

INTERVIEW XIII

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INTERVIEWEE: WALTER JENKINS
INTERVIEWER: Michael L. Gillette
PLACE: Mr. Jenkins' office, Austin, Texas

Tape 1 of 1

G: Let's start with 1953. We worked a little bit on that last time. I notice in the first of March, LBJ began a series of monthly radio broadcasts from Washington over the Texas State Network. Was this something that he had done off and on, or was this--?

J: Well, it was sort of a growth of what we had sent--we'd sent tapes. Talking about tapes, we had sent tapes to stations that would carry them and gotten to where we were just sending out tapes, so many of them, that--but we'd been doing it for a number of years. We'd been doing that in the Senate Broadcast Room, and we asked each station to pay for just the tapes was all, which was very cheap.

G: Well, were these actually live broadcasts in 1953?

J: No.

G: These were the taped--?

J: They were tapes. It was in one tape with the whole group.

G: Did most of the stations want to carry the broadcasts?

J: Yes, they did. They asked for it. If they didn't ask for it, we got a few prominent citizens to promote them to ask for it.

G: Did LBJ pattern this form of presentation after any other political figure that had done the same thing, do you know?

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J: I don't think he'd paid that much attention to other--I believe he just kind of wanted to tell them what he was doing and kind of making a--

G: Yes. I noticed that he would have other elected officials from Texas, particularly members of Congress.

J: He very often would have Mrs. [Oveta Culp] Hobby or George--what's his name?--Bob Anderson or whoever, according to who was in power at the time. He did.

G: Do you think those talks were successful? Did you get good feedback from them or negative feedback?

J: We got very little negative feedback. We got, I'd say, 90 per cent favorable.

G: Was it at all seasonal? Would he tend to do it more, say, at the beginning of the session?

J: No, we had a schedule; we did it just right along.

G: But after he really got busy, say, in Congress, could he find time?

J: He found time.

G: Did he?

J: Those of us on the staff sometimes had to invite somebody to appear with him and prepare things and so on, but he found the time to go to the radio room and make the tapes.

G: Would he usually give a prepared statement that someone else would write, or did he speak off the cuff?

J: He usually gave a little prepared statement at the first that someone else would have prepared. Then he'd launch into just either--he never

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used a prepared statement with somebody else, or even by himself, as far as that's concerned, after he got started.

G: I know that later on when he was in the White House he would have people advise him on television presentation.

J: Well, after he got in the White House he seldom ever went on television or radio without a prepared statement, because I don't know who it was, but somebody told him once that he couldn't afford to take a chance of saying a billion instead of a million because it was official. He could make a mistake when he was a senator, he couldn't [as president]. I thought he lost a lot of ground on these presentations, because he was a great speaker if he wasn't tied down by a script. He was never as good a speaker with a script as he was without one.

G: Did anybody advise him or give him professional tips on how to do these radio broadcasts?

J: He had some professional tips along. I don't know if it was just on these broadcasts or not, I don't remember. But he did have some of the telecasters--whether Walter Cronkite did or not, I don't remember, but some people like that that he knew he'd talk to about [his broadcasts].

G: Now, in 1953 of course there was a good deal of controversy over Senator [Joseph] McCarthy's accusations, and they come up throughout the year. The first one that I have in my notes concerns the appointment of Charles Bohlen to be ambassador to USSR.

J: When was that?

G: That was March 27. LBJ spoke in support of Bohlen.

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- J: He always liked Bohlen very much.
- G: Did he think that the charges were simply trumped up?
- J: McCarthy's charges?
- G: Yes.
- J: Well, not completely simply trumped up, but greatly magnified certainly. McCarthy was so far to the right that anything that anybody did that was very much to the left of him became a communist plot.
- G: Let me ask you to describe LBJ's own relationship with McCarthy during this period.
- J: Well, he was minority leader. He didn't ever have too much to do with McCarthy personally. He was not certainly a social friend. I don't remember his ever going out with him or anything like that, but he was respectful to him and kind to him on the floor. I think he felt that as one of the leaders he should be and should do that. He was never rude to him that I remember. He of course voted to censure him, which was the way he felt was the proper way to show what you thought of what he was doing. And he never, as far as I know, made any speeches denouncing him. He may have made one speech.
- G: At the censure, he did.
- J: Yes, he did on the day of the censure, but he didn't carry on any running gun battle with him or anything like that.
- G: What was his own attitude toward McCarthy?
- J: I think he felt McCarthy went too far all the time.
- G: Did he feel like he was dangerous?
- J: Yes, I think so.

