

INTERVIEW VIII

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INTERVIEWEE: WALTER JENKINS

INTERVIEWER: Michael L. Gillette

PLACE: Mr. Jenkins' office, Austin, Texas

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G: We started 1941 the last time--

J: 1948.

G: Excuse me, 1948 the last time I was here. I wanted to begin today by asking you about rumors during the campaign that Sam Rayburn was actually supporting or at least favored Coke Stevenson.

J: I don't think we ever believed any such thing. There were some rumors, but I'm pretty sure nobody close to President Johnson ever believed it.

G: Do you recall what Rayburn's role in the campaign was?

J: As far as I know, he had no active role. He may have. Do you have some reason to believe he had an active [role]?

G: Well, other than simply the rumors at the time. Do you have any indication that he supported Mr. Johnson over Stevenson?

J: Only that they were in touch. I don't think he supported anybody actively, but I think he counseled and talked with President Johnson on occasion and maybe advised him.

G: Let me ask you about the Texas press during that campaign.

J: The Texas press in Washington?

G: No, the newspapers in Texas, the big dailies. Did they tend to support Stevenson as opposed to Johnson or vice versa?

J: The big, big ones supported Stevenson, like the **Dallas News** and the **Houston Chronicle**. But the middle-sized dailies were mainly for Johnson, the Harte-Hanks chain in Wichita Falls and Austin and Waco and Port Arthur.

G: Did you make any attempts to get, say, the **Chronicle** or the [**Houston**] **Post** behind you in that?

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- J: I don't think the **Chronicle**. I think an attempt was made with the **Post** because I think they felt like the feeling was that there was some chance with the **Post**. I'm not sure that the **Post** was active for anybody. Maybe for [George] Peddy.
- G: Did the publishers' positions differ from those of the reporters? Could you generally win over some of the reporters if not the owners and publishers?
- J: I think so. Mr. Johnson had been around the reporters a lot and they liked him. I think there were some reporters who supported him who worked for newspapers who didn't support him.
- G: Would they generally cover LBJ one week and Stevenson the next?
- J: Most of the larger dailies had somebody covering both Stevenson and Johnson. After a week or two they would switch.
- G: Was this a way of learning what the Stevenson campaign was doing? Were the reporters at all useful in confiding what they had learned from the other side?
- J: I don't know for sure how we knew what Stevenson was doing, but we were hearing that he'd come into a town and sit in the hotel lobby and some people would come see him. He never went out to see anybody. For every one he saw, Mr. Johnson with the helicopter was seeing fifty.
- G: Now, in your earlier interview, the one that you did a number of years ago, you did talk about the trip to the Mayo Clinic and the disagreement between Mr. Johnson and John Connally about whether or not it should be divulged. But let me ask you to recall that episode in as much detail as you can, if you remember. Number one, how the decision was made that he couldn't go on and that he had to seek help, and how he decided on the Mayo Clinic.
- J: Well, I think he had this kidney stone. I don't know how he decided on the Mayo Clinic, except that he had been there before and trusted them and liked them. Jackie Cochran was available and I guess--I never have known for sure but he probably just felt like that was the place to go and he was in pain. And he had had kidney stones before.

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G: And John Connally went ahead and announced to the press that he was going, against [Johnson's wishes]?

J: He told John Connally not to tell anybody where he was. I've forgotten who all took his speeches. Everett Looney I know took some of them. Jimmie Allred maybe, I'm not sure. But he was speaking in Wichita Falls and Bowie and down that row, and his instructions to John were just to say that he was called away, like it was a vote or something. John just completely ignored it and said--they had a--well, I only heard one end of the conversation, but a rather bitter discussion. John said no, we can't do it that way, we've got to be honest, we've got to tell them what's happening. But Mr. Johnson I think was not thinking too straight because he was not feeling too well.

G: Do you think he feared the other side might use health as an issue and feel like he was--?

J: I think he felt like whether the other side used it or not he was defeated if he was a sick man that late in the campaign.

