

INTERVIEW XII

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INTERVIEWEE: WALTER JENKINS

INTERVIEWER: Michael L. Gillette

PLACE: Mr. Jenkins' office, Austin, Texas

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G: Let's start today with a few items in 1952 that we didn't cover last time. One, in late March, March 29, President Truman announced that he would not seek re-election.

J: Yes, I remember.

G: What was LBJ's reaction to that?

J: I think some disappointment. He liked Truman, felt like Truman could be re-elected if he wanted to be.

G: Did he have any forewarning?

J: I don't know. Not that I know of.

G: That is rather intriguing, because the circumstances of his own announcement were similar, same time of the year and everything. Do you think he drew from that example?

J: Perhaps, although I have always heard--in fact, I've heard him say that--when he made his own announcement, that he wasn't sure when he started the speech that he was or was not going to finish it that way. I don't know whether he was kidding or not, but that's what he said.

G: That's a good point. There was a rather bizarre case that spring, the [Sam] Smithwick suicide.

J: Yes, I remember it.

G: One has the feeling that some of Mr. Johnson's adversaries were trying to use that against him.

J: They were.

G: Let me ask you to recall what you can about it.

J: Well, Smithwick, if I remember correctly, claimed to have all the inside

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information on the Precinct 13 business and maybe evidence of some kind to prove he was right. And then he committed suicide in his cell before he was to meet with--was he to meet with [Coke] Stevenson?

G: I think--at least that's what Stevenson said.

J: --or somebody representing Stevenson. And anyway, I don't know how people thought it could be done, but there were some crazy nuts thought that somebody had gotten inside his cell and killed him so he couldn't meet with Stevenson. It would be a little difficult I believe to do that inside the pen at Huntsville.

G: Do you recall who in particular utilized this propaganda? Was it Stevenson? Was it [Allan] Shivers at all?

J: No, Shivers was not one to deal in stuff like that. Stevenson did but not repeatedly. I mean, he made his statement as I remember. I believe he said it absolved him or made it clear his charges were true or something like that. I don't remember exactly.

G: But you don't recall Shivers ever utilizing that even by [inaudible].

J: I don't recall it. Do you have any evidence that he did?

G: It seems that there may have been some real obscure reference to it in 1956 but maybe not.

J: It wasn't like Shivers.

G: Wirtz Dam was dedicated that June, June 15. Do you remember that occasion? Were you there for it? Do you have any--?

J: No, I was in Washington I guess. As far as I know I was in Washington.

G: Okay. Also in June there was the President's Commission on Materials Policy. This was a group that studied and made recommendation on important resources and materials. George Brown was one of the people on that. Do you have any recollection at all of that commission's work and whether or not it influenced LBJ's thinking?

J: No, I don't, to be honest.

G: Okay. Let's see who else was on it. William Paley, George Brown, Eric

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Hodgins, Arthur Bunker, and Edward Mason.

J: Well, of course, two of these people were good friends of President Johnson's.

G: Paley and Brown?

J: Yes. But I don't know.

G: You don't recall their discussing it with him?

J: No, I don't.

G: Okay.

LBJ became a member of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy that summer.

J: Yes, he sure did.

G: Let me ask you about that committee and its work.

J: All right.

G: Can you describe it?

J: Well, it became a rather important committee because as atomic energy became more and more and more a matter of importance in the nation, there was not a House Committee and a Senate Committee, there was only their legislation and their programs and so on governed by the Joint Committee, and Mr. Johnson became very interested in it, attended all the meetings, and followed it very closely. I can't recall exact details, but I know it was something he took serious interest in and felt it would be of great importance to the future.

G: Did it focus on military as well as civilian uses?

J: Only peripherally. I think that, if I remember correctly, at a meeting they decided that military uses were under the Armed Services Committees and that they didn't have the authority to follow that except as it affected the future of atomic energy for civilian use, civilian benefits and so on.

G: There was a Drew Pearson column in June that indicated that the Preparedness Subcommittee had a scathing report on the Truman Administration and the failure of the administration to heed Joint Chiefs of Staff warnings on the need for more defense and more expenditures in arms. Do

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you remember that at all?

J: No.

G: I wonder if Pearson was accurate in that instance?

J: I have no reason to believe so or believe not. I do not know.

G: Now, that fall, September 11, the LBJ Ranch was flooded.