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- G: McCarthy seems to have had a lot of support in Texas.
- J: McCarthy did have a lot of support in Texas.
- G: Did any of these supporters lean on LBJ to support McCarthy or certainly not to censure him?
- J: Yes, I'm sure your mail over at the [LBJ] Library will show that. Fortunately, none of the people who were close to Mr. Johnson I don't think made any real issue out of it.
- G: Really?
- J: I don't remember anybody, but there were a lot of people who did write and tell him McCarthy was a savior and was going to save the country. He had a strong backing.
- G: There seems to have been two different approaches within the Democratic Party on how to deal with McCarthy. One was that he was a Republican problem and let's not get into a battle. Let's let the Republicans deal with him. And the other was what Senator [Ralph] Flanders did, to introduce resolutions and to take a more head-on approach.
- J: I think Senator Johnson followed the first one more.
- G: Tell me how he arrived at that position, and if he was tempted or encouraged to take the other route and why he didn't.
- J: I'm sure he was encouraged to take the other route, but I think he felt that McCarthy had been elected by the people of his state and that it was up to the people of his state and to the other members of the Republican Party in the Senate to try to put a damper on him. It got so bad that [when] the opportunity to vote on the censure for the

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first time came up, why, he did.

G: Did the subject of McCarthy and how to deal with him come up in the Policy Committee? Did you ever hear Johnson and [Richard] Russell and [Carl] Hayden, people like that, talking?

J: I'm sure it did. I don't recall anything specific, but I'm sure it did. I think most of those people, Russell, Hayden, sort of followed the same policy that Senator Johnson did.

G: Was Johnson at all afraid of McCarthy because of his influence and access to the media?

J: No, I don't think he was ever afraid of anybody, but I just felt like he figured he was Democratic leader and it wasn't his position to spend his time jumping on him.

G: A couple of other McCarthy-related things: J. B. Matthews on his committee came out with this article, "Reds and Our Churches," attacking the Protestant churches in America as being hotbeds of [communism].

J: Yes, I remember that.

G: What was Johnson's reaction to that, do you recall?

J: He said it was crazy and ridiculous. He figured, I think, that it was so far out that it would fall of its own weight.

G: McCarthy was somewhat of a maverick, I guess, from the Republican Party. Did Johnson ever use that distance to get McCarthy to vote with him on certain issues?

J: I don't remember his ever politicking with McCarthy to vote with him. I may be wrong. But he never really liked McCarthy or had much to do

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with McCarthy one way or another. I don't know whether McCarthy ever voted with him on the issues or not, but I don't believe Johnson spent a whole lot of time trying to get him. If he did, I don't remember it. I'm sure Johnson's close friends knew how he felt and how he would vote when the censure finally came up, because they wanted to know, they were anxious to know.

G: Anything on the mail?

J: On McCarthy? I'd say the mail was more pro-McCarthy than it was anti. In fact, I'm sure it was. There was a good deal of anti-McCarthy sentiment in the country, but they didn't feel strongly enough to get down and do much about it. The pro-McCarthy people did.

G: What was LBJ's reaction to televising the army-McCarthy hearings?

J: I don't remember, but--

G: Did he feel, do you think, that exposing McCarthy on--?

J: I think that he did. I have a feeling, a vague memory of his believing that they should be televised, but I'm not sure of that. He didn't really get into the McCarthy thing too actively till right near the end.

G: Now, Senator [John] McClellan was, I guess, the ranking Democrat on that Government Operations Committee, is that correct?

J: Yes. That's correct.

G: Do you recall any aspects of the Democrats on that committee that in their--I know at at least one point they resigned out of protest of the way McCarthy was conducting them. Robert Kennedy was, I guess, the minority counsel to the committee. Any--?