G: Did Connally talk to you before he just announced that to the press?

J: They both talked to me, yes.

G: Really?

J: In Washington, yes.

G: Oh, you were still in Washington?

J: Yes.

G: I see. Okay.

J: They weren't talking to each other. President Johnson would call me and tell me what to tell John, and John would call and tell me what to tell Mr. Johnson.

G: But before Connally released this information to the press did Connally seek your advice on whether or not to do it?

J: Well, I don't think he sought advice. He was so sure he was right. And I think he was right; I don't think there's any question but what he was right. He just went ahead.

G: How did he do it, do you know? Did he just call in the reporters?

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J: And announced that Mr. Johnson was sick and in the hospital. They announced speeches, I remember, and used substitutes in other speeches. It made Mr. Johnson real mad. I think Mr. Johnson finally realized that John [was right], that it was the only thing he could do. He might get by with that for a night, but you couldn't get by with it for two weeks.

G: There was some suggestion that he was so upset in the interim, though, that he would have resigned from the campaign if he could have gotten to the press. It was a matter of keeping him away from the reporters until he cooled down. Do you remember that?

J: I remember some discussions of that kind and some feeling, some fear that he was going to.

G: Anything else on that episode that you recall?

J: I can't remember how long it lasted, but it lasted a while. I mean it seems to me like a couple of weeks that they didn't speak to each other. They only spoke through me. My memory may be fallow, maybe it wasn't two weeks, I don't know. It was not just a day or two, it was a while.

G: Now, let me ask you about the period after the first primary. You were, what, seventy thousand votes behind. There was almost no run-off. Stevenson almost won with a majority. This must have been terribly depressing to the candidate.

J: It was, although he studied it and decided that he'd spent his time in helicopter in these little towns that didn't have many votes, and that if he had any chance he had to spend his time in the run-off in Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, San Antonio and Austin, where he could switch enough votes to make a difference. He did not go back to the little towns in the run-off.

G: Did he ever consider during that time not continuing in the race?

J: If so I never heard it.

G: Really? Do you recall any discussion by any of the people in the campaign about whether you should give up?

J: I don't recall it. I think there was a lot of gloom, I know there was. A feeling that we were fighting an uphill battle. But I don't believe

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anybody ever seriously considered just throwing in the sponge. I don't remember it.

G: What effort did you make to get Peddy's votes?

J: Well, most of Peddy's votes were city votes. They were moderate votes.

G: Did you seek out any individuals who might have some influence?

G: I'm sure he did. But I think what he really won with--I may be wrong about this--was just pressing and pressing and pressing on the Taft-Hartley law, which was a hot, hot issue, and Mr. Johnson was on record. He'd voted, so there wasn't anything he could do. He'd already voted for it. The AFL and the CIO had endorsed Stevenson. He just kept pushing him to state how he felt in every speech, because he knew if he could make him say something he never would say that he was opposed to the Taft-Hartley law publicly. And finally he did write a letter to some obscure editor somewhere saying that if he had had to vote he would have voted for it. I've forgotten now where it was.

G: During this period there was an altercation between John Connally and Roy Hofheinz about the strategy of emphasizing the Taft-Hartley issue. Do you recall that? Do you know anything about it?

J: No. I was in Washington. Well, during the run-off I was not. Most of the run-off I was back down here, but I don't recall it.

G: There was a special session of Congress right after the first primary, and LBJ had to go back to Washington.

J: I remember that.

G: Do you remember that? Anything significant related to the session?

J: I don't recall. I know he didn't stay very long. But he felt like it would be to his advantage to go back, not to refuse to go back, be at his desk working.

G: He did, I gather, when he came back have a meeting with all of his campaign workers from around the state in Fort Worth. Do you remember anything on that?

J: I remember there was one. I wasn't there.

G: Let me ask you a little bit about the campaign organization and ask you

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to describe the elements of it, for example, the district men and how it was structured from the grass-roots.

