with little hats. We had a rather large organization. We had field men that--three or four field men that covered Texas constantly. We had, oh, 20 or 30 people in this headquarters. We had a pretty good going operation.

Then we had another problem. We knew we had a chance at something, but we didn't want to give up the possibility of his remaining as senator,

so we proposed to pass some legislation. There's a provision in the election code to the effect that no one person can seek two offices on the same ballot, so we wanted to amend that legislation, permit Johnson to run for the senate at the same time he ran for a national office. We had the legislation drafted and had it introduced. Several of us worked very hard on getting that piece of legislation enacted. We did the lobbying. We talked to the individual senators and representatives and split up the legislature just like you do the congress to be sure we had the votes to pass it. Eventually we did pass it. We had some difficulties along the way and there was some language in it that we probably should have known would disrupt things. When Daniel got the bill after it was passed he found this language in there and raised objection to it. We had to go back and call the bill back in the senate and redraft it and get it repassed. But that's a typical legislative problem. I don't make that a big issue. We did get the bill passed. Many of us worked real hard, so that during that period of time from '57-'58 to '60, I was actively engaged in trying to number one, get Johnson nominated for President, the presidential candidate of the Democratic party; number two, be sure the Texas delegation was strong behind him; and, number three, to try to get this legislation enacted where if he didn't get what he was after, he could still serve in the senate. I also acted, I think, as his campaign manager in Texas for United States for United States senate when we finally got to running. I think all that entailed was keeping the necessary books and records and getting the paperwork done. I was very much engaged in the whole thing. I was right in the middle of all of it.

M: Were the factional splits in Texas politics any problem to overcome in getting the legislation through?

J: Not really. This was not a real serious problem, although, of course there was opposition. It was all minor though and really all you were talking about was, "Don't you want Texas to get a chance to have one of its people be a President or Vice President of the United States." And when you get down to that there isn't anybody who says, "No." We did have little problems, but hindsight would say they weren't really much at the time.

M: Any anti-Johnson movement was not a powerful force?

J: Not really. It was there, but we overcame it pretty quickly. We did a good job, there's no question about it. We really had our people out and had it going good, and that legislation passed. Oh, I'd call a lot of people and talk to them, and by then I was pretty well known as one of the few people in Texas in the establishment who could talk to the liberals, and that was always my job to talk, to the liberals. They believed me and they trusted me. My liaison with them was excellent.

M: With whom did you deal?

J: Oh, I always worked with Hank Brown and the labor people and the liberal senators, whoever they might have been at that time, Don Kennard and Babe Schwartz. I don't know whether he was in the senate or in the house. But I could always work with those people and I could work with the conservatives too, because they knew I had been with Daniel and that kind of branded me with that conservative look. So I could work with all of them.

Our organizational efforts in the organization of the Texas convention was probably as well done as any convention ever has been or ever will be organized. We had the thing done so well, we knew inside of an hour after the precinct and county conventions, respectively, just where every

precinct and every county stood. We had our people in there. We had the people who were going to call us, and we had our score card and we knew that we had no problem. I don't think we lost one county. I don't believe we lost one. If we did it was a minor one and it didn't make any difference. When the convention was held here in May it was one of the most successful conventions I've ever seen. It was a true Johnson convention, we had decorated the hall and we had a band and we had everybody excited and we'd built up to a crescendo and he came to the hall and they just went crazy and they hollered and yelled and stomped and he made a hell of a speech and it got everybody excited. It was just well done. It was obviously a Johnson convention, and the delegation that went toLos Angeles--it was pure Johnson, and everybody on it was committed to work hard for Johnson and did work hard for Johnson. They were the best people we could find. We had complete control, and I think I got that convention over in an hour and 15 minutes, as compared to that Fort Worth convention which ran about 15 or 16 hours. It was the best convention I ever ran. It was obviously a Johnson thing. It went off well and everybody went home happy. It was exciting and just real well done. It was held down here in Austin, where our auditorium was new, looked good. Just as fine a convention as I've ever seen, obviously for Johnson 100-percent. And I would say in all due modesty I had about as much to do with it as anybody.

M: Were you the secretary at this convention?

J: Oh, yes, I was the permanent secretary, temporary secretary, and then I also ran the outfit that organized the convention along with Mr. Blackmon, who gave up his business in Fort Worth to come down here and spend full time working.

M: With this type of early and very extensive campaigning and organization, where were you deriving your funds from?

J: We were having a hard time and we were selling these doggone little hats. That was a mess too. We just assigned quotas to our people in different regions and we would send them that many hats and expect them to send back that many dollars and they could sell them for $2 if they wanted to. But that's how we primarily raised our money. We also got some contributions. I can't recall from whom, but we did get some contributions.

M: Did Mr. Johnson give you any encouragement to do this?

J: Oh, yes. He didn't call me and say, "Do it," but yes, he gave us permission. I'll say, this was not a national Johnson for President thing; this was a way to organize Texas. We were going to call it Johnson for President because you can't imagine the impact of this. I used to go into crowds that were--some of which were strong pro-Johnson but some of them were mixed, like a tea where you'd get a bunch of ladies together where some of them would be pro-Johnson and some of them not. But when you get to talking about a native Texan President of the United States, their whole attitude changed. They don't really care who the man is or what his philosophy is so much as they get a great sense of pride. These speeches, I used to enjoy them so much, because you could just see people, you could see their pride swelling up, and their vision of having a Texan as President of the United States was really--well you could sell anybody on that. This is what we were doing as a way to organize the convention. We weren't trying to make Johnson President of the United States. I had no idea that he would be anything except favorite son. That's the best organizational tool I've ever

seen in my life, to get Texans excited about seeing one of their own President. That certainly organized the convention for us, and did another thing. This was my thinking. I don't know what Johnson thought. I may have discussed it with him or may not, but I wanted to see him reelected as Senator too. And the best way to run that Senate campaign was to run him for President. You see, people would vote for him for senator. They wouldn't think much about that, but they'd be running him for President all the time.

So, in my mind there were two things we were doing, number one, we were organizing the convention. We were getting it firm and solid. And we were also running Johnson for the senate all the time, without ever mentioning the senate. There was this Texan for senator with the likelihood of being President. We were selling everything we had to sell and selling it well.

M: But with all of this extensive operation and getting laws enacted so he could run in both positions, you still were only thinking in terms of him being just a favorite son and not seriously a political candidate?

J: I'd have to say this in all fairness to everybody concerned--that I really didn't have any feel for the national scene. I didn't consider myself an expert in the national thing. I was just thinking about the Texas part of it. I considered my job as getting Texas in good shape and I think that's what I did. Now nationally, sure, I wanted him to be President. I wanted him to be President more than anything I know, but I didn't consider that I was playing any part in that. As you know the national headquarters opened. John Connally took that over. I didn't even go up there. I had my own law practice here. I didn't have the time. I didn't have the time or the money to do those things. I knew I could handle

Texas, but I wasn't a national man.

M: Were you able to sell this campaign to the news media too?

J: I think they were very friendly to us. They treated us nice. As I remember, the newspapers were very friendly. They're Texans too. They got caught up in this thing of having a Texan as President of the United States, and it was as successful a thing as I've ever seen. And for the part I played in it, I'm very proud, because I think we did a hell of a good job. It was well done and the media bought it; the media went with it; everybody went along. It was just the thing to do.

M: With all of this happening in Texas, why was Mr. Johnson so reluctant to announce his candidacy nationally?

J: I don't know. He never told me why and I never asked him why. I don't know.

M: You have any theory?

J: Oh, I would guess the reason was, I'd guess two things. Number one, he was a big senate man, and was afraid that would undermine his power in the senate to get mixed up in the presidential business. Secondly, I would guess, just as a man, he had considerable doubt that he could have gotten the nomination at that early stage and, therefore, didn't want to push himself out at something he wasn't sure he could get or wanted, I guess. That would just be my guess.

M: Would his greatest drawback have been the fact that he was a Southerner, and it had been quite a long time since we'd had a Southern candidate win the presidential office?

J: Yes, I guess that would be his greatest drawback, the fact that he was considered Southern and consequently the Northerners just wouldn't have any part of that.

M: At any point in the pre-'60 convention, did your operation extend outside

of the state?

J: No, not properly. We did do some work outside of Texas, but it was more on our own, with a few friends.

M: What did you find?

J: We didn't find much. What we found, where we had friends--we were trying to get delegations favorable to Johnson for the national convention. But nobody was really pushing us on this. Anything we did we did on our own and it really wasn't much, I must say. It was just through personal friends, sending people out some. Most of that really didn't start until they got that Washington office.

M: Did any of the Kennedy staff or people come into Texas?

J: I heard they did. I never ran into them. But they might as well have stayed home. There wasn't any way for them to do anything in Texas. There wasn't any way! There just wasn't a chance. I heard they came in, but I didn't ever see them.

M: Did you actively participate in the campaign pre-convention at all, up to going out to Los Angeles?

J: Yes, I did.

M: How would you describe that campaign?

J: You mean the campaign for the nomination? I'd describe it as poor! I'd compare it a lot with me and Fort Worth. Aside from John Connally, who is a man of great national prominence anyway, and a few others, we were a bunch of amateurs running something that we really didn't know what we were running. We put together teams and people to cover each state and try to find people who could work in particular states and we did. We found a lot of them, mostly Texans. A few outsiders, a few people outside of Texas who were these traveling men who went to these different states.

We'd try to persuade people to be for Johnson. Every time we'd take one step, Kennedy would take four, and push us back four. We were not really too effective in our campaign, and I think that's obvious from the way the vote went. We did a commendable job for what we had and for how we worked it. We had a reluctant candidate, we had little money, and we were making little headway, although many of us were pretty optimistic about how we were moving. Well, hindsight would tell me we weren't really doing any good at all.

M: Was there an effort to bring about a stop-Kennedy movement where he wouldn't get it on the first ballot?

J: Oh, yes.

M: Could you tell me a little bit about that?

J: Well, as I recall the theme was to nominate Stevenson. The idea was to try to get Stevenson as many votes on the first ballot as we could get for him in order that Kennedy wouldn't get it on the first ballot. Of course, we had many second ballot commitments, or at least we thought we did. I was secretary of the delegation to the Los Angeles convention, and again, most of my duties revolved around our delegation. My part in the national thing, working with other delegations from other states, was relatively small. I don't recall anybody ever had any dealings with me on the first ballot thing. I do remember that there were a lot of people working on it and I kept hearing stories. As I remember, Daniel was chairman of the delegation. I was secretary. We were pretty busy with our own things--Daniel contacting other governors and I was going around with him. At the pre-convention, we had meetings at the Biltmore. Mr. Rayburn was meeting with people. We were all having meetings, trying to get things lined up. Hindsight now--I had great hopes

at the time. I'm not sure what I based them on, but hindsight tells me that we really never were in the ball park very good.

M: How was Mr. Johnson received when he was speaking before the various delegations?

J: Reasonably well. Reasonably well. At times you could tell the politeness of the delegation and the lack of enthusiasm that this was obviously a Kennedy delegation, and we were really wasting our time. He was received politely and well and, in some cases, enthusiastically.

M: Did you find before you got out there that John Kennedy had pretty well organized the convention?

J: Oh, yes, ma'am. We found that the first time we tried to get a hotel room. That's how simple that was. You found it early.

M: Will you tell me a little bit about the convention and what happened?

J: Well, we sent a group out early to arrange for our hospitality room, for our suites, and, you know, the ordinary advanceman work that has to be done. I was not part of that group. I still had my own living to make, and I couldn't do that. The closest man that I had in it was Larry Blackman. He went out early. He was the guy that did the leg work out there, and Larry called me about every night. And poor Larry, we thought--for instance, Sid Richardson owned the Biltmore Hotel, as I remember, and we thought we had it made. We thought we'd get the best of everything. Well, we found out that wasn't quite true. The Kennedy people had been there and Kennedy obviously had control of the Democratic national committee and we didn't, because the Texas delegation was assigned to a "lovely" hotel, fairly close to downtown, which was fortunate, I guess, but it was the sorriest, nastiest place I've ever seen in my life!

These are the things I've learned over the years that tell you who's

in charge, not what the newspapers say, or not what you read in Time Magazine, but who gets the best hotels, and who gets the cars, and who gets the transportation, and who gets the assistance, who gets the best seats in the convention hall. These are the things that tell you whether you're ahead or behind. Obviously, all those signs pointed to President Kennedy having really done his homework, really having done his job well. We were short of cars; we were short of rooms; we were short of everything. We were short of communications. We just didn't have anything like he had. He had it organized, and he had obviously done a good job of it.

M: Did this aggravate Mr. Johnson very much?

J: I never talked to him during this period of time. I would think so, but I wouldn't know. I didn't ask him. I would think it aggravated him, yes. I would think he got the feeling pretty good that we had problems and that we were just out-organized. Of course, he was in Washington at the time. The senate was in session. He was busy taking care of his job. That's about what he would say. Whether or not he was happy or unhappy I don't know. You'll get that from the Connallys and the Chapmans and people who were up in Washington in closer touch with him.

M: Was there much bitterness brought about by the campaign pre-convention between the staffs of Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Johnson?

J: I would guess so, yes. I didn't run into too much of it until I got to California. I saw some bitterness out there. But I didn't know too many of the Kennedy people. I didn't know who they were. I wouldn't have known them if I'd fallen over them. So really I don't know too much about the bitterness, if any, that developed. I'm trying to limit myself to what I know, because I know there are people who really know the answers to these things. If I'm not one of them there's no use in my speculating

about them. I really didn't know too much about the national part of it. I had done my job. The Texas delegation was in line without any doubt.

M: Would you describe the convention for me?

J: From my standpoint, yes. When we got to California we found out we were staying in this miserable hotel, which of course was a bad beginning, and we all were pretty distressed about the fact that we had such poor arrangements, but we nevertheless lived with that. And we started out--our headquarters was opened of course in the Biltmore and all of us went over there to have a meeting and get our duties. We were all informed. Our primary mission, of course, was to help Johnson, help him secure the nomination. We had our women's group out there. I forget what we called them. They had these Neiman-Marcus dresses that they wore. We had them there. We had a good crowd out there. We met to determine what our individual jobs would be. Daniel was delegation chairman, as I said, and he tried to assign jobs to all of us. We were each assigned a delegation to visit and talk with and try to get to go with Johnson. The effort being to find people who knew people in other delegations. Then we also undertook to visit individual delegates. We had rooms in our headquarters where we had John Ben Shepherd and Will Wilson--some public official running those rooms where an individual delegate could come in and visit with somebody, talk to them about Johnson's merits, relative merits. Then the women split up the duties of being hostesses in the delegation rooms and doing the things that needed to be done to try to win delegates and make friends. Then some of us--I tried to stay with Daniel as much as I could because he was chairman and I was secretary, and we held meetings with our friends trying to convince them to be for us. Daniel had a lot of friends among the governors.

Prior to the convention in California we had a governors' convention up in Montana. We worked out a deal where we would present to each of the governors a pair of cowboy boots, a Western belt with a big buckle with a horse on it and their name engraved on it. This was done through John Justin of Fort Worth, the Justin Boot Company. He arranged to do this. I arranged to transport the boots and the belts up there. I went to the convention in Johnson's airplane, as I remember, or he got the plane for us to transport the stuff up there. And, of course, Daniel and my function at that meeting was to try to win over as many governors as we could. We talked to many of them and we presented them with these boots and these belts and they were very pleased to get the gifts. We made a little headway but you could tell we were a long way from home. Of the Democratic governors, Kennedy had a lot of them. We didn't have enough of them to win. That's when I began to realize that you can't win a national convention with the senate. It's the governors who really control the delegations, and if you don't have the governors you've got lots of problems.

I stayed up in Montana three or four days and we visited with every governor who was there. We had them come by our booth and we'd talk to them about Johnson and hoped they'd support him. And I remember one night we were in the middle of a banquet and the Prime Minister of Canada was speaking. I forget his name now.

M: Pearson, perhaps?

J: No, it was the one before him. A great big tall man, a good speaker. They were paging Sargent Shriver on the intercom at the time so I could see we had some competition there. Kennedy had his people there too. I was the Johnson man at the governors conference, along with Daniel. But those were preliminary things

to the--and we held meetings in Los Angeles with many of the same governors who were at the governors conference trying to persuade them, trying to get the delegations to go along with Johnson, whatever we could do. But it became more and more obvious that we were not really making much headway, that Kennedy had made lots of friends and lots of contacts and that we were behind them. Although we never gave up. We went on the floor and we worked around on the floor.

M: Was Mr. Johnson able to exert any influence in the credentials and the platform committees?

J: I don't know. I don't remember there being any credentials fights that were of any importance at all. I don't know what the platform committee was doing, and didn't much care. We were just trying to win. We did have, after several days of going around to different delegations and getting reports that weren't too good, we tried to think of a way to have a confrontation between Kennedy and Johnson.

I could remember from the Senate floor, and that was really my best memory, Kennedy wasn't much of a speaker at that time. He didn't take much interest in the Senate anyway. And I thought if you could get the two of them on the platform Johnson would really make him look bad and we might make some headway. That's how that debate before the Texas delegation evolved. I don't know that it was my idea, but all of us together decided we'd invite Kennedy to the Texas delegation and have Johnson there and have them both make a speech, although there wasn't ever any question about how the Texas delegation was going to go. Kennedy accepted the invitation and I remember I was up on the platform there with Kennedy and Johnson, and Kennedy just did a tremendous job. He just made a talk that really was very persuasive and very nice, and complimented

Johnson. Just did a hell of a job and got Johnson to where, when he got up, there wasn't much to say. You couldn't argue with a man who was treating you so good, and really it didn't come off as good as we had expected it to. We figured that this was the last chance we really had. It was on television. We had it televised. We figured if it went well, enough delegates would be watching it to maybe be persuaded, but it didn't go as well as I had anticipated, although Johnson did a good job. Kennedy did a good job! Really, the comparison between them was not as great as I'd hoped it would be, or many of us had hoped it would be. It went very friendly and nice. I would say that that was about our last gasp. We thought that might do it, but that didn't do it and that was about the end of the road to us.

I think the thing that impressed me the most at that convention was the control that labor has in the Democratic party, which I didn't realize before. I've always thought, "Well, labor is big in New York," but, they have tremendous strength in the Democratic party in the Midwest for example, in the Dakotas and Montana. When we saw that labor, big labor, was not going to go with us we were pretty well at the end of our road. John Connally did a hell of a job of giving out interviews and doing what he had to do. But it was pretty much in vain at that point. President Johnson did a good job. He talked to a lot of people, worked hard. We just couldn't make it.

M: Had there been much discussion of Mr. Johnson possibly accepting the number two slot?

J: No. I'd say no, generally. Certainly not in the Texas delegation. Nobody ever had that idea at all. They thought if he didn't get to be President, he was senator. He would be majority leader. That was fine.