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(Interruption)

J: He [Robert Kennedy] just didn't have any association with LBJ during that period. Matter of fact, I hesitate to say this, because it's critical, but he was generally considered to be sort of one of McCarthy's toadies.

G: Is that right? But he did resign, didn't he, when McClellan and the other Democrats--?

J: He may have. I don't know.

G: Was there anything that he said or did that made you feel like he was aligned with McCarthy?

J: Well, he stayed right on up to the end as minority counsel of the committee.

G: Did you have any association with him at that point that gave you an impression of him?

J: I had a little association with him. I went by and invited him to speak to--gosh, what group was it?--somebody wanted him to come speak to them, and he readily agreed and he was very nice. He couldn't have been nicer to me. And I didn't have any association with him that had to do with the McCarthy hearings, and the only association I had with him was where he was kind, friendly.

G: I don't want to jump too far ahead but as long as we're talking about McCarthy, let's talk about the censure committee. I'd like to ask you to recall everything you can about the naming of the members to the censure committee.

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J: I remember that Senator Johnson, who had the responsibility for naming the Democrats on the censure committee, spent a lot of time and a lot of thought and a lot of conversation in naming those members, with the thought in mind of getting people who would be certainly fair, and he thought fairness would require approval of censure. He could have chosen another group of people who would have been a little afraid of their own shadows. I think that the secret to censure was the naming of the committee.

G: People have written that he wanted others on the committee that were not willing to serve, that he wanted Russell on the committee and--

J: It's very possible.

G: Do you recall?

J: I don't recall, but I know Russell wouldn't have been willing to serve. Russell never wanted to do anything that was very controversial.

G: Really? Is there anyone else, like Walter George, that he may have wanted?

J: Probably, but Walter George was a committee chairman in Foreign Relations, and he probably would not have asked Walter George. I don't know that he wouldn't have but--

G: Who did he talk to in deciding who to appoint, which aides or advisers?

J: Bobby Baker more than anybody else.

G: Oh, did he? He ended up with, I guess, the senior man for the Democrats was Ed Johnson. Why did he pick Johnson?

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- J: I think it was because he felt like Johnson was a very fair man and had the guts to do what his conscience told him should be done. Johnson was later defeated, though.
- G: I thought he had already announced.
- J: Maybe he'd announced. You may be right. That may be one of the reasons he was selected, I don't remember.
- G: Do you recall anything from his discussions with Johnson about that? Whether Johnson was reluctant to serve or--?
- J: No, I think Johnson was willing to serve and felt it was needed.
- G: The others were Sam Ervin and John Stennis, is that right?
- J: Yes, Ervin and all of them had a good deal of guts.
- G: Yes. The story is told that at one point when he was discussing the situation with Ervin, Ervin recalled that he had written a letter about McCarthy, and they got a copy of the letter to determine whether this had committed Ervin one way or another. Do you remember that?
- J: I didn't even know that.
- G: Do you think that LBJ had influence over [William] Knowland's selections?
- J: I know they discussed the selections together.
- G: Did they?
- J: Yes, and maybe Knowland had some influence over LBJ's, too. I think they worked together on the selections.
- G: How do you know that? Did you see them meeting together about it, or were you there when they were talking about it?

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J: No, I wasn't present, but I remember him conferring with Knowland whenever this was coming up.

G: Really?

J: He and Knowland were, as you know, very close.

G: There were of course senators like Flanders and [William] Fulbright that were attacking McCarthy more head-on. Were they impatient with LBJ for assuming a more discreet profile on this?

J: I think they probably were, but I'm not sure by the time it was over they were. I think LBJ felt that his way was a whole lot better than the way they had been out attacking every day.

G: Some other issues. LBJ was in this year lobbying with the administration to halt the increase of oil imports. Do you recall that and his efforts to--?

J: I recall it. It was on behalf of the oil industry.

G: Anything here of significance that you remember?

J: I don't know of anything significant. I know that the oil industry felt that the imports were getting so large that they were going to seriously hurt our industry here. I guess now we'd be better off if we'd had more imports then.