J: Yes, I remember that. That's the day he landed by plane, wasn't it?

G: I think he was with Lloyd Bentsen, wasn't he, at the time?

J: Yes, he was in the Valley and flew in a small plane. Mrs. Johnson was at the Ranch, if I'm not mistaken, by herself. I believe not even any servants. Am I right?

G: That's page 28 [of the 1952 chronology].

J: I haven't read it, but he landed in a rather dangerous landing and picked her up and took off, because she was either going to have to start off across the back country, which was also pretty well flooded, or. . . .

G: I think that actually she may have stayed there once he saw that she was all right and the water was [receding].

J: It may well be.

G: But they did crack a wing off the plane or something trying--

J: Yes, they had some sort of a crash and I don't remember where it was. Was it at the Ranch?

G: Yes.

J: How did they get out?

G: I think they took a back road.

J: By car. I remember it very well.

G: Now let's talk a little about politics that year. You discussed the [Richard] Russell campaign in some detail last time and Shivers' effort.

There are just a few things that we did not talk about. One is that the Shivers faction apparently was considering whether or not to allow Sam Rayburn to go to the convention as a delegate. Do you recall that?

J: Yes.

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G: And how it was resolved?

J: I'm not sure, but I believe as a result they did not allow him to do so.

G: Is that right?

J: I may be wrong. But that was the--they were in complete control. If they did, it was just a courteous thing because they had complete control. They ran roughshod over everybody. You must know what the answer to that question is, and I don't know for sure. Was he allowed to go to the convention?

G: I don't know.

J: I have a feeling he was not. He may have. I don't know, it seems like maybe he was given an honorary position, because he was the convention chairman. I guess it didn't make any difference whether he was a delegate or not.

G: Some of the liberals seemed to have been bitter not only towards Shivers but also a little bit towards LBJ after that year's proceedings. He'd cooperated too closely with Shivers. Do you recall that criticism and whether or not there was any validity to it? I realize that the same thing comes up in 1956.

J: I'm trying to divide them in my mind. In 1956 the results were just the opposite, however, if I remember correctly. If it's true, it's true only because he refused to just split the party down the middle and tried to kind of--you know, Mr. Johnson always tried to be sort of a peacemaker and tried to hold things together. It may be that some of the loyalists felt that it was time to draw the line and go ahead and split the party and be done with it. And I guess there was some criticism. Although he certainly did not side with Shivers in the fight. He just I think tried to kind of stay in the middle and keep both sides together.

G: Russell gave an interview I think to **U.S. News** and declined to say whether he would support the Democratic ticket or would refuse to head a

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third party if he did not receive the nomination himself. Do you recall that posture?

J: I don't.

G: During the campaign Russell called for first repeal and then revision of the Taft-Hartley Act. I think perhaps he had been misquoted initially and he said he was not for straight-out repeal but rather some sort of revision, saying it was unfair to labor. Do you remember that? What was responsible for--?

J: Oh, I think he was trying to get labor off his back.

G: Do you recall how this decision was reached though? Who advised him to take that position or did he actually feel that way about Taft-Hartley?

J: I don't think so. He had supported it.

G: You're right, he had, yes. Well, you don't remember who advised him to do it?

J: I'm not sure I ever knew. I don't suppose I did.

G: Now, after the Stevenson nomination Russell pretty well sat out the campaign until very late. The files indicate that LBJ did call Russell and urged him to support the Democratic ticket, and Russell ultimately did, just before the election. Do you recall any of their conversations here, and did Mr. Johnson ever talk about that with you?

J: No, but I think he felt that Russell almost had to do it, because he had been in an effort to get the nomination himself. It would be a serious mistake for him not to at least make a show of supporting the Democratic nominee. And he did support the Democratic nominee as I remember.

G: There's one letter in there that's from Clint Murchison suggesting that LBJ may want to bolt the Democratic Party and support Eisenhower.

J: Yes.

G: How much pressure did he have from people like Murchison to do just that?

J: He had a little pressure, because some of his friends like Sid Richardson had been active in getting Eisenhower to run, and Murchison. I

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don't think that certainly Sid Richardson ever thought that he would, and I don't think they ever lost any friendship over it. But there was some pressure.

G: Amon Carter seems to have taken it the worst.

J: Well, he would. Amon Carter always insisted that you go with him on everything, that you follow him.