We were all pretty well reconciled to that. As you recall now--I don't want to make myself a soothsayer or anything else--but you recall earlier my interest was in seeing that he stayed in the Senate because I wasn't too excited about the chances of his ever being President, of the presidential nomination. And that suited me fine, and I think the majority--well, all the delegation thought, "Well, if he can't be President, he'll be majority leader." That's why we passed the bill. That's why we're going to get him elected to both offices, if he runs. Or that's why we did what we did, so he could still be a candidate for the Senate. There was no talk at all about his ever accepting the second spot. Nobody ever thought about it, at least in my crowd.

M: Johnson hadn't mentioned it?

J: No.

M: Or that he had been approached about it?

J: No.

M: Did he discuss--this is sort of after the fact--but should he, who his running mate would be?

J: No. He might have had some thoughts about that. He may have discussed it with Connally or with the Speaker, but certainly not generally. He hadn't discussed those things.

M: Could you tell me what activities you had involved in the day after the presidential nomination in which Mr. Johnson was approached?

J: I had nothing. I had some friends in California who have a great big home and a swimming pool and I got in the car and I went out there and lay down by that pool half dead. I didn't do anything until I had to get up and get ready to come back to the convention. Then one of my reporters, Bill Downs--I saw Bill Downs, he said, "You know, Jake, they are talking

about Johnson for Vice President." And I said, "Oh, hell they are!" So I didn't have anything to do with it at all, just nothing.

M: Has Mr. Johnson ever talked with you about it, what happened as far as that contact and events?

J: No, I've read a lot about it. I don't think he has ever talked to me about it. He may have. We've talked about so many things. I don't specifically remember. I'm sure we've talked about it at some time or another, but I don't have any independent recollection of what he said.

M: When you did get back to the convention had he already accepted the Vice Presidency?

J: Yes, oh, yes! And, oh, I was sick! Just sick! Who'd want to be Vice President for that man! I thought that was the craziest thing the man ever did.

M: Did you talk to him about it?

J: Oh, no. There wasn't anything to talk about at that point. But I'd say if we'd taken a poll--I did talk to many of the Texas delegation--if we'd taken a poll of the delegation they would have been overwhelmingly opposed.

M: Rayburn was pretty strong against it, wasn't he?

J: Oh, yes, at first. He came around.

M: Do you recall Mr. Johnson ever explaining why he did accept it?

J: Oh, yes. Yes, I do recall that. The obligation to the party that--he felt he had an obligation to the Democratic party which had been so good to him and that if he could be the candidate for Vice President to help elect the Democratic ticket, which we weren't thinking. Kennedy was far ahead of all of us on that. We didn't realize what a major role Johnson could play getting that ticket elected. We were just thinking parochially, who would want to be Vice President when they could be majority leader.

But he, Kennedy, was out-thinking us and so was Johnson. Johnson saw his obligation, saw what he might do and what he could do for the party and for the country and therefore he felt an obligation to accept the Vice Presidency if it was offered to him, based, I would say, primarily on his feeling that he could be helpful to the party and to the country if he did accept the Vice Presidential candidacy.

M: Do you think that there was any feeling that this was another step up the ladder?

J: Maybe. But I would think primarily nobody in our crowd figured it was much of a step up, because we just thought that majority leader was a lot better position than Vice President. But I would say that those--I don't know what Johnson thought, I don't know--but those in our crowd who were really thinkers could see that it was a step up, but I didn't. I didn't think it at all, and most of us didn't.

M: Did you become involved in the following campaign?

J: Oh, yes, yes.

M: Could you tell me a little bit about your activities and the assessment of their--

J: I was the treasurer-- [machine turned off]

M: We were discussing the 1960 campaign, Mr. Jacobsen, would you tell me what your activities were in that?

J: In the organization of the campaign, I was named, I think, along with Ed Clark as treasurer of the Texas Kennedy-Johnson campaign. It was really our function to raise money and to try to correlate the amounts of money we could raise with the amount of work being done and the costs incurred at the headquarters. As I recall, the principal worker in the headquarters down there was Cliff Carter. Ed and I were supposed to be

the fund raisers. We raised some money. We did a lot of talking about raising money. Money was very difficult to come by during that campaign. Texas was not the best state for raising money for the Kennedy-Johnson ticket.

M: Why?

J: In the first place, we had raised a whole lot of money in Texas on the Johnson for President campaign. We'd been to see all our friends and we had raised a whole lot of money down here then, and it was hard to go back to the same people to get money from them. Secondly, Kennedy wasn't very popular in Texas at that time. There weren't too many of the usual givers who were interested in giving money to Kennedy. So we had it very difficult raising money. But we did what we could and we tried to correlate with what we were spending, never did, because of the possibility that we could carry Texas. This, of course, got everybody pretty excited that we might carry it, and therefore they wanted to spend whatever was necessary to try to carry this state. The end result was that they spent much more money than we raised. We ended the campaign with a considerable debt, but I was very active in the campaign. I appeared with Kennedy and his family at the State Capitol when he spoke down there.

Daniel was a great help in the campaign--I did work with Daniel a good bit--because Daniel is a big Baptist and, of course, when he was for Kennedy that caused a lot of Baptists to think twice about the religious issue. It was another situation where we were trying by the use of the pride that Texas feels in its native sons to get support for the ticket with a native son on it. And our success, we carried Texas. That's the end result.

M: Was there a question in your mind from the beginning about the ability to

carry Texas?

J: Oh, yes, a very serious question in my mind. I thought the only way we could carry Texas would be as a result of Johnson. I'd say that was the reason we carried Texas in the final analysis. First of all, he was on the ticket as Vice President. Secondly, the state officials who wouldn't have any more supported that ticket than fly to the moon if Johnson hadn't been on it, did support the ticket. People like Daniel and the other elected state officials who were willing to be counted in support of the ticket whereas when, for example, when Stevenson ran you couldn't find them--Truman even. This was the real contribution that Johnson made here. Well, I suppose, the other contribution was that the people who were running it down here were all Johnson people. We wouldn't have been doing it if he hadn't wanted us to.

M: What was the main obstacle to overcome on the ticket?

J: Kennedy was our biggest obstacle. We had--

M: Was it his political liberalism, or was it the religious issue?

J: Both. I think his liberalism was a hard issue to overcome. A Boston, Massachusetts, liberal. That's not the best thing we have in Texas! Then his religion was a very, very serious issue which resolved itself, I think, finally in Houston when he made that fine appearance. But we did have those two problems.

Then we still hadin Texas the basic conservatism, and it's here today. Nixon was saying the things that Texas liked to hear. As a matter of fact he still is today! We barely made it last time for Humphrey and that was just a miracle. Those things together gave us great problems in Texas. I think people who ran the campaign did a good job by the result shown, and I think the primary reason for the result is the

fact that Johnson was the Vice Presidential nominee.

M: Were you at the Houston meeting?

J: No.

M: Were you in Dallas at the occasion of the Adolphus Hotel incident with Vice President and Mrs. Johnson?

J: No. At that point, I was in Washington. One of the best friends I have in this world is Walter Jenkins, and I went to Washington one time on some business and I went by that office and I saw that poor Walter was about as harassed as any man that I've ever seen in my life. So I volunteered to go up there and spend as much time as he needed me between then and the time of the election and work in the office, just doing office work to kind of relieve him of some of his problems. And I was up there. He accepted my offer and I spent a couple of weeks up there, up until election eve. Then I flew back to Texas. So I was in Washington at that time, in Johnson's office working. We were getting pretty good reports on what was happening at the Adolphus. We thought, Walter and I both thought, that it's unfortunate that it happened but that it would have a great effect on the outcome of the election.

M: Are there some other significant events or activities that you participated in in regard to this campaign that we should discuss?

J: No, I think this fund raising and just working around the headquarters generally was about what I did. I don't remember anything else that was of any great moment.

M: Did you feel that there was a possibility for the Johnson-Kennedy ticket nationally, or were you in doubt of that too?

J: I was in doubt of it. I saw that there were great problems involved, but I thought there was a chance, yes. I didn't think it was a cut-and-dried thing.

M: It didn't turn out to be either.

J: No. I didn't think so at the time. I thought that it would be close.

M: Mr. Jacobsen, we're at a period here between 1961 and 1963, where I again want to sort of ask you about at that point about the Texas political scene. But during this period, let me ask you if you had any activities in Texas politics and what they might have been.

J: '61 to '63. I guess I was secretary of the Democratic party at that time because I think Governor Daniel was still in office, and the political situation--I don't recall anything that stands out in my mind that occurred during that period of time. Of course, there are probably many things that occurred, but I just don't recall anything that was outstanding.

M: Did you have any occasions to see the Vice President?

J: Oh, very few, if any. I had my own business to tend to, and I didn't have many occasions to see him, if any. I don't remember really.

M: Did Mr. Johnson ever talk with you about the difficulty of that position and the transition from the Senate?

J: No. I heard a lot about it but ne never talked to me.

M: Another area, if you were ever involved in any conversation regarding any friction developing between the Kennedy and Johnson staffs or principals?

J: Actually, no. I didn't know anything first-hand about it. I heard a lot about it, but I didn't know anything first-hand about any friction that was developing.

M: Did you have any activity concerning the development of the Bobby Baker problem as it related to Mr. Johnson?

J: The only think I had was that the FBI interviewed me one time, or a couple of times, about some checks I received when I was treasurer of the

Kennedy-Johnson, I guess. I got some checks from Bobby. I didn't know anything about them. They were from different people, and I found out later that they were from some people who were involved in Bobby's problem, and the FBI asked me about them. I just referred to the duplicates of the checks which they handed me. There wasn't any problem so far as I was concerned. They were within the proper amount for one giver and they were for a specific purpose. They were made to committees that I was chairman of. They were committees to raise money. But that was my only involvement in the Bobby Baker thing--the FBI interviewed me about those checks. I told them what I knew and they didn't bother me again about it.

M: Did Mr. Johnson ever talk to you about his relationship with Bobby Baker?

J: He never, no. He didn't at that particular time. I'd seen them work together in the Senate. At that point he didn't express to me any feeling one way or the other about the Bobby Baker thing. He never discussed it.

M: Did you at a later time?

J: Oh, yes, we did. As a matter of fact, we did when I was his assistant in the White House. We talked about the unfortunate circumstances surrounding the whole Bobby Baker problem, and how any of us who serve as assistants to men in high office can find ourselves in the position where hindsight would indicate that we'd done something that would look awfully bad but at the time it wasn't bad and there wasn't anything wrong with it. This is a part of the problem of being in public office and being the assistant to somebody in public office, and these are the chances you take of being caught up in something that you really don't know much about. You've actually acted as a kind of a middle man and how unfortunate it was. We both knew of the relationship between Bobby Baker and Senator Kerr. We

both knew what a generous man Senator Kerr was. And we both, I think, believed the story that Bobby told about Senator Kerr having advanced him certain monies. And having known everybody involved our sympathies were strong with Bobby, but obviously there were other problems involved.

M: Was there any feeling that this was an effort to scandalize Mr. Johnson by any particular group?

J: Oh, there might have been some feeling that Bobby Kennedy and his attorney general's office were trying to make a big issue out of what may not have been a big issue otherwise in order to hurt President Johnson. I don't think that was a strong view, but that was certainly a view, that this was one of the reasons for the whole prosecution of Bobby and the great publicity which went with it. I don't know whether that's true or not.

M: At this period or during this time, did you ever discuss with Mr. Johnson or his staff about the political fortunes of the coming election in '64?

J: No.

M: Was there any suggestion that Johnson might not be put back on the ticket?

J: Oh, no. I think that was just inconvenient, I don't believe anybody in their right mind thought that Johnson wouldn't be back on that ticket, because he got Kennedy elected in '60 and those are, I think, the political realities of the situation. You might have had a lot of speculation by Kennedy staff people, they were all great speculators, big talkers. But really I think the same thing was true in Los Angeles. I think Kennedy was too damned smart to get caught in the position where he was going to give up a strong co-worker just became of some ill will between his staff and somebody. No, there wasn't any talk about that. I never heard it. I don't believe it. I don't believe what I read in Manchester's book. I don't believe any of it.

M: In 1963, or I should say by 1963, Mr. Jacobsen, President Kennedy's political or other support was declining across the country. This, of course, was one of the reasons he took a political swing through Texas. I wonder if you will tell me a little bit about what your activities were and how this affected--

J: In the first place there was a great disaffection with the Kennedy operation in this part of the country in '63, certainly. It started shortly after he became President and just got worse. I don't think Kennedy could have carried Texas in any way by '63. I think the people were back where they were before we did the great seeling job in '60. His political fortunes were at a great low ebb. The polls showed that he was down, way down in Texas. People didn't like what he was doing. They didn't like anything about it. And I think that was true. I think that our organization of the trip in '63 is a good sign of the great problems we had.

By the way, I must say by that time John Connally was governor and I was no longer secretary of the Democratic party. Therefore, I wasn't playing as great a role in the operation of the political activities in Texas as I had been previously. Frank Erwin and some of the other boys were more in the scene at that time.than I was. But I was consulted and I was asked to most meetings that involved anything to do with the trip or any major decisions involving politics. And we had great difficulty organizing the Austin dinner.

As a matter of fact, the Vice President just let us use his name completely to get people here. We just used him to the hilt to get people to come to the Austin part of the function. Now, I played no part in any other activities of that trip. The Austin part was the only one I had

anything to do with and I did have a good bit to do with that. We had organized well and between John Connally and the Vice President we were getting people to Austin. We would have had a nice crowd here, but solely because of our use of the Connally and the Johnson names. And I think that bears out the fact that Kennedy was in bad shape at the time.

M: Texas was politically split too, did you see that there was some problem between the Yarborough forces and the Connally forces with Mr. Johnson sort of caught in the middle?

J: This is always true. Up until just lately, which is a surprise to me, you always have a split between the governor whoever he is, and Yarborough. He'sjust a split. Yarborough is always going to be on the other side, whoever's governor. That has been true for years. This wasn't just true in '63. It was true in '63, also. Connally and Yarborough weren't getting along at all. Daniel and Yarborough never got along much, so it's nothing. Smith, our present governor, seems to get along with Yarborough fairly well. I can't understand it, but it seems to be the situation.

But, yes, there was that split. But bear in mind that's just a continuous split. We always have a split of some kind. It all depends on who the leader is. You name the split by the leaders of that time, but, yes, there was this big fuss between Connally and Yarborough, and Connally's a man of some ego.

M: What had been indicated for the main reason for the trip to Texas?

J: Politics, trying to raise money was the main reason for the trip. Kennedy wanted to come down here from the day he got elected, I think, almost, to try to get some money out of Texas. This was the thing that bothered him considerably, that he could raise money in Massachusetts but he couldn't raise any money in rich Texas. He'd been wanting to come down

here. Oh, he tried to schedule trips all the time, and Connally was just opposed to it. He kept putting him off and putting him off and finally they agreed on this trip. It was primarily an effort to make some political hay and to raise some money. Those were the two purposes of the trip.

M: Was it also necessary to patch up some political feuds?

J: You mean the trip?

M: Yes.

J: You mean Yarborough-Connally--oh, no. That was a corollary to the trip. That problem was just like a thorn in the side of everybody during the trip, the Connally-Johnson-Yarborough splitup there. He wasn't coming down here to mend that thing. He was coming down here to mend his own fences and try to raise some money down here in Texas.

M: How did Mr. Johnson feel about the fact that even with him on a ticket he might not carry his own state in the forthcoming election?

J: I don't know how he felt. I guess he felt pretty bad about it. I don't know.

M: Could you tell me a little bit more about what the activities were in the Austin--?

J: As I recall, we were going to have the dinner that night. We had the auditorium down here fixed up very nicely, decorated real nice and had nice bands and had arranged an excellent meal and had sold a lot of tickets. We were going to put on a real fine occasion. We were going to try to show that there was unity behind the Democrats and that the people of Texas supported the President and the Vice President and we had arranged an excellent function. It would have looked nice if Kennedy hadn't been shot, it would have been a good occasion and would have been cited as an example of how well we were all getting along here in Texas. We had gotten the

best people to buy tickets and worked out a good attendance and had a lot of good public officials coming. It would have looked nice. We'd worked hard on it. We'd have many meetings and done a lot of work decorating the auditorium, which is a big job, and arranging for the dinner, arranging for the food, arranging for the entertainment, and got the seating worked out right. We'd all done lots of work and we were prepared to have a good occasion.

M: President Kennedy's just appearing in Texas by himself wouldn't have brought out the crowds?

J: You mean--

M: Without preparation.

J: Oh, absolutely not.

M: He was very well received in San Antonio and Houston.

J: Oh,yes.

M: And in Fort Worth.

J: Oh, yes, a President brings out people but you've got to have advance work on any trip. That's how you really get the thing done right, your advance work. You know, a politican dinner's never anything spontaneous. It involves a lot of hard work, being prepared, bringing people together and seeling the tickets and doing what's needed.

M: Were you evidencing a willingness to contribute to the party by way of organizing this trip in making out the details?

J: Oh, fair, not much. We had to call them and push them and shove them to do what you had to do. No spontaneous great giving, no. The answer's no. There wasn't anything like that.

M: And had Mr. Johnson had any conversation with people in Texas as to whether they should or should not try to make this trip?

J: He had talked to Connally and he had talked to a lot of people previously about this trip. It came as a surprise to him. When they announced this trip on these days, it was a surprise to him. He hadn't been in on that at all.

M: Had Mr. Kennedy, President Kennedy, worked with John Connally--

[tape runs out]

INTERVIEWEE: JAKE JACOBSEN (Tape #3)

INTERVIEWER: DOROTHY PIERCE MC SWEENY

May 27, 1969

J: Actually, President Kennedy had worked with John Connally, and they had agreed on a date. My recollection is that Johnson had never been called in on those discussions, and that Johnson learned about it after the dates were agreed on. I don't know what he would have advised if he had been called in in advance, but he was not. He didn't have anything to do with the setting up of the particular trip that Kennedy finally made to Texas. He'd been in on discussions on several occasions before that when Kennedy had been urging that he make trips down here, but he had not been in on the final decision.

M: Do you recall the sequence of events as they occurred on that Friday prior to the assassination and what happened afterwards?

J: All I remember is in [Austin] Texas we were going ahead with our plans that night, the last minute things. We had a luncheon, I remember, at the 40 Acres Club. Bill Moyers was there. He was kind of advancing part of it. We had a whole crowd there to firm up that everybody had done what they were supposed to do, and everything was going to be all set for that night. And I had gone back to my office. We had already concluded all we needed to do and thought, and we were supposed to meet again later. I had gone back to my office to tend to my business when I heard about the assassination.

Then, of course, we had the usual things that took place everywhere else in the country. Everybody was shocked and at wit's end. None of us

who had had anything to do with the dinner knew what to do about it. We just couldn't do anything about it. We knew we couldn't have it, and we tried to call some people to tell them not to come, but most of them were on the way. We just went on about our business of being shocked and watching television and listening to the radio to find out what had happened.

M: Did you or the people here in Austin have much contact with Mr. Johnson in Dallas?

J: No. I didn't, I don't know who did, but I didn't.

M: Did you have any contact shortly thereafter as Mr. Johnson returned to Washington as President?

