INTERVIEW II

DATE: June 7, 1984

INTERVIEWEE: JAKE JACOBSEN

INTERVIEWER: Michael L. Gillette

PLACE: Mr. Jacobsen's residence, Mobile, Alabama

Tape 1 of 2

G: Let's begin with that note.

J: Well, my memory is that when I came to work, they assigned me to an office, and I had to get it decorated--I was living at the Mansion at the time with my wife--and I had to get a secretary and just do the things that you had to do to get on board, such as sign the papers and get all the other forms that were required. I was living, along with my wife, in the Mansion at that time.

One evening Marvin Watson--who, I suppose, you would call appointment secretary, since he sat outside the President's office--had to go somewhere. Marvin was working so many hours that his family was suffering since he was never home. So, that evening, Marvin asked me to come down from my office and sit at his desk while he was gone. I think the general idea was what finally happened, that Marvin Watson and I would split up duties. I had watched Marvin enough to get the general idea of how you handled his duties. Among other things, you never brought people in or absolutely *never* walked in the door yourself without phoning in advance. This consisted of picking up the

President's direct line and saying, "Mr. President, may I bring So-and-so in?" or, "May I come in?"

G: Is that right?

J: Oh, absolutely not. He used to put it this way; he used to say, "How do you know what I might be doing when you walk in the door?" And he said, "I don't want anybody to walk in my door, absolutely nobody," and you didn't; you never walked in that damn door. I made the mistake of doing it once, and fortunately, he was in a pretty good mood, and all he did was say, "Jake, don't do that again." But other than that he would chew your ass out if you made the mistake of ever walking in his office.

So that night I was on duty at Marvin's desk. Were you going to ask something?

G: I was just going to say, even in an emergency?

J: No emergency. There wasn't any such thing as an emergency. You had a phone you could pick up, and it would ring immediately, and he would answer it, because he knew whose phone it was. There wasn't any such thing as an emergency, at least from our side. Now on Juanita Roberts' side they may have had the right to walk in. I don't think so, though, because a woman would, I think, bother him worse than a man. He just didn't want you walking in his office. There's no point in going into the reasons why. You just didn't do it. So I knew basically how you went about bringing people in and what you did with them when they arrived. You were never surprised because there was an appointment list each day and the callers could not get in the West Wing if their name was not on the list. I had picked this up by observing Marvin, and Marvin also instructed me in how to go about it, as well as Jack Valenti.

G: Did you stage them in another room?

J: Yes, you put them in the Fish Room--that's the one across from the Oval Office--if you had more people than there were seats in Marvin's office. If you just had one, they could sit in "Marvin's office," I always called it, and I am not sure if it had an official name. There were a few chairs in there, and they could sit there. But if you had very many you put them in the Fish Room; then you went and got them when the President was ready for them and took them in. After calling and getting permission to do so, you always walked them in and said, "Mr. President, Senator So-and-so." Although he probably knew the person well, the introduction was a way to get the visit started.

Now, your records may show I'm wrong, but it seems to me that shortly after I started, I was down there, and Bobby Kennedy was coming. Of course, you had the schedule and you knew who was coming. They called you from the guard post to tell you they were there. I was distressed because I knew Kennedy didn't like Johnson; I knew Johnson didn't like Kennedy. I didn't like Kennedy, which was unimportant, but I didn't, and I wasn't sure how to handle it, whether to be real nice to him or mean to him or what the hell to do, and I wasn't sure how to do it. Secondly, I was very much in awe of Johnson. I had been around him socially and on occasions for years, but I never had been around him in his official capacity as president of the United States. Nor in the capacity of an employee, in the office where he's *the* man in the United States, and I was just uptight as I could be. And I remember taking Kennedy in. I said, "Mr. President, Senator"--I guess he was senator; I don't remember.

G: Yes, he would have been senator. He ran in 1964. This was 1965.

J: Yes. I said, "Mr. President, Senator Kennedy." I wasn't sure what to do next. Finally I just walked out. That day, I must have brought in more than Kennedy, since I am sure

there [were] other people coming. I evidently didn't do very well at it because I was nervous. He said, "Jake, what in the hell is the matter with you? You aren't doing right." I said, "Mr. President, if I continue to act the way I'm acting right now you might as well send me back to Texas, because I'm in awe of you. I'm standing here like a damned idiot, just stiff as a board. I've got to loosen up, and you've got to let me loosen up or help me loosen up." And he said, "Okay, that's fine," and I never had that trouble again. That was just the first time. I was just completely in awe of him, and I wasn't sure what to say or not to say and how to go about doing things and how much leeway I could take. Consequently, it was just a tough night. Finally I got through it and went home.

G: Anything on that meeting with Kennedy? Did he--?

J: No, I left. I don't have any idea. Kennedy had asked for the meeting, and I don't remember what they talked about because I was so nervous I didn't really care what they were doing; just let me get out of there. I didn't want to hear anything or do anything, and I just left Kennedy in there [and] departed. I knew no substance of the meeting, what they might have talked about.

G: Now let me ask you to describe that President's Club dinner in New York at the Waldorf.

J: Let me ask a question then. Were there two Waldorf dinners while I was there?

G: There could easily have been. Could have had one each year.

J: Yes. I don't think I went to that first one.

G: Okay. You did go to Camp David during that.

J: The first time he went to Camp David after I came on board he asked me to come with him. Again, I had read so much about Camp David when Eisenhower was president, and all the names of the cabins were his grandchildren. Anyway, I just walked around

basking in the history of the place and went from cabin to cabin and looked at the names. As I remember--we'll look at these notes a little bit. Where is that first trip to Camp David? Yes.

G: There's one on May 23.

J: Yes, that's it. That's the one. I guess Marvin had gone home to Texas and that I was it. And I did hang around the big cabin with him, and I did go to the bowling alley with him. I watched him bowl. I didn't bowl, I remember, that time. I did bowl with him later. I knew that I wasn't any good anyway, but I always knew to lose, although, I am sure, I would have lost anyway.

G: Is that right?

J: Yes. This trip to Camp David on the twenty-third and the twenty-fourth--

G: What happened if you won?

J: Nothing. He liked to kid you a lot about how bad you were. An aside: I always felt, and I think most people should feel, whether they do or not I don't know, but they should feel the president of the United States carries such a terrible burden, with really just people harassing him and wanting to see him and wanting to do this, and he had to give this person a little time and give that person a little time. And just the tremendous problems he has, not the Vietnams--of course that was the overriding thing and the Dominican Republic--but the day-to-day problems, such as, this congressman wants this, and this bill has got to get through, and this department doesn't know what to do. But the man has such a tremendous burden. Now that's being trite because that's been said so many times before. But my feeling was that if I could provide a little relaxation and bring him some pleasure by being the butt of his jokes, you know, kidding him through saying something

about me, I felt like that was a real contribution, even more so than coming in with a big paper on what you do with Africa. Because he had people who would give him papers coming out of his ears about Africa. He didn't have very many people that he could be comfortable around and laugh a little bit, when he wasn't kind of forcing it, and make them the butt of his jokes. I felt that that was one of the things I ought to do.

You must understand that the President was not comfortable around many people outside his immediate family. He always had to [be] cautious in what he said, even with his staff, or he might read about it sometime later. He was always comfortable with me and, I think, enjoyed having me around. Often he would repeat what President Roosevelt said about his staff, that he sought people who had a "passion for anonymity." He knew I was bright enough to handle any job he gave me, but he also knew that he would not have to worry about my repeating anything. Now that doesn't mean I had to be the clown of the White House. I'm a fairly serious man. But I do understand human beings, and I do understand what a man with Johnson's vitality and drive, as well as his background, having come from the Hill Country and his having been in politics as long as he had. I understand what they like to laugh about, what they like to talk about, what they like to kid each other about. This, in addition to the serious aspects of my position in the White House.

G: Do you recall any of the discussions at Camp David about policy?

J: That trip? No. It doesn't appear so from looking at the White House Daily Diary for that day.

G: One of the big issues during May was the Dominican crisis. He had already sent in the troops.

J: On the twenty-third, had he?

G: Oh, yes. I think the decision was made at the end of April, and it was then a question of getting a cease fire.

J: Yes, I understand that.

G: Arranging to have free elections.

J: Yes, yes. He didn't talk to anyone that I notice on this schedule, at least on Sunday, about the Dominican Republic.

G: I don't mean at Camp David in particular. I'm asking you now about your observations that spring on the Dominican Republic.

J: I didn't understand what you were saying. I heard him tell this story many, many times, and I thought I was in the office when it happened, but obviously I wasn't--about his talking to our ambassador [W. Tapley Bennett, Jr.] and hearing the bullets fly over his desk, therefore realizing the serious nature of what was happening down there. The Ambassador, of course, was asking him to do something. And, of course, he was prompt in wanting to do something. It seems to me that the main Dominican man at the State Department was this fellow Mann from Laredo.

G: Tom Mann.

J: Tom Mann. I think he was from Laredo; I'm pretty sure he was originally. Of course, he'd been in the State Department a long time. Johnson relied very heavily on Tom Mann in the Dominican crisis. He, of course, talked with the Secretary of State and everybody else, but I think on the side he would always talk to Tom--or Ambassador Mann; I don't know him that well--about the decisions he was going to make. And he would always express the fact that we had to do something--we couldn't have another Cuba--and that he

was going to do what was necessary. Of course, it was such a successful operation. It all happened, and we were successful, and we got out.

G: Do you think he ever felt in retrospect that the Ambassador had exaggerated the danger to American lives?

J: I don't think he did. Now it may be true. That may be the fact, and it may have been proven since then, but I don't think he ever felt that. Hearing those bullets was extremely impressive to him, the man talking from underneath his desk. No, I know he never felt that he had been put upon by anybody insofar as the Dominican situation was concerned. I know he felt that it was the thing to do and that it was proper and that we won.

G: To what extent do you think the decision was made in order to save the lives of Americans who were down there or to prevent the communist takeover of the government?

J: Let me understand your question. Are you asking me percentages?

G: Yes. Yes. Which do you think was his primary motivation in sending in the [troops]?

J: Very hard to answer. That's really delving in his mind, because he never expressed that in a manner I could tell. He always expressed first the protection of American lives. He either did it because he felt that was the thing to say, or he did it because he really felt that way. Secondarily, of course, we just couldn't afford another Cuba. We just had to get rid of that bastard, and we had to get somebody in--not our man necessarily, but a man whose thinking would be more along the lines of ours.

G: He sent Abe Fortas down there, as I recall?

J: Gosh, I didn't recall that.

G: You don't have any recollection of Fortas, perhaps even incognito?

J: What I'm trying to remember is, Abe Fortas probably had a cohort in the Dominican Republic, somebody that he had known in the past; as you probably know, that firm represents a very diverse group of clients. That firm, Arnold and Porter, represented some of the large industrialists and the richer folks in the Dominican Republic. I'm sure that was his *entrée* into the Dominican Republic, and I'm sure that's how he got down there. What message he carried, I don't know. But I'm sure that's how the thing evolved, was the fact that Arnold and Porter represented some of the substantial industrialists in the Dominican Republic.

G: Did he have the FBI investigate the communist influence down there, do you remember? This was a question that was raised a lot in the press.

J: I don't remember. But let me ask you a question. Was this before we went in or after we went in?

G: No, after. After.

J: Oh, I wouldn't be surprised. No, I don't know, but I wouldn't be surprised at all, because his relationship with the FBI was such that he--

G: Any recollections of his discussions with the other Latin American leaders, ambassadors, presidents, with regard to our intervention down there?