J: Of course, Claude Wild was the campaign chairman in name; John Connally was the campaign chairman I think in fact. Then under John was the district chairman in each district and a county chairman in every county where we could get one. We didn't have a county chairman in every county because some of them we just didn't know anybody. But most counties had a county chairman. It was organized that way, the district chairman stayed in touch with the county chairman.

G: Would there be any chain of command? Would the district chairman be over the county chairman, for example, or vice versa?

J: Yes, he would. The district--

G: He had several counties usually I guess.

J: We organized by congressional districts. The district chairman would be the district chairman for a congressman's district, and under him would be the county chairman for the counties in that district.

G: Would these people be responsible for putting together lists of supporters or distributing materials?

J: Both. Making suggestions of people to appeal to, people to write to. We put an awful lot of mail out of that old white house, down where the courthouse is now.

G: Hancock House, was that the name of it?

J: I don't know for sure.

G: You had a lot of volunteer workers, too, in that campaign.

J: Yes, Mrs.--oh, was chairman of the women's [division]? What's her name? Mrs. Brooks.

G: Marietta [Moody] Brooks.

J: Was chairman of the women's, and then we had Sarah what's-her-name in charge of all the telephones. She was something.

G: Sarah Wade?

J: Sarah Wade. She could find you. I remember one time landing in Waco, and nobody knew I was going to Waco. I walked into the airport and I was

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being paged. Not a human anywhere knew I was there, and Sarah found me.

She could find anybody anywhere.

G: What did the volunteers do in that campaign?

J: Whatever they were asked to do. They did distribution of literature and placards, bumper stickers, you know, the same things. It wasn't all that different.

G: Did you use polling in that campaign?

J: Yes. I can't remember who we used, but I think it was the Texas poll, which was run by Mr. Joe Belden, in fact I know we did. He showed we were gaining, however he showed us still behind in the last ones, but close.

G: Do you remember what the margin was?

J: No.

G: Now there is some indication, too, that you used advance men for the first time in the LBJ campaign.

J: He did use advance men. Charlie Herring, I think he was in charge of advance men. He's still alive. He could probably tell you something about that.

G: Were there no advance men in 1941?

J: I don't remember any advance men in 1941. I believe 1948 was the first time we used advance men, just to boom the crowds.

G: Besides the issue of the Taft-Hartley that you really hammered home, and the fact that you concentrated more on the cities, what other differences were there between the run-off primary and the first primary?

J: Well, he sort of stopped speaking out of the sky. He had made quite a thing during the first primary of seeing twenty railroad workers and hovering over them in the helicopter and making a speech to wherever he saw people. He gave up the idea of speaking to twenty and fifty and thirty and forty and trying to have much larger crowds.

G: Did this mean radio crowds?

J: He had radio speeches every day. He was on the radio at 6:45 and 12:45 or something, I don't remember, twice a day.

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G: Was this targeted toward the urban areas or was this part of your overall plan to--?

J: Yes. Very definitely targeted toward the urban areas.

G: Was there any change at all in your mailings? Did you send out different kinds of mailings or more mailings, do you remember?

J: We sent out more. Now I can't tell you for sure, I can't remember, what different kinds. I know that we stopped working--he analyzed the returns in the first primary, and we had lost in Dallas and Houston primarily. He concentrated in Dallas and Houston. We'd carried I think San Antonio by a very small margin, carried it in the second primary by a big margin.

G: Why was that? What was the difference? It was a big turn-around there.

J: Well, I think it was appeal to the Latin Americans.

G: Do you think it had anything to do with the political machinery in place there, say the Kilday--?

J: Well, I think Kilday got out and really worked in the second primary. Not that he didn't in the first one. I don't think he really realized the need for it. And the Texas delegation in Congress were almost to a man for Mr. Johnson. I think they all got after it.

G: Yes. It seems that W. Lee O'Daniel supported LBJ in that race.

J: I never heard that, that I remember.

G: Or urged his people to support him. You don't recall anything?

J: No, I don't. I can't imagine why he would have. Mrs. [Miriam] Ferguson did, and she had supported O'Daniel--the Fergusons had supported O'Daniel in 1941. So they might have left the impression that O'Daniel was supporting him.