J: No. As a matter of fact, I had very little contact with anybody in the White House after the assassination other than my normal contacts with Walter or with somebody else. I had no particular contact.

By the way, after the '60 election Kennedy came down to the ranch as you'll remember, and spent a few days there. And Johnson invited to the ranch about ten or fifteen of us who had been the mainstays of the campaign. I had dinner with Kennedy one night while he was at the ranch. Johnson was there, and it was a very nice occasion. That might fit in somewhere.

M: Was this your first meeting with Mr. Kennedy?

J: No, I met him at the Capitol here when he was here that time. I knew him in the Senate. I knew him pretty well at the Senate. George Smathers and I were big friends, have been for many, many years, very close friends. He and Smathers were big buddies, and I knew him through Smathers. Then, of course, I had dinner with him up at the ranch that night. It was a very nice occasion. We had a stag dinner, a bunch of us there. We visited

with Kennedy and the staff. They all seemed very happy, it was a pleasant occasion. Now where was I? We were up to the assassination.

M: Let me just ask you, did you feel in those days John Kennedy was interested in ultimately running for the Presidency?

J: This was afterward.

M: I meant back in--

J: Oh, no. I didn't understand your question. No, I didn't know then. But after the assassination and after Mr. Johnson assumed the Presidency, I had little to do with the administration. On the night of the assassination we did a CBS program here, and I was called in--it originated from here--to talk about Johnson. I was one of the three or four people that was called down to the studio. They taped my part at 4 o'clock in the morning, I think, or some awful time. I was so tired I was talking worse then than I am now. And the guy that did the interviewing thought I was a pro. He said, "Well, I won't ask you any questions. You just talk." This was 4 o'clock in the morning.

But I had very little to do with the operation at the White House after he became President. I steered clear of any immediate involvement.

M: Had there been any worry in the organization of the Austin part that you were involved in of reaction or demonstrations to Mr. Kennedy's trip through Texas?

J: I don't think we anticipated anything bad in Austin. This is a pretty good town. People are generally knowledgeable about politics, and unless you get the University students mixed up in something, you wouldn't have demonstrations or bad reactions like you might in Dallas, where you have a strong conservative element. These are pretty sophisticated people in Austin, politically, because we live with it every day. We've got a

legislature here and the State Capitol is here, and most people know the public officials. No, we didn't anticipate any problems along these lines.

M: Did you become involved in the 1964 campaign and convention?

J: I was a delegate to the convention on the Texas delegation, and I went to the convention. That's about all I did.

M: Was there any effort to really build up interest in this convention? It was a bygone conclusion that Mr. Johnson, of course, would be nominated.

J: No, there wasn't much effort to stimulate anybody. Our Texas delegation was his home state delegation, and they told us all to do certain things. But really, it wasn't much. The answer is that personally I didn't get too excited about it, and didn't get too involved in it. I was a delegate and that was all there was to it. I went to Atlantic City. It happens that I'm from Atlantic City and my brother lives there, and I spent a good part of my time out at his home visiting. I hadn't seen him in four or five years, so I spent a good part of my time visiting him and his children.

M: Had there been much discussion in the delegation regarding Mr. Johnson's running-mate?

J: Yes, lots of discussion, lots of speculation, but not anything that would matter. I don't think anybody in the delegation knew anything. Daniel one night flew back with Johnson from Atlantic City to the White House and spent the night with him there. I don't know what they talked about. They might have talked something about the Vice Presidency. I don't know.

M: Mr. Johnson hadn't indicated to the Texas delegation to your knowledge who he preferred?

J: Not that I know of. We were ready to accept anybody he preferred. I mean, it wouldn't have made any difference.

M: This is a period of which some books have been written saying that Mr. Johnson had to deal with what became the beginning of the Bobby problem, in that he would not be his running-mate. Had this been discussed?

J: Lots of discussion. We'd read about it in the papers and all the problems of Bobby being a cabinet officer,and Johnson saying, "I will not accept a cabinet officer." We'd heard all that stuff, talked about it, but there wasn't anything that we got firsthand.

M: Did you ever discuss this later with Mr. Johnson?

J: No. I don't think we ever talked about the Vice Presidency in '64.

M: What about the campaign and convention of '64? When you were opposing Goldwater?

J: We talked about that from time to time. Either we talked about it, or I was there when there were conversations going on about it, about the plan of the campaign against Goldwater, the plan to destroy him first, destroy his image, and then build up Johnson after that. It was a well executed plan.

M: Is there anything else that you participated in or that you recall about that election or that you discussed later?

J: No. Let's see, the '64 election--there wasn't much to be done. I didn't have much to do with that. You see, you had Connally and his crowd. They'd call me. I guess I was becoming then sort of the elder statesman in the state politics. They'd call me and ask my opinion on things, and I'd give it to them. But I didn't really participate actively.

M: It was not very much of a worry within the state about the attraction of Mr. Goldwater?

J: Yes, oh, yes. There was a great concern. Goldwater was a very attractive candidate for Texas. You still had that strong conservative element who were strong for Goldwater, but we just figured that the odds were that

we'd carry Texas pretty well, mainly because Johnson was from Texas. And then Connally put on a pretty good campaign. Connally and his people put on a pretty good campaign. I didn't have much to do with it. You see, what was happening to me in the meantime was that I was becoming pretty active on my own politically. I had an active law practice. It was bringing in about $150,000 a year. And then I had gotten in the banking business, and the savings and loan business, and the bus business. I was in a lot of businesses, and I had lots to do. I had a full day's work every day on my own things, just as I do today. So I didn't have time to mess with politics much. I was busy making a living, trying to make a little money, trying to borrow some money.

M: When did Mr. Johnson first approach you about coming to--?

J: It had to be on Thanksgiving of '64--that would be November '64--he called me and asked me if I could come up to the ranch. I had a hunch of what the trip was about. Thanksgiving Day he called me and he asked me if I'd come up there. I said of course I would. I turned to my wife who was there, and her sister was visiting us for Thanksgiving, and said, "Well, I think he's going to ask me to come to Washington to be on his staff. You all had better be thinking about whether you can go or not."

I went out to Bergstrom and got a helicopter and met him. He was hunting or something, driving around, and by radio they brought me in right next to his car. I got in the car with Mrs. Johnson and Mr. Kellam and the President. We talked a good while. He asked me if I could come to Washington.

M: Did he ever mention this before to you, coming onto his staff?

J: Not as President. He had mentioned it a long time ago when he was still in the Senate, and I had left the governor's office. I told him I wasn't interested.

When they asked me to come, of course it was a great compliment to me. Naturally, it's something that very few people do, and of course I've always had an active interest in politics. I've been assistant to so many politicians, that obviously it's a great compliment to you. And I told him I'd come if my wife could come, but that I would have to check with her doctor, and I'd let him know. And I did check with her doctor and he said--

M: What did Mr. Johnson say about why he needed you at that time and what you would be doing?

J: Well, he told me that he hadn't been able to get his staff straightened out since Walter left, and he needed somebody up there who had a little maturity and who could handle his business, both personal and governmental, and who could be close to him and be somebody he could trust. He just generally said I ought to "serve my country," and that serving him would be serving my country; that I would have more to do than I could do and it would be all close to him. That's about it.

M: You said this was Thanksgiving of 1964. When did you first get up there?

J: May of '65.

M: He didn't want you to come right away?

J: Yes, he did very much. He really put a lot of pressure on me. I had a great deal of difficulty. Well, in the first place, he didn't ask the FBI to check me. He was working on Watson at the same time, if you'll remember. He got Watson, so that kind of slowed it down a little bit. He

wasn't sure he could get Marvin. When he got Marvin, it kind of slowed it down. The need wasn't as great evidently. I assume that. But for awhile I didn't hear anything about it, and then the next thing I knew the FBI was checking me pretty carefully and in a great hurry. The local FBI man told me they had a deadline on the check and everything. And when they completed the check--.

I had an income tax problem that had to be resolved before I could go to Washington. The tax people were claiming I owed them $50,000, and I was claiming I didn't; it was in the usual appellate procedure. I had my lawyer and it was going on. They wouldn't let me go to Washington until I got that settled, and I wasn't about to settle it on the basis of paying them $50,000. Johnson kept calling me and telling me to go on and get the tax thing settled, so finally I paid the $50,000. I think I was right, but I did it and settled the case. All this took a great deal of time.

Then after we had worked out all those problems, I owned a lot of stuff. I owned savings and loans and banks and bus companies--I owned a lot of things. Each one of them was a separate kind of problem as to what conflict of interest I could get into. Finally I set up a trust and put everything I had in the trust and appointed some trustees who couldn't tell me about what was happening in my businesses. This all took time.

I had so many second thoughts about it. Every day I had second thoughts. The first thing was that $50,000. That was a terrible blow. The second thing was whether I wanted to give up all that I had worked so hard to acquire. I had a lot of doubt about all of it at that point, but I finally decided that I wanted to do it and I would do whatever was

necessary, short of giving anything up completely.

M: When you first got up there, Mr. Jacobsen, what did your duties and assignments and responsibilities come to be?

J: When we first got there--my wife and I had gone up one weekend and had rented an apartment and had bought all new furniture to put in it, and it was not available. The furniture wasn't available, or something wasn't available. We were staying in a hotel, and as soon as President and Mrs. Johnson heard of this, they insisted that we move over to the White House, so we did that. We moved in. We kind of hated to. We didn't feel like living in somebody's house for so long, but we did, and we stayed there a long time. It took them a long time to get our apartment ready. The apartment is where Joe Frantz lives now. We had a two bedroom apartment in that building.

I went to work. I had to find me an office first. I had to work out my salary and all that kind of stuff, and we did all of that. The President asked me if I would occupy an office up on the second floor of the west wing because he said he didn't have any of his people up on the second floor. They were all the O'Briens, the old Kennedy folks, the congressional staff, and part of my duty was supposed to be in the congressional area. That's how the term legislative counsel came about. I said I'd occupy an office anywhere.

I want to set this up--bear in mind that I was a man whose income ranged between a hundred and fifty and two hundred thousand dollars a year when I left Austin. I was independent. I was no more responsible to one man than I was another man. I mean I didn't owe anybody anything in the way of personal things. I might have owed a lot of money, but I was as independent as a man can be. I had a nice income. I had a nice quiet life

compared with the many, many years of politics I had been in. I was able to go home at night, get through at the office and go home, be home by 6 o'clock easily, and just do what I wanted to. I had a nice home. My wife had been extremely ill for many, many years, and had about as much business being in Washington as the King of Siam. Those were things that I took into consideration at the time I went. I didn't owe the country very much, I don't think. I served in the war and served every time I had been called on, had eight or ten years of public service behind me. And so I did it without the ordinary thing--that wasn't a stepping stone for me to get where I wanted to go. I was all right. I'm back where I was before now. I wasn't looking for a big job in New York or the president of some corporation. I had no intention of giving up what I had acquired, or giving up this life. I was going to come back to it when I got through.

So I really had no reason to, number one, fear the President. What did I care! The greatest thing that could have happened to me would have been if he had fired me. I'd have come home. I had no reason to kowtow to him, because I didn't care. I wasn't looking for him to get me a job or anything else. Most of the reason that most of the writers say is responsible for people being loyal to Johnson or toadying to Johnson weren't true in my case at all, and I couldn't have cared less. I just would have been so happy if one morning he's have called me and said, "Jake, I don't like what you're doing. You'd better go home." That would have been the greatest thing that could have happened to me in my whole life. I'd have gone home, right then. Every stick of furniture we bought in our Washington apartment had a place right here in Austin to replace old furniture that we would move out. I'd bought my furniture

that way. I did everything that way. I had absolutely no intention of doing anything except serving my two years and coming back here. I'd like to set that up as the background for everything I did in Washington.

M: Was that the agreement you had with him, for two years you would come?

J: That's right. When he asked me, for example, if I'd go up on the second floor, what did I care! I didn't care if I sat on the first floor or the second floor or on the roof. It didn't bother me. I wasn't looking to be the guy with the office next to him. That just wasn't any thrill to me at all. And if he thought that I could do more good up on the second floor, sure, I went up there.

And I did good! I think I brought together the Kennedy legislative crowd and the Johnson people more than any other person had been able to do. They finally had someone that they could talk to that they knew could talk to Johnson. They finally had someone in their crowd who was a real Johnson man, and therefore they were no longer a kind of an offshoot Kennedy-type operation. In addition to the other things I did--that was one of the things I did. I worked with Larry O'Brien, and I took my states and went and called on my congressmen and did everything I was supposed to do; and also served to create a much, much better feeling between the holdover Kennedy group that was handling congressional relations and the Johnson incoming group. And this went on for awhile, two or three weeks, I guess. I was calling on my congressmen, and Larry told me what to do just like he did Henry Hall Wilson or Mike Manatos, anybody else. I let him know that this was what I wanted him to do, that I was there to serve. Larry and I became very, very fast friends, by the way. We're about as friendly as you get under circumstances such as this. We correspond. He gave me a nice gift when I left Washington. Elva and I

are good friends, and Florine and Elva are good friends. I always made it perfectly clear to him that he could command me to do anything he wanted me to do, and this was a good thing, I think. This served a good purpose. I went and called on my congressmen like I was supposed to, and got to know them, and find out what their problems were and establish a liaison with them so that when they did have problems they knew they could call me at the White House.

M: This was a period of great legislative activity.

J: Oh, yes.

M: Do you recall some of the problems that you had working on the Hill at that time?

J: I don't remember what bills we had specifically. We had the 14-B. We had a lot of--

M: Some of your voting bills.

J: We had a lot of big legislation, and I had five or six states that I was responsible for. One of them was Texas, I know that.

M: Aid to Education, Medicare, Rent Supplements, Model Cities.

J: I guess we had it all during that period. And I was working on all of them, doing my part of the headcount and going to the meetings and courting these congressmen around and doing what I had to do.

Then one day, he said, "Why don't you come to the bedroom in the morning," and I said, "All right fine." That started then, and Marvin and I would show up. I usually showed up about 7:30 because he'd usually get up early. Marvin would usually come in about 8:00. Then I took over with Marvin. We sort of shared our duties. The job Marvin had is a man-killer. It's just an impossible job, just under pressure all the time. So Marvin and I would share those duties. I would be first to the

bedroom in the morning and then theoretically every other night one of us would get off early and the other would stay late.

But each morning at 7:30, or if I worked late the night before I would have read most of the things that would be in the night reading--if I hadn't worked late, of course I hadn't read it and the first thing I'd do when I'd get into the bedroom in the morning was to get those papers together and start reading them because I knew he was going to talk about them before long. If I hadn't read them the night before I'd better get familiar with them. And I would. I'd familiarize myself as well as I could, but everything was in the night reading files so that when he'd say something about something I'd have some idea of what it was about.

We'd usually greet each other in the morning, very friendly fashion. We got to be, I would say, good personal friends. It wasn't a friendship that went back many, many years. It was a friendship that just developed. Mrs. Johnson and the President and I would talk and laugh. I'd try, as well as I could, to get his morning started off pretty good. It's a hard, terrifying job to be President of the United States, and to have a little peace or a little quiet or a little comfort--that's about all that a man can possibly expect under the circumstances. I would try to supply whatever part of that I could. When I'd come in, we'd usually have a little routine where he'd say, "Well, there's old Jake--I didn't think you were going to make it this morning." Of course, this was 7:30 and I was just staggering in. Mrs. Johnson was there, or else she'd be sleeping, and he'd say, "Well, how are things this morning, Jake." And I'd say, "Fine, Mr. President, just fine." And my nature is a Pollyanna type. Things don't get too black for me. And he'd laugh and say, "Well, Jake, always everything's fine with Jake." Of course that wasn't true, but that's what he thought. I

had more headaches than he knew about. But he seemed to enjoy that joke on me.

Then we might talk awhile about Texas and rain and ranches or banking or anything or the children--most anything. Or he would wake up busy, or he would be on the phone when I'd get there. Generally what we would do before I left, which was usually about 10:30 or 11:00, whenever his first appointment was, we would go over most of the things that were in the night reading that required any attention other than the notes he had made on it. It might involve a decision of the Department of Agriculture, it might involve foreign affairs, it might involve anything in the government that was in the night reading. Or it might involve getting a speech prepared where he'd read it the night before and then he'd say, "Jake, that speech in there." Of course, you've got to know enough to find the speech. Then he'd tell you what he thought was wrong with it. You'd try to make notes and try to get it in your mind, and then you'd go out and call the speech writer and say, "Now, your speech is so-and-so," and they'd usually have a copy of it. You'd say, "Now, this is how it ought to be changed." You'd give him the thoughts, and then you would have another draft come over. Or you'd send the speech back to them with your notes written on it where they could see what they were going to do. Or there would be some major crisis involving the state department, or the defense department.

But most anything could come up in the morning. Most anything that was a part of his night reading could come up in the morning. He might not ask my opinion on what he should do in Germany, for example, about the monetary crisis, but he would discuss it maybe, or throw his ideas out just to bounce them off of you. He thinks aloud a lot.

I tried not to ever inject myself in anything that I wasn't asked to. I don't think that's the proper role of an assistant. I would never fail to inject myself any time I was asked to. I was privy to most every major government secret other than those that occurred during the course of the day when I'd gone up to tend to my congressional duties. I felt like what little contribution I could make when asked for, I would make it.

That was the general routine in the bedroom in the morning. It could involve anything. It could involve most anything. It could involve some trivial nothing, or then again it could involve some major problem of this country.

I would say that most of us were generalists, that's true. My specialty, if I had one, was finance, mainly because I was in that business. But really that wasn't my specialty. I wasn't called legislative counsel in charge of finance. I guess the duty that was intertwined through everything else I did was this legislative business which I continued to do as time went on. And I did that always. During the course of the day I'd check with my congressmen and run up to the Hill to see what I could do. But other than that my functions were general in nature, and I did what I was told to do. In connection with a memo involving agriculture, he might say, "You call Orville and tell him let's see if we can do it this way, and see if you can handle it." And that's what I'd do. Orville Freeman happened to be a good friend, and I could get a lot out of Orville where he would resent other people calling. [interruption]

This was true in many instances where the particular subject matter that came up that morning was something that required some further action.

A President's time is very valuable. He didn't have a slot in his mind to say, "If this involved so-and-so, I've got to call so-and-so." He just turned to me or turned to Marvin or turned to whomever was there and would say, "Why don't you call so-and-so and let's see if we can resolve this on a different basis." Or, "Why don't you tell him it's okay for him to proceed like he has suggested in this memo." Just most anything that related to the subject he'd say that, and we would consequently get involved in the subjects. Now, you're involved maybe to the extent of passing on a message, but you can't even pass on a message if you don't know what you're talking about.

As a consequence, although I've read most of the books that have been published about the presidential assistants and their various duties, and they're all wrong. They're just wrong because what they want to think is that you compartmenalize everything. Maybe this is their way of doing it, but it wasn't the Johnson way of doing it. Johnson didn't compartmentalize his mind, and therefore he didn't subdivide the work in the office that way. The fact that a man didn't go out and make speeches or didn't get interviewed by the press or go to a lot of parties where he could spread a lot of rumors, that didn't mean he didn't do anything. It just meant he was discrete. He kept his mouth shut and went about his business and was a good presidential assistant.