J: I don't remember any of the specifics. I do remember that he was constantly attempting to build up the unanimity of the other nations in the Caribbean so that it would not appear to be solely a United States venture. And he would talk to them frequently. He got along extremely well with most of the chief executive officers of the Caribbean nations and the South American nations. They like a Texas-type person because we're so tied up with Latin--Mexican, really--background, and Johnson having taught in South Texas. They

think that we're very sympathetic with their point of view, and he could get along with them, and he could convince them pretty well that they ought to back us up.

G: How about his efforts to ensure that they did have free elections and to get the military leaders to decrease the role that they had played?

J: Well, again, Tom Mann. And again, I forget who on the staff was--I guess [McGeorge] Bundy was there. He didn't get along with Bundy very well because Bundy seemed very aloof and seemed to talk down to the President. But I guess he went through Bundy. They did actually do a great deal. He did a great deal to convince everybody that they ought to have free elections and as quickly as possible. Of course, he was very apprehensive of becoming, in the eyes of the public, a sort of a war man. His basic feelings, I think, are democratic to the extent that he would want to see somebody in there who was elected.

G: There was a good deal of press criticism about his Dominican policy. The Republicans accused him of being impulsive.

J: Yes, they did.

G: How did he react to this?

J: Very badly. He could never understand--and this doesn't apply simply to the Dominican situation--why, when the security of this country or of its citizens was being tampered with, anybody would want to sit around and talk about it. You first get rid of the problem; then you can talk all day long. That, to me, is basic in his thinking, about not only government, but even to a Ranch problem. You don't sit down and talk when there's--

(Interruption)

I know exactly where I was. It's just like if the dam at the Ranch is overflowing. You know that road that the water runs over all the time?

G: Yes. Low water crossing, yes.

J: If it's any problem, you don't sit there and talk about it; you get something done first and then you can discuss first whose land is being overrun and everything else. But basically, the fact that they said he was impulsive, he figured you ought to be impulsive at a time when--

G: Did he do anything to counter that criticism?

J: Yes.

G: What did he do?

J: Well, he got free elections going as soon as he could and got the troops out as quickly as he could. He was very, very conscious, as you well know from everything you've read and seen and people have said, press criticism just disturbed him so much. In spite of the fact that he knew he was right, he would certainly try to do something to give an indication that what they said wasn't so. He tried every darn thing he could to be fair, and just do everything possible to get things back to the Dominicans and us out, and try not to elect somebody who would be owned by us, you know, and things like that. Yes, he did try to overcome the impulsive stories that came out.

G: There was also the question of taking more drastic action and some sort of military action against Cuba at this point. It brought up the question of whether JFK after the Cuban missile crisis had issued some sort of non-invasion pledge to [Nikita] Khrushchev and what policy considerations there were there. Do you recall anything?

J: I don't have any idea.

G: Okay.

J: If there was, I never was around when that was discussed. I doubt that anybody was around when that was discussed, other than the people who were very privy to that sort of thing.

G: Now, you had, right in this period, the White House Conference on Natural Beauty. This was the launching of the beautification legislation and the efforts to control billboards and junkyards along the highways.

J: Yes. I remember that well, as a matter of fact.

G: Let me ask you to recall everything you can about that conference and the legislation that resulted.

J: The conference I don't know much about. That was done mostly at Mrs. Johnson's side of the White House, the setting it up and things like that, although our side, the Oval Office side, was in on it, too. But I didn't have anything to do with setting up the conference. I know that I went over there and listened a while.

I do know a good bit about the legislation because my surface function, as you know from my title, was in the legislative area. Johnson dreamed up that title of legislative counsel to the president instead of calling me something else. My main function was supposed to be working with Larry [O'Brien] and working within the legislative program. Consequently, I did work on the beautification legislation to a great extent and had meetings in the Cabinet Room with the President and Vice President. Johnson got him all involved in that legislation. And we did a lot of lobbying. My states, I think, were New Jersey, New York; some of the eastern states and the New England states were assigned to me. I called on all my congressmen to work on this beautification

legislation. Most of them were fairly receptive to the concept of the legislation, and there was no need for a lot of lobbying. The billboard legislation was a problem because you had the billboard people--they had their lobbyists working, and that was more or less a fight. But most of the legislation, the congressmen were sympathetic to it. We sure watched it carefully and worked on it very hard. We got it all passed, as a matter of fact.

G: Do you think that there were too many concessions that had to be made to get it?

J: I don't think too many. I think that they were necessary concessions that you had to make to overcome some of the opposition. You could count votes, and you could see that you couldn't do any good without giving in a particular area, because this would bring you so many votes. When you got your majority, you could quit conceding. No, I never have thought there were too many concessions. I think maybe now or sometime later they could strengthen some of the things. I don't think it's necessary. It looks like we're in pretty good shape.

G: There was a Mr. [Phillip] Tocker who was--

J: Yes, I remember that name.

G: --the outdoor advertisers' lobbyist.

J: Yes. Yes.

G: He really felt that he had been betrayed by the White House on that. Do you recall?

J: No. I don't know who he dealt with in the White House. I remember his name from reading things.

G: How easy was it to work with the outdoor advertisers? Were they willing to make some concessions?

J: Oh, yes. They knew they had formidable opposition. They knew if they didn't give a little something we'd steamroller them if we had to. Therefore they were willing to concede. You know, in any sort of legislative program there's a lot of give and take. You try never to get in a legislative fight where you're hurting an industry without trying not to hurt them too much. What you try to do is get them to realize they're going to get hurt, and then try to get them to minimize their losses, and by then you kind of reach some kind of accord. You try not to give up everything, but you do give up a few things. It's never too difficult to work with a group which knows you'll kill them if they don't work with you.

G: What did the White House do to get this legislation passed? There's an indication that Johnson really turned loose a lot of the force of the executive.

J: No, we did our usual--you know we had a program of lobbying. Larry had it all set up. Larry, by the way, was a hell of a manager in that area. I just got to where I think an awful lot of Larry O'Brien. We became very good friends. As a matter of fact, I had a lot to do with him being appointed postmaster general, because I thought he deserved it, and I thought he'd make a good postmaster general who was loyal to Johnson. But that's an aside.

Larry had a set program. He had about, oh, five, maybe, assistants that worked with him. One, Mike Manatos, worked alone in the Senate. But the other four of us had states assigned to us. We were told to get to know the members to where they'd call us if they wanted something and to establish a good rapport.

G: Did you work only with House members?

J: Yes. I worked a little bit with senators because I knew a lot of them from the days I was there. I certainly knew their assistants. But I didn't have any senators assigned to me. If Mike wanted me to call somebody, I'd call him, or if the President said call somebody, I'd call him. But my assignment was the New England states. I remember that because I met a lot of people out there I'd known before. We just did what we would do to pass a higher education bill. We just went and lobbied and called them and talked to them and found out what they wanted, did the whole thing.

G: How much trading was involved in the beautification act?

J: You mean about beautification itself or trading?

G: Trading, yes.

J: Well, we traded all the time. You didn't pick a piece of legislation and say I'm going to trade you on this one. The ideal way to work that is just have them obligated to you all the time. Perhaps I should explain what is a common misconception about lobbying and trading. Never, in my experience, did I have a situation in which a member offered to vote for a particular bill if I would do something for him. Nor did I ever have a situation in which I offered something to the member for his vote on a bill. What I tried to do was to be in a position where my members would call me when they wanted something. Also, through the Democratic National Committee, we would talk with members to determine what they needed in their District in the way of government grants or projects, and if we could help get them, the assumption was that they would be fairly inclined toward our legislative program.

I suppose one of the closest relationships I had was Henry Gonzalez. Poor Henry, many people in government unfortunately treated him like a dumb Mexican, and Henry is

not dumb; he's an extremely bright man. He'd call some department to get something done, and they'd put him on the back burner, and he'd never hear from them again, and Henry would be on the phone to me. He'd say, "Jake, I can't get this done in such-and-such a department." I'd say, "Well, Henry, just leave it alone," and I'd call them, and I'd really give them hell about Henry, because Henry just looks like you could just push him aside. But that's the kind of relationship we had. This was particularly true when Henry was sponsoring legislation and arrangements for the World's Fair in San Antonio. Henry felt deeply obligated to me, gave me a briefcase from Mexico, one of these ornately tooled briefcases. I have it in Austin.

But that was the kind of relationship we tried to set up with Congress. Of course, Henry's and mine was personal; I knew him in Texas and everything. But we would try to get these members, try to make it as easy as possible for them when they had a problem in the departments--and most of them did, you know, their constituents would write them--to call their particular person in the White House. Now some of them you couldn't get to do that, you know. You never did set up the relationship too good, particularly those New Englanders. I had great difficulty with them. They thought I was a Texan, a Johnson Texan, a big operator. Several of them wouldn't get very close to me because they didn't think they ought to, a wheeler-dealer.

G: Did you work differently with the Republicans than you did with the Democrats in this sense?

J: Well no, really not. You tried to get the Republicans to call on you, too, if you could, but in many instances they didn't want to do it; they didn't want to become obligated. We really didn't need them very much, we had such a majority.

G: Yes. What were the key elements in getting the beautification bill passed?

J: I think the key element was the lobbying, and the fact that it was good for the country; that part was being stressed by all of us. We were saying how good it was. But I think just the personal contact and, again, as we discussed earlier before we got on this tape, the fact that Johnson had this tremendous backing in the country, that a congressman was apprehensive to vote against the Johnson measure because there was no telling what the people back home would do. Now we did a good bit of that, too. I didn't mention that. We wouldn't hesitate to call some of these members' constituents, if we knew them and if we knew they were Johnson people, and have them call or have them apply pressure. We did a good bit of that, too.

G: Did you?

J: Oh, we did it on all bills.

G: Did Johnson himself play a role in beautification?

J: He did.

G: What? Did he make some calls?

J: He made a lot of calls and really kept pumping us up, got the Vice President so steamed up. I've got one picture--I know it's in the [LBJ Library] archives--of a meeting we had in the Cabinet Room with the Vice President, and all we were doing was going over votes. It was on one of the measures, I forget which one it was, but it was on a tough one in the beautification program. We had the Vice President calling everybody. And that was Johnson's main role. He would steam us up, and then he did a lot of calling himself. He never shirked the calling.

G: What was Mrs. Johnson's role in that bill?

J: I never did see her do any congressional-type lobbying. She did talk to women's groups and those interested in ecology and beautification. She would certainly get the message out to them that they should contact their senators and representatives. She is an extremely persuasive lady, and she worked hard on the passage of legislation in which she had a great interest.

G: Were there any congressmen who were critical, whose support you really went to great lengths to get on this bill?

J: If there were I don't remember. I don't remember any key member that we had to get. I'm sure Johnson made some calls on some key people, but I don't know. Larry would know.

(Interruption)

G: Now, one element of the beautification legislation that I want to ask you about in particular was the controversy over an exception regarding land that was in commercial use or industrial use, that they wouldn't regulate the billboards in those areas. Do you recall that?

J: No, I don't. I can readily understand why that would be the case. No, I don't recall that specific issue at all.

As a matter of fact, an aside here. This is a pretty good time for it. I tried not to concern myself, although I heard a lot, and I had my own opinions, with the meat of legislation, unless one of my members wanted to discuss some provision. It was all right with me. I learned as much about it as I needed to, to talk to my congressmen, but I didn't try to interfere in drafting, and I didn't try to express my opinions on it. The President didn't hire me for that. He had [Joseph] Califano, who would express himself

on anything if he got a chance to, whether you wanted him to or not, and he had [Bill] Moyers and others interested in drafting in the various departments of government which were affected.

G: LBJ called for the repeal of Taft-Hartley that May.