G: Did he ever consider supporting Eisenhower?

J: I don't think for a minute. I think he knew that he couldn't do that.

G: Let me ask you about [Adlai] Stevenson's stand on the tidelands. This must have been an embarrassment to LBJ.

J: Of course it was.

G: Did he try to persuade Stevenson not to take that position?

J: I'm sure he did.

G: What do you remember about that?

J: I just remember it was tough for Mr. Johnson, when he'd sort of been in the forefront of the tidelands fight on one side to be supporting a nominee who was taking a directly opposite position. I don't know whether he'd made any direct efforts, but I'm sure some efforts were made through other people.

G: That fall he did campaign some with Stevenson in Texas.

J: Yes.

G: Introduced him in Fort Worth and accompanied him to Dallas, San Antonio and Uvalde. Were you there? Did you go along on any of these?

J: No.

G: Was it the Fort Worth speech that caused the alienation of Amon Carter, do you remember?

J: I don't know whether it was the Fort Worth speech or just the position, the fact that he was supporting Stevenson. I'm sure speaking in what Amon Carter felt was his town didn't help any; he felt like he owned Fort Worth.

G: Did Carter really become alienated though as a result of this, what ever

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this specific incident was?

J: At least for a while, yes.

G: Did they ever get back together, do you remember?

J: I think they had some meetings later on before Carter died. And I know that Amon Carter, Jr. became friendly later.

G: Now, LBJ also spoke for some of the Democratic senatorial candidates in other states, for [Ernest] McFarland in his re-election bid, for Stu Symington.

J: Yes.

G: Do you remember those?

J: Yes. Not any specifics, but I remember that he did.

G: He stayed with Tony Buford when he was in St. Louis.

J: Yes.

G: Who I guess worked for August Busch.

J: He did.

G: Let me ask you to describe his relationship with Busch and Buford. He seems to have been awfully close to Buford and a close friend of Busch, too.

J: He was close to both, although he didn't see Busch as frequently. They just hit it off, they liked each other. He and Gussie met whenever they had an opportunity. Buford came to Washington to see him when he could and frequently called in, gave his advice, enjoyed feeling like he had the confidence of a person in high places. Tony Buford was a smart man, an able man.

G: Were they political allies as well?

J: Well, they became that. I don't think it started that [way]. I think it was just a personal friendship at first, but Buford became a political ally, and so did Busch, as far as that's concerned.

G: Was there anything that a Texas senator could do for August Busch in the way of--?

J: I don't think he ever asked him to do anything. I don't remember his

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ever asking him to do anything. I'm reasonably sure he did not. I guess there were things he could have done, but Busch was not the type to go around seeking favors.

G: Was the friendship a factor in his association with Symington at all, do you recall?

J: I don't think it had anything to do--there was no connection. He was a friend of Busch's before he was a friend of Symington's, but I can't tell you how the friendship started.

G: Now, during the campaign there was some controversy regarding the moving of some nine hundred tuberculosis patients from a hospital in Mission to McCloskey Hospital in Temple. Do you remember that?

J: No.

G: Kika de la Garza protested the action or something.

J: Was Kika there that early? I guess he was.

G: I'm sorry--well, I think it was Kika. If not it was a member of his family perhaps.

J: I don't remember it.

G: Now, Russell visited the LBJ Ranch after the election. Were you there when he came? Do you remember that?

J: No, that fall I was in New York most of the time. I'd left the Senate payroll and sold advertising on KTBC television, which was going on the air Thanksgiving Day. I was in New York for a number of weeks, maybe months, I don't remember.

G: Why were you selected for the job or did you volunteer for it? What was the--?

J: I just liked to--because I was in that part of the country I guess.

G: Who did you call on, do you remember?

J: Advertising agencies, all of them. I thought I was the greatest salesman in the world--I think I told you this one time--because everywhere I went they'd buy. I thought, goodness, I'm hot. But it turned out they were looking, as soon as a new TV station came on the

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air they were ready.

G: Did anyone else from the Washington office leave the staff and sell?

J: No. No.

G: Well, were these sales done at all through CBS or did they help with the sales?

J: Well, at that time there was only one TV station in Austin. And so we had all networks. So CBS didn't help any more than NBC did or ABC did or Dumont did. They all helped. They were vying among themselves to get on. There were some programs of first-class nature we were carrying at midnight or one o'clock in the morning because that was the best time we could clear for them. We were carrying all four networks. There's only three now. Dumont's gone off the air.