G: Was there a shortage of campaign funds in 1948?

J: Yes. Not as dire as it was in 1941.

G: But people have described going out of second story windows of buildings to get away from creditors demanding money and that sort of thing. Tell me about the financing of it and where your deficiencies were.

J: Well, I think they were trying very hard to use a lot of radio, a lot of

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radio, and the bills from radio were piling up. John Connally was finance chairman. He was having a heck of a time. But in 1941 they did not know who Mr. Johnson was so much. We almost had to pay cash to get on the air. In 1948 they figured it would be paid sometime. They were a little better about letting him go on without paying in advance.

G: Did you spend a lot of money on the helicopters in 1948? Was that a big expense?

J: I don't know. I always felt maybe the helicopters were given to us. I'm not sure. If they weren't, they were provided at low cost.

G: You mentioned radio and the cost of radio. What other major expenses did you have in 1948?

J: Well, we did with some newspaper, but not to the degree that he would have liked to have, just because we didn't have the money to do it.

G: Were the sources of funds, of contributions, the same in 1948 as they had been in 1941 or did you have a lot of new supporters? Did you lose some of your old contributors?

J: I don't remember any that we'd lost, but I think there were a lot of new ones that came in. Money was a lot easier to get in 1948 than it was in 1941.

G: Do you have any idea how much you spent in the 1948 campaign?

J: Not the faintest. A lot. I don't know. I know we tried to get committees to spend as much as they would, because you didn't have to report what a committee spent because you didn't know what a committee spent. You only had to report what the candidate spent. So we tried to have the candidate spend as little as possible and organizations spend as much as possible. The law is different now, but in those days organizations could spend--

G: Are you talking about a local committee or a--?

J: Either one.

G: --or the regular statewide Johnson-for-Senator committee?

J: Well, all that we had to report was what Johnson himself knew about, had to know about. If he was on radio, he couldn't be on radio without

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knowing he was on radio. So we were very careful with the things that he had to know about that we reported them. Sometimes we didn't always know how many stations he was on. We knew he was on the station it was originating on. If it was on a chain of stations, we didn't always know for sure what all stations were carrying it.

G: You had mentioned San Antonio and the big surge that you got of votes there in the second primary. Gregg County on the other hand, in East Texas, seems to have gone for you in the first primary and for Stevenson in the second. How do you explain something like that?

J: Probably Carl Estes.

G: You think so.

J: Probably. I don't know for sure. But he had more influence than anybody else out there.

G: Did he have a disagreement with LBJ from the first primary to the second, do you recall?

J: No, but I don't think he really worked in the second primary.

G: Now, let me ask you about the events surrounding the election itself. I know he went to San Antonio and spent I guess the last day there.

J: We had quite a rally, one of the greatest political rallies I ever attended, I guess the greatest one.

G: Let me ask you to describe that in as much detail as you can.

J: Well, it would be just like a lot of them that everybody has been to, except of course I was particularly interested. There just were so many people you couldn't get around that building. There was a feeling of excitement. You're going to ask me to describe this and I can't do it, but he made the finest speech that I ever heard him make that day.

G: Really?

J: He just lifted those people up off of the chairs. When he didn't have to follow a script, he was a great speaker. When he had to follow a script, he wasn't the greatest speaker in the world.

G: What did he talk about then, do you recall?

J: He talked about what it would mean to little people to have a person that

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was interested in them. Poor people, disadvantaged people, that's what he was interested in then. I think he pretty well convinced folks that Stevenson wasn't.

G: Anything about the audience reaction to the speech that you remember?

J: It was overwhelming. I mean, you almost had to stop for applause nearly at the end of every sentence. Exciting night.

G: What was his mood after that, that evening?

J: I don't remember whether I was with him or not. Probably was, but I don't remember. I don't know.

G: Now, Mrs. Johnson had that car wreck, remember, with Marietta Brooks in Seguin.