J: Halfheartedly.

G: Halfheartedly? Let me ask you to give me the story behind that.

J: Well, not much story behind it really. Repeal was, I suppose still is, one of their [labor's] main issues and goals. He was extremely dependent on labor. He needed labor's support. Let's go a step further. Labor in the convention, when we went up against Kennedy in that convention in--

G: 1960.

J: Yes. Was it 1960? And where was that, Chicago? No, it was somewhere else.

G: Los Angeles.

J: Yes, that's right; it was Los Angeles, because I got out there early. We had a chance of doing something, of perhaps defeating Kennedy, a chance. It was dependent, of course, a lot upon Sam Rayburn, who had the respect of a lot of people that didn't think much of Johnson. Labor was one of them. We either won with labor or we lost. They, in spite of everything Sam Rayburn did and in spite of everything some of our other friends did, decided they just didn't want to have any part of Johnson. They were for Kennedy, and that was it. Johnson knew that labor, [George] Meany and all those big labor leaders, really didn't like him. He wasn't their type of man. He was too independent, and he was too closely tied with important rich people and industrialists, the George Browns and people of that kind. And by the way, Johnson inwardly had a deep respect for people

who were able to make lots of money through their own ability, through their own brain. Therefore labor would rather have a person like a Kennedy who had lots of money himself but didn't seem to be beholden. Well, he wasn't beholden because he had so damn much money it didn't really make any difference about that. So they really never liked Johnson, even Lane Kirkland, who was closer probably than Meany, because Lane was doing some legislative work at that point. As a consequence, Johnson tried in his way to win labor over to his side, and he was obligated to labor, because when he got his big landslide they were for him. Consequently, he did come out for the repeal of Taft-Hartley, but I know--now, he never told me this, and I probably shouldn't even say it, but I know in his mind he didn't really give a damn if it was repealed or not because most of his friends were on the other side.

G: John Connally came out with a statement right at this time saying that he opposed the repeal of it. Do you recall their controversy?

J: Oh, I do. I do. I recall that very well. The President talked to him on the phone. He didn't say much to him, but afterward he said, "That's amazing, how that man has forgotten how he was raised. He's so rich now, and he's got so many rich friends, he doesn't have any recollection of the fact that he was so poor when he was brought up."

G: Johnson himself had run in 1948 for the Senate in support of the Taft-Hartley Act, so it was a switch for him, too.

J: And a truthful switch. That's a bad word. But anyway, he had changed a good bit since then, but basically his friends were on the other side.

G: Okay. I want to ask you some questions about the poverty program and some concerning the implementation and development of the program. Right after you got there he

announced the inauguration of a summer program, a youth opportunity campaign, to get businesses to hire a lot of unemployed youth for the summer. Do you recall that?

J: Very well. I recall it very well, and I recall the fact that this was--well, let me say this, and then I'll get back to Johnson. I thought it was a great thing. I thought it was a way for him to use his close friendship with industry to get them to do something that was really not what they would ordinarily do, and that is help the poverty-stricken in a way that wouldn't cost them. It was a way that they could do it without just making some contribution. This was the kind of thing that he thought was the way we ought to resolve as much of the poverty situation as we could. That was through the utilization of industry in a way that would not be contrary to their thinking, but in a way that they could do without bending their principles. And he knew that, in the long run, industry has to depend on government. Of course, that's fundamental and trite. But they had a friend in the White House, and they knew it. Industry knew that they had a friend in the White House, no matter what he did in the way of proposing repeal of Taft-Hartley or [creating] poverty programs which they didn't like. They knew that when it really got down to the heat of the thing, he would certainly see that they weren't hurt too bad. Consequently, a program like this was right down his alley. It was a bright thought, and it was his thought, and it was good. He enjoyed it and he liked it.

G: There was a lot of criticism in the Senate at this point of [Sargent] Shriver holding two jobs.

J: Yes, there was.

G: What was LBJ's attitude toward that?

J: LBJ's attitude toward the whole Kennedy family was so torn up. It was schizophrenic. That's a bad word, too, but it was; it was split. He didn't like any of them. There weren't any of them that were nice to him when he was vice president, and he didn't like them. But on the other hand, he had an overriding idea that they were bright and we were dumb. If we were from Texas we had to be dumb. They were from Massachusetts, and therefore, they were smart. He just was apprehensive to get rid of them. He wanted to do more for them, and Shriver's two jobs, he thought, "Well, he can hold two jobs. He's going to do a good job at both of them. I don't want to upset the boat." His attitude was just leave them alone. If he had really thought he could do it--and he should have done it, by the way, he should have done this early. He should have gotten rid of all those people and not let them constantly detract from what he was doing and have people say, "Oh, that's an old Kennedy program." But he didn't do it, and he wanted them around because he was always afraid that he would lose a great deal of knowledge that he needed.

G: Shriver seems to have been considerably more pro-Johnson.

J: He certainly acted it. He and Moyers were--that was the key to Shriver. He liked Moyers and Moyers liked him, and Moyers was always pushing him. Moyers was not above pushing anybody. As an observer I noticed he pushed Shriver all the time. He'd keep telling the President how loyal he was and what a good man he was, how he wouldn't do anything to hurt Johnson. I think a lot of it was bullshit but Johnson, for many reasons--he might have thought that, too, but he had other reasons for wanting to go along with him.

G: Well, it seems to me that perhaps one of Johnson's resentments toward the War on Poverty was he felt that it was a bastion of Bobby Kennedy people in OEO [Office of Economic Opportunity]. Did he ever express that to you?

J: No. He was extremely careful of saying anything overtly, of speaking out against the individual Kennedy folks. He was pretty quiet about it. I knew how he felt just by remarks he made, but--

G: But surely he'd talked to you about the--?

J: Yes. Well, I always knew that Mrs. Kennedy was a thorn in his side, because she called frequently and sought sympathy. Everything that he did that was good seemed to inure to her benefit, as the living representative of the Kennedy family. She had the head line. And Bobby, of course, was just mean to him. He just didn't like Bobby at all, and he didn't mind expressing that too much. But he never really said anything mean about them even to me, or even when I was around. When he was talking to Mrs. Johnson, for example, he would try not to say anything just real mean about them. But he constantly let it be known that he didn't like them much. But on the other hand, he wanted them around.

G: Do you recall the first year of that War on Poverty budget that you worked on? The program was expanded quite a bit to over three billion dollars.

J: I don't remember anything about that.

G: You would have, I assume, worked with Adam Clayton Powell since he was chairman of the House committee you dealt with.

J: Adam Clayton Powell and I got to be fairly friendly. He was a crude man and just not nice to be around. But we both used to frequent Duke Zeibert's [restaurant]. He knew I

liked Duke Zeibert's, and therefore, we became friendly because obviously we liked at least that much of the same thing. And he used to call me from time to time. I was not assigned to him. Larry could talk to him pretty good.

G: Oh, really? Even though you had New York?

J: Well, I wasn't assigned to him as chairman of that committee. On a piece of legislation that wasn't in his committee I could call him, and we could do our usual work, but when it came to that type [of] thing, Larry would handle it, and he would talk to him. And he could get along with Powell. He called him Adam or Clayton or whatever the hell he called him.

G: What was LBJ's relationship with Powell?

J: You know, it was kind of a--he didn't like Powell any more than anybody else did, he's so outspoken. But at the same time, he recognized him as a very bright man in his field and a very capable politician. He was nice to Powell and always spoke nicely about him. But I think his morals were so bad.

G: Did Powell have a certain, in effect, tribute that he would exact in the War on Poverty in order to get--?

J: I don't remember if he did. I'm sure he did now, because he was that type of person, but I don't remember what it was. He always had something he was going to exact. He was a strange man.

(Interruption)

G: Now, let's start with that.

J: Let's see. Let me find that. Yes, the party for congressional aides. The President knew that I had spent years on the Hill, and he knew that I knew many, many of the people who

were going to be there, and he told me beforehand, privately, to be sure and make them all welcome and make them think that we wanted them there. In addition, now, the *quid pro quo* was to try to get them in a position where they'd call me, because as an old friend they could get things and have an ear in the White House. There were a lot of people there and I knew many, many of them, and I spent the evening just walking and talking and remaking old contacts, and letting people know that I was back and in the White House. Of course, a good congressional aide knows who's in the White House. If he doesn't, he's in pretty bad shape.

G: I wondered to what extent having a party for the congressional aides was motivated by the fact that he himself had been one when he worked for [Richard] Kleberg.

J: That may have been part of the motivation, because he would realize how much they would appreciate it and how much he would have appreciated it, but even more so by the fact that he understood the machinations of the Hill and that these aides just really had a lot to do with what went on. He knew that the congressmen and the senators couldn't do it all themselves.

G: Can you give me an example of how he relied on the aides to get help on some instance?

J: He never did that.

G: Really? I guess that would be bypassing the congressman.

J: Yes. I've never seen a situation where he talked to anybody other than the man himself. Now, we could do it. He could tell us, "Maybe you ought to call old So-and-so," who he'd remember, and he's got a lot of influence on this particular senator.

G: I gather he would call committee staff people though, if they were staff directors, something like that.

J: Yes, some. But he was very careful about not violating protocol.

G: Okay. Then you went to Texas.

J: Yes. Then after the party we left. Yes, that's right, we couldn't have the helicopters on the lawn because the party was outside, and so we had to drive over to the Ellipse and get our helicopters over there. That was always such a chore to get the cars there and get everybody going, but we did.

G: You'd take the helicopter to Andrews [Air Force Base] and then take *Air Force One*?

J: Yes, and then take *Air Force One*. If you'll notice, on this trip I was not the only aide who went. Valenti went on this trip, because I was brand new. Oh, I don't know what Johnson thought, if he thought anything about it at all. I think he thought I was capable of doing any damn thing he wanted me to do, but at the same time I guess he thought that he ought to have somebody else around. And Valenti was senior to me, and therefore, I would take second place to him. I would push him to the front. Nobody gives you a lesson in how to handle a presidential situation; you've just got to figure it out for yourself.

But anyway, he did take Valenti on this trip, and obviously, he was senior to me, and obviously, I was going to take the back seat to him. We all stayed in the guest house. You know, it's the house to the right if you're in the big house; it's that little house to the right. The doctor would stay there, and the aides would stay there, just anybody except the two secretaries who always traveled with the President. They always stayed in the big house. I forget who--oh, Oki [Yoichi Okamoto] used to stay there, the photographer, and any other staff people. The male staff people would stay in that house, and we had our own cook from Bergstrom [Air Force Base]. He would fix dinner. I never ate there

because I always ate with the President, but he had to fix dinner for the doctor and whoever else was around that Johnson didn't want to eat with him. So I was learning about how this all went.

G: Were communications different at the Ranch?

J: Yes, communications were very, very different at the Ranch. We had the same basic system of telephones with the White House operators answering. We would take several White House operators with us to the Ranch to man that switchboard because he thought they were so good and could get people so well, and he was right. They just were beside themselves about it. You ought to interview some of them. You'll get a story. It won't take long but you will find that nobody had ever treated them that good in the history of the White House. They'd sit on *Air Force One* and oh, man, they were just in heaven. But anyway, we'd take enough of them to man the various shifts, and they stayed in Johnson City.

So this telephone communication, if you picked up a telephone, the lady would answer, "The White House." That part was the same. We didn't have all those buttons, direct lines. Well, we had lots of direct lines, but you had to go through the switchboard. For instance, I had one in my house in Austin. I could pick up the phone and say, "Get my house," and they would just ring it. I didn't have to go through any kind of other thing. And most of the important people on the staff had the same setup. But it wasn't the kind that we had in the White House, where he could push a button and their phone would ring. You had to go through an operator.