G: LBJ met with Governor Stevenson with regard to the need for reorganizing the DNC. This was after the election and Stevenson had lost. Do you recall what that was about?

J: I think I was out of the picture then, that whole period.

G: Do you have any recollection of the firing of Lawrence Westbrook by Steve Mitchell?

J: Well, I remember Lawrence Westbrook, but no, I don't.

G: Now, there's a letter dated December 16 in which LBJ says, "I still haven't decided on the leadership and it seems to get more confusing each day." Do you have any idea what he's referring to there?

J: No.

G: Do you think it was deciding whether or not he wanted to be Democratic leader?

J: It would have to be I guess. I don't know what else it could be unless it was who was going to be whip perhaps. I don't know.

G: Did you ever hear him express any ambivalence about wanting to be Democratic leader?

J: Not in this connection, no. I heard it when it was a question of taking the vice presidential nomination. He said if he turned down the vice

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presidential nomination there was no way he could go back and be Democratic leader. That's a different time, different place.

G: Now he was unanimously elected minority leader in the caucuses.

J: It was majority leader this time, wasn't it?

G: No, 1953. I think until 1955 he was in the minority, by one vote or something like that. It was a very close. . . .

J: All right.

G: He was nominated by Russell and seconded by Theodore Green and Senator [Dennis] Chavez. Do you have any recollection of why those particular senators spoke for him? Did he ask them to?

J: Yes.

G: Did he choose them for any particular reason is what I want to know--?

J: Yes. Because he felt that they each had groups that would follow them.

G: Russell presumably the southern bloc. And what about Green?

J: Green was very much respected in the eastern group, not a real leader as far as legislation or anything like that was concerned, but highly respected by everybody.

G: And Chavez? Was he New Mexico?

J: Yes, he was New Mexico. I don't know. Maybe western. But I do remember him sort of orchestrating that.

G: Early on in January Senator [John W.] Bricker proposed the Bricker Amendment.

J: Yes, I remember that.

G: And there was a big controversy. Let me ask you to remember everything you can about that.

J: Well, I remember it was one of the hottest issues that we ever faced as far as the mail was concerned. It vied with the firing of [Douglas] MacArthur for mail, just piles and piles of it.

G: Was this in reaction to the Korean War, do you think, or to some of the treaties that had been signed?

J: Probably.

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- G: What was LBJ's attitude toward the Bricker Amendment?
- J: He opposed it.
- G: Why? What was his philosophy on the subject?
- J: I think he felt that it was an undue restriction on the powers of the President and the administration.
- G: Do you recall the George Substitute and Mr. Johnson's discussions with Senator [Walter] George about proposing this alternative to the Bricker Amendment?
- J: Yes. I think he felt that it was going to pass unless something of moderation, some compromise could be achieved. I think he also felt that the only person that could achieve it was George. I think he had a very integral part in helping bring about the George Substitute.
- G: What exactly did he do?
- J: I know he talked with George a lot and met with George a lot and met with other senators. I'm not sure, I wouldn't want to say that he was the moving power behind the George compromise, but I know he was involved.
- G: Is there anyone in particular that would be a good source on that subject?
- J: Perhaps George Reedy. Was he there by then?
- G: Yes.
- J: Was Gerry Siegel there by then? All right, Gerry Siegel. That would have been sort of their department. More Gerry--
- G: Arthur Perry joined the staff and Warren Woodward resigned to open up a public relations firm in Dallas in partnership with Harding Lawrence.
- J: Which I think is rather interesting because when we hired Warren Woodward those were the two people we'd narrowed the choice down to last. Mr. Johnson told me to find somebody to sort of be my assistant, and I interviewed people from all over and narrowed it to two people. They were Harding Lawrence and Warren Woodward. Both became later airline executives. Harding Lawrence already was an airline employee, he

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is now an executive.

G: There's a note that you were to work with the Senate Policy Committee.

J: I moved from the--

G: Why did you do that?

J: Because I was told to.

G: Give me the background of it.

J: I don't know. I think that Mr. Johnson decided that he was more and more spending time at the Policy Committee office. Actually I was I guess more liaison with all the various staffs he had then.