J: He was concerned about that. I had forgotten it until you mentioned it, but that's true, he was concerned about that.

G: Do you know how he found out about the wreck?

J: I don't, but I know he knew it, because he mentioned it.

G: In the speech?

J: Yes.

G: What did he say, do you recall? I know it's a long time ago.

J: I don't know exactly except that I remember him saying something about the fact that there had been one and she was all right.

G: Now, did he go back and vote in Johnson City, is that [right]?

J: Yes.

G: Were you there election day, do you recall?

J: I was in Austin election day. They came into Austin that night.

G: Did the campaign workers gather at the headquarters or Dillman Street? Where did you listen to the returns?

J: Dillman Street.

G: Dillman Street. Let me ask you to recall as much as you can about that week where the lead was shifting back and forth. I know that you had your own estimates based on your own people.

J: It was more than estimates, but. . . .

G: They were counts I guess, is that right?

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J: Our county managers got the responsible official in each county to sign and send them in to us. That's where I had given President Johnson a report very shortly that he had won by 156. That's why he looked so bad when he went on statewide radio and the radio was saying he was behind, and he said don't pay any attention, that he had won. Some of the same counties that were slow in reporting in 1941 were also slow in reporting in 1948.

G: Was that right?

J: But it was good in 1948 that they were. Because in case anybody had any idea of stealing the election, they never knew in 1948 how many they would have to steal. They knew in 1941 because we got all of ours in right away. We didn't in 1948. Some of our strong counties were slow in reporting.

G: Do you remember any telephone communication between LBJ and some of the late return areas, like Jim Wells County or Duval County?

J: I don't think he--I know you're going to find this hard to believe, but I don't think he knew the people in Jim Wells and Duval County. John Connally called down there for reports. There was nobody out there except John Connally and Mary Rather and Mr. Johnson and me. That's all. Mr. Johnson most of the time in his pajamas.

G: Others have described him as being absolutely exhausted and very, you know, rather unshaven.

J: He was.

G: Was he? Well, when he got this--

J: We were getting telephone calls from all over the state, but I don't think he was taking many of them. Either John or I was taking them and keeping up our count.

G: How well did he endure the stress of not knowing whether he won or lost?

J: Well, I think he felt he had won, because we had written, signed statements from every responsible official in each county giving us what later would become the official returns. They hadn't been sent in in all the counties; they hadn't been sent in to the state election bureau. He

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was I think pretty confident that he had won. He went on radio and said he had won. People thought he was nuts.

G: In the questioning that took place later of the returns, the corrected totals, who was the one that LBJ leaned on for advice on that, how to handle this?

J: Senator [Alvin] Wirtz.

G: Is that right?

J: At that hearing in Fort Worth, before that court case, Jimmie Allred had a lot of the answers. You know, they let the other side just go high, wide and handsome because they were taking the position that it didn't belong in that court, that they were in the wrong. And Jimmie Allred, very fiery guy that he was, he'd jump up. Senator Wirtz would grab his coattail and pull him back down because he didn't want him to say anything. They just let them go right ahead.

G: Did Everett Looney play a role in the whole question of the validity of the vote?

J: Oh, yes. But not really up front.

G: What did he do? What did Looney do?

J: Mostly advise.

G: Now, then I guess in September you went to the state convention.

J: Yes.

G: And I guess spent a lot of time with the State Democratic Executive Committee in an attempt to win over--

J: Where the vote was 28 to 28 and then they found the one guy from Amarillo who was in the bar, came bringing him in on their shoulders, and he cast a vote for Johnson, making it 29 to 28.

G: Were you there when that took place?

J: I was sitting right by Senator Wirtz giving him county votes. When they came to Jack County and they'd made a mistake, and to Dallas County where they made a mistake--156 was the correct vote--I wanted him to get up and protest the vote. He said, "No, no, let's wait until the end. Don't protest anything." Like for instance, Jack County the vote was 698 to

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679 and they reversed it. Johnson had carried it by that much and they recorded that Stevenson carried it that much, and I had this affidavit right in my hand showing that they'd got it backwards. And I said, "Senator Wirtz, Senator Wirtz, you've got to get up and do something about this." He said, "No, no. Just let it go. We'll wait until they're through counting." When they got through counting, well, he still sat.