Secondly, he was out a lot. He'd either be flying or driving, and the radio communications were extremely important. We had a very fine [system]. The White

House Communications Corps set up or improved on Johnson's original radio setup to where we had repeater stations to where you could go as far as Austin on the radio and where you could go as far as Fredericksburg. He couldn't get away from the radio, and it cost a lot of money to put those repeater stations in. He didn't have that. What he had, of his own, was a radio, of course, but it didn't have repeaters. It couldn't get Austin; it couldn't get very far. It would only get as far as line of sight, and the communications people improved it since it was essential to govern that there was always access to the President. And we talked on the radio a lot. We had to have lots of codes, not written codes, but you had to be able to say something and he would understand what you were saying, and you weren't saying what was really the case.

G: Give me an example.

J: Well, I remember one very specifically. [Robert] McNamara was there, and Johnson had talked indirectly to the Pope. And the Pope was making a run at the Vietnamese to try to resolve that situation. We knew that the proposition was outstanding, whatever the proposition was. Whatever the Pope was trying to do, he had already made the approach and was waiting for some response from the Vietnamese. McNamara happened to be down there that time and every once in a while they'd be riding around, they'd call in and say, "Base." I don't know what they called; we had code names for the Ranch house. "Unit One" was the President's car. They'd say, "Base, have you heard anything on our situation?" or something of that nature. Of course, I knew what they were looking for was some message I'd gotten from Washington to the effect that they'd had some response. This went on all day, and he'd come in and, of course, he didn't have to talk on the radio then. But all the time they were moving around, they'd keep calling in and

asking me, never saying what "the situation" was. I don't remember the outcome. Well, I know the outcome; it didn't work out. I'm not sure if it didn't work out that weekend or if it was later when it didn't work out.

G: Did his mood change at the Ranch?

J: Oh, extremely. Golly, it was just the difference between day and night. He was just fun to be around at the Ranch. He was more relaxed, *most* of the time. He might get uptight at times. I remember an instance where we had a bunch of pickets down on the road out there that they'd let them get as far as--and they sat out there for a long time. Anyway, that got him nervous. As a matter of fact, I had them arrested. I didn't do it on my own. He said, "Get rid of them. Call the sheriff. Just get them moved out." Well, that was a mistake. I didn't know it at the time, and he didn't know it at the time. The minute the sheriff came out there and moved them, it turned out one of them was pregnant, and she claimed she was going to have a miscarriage. Oh, it was just awful, with the press hanging around. Anyway, it was a terrible move to make. I guess the thing to do would have been just let them sit there. But anyway, we did move them. The end result was we had them all out to the Ranch for coffee and cookies. That was an attempt to overcome the bad reaction to the fact we had them moved. (Laughter)

G: The same people?

J: The same people, that same dirty-looking bunch of people. We had them out there and served them coffee and cookies, and Johnson came in and talked to them and was nice to them.

G: Was this the next day?

J: No, it was that afternoon. Now, my recollection may be a little off on time, but I think we got them moved in the morning, and we saw what a terrible mistake it was. They were all wanting to get in jail, that's what they wanted, and the sheriff had to do it, you know. We got that undone and invited them all out to the Ranch for [coffee]. I think it all happened the same day, I believe that's right. They didn't stay incarcerated for any length of time, and they really weren't incarcerated; they were just moved into a room.

G: Did Johnson have a dialogue with them on Vietnam?

J: I don't think so. My recollection is all he was, was nice to them. He didn't ask them about Vietnam, and fortunately, they were so overawed that they didn't spout off about Vietnam, which is not always the case. I remember that Eartha Kitt was not so polite.

G: Oh, Eartha Kitt?

J: Yes. Eartha Kitt. But these kids, they were overawed, too, and we were real nice to them. I went out and got them and kissed their ass two or three times.

Okay, let's get back to the trip. Obviously, you want to. We went into Austin to speak before the legislature, joint session. That was kind of the highlight of the trip from the standpoint of business. Then we were going to go to Waco, too.

G: They presented a portrait of LBJ to hang in [the Texas senate].

J: Correct. Dorsey Hardeman was in charge of the committee. Dorsey was a big conservative, but he and Johnson just got along extremely well. He thinks the world of Johnson. Of course, Dorsey is a close friend of mine. So we went to the legislature, and Valenti, of course, was *the* assistant who carried the speech, handed it to him, and was in the forefront. I was the other guy who just went along, but I had so many friends there--of course, I had lobbied the Texas Legislature until the world looked level. They

were all my friends, and I talked to a lot of them. But the funny part was, they had a place next to the speaker's podium there in the senate, they had a big sign that said "White House staff." Well, that was me; there wasn't anybody [else], and here I was sitting up alone in there. There's a picture of it. It was kind of peculiar.

Anyway, he thoroughly enjoyed things Texan, and a speech to the joint session of the Texas Legislature was a source of great pleasure to him. Those are people he'd known about or known for many, many years, the Hardemans and the Chick Kazens. Let me look at this thing [diary].

G: Let's see, I think it's on this page.

J: Well, these are friends. Charlie Herring, for example, was with the LCRA [Lower Colorado River Authority], and Johnson was big with the LCRA. Now, of course, Jim Bates and Don Kennard were late-comers. Anyway, he just thoroughly enjoyed being around these people. Of course, Connally was involved, as I remember. He was there. The President just thought the world of Connally. He might have differed with him a lot, but I'll tell you something, when it got right down to the final wire, he would go with John. He thought the world of John. He just enjoyed this type of thing. Unfortunately, as I remember, the weather wasn't very good, and we had trouble getting off and everything, and that detracted from our trip. But he enjoyed things like this.

Then, of course, he went on [to Waco]. I don't think I went up to Baylor. I think the weather was so bad that they had to take just one helicopter. I think Valenti went with him, and I think I went back to the Ranch, that's my recollection.

G: Okay. The rest of the weekend I notice he did drive around the Ranch and honk at the cattle.

J: Yes. And get close to the earth.

G: Haywood [Ranch].

J: Yes, he went to all the ranches.

G: Moursund Ranch.

J: Yes.

G: This must have been your first exposure to LBJ and A. W. Moursund.

J: Absolutely my first. It was my first exposure to Moursund. I had heard a lot about him, but I had never [met him].

G: Let me ask you to look over that and let me. . . .

J: Well, first let me say that this movement was typical. Every time we went to the Ranch we went through this whole routine of going from ranch to ranch and driving through the fields, just moving around.

G: Was he looking at the condition of the stock or the condition of the land or just riding around?

J: A little of everything, but primarily just riding around. I don't know what it did for him, but it really did something for him to just ride around and look at the hills and just see the land and see the scrub, the brush and everything. I never did understand it. It didn't do anything for me. I had a little ranch of my own, and I never wanted to ride around it. I didn't care about it. But it did, it helped him to do that. I don't want to speculate. I think one thing it did was he saw what he owned, and I think that was good for him. He saw that this is something he owned that you could just grab onto. Land is extremely important to a Texan, particularly a Texan who is a ranch-type person. They want to own all the land next to theirs, and when he could fly around and see what he owned and sit in

the car with people he liked and talk about it and show them what he had and what it was like and why it was important, he enjoyed that, and it did a lot for him. As I say, I'm not sure why, but it did.

G: What were your first impressions of A. W. Moursund?

J: Oh, he was nice to me, when we first met. I thought he was very valuable to the President, that he was looking after some of the most valuable things the President had, and that was his ranches.

Let me digress just a second: I was the contact in the White House for the President's business people. Jesse Kellam, Moursund, anybody who was involved in his private business came through me. He didn't tell me that when I was first hired, but as he got to know me and as he became aware of the fact that I was extremely discreet and that I had no ax to grind and that I wasn't trying to get in the papers, the more he got to know about me the more I became his contact in areas that he would just as soon not have publicized. So that A. W. called me a lot, and I just thought he was the President's close friend.

G: What were they like together?

J: They just sat and talked constantly about cattle and about land and about banks. They just talked. They were kind of secretive; they'd always be kind of off to themselves. The President would invite A. W. and his wife to a lot of the functions that they'd have at the Ranch. He'd always have them around. She was a delightful lady. I don't know whether she's still around or not. But basically, they'd get off to themselves and talk about who they were going to screw next. What little of the conversations I heard, they'd be talking about this person was giving them trouble and that person was giving them trouble and

how they were going to avoid the problems in getting this that they wanted and that that they wanted.

G: Was their main interest obtaining more land at this point?

J: I don't know, yes. "I don't know, yes," that's a pretty good answer. That was one of their interests, was obtaining land, and certainly obtaining the land of those who were opposed to their ideas of how that Hill Country ought to be. The land became so expensive that it was just so hard to acquire, because of him. The fact that he was there made it very valuable. Then they talked about other things. They were interested in acquiring things in the Hill Country.

G: The indication is that he would ride around and look at the cattle on this trip. Let me ask you about his cattle. Was this another area of interest, raising cattle?

J: Oh, yes. He had some fine cattle. I don't know much about cattle, but I know from listening to the conversations that went on that his were prizes. And that he had some bulls that were just excellent.

G: Did he rely more on [Dale] Malechek than he would, say, on A. W. Moursund [here]?

J: Yes. Yes. Malechek was the expert on cattle and on the actual running of the LBJ Ranch. I'm sure that Malechek checked with A. W. on major things, but the day-to-day things, Dale did it by himself. Dale was a very capable rancher.

G: Anything else on this first trip to Texas that you recall that was interesting or amusing?

J: Not anything specific that I [recall]. Let me get back to this. We were on our way back then. Okay. Let me just flip through this. See, I was in Austin on Sunday. I drove into Austin on Sunday to visit with my wife, but I didn't stay long. And he called me a couple of times while I was there. My guess is, what he called me about was that he and A. W.,

and probably Kellam or somebody, were talking about business, and they called me to ask me questions and tell me what to do or what they'd like to be doing. Of course, then I came back to the Ranch, evidently Monday morning. Let me think a minute. No, there wasn't anything just real exciting. He talked on the phone a lot, I see that, talked to Kellam about things, about the radio-television station.

G: It seems that he brought Henry Cabot Lodge back to confer on Vietnam. Now, I don't know that Lodge actually went to the Ranch, but I know Lodge was back from Vietnam in this period.

J: I don't think he came to the Ranch that trip. My recollection is he did not, and it would certainly be in this schedule, and it doesn't show that he did.

G: Another thing that seems to have been prominent in the news at this point was the New York mayor's race and [Robert] Wagner's decision not to run for reelection at [John] Lindsay's--did the President get involved in that at all, do you know? Did he, say, try to--?

J: My recollection is that he did, that he talked to Wagner. He and Wagner, as Democrats, talked, but I don't know what they discussed. I don't know if he tried to convince him not to.

G: Another item, that President's Club dinner at the Waldorf in New York, Robert Kennedy evidently wanted a piece of that gate for his own campaign debt, which was something like $900,000. And the President's Club organizers said no, that the DNC had its own debt.

J: I would think they did.

G: But do you recall the discussion of that?

J: No. No, I don't recall anything about that.

G: Now, during this period a lot of his bills were held up in the House Rules Committee: the War on Poverty expansion, the creation of HUD [Department of Housing and Urban Development], increasing the national debt limit, the excise tax cut, housing, federal rent subsidy program. Do you recall his effort to move some of this legislation through the Rules Committee?

J: Yes, I recall the problem and the fact that the President was concerned and needed to do something. My problem is, I need to be reminded about who was chairman of the Rules Committee. Do you know?

G: Wasn't it [Howard Smith]?