And then the next thing that evolved was--of course, the President knew I wanted to come home as much as I could, and the first trip he made to Texas after I got on the staff, he asked me to come along. Well, on that trip we had Valenti and Watson, and we had a bunch of assistants along. And I didn't have much to do. But over a period of a week or two, it worked out to where I was the only assistant who came to Texas. I ran

the office down here. I came and no other man came, just me and Marie Fehmer and Vickie McCammon, who is now Vickie McHugh. The three of us were the only ones that came to the ranch.

Now, the press and other people might be in Austin, or others might come down to visit with him, but we were the three that really ran the show when he came to Texas. In that capacity, I looked at everything--all the memos that came in, all the phone calls, they all came to me. I just ran the show. I was the one, that either I or one of the two girls would call them to his attention. He might take some direct action as a result of some phone call, or if Rusk called, he'd return the call. But we were the ones that were in communication with him, by radio or by telephone or some way, twenty-four hours a day. I slept right down the road there at the ranch with the phones by my bed to get calls at any minute of the day or night. All the briefing papers came through me, the foreign briefings, the situation report in the morning came to me, and I took it to him. If he had any questions about it, I was the one that got the answers for him. The ranch operation was just the White House, of course, but with just three of the people. It was hard work. Lord, I'd get up and be with him when he woke up in the morning and sit with him until he'd start snoring at night after the rubdown. Maybe it might be 2 o'clock in the morning when I'd get to my room, but I'd be there at 7 the next morning, or 7:30; whenever he was awake, I was there. But that's what I did.

I did a lot of personal things for him. I bought most of his clothes. I arranged for all of his shirts and his ties and his socks and his shoes and everything else. I'm a man whose interests lie in that field. I became known around there as a pretty good dresser, and I do dress pretty well,

and I buy good clothes. I had a lot to do with his wearing better things and looking better and getting his hair cut better and getting his face made up better. As a matter of fact, when worse came to worse I'd do the makeup myself. So I did everything from sweep the floor to make decisions on major policies in the administration.

Now, that's enough about me. That's just setting the groundwork for really what I want to say about Johnson. I wanted to preface what I said by the fact that I was with him just many, many, many hours, and that I was with him not as a slave, not as a flunky, and not as a person whose whole future depended on what Johnson thought because it didn't. I didn't give a damn. I was there as an independent human being. I think the best example I can give you of that was one time I said, "Everything is fine, Mr. President," and he said, "Jake, how can you say that? Look at this paper, look at that paper, look what they're saying about me." There was one time he did that to me and I said, "Well, you don't see the name Jacobsen in those papers do you. It just says Johnson, J-o-h-n-s-o-n. They're not talking about me. It doesn't bother me much." So I wanted to preface what I say about him with what I've just said, that I had no reason and no fear that would put me in a position where I had to say one thing or another to him. Really, I couldn't care less.

I found him to be the kindest, nicest, compassionate man that I have probably ever met. Aside from being a brilliant man whose mind functions quicker in a variety of fields at the same time, with greater knowledge, with greater ability to retain information than any mind I've ever had the opportunity to watch. In addition to those things, in addition to his being a great statesman, he was a kind, considerate, compassionate man.

He loved humor, although his sense of humor might have differed from

yours or from somebody else's, but he loved his type of humor. He loved a story, he loved a joke, he loved to kid people. That's the hardest thing that people have to understand. When a man with title of President of the United States kids you, you're not sure if he's kidding you or killing you. But you must understand that here was a man who enjoyed the humor and the friendly, close association of the people he thought he could trust.

His compassion was great. I think that these tremendously great programs, some of which you enumerated as being before Congress at the time, the stories are that some committee dreamed them up, or some task force. Well, there were task forces, and there were committees, and there was somebody in charge of the legislative program. But if you'll study those programs, you'll find that most of them come from a compassionate heart, that the basis for most of those programs, the kernel of the program, not the how you do it●, and who handles it, and how do you get this done, but the real--the aid to education, all that is is a good compassionate thing where you want to help people who can't afford to get an education. The foreign medical business where we contribute money to these foreign countries to improve the health of their young people--all that is is just a good, kind heart is thinking.

M: What about the fact that it was also said to be a Kennedy blueprint?

J: It may have been. A lot of it may have been that. I don't know what Kennedy's blueprint was, and I couldn't care less. I didn't care what was Kennedy and what was Johnson. It was Johnson who was doing it. And whether it was a Kennedy blueprint or whose blueprint it was, I don't know. But you'll find that the thread that runs through all of the legislation in the social area is compassion, is kindness, is consideration,

is health. When you help a poor sick kid, that's Johnson. That isn't some task force. That isn't anything else. The task force may have put together the means for the accomplishment of the thing, but this is him. And this is the man that history has got to show is somebody whose real interest was the betterment of mankind, the betterment of the people who can't fend for themselves, the effort by a compassionate, kind government to provide the wherewithal for people who can't do it for themselves. Most of us can do it for ourselves, but there are a number of people in this country who just can't make it on their own, and this was an effort for government to fill that need, and to provide a better society in this country. I think that thread runs through every one of our domestic programs, as well as many of our foreign programs.

In the foreign field, here was a man who was a practical person, who all his life had lived by his knowledge of people and his ability to persuade people and to know what would persuade people and would cause them to do certain things. And here's a man who took that knowledge and applied it in the foreign area. When you dealt with Germany, you were dealing with a Kiesinger, or you were dealing with whoever was the prime minister. He was the spokesman. How do you get along with people like that! Well, how do you know to get along with them! How do you get along with the German who lives up at Fredericksburg! Not much different, not much different. How do you get along with a Prime Minister Wilson! Well, you know Wilson. You know what kind of a man he is, you know what causes him to react a certain way. You try to talk to him like you would to any other person you do business with. You don't try to make a big public issue of something that can be done privately.

I think we'll find in our foreign relations that our relations with

Latin America were excellent. Those people just loved Johnson. He was a man who taught school down here in South Texas, taught a bunch of Latin American children, who was raised in Texas with a bunch of Latin Americans, and who knew how to get along with them. I think our relations with that part of the world couldn't have been better.

Europe--well, Europe was a problem. De Gaulle was a problem. But maybe the way to solve de Gaulle was the wayyou do any other egotistical man, just leave him alone. Kennedy had given more attention to Europe than it needed. Maybe it was time just to leave Europe along for awhile.

Africa--why, the Communist-headway in Africa was completely blunted during the Johnson years.

The Far East-- what a problem! Viet Nam! Well, he inherited terrible problem. He could have walked away from it and left it like it was, or he could stay there and show the other countries of the world that we're not going to be pushed out. And this was the decision he made, based on meetings and meetings and meetings with experts of all types--military, Walt Rostow, and Dean Rusk, and all the experts who gave him their opinions. He would listen to everyone of them and with the patience of Job. I've seen him sit in meetings where people just talked and talked and talked, and I believe I'd have run them out of the room, and he'd just sit there and listen and listen and listen and absorb and absorb. That terrific sponge mind of his would just bring it all in before he'd have to make a final decision. He listened to them all--the doves and the hawks and the fighters and the lovers and the whole bunch of them. He heard them all out and when he finally made his decision, he did it on the basis that he knew best what was best for the country, what he thought was best for the country. And that prevailed during all of this administration.

But that's what I wanted to say about Johnson. And I say that without attempting--I'm trying not in any way to build myself up, I was just an assistant, I listened. I did what I was told to do. I heard, and I formed my own opinions. The only reason I build myself up at all is to point out that the conclusions I reached were not based on any fear of retribution or fear of some whip being cracked across my back or fear of being fired or fear of not getting the job I wanted to get up in New York or some big deal--I formed my conclusions based on what I think is an independent judgment. And these are the conclusions I reached about the man Johnson.

M: You've covered so very much. Let me just pull out some things and--

J: Go ahead. I wanted to make that statement. Now, you go on and pull out anything you want.

M: In your legislative work, how would you describe Mr. Johnson's relations with the Hill as you worked in it during this period--and on it?

J: Mr. Johnson's relations with the Hill were, of course, always good. He was one of them. He would not take a personal active interest outside the White House until Larry asked him to. O'Brien would handle it up to it got to the point where he'd say, "Well, Mr. President, we need you to make X number of calls," or, "We need you to call so-and so. We just can't budge him."

But Johnson worked all the time. When he'd have a dinner at night, he'd invite the leading congressional people. He'd sit there and visit with them or take them out on the boat. He was always just working. And he'd talk about his legislation. He'd just happen to have the chairman of this committee along at the right time. His relations, I thought, were real good. It made it easy to work the Hill, because you had a man whom

they liked pretty good up there.

M: Did you ever hear complaints that there was too much pressure from the White House, particularly during the '65-'66 era when there was so much legislation?

J: I have worked legislatures for the last twenty years and I've never failed to hear that there was too much pressure from the governor's office or from whatever office the executive happened to be in. It's always that. No congressman likes to get any pressure put on him. Sure, you hear that complaint all the time. I heard it here in Austin when I was in charge of the legislative program for Governor Daniel, and we passed forty bills out of forty. They were moaning and crying about what I was doing to them and what I wasn't doing to them. But they always do that.

M: Then you didn't feel there was any particular over-emphasis--arm-twisting. I think is the word they used--to get your legislation passed?

J: No, I don't think there was any over--

M: Usage of it.

J: Usage of it. It was just part of what you do.

M: Did you become involved in any of his trips that he took?

J: I went over every trip during the two years I was there. He never took a trip that I wasn't on.

M: Could you tell me a little bit about what happened on some of them?

J: They were all about the same. Sometimes Watson would go, sometimes he wouldn't. If Watson went, I just kind of was in the background and Marvin was the leader. When Marvin was around, I always deferred to Marvin. He was senior to me in point of time, and I've just not pushed myself in front of Marvin. On long trips such as the Far East trip, the long one,

Marvin and I would alternate days. One day he would be the man to walk next to the President with the speeches and the papers and all the hell-catching, and the next day I would be the man. When I wasn't the man, I could slip off and take it a little easier, and when he wasn't the man he could slip off and take it a little easier. But don't ever let Marvin tell you now--are you going to interview him?

M: I've interviewed him some. We haven't finished.

J: Don't ever let him tell you that he was a nothing, which he might tend to tell you. He was no more a nothing than I was, and I don't think I was a nothing. Marvin was a real trusted adviser who did many, many things the President asked him to do that were unpopular as hell and bore the brunt of them and never backed up and said, "Well, I did that because the man asked me to." He did it himself, and he was a big help. Gosh, he was a big help! And when he was around I always tried to play second fiddle to Marvin.

M: How was Mr. Johnson as a foreign emissary, his relations on these trips?

J: He couldn't have been better. He gets along with people. And you've got to bear in mind that here's a man, again I'll say, who for forty years or so had done nothing but get along with people. Then you've got to bear in mind that the prime minister of Thailand is an elected official primarily, and what it takes to get elected in Thailand is about the same thing it takes to get elected here. Therefore your ordinary politician is no different--I don't mean your ordinary politician. A politician in England is no different from a politician in the United States. A politician in France is no different, or in Japan. They have to be popular; they have to be

people that the people like. Therefore, they've generally got good personalities, they're outgoing, they've got their country in mind, and they're trying to sell just as hard as you're trying to sell. They're trying to get something out of you, or get you to do something. He can get along with people. On these trips he was terrific.

Down at Punta del Este he visited every head of every country who was there. If they didn't come to our place, we'd go to their place. And they talked to him freely. Most of them spoke English, and if they didn't, they'd have their interpreter there. They'd just lay it out, and we'd answer them. It was just man-to-man. All these state department guys would sit around and just die. They'd want to have big meetings with them there and all. I remember we went to see the President of Uruguay--I believe that's the one who's supposed to be a dictator, this man Stroesser. We walked over to his house. The President I walked over there, and we sat there with his son--that man's son, who was a delightful youngster--and we just talked and talked and talked. Oh, we might have had one of our National Security Council people with us to take notes. That's the kind of meetings we had. In some cases it would be more formal with position papers.

M: What about the around-the-world trip? That was later.

J: That was after I left. But I remember an instance down in Punta del Este. I was kind of in charge there. He invited one country's group over for breakfast one morning, and I couldn't find the protocol man anywhere. Protocol men were always gone when you needed them. They're either off partying or drinking or buying some gift for somebody. The biggest mess I've ever seen. The first morning we had the group in, and the protocol man hadn't been there to seat them. And here I was, I was in charge, and

I said, "Mr. President, you sit here, and Mr. Prime Minister (or Mr. President, of the other country), you sit on the President's right." I knew that had to be right. Then I said, "The rest of you just find seats around the table." And it was the biggest mess you've ever seen. Everybody was kind of bowing and scraping and trying to defer to everybody else, and it must have taken them fifteen minutes to get seated. I could see the President was not enjoying that very much, and I knew I had made a mistake. But there wasn't anything I could do about it--just had to get them seated. So I'd push them around and get Dean Rusk here and--.

After it was over, the President was still boiling. He said, "Jake, you don't know much about protocol, do you!" I said, "No, sir, obviously I don't know anything about protocol." He said, "Well, you damned sure better get you a protocol man. I don't want that to happen again." I laughed, I didn't cry, I didn't fall through the floor, I didn't feel a whip cracking me in the back--I just laughed. I said, "Well, it was in a hell of a shape, wasn't it!" We did get a protocol man and he wrote name plates for each person from then on. But that's the kind of man who was President--a great President, I think. We'll find out about that later. But on these trips he was terrific.

M: Anything else come to mind about some of these trips? I just can't be more specific with you. You've been too involved.

J: I remember one instance--I probably shouldn't tell you this. It was also on the Far East trip. We got--we were in New Zealand, I think. Australia had gone so good, and we were in New Zealand and oh, we had a big crowd out. Gosh, I never saw so many people in my life. We were coming up to the palace or the government hall, the capitol, whatever they called it, for a luncheon where he was going to have tomake a speech. He was in

his car with a loud speaker on it, and it was going to be televised. And he wanted somebody to put a little makeup on him because he looks better if you smooth out some of his deep wrinkles, although his real character is in his wrinkles. He has got a face full of character with all that wrinkled, rubbery skin--that's just him. But I used to fill them up a little bit to where they wouldn't look so dark. Then he had pretty black circles under his eyes. Anybody that stays up all night is bound to have that, and I used to cover those up a little bit when I had to, just a couple of places that I'd do. Iheard over the loud speaker--he'd been saying hello to all of these big balloons--and I heard over the loud speaker, "Jake Jacobsen, please hurry!" It was the President. "Jake Jacobsen, hurry up! Come on up front and bring your equipment with you." Well, I knew I had to get up there and put a little makeup on him.

Oh, there are a lot of different stories, but I don't want to derogate what I've said that I think is important by telling the many, many, many stories I could tell. One I do want to tell:

One time on one of our trips to the ranch we were driving around, and somebody had just acquired another piece of land down there, and on it was living a family just as poor as church mice. There were about six of them living in the same room--just a miserable situation, not untypical of country living in Texas. He drove by and looked at that place, didn't say anything, came back. The next thing he said, "Jake, you'd better get hold of our architect in Austin and have him design a couple of extra rooms for that house. Don't say anything about it." And I did. And he said, "You know, those people need clothes awfully bad." Well, the end result was that we took up a collection of old clothes among our friends, and the President personally paid for building onto that house, enough rooms to

where each of those kids--the girls had a separate room and the boys had a separate room and the mother and father had a separate room. I don't know how much he spent, and it's really not important, but he spent a lot of money to take care of that family. That was his own poverty program. I've seen him do many of those things. We used to go to church, and he'd never put less than ahundred dollars in that plate. I used to put twenty in and I thought I was really doing something, but he'd always give Father Schneider a hundred dollars or more.

Then there's the story about the kneelers at the church over at Stonewall. I'm Catholic, and we'd been going to that church every Sunday when we went to the ranch. Marie would just make us all go to church. I don't go usually, but she'd make sure I went. And the kneelers in that church were just awful, they had nails sticking out of them, your knees would get so sore by the end of a mass that you'd just want to collapse. The President said, "Jake, why don't you do something about that church." So I ordered some kneelers. I thought the bill was going to be a hundred dollars--at least that's the estimate they gave me--and it turned out to be five hundred dollars. Of course, I put the kneelers in and made it comfortable. The President likes to tell that story about how he got me to buy the kneelers for the church over there at Stonewall. Actually, he donated much more than I did, but I did pay for the kneelers. The end result was that it made that little church into something that is just beautiful. The people then figured these outsiders were doing things, and they ought to get behind it, and they just made the church beautiful.

But he's a man who just takes an interest in people. And that prevails in everything that happened, foreign, domestic--the whole run of things.

M: Mr. Jacobsen, another area that continually is written and talked about is the frction between the Kennedy and Johnson staff and the principals involved. Through this period, of course, that you were involved in, it would have been Robert Kennedy who would have probably been the main friction. Can you enlighten the issue, the subject? Was it there? Was it a problem?

J: Yes, I think there had to be some friction between Robert Kennedy and the President, and I can't put my finger on the reason for it. But I always had the feeling that Bobby Kennedy was an ambitious man and always felt that Johnson was in his way, and that he, Kennedy, commanded a great deal of respect in the Democratic party and Johnson was head of the party. The only occasion that I saw the two of them together was one day when Marvin was gone and I had taken that place, and I brought Kennedy in and sat him down and then I left.

M: Was Mr. Johnson sensitive to what became called the Kennedy legend--and Camelot?

J: Let me say this. If you assumed the leadership of the oral history program, and you were running it, and all you heard was what a great job the man before you did, and you were actually doing a better job, and you knew you were, you wouldn't particularly like it. That's about the way I'd put that. I don't think that's any more than human nature.

M: How would you describe Mr. Johnson's relations with Hubert Humphrey as his Vice President?

J: I would describe them as good. I would say they were good. I would say that he was as nice to Humphrey as he was to anybody. He treated Hubert well, it seemed to me. And I don't know that this is true. I'm no expert in the area. I've never seen another President and Vice President operate

together. It seemed to me however that he tried to overcome the basic problem that arises as the result of having a Vice President. He's a man who's there with nothing to do. He tried to bring Vice President Humphrey in on decisions, tried to be nice to him, tried to give him his rein as much as he could. He tried, I think, to overcome the fact that the vice presidency is not a very good job. It's not a very active job, and he tried, I think, as best he could to overcome that. Of course, bear in mind a Vice President is what the name implies. He is the Vice President, and when he opens his mouth, ithas great consequences. So you have to be careful. There are times when you must advise him as to what he ought to do and what he ought not to do. I'll put the bee on Marvin--I think he had more to do with that relationship than probably anybody in the White House. He'll kill me for that.