G: Did you have an advance count of how that committee vote was going to come out?

J: No.

G: What would you have done if the committee had ruled against, if the one vote had gone the other way?

J: I guess they would have certified Stevenson as the nominee.

G: But did you have any--it just seems unlike Lyndon Johnson not to have some sort of--

J: Well, he certainly did his best, but bear in mind that the state Democratic committee was a Stevenson committee. He'd been governor for four years, and that was an instrument of the governor. There's quite a limit to how much he could do with them.

G: But would you have taken it to the courts?

J: I don't know that. I'm sure he would have.

G: I have a list of the committee there. Let me ask you to look over that and see if you recall any individual incidents of persuading people to vote with you on that.

J: I remember something about Colonel Albert Sidney Johnson, but I can't remember for sure what it is. I think there was in that case. Of course, John Simmang from Giddings was for Mr. Johnson from beginning to end. Guy Jackson was. Tom Moore was. Jerome Sneed was. Mrs. [Alma Lee] Holman was. Frank Mayborn was. There was something about Holford Russell, I can't remember what it was. He was a key fellow for some reason. French Robertson, he vacillated I remember. Ed Lloyd was for Johnson. Of course, the hero was Charlie Gibson from Amarillo.

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G: Tell me about Gibson.

J: He was the guy that was the twenty-ninth vote. He was the guy that wasn't even there. Some of our henchmen went out and started going to the highways and the byways and found him.

G: Where did he come from? Do you know where he was or--?

J: Well, I always heard he was in the bar having a drink. I don't know for sure where he was.

G: Now, there's also a story that one of the delegates had a heart attack .pa or something and Senator Wirtz got a proxy from him before he left for the hospital. Have you heard that?

J: I don't remember that. But see, we were in a forum that was all the other way. Bob Calvert was chairman, Vann Kennedy was secretary. They were all Stevenson appointees, Stevenson's people, Stevenson's organization. When they had that one vote, he waited, he waited for them to try to find one. And he knew our friend [Gibson?], who handed his vote over. But he thought maybe they'd find one to bring it back to a tie, but they didn't.

G: Who waited? Was it Calvert?

J: Bob Calvert, a fine man. He's one of the finest men in the world, later was chief justice of the [Texas] Supreme Court.

G: What was the atmosphere like?

J: It was loaded. I mean. . . . One lady changed her vote, I remember that, changed her vote from Johnson to Stevenson.

G: Do you know which one that was?

J: Johnson was ahead 28 to 27 I guess, and she switched her vote, making it a tie. It was just before they went out and found Gibson. I don't remember who it was.

G: Let me ask you something. What enticements, what sort of reason could you give to one of these people to vote with you rather than Coke Stevenson?

J: There wasn't a thing you could give them except that you'd remember them and they'd have a friend.

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G: Was there any contingency for having another vote after the committee had been replaced? I guess the committee itself would be reconstituted at that convention, wouldn't it?

J: Yes, but if it was reconstituted, the vote would have been unanimous the other way, the way it went. See, the whole thing then collapsed, Stevenson's. If there had been another vote at that point, it would have been unanimous for Johnson.

G: Is that right? I mean, with--

J: Well, ultimate, but I mean close to it.

G: But was that a possibility then?

J: I don't know that. We didn't face that. The subcommittee was also a one-vote margin, 4 to 3, wasn't it, or 5 to 4, I can't remember. But the whole thing was just touch and go.

G: Where was LBJ when all of this was going on? Was he there at the convention?

J: He wasn't out in the convention hall, he was back at the hotel. He was getting frequent calls.

G: Tell me what his role in all of that was. Did he talk to delegates personally, or committeemen?