J: I'm trying to remember how we got around Smith. We did eventually. We just had to work around him because there was no way to convince him that he ought to get the bills out of committee, even with a bad recommendation. He thought the way to kill them was just to let them sit. In my mind is the fact that we overcame that problem, and I'm just not exactly sure how we did it. We either switched votes in the Rules Committee and made him bring up things that he wouldn't bring up--[John] McCormack must have helped us in some way to lessen his power, or we threatened through the leadership to do something to really destroy the Rules Committee, and nobody wanted that to happen.

G: Were you ever successful in getting the other members of the Rules Committee to buck Smith?

J: I believe that's how we finally did it. I think we just got to the point where they just said, well, if we don't do this through McCormack and the leadership, they're going to change the Rules Committee to where it won't have the power it has now, and they didn't want

that to happen. Howard Smith was an impossible man. He was so conservative that he just--

G: You said that he wasn't responsive to pork barrel.

J: We tried anything. He could have gotten anything he wanted at that point, but he really didn't care. He was a man who really believed in principle, and he just thought, on principle, these things were socialistic and therefore they were terrible for the country, and he wasn't going to let them out.

G: Did LBJ have any kind of rapport with Smith himself, or did the two men understand each other?

J: I think only to the extent that they were both seasoned legislators, and, to that extent, they understood each other. But Smith, he just didn't understand anybody who would propose a bill like War on Poverty. That's communism.

G: LBJ flew back to Washington and addressed the graduating class [of the National Cathedral School].

J: Yes, I noticed that. As I remember, somebody else went with him. I don't believe I was [there]. Yes. Marvin and Horace Busby went with him.

G: This is at National Cathedral?

J: Yes.

G: He also spoke at Howard University and gave that important civil rights speech calling for the [White House civil rights] conference. Let me ask you to tell--

J: Did he do that--?

G: Not the same day. This was on June 4.

J: Yes, he did. No, you can't ask me because I wasn't there. I believe that Marvin and some of the others went, and he left me back at the White House.

G: Did he talk to you about that Howard speech though, or did you--?

J: Only to this extent. This went on all the time, constantly; that's why Harry Middleton and the other speech writers appreciated me. Speech writers were an enigma to him. He just didn't think they wrote worth a damn. None of them would give him a good product. And he would just raise hell in the mornings when he'd look at these speeches that they sent him. He'd flip through them, and he'd say, "Jake, call so-and-so and just tell him this is terrible." Well, of course, I never did it; that was the answer to that. I always tempered his statement, although I never failed to indicate that there was a need for improvement. On the other hand, Marvin would do it very literally. Now if he told Marvin to call somebody and tell him he's a son of a bitch, he'd pick up the phone and say, "Now, you're a son of a bitch!" But I would always temper my messages. I remember him talking about this speech and how poor it was. I forget who drafted it. I can't remember. Anyway, he didn't go over the--

G: [Daniel Patrick] Moynihan drafted it, I think.

J: Did he?

G: I believe he did.

J: Well, he didn't go over the meat of it. He didn't ask me what I thought about this or that, but he would say, "That's terrible. I need to get this redone. Call so-and-so and tell him to get the damn thing in [the] kind of shape where it says what I want it to say." That's the extent of what I did on speeches, primarily.

G: Do you recall whose idea it was to have a fall conference on civil rights at the White House? This was announced there at the [Howard University speech].

J: No, I don't. I don't know whose idea that was. My guess is it was a conglomeration of the civil rights leaders. You know he did have communications with them, not personally, but Moyers and the other policy people, one of them would always talk to them. I'm sure they came up with the idea that they ought to come to the White House. And you know, Johnson wasn't averse to it, I'm sure. But my guess is that in most of those instances the outside leaders wanted to come to the White House because that gave them so much importance.

G: He hosted a dinner party for Eisenhower.

J: He just loved President Eisenhower. Just thought he was a great man and a great hero and a man who had done so much for this country. Every opportunity he got he would host something for President Eisenhower and try to get Eisenhower's friends in. Didn't he have something where he was trying to raise some money to help something that Eisenhower was interested in? I can't remember what. I remember reading it in here. But anything he could do for President Eisenhower he would do. He just had a high regard for that man, and I think rightly so, but that's not important, what I think. He would have him there. During my stay there he had at least three or four things involving Eisenhower and his brother at the White House. I remember one that I was a part of where he had all the Eisenhower staff and Cardinal [Francis] Spellman. Bob Anderson, you know, was big with Eisenhower. President Johnson thought a lot of Bob Anderson, by the way.

G: Old friend.

J: Old friend and a capable man. He had been up in high places and was able to accomplish things.

G: Did he seek advice from Eisenhower during this period, do you recall?

J: My recollection is no. Now, what they talked about privately, I didn't hear, but I don't think he had that kind of a feeling toward Eisenhower. My thought is that what I could observe was that his feeling toward Eisenhower was respect for a man who had done a tremendous job for his country, and not his ability to get legislation through or run a government.

G: Well, of course, Vietnam was something that had begun in Eisenhower's [administration].

J: Yes. I never heard them discuss Vietnam, and I'm sure he did talk with Eisenhower about Vietnam.

G: The Gemini IV space mission went into orbit during this period with [James] McDivitt and [Edward] White. The President watched the space shot on television.

J: That was staged for the press.

G: Then I think he went to NASA and spoke afterward, and had the astronauts to the Ranch.

J: He had a high regard for this fellow Webb, Jim Webb. For some reason or another--Webb was with one of the oil companies before he came to Washington. I think it was that one in [Oklahoma].

G: Kerr-McGee?

J: Yes, the one that Senator [Robert] Kerr had. He had done well with the oil company. He'd been a bright man and done well. And President Johnson had had so many connections with the space industry--the space program, I should say--in the Senate and had done so much to bring the program along and had made friends in this whole thing.

Webb was one of them; Webb was a pioneer in the thing. The President was really very close to this program and very close to Webb. He would call Webb a lot on things other than space, but particularly on space. When he had a decision to make regarding the space program, he would always visit with Webb and would generally follow his recommendations to the extent that it wasn't completely out of line with what he could spend. He did take a great interest in the space program. I think he always resented the fact that Kennedy got so much credit for the space program and he had done so much for it. He was willing to do what was necessary to help the program along, like visiting with the astronauts and promoting them and having them come to the White House and doing things that would bring them to the forefront, like sending them to Paris to the air show. Well, that was a program that he took a great deal of interest in.

G: Anything on his inviting the astronauts to the Ranch? Do you remember that?

J: Yes, I remember when they came.

G: Let me ask you to recount that.

J: I don't remember which two it was.

G: I think it was McDivitt.

J: Was it McDivitt?

G: Well, McDivitt and White at this particular [time].

J: I didn't remember who. But I remember they came to the Ranch and they brought him a picture of the LBJ Ranch from space. Of course, you couldn't tell it was the LBJ Ranch, but they said that's [what it was] and they pointed to the place on the picture. He treated them extremely well. I don't remember that we had any big occasion for them. Did we?

G: No, not that I see here. Their wives came, I gather.

J: That's right, and he treated them like guests at the Ranch. He was good to his guests at the Ranch. That's my recollection of the trip. He showed them around and treated them extremely well.

G: The next item I have is the White House Festival on the Arts.

J: I didn't have much to do with that.

G: That was Eric Goldman, I guess?

J: Yes, Eric Goldman. He could hardly stand him. Let me say this: he did everything he needed to do for the arts, because he knew that was an important thing in this country. He passed legislation, got money, did everything. But he really didn't like the people that you had to deal with to get these things done. He didn't want to be around them. He would deal indirectly with most of them.

G: Do you think that White House festival was really a failure in that it highlighted criticism of the administration rather than accomplishments?

J: I'll say this, I think, without fail, every meeting of intellectuals or artists or stage personalities or radio personalities, any of those people in the art area, was a failure because they were all opposed to what he was doing other than for them. And they weren't interested in being appreciative of the fact that he was promoting the arts and really did a good job on it and set up a lot of things and got them lots of money. But the fact that they opposed so many of his policies just overrode the whole thing. There was always somebody there, *always* some smart aleck who would run out to the press and say, "He's a killer. He's going to kill a lot of people, and his Vietnam efforts are so bad that we just don't even want to be here," or they'd turn down the invitation, then write a letter and give it to the press. They were just a bunch of bastards. And of course you're

entitled to disagree, but not to be mean about it and just try to utilize the publicity that you're going to get as a result of turning down an invitation to point out the fact that you disagreed with his policy in Vietnam or--that's just terrible--the Dominican Republic. They really didn't disagree with much that he did, basically, but what they did disagree with they sure wanted to make a big issue of it.

G: Robert Lowell was one who had written a letter declining that.

J: I didn't remember; I just remember the letter. I remember it.

G: What was the President's reaction to this, do you recall?

J: Well, he was hurt. He was just hurt by this. What it did that really hurt these people more than it hurt him, it just proved to him the fact that he thought all the time, that these were a bunch of self-centered people who considered themselves expert at everything. They're smart people, but they just didn't have the best interests of this country in their thinking. The Goldmans and all those people, he just didn't want to have anything to do [with them]. It just alienated him from them insofar as personal contact. Now he never did quit trying to help them, because he felt that that was something he ought to do.

G: Mrs. Johnson seems to have had a prominent role in the White House festival. What was her reaction to the dissent?

J: Well, she was just sick. Dissent just made her sick. On the surface she'd never say anything about it, but when we'd get to the bedroom, these people were just too much--

Tape 2 of 2

G: Discuss the White House festival.

J: Yes, the Festival of the Arts.

G: Eric Goldman had been regarded, I suppose, as sort of a successor to Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., as sort of a historian-in-residence. Did this diminish his image in the President's eyes after the White House festival's problems?

J: No, I don't think he liked Goldman to begin with. I don't think he ever considered him any kind of historian or anything else. I just think he had him around. I don't mean to demean the man, but he just didn't like him; he had no regard for him whatsoever. And of course the failure of this thing didn't help him a bit.

G: Let's talk a little bit about Vietnam during this period. It was a time when he was facing increasing criticism. Even people like Joe Alsop, who were nominally in favor of what he was doing, were criticizing his secrecy in going about it, that he wasn't being explicit enough about his program, that McNamara was on the one hand announcing that they were going to have to substantially increase the number of troops there, while on the other, they were still maintaining that our forces were not in a combat role, that they were just in support of the South Vietnamese troops. What do you remember about Vietnam during this interval of spring and early summer of 1965?

J: Well, what I remember is difficult to place in a context of spring and summer of 1965 or some other time. But I do remember that he always had the problem of his thinking that if you get into a situation where you're battling with someone, you win. You know, you just can't not lose and not win. If you get into something, you ought to win. And I think he sincerely felt that the Vietnamese were fighting this war and that our people were not. If he was misled, he was misled, but I think he always had the feeling, at this period of time, that the Vietnamese were bearing the brunt of the thing and we were just helping them at that point. I don't think he consciously felt that he was not telling the truth to the

public; I don't think he felt that way. I think he felt that a president, in a situation like this, cannot reveal everything because it's like calling Ho Chi Minh on the phone and telling him what you're going to do.

G: In his speeches he seemed to emphasize peace. He gave a lot of speeches during this time and he would talk about doing everything possible to gain peace and to fight war and this sort of thing. What was the background of this?