M: Another area that received a lot of attention--it was all in the form of communications, so I'll put them together--was what they called Mr. Johnson's telephonitis, and also his consciousness of the news media--the tickers in his office and the television, the three sets of television.

J: I'd say without a doubt that he was extremely conscious of what was being said about this country, the government, and him on the media. No question about that. He read several papers in the morning, had those ticker tapes in his office to see what was going out. He'd watch the news programs on television to see what was being said about him. Now, again I say, I have no knowledge of what other Presidents did. I can't compare him with other Presidents. I think, and I thought then, that perhaps he was overly sensitive to what was being said about him.

On the other hand, I don't feel that I'm capable of really making a good judgment decision in that area. Watching those news tickers gave you

almost as much information about the government as being President because you'd read things that came out of departments that you knew nothing about. It's such a big government. He would get a lot of information off the tickers that there wasn't any other way to get, and he would react accordingly.

The White House, it seems to me, is so isolated that really you can get out of touch with everything in the White House. Although you're in touch with many things, you're really out of touch. It may be that watching those tickers and listening to those programs kept him in touch better. You see, you're a prisoner in that White House. There's nowhere to go. You're just there. You can't go outside the fence. You can't do anything. The information get is fed to you, but he wasn't going to be completely dependent on what was fed to him. He was going to be getting it on his own, too.

M: Another area--this is going to be inconsistent, but this comes to mind. It would relate to Texas problems and Johnson and it would be the development and magnification of the TFX issue. Primarily this was because General Dynamics was a Texas company. Did you get that issue at all?

J: It was over before I got there.

M: I think they reviewed it a few more times.

J: They may have, but it was about over when I got there.

M: All right. I'd like to go into a little bit of the operation of the staff together and within the West Wing. Did you think there was a sort of political balance of the staff members in their own philosophy?

J: I really never thought much about that, although I've read a lot about it and have talked about it. But I don't think really that was--

M: Intentional?

J: I don't think that was in the picture at all. For instance, what difference does it make if Marvin Watson happened to come from Daingerfield and happened to have worked for a very conservative man! What difference does that make! He was working for Johnson then. He wasn't working for Mr. Germany. What difference did it make that Bill Moyers happened to be a Baptist preacher and a big Peace Corps man. He was working for Johnson. All of us reflected Johnson's views.

If he asked my opinion on an issue that I happened to think conservatively on, well, he'd know what kind of answer he was going to get, and that would be my answer as I gave it. But the final decision was his. It might be that the balance in the staff-well, he set the programs. We didn't set them. The Great Society was his, of course, not ours. The fact that I didn't like some particular measure in the Great Society couldn't make the least bit of difference. I wasn't going to sabotage it. I was going to push it. It was his program. I'm not sure that I concur in any way with the fact that the staff dominates the boss, I don't think that happens at all, and I don't think it makes any difference what our personal political views were. That may be naive and that may be provincial, but that's true.

M: Did you have occasion to find out that something you were working on was also being worked on by other people?

J: Oh, yes. Of course, that's typical. If you're smart, you check with theother people before you get to doing something. And if you're a smart staff man, you get to know your staff. And you say to yourself, "Now, who would he call on to do this if he was going to call on somebody." And you go see that guy and ask him, "Now, has he asked you to do it." The guy would usually say, "Yes." Then you say, "Well, he has asked me to do it,

too, so why don't we just get together."

M: I think what I'm leading up to is, did the relations between staff and the President--and going back the other direction in theprojects you were working on, your own political philosophy, all the things that would come to bear in a normal working situation--did it cause any friction to develop among staff members?

J: No. There were frictions. You can't blink that away. What caused the frictions were personalities, not political philosophies and not Ph.D.'s and not great nebulous issues. What caused friction was that some guy would be building his own empire, and he'd be trying to undercut everybody--or he'd be abrasive, and that's what caused frictions. The same things that cause friction between you and Bill McSweeny--the fact that he gets mad and says something to you the wrong way, or the same thing that causes frictions between me and my law partner. If I'm overly aggressive and if I'm mean and if I'm undercutting somebody, or if I'm calling in a reporter and saying, "Don't say I told you this, but Jack Valenti is a no-good SOB, and he did so-and-so, and he did so-and-so, and I'm a great man." I've seen that all my life, all of my life. There are people in this world who think that the way you build yourself up is to knock somebody else down. And that's what causes friction in a staff. Then of course there are the ordinary jealousies about who was closest to the man. Some people want to push themselves in. They think that's a great thing. You had some of those things. You have that on any staff.

M: Was this particular problem while you were there, and between whom?

J: Oh, I guess the biggest problem was Moyers. Moyers was always undercutting somebody. Or he'd call you in on his own and say, "Now, Jake, so-and-so is just fixing to write a mean article about, you, and I stopped him from

doing it." Well, about half the time that wasn't true at all. Nobody was wanting to write mean articles about me because they didn't know me. They didn't know what to write about. They had nothing to write about me. I didn't talk to them. Any information they got about me, they got from somebody else, because I wouldn't see a reporter if I just fell on my face. They didn't pay me. I didn't give a damn about getting my name in the papers. I'm right back here in Texas where I wanted to be. I'm not trying to be a hero. I didn't want to get a bunch of publicity. I wasn't looking for anything. I'm right back where I started from, right back here in Texas doing not much better than I was doing before.

M: Were you unable to talk to newsmen? Was there any restriction put on you?

J: Not on me, no. I just didn't want to. You can't come out ahead with those people. They don't want to say anything nice. That's not what they're in business for. Oh, I got interviewed a couple of times. Some girl on a Baltimore paper wanted to do a story about me, and I talked to her, but not much. This was very seldom.

M: Was anonymity an essential factor in this position?

J: I thought so, and the President thought so. Presidents think that their staff ought to be a staff. If they get too much on their own, they've got their own axes to grind. They're not going to be a staff man then. They're trying to protect their own images, dove or hawk or whatever. They want to say, "Well, I was the one that persuaded him to do so-and-so." Well, that's just not true.

M: Mr. Jacobsen, I'd like to know what your assessment of some of the staff men is, and their contribution. There are a number of people, of course.

J: I didn't know too many people in the E.O.B., although Arthur Perry was over there and he's a great man, and there were some others over there

that were fine people. My assessment of those in the west wing with whom I worked was that they were all extremely competent people, very able, very intelligent, each of them with their own capability. Some of them did things I didn't like. They were too pushy or they were mean or they were building their own little show. But they were all capable, and they all had a tremendous amount of ability in their field.

Larry O'Brien was just about as capable a legislative man as I've ever seen. He was an able politician. Lee White and Harry McPherson were fine lawyers and could really do a good job of looking after the legal functions in the White House. Jim Jones was about as hard-working and bright a young man as I've ever met. Mike Manatos and Henry Hall Wilson were just tops in their field.

M: You had Valenti and Moyers, Bundy, Califano, Watson, Rostow.

J: Yes, they are all capable. Walt is just a dream, just a nice man, a brilliant man, and a real asset to the President who wasn't abrasive with him, wasn't harsh, but surely gave him all the facts and was helpful in making decisions. Moyers was--gosh, in spite of his ambition, which just about ran him into the ground--was, really for a kid, just a kid, and just able to put together speeches and programs and just able to take a word from the President and build it and do something with it. Califano was an empire builder. Nobody liked Califano,but he was bright as hell. I say nobody. I thought he was a fine fellow and we got along just great, but I wouldn't trust him around the corner. But he was a fine assistant to the President. There wasn't any doubt in my mind but that he was a good assistant to the President. And I didn't see anybody on that staff who wasn't good for the President. Busby was just a bright man who could write well, and who had scads of good ideas. I would say that from my vantage point of being with him and being more or less--.

I had no reason to get into these interstaff squabbles. Moyers treated me about as bad as a man could be treated. Every time he'd get a chance to take a swipe at me he would. I don't know why. I had no animosity toward Bill. He's a nice kid. But from my vantage point of being with the President, watching him operate, I'd say they all served him. And he knew the ones that were trouble makers. They were good for him, too. They'd deliver.

M: While you were there, Valenti, M9yers, and Bundy left.

J: Yes.

M: Was there any problem associated with their departing?

J: I expect that Bundy just couldn't run the White House so he decided to go to the Ford Foundation. But there wasn't any problem about it. He went to the President and told him he wanted to leave. The President said, "Well, you've got this fine opportunity; you'd better go." Valenti, of course, the President helped him get that job. Poor Valenti, he was being slaughtered anyway. The press was just, oh, God! Poor Jack was just getting killed, so he was probably better off getting out while he still had his skin on him. And Moyers got an opportunity to go to Newsweek and left--Newsday, whatever it's called, and left. I don't think the President cried very many tears when Bill left.

I must say I think George Christian was a far better press secretary than Bill Moyers ever thought about being. I think the credibility gap was purely a Moyers invention because he'd answer too damned many questions. He wouldn't every say, "I don't know." He just had to have an answer for everything, and that creates a credibility gap. Whether it was the President's answer or his, you never did know that.

M: Is there any one of the men whom Mr. Johnson relied on who had a great

deal of influence over him as far as the decisions--?

J: Oh, yes. I'd say that there were a lot of people that had influence on him. I'd say Rusk and McNamara were probably the two who really had the greatest amount of influence. He relied on them more than he did on anybody. Then each of the cabinet officers in theirparticular area was extremely influential. The staff people insofar as they didn't try to interpose themselves between the cabinet and the President, when they were just acting as they should and would give the cabinet member access to the President rather than try to interpose their views, were influential, too.

We all had our ways of influencing him. Mrs. McSweeny, you give me the right to see somebody at 7:30 every morning until they go to work, and I want to tell you I'm going to have some influence on him. Now they may not think I have any influence over them, but I'm damned sure going to have it. You give me access to all the conversations that take place and I'm going to have some influence, whether I do it by raising my eyebrows or by looking down or just some way or another, I'm going to have some influence. Whether I want it or not, I'm going to have it. You can't sit there like a snake. You've got to have some expression. You've got to say something some time.

M: Was there any problem while you were there of friction between staff men and cabinet officers, feeling they were blocking access to the President?

J: Yes, there was that problem, particularly in the case of Califano, the majority of the time I was there. A lot of the cabinet people thought he tried to step between them and the President.

M: Particularly cabinet members?

J: I think John Connor was probably the man--he finally left, he just couldn't stand it. But I'd say, as you interview cabinet members, if they tell you

the truth, you will find that many of them felt that way.

A cabinet member ought to always have access to the President unless the President doesn't want him to. An assistant should never take it on himself to block access to the President by a member of his cabinet, or any other high government official for that matter, any presidential appointee. Now, if Orville Freeman saw fit to call me rather than call the President to ask me to convey a message to the President, that's fine. But I think he should havethe right to call him himself. If he felt in his judgment that the msssage would be delivered at a time when it would be better received if he called me, that's his judgment. But it's not my judgment, it's not him trying to call the President and me saying, "No, you can't get to him." Now, I don't think for a minute that I'm any dumber than any one of those cabinet members. I think I've got as much sense as any one of them. That's as egotistical as I am. I'm a successful businessman. I've done many things in my life. I've made lots of money, and I think that I'm just as smart as they are. But I wasn't picked to be a cabinet man. I wasn't picked to be secretary of the treasury, although I own four banks and three savings and loans and do more financing and owe maybe ten million dollars. I wasn't picked to be secretary of the treasury, but Joe Fowler was. And he's the one that ought to be able to express his viewpoint, not Jake Jacobsen.

M: Did you think that the holdovers from the Kennedy cabinet served Mr. Johnson well, or should he have named his own men to these posts?

J: That's a thing that's hard for me--. Yes, I think they served him well.

M: I don't mean that they didn't serve him well, but would it have been more to his benefit had he named his own people?

J: Personally, I think, yes. But I didn't have to pick the new people. That's

a hard job. It's like the name Johnson being in the paper, not Jacobsen. And if somebody was criticized, it was Johnson, not Jacobsen. So, yes, personally I think he'd have been better off, but that's just purely my personal opinion. I didn't have the decision to make.

M: Did you see any reason that you could give for your feeling on this?

J: Well, I'd say, yes, in that when you pick your own people, their loyalties are to you, and they're more helpful to you. A stranger is a stranger. You're never absolutely sure--but then again, McNamara, gosh, the President relied on him constantly, and Rusk. They weren't his appointees.

M: Swinging back a little bit to some questions I had about working with Mr. Johnson directly, there's an awful lot written about Mr. Johnson's temperament, and losing his temper, being angry with staff men, or I would imagine, also with many other people; and also the development of what was called a "freeze-out" to people. Did you see this occur?

J: Yes, I saw him lose his temper, infrequently however. But I think I'd have lost my temper under the same circumstances. I mean I don't think it was a situation where I can judge the man. The times I've seen him get mad at somebody, I'd have gotten madder probably. I'd have probably hit them over the head with something--for stupidity, or for overt acts that were obviously intended to do harm. I'd have gotten madder than he would. I've seen him get mad a few times, not very often though. I've seen him not get mad when I would have. I've seen him be kind to people when I wouldn't have been kind to them. I've seen him be as calm and as fair as any man I've ever seen. No, I don't find that to be a problem. Yes, I've read many of the stories about how mean he could be.

M: Was it abusive when he lost his temper?

J: I didn't see it.

M: Was it a case of people falling into disfavor with him and he not associating with them or not being in contact with them?

J: Yes, I've seen that happen, yes. When he had reason to mistrust them, he would try not to put them in a position where they could abuse his trust.

M: That seems reasonable.

J: That does seem reasonable, doesn't it!

M: Another thing there's quite a bit written about is Mr. Johnson's earthy language.

J: Yes, of course, and his language is about as earthy as mine. I've spared you a lot of my earthy language today. He does from time to time use earthy language, and so do I. That's our way of doing business. That's the way we've been brought up. That's the way you make a person understand your problem if you bring it down to his level, or if you put it in words that he can understand, and sometimes those words are rather earthy. I don't see a thing wrong with that. I'd say your vocabulary is pretty poor if you've got to curse, but maybe my vocabulary is poor. But I do find that I get my point across. When I compare some difficult problem with one that's very, very simple and you can see the answer to the simple problem, and therefore you can see the answer to the difficult problem--which is what most people call earthy.

M: Did it have much of a shock effect on people?

J: I'd say yes, oh, hell, yes. Those that didn't live down here, for example, those that lived in the rarified atmosphere of what I'd call the East or Georgetown or something like that, why they'd be shocked at the way you'd make a point sometimes.

But really, I've been an apologist here, and I don't want to be one. He's not a perfect man by a hell of a long shot, and I"ve had my falling

outs with him personally. I've gotten to where I just don't want to mess with him--just about the way he'd do me where I don't want to put in a position of misusing my trust. And I don't want to give the impression that I'm apologizing for him. I don't want to give it for the tape, I'm not worried about you. But I want to say this: that I see nothing wrong with using earthy language, whether a man is President of the United States or head of a law office or head of a bus company in San Salvador like I am. If the way I can make a person understand the point I want to get across to him is by calling him a son-of-a-bitch, or by referring to something as a son-of-a-bitch or a damned tough problem or something like that, that's the way they'll understand me. Then there's no question about them understanding me. Now, they may be shocked. They may think I ought to say that this is a very difficult problem. Well, there are a lot of people who wouldn't understand what you're saying if you say that. But they can damned sure understand when you say, "That's a son-of-a-bitch of a problem."

M: Something else that's written about an awful lot is what they call the Johnson treatment, his great persuasive talents.

J: Yes, I've seen that happening, and that is true. I've seen him work on people, just really work on them, and he can persuade them. There's no question about that. You can call it the Johnson treatment or the McSweeny treatment, because I'll bet you Bill McSweeny, when he wants to see a point, can work on somebody pretty good. Maybe he's not President of the United States so he's not in the limelight, but when he wants to sell a point, he'll work on somebody. Well, it's the same thing.

M: Did you see a pretty exemplary event of this, occasion of this?

J: No, I've seen it happen so many times when the President really wanted to make a point with somebody, he would really work on them. He would just

sell them and sell them, and then he'd give them a hard sell. And that's what it is, it's a hard sell. And he talks pretty good. They might not get a chance to answer him much, but that's a hard sell. He's just selling, just like I'd be doing if I were trying to sell you a vacuum cleaner. I'd be just selling you as hard as I could on the merits of my vacuum cleaner. And every time you'd open your mouth to say something bad about my vacuum cleaner, I'd try not to give you a chance.

M: Could you object? Were you able to--I don't mean necessarily in this instance--but could you say no?

J: If you were polite.

(end of tape)

INTERVIEWEE: JAKE JACOBSEN (Tape #4)

INTERVIEWER: DOROTHY PIERCE MC SWEENY

May 27, 1969

M: I was asking you about being able to object or say you did not agree with him.

J: And the answer is yes, of course, you could object. If you and I are engaged in a conversation and you interrupt me possibly you'll never get anything done, but if you'll let me finish what I'm saying, you can say anything you want to after that. You can object, you can disagree with me or make a speech of your own.

M: You did mention this once before, but again this is an area where there are a lot of things written, the so-called credibility gap in part stems from what appears to be misleading information that was given and then changed or nominations that were supposedly to be made and did not occur or trips--

J: There was a lot of that. I suspect there were some situations where the White House was responsible for that. In many instances itwas the press that created their own credibility gap by hearing the rumor that so-and-so was going to happen and then printing it. And then when it didn't happen, saying, "Well, there's the credibility gap." And I say in some instances Moyers created it by saying things he probably shouldn't have said. But I think probably there are some instances where the White House is responsible for changing it's mind, for example.

M: Did Mr. Johnson--was it part of his nature that he just wanted to be the first to break the news?

J: Yes, I'd say that's true, but I don't think it was a life or death proposition. Yes. He wanted to be the first. When it was his information he wanted to tell it. But I don't think it was a thing that would override his good judgment in making a particular decision.

M: Were there occasions when as a staff assistant Mr. Johnson asked you to give all of the testimony on one side of this--in other words, sort of debate the issue between yourself and a member of the cabinet or another member of the staff to bring out all sides of a question?

J: I don't remember a situation like that but it may have happened. It didn't happen to me.

M: There was a disaffection in the country and particularly stemming from the Eastern intellectuals. This is towards Mr. Johnson, towards his politics. Was this much a concern of Mr. Johnson's and his decline in his popularity? It would have really started more after you left. Well, toward the end of the time you were there.

J: I didn't understand your question. My mind was wandering.

M: I was thinking of the decline of Mr. Johnson's popularity and it in part stemmed from or was attributed to beginning with the Eastern intellectuals. Was this much of a concern of Mr. Johnson's and how did this affect his thinking?

M: Oh, I think it was a concern of his. I think he recognized the fact that his popularity had declined. I've heard him say that he knew that before he left office that his popularity had to reach a low ebb because he was making many unpopular decisions. There wasn't anything he could do about it. He had to make the decision based on his best judgment, on not what his popularity was going to be.

M: Did he particularly try to sway the intellectual element? They became

quite critical, severely critical.