G: But he had just taken over this leadership position. Surely he was aware of his predecessors' problems in failing to keep up their role as senator from their state and keep their constituents happy and that sort of thing. It seems that moving you out of the Texas office might have been. . . .

J: Well, Arthur Perry had been in charge of Tom Connally's office longer than I had been around and we had just moved into our office. He knew more about Texas--probably forgotten more than I ever knew--and I think the feeling was that Arthur would fill any void that I might leave.

G: So Perry assumed your duties and you indicated that you coordinated work among the various staffs that he had?

J: I sort of worked with--I guess the Space [Committee] hadn't come along yet--all the committee staffs that he was involved in, sort of a troubleshooter with all of it, although I was--

G: Did you have any regular duties on the Policy Committee as well? Did you have any--?

J: Yes, I was staff director of the Policy Committee. I had administrative at least jurisdiction over the people like Reedy and Siegel and so on. I didn't certainly follow press matters as much as Reedy did or legislative matters as much as Siegel did but sort of administrative matters over all of them.

G: Let me ask you then to describe the Policy Committee and how it worked.

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J: Well, I suppose it still does, although Mr. Johnson made I think more of the Policy Committee than it had been. It was a function of the Democratic Policy Committee to coordinate activities of the leadership of the Democratic Party in the Senate. The Democratic leader was the chairman of that committee. I guess he always had been as far as I know. It involved trying to get them to vote together, trying to get them to move together, act together. Bobby Baker actually was more involved in that part of it than anyone.

G: Did it also determine the fate of legislation? Did it schedule legislation and things of this nature?

J: Yes. The Democratic leadership did, but they did it through the Policy Committee.

G: But LBJ in fact would make the recommendations and have them approved by the committee, is that right?

J: That's correct. I think they pretty well followed him.

G: The committee seems to have been dominated by southerners and westerners, is that right?

J: Only because the South and the West had a tendency to put somebody in and leave them there, and the Policy Committee was dominated by people who had been there a long time.

G: Would they meet once a week for lunch or something like that?

J: No, they met whenever the chairman felt there was something to go into. I don't think they had a regular--if they did, I don't remember it. But they met pretty frequently.

G: His log seems to indicate Tuesday luncheons in Skeeter Johnston's office, meetings of the Policy [Committee].

J: Probably true. Of course Skeeter was the, what, clerk of the Senate, was that his title?

G: I guess he was secretary.

J: Yes, secretary of the Senate, that's right. Well, not when we were in the minority. He was minority clerk of the Senate during this period.

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He later became secretary of the Senate. I guess that's right. I guess they did have a general understanding they'd get together in Skeeter's office.

G: You know, in the White House period he had a routine Tuesday luncheon that some people called the Tuesday cabinet or just the Tuesday luncheon.

J: Leadership, yes.

G: Basically people like Dean Rusk and [Robert] McNamara, some of the senior officials in his government.

J: And didn't he have a Tuesday morning breakfast?

G: The leadership breakfast?

J: Leadership of the Congress, yes.

G: I'm wondering if this Tuesday luncheon was an outgrowth of the Policy Committee.

J: I wouldn't be surprised.

G: Was there any reason for having it on Tuesday, do you remember?

J: I don't know. That day was convenient to him I imagine. Mondays were always kind of a tough day.

G: How much give and take was there in the Policy Committee? Did they have any spirited debates over legislation, the merits of legislation?

J: On occasion.

G: Or a position that the party ought to take?

J: On occasion. I don't actually give you examples, but I do remember that there were occasions when there were some pretty good discussions.

G: Anything else on the Policy Committee that year, in 1953, that we haven't talked about?

J: I don't know. The years run together. It might be nice if you could catalog them in your mind so that they didn't, but I can't.

G: Now you had a Republican president. Since Mr. Johnson was known as a legislative genius and someone that was really skilled himself in working with Congress when he was president, let me ask you to assess

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how the Eisenhower White House dealt with him as the leader of the opposition party.

J: Well, I think it sort of depends on what the issue was. If it was anything involving foreign relations, they weren't really the opposition. I think he and Mr. Rayburn were probably responsible for Eisenhower's, whatever success he had in foreign relations because he led the fight for most of the things Eisenhower wanted in the field of foreign policy. On the other hand, when it came to the domestic policy he was a legitimate leader of the opposition.