J: The background of all of that, the whole bit, is that he felt--and maybe he was wrong, maybe he didn't understand human nature--but he felt that the Vietnamese and the Russians and the others were just as human as he was. And that, basically, they all had the same desire to make the world better for their children or, you know, just not to fight each other, not kill each other, that basically they didn't want to do that. And the fact that they were doing it was a result of some force that they would overcome if they could. That's why he felt that by emissaries of one type or another, or something, that surely these people would come around to the fact that they didn't want to fight either. He emphasized peace to try to get the message to [them]. I don't think he was naive. I think he just had a gut feeling that Khrushchev, or whoever in the hell it was, had the same motivation he had. That he was a human being and therefore he had motivations, and political motivations, of course. That he was going to defer to some of his political motivations to a degree, but at the same time he was going to try to overcome--

(Interruption)

I don't want to try to make him appear to be naive or a fool, but I think he felt that if he could get the message across that he was a peaceful man and that he would certainly try

to lead this country into a peaceful attitude, that the other people would do the same thing. But there were too many motives in Vietnam.

G: Was he perplexed by the fact that Hanoi did not want to talk at this point?

J: Absolutely, absolutely. And couldn't understand it and wasn't really sure what to do about it, other than to just bomb them or do something to them to make them talk. And if you can't make them talk by all these speeches he made about the fact that--he was presenting overtures to them all the time. Any source, any way he could get word to them, he was doing it. They just didn't care. They didn't want to talk and they didn't want to do a darn thing. I guess they knew that in the final analysis they would win.

G: Did he, do you think, during this period get the impression from some of his advisers that the conflict would be much shorter than it turned out to be ultimately, that if we did increase our troop levels that it would be short term?

J: I don't think there's any question about that. I think all the military people involved led him to believe that, although I must say, in fairness to them, he felt that way, too. I think he felt that--just like you would in a private fight--that the more pressure you put, the more the other guy thinks you're going to beat him up, the quicker he'll come around to talking. I think he felt that that would be true in this instance, too, and then the military advisers indicated to him that what we could do without using the ultimate weapons would lead them to back down.

G: Can you recall any specific meetings?

J: No. No, I can't. My statement to that effect comes from hearing him. No, I did not attend the meetings. They were all held in other places, and I was not present. That

wasn't my function. Other people would be present, like [Walt] Rostow and people like that, but I wasn't.

G: Do you think that opposition opinions were filtered out by people like Rostow?

J: I'll say this, that in any issue in the White House, I don't care what it is, opposition opinions are filtered out, because advisers don't like to say bad things. Consequently, if they say them at all, they're downplayed. I think that's true. I think that's one of the problems of the White House. Now, the one thing Johnson did to overcome that was reading these ticker tapes all the time. He would get more from those than his aides would give him, including me. I didn't like to tell him anything bad either if I could avoid it.

G: Let me ask you to describe the process of filtering out unpleasant information or negative views on things?

J: I know you know, and I'm just stating it for the record, the means whereby information came to him. If it were extremely important, he would get it in person, but it was always made as concise and short as possible. And it always came through somebody. There's no way for a man to have a direct conduit; he couldn't go look at it all. He had to be told about everything. If the information was not of the first magnitude and immediate in nature, required immediate decisions, it came to him in memos with the yes-no on the bottom which would give him his options, so he didn't have to say a lot. These were written by individuals trying to be as short as possible, trying to keep them down to a page or so or whatever they tried to do. If something had to be eliminated it was a bad thing [that was eliminated]. It's the means whereby information is directed to a president that permits the elimination of bad things, because you're presenting it to him in your way

in as short a way as possible, and therefore if you're going to eliminate something, you try to eliminate something bad. Or if you say something bad, you try to weave it in with something good, because you try to spare his feelings as much as possible.

G: If that is done, what happens if there is an aide who disagrees with a certain policy? Is someone else able to filter out that before the memo gets to the President? What is the process? Once you write a memo, how does it get to the President from there?

J: Well, it depends. Everybody didn't have the right to present memos, because it wouldn't be physically possible. Nobody ever said who could do it and who couldn't, but generally it was considered that the top people would get the information first. They might have some of their people help them with the memo or something, but it would be their memo, it would be their work that would go forward. If it were the kind of issue that you might have disagreement on, generally the first memo was circulated to other people on the staff to have a chance to say what they wanted to say about it. They could write a memo and they'd go up together.

If it were a cabinet person, they had access to the President. Nobody fools with what they did. If you disagreed with it, you might have gotten the chance to say so later, but whatever they wrote went to him and didn't get messed with by some assistant. Although some of the staff members--Califano was one--tried to interpose themselves between cabinet people and the President. The President didn't like that, but you could do it, because he didn't know what the hell you were doing. You could call and say the President said so-and-so. They didn't know whether he said it or not.

G: What about someone like Marvin Watson, who is in a very close-in situation, as you were? Can he intercept a memo that he does not think the President ought to see?

J: He could have, but he'd never do it.

G: Is that right?

J: It would be difficult, because eventually the word would get up, would filter around enough to where somebody would know you were pulling out memos. You just couldn't get by with that very much. What you could do, you could slant the damn thing any way you wanted to. The power is awesome. The words "the President said" are just so powerful and they carry so much meaning, you can do almost anything you want by just calling from the White House and saying, "The President said. . . ." And the likelihood of your being caught up in something is small, because the President gets so little of what--by the time it gets to him, it's boiled down to where you can get by with most anything.

G: Did the President seem to have a passion for secrecy during this period?

J: I think the President had about everything he dealt with a passion for holding his own counsel. He didn't think that really it was to the best interest of the country to talk about a lot of things. I think basically he was a fairly close-in man; I don't want to say secretive, but he was pretty close-in. He would hold things close to his vest in business and in politics. And that may be bad, I don't know. I don't know how a person can be otherwise, but maybe some of them are.

G: Another criticism about his secrecy that the press was especially sensitive to had to do with travel, because they felt like they never got enough notice on where he was going.

J: And I suppose they were justified in that to some extent. However, safety dictates that if you let people know where you're going, you're going to get in trouble.

G: Is that why he did it?

J: Absolutely, absolutely. And you know, the press was mean. They're a bunch of bastards. Why in the hell should you treat them so good? Why do you have to call them early in the morning and say, "Well, you be ready tomorrow; we're going somewhere"? To hell with them. They're paid to do what they did. You don't have to carry them around. But basically the reason was that every memo that was ever written on the safety of the President cautioned us always never to let anybody know where you were going to be if you can avoid it, particularly outside on trips and things, because that's where you get in trouble.

G: How much of it was just his own desire to preserve his options?

J: I would say a lot of it was. I would say he's a man who liked to have his options. He felt very strongly that the press shouldn't be permitted to destroy his options, that as president of the United States, he ought to maintain some right to do what the hell he wanted to do.

G: Well, for example though, if he knew he was going to the LBJ Ranch for a weekend, and presumably he would have security there and security on *Air Force One* and security flying into Bergstrom or wherever, was it really asking too much to tell the press that he was going to go or not going to go?

J: In some instances, maybe yes. But in most instances he was really never sure he was going to leave until just about the time he left, because I know of, I think, two instances where we cancelled the trip completely because of business that came up.

G: What was the business?

J: Legislative in nature. It got to the point where if you left, you'd leave something undone, and it kept getting later and later, and he just said, "The hell with it; I'll just not go." I know of many instances where the trip was delayed for hours, to where if you had told

someone, "I'm going to leave at three o'clock on such and such a day," they'd have been sitting for six hours waiting for something to happen.

G: Did it create logistical problems for you all in the White House staff, the communications, having to go places on very short notice?

J: I suppose to some of the staff people, the WHCA people, but what they did, they just tried to anticipate him. If they thought he was going to do something, they would go ahead and get it set up, and if he didn't do it, they'd just wasted that time and effort. Yes, it created some problems, but there's no way to avoid those problems. Hell, that's a major undertaking.

G: I have some miscellaneous things I want to ask you about. One was the William McChesney Martin situation, where he was espousing a much more cautious approach to the economy and had fears of the repeat of the Crash. It seemed very much out of step with Johnson's own views and the policy of the administration.

J: It did. It was.

G: What did LBJ do about that?

J: He knew he couldn't do an awful lot. The law is such that you can't do much about the chairman of the Federal Reserve [Board]. He's there. You can put pressure on him. What he tried to do was court him. He would just go out of his way to try to get the man to come around a little more to his way of thinking. He just worked at it and tried through intermediaries, through friends of Martin, through bankers--you know, he just thought bankers . . . .

G: Was he frustrated by Martin's independent course?

J: Of course he was.

G: What did he think of Martin?

J: I think he thought he was an ultraconservative man who really didn't have the best interests of this country in his thinking. He was more interested in the bankers and the financiers rather than trying to keep the economy of this country in such shape that the people--that's a bad expression--but there would be enough money around to where people would do well and live well.

G: Wright Patman, of course, was violently opposed to Martin--

J: Oh, absolutely.

G: --and was an old friend of LBJ, too.

J: Yes, he was.

G: Did he aid Patman in his opposition to Martin at all? Was there anything he could [do]?

J: I don't think there was much he could do. Patman was chairman of the committee. He had all the forum he needed. But on the other hand, he did not try to help Patman all the time. Patman could do it on his own. He wasn't going to quit. There really wasn't anything--Patman was pretty much the other way. He was pretty wild on his side.

G: [There are] a couple of appointments I want to ask you about. Joseph Swidler was retiring as head of the FPC [Federal Power Commission]. I have a note here that LBJ asked him to stay even though Swidler was severely criticized by the oil and gas industry for his aggressive regulation of natural gas. What was the situation here with Swidler? Did the President really want him to remain in that position?

J: Yes. I think he'd have been glad for him to remain in that position. I know he felt that the chairman of the Federal Power Commission shouldn't be liked too damn much by the oil and gas interests, and that in order for him to fulfill his role as the public protector in

this area, he ought to be a person who is pretty liberal in his thinking about power and oil and gas. Yes, he wanted him to stay.

G: Did the President get pressure from his home state to replace Swidler with someone else?

J: Always. Always did. Our oil friends just thought Swidler had horns and that we ought to put somebody in there who was--

G: Did the President have you deal with this?

J: No, I did deal with it. He didn't ask me to. Because a lot of my friends were in the oil business, and they would call me, and I would pass it on. You know, anybody who is a large contributor or a good friend who happens to be in the oil business has a right to express his views, and a lot of them would go through me because they just liked me, and they figured I had the President's ear, for one thing. I had been an oil lobbyist, you know. I worked for Conoco, as a matter of fact. That was one of my big clients. But I got in it to that extent that I'd pass along what So-and-so thought about Swidler. Of course, he didn't have to [have me] pass it along; he knew it to begin with. He would sometimes say, "Call So-and-so and tell him that I can't put an oil-owned man into this position. There's just no way for me to do it. They ought to understand that."

G: He appointed Ed Clark ambassador to Australia.

J: Yes, he did, and Ed deserved it, and Ed turned out to be a hell of an ambassador. I briefed Ed. I had to read through the damn SEATO [Southeast Asia Treaty Organization treaty]. I think there were three treaties that involved that part of the world. One of them I remember is the SEATO; I don't remember what the other one was. But I had to read through them because the President didn't think Ed had enough sense to. Or not that he didn't have enough sense, but that he wouldn't. What he'd do is go up there and make a

fool of himself, and he wanted to be sure he didn't. Well, Ed knew that too, and he understood my problem. I just had to keep insisting that Ed read this treaty and that treaty, and I'd go over them with him. Fortunately, Ed didn't resent it. He understood that the President was making me do it. It turned out to be a good appointment. You know, everybody thought that the President was appointing a fool to the thing, at least those who knew Ed. You know, Ed talks funny, but Ed's a bright man. And the other problem was that there were so many people outside of Texas who didn't know Ed. [They thought] to appoint a Texas lobbyist as ambassador to Australia was just bad. They thought it was bad. They thought he would be a terrible ambassador, that they ought to appoint a career man. So he just repaid Ed a million favors by appointing him ambassador to Australia, and Ed really wanted to do the job, and Ed handled his confirmation hearings very well, and lined up his votes and went to see everybody, and did everything you were supposed to do when you're an ambassador-designate, or whatever he called himself.