J: I think he tried as best he could through others to persuade the intellectual establishment to his viewpoint. I think he did it with speeches and tried to do it in his operation of the presidency. I think he was unsuccessful at it.

M: Did you see Mr. Johnson in operation under some crisis situations that you recall that pretty much reflect his ability and talent to cope with them?

J: Sure. I saw him when we first started bombing Viet Nam and saw him through all the crises we had in the two years I was there. He handled it well and kept calm and tried to be reasonable.

M: How were decisions reached in these situations?

J: Well, in many different ways but in most situations he'd just hear everybody out. He'd hear all sides of it. Anybody that wanted to talk about it he'd let them come talk to him and then he'd finally make a decision.

M: How much influence would you say that Mrs. Johnson--

J: Extreme amount of influence. She's a great lady and has a tremendous influence on the President. She would not interfere to any great extent in the operation of the office but she was very influential in her dealings with the President. He has a great respect for her and she's a woman of great judgment. I don't mean to infer that she took part in day-to-day decisions in the White House, but when called upon she always had a real contribution to make on questions that we were presenting.

M: Was she a leveling force on Mr. Johnson?

J: Oh, I think so. Oh, yes. I hate to give you short answers.

M: In thinking about the time you spent with Mr. Johnson, were there reoccurring

thoughts or things that were on his mind predominantly during that period?

J: It had to be. I'll just name a few. Viet Nam. The economy. Our relationship with all the foreign countries were almost constantly on his mind. They reoccurred constantly because that was just part of the presidency. They kept cropping up again and again.

M: I think I was more or less thinking of times in which you were not dealing directly with the problem, but just say in the moments of relaxation he would discuss the problems that we was dealing with.

J: That's exactly right.

M: That's what you were talking about? All right. Did he ever indicate or did you ever feel that he had a certain wariness toward military advice?

J: No.

M: Was he particularly overly receptive to it or more receptive to it?

J: I think they were just all advisers, like everybody else. In their field they were probably very influential. He was very receptive of their advice in their field.

M: Mr. Jacobsen, I have that you left in the spring of 1967.

J: May of 1967.

M: May of '67.

J: Two years after I got there.

M: Was the President expecting that you would leave?

J: No. He was very grateful, complimented me very much by trying to persuade me to stay, by just giving me the full treatment. But finally when he realized I was going to leave, he was very nice to me. He gaveme many gifts. He was very complimentary.

M: Did you have occasion to see him much between 1967 and 1969?

J: Yes.

M: What instances were there or what relationships--

J: Many times. When I'd go to Washington and he'd find out I was there, he'd ask me to come by in the morning and visit with him. We'd talk about things a nd visit. Nothing specific. I never had occasion to talk with him about any specific problems.

M: Did you have any inclination of what was developing or what came about on March 31, 1968?

J: On many, many occasions, Mr. Johnson would indicate--I always thought he was talking, that he shouldn't run again. "Never ought to run. Being President is too much," that he ought not to do it. I thought that was just talk. I really had no inkling other than having overheard him on many occasions when I was with him. He'd talk about what a terrible job it was; how a man shouldn't be President.

M: Did Mr. Johnson enjoy the presidency?

J: Oh, yes. Very much. Every indication was that he enjoyed it very much although it's a pleasant misery or whatever they call it. It's miserable, but he did seem to enjoy it very much.

M: Did you think there was any possibility that Mr. Johnson could be persuaded to run again in 1968?

J: No, I don't think so.

M: I believe that you attended the '68 convention in Chicago of this year?

J: Oh, yes, Oh, say that again! I said absolutely not. What a minute! Do I think he could have been persuaded?

M: Yes.

J: I think he could have been and would have been. I just tried the whole damned convention to tell him that we could have stampeded that convention floor.

M: There was a lot of talk about that convention and that Mr. Johnson was in control of it. What was your opinion of this?

J: Well, he actually was there all the time! I don't know that we were in control but we could have gotten control if we had wanted to.

M: Did you feel that there was any preparation for a draft-Johnson movement before the convention got underway? Would this have been a possible way to get Mr. Johnson to run? And had this been a consideration leading up to the period?

J: It was by some people, but it never materialized in the way that it could have materialized. The only draft-Johnson movement I saw was by those kooks who wanted to nominate him to show that he was responsible for the Viet Nam war, and let him run on that platform. But, no, there was a lot of serious thought given to a draft but it was just never materialized.

M: Did you ever discuss this with Mr. Johnson?

J: Not before, during or since.

M: Did you feel that there was a serious draft-Kennedy movement afoot in that convention?

J: I think there was an effort, but I think they saw that it would have been a big flop. In my way of thinking there was really only one thing that convention could do, and that would have been to nominate Johnson. It never really got started. It would have been wrong for the Johnson people to start it.

M: I think the reason I was pursuing that was that I think that was the reason given that the things that did occur at the convention, some abrupt closings at night time; planks that were pro-administration, that were supposedly evidencing Johnson was in control and this was, to use a phrase that was popular, keeping his options open during this period.

J: It may have been. I don't know that we were in control but I say again, I think we could have gotten in control at any time that we wanted to. And we may have had some control but we could have gotten in control any time we wanted to.

M: Previous to his withdrawal on March 31, what was your assessment of his opportunities for reelection?

J: I thought he would be reelected but I thought it would be a very difficult campaign, not because of the Republicans, but because of the feeling in the country about the Viet Nam war and the demonstrations and the difficulties we would encounter traveling around the country.

M: Had that become a problem during the period that you were there? This talk about him being a captive President?

J: It hadn't become as big a problem as it did become.

M: Did Mr. Johnson feel that he was somewhat limited to where he could go?

J: I never got that impression. I think some of the staff people felt it more than he did.

M: Mr. Jacobsen, we talked about a great many different subjects and some of them too superficially or some of them maybe we haven't covered. Is there any areas that you particularly think--

J: No, I'd say from about ten minutes to four on we've covered everything too superficially and I can't think of anything. It's getting late. I'd better get on with my business.

M: Let me just ask you in conclusion if you could tell me what you think were some of his most significant accomplishments and perhaps his least successful.

J: Well, I think his most significant accomplishments were in the field of domestic legislation where the Johnson programs will be the keystone of

domestic operation in this government for many years to come. I think he also had a real accomplishment in the foreign area in those areas of the world where things stayed quiet and peaceful. I think it's perfectly obvious to say that the inheriting of the Vietnamese war was probably the worst thing that happened to him. But I think what he did was right. Hindsight would say he probably could have picked better people for offices but they're hard to find.

M: What did you think were his personal strengths and weaknesses?

J: Well, I would say that his personal strengths were his tremendous ability to grasp, to learn, and his longtime knowledge of government and his decisiveness and his knowledge of history and of the operation of the presidency.

I'd say his weaknesses, if any, is his inability to speak with the kind of flair that people like to hear, particularly those who have so much to do with forming public opinion; his inability to overcome his native twang. His native way of speaking was a real detriment. I don't know of any others that I can think of offhand.

M: Mr. Jacobsen, by way of concluding, is there some particular story or occasion that sort of summarizes the way you thought that he ran the administration, the presidency, and his political ability?

J: No, Icant think of any that aren't already in this tape somewhere. No, I don't think of any particular story that would summarize. The summary is best gained from something I said back when we started on my time as presidential appointee. I think I summarized it pretty well back then, I can think of any way to resay it or to say it in any more capsule form.

M: I have concluded with other people that I've interviewed, although I think you may have indicated this, with how they thought that history would judge Mr. Johnson. It's kind of a difficult question to answer, and I

think you've probably indicated how you feel about it, but would you like to comment on that?

J: Yes. I think that history will judge him well in the domestic field. I hope that we don't have too many more situations. You see, you talk about wheeler-dealer and I told you that I think that they would have called him something besides a wheeler-dealer if he hadn't come from Texas back in the Senate days. The fact that he came from Texas and the fact his history was characterized as a wheeler-dealer--we have too many scandals I'm afraid that he's going to be recorded as a wheeler-dealer. If we have too many of these Fortases and if situations arise where times when he was President, when he was the one who was the mover, it turned out that he was misled about somebody, and this is brought out and this becomes sort of scandal, he may go down in history as a wheeler-dealer. I hope not. I hope that history will look at what he did rather than what might occur after he leaves office; such as, again, the Fortas thing. But I think history ought to treat him pretty good. He tried harder, worked harder, had a bigger heart than most any President I've read about. But as you said in asking the question, that's a hard one to answer.

M: Thank you very much.

J: Oh, you're welcome.

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Dorothy H. Jacobson
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Sept 13 1978
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acting James E. O'Neill
Archivist of the United States

October 4, 1978
Date

INTERVIEW I

INTERVIEWEE: Mrs. Dorothy Jacobson

INTERVIEWER: T. H. Baker

March 5, 1969

Tape 1 of 1

B: This is the interview with Mrs. Dorothy Jacobson. Mrs. Jacobson, if I may summarize a long and active career here, you were born in Minnesota, and you have a B.A. and M.A. from the University of Minnesota. You've been a public school teacher and are married to Mr. George W. Jacobson. In 1934 and on to 1941 you were with the Minnesota Department of Education except for a time out in '36 and '37 with the National League of Women Voters here in Washington.

J: That is correct.

B: And from 1945 to '55 you were an assistant professor of political science at Macalester College.

J: That's right.

B: Incidentally, were you there when Mr. Humphrey was there?

J: He had been there earlier as a part-time teacher.

B: And of course he's back there now.

J: And he's back there now.

B: Then in 1955 you became an assistant to the Governor of Minnesota, Governor [Orville] Freeman.

J: Yes.

B: And during that period, too, from '49 to '56 you were chairman of the Democratic Farmer-Labor party in Minnesota.

J: I was what they normally call a vice-chairman. They have a man always for chairman, not a woman.

B: Then in 1961 you became a special assistant to Mr. Freeman when he became Secretary of Agriculture.

J: That's right.

B: And in 1964 you were named Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for International Affairs.

J: Yes.

B: Have I left out anything?

J: No, I think that's a big enough summary.

B: Okay. To kind of start back at the beginning, do you recall when you first met Mr. Johnson? Did you have any acquaintance with him before 1960?

J; No. I had no acquaintance with him before '60. I met him at the convention.

B: May I ask, by 1960, and the events leading up to the nomination of that year, had you as an active Minnesota politician formed an opinion of Mr. Johnson?

J: Yes, I had an opinion with the reserve that I always have when I don't know a man too well and don't know how he works personally. I was of the opinion that he was a very effective leader in Congress; that he was substantially more liberal than at least the average Minnesotan thinks a Southern leader is; that he was a supporter of the New Deal and so on. I had enough of this type of opinion to have been one of the spearheads in the Minnesota delegation at the convention of 1960 to not only get acceptance of his choice as Vice President, but to work very hard for his acceptance by others, as we did on the Michigan delegation which was very unhappy with this choice.

B: I was going to ask you about that. But before that, I assume you were close to Mr. Humphrey?

J: Yes.

B: And Mr. Humphrey, in turn, was close to Mr. Johnson in the Senate.

J: Yes.

B: Did this relationship affect your opinion of Mr. Johnson?

J: Yes, because in discussions again and again with Humphrey about his work, his problems, etc., he was complimentary of Senator Lyndon Johnson.

B: Did it in any way adversely affect Mr. Humphrey in Minnesota, that he was so close to Mr. Johnson?

J: No.

B: Were those in Minnesota who objected?

J: No.

B: They seem to have made a very effective team in those Senate years.

J: Yes.

B: Before the convention, I understand that the Kennedy people were very active in Minnesota, were they not?

J: Yes. They were the most active, although all of the potential candidates courted the Minnesota delegation. For a small state, I think it was rather unusual that they should. We were holding all the time to the support of Hubert Humphrey as a favorite son in order to prevent a real split; because the Minnesota delegation, as was the party in the state, was split several ways as to which candidate they would favor.

B: Were there many people who were actively for Johnson for the presidential nomination?

J: No. I would say that there were a few for Stevenson; that Freeman led the group, and I was in on the decision-making process there when the decision went to go for Kennedy on the part of Freeman and that group within the delegation.

B: How did that go? How and why did they decide?

J: Primarily we decided, and for me it was clinched at the time I sat in Governor Freeman's office, and for the last time he called Adlai Stevenson --this was some time in the early part of the year--and asked him if he would run, and he couldn't answer. He couldn't make up his mind. Freeman said, "Well, there is no time to wait. The time is past long since, and I just feel very strongly that if you are not prepared to run again--if you are prepared as of now, I will support you. If you are not prepared, then we will have to start to make a decision and start to work for some other candidate."

B: And even then Mr. Stevenson would not give a definite answer?

J: Could not decide. Shortly thereafter, Senator Kennedy, accompanied by two other people--I am not sure, I know that Ted Sorensen was there and I think Sarge Shriver was there--came to Minnesota for a very quiet meeting with a few of the political leaders of the State. If you want this much additional politics here, I'll give it.

B: Please.

J: Probably there were a dozen of us at this meeting. The Kennedy party stayed an hour, an hour-and-a-quarter, an hour-and-a-half, had a general discussion. I think that by this time Governor Freeman was fairly well leaning toward the support of Kennedy. I think this discussion helped. I remember very clearly that at the end of the discussion after the people from Washington had left, Eugene McCarthy stood up and made quite a point of explaining vigorously his opposition to Ted [sic] Kennedy.

B: You mean John Kennedy.

J: To John Kennedy, yes.

B: What were his grounds?

J: They weren't very effective.

B: You mean his reasoning was not very effective?

J: His reasoning was not very effective. He said that Kennedy had made no record as a liberal leader in the Senate; neither had Eugene McCarthy at that time.

Eugene McCarthy had voted right on one issue that Jack Kennedy had voted wrong on, and that was the farm issue. That was an issue of importance to Minnesota. I remember once we had scheduled Kennedy for the Jefferson-Jackson Day speech, and he voted wrong on the farm bill and I had to make some arrangements so that he wouldn't come. The Governor didn't want to do that, so it was thrown upon me to do, which I did by finding a very good reason why we couldn't hold the dinner at all that time.

B: And of course cancel out the whole--

J: We could schedule it later at some time when Kennedy couldn't come. But politically that vote on the farm bill, together with Humphrey's comment that he had tried to tell him that he ought to vote differently--I'm not saying that was a test of liberalism, but it was a test of the way the political reaction--

B: Practical Minnesota politics.

J: Yes. So when the delegation went to Los Angeles, Kennedy had been there. Lyndon Johnson had sent India Edwards to speak for him when we had a big meeting of the party and the representative of each of the potential candidates.

B: I've heard it said that Mr. Johnson just really didn't try hard enough out in the States there before the convention of '60.

J: He made no real serious attempt in Minnesota.

B: There are those who say that he was perhaps indecisive, too, as to whether or not he really wanted to make a committed effort.

J: I have always felt that it was his judgment that starting from scratch at that point, possibly, it was still--everything was stacked against a "Southerner"--using the word "Southerner" in quotes. And therefore, I don't know what effort he made in some other states.

Symington made a greater effort, although he personally didn't come there either. He sent a man named Brown, who was able to perform as I've never seen anyone else perform in that we had sat there listening to the representatives of various candidates--and some of the candidates themselves --for well over two hours after a big dinner. Nobody thought Symington had much of a chance, and so when they introduced Brown to speak for Symington, people were leaving the hall. Brown hadn't been talking more than three minutes when they started coming back. He was just a remarkable speaker. I don't know if he converted many people to be for Symington, but we enjoyed him after these two hours.

B: During this period before the convention, did the Minnesota party seriously approach the idea of whether or not Humphrey could be the nominee?

J: No. Humphrey was being regarded there as one way to hold the delegation together.

B: I knew that, but had you earlier thought about whether or not this was the time for Mr. Humphrey to make a bid for the nomination for real?

J: I think there was always the thought that something might happen in the convention. There was the very strong conviction among most of us that Humphrey was perhaps better qualified than many, if not all, of the other candidates. For that reason, there was always a hope that something

would happen. But as realistic observers, we didn't think that apart from deadlocks or other eventualities he would have much chance.

B: Of course, at that time Mr. Humphrey had a general national reputation as an extreme liberal that might have worked adversely against--

J: That had toned down quite a bit by 1960. At least he had arrived at a sufficient position of leadership. His first few years were, after all, many years past. There was always I think a feeling that he might be the vice presidential candidate.

B: That was my next question--if you had in the preconvention period considered vice presidential possibilities, Humphrey, or Governor Freeman himself?

J: Both were in the mill--both Humphrey and Freeman were considered as potential.

B: Do you know if anything about this had been said when Mr. Kennedy was talking to Governor Freeman before the convention?

J: I'm quite certain that Mr. Kennedy never said anything to Freeman about the potential for the vice presidency. He talked with him many times, particularly about Freeman making the nominating speech, because on every occasion it was, "If Adlai won't do it, will you do it?" I was in on this because I was going to have to write the speech, which I finally did. But each day Senator Kennedy would call Freeman and say, "Well, Adlai can't make up his mind, so will you be prepared?"

The Minnesota delegation finally had to break its unified backing of Humphrey. We've never had the unit rule in Minnesota. And when it appeared that the Minnesota vote would not be cast for Kennedy en toto but would be a split vote, and that the best we could hold on the first ballot was a unit vote for Humphrey--McCarthy had sort of defected by

this time--Freeman wondered whether Kennedy would want to be nominated by a governor whose full delegation wasn't supporting him.

[Telephone interruption]

B: You were saying that Kennedy told Governor Freeman that it didn't make any difference that the full delegation wasn't supporting him, but that he was still waiting for Adlai.

J: As I recall it, it was at 10 o'clock on the morning of the nomination that he called Freeman and said, "Adlai still hasn't made up his mind, so will you make the speech?"

B: They waited that late.

J: Yes, giving him a chance up to the last minute.

B: How did the Minnesota delegation vote?

J: Of course, what we did, we cast the vote for Humphrey; and before the roll call was over when we saw the count, switched so that Kennedy did get the vote.

B: Then comes the issue of the vice presidential nomination. Did there begin immediately among the political leaders a shifting around to see who was going to be the vice presidential nominee?

J: Everyone was wondering who would get the favored choice. There was some thought that it might be Freeman; there was quite a bit of talk about Jackson in our circles. Now in other states--

B: That's Scoop Jackson?

J: Yes, Scoop Jackson. Soapy Williams would have liked it. And the Michigan delegation was somewhat unhappy with--we had worked for several conventions rather closely with the Michigan delegation. The political leaders in Michigan had a background more nearly like the people in Minnesota than any other state. And during the convention, Minnesota had been caucusing

every night. We had had reporters trying to listen in. We tried to keep it quiet. We tried to hold the line. Michigan was quite happy; they had parties instead of caucuses. They were in the same hotel we were. But the night after Kennedy chose Johnson, the Michigan delegation was caucusing. They were pretty disappointed. And the Minnesota delegation was holding a party. This was our first real party, and we were really trying to unite the party and our people there behind the ticket. It wasn't so hard, but we had some that were pretty worried about Kennedy.

B: About Kennedy, not so much about Johnson?