G: Well, in foreign policy, were Johnson and Rayburn really consulted? Did they have any direct input in foreign policy, or was it simply a question of their being asked to approve something that the administration decided on?

J: No, although that happened occasionally and I know Mr. Johnson felt it on occasion, that something had been done without him being consulted. But by and large I think that Eisenhower felt like it was a nonpartisan team and he consulted with them. It wasn't always true but most of the time.

G: The people who worked on legislative liaison for the White House were Bryce Harlow and Jerry [Wilton] Persons--

J: Very close to our office.

G: --and Jack--was it Jack Martin, was he one?

J: Yes. Jack Martin.

G: Maybe even Bill Macomber from the State Department?

J: Very much was.

G: Okay. Let me ask you to describe the relationship that Lyndon Johnson had with each one of these.

J: Well, we'll start with Jerry Persons. He had known and worked with Jerry Persons because he'd been the head of legislation and liaison in the military long before this, and we'd worked with him through the years in helping work out our military problems. They were close

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friends and worked together well. Bill Macomber maybe perhaps Mr. Johnson hadn't worked with directly, but he had been legislative liaison for the State Department, and certainly those of us in the office had worked with him on a day-to-day basis on any matter involving the State Department. Bryce Harlow had been a part of Congressman [Carl] Vinson's staff, and when he was chairman of the Naval Affairs Committee Mr. Johnson was a member of it. Bryce used to come to our office long years before this and hang around, a very close personal friend.

G: How about Jack Martin?

J: Jack Martin had been with [Robert] Taft, hadn't he?

G: I think.

J: I think he came off Taft's staff if I'm not mistaken. He had been around, too. There was not the closeness with Jack Martin that there had been with the others as far as any personal relationship, although Jack Martin was an able guy.

G: Did this enhance LBJ's position on the Hill or vis-a-vis the administration, having these close friends within the administration?

J: I think it cut both ways. He got some criticism from some of the ultraliberals who liked to be against the president regardless of what he was for just because he was for it. I'm sure Eisenhower on the other hand got some criticism for working as closely as he did with a Democratic senator and Speaker Rayburn, too. But I think probably both were fortunate to have the other at a time when the country needed it.

G: There has been some suggestion that perhaps he was even able to use some of these people to thwart the White House on occasion, that he would enlist them in his own efforts to blunt something that the administration was trying to do?

J: I guess that's possible, because they certainly were people who were close to him and he was able to feed thoughts and ideas into them and tell them how he felt maybe before a decision was made on certain policies. I think if he told the White House that Senator Johnson was

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going to give you a problem on that it would have had some effect.

G: Can you recall any examples though?

J: No.

G: Now, on the other hand there were two cabinet-level officials from Texas, Bob Anderson and Oveta Culp Hobby.

J: Both of them he was very close to.

G: Let me ask you to assess his relationship with them and explain how that might have been a source of influence.

J: He had been very close to both of them for numbers of years.

G: Anderson went back to the NYA days I guess.

J: Anderson was involved in my race for Congress.

G: Is that right?

J: He's from the Wichita Falls area. But Mrs. Hobby was very fond of Mr. Johnson, came to their home often. So did Bob Anderson. There was a personal friendship with both that transcended party politics. I don't know how much he tried to use them on political matters, but he certainly felt close to them and was close to them, long before they were members of the cabinet.

G: In a time when the country had just swept in a president of the opposite party by a big popular vote, was it important to him from a public relations standpoint to have close ties with the administration?

J: I don't think he looked at it that way. Perhaps it was, because there were a lot of things written about the fact that Eisenhower depended on him in the Senate and Rayburn in the House rather than people in his own party.

G: Now let me ask you about Johnson and the Democratic National Committee. Can you recall his relations with Steve Mitchell? Did he and Mitchell get along, did they not get along?

J: Reasonably well. They were never close.

G: Why was that?

J: I don't know. I guess Mitchell was Stevenson's selection. Was he?

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G: Yes.

J: However, Mr. Johnson got along with Stevenson better than he did with Mitchell. I don't mean to imply that they didn't get along, they just didn't have much to do with each other. Mr. Johnson never felt like he needed to have a whole lot of closeness with the Democratic National Committee. I'm not sure that he ever had a whole lot of closeness with it at any time until Cliff Carter went over there.