G: Whose idea was it to appoint Clark to begin with, do you recall?

J: I think the President's.

G: Really?

J: Yes. I think he felt very indebted to Ed Clark.

G: Why was Clark a good ambassador?

J: Because he got along very well with the government officials in Australia. They liked him because he understood their problems, and they liked to talk to him, and they knew he would try to help them if he could. Mainly they thought he had the President's ear because he was such an old friend, and that made him a good ambassador. And he did a

good job. He knew what to pass on to the State Department, and the folks over there who were so opposed to him when he was nominated got to where they thought he did a reasonably good job. He treated them right, you know. He didn't go around them to the President. He went through channels like he should.

G: He appointed Jim Symington to head the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency. Do you remember that appointment and any significance there?

J: No. That's Senator [Stuart] Symington's son?

G: Yes.

J: He eventually made him [chief of] protocol or something, didn't he?

G: That's right.

J: He was terrible. Jim Symington--he's in Congress now, isn't he?

G: Yes, I believe he is.

J: He was ineffective in whatever he did. I remember one instance at the Punta del Este conference. Jim was the protocol guy then, I'm sure, and he was on the trip. The President was setting up a series of breakfasts with the various chiefs of state of different countries, and Jim was supposed to be there and tell everybody where they were supposed to sit. That's the protocol function. And he was never there. I know about as much about protocol as the man in the moon. I remember one morning particularly, everybody showed up, the president of this particular country and all his staff, and there was no protocol man there, and the President said, "Well, Jake, get them seated." I didn't have the slightest idea what to do, and I just said, "Well, gentlemen, this man ought to sit on the President's right, and why don't the rest of you just get around the table," which is terrible. That's wrong. The President just chewed my butt out because, he said, "You

don't know anything about protocol at all," and I said, "That's right, I don't know anything about protocol. I've never studied it and don't know anything about it." I just figured that Symington was the cause of that. He should have had all this done. Symington wasn't worth a damn.

G: Now, there's one incident when McGeorge Bundy returned from the Dominican Republic--he was there ten days working with the interim government there--and he came to the White House and [George] Reedy announced briefly that Mac Bundy would hold a press conference, and evidently the reporters there put it on their wire service that that was going to be the case. And LBJ picked it up on the ticker upstairs and phoned down and told Reedy that he wouldn't, and had Reedy countermand the information. Do you remember that?

J: No.

G: Was this a common thing?

J: No, it was very uncommon for a person like Reedy to announce a press conference of any kind with anybody without consulting the President.

G: Really?

J: Oh, absolutely. Reedy has better sense than that really, although Reedy was always pretty uptight at the White House. He was not really cut out to be the press secretary of the president, because he just was afraid--he didn't want to hurt the press and he didn't want to hurt the President. He made mistakes. All of us do, but he made more than he should have. Anybody would know that you don't have any kind of press conference out of the White House without first consulting the President and getting his agreement to it, and generally the President didn't want it. If he were going to have a press conference, it

would be him and then he might let Bundy say something, but it would be his press conference.

G: That's odd, because Reedy had worked for Johnson so long by this time, handling press--

J: He had reached the stage where it was just more than he--he's in a perfect place now; he's in a school, and he's a professor. But he wasn't doing a very good job at the White House.

G: Another appointment I want to ask you about was the appointment of General William McKee as FAA chairman. There was a controversy here in the Senate over the fact that the post had been largely a civilian-held post rather than an active member of the military. Vance Hartke and Russell Long fought that nomination pretty vigorously. Do you recall that, and LBJ's--?

J: I recall McKee. He was a hell of a nice man. He just was caught up in the middle of something. He just didn't know what was happening to him. He didn't understand the problem. He thought he was as civilian as anybody. He was a retired general, wasn't he?

G: Oh, I think he still had his commission.

J: Did he? Well, anyway, he didn't understand the problem. You know, I don't know much more about it than that. I don't know that the President gave it much thought beforehand. And I don't know how McKee got to him. I don't know how that name got into the picture. He was a nice man. McKee was a good fellow. But no, I don't know who recommended McKee for the place.

G: LBJ did not back down on that; he went ahead and pushed it through and passed it. Do you recall anything about getting the nomination approved? Any of the legislative battles?

J: No, I don't think it ever became a real [issue]. You know, there was opposition, but I don't think it was ever very close, because most people didn't feel like that was a very big issue. I can't remember why Hartke got so excited about it. And particularly Russell Long, who really doesn't give a shit about much of anything. There must be somebody in Louisiana who was upset about that, because Russell Long couldn't care less about who was chairman of the FAA.

G: Senator [Richard] Russell's nephew, [Judge] Bobby Russell, died during this period and LBJ went down there for the funeral.

J: Yes. Yes, he did, didn't he?

G: Any recollection of that?

J: I don't know how well the President knew this nephew, but he was as close to Senator Russell as two men can be. He just loved Russell, and Russell loved him. I think his main interest in--and by the way, this judge was really a son, more or less, of Russell's, and I think the reason he got so interested was that he knew how close this man was to Senator Russell, and he wanted to express to Russell his feeling for him as much as anything, and to do what he could--didn't he send this judge to some hospital?

G: He may have. I know he was in touch with the doctor.

J: I think he sent him to Mayo. You know, he was very close to Mayo. I think that [he sent him there], if my recollection is right. And I think it was done primarily because of his high regard and his deep feeling for Senator Russell. They were just really close. They'd get in that White House up in the quarters and get to drinking whiskey and just having a hell of a time. Used to almost have to roll Senator Russell out.

G: Is that right?

J: Yes. They just had a good time together. Their interests were the same, and they just enjoyed each other. They'd been through so much together. That was a dear friend. And [Everett] Dirksen was a close friend, I might say. He liked Dirksen pretty good.

G: You had some major pieces of legislation in the Congress at this time, the Voting Rights Act.

J: Yes.

G: Do you recall work on that to get that passed?

J: Yes. You know, it's pretty repetitious what you do on bills.

G: Well, if you can tie it to a particular bill, the specific things that you did to get it passed, in terms of getting congressmen and senators to resolve some doubt that they had. First, voting rights?

J: Well, voting rights was easy for me. I had the East, and all the pressure on them was from home. They were going to vote for that. I do recall on one of the bills--it has to be one of the civil rights bills, I'm not sure if it was voting rights or which one it was--that somebody asked me to handle the Chicago delegation, or the Illinois delegation. And I thought, well, that's a cinch. They're all from the North. I can do that with my hands tied behind me. So I volunteered to take it on.

Well, the first one I called was Danny Rostenkowski; we were good friends--not good friends, we were political friends. I said, "Danny, I assume you're going to vote for this bill. It's something that certainly you northerners would be for." He said, "The hell I will! We're not going to ever vote for any kind of civil rights bill and be reelected in Chicago, because the people up there are just not for all this civil rights stuff," and I learned a good lesson from that. But basically there isn't much reasoning in civil rights

legislation, to call somebody and say, "Well, can you vote for this?" and they'd say, "Well, I just don't know," because of this thing or that thing. Generally civil rights is either yes or no. If you come from a part of the country where there are lots of black people and they have a lot of power, or labor or something, you're going to vote for the damn thing. If you come from a part of the country [like] the Deep South, you're just going to vote against it because, politically, it's suicide. Now, in between there may be some reasoning with people in border states and things like that, but generally there isn't much reasoning there. Lobbying on this civil rights legislation was more or less trying to power it through if you could.

G: Was Dirksen helpful?

J: Dirksen was always helpful. He was always helpful. He would try to help Johnson all he could. They liked each other and he would [help] unless it was some party issue.

G: Did Dirksen, as a result of his friendship and cooperation, was there a certain amount of consideration that the White House likewise would give to him?

J: Always. Everybody knew he was helpful, and everybody knew he was a friend of the President. If he wanted something, he got it.

G: Did he generally want appointments, some of the Republican appointments on the commissions?

J: Yes. He was pretty big in getting together the names, you know. I'm sure he consulted with his people but he was generally in the act; he was in the act pretty good on any Republican appointment that we had to make. And if the appointment was in Illinois, Democrat or Republican, he'd be talked to.

G: Well, now you had Paul Douglas, and you had--

J: Nobody liked Douglas. We had to consult him, but nobody really liked him.

G: But he was the Democrat.

J: I understand, and he talked to him. But. . . .

G: You're saying, in effect, that Dirksen was the one--

J: Well, not really. If somebody were under consideration that Dirksen just found completely intolerable, I would say he wouldn't get it. But Dirksen understood his place. He understood that he didn't have the right to name Democrats, and he would never try to do it. He would use good judgment, in other words. But nobody liked Douglas. Nobody really wanted to appoint his friends, because they were as bad as he was.

G: Did the fact that you had supporters in opposite parties ever present you with a conflict over an appointment, or something between Dirksen and Mayor [Richard] Daley?

J: I don't recall such an instance, because they're both sensible people, and I don't think they'd ever let that happen.

G: Okay. Let me ask you about the Higher Education Act. This was another one that was in the Congress at this time, and I bet you worked on that.

J: Yes, but that was not too controversial. It was an easier bill than some. It had a lot more support on its own merits. You didn't have to push as hard on that one as you did on some others because it had a lot of merit to it, and the merits of the bill were such that all you really had to do was count votes and call on those who you thought might be indefinite. You could pretty well tie that down. This was all the result of something that we discussed before. I don't mean to be making it sound too easy. The fact that the President was so powerful and had such a mandate, and the fact that most congressmen, most people on the Hill felt that if they really gave the President too hard a time on some

of this legislation that their constituency would resent it, was the reason we had such an easy time. On the other hand, those who were from parts of the country where they felt that there were civil rights involved, they weren't going to support anything. But basically, that was the reason our job was made easy. Now we all felt like we were doing a lot of lobbying and really killing a bear, but really, the President was the reason why our job was so easy.

G: The creation of HUD? Anything on that that you recall?

J: No. I can't remember the opposition to that. I just can't remember who was opposed to it. There had to be some opposition.

G: I imagine at least some of the Republicans would have been opposed to creating a new cabinet department.

J: I wasn't thinking about that. They're generally opposed. I was thinking they would be opposed, but we wouldn't worry much about that because we had such a majority. I don't believe we had any--

G: Okay. There was legislation designed to prohibit the sale of mail-order guns and imported military weapons. Do you recall that?

J: Oh, that was terrible. We lost that. I don't think that's one we passed.

G: That's right.

J: Yes. Well, the opposition--I can't remember the name of that organization.

G: NRA [National Rifle Association], you mean?

J: NRA will just kill you. They have more clout and they know how to lobby. Really, we were just fighting a losing battle from the outset because--well, I think we thought we were going to do something good with it, because Johnson really was in favor of that

legislation. He wasn't doing it just for political reasons. But when the thing got going, [there was] no way to overcome this NRA group, and we pretty well knew it, although we tried. Johnson was convinced of the fact that you should have some sort of legislation about guns.

G: Anything on Medicare?

J: No, I don't. The one thing I remember about a lot of these bills, Medicare and things like this, is Cohen. Isn't he down at the University [of Texas] there?

G: Yes. Wilbur Cohen.