J: I don't really think he did. I may be wrong. He probably talked to some he knew closely enough. But he had his team, Senator Wirtz being the leader of it, and he left it to them. I'm sure he did, but I don't know that positively, I don't. It was pretty hard to get hold of people.

G: It seems amazing that the vote would be that close after the election was so close. Is there any correlation between the two?

J: Probably. Probably if Johnson won the election by a big margin, the vote would have been by a big margin. But Stevenson was contending at that time that the election was a fraud. Of course, there were other things.

Probably if they'd ever had a--I've always felt the reason they didn't go into a state court, which is where they should have gone, is that they knew they would lose by more votes because Brownwood [had] several hundred involved.

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G: Now, after the election but evidently before this convention, both Stevenson and LBJ met with--separately, of course--Governor [Beauford] Jester. Do you recall that and why this was--?

J: I recall that they did, but I don't know that I ever knew just exactly what happened.

G: What his purpose was in seeing Jester? Did it have anything to do with the convention, do you know?

J: I don't know. Jester probably was for Stevenson.

G: Yes. Did you happen to go to the trial in Judge [T. Whitfield] Davidson's court?

J: I was there.

G: Let me ask you to recall everything you remember. You've mentioned Allred standing up and Wirtz pulling him down. What else do you remember about that hearing?

(Interruption)

J: The Judge was from a little town in East Texas. I don't know whether he was actually from Karnack or not, but if he wasn't he was from near Karnack. He started out by saying that if he was going to decide this based on personal relationships, he'd have to decide in favor of Johnson because he had grown up--

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J: --Mr. Taylor, Lady Bird Johnson's father, was his closest friend, and if he had based it on friendship. . . . I don't remember just at what point he said this, but somewhere early in the case. I remember Senator Wirtz said, "Well, that's the end of it." Senator Wirtz left before it was over. He went to the airport and caught a plane to New Orleans to file the papers to appeal.

But the Judge let the other side just go high, wide and handsome. They put on all sorts of evidence. They had a lot of people from Jim Wells County who said their names were on the election rolls and they didn't vote. We had researched a lot of this, their names, and we had answers to a lot of it. Actually their names were not on the voters list

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at all. That's what I was talking about when I said Allred just couldn't stand just letting them go when the answers were ready at his fingertips, and they wouldn't let him use them because they felt like if we ever tried to answer one thing we were acknowledging that they were in a place that had the right to hear it when our contention was that they were not in a place that had any right to hear any of it.

G: Was LBJ there in the hearing? Did he sit through that or part of it?

J: I don't believe he was there at all. I may be wrong, but I don't believe he was.

G: Did you have any speculation why Stevenson went to this judge to begin with?

J: Well, we always thought he was very, very conservative--that he thought he had a friend in court. I mean, that was all conjecture.

G: Yes.

J: And of course the Judge did find completely with him.

G: Anything on the other side during that hearing? Dan Moody was there, wasn't he, representing Stevenson? Do you remember Moody's performance in here?

J: Not individually. Somehow I don't think Moody presented the guts of the case, but I may be wrong about that. Senator Wirtz just kept saying "we protest this appearance on the basis that this court has no jurisdiction." He never tried to combat anything that was said. Of course, it made Mr. Johnson look awfully bad because they were making some wild charges.

G: Well now, the Stevenson people had a set of affidavits from people in Jim Wells County, or Alice I guess, saying that they hadn't voted.

J: And their names were on the [list of voters].

G: Yes. And had affidavits from people who said they were the last ones to vote, and they voted at seven o'clock or whatever.

J: That's right.

G: And then you had a set of affidavits from other people who--I guess Don Thomas went down there and Ed Lloyd, they got some affidavits from people

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who said that there were other voters there and the one thing and another.

J: That there were people waiting to vote. You know, at seven o'clock you're not supposed to close the polls if people are waiting to vote. You're supposed to stay open and let them [vote]. But they never used our affidavits. We had them. That's what Allred wanted to use.

G: Did you ever sort this out in your own mind of what really happened down there?