J: About Johnson, they didn't seem to be as determined. It wasn't as hard to convince the delegates there to go for Johnson. I think partly this was Humphrey's influence. Anyone who had known him and who had worked with him and talked [with him] knew that he had a very high regard for Johnson so that he was accepted.

B: What was the stumbling block against Senator Kennedy? Was it his Catholicism or his youth?

J: It was both. Interestingly enough, one of the very able men in the Minnesota delegation who was plugging for Symington was a Catholic himself, who had had such a hard struggle getting elected to the state legislature from the Protestant area in northwestern Minnesota that he wouldn't openly come out for Kennedy for fear it would hurt him; and he feared that his district would be reflected in the whole state, and that we'd lose. In other words, he wasn't prepared to support Kennedy until he was nominated because Kennedy was a Catholic--not because he didn't like the religion or he feared a Catholic President, but because he feared the political effect. And there were others of that kind.

B: But you did manage to convert--?

J: We did. Minnesota was disappointed in the Johnson choice, primarily I think because the Minnesota people had hoped that they might get a Minnesotan on that ticket.

B: Did Mr. Freeman show any obvious personal disappointment at not being the candidate himself?

J: I don't know how obvious it was. To those who knew him well, he was clearly disappointed. However, he's a good sport and a good politician, and he was leading in the party--I'm speaking now of the social event--and in the later attempt to get some of the Michigan people to come to our party and sing a song for Lyndon Johnson, as well as for Kennedy.

B: You said earlier that your delegation tried to help calm down Mr. Williams and the Michigan delegation.

J: Yes.

B: How effective was that? What sort of arguments did you use? Did you just explain the hard-headed politics of balancing the ticket with a Southwesterner?

J: We tried to do that. We tried to argue that this was politically a wise choice; that without it, probably Kennedy couldn't be elected; and that possibly these "better" candidates from the Midwest, whether it was Humphrey, Freeman, Soapy Williams himself, whoever else they might have wanted for Vice President, couldn't have brought the political addition that was needed that Lyndon Johnson brought to the ticket. Then Humphrey's assessment of Lyndon Johnson as a man and as a liberal and as a political leader was helpful.

B: Were you in touch with any members of the Johnson staff in this process?

J: No, not that I know of. I don't know of any Minnesotan that was. We were very much surprised. Freeman was very much surprised.

B: By the selection of Mr. Johnson, you mean?

J: Kennedy called in everybody--everyone whose name had been circulated-- and informed them before he made the public announcement, and Freeman was one of those. So probably we heard the public announcement a few minutes before it became generally public. Freeman was very much surprised, not that he wasn't chosen as much as the choice was Lyndon Johnson.

B: And there were also some that were surprised that Johnson would accept.

J: I think this was the most surprising to me. My own personal evaluation of the decision was that Johnson would bring great strength to the ticket, but I must admit it had never occurred to me that he would accept.

B: Did you hear any stories that hectic day to the effect that there was some dissension over the choice of Johnson within the Kennedy camp itself?

J: We heard that.

B: Could you ever figure out whether there was any justification to it?

J: I have never known.

B: It's one of the things that is so clouded that future scholars are going to have to straighten it out.

J: It's going to be hard to straighten out. I have always had a personal feeling that Bobby Kennedy probably didn't like this. I can't justify this. I have no knowledge. I've read some of what has been published about it, but that's that.

B: But this feeling was general that day? There were many who thought that?

J: I don't think it was general. My impression would be this: I don't believe it was general because I don't think many people were thinking at that stage of the convention in those terms. They were thinking, "Why did he pick Johnson?" I think there were more people who were thinking,

"Why did Johnson accept?" I think most of them thought that Johnson's position of influence was so great, as many thought about Humphrey's in a similar situation, that why didn't he stay there. Now, I'm sure that among some people the idea occurred, and we had the general wonder of what went on in the Kennedy camp to arrive at this decision. Who was for whom. But I just don't think we worried too much about it--most of us.

B: Then the attempted floor revolt against Mr. Johnson's nomination really never got off the ground?

J: No. This was why we were working with Michigan.

B: Getting back to you, you apparently did something good there.

J: If we couldn't convince any of them about the man or the choice, we at least thought it was important to convince them not to make a mess of the rest of that convention. And apparently times have changed. But this convinced some people who still had the feeling, "Well, after all, the Vice President." We have this now, but--

B: I'm sorry, that's not clear. You mean you could say that the Vice President isn't that important?

J: Yes. "We have this ticket now, and a floor revolt can't change it." I think any experienced convention-goer recognized that the floor revolt could hurt the campaign, but it couldn't really change the ticket.

B: The ticket would stay the same, and all that would happen would be the legacy of bitterness within the party.

J: Yes. So under those circumstances, I think there was a willingness to accept. I remember thereafter Johnson called Freeman at one point, not too far afterwards, about the campaign--Freeman was running for reelection as governor, and of course then we were working for the national ticket--and I remember he told Freeman, he said, "I will do anything for you

during this campaign; if it will help your reelection for me to come there and speak, I will do that. If it will help your reelection for me to stay out of Minnesota, I will do that." And I think he was very sincere in this.

B: What was the choice? Did Mr. Johnson--?

J: He did not come into Minnesota.

B: Was that Mr. Freeman's--?

J: I don't think it was--I think we had the feeling that it wouldn't help, that it wouldn't hurt, but that we had so many things that we hoped would help--we were so busy that we could concentrate on something more positive. In Minnesota I think our assessment was right. The election--the vote was on Kennedy, and nothing else. The vote against Freeman--Freeman lost the governorship--was in part because of Freeman's support of Kennedy.

B: Oh, really? I knew the campaign issues revolved around his record as governor. As he admits, he had been a spending governor which had built up--

J: Of course, when you lose by a fairly small margin, you lose for several reasons, and any one of these is contributing. He was a spending governor. This was one reason. He had been governor for three terms, which is as much as anyone has ever been governor, and only one previous governor was three terms. But there was a real religious issue in Minnesota. This is one thing I still have some files on. All the letters, all the problems that came up with regard to the Catholic issue were thrown at me for an attempt to handle.

B: How did you go about doing that?

J: I wouldn't even try to answer some of them. Some of them you can't answer.

B: Did you just get the irrational bigot type things?

J: Got both. One of the Lutheran Church branches sent out a prepared document which all the preachers were supposed to read in their pulpits on the Sunday previous to the Sunday just before election. A Lutheran minister in Duluth who received such a one called me on Saturday to alert me to what was going to happen in all these churches in Sunday. He was a good party member, and he was a supporter of the ticket, but he was a Lutheran minister. I remember asking him what he was going to do, and he told me, which is what he did. He read the thing from the pulpit, and then he stepped out from the pulpit and made his own speech to his congregation. But most of them just read it, you see. And I persuaded Freeman to write a major speech on religion and politics, which I think was a very good one and which had some effect.

But interestingly enough, what happened--and this has been checked by an analysis of the votes in various precincts where we know the normal vote--the anti-Catholic, bigoted campaign conducted by a few groups caused an almost complete swing of Republican Catholics to Kennedy. I think this is very easily understood. I probably would have done it. They normally wouldn't have voted for Kennedy because they were conservative Republicans, but this attack was so serious that they switched. Now, they wouldn't switch for Freeman. But they almost unanimously went for Kennedy. I don't think they would have done this if it hadn't been for the bigotry of the campaign. They wouldn't do it now.

Then I have any number of letters written to Freeman, particularly from Protestant, normal Democrats, who said they simply couldn't vote Republican; they couldn't vote for Ezra Taft Benson. And after all, "Kennedy can't help that he's a Catholic." They felt they shouldn't vote

for a Catholic, but "He can't help it, he was born one. But you, a Lutheran, a deacon, and a Mason, you forced upon us, you nominated this man--you are forcing us to violate our conscience by voting for a Catholic, so we won't vote for you!"

B: An odd situation. Then the Catholic issue affected Freeman more than it affected Kennedy.

J: I think it did. You can't tell how many, but this did affect him. It did affect him in the reaction of those people who felt he shouldn't have done this. He shouldn't have pushed. There were plenty of other good candidates. So it was a combination of all of these.

B: Was Kennedy's talk before the Houston Ministerial Alliance on this issue effective in Minnesota?

J: Yes. I think it was effective among those who were thinking. I think, for example--I'm speaking not of bigots, this didn't affect the bigots--but there were a group of people who were concerned not because of bigotry, but because of their fear of anything that would draw Church and State closer; of their quite genuine belief that on certain issues that were public issues like support of schools, like possibly birth control, like other things that the Catholic President would have to take the orders of his Church. In other words, it wasn't because they care personally what his belief was. I think that the Houston speech convinced them that he was as dedicated a supporter of separation of Church and State as they were.

B: I might insert here for the records, since we've been discussing religion, you're a Unitarian, are you not?

J: Yes.

B: Future scholars might want to know.

J: Yes.

B: Then after the election, were you in on Mr. Freeman's selection for Secretary of Agriculture?

J: I guess so.

B: How did that come about?

J: You'll have to piece together several reports on this. He had said first that he didn't want to be Secretary of Agriculture for good and sufficient reasons. Having been Governor of a farm state, having worked hard to criticize the then-Secretary of Agriculture, having had a special committee on agricultural problems, having tried to lead the Midwest Democratic Governors into a policy position on agriculture, he knew how tough it was. He wanted a Cabinet position, but he had said and meant that he didn't want the Agriculture position.

The days and the weeks passed, and he wasn't being asked to take any other Cabinet position. He did talk, I think with President-Elect Kennedy, I know with Sarge Shriver, about some other possible top federal appointments. He'll probably have in more detail what some of these were. Those were discussed informally. He began, I think, to reconsider the agricultural possibility, I think because it looked as if this might be offered to him. There were two or three other names suggested, more than that, I suppose, but two or three that we heard of.

B: Well, there was this man from Missouri--what's his name! Hinkle. He was a farm leader, of competence as a farm leader, but I gathered the President-Elect didn't think he was quite Cabinet material. George McGovern was talked about at some length in Minnesota, because we were pretty close to McGovern--knew him well, and liked him. Some of us were concerned that he probably wouldn't make a good Secretary of Agriculture just in

terms of what we thought a Secretary would have to be. I think the Farmers Union, Grain Terminal Association, had quite some influence at that time on selections, especially its then and long-time and only up-to-then head, M. W. Thatcher. He announced a few days before the announcement was made that he knew who was going to be Secretary of Agriculture. He didn't.

Hubert Humphrey was supporting someone else for Secretary of Agriculture at that time.

B: Someone other Mr. Freeman?

J: Someone other than Mr. Freeman because he had decided to do this at the time when Freeman had said that he didn't want it. So Humphrey being an adviser in the agricultural field was likely to be asked. This caused an undercurrent later of concern as to whether there was a rift, but as is historically accurate--I'm sure all of the groups will bear this out--at the time that Humphrey did give support to any other candidate he was doing it in the light of Freeman's statement that he didn't want this job.

There got to be several people who were talking in Washington to the Kennedy talent group about Freeman.

B: Do you know if Mr. Johnson had any influence here, as a man of a farm background himself?

J: I'm not aware of any influence. I think that's an interesting question. I never thought of it before, and I think it would be interesting to check with others. And if I checked with others, I'd check--now, some of these people are gone.

The moving force--I think the original single man that started the Freeman boom, you might say, sort of late in his selection, was Murray Lincoln, who was then president of Nationwide and has since died, but who

sent two men to Minnesota to talk to Freeman after he had sent them to Washington to talk with the Kennedy staff. He was rather close to some people on the Kennedy staff, if not to Kennedy himself. He was well known in some of the Southern states, but I don't know if there was any Johnson tie-in at that time.

B: At any rate, the offer finally came.

J: The offer came.

B: And I gather Mr. Freeman had no hesitation about accepting it.

J: No, not by that time.

B: Incidentally, was it a foregone conclusion that you would go with him?

J: What actually happened this night that the two men came out to talk to Freeman about this job--this was being done very quietly, a talent scout operation--they were to meet at our home which was on the outskirts outside of the twin cities. Freeman and his wife were going to come out there. I was to meet these men at the airport and take them to our home. As a matter of fact, they stayed overnight at our home and we took them to the airport. No, they talked to a few Minnesotans the next day. It seems that Hubert Humphrey and Max Kampelman came on that plane. I saw them first when they got off the plane. And I think they were thinking in terms of someone else for Secretary of Agriculture at the time. Of course the Freeman move was very quiet. I was sort of smiling to myself at this, that they should be on the same plane and that Max Kampelman should spot me and ask me, "Who are you waiting for?" at this point.

They came out there and they discussed whether or not Freeman ought to consider the Secretaryship of Agriculture. I argued against it. I argued against it because it was my judgment that anybody who hoped to go further in politics had better stay away from this one job; that this

would kill him. My husband argued for it. He didn't dispute what I said on the political impact, but my husband argued that if anybody could do a decent job in this terribly difficult position, it would be Freeman, so Freeman ought to take it.

Well, Freeman and Mrs. Freeman stayed until probably 1:30 or 2:00 in the morning; and when they left, I remember George and I standing at the door and Freeman said, "Well, if I take it, Dorothy, you'll have to come to Washington with me."

And I said, "I suppose I'd be willing to do this for a few months." When I came here I expected to just break over and help a little bit at a period when--because I wasn't an agriculturalist either. And my husband couldn't object because he, when Freeman said that, he said, "Oh, she will," you know. So that's what happened.

B: Incidentally, who was Mr. Humphrey supporting?

J: He was supporting--I think he was supporting Fred Hinkel of Missouri. It was generally thought that his former aide, Herb Waters, was the man that he'd like to see as Undersecretary. Herb Waters was originally a Californian. He had been tied to Humphrey so long that they kind of thought of him as a Minnesotan. Obviously you couldn't have a Secretary and an Undersecretary from the same state. Obviously, too, with the relationship that had existed--the political relationship--between Freeman and Waters, you couldn't have had Waters as Undersecretary under Freeman. But I'm not sure of this. I'm quite sure that Humphrey was at the time hoping that the Secretary of Agriculture would be one that would have Herb Waters as Undersecretary.

B: So then, you came to Washington with Mr. Freeman.

J: Yes.

B: As you've said, to work a couple of months.

J: Yes.

B: In the Agriculture department. It turned out to be eight years.

J: What were your duties at first? Your title was special assistant.

J: I did several things. The first week I was here I got thrown into meetings over at the White House on matters of organization of the Food Aid Program, together with the overall AID Program. A high-level group had worked long before the inauguration on how foreign aid ought to be organized, and they had to change the name of the agency, and they changed it to AID. George Ball had done a lot of the work on this, and Dave Bell had done some of the work on it, but Ball figured more in these presentations. There were several others. And of course the people who had studied this area felt that food aid was a part of overall assistance, and that the PL-480 program handled in substantial part by Agriculture ought to be under the AID agency, or whatever they were going to call it. So, obviously Agriculture was involved.

Freeman didn't know the personnel. He didn't know the political philosophy or the administrative principles that anyone in the department had, so he asked me to go over there. I, of course, tried to get someone, tried to weigh the top people in the Foreign Agriculture Service and be accompanied by someone who knew something about it, because I knew very little. I knew some of the politics involved; I knew that it would be politically absurd to try to absorb this part of what the farm groups regarded as surplus disposal and turn it over to the Department of State. I knew certain things. So I got involved in that set of meetings that came right away.

B: From the beginning was the Department of Agriculture resisting the idea of

letting the PL-480 administration go under another department?

J: Oh, sure, that is resisting its going completely out of Agriculture's hands.

B: And you won.

J: Oh yes, we won because of politics involved.

B: I was going to ask this later, but this may be an appropriate time. During Freeman's years, the PL-480 program, what came to be called the Food for Peace Program, did become less of a surplus disposal mechanism and more of a conscious foreign aid mechanism. Was this thought out from the beginning?

J: Yes. I worked rather hard on that. I felt that there were times when the assistance motive had been overshadowed and perhaps even denied by the surplus disposal motive.

B: And of course you were aided in that by the fact that surpluses declined eventually under the new policies?

J: They declined, yes. That was a help. In fact without it, politically you wouldn't have gotten the changes that we got finally in the bill.

Another thing Freeman asked me to do right off the bat was see what we could do about food distribution. And I called together--this is interesting for me to recall now--I called together all the people I could find in about two or three departments to meet on why we couldn't have a food stamp program. I listened to all the arguments as to why the old attempts had failed. The professional welfare people were against the stamp system, and I was trying to find out why. Many of the people in the Department of Agriculture were against the stamp system, and I was likewise trying to find out why. I don't know how accurate my assessment was, but I concluded that the reason that the welfare people were against a food stamp system is because it is a part of their professional code

that they are for figuring out the total welfare needs, and if it's $50 a month, seeing that they get $50 a month; and that the welfare worker or whoever it is ought to supervise; and maybe they needed it for food, maybe not, you know--that this was a professional point against earmarked funds. I also concluded that there were certain defects in the way the old attempt had been managed that could be corrected. I recommended that Freeman pursue and start a new stamp plan. I didn't have much to do with it after it got going, but that was one of my first--

B: You originated the idea?

J: I sort of revived it.

B: Revived it within the new administration.

J: Yes. I was instrumental in that.

B: Was Mr. Freeman easily convinced that this should be done?

J: Oh, yes. He wanted somebody that he had confidence in to try to weight and present to him what the reasons were, what the points were involved.

B: You mentioned that there was resistance within the Agriculture department. What were the grounds there?

J: I think it was a headache that they didn't want to assume--the old experience with it; they'd learned a lot of lessons; those lessons had been tough; it was hard to administer.

B: It also tends to create political problems on the Hill.

J: It creates political problems. The donation program--the donation of surplus foods was better as a surplus food disposal. They argued it was cheaper to administer, and that nobody made a profit off it. Now, through the food stamps, the retailer makes his normal profit.

There were countless cases of abuses, and this was I think the real reason for the headache of administering it. Therefore when the new plan

was created, it was done very cautiously with the problems involved. What had happened under the old idea--the food stamps were supposed to be used, one, for food; two, for domestic food; and three preferably for the foods in surplus. But suppose the welfare recipient wanted to buy some tobacco--they even had worse stories in those days, perhaps they wanted to buy liquor. It didn't matter to the dealer, if he got the stamps, and he didn't follow strictly the rules. It could go for purposes for which it wasn't intended, and it was generally regarded as a difficult thing to handle. I think this was the main reason.

B: And in fact it continued to be difficult. You said you didn't have anything directly to do with it, but it seems like during the next eight years periodically someone would discover hunger and turn on Secretary Freeman to want to know what was being done about it.

J: Yes, although the discovery of hunger, I think, was apart from this. The administering of the stamp plan we started rather gradually. We started with people who believed in it, but who were aware of the mistakes of the past; who were rather determined to spend what it took to make it work; who were willing to do the checking necessary, and on a few occasions to punish the dealers. So now I'm amazed. This is one of the things that Freeman started. I'm amazed at the degree of acceptability as they've gone so far as to say now that you would never carry it far enough. There has been a real shift in eight years in the public attitude.