G: Did he have a low esteem for the committee as a rule? I'm not talking about anybody--

J: I don't think he had a low esteem, I just don't think he felt like he needed the committee. Now he did some things with the committee in raising funds and helping them, but I don't think he really felt that they could do much to help him. I think he did more for them than they did for him.

G: Did he see it at all as a potential rival to his Senate leadership?

J: No, I don't think that. I just don't think it was a matter that was of too much concern to him.

G: Now at LBJ's request Truman appointed a U.S. attorney in Nevada, James William Johnson, Jr. Remember him and why LBJ would request somebody in Nevada for U.S. attorney?

J: No.

G: A personal friend maybe? Maybe as a favor to another senator?

J: Probably to Alan Bible. Is it somebody Eisenhower appointed?

G: Yes.

J: He probably was trying to help Alan Bible or Howard Cannon but I don't know whether Howard Cannon was in the Senate yet, but probably it meant a lot to Alan Bible.

G: I'm sorry, this is a Truman appointment at the very end of Truman's Administration, the last four or five days. It was not an Eisenhower, it was a Truman appointment.

J: Probably it was something that Alan Bible wanted very badly.

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G: Now the Senate Armed Services Committee was considering the nomination of Charles Wilson, secretary of defense. The big issue over Wilson and one or two of his deputies was whether he should sell his GM stock. Do you remember that and Mr. Johnson's position on that issue?

J: I remember the issue but I don't remember his position. I just don't.

G: Douglass Cater published an article on LBJ in the **Reporter** entitled "Lyndon Johnson: Rising Democratic Star." Do you remember that and whether this did have an impact on his career at all?

J: It probably had an impact on Doug Cater's career. (Laughter) I'm sure that every little bit had some effect, yes.

G: But anything on Johnson's reaction to it? Was it at all significant?

J: Yes, I remember he was pleased.

G: Did he get considerably more publicity now that he was in the leadership position?

J: Yes.

G: Okay.

(Interruption)

G: He was getting more publicity then?

J: Substantially more.

G: Substantially. Had his publicity been primarily restricted to Texas newspapers before, and this represented a different kind of coverage?

J: Certainly most of it had been Texas papers although little by little the national press had begun to pick up an interest in him, occasional articles and so on about him as a comer.

G: He is known as someone who was very, very sensitive to press criticism.

J: Too much so.

G: That he had really high standards of what constituted a favorable news story. Did this change any through this period? Did his standards get more rigid? Was he as time went on, or had he always been that way? Did he expect more and more of the press as he--?

J: Yes, but he expected a lot of them from the beginning.

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G: Is that right?

J: Yes. I think those of us around him had told him so many times "don't pay any attention to them, you do your job and let them do theirs," but it just wasn't in him to do that. He just couldn't do it. He either had to love them or hate them, one of the two. They'd do something nice and so he'd give parties for them and take them with him wherever he went and so on, and then one of them would write an article he didn't like, and he'd leave them alone for a while completely, would have nothing to do with them. He couldn't sort of just have a hands-off relationship with the press.

G: Of course during this whole period you had a terrific problem in the Southwest with the lack of rain, the drought conditions. He appealed for drought relief. Do you recall this whole issue? I think at one point in 1953 he even toured some of the drought-stricken areas with President Eisenhower.

J: He did that, and I guess it was 1953. It must have been. I know that he and--

G: He went to Amarillo and places. What do you remember about that?

J: I remember that parts of our state were in serious condition and that he was very concerned about it. He talked Eisenhower into going down and taking a look at it because he was having a hard time getting much relief. I don't remember where all they stopped, but they did make a trip.

G: I noticed that his speeches during this period sound very much like some of Walter Prescott Webb's writings on the subject, *More Water for Texas*.

Do you recall, did he ever use Webb for advice or did he discuss these issues with Webb?

J: I think more likely, because he really had a great respect for Webb, that he told [Horace] Busby or Reedy or our people to get out the Webb books and papers and study them. Because he was a great admirer of Webb. I don't recall that Webb directly helped with things, but I'm

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sure he had an influence because of Mr. Johnson's feelings about him.

End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview XII

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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.
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Beth Jenkins Bromberg
Donor

Date

9/4/07

Ann Sawcett
Assistant Archivist for Presidential Libraries

Date

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Donor Beth Jenkins

Date 2-5-87

Francis S. Burns
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