J: No, I didn't, and I don't know whether some of the votes were fraudulent or not. If they were, there were more of them fraudulent the other way in other places.

G: Was this also LBJ's perspective on the--?

J: I don't know.

G: Anything else that you recall about the court test?

J: Only the thing that makes me think that the votes were legitimate was that they could not have known, no way they could have known how many votes it would take for us to win. I mean, 201 votes were in question, but I don't think there was any way they could have known that 201 votes would put us over the top or not over the top. They switched 225 votes in Eastland County in the counting.

G: But weren't these in Alice the last votes to come? Didn't all the other counties report beforehand?

J: They were among the last to come in. I don't know that they were **the** last.

G: Now, I guess just about the time the case was being argued in Justice [Hugo] Black's chambers, Harry Truman came through Texas campaigning. Do you remember that?

J: Yes.

G: Where were you? Did you meet the train?

J: No, but President Johnson was on it.

G: Yes. Tell me what you remember about meeting the train. I think I've got some--

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J: I don't think I met the train. If I'm not mistaken, Mr. Johnson got on it in Waco and rode from Waco to Austin on it, I think. That's my memory.

G: Did you ride with him on the train?

J: No, I didn't go on the train at all.

G: The train also went to Bonham. Do you have any recollection of that?

J: No.

G: Did you ever have any indication that Rayburn helped--he was a good friend of Justice Black, I guess--advance your side of the argument to the Supreme Court?

J: I don't think he was as good a friend to Justice Black as President Johnson was.

G: Is that right?

J: And I don't think Justice Black decided on the basis of friendship. I think he decided on the basis that no federal court had ever heard an election case.

G: Were the Johnson forces pretty confident that Justice Black would so rule?

J: I think we just didn't know.

G: Was that, as far as you were concerned, pretty much the end of it when Black did rule? Was there a sense of relief?

J: Of course there was a sense of relief. That wasn't the end of it though. It still had to be confirmed by the full court, which it was, unanimously, when it came back into session. It didn't end then. Then there was a contest filed with the Senate Elections Committee.

G: But if you had to draw a line and say, "after this we were able to breathe easy"--?

J: I'd say that was it.

G: It was the court ruling, or the Senate--which?

J: It was the Black ruling, which was later confirmed by the Fifth Circuit in New Orleans and then later by the Supreme Court.

G: Do you recall anything else about the court challenge or anything about

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the subsequent Senate investigation?

J: It would be good if I could remember better. No, I guess not.

G: Stevenson supported the Republican that November, supported Jack Porter.

J: I'd forgotten that. Yes, I guess I hadn't forgotten it.

G: The FBI also had some sort of report or investigation into that, too, didn't they, the whole election?

J: Maybe.

G: Do you recall anything?

J: No.

G: Well, I don't have anything else on that campaign. I think that covers it. Can you think of anything that we left out?

J: No, but I'll think on it before we meet [again]. [No], I think [not].

[End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview VIII]

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WALTER JENKINS

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, Beth Jenkins, of ~~Austin~~ ^{Dallas}, Texas, Executrix of the Estate of Walter Jenkins, do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title, and interest in the tape recordings and transcripts of the personal interviews conducted with my father, Walter Jenkins, on August 14, 1970, August 24, 1971, September 23, 1976, May 13, August 12 and September 16, 1982, January 18, July 22, September 22 and October 6, 1983, and on April 18, April 25, July 12, July 19, and August 30, 1984, in Austin, Texas, and prepared for deposit in the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library.

This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

- (1) The transcripts shall be available for use by researchers as soon as they have been deposited in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.
- (2) The tape recordings may be made available to those researchers who have access to the transcripts.
- (3) I hereby assign to the United States Government all copyright I may have in the interview transcripts and tapes.
- (4) Copies of the transcripts and the tape recordings may be provided by the Library to researchers upon request.
- (5) Copies of the transcripts and tape recordings may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

Beth Jenkins Bromberg
Donor

Date

9/4/07

Ann Sawcett
Assistant Archivist for Presidential Libraries

Date

10-30-2007

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