B: Did you have any other particular assignments during those John Kennedy years?

J: Insofar as his staff of assistants specialized, I got into specializing in the foreign agriculture field so that I was probably within--well, right from the beginning, Freeman wanted me to concentrate on this area

rather than, let us say, the commodity support programs. I got into the support programs during the time of the[Billie Sol] Estes case. I mean I got really called in to try to find out what I could and then follow what I could at that time.

It was at that time that Freeman began what later came to be his staff meetings. It started with a meeting early in the morning of those who were involved in the Estes case and the hearings. I attended all the hearings, and I advised to the best of my ability those who were involved in the hearings. I wasn't involved directly.

I was out one Sunday, I remember, at a meeting that was held at Bobby Kennedy's home. He, being the Attorney General, was concerned about this. For awhile it looked very serious. And he had three or four of his staff out there. Freeman was there, and I was there. I remember at that point they were discussing what kind of testimony Charlie Murphy ought to give, as if what they discussed could affect what Charlie Murphy would say. I knew better than that. I knew Charlie better than that. Charlie was going to be very forthright and state directly what he thought. This involved Texas, as you know, and this was a very interesting episode.

B: Did Mr. Johnson get involved in it in any way within the department or the administration?

J: Not directly. But there was always the feeling, was Billie Sol Estes given any special consideration because he was from Texas, because he was a friend of the Vice President's, and the question was never answered yes, but just the location, just the geography caused it to be raised.

B: Did Mr. Johnson ever get in touch with Mr. Freeman or anyone else in the Agriculture department to ask them to keep him out of it?

J: No, I don't think so. Not that I know of.

B: Actually, the Estes affair created some difficulties within the department, too, didn't it?

J: Oh, yes, we lost an assistant secretary, who was also supposed to have received a pair of shoes or something at Neiman-Marcus. Jim Ralph had been appointed assistant secretary by advice of the White House. Freeman had never heard of him before, didn't know who he was.

I was interested in Freeman's selection of those he appointed. He selected and decided upon Charlie Murphy as undersecretary, which was a very wise choice. I remember when he told me he had decided he'd like to get Charlie, if he could get Charlie, because Charlie knew Washington; he knew a lot of things that would be helpful. Freeman liked him, had confidence in him. But he wasn't a farmer either, and Freeman wasn't a farmer. And so there was a political problem. I remember that when Freeman decided on this, he told Charlie, "We are like this, but we're going to have to build up political support. You work at this, I'll work at this, and we'll do this."

Then having this top right-hand man picked, there were these assistant secretary jobs, and obviously, Freeman recognized these had to be spread geographically and otherwise to be more representative. And something had to go to the West Coast. I couldn't tell you whose recommendation Jim Ralph was. I don't think he was particularly a friend of Johnson's; I don't really know--a young fellow, very indiscreet in many ways, and certainly indiscreet in his performance. He came down to Washington and started the high living. At any rate, he did have some ideas that he was trying to sell. I recall the fact that they existed. I don't think they were too seriously considered, but then when he got

involved in the Estes case Freeman asked him to resign.

B: And you also had the weird case of the man within the department who objected to the way the Secretary was handling the case, and then that man's secretary objected. It must have been a real circus.

J: Yes, we did. And we had his secretary, who was really emotionally ill--mentally ill--a real problem.

B: I brought it up because I wondered if you as a lady were asked to handle the other lady.

J: No, to tell the truth, I never saw the other lady. I talked to the department doctor who had been involved, but this was clearly a poor, unfortunate case where somebody wanted to make use of the poor gal. And the man--what's his name?

B: Is Hales correct?

J: Battle Hales. I guess he's still in the department.

B: I believe so. I think he is sort of shunted off to one side.

J: I think he was shunted out of town. I believe that he's in Missouri or some place.

B: I believe so.

J: But there were people that wanted to make a political issue of this. So this I got involved in.

But to go back to your question, generally speaking, I had turned over to me the area of PL-480, what little technical assistance in Agriculture our staff was providing at the time to developing countries. And so I suppose that almost from the beginning, I was involved.

One of the first things Freeman asked me to do was to write an outline of the role of U.S. agriculture and the role of the Department of Agriculture potentially in the assistance program of the United States,

assisting in development throughout the world--what it ought to be, what it ought to be directed toward, and how it ought to be handled. As usual, Freeman wanted this by yesterday. As I recall, I wrote this one night.

Now, I should have known better. I stayed up all night writing this and pounding it out on my little Hermes; and by 7 or 7:30 in the morning, I wasn't in condition to edit it. I was just too tired. I thought, "Well, tomorrow night I'll get at this and perfect it."

Well, that morning Freeman asked what I had accomplished, and I said, "I have a very rough draft, and I expect to edit it and give it to you tomorrow."

" Well," he said, "Let me see it now and see if it goes in the direction that I want, and I'll send it back to you."

I thought that was a good idea, might as well have his ideas before I go over it again. He took it over to the White House with him and showed it to the President in this struck-over,awful shape. I'm not a typist, but I can type when I have to. I learned to type so that I could type a thesis because I couldn't afford to hire it, once long ago. As a result, this thing hardly ever did get edited, and it was sent around. I'm amazed now, and Freeman is amazed, because the last six months or so--he sent this in formally as a memo to the President after it was cleaned up grammatically and typographically, but no substantive change. And at the end of about six months ago or more, he dug this copy up and reviewed it. Some of the things have been effectuated; some of them have not; but he would still support them. He's quite surprised that we were able to come as close to what he still thinks is a good idea that early in the game with that little knowledge about anything.

B: Before we go into the details of the foreign program, did the assassination

and transition cause any serious traumas within the Agriculture department; that is, beyond the personal tragedy involved on the death of President Kennedy?

J: I don't think so.

B: Was there any thought that perhaps Secretary Freeman might change, or that the Secretaryship might change?

J: I don't think there was any serious thought of this. One always accepts the form that the new President should pick his people. Johnson made it rather clear early in the game that he didn't want to make changes for the purpose of changes, that he wanted to go on with and get the program enacted.

I think that one of the surprising things--I believe it was the Saturday after the assassination because I know it was either a Saturday or Sunday morning when the offices weren't open--a meeting in Freeman's office. Walter Heller was there. Walter Heller had had his first session with President Johnson. Somebody's interviewing Walter Heller, I know.

B: Yes.

J: I was amazed at Walter because I've known him for years and years back in Minnesota. He was then chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers. He was going to leave for personal reasons--his wife's health or something. This had been long planned. No matter who was President Walter would have gone back to Minnesota. But he was not inclined to look with optimism at Lyndon Johnson. I don't think he'd ever opposed him, I don't think he'd ever thought much one way or another. But he was amazed after this interview. He must have spent an hour or more with the new President, and I'll never forget his genuine amazement. He sat next to me, and he

had copied immediately a quote from Johnson that had so impressed him. He says, "Dorothy, this is true. You may not believe it. I couldn't believe it, but this man is going to really launch a war on poverty. This man is going to do these things." He said, "I was never so surprised in my life, but we discussed these things and he asked the kind of questions that would indicate that he's very serious about this. After I left, he called me back again. He had gotten some other ideas," and I'll never forget how impressed Walter Heller was with the fact that this man was really going to do something about what Kennedy had talked about.

B: Did you personally need that kind of reassurance; that is, was there any faint dismay in your mind--?

J: I think not. By this time I had met Johnson on a few more occasions. I had been here a few years [while he was] Vice President. He never remembered me, I'm sure, but I was further favorably impressed. I had always accepted him as a great congressional leader. I must say I didn't understand how he could be Vice President and sit quietly with his feet on the desk or whatever Vice Presidents do--a standing joke.

B: Did he do anything in connection with the Agriculture department in working with Congress or general advisory work--?

J: Once in awhile.

B: As Vice President?

J: Yes, once in awhile he'd help. He was concerned with civil rights, and we were concerned. Under the administrative assistant secretary we had an attempt to try to progress as far as we could toward a far, more equal rights treatment. We had segregated extension services in the South and other kinds of things that we were trying to remedy. And these people met with the Vice President when Johnson was Vice President. He was

active in that field. When things were needed, every now and then we'd call on him as Vice President, and it would always work out.

B: By "things were needed," you means as in help with Congress?

J: In help with Congress or in help with Texas or something, you know. He'd do this. No, I think that the personal shock was the greatest. I wasn't aware of, and I personally didn't have any concern that the government was going to fall apart, or that we had lost anything program-wise.

But of course it's a shocking thing. I think that we all realized that there was a personal appeal that Kennedy had that Johnson didn't have, whatever you choose to call it. It's an absurd thing, but it was there.

But I think there was a surprise on the part of people like Walter Heller at the conviction and the determination that Johnson expressed, not about principles as such, but about putting them into effect, which hadn't been apparent. By this time we had recognized that Kennedy was not going to push upon Congress a lot of the things that he'd talked about. Some of us, at least, had become concerned that he wasn't trying to get enacted the things that we believed in and that he believed in.

B: You mean in administration policy generally, beyond just specific Agriculture policy?

J: No, in the whole general field. No, I wasn't thinking of Agriculture particularly there. Kennedy never knew much about Agriculture. He preferred to leave that to somebody else.

B: Was there any thought in the Agriculture department after Mr. Johnson became President that things will be better for the department now that a man with an agricultural background was President?

J: I believe there was, yes. There was a feeling, "Now we have a President who knows what agriculture is, who knows what REA is, who knows what a cooperative is--a farm cooperative--who has worked with farmers, who will understand." So I think there was this feeling.

B: How did President Johnson and Secretary Freeman get along?

J: As far as I know, very well. Johnson was a hard-boiled taskmaster that reminded me a great deal of Freeman. I remember one very small staff meeting. Freeman was describing the President. He said, "He announces this, and he expects us to have it done by tomorrow. He doesn't know how tough it is. He doesn't consider what's involved, and so forth. I want you to know you've got to perform, you've got to do this. I have to do this, I'm really under the gun."

And I implied, well, I'd been used to this. This is the way he handled us all these years, which is true. He looked at me with great concern. But, no, I felt that in many respects they were alike. And I think perhaps they got along pretty well.

B: That's really why I asked. Because you kind of wonder if two men who are that much alike get together, sometimes--

J: You have a real point. I wondered when I first came down here with Freeman how he would work as a Cabinet member where he was definitely under a boss, because in his political career he'd never been that. He leaped right into the governorship where what he said was it. And I was amazed at how well he adapted in the Kennedy period. I think this was probably a good transition, because Kennedy didn't know as much about or care as much about agriculture as Johnson did. So I think that Freeman learned something about it and Freeman basically, perhaps because of his experience as governor, knew enough about the problems of administration

to know that the chief administrator has to have certain authority. I think he knew this by personal experience and recognized it, so that he conceded that to someone else over him as he had demanded it of people under him. And I think they got along very well. I'm sure there were always some occasions, and they seemed to leak every now and then, when the President said some pretty blunt things to the Secretary of Agriculture, as I guess he did to everybody else.

B: Then shortly after that in '64, you were formally designated to, I guess, the position you had been informally in already.

J: I had been working in this field, and I had recommended my predecessor, Dr. Roland Rennie, who was the assistant secretary before I. Then I had been asked to recommend a successor when he resigned, which I did. I would never have recommended myself, and I think rightly so. And I recommended this person to Freeman, and he recommended this to Johnson. Much later I heard this--I didn't know about this except that Freeman told me that Johnson hadn't acted. So we went on with the vacancy. I later learned that Johnson had told Freeman, "No, I don't want him; come up with someone else. Can't you find a woman?" I only learned this much later.

Well, the weeks passed, and we got along without an Assistant Secretary for International Affairs. Than Freeman said, "We've got to get somebody in this field. The President's ready to get somebody. Go over it again and see what the situation is." I checked the best I could and came up with a recommendation which happened to be the same person.

B: Did Mr. Freeman mention getting a woman to you?

J: Oh, no. I didn't know anything about that. I had no idea. I didn't

want it. Then I knew that this man, and I talked with him--he was also building up other political support for his appointment; and Freeman went up again. The President didn't say anything, didn't do anything. But I knew that something was going to be done fairly soon.

And one day Freeman called me in in a hurry, and he said--I had been working on some suggestions for a speech--"All of these Cabinet members are going to testify on the Hill on East-West trade." And because Freeman was going to testify, Rusk paid him the compliment of sending him his [Rusk's] draft for suggestions. But it was this usual type of thing that I learned to become more accustomed to. It was already mimeographed, so he sent it to Freeman for suggestions. But since I had been assigned it, I made four criticisms and put them in a letter for Freeman to send to Rusk. I thought they were serious enough to note, although they had nothing to do with foreign policy, the East-West trade. The State Department knew more about that than I. But they were going to testify before a committee of Congress.

[Telephone interruption]

This speech had been prepared introducing our policy--"The United States government policy on East-West trade is founded on the following: one, two, three, four, five," all of which was true except that they had failed to include the laws passed by Congress as something on which policy is based.

B: Oh, boy.

J: This is so typical--to testify before a committee without paying it the compliment of giving that first, so this was my first suggestion. The rest is immaterial, I think. But this was the kind of thing I had written in this letter, which Freeman signed. But he called me in, and he said, "I think I've got to see you right away." I told him I was trying to finish this letter. He said, "The President may call you, and I thought

I'd better inform you that he is about to ask whether you will be Assistant Secretary for International Affairs." Well, this was the first I had heard of it--totally. And had I heard of it in advance, I think I would have presented enough arguments and talked everybody out of it. I didn't want it really. I've enjoyed it.

B: What sort of arguments would you have presented, Mrs. Jacobson?

J: I don't know really. But I would never have picked myself. It seems that, again, the President had said, "Can't you find a woman." I don't know about this. I was sort of flattered; I was inclined to say no, because when I learned this afterwards I thought, "Well, it has been months since the President first suggested this. What lack of confidence is there that Freeman has toward me!" Obviously I was a woman he'd worked with, and I had worked in this field, when I stopped to think of it. Of course, what he told me was that he had wanted me to continue on his staff, and presumably that's right. I enjoyed being on the staff. I enjoyed the job as assistant secretary too. It was different in many ways.

B: Did Freeman finally recommend you, or did Mr. Johnson come to this selection independently?

J: Freeman had finally recommended me, from what I heard later. He said that after Johnson said that, he said well, the only woman he knew who could do the job was on his staff. And apparently the President had insisted on going into this further. But the interesting thing to me is that from the accounts that have been told on two separate occasions, he did ask specifically, "Couldn't you find a woman who could do this?" I have always felt that the President really meant this because he believed that perhaps a great deal of talent was being wasted by refusal to look for women in jobs.

He had started this campaign. He wanted fifty women appointed--at least fifty--to high places. He wasn't content to just make this as a statement. Of course many people thought, well, he's out for the women's votes. I've never believed that, while obviously he was happy to get women votes--that he basically believed in this. I have always had the feeling that one of the reasons he really believed that women have some ability was because of the ability of his wife, which he knows at first hand; and that he recognizes that there must be some other women with some competence in these fields.

B: I don't mean this to be a condescending kind of question--it may sound like it--but is it difficult to be a woman in a high administrative position? Does being a woman make additional difficulties?

J: Some, I think, although I have never paid too much concern to this. I think the main difficulties are not direct. There are certain kinds of rumors and scuttlebutt you don't hear as readily if you're a woman.

B: I'd never thought of it, but that makes sense.

J: You don't hear the stories going around in the men's room.

B: Of course men don't either.

J: But I also have enlightened my administrative assistant secretary by the fact that he doesn't hear all that goes around in the women's room either.

B: I was just going to say that.

J: There are occasions. There still is a feeling that, I think, a woman in a position like this has a tougher time proving that she wasn't a political appointee, a hack done to get votes. I think they're more likely to take this for granted if it's a man.

B: Does being a woman make any significant difference in dealing with representatives of other countries?

J: I've been rather interested in this in my capacity as U.S. delegate to the FAO. I've been now for four years the chief U.S. delegate. And there one deals with more than Western Europeans. I've been the only woman, by the way, who was delegate to most of these meetings. Barbara Castle headed the UK delegation for two days or so at one FAO conference, but she was there to make a speech and get on an interview, she wasn't really there to head the delegation. One woman very ably represented Finland on many occasions. You deal with representatives of some of the Moslem countries who at home would have a slightly different attitude toward women. Again, I think there is perhaps some reserve at first, but I think that after you're known that there probably is no significant--

B: Of course, you had a lot of contact with India which had at the time a lady Prime Minister.

J: Yes. It's interesting to me that obviously the average Indian woman isn't anywhere near what the average American woman is, but they have a higher proportion, I'd say, in their Parliament than we do, and of course the Prime Minister, who, I think, perhaps has been criticized differently than if she would have been a man.

B: Possible.

J: Her weaknesses are attributed to her sex. There are plenty of men who would have had as many weaknesses too. I've never spent much time on the question of women in men's places. When I was an undergraduate, I was the first woman assistant in political science that they'd ever had--a girl at the University of Minnesota. They'd had them in economics and in history, but not in political science. They'd never had a woman on the staff of the governor of Minnesota until I was there. And I guess once you get over the first story--when we started staff meetings and I first attended staff meetings, I was told that in the Department of Agriculture that I cramped

their style--they couldn't tell all the jokes they would normally tell. I think they got over that.

B: Probably to their moral betterment.

J: I think the jokes got--not sure. But I think in general it isn't too bad.

B: On the occasion of your appointment, did you have a personal meeting with Mr. Johnson?

J: Yes.

B: Did he discuss with you what he wanted your agency division to do?

J: No, not too much. He asked me what I thought. He talked some politics.

B: Was this before the election of '64?

J: This would have been in March or April of '64. I remember as we were saying goodbye, shaking hands with him, he pulled back a little bit, "One other thing." He says, "Remember, you're no longer under the Hatch Act."

B: Meaning, "Get out and campaign!"

J: That was the closest to approaching the political. I went over there; Freeman was along. At that point he asked me if I would be interested. He went over what he already obviously knew. I learned later that before Freeman had done this, he had checked with the chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee to see whether Senator Ellender would have any objection to recommending the confirmation of a woman. This was all before he had ever talked to me about it, which I didn't appreciate at the time.

B: It's amazing that it could have been kept from you that long. You get the impression that Washington is not that secretive a town.

J: But some things are kept. There's one thing that President Johnson got across very early, that he didn't like leaks. And I tell you, this was really impressed on everybody. And when a leak occurred, boy, everybody was concerned about where it had happened. And the White House would call,

and they would--"I have discovered leaks." I have spent hours talking to these correspondents, you know, that have heard thus and thus, hedging like mad. I'm not much good at--I can do it better over the phone than face to face--at being poker-faced and assuming I know nothing about any of this. And they get to know that you really know something, but won't tell. And I'd spend all these hours, you know, and talk to this correspondent. You know he doesn't believe that you don't know anything about it. Then you go and see it in the New York Times. After you've gone through all this agony somebody else has leaked it.

B: We're just about at the end here.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I]

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