J: Wilbur, yes. He was always around when the President wanted to propose something to help older people, because Wilbur, you know, wrote the first Social Security Act. He was proud of showing us that copy that he had, with Roosevelt's handwriting on it. The President would consult with Wilbur on most of this legislation, even before he became--we appointed him head of HEW [Health, Education, and Welfare], didn't we, finally?

G: Yes. I think now he was assistant secretary of HEW.

J: Yes. But the President consulted with him a lot on these things. I don't remember that Medicare was any kind of a hassle. I think by the time we got it and got it into the Congress, my recollection is that we didn't have any big hassle to speak of.

G: Yes. Do you recall anything about Wilbur Mills' position here?

J: On what?

G: On Medicare?

J: I don't remember. Wilbur Mills would do almost anything I asked him to do.

G: Would he?

J: Almost. We were good friends. He would certainly give me the benefit of a hearing, and the President invited him down to the White House often. Because Wilbur was a powerful fellow, he was chairman of that committee. He was amenable. Wilbur was a good politician. Of course, we found out now that he drank a good bit and had a lot of other problems, but he liked the President and he certainly liked the power of the presidency. He was very impressed with that. You could talk to Wilbur Mills pretty easily. He was easy to talk to.

G: I guess as the administration wore on they had more conflicts, particularly over the budget and surtax.

J: They did. Mills had his own position, particularly on finance matters, and he wouldn't defer to the President on a lot of things. But the President pretty well understood, although he wasn't big on anybody opposing him much. Mills was reasonable. We did the best we could with him, and on finance matters he had a lot of power. I got to know him better after we got out of the White House.

G: Now, during this period there were a lot of published stories on the relationship between LBJ and Robert Kennedy, and the Kennedys' effort to obtain the vice presidency; a lot of this was coming out, a taped conversation that they had had about RFK not being offered the vice presidency. It seems like there was a good deal of friction here. What do you recall about that and the President's attitude here?

J: Well, I was not there at the time.

G: I know, but this is when it's all coming out in the press, in the spring of 1965.

J: Oh, well, the President, his feeling on the Kennedy thing was--particularly Bobby, I know he didn't like anything that Bobby did or anything he said. I don't remember

specifically about that. I would think he would think anybody's an idiot to think he would have asked Kennedy to serve as vice president. You just don't have a man in there who's opposed to you. I just think--well, I don't remember really. All I can say is what I think, and I think that he would certainly think that any writer who would write something like that has to be crazy. Because you don't appoint your enemy as vice president. You can't have that.

G: Kennedy also during this period asked LBJ for open talks on nonproliferation of nuclear weapons, even including Red China. Do you recall this proposal?

J: No, I don't.

G: Now, you went on this--

J: Let me go back to Wilbur Mills a minute. One of the keys to Wilbur Mills was he's from Little Rock. The dairy people are big in Arkansas. This was before I worked with them, but they had a tremendous slush fund. They contributed a good bit to Johnson, but they sure did contribute a lot to Wilbur Mills. There was a young man in Little Rock who was the second-in-command of the biggest co-op, and he and they flew Wilbur Mills around in their plane and they did everything, took care of Mills. And if we really needed Mills, I knew how to get him, and I would call David. David Something-or-other, I can't think of his name. He got in all--we all got in Watergate problems. Now, he couldn't deliver Mills, because he wasn't that kind of person, but he could damn sure talk to him, and you could get him most of the time. If you really needed him you could go through David Whatever-his-name-was.

Go ahead now, back to where--

G: You went on that trip that the President went on to California, where he stopped in Kansas City and visited with President Truman.

J: Oh, I did! That was a fun trip. I just loved President Truman. I just think that is one of the greatest--that was a good trip. We got to Kansas City. I'll look at that [diary] if you want me to, but I can remember most of it.

G: Okay. Well, if you don't need it.

J: No, no, no, no. Let me look at it a little. It will help me. But Truman, that was the time--I noticed it was in the diary. I don't know who heard him say it. When the President introduced me, he [Truman] said, "Jacobsen? Oh, that's a great name. That was my partner's name." Just the sweetest man. Old Truman was just nice--he was getting old, of course.

But anyway, that was a good trip. We got to Kansas City, and the President was in just a real good mood. He was even happy with the press. The first thing, as I remember, and I see it here, we got out of the hotel the first morning we were there, and we went for a walk, and the President bought papers from a paper boy around there. We just walked around, and he talked and he joked with whoever was with him and with the press. Of course they were there following him. I know he knew that visiting with President Truman was going to be a fun thing, an enjoyable thing, and he just woke up that morning with the thought in mind that he was going to have a good day, and it turned out just to be a real good day. Truman was in a great mood, although his memory was a little bad, but he was just pleasant and laughing. The two of them just got along--it was just a wonderful day. We just had a good time. And Johnson had just a fun time--that's a poor way to put it, but he just enjoyed himself with Truman. Here he was with a

contemporary and a man he'd served under, a man who'd served in the Senate with him, and they were both politicians, and they understood the political machinations and the political workings. It just worked out to be a good, good trip.

G: Do you recall what they talked about, anything in particular? Was it mainly reminiscing?

J: Yes. Truman, at this stage in his life, he wasn't going to talk much about issues and probably wasn't very interested. It was primarily reminiscing and talking about old times, talking about the libraries, just a general discussion that two men of that background would have. That's basically what they talked about. I believe I was there the whole time. There was very little meat to the discussion at all, if any.

I think--yes, yes, yes. There was one--Medicare, was that passed yet? As I remember--

G: He did give Truman the first [pen when he signed the Medicare bill].

J: And he told Truman, "Harry, I finally got through something you really have been advocating for many years. It's something that's really your idea." He gave him a lot of credit, and Truman was kind of pleased with that. I believe that was right. I think it was Medicare. Anyway, it was a pleasant, pleasant visit. Truman was very nice and didn't offer any big advice or anything like that.

G: Then you went on to San Francisco from there, is that right?

J: Yes. Let me look now. Let me just look at this thing a minute because my guess is that I may--if I went to San Francisco I did not go to town; I stayed out at the airport, because I don't remember anything about this UN speech. Lloyd Hand was along, and they went. I'm sure that I did not go downtown in San Francisco, or I went direct from Kansas City

to the Ranch. But probably I did go to San Francisco and stayed out at the plane and then flew back to the Ranch with Johnson.

G: Anything else on that trip that you [remember]?

J: No. Let me see who we took to Kansas City with us. I can't remember.

G: I think Frank Carlson went on one of the--

J: Well, the President liked him. He was not a--no, it doesn't say. I'm sure we took Frank Carlson and any other Kansas politicians--Frank Church and Frank Carlson. I think we took Frank Carlson with us. Anyway, it was a good trip.

(Interruption)

G: I'm asking you about the appointments of Homer Thornberry and [James Coleman].

J: Then I'm going to go back to something we talked about at lunch, and that was the desire of Price Daniel to be a judge, and the fact that President Johnson, even though he just thought the world of him, wouldn't appoint him judge. He would not appoint a federal judge who had any bias about civil rights. As a matter of fact, he almost made them swear that they would vote in favor of the black people on civil rights issues, which was probably wrong. That's how strong he felt about it. And Coleman was a problem because we had to get somebody that Senator [James] Eastland would go along with. We just had to keep dickering around until Eastland came up with somebody or we came up with somebody who Eastland would agree with, who was willing to tell the President that he was not going to be racially biased on the bench. That was a hard one, and it took a long time to negotiate that one through, and Coleman, I don't know what kind of judge he's made, I haven't followed him, but he was a hard appointment to get. He was a difficult one.

Now, Thornberry was not that kind of a problem. Thornberry's problem was cronyism. It took a lot of courage on the part of Johnson to appoint Homer, because first of all, a lot of people didn't think he was qualified. They didn't realize that he is a bright man. He was always behind the President. He was always in the President's shadow, even when he was a congressman. So people really didn't understand how bright Homer really is and the fact that he could be a good judge. There wasn't any problem about civil rights about Homer, because he knew which side his bread was buttered on, and he knew how he was supposed to vote. But the problem was cronyism, and it turned out--it took a lot of courage, a lot of people didn't really think that was the thing for the President to do, a lot of people close to him. But he just did it because he thought the world and all of Homer Thornberry, and Homer had had all of Congress he needed. He was getting older, and he just didn't need that hassle, and he needed to be in a more sedate position. This was the place for him.

G: Back to Coleman, did President Johnson feel that Kennedy had compromised too much in naming southern judges that were racially biased against blacks?

J: I don't know. I never heard him say anything about that. I don't know if he felt that way or not. I know he wasn't going to compromise, not one iota. He felt--and gosh, he'll never get credit for this because the very people he was helping, they're never going to say anything nice about him--that the way to get the black people into some kind of shape down here in the South is through the courts and through pressure of withholding monies and requiring people who got federal monies to do certain things. He just wasn't going to compromise on any of that. He was just going to try his darnedest to get the blacks, black people all over the country for that matter, but particularly in the South, in a position

where they were getting a fair shake at something. He just did it, and it took a lot of courage for a man from Texas to take the positions he did and to talk to people about appointments, to almost make them take an oath that they were not going to be biased. Of course, I don't guess he'll ever really get as much credit as he deserves for that. First place, people don't know that he did these things. I don't guess that there's any way to really let it be known.

You've got to remember that this was an extremely restless man. Being still was really a hard thing for him, but he had to be, you know, he had to attend a lot of meetings. But he wanted to be on the move. Being on the move was what he enjoyed more than anything. If he could get in the car and drive--you know, for a president, you can't do that in Washington, no way for you to do that. Movement was something he enjoyed, if he could go on that boat or get out to the Ranch and drive or walk around. He was very, very restless, and he wanted to be on the move, but in Washington there was no way to move. But he would try to slip out, for instance at night and go to Vicky's [McCammon McHugh] house. One night he went over there, or to somebody else's place, the Fortases, just something to break the monotony of that White House. But it's hard to do, because everything has so much significance. If you go to the Fortases' house, that's a problem. It's hard to find ways of releasing that restlessness, and one of the ways was the boat, because that was out and alone by himself in this thing. He didn't have the aides and the ushers and everything.

That was why he did a lot of the things he did, was his restlessness, this fast boat and dragging people behind him on a ski. One time he made me ski, and I never could get up because he'd go so [fast]. I'd get in a position to get up and I'd wave I was ready,

and he'd pull so fast that it would just knock me down. But anyway, that was a way for him to release this strong restlessness that he had, was to do things when he could.

G: How did he get out of the White House on these [occasions], not so much going out to the *Sequoia*, but let's say if he wanted to go over to somebody's house. How did he do that without the press following him?

J: Well, you just had to really be secretive. First place, he wouldn't tell anybody, not even--the Secret Service less than anybody, because he always felt like they leaked everything anyway, and certainly none of his aides because he thought most of them would leak anything. There were just a few of us that he really felt would never violate his confidence by leaking things to the press. The way he would do it is just be completely quiet about it, and make Lem Johns swear that he would do it without any fanfare whatsoever, that they would sneak out, and the Secret Service car would be far behind, and that's the only way he could do it. That's part of that secrecy. Hell, if he had let anybody know two hours in advance that he was going to do something like that, the press would eventually have gotten him.

G: Did he ever use a vehicle other than say the presidential limousine?

J: Generally not. Generally not. See, that's really the only source of protection he has. That's bulletproof and everything. I really never had seen him get in a car that it wasn't one of the limousines. But after dark you can slip out a side entrance. You know, if you go out that side entrance between the Executive Office Building and the White House, you've got a long run where nobody can get in, so you can pretty well slip out that way. Or if you go out the other side of the White House, nobody ever goes in and out that way so you can slip out that way.

End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview II

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