(Interruption)

It was certainly a blow to his office [when Mary Rather left] because she knew everybody and she had a good memory and she knew what he called people. She could write a letter to Wesley West, we'll say, or somebody like that, just almost like he could, because she'd been

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doing it for so long. There really wasn't anybody else around that could; it was a real loss to the staff.

G: He was traveling, I think, in Texas when he heard about the accident [in which her brother and sister-in-law were killed].

J: I don't remember that. I don't remember that.

G: There was nothing I guess they could do, she had to leave.

J: She just had to--the children, their grandmother was old. There were no other aunts or uncles that could take them. She just had to.

G: Who replaced Mary Rather?

J: I don't believe anybody did. I believe we just went on with the same people. No, no, he called Dorothy Nichols back for a while. We did that through the years. Whenever there was an emergency, she came back, and she came back then for a while.

G: Did Mary Fish ultimately assume that job, do you think?

J: Mary Fish never assumed that job. Well, she never had the kind of knowledge that Mary Rather had. There was no one to assume that job.

G: Who would he rely on for the same sort of thing after Mary left? Would it have been Mildred [Stegall], or would it have been--?

J: No, not really. Mildred was my secretary. It would be Dorothy, because she had been in and out. She'd been there all the time up until the time she got married and then had been back several times after she got married.

G: How about Juanita Roberts? Did she--?

J: Juanita to a degree, but not the same degree. Different relationship

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entirely. Juanita's super official--not official--well, sort of, very, very official or efficient, but not very adaptable.

G: Now, the Senate on May 19 passed an emergency wage, price and rent freeze authorization.

J: Yes.

G: This was over the opposition of the administration. It was a very close vote. All of the Democrats evidently voted together and they got three Republicans, [William] Langer, [Milton] Young, and [John] Williams, and even Wayne Morse, to oppose the administration. Do you recall that vote and what he did to keep the Democrats together and to get those extra Republicans?

J: Well, he just turned it on, as only he could do. He could nearly always get Langer when he really needed him, because Langer was--and very often he could get Young and sometimes Williams. If he appealed to them on patriotic [grounds], our country needed it. Unfortunately, this administration did not enforce this bill very well and it turned out not to be such a good bill, but only because they didn't really enforce it.

G: How was he able to keep the Democrats [united], as diverse as they were philosophically I would think on something like this?

J: Well, I think you'll find that he was able to keep the Democrats on a lot of things. The Democrats became almost a cohesive group for a while.

G: Well, would he argue with some that this is the best we can get, and argue with others that if you don't, it's going to be worse?

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J: Yes, I'm sure he would. He knew what appealed to different people and he just used the type of argument that appealed to them. I think you'll find there's a lot--there's not a lot, but there will be a number of occasions where he got all of the Democrats plus Langer and maybe occasionally Young.

G: He made a number of speeches on the drought situation in the Southwest at this time.

J: Yes. He got Eisenhower to fly down here, I think.

G: Yes. And he seems to have borrowed a page from Walter Webb's book, More Water for Texas, that was published during this period. Do you recall his attitudes here and what he did to remedy the problems?

J: Well, I know he was behind all of the water projects that provided more water, like moving the water of the Sabine across--I've forgotten what they call that, but across the valley to the other river that was shy of water. The Sabine always had an overage. I don't know. He couldn't make it rain, but he did the best he could to get some relief for the areas where it didn't rain.

G: Did he talk to Webb about this issue, do you know?

J: I don't know. He was a great admirer of Webb's and had read all of Webb's [stuff]. And as you know, President Johnson was not an avid reader, but Webb's stuff was one thing that he did read.

G: He did read Webb's stuff?

J: Oh, yes. He thought Webb was great.

G: Well, I wondered if in this case he had been reading Webb's writings or perhaps an aide had.

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J: I don't know, but I would guess that he had, because he did read Webb and probably talked to him, although I can't say that for sure.

Because he did talk to him on occasion.

G: In this connection, Joe Pool, when he was a state representative from Dallas, criticized LBJ for delaying the issue of a federal survey on Texas water needs. Do you recall that attack? He said he let it sit around for six months before he passed it on to Texas.

J: I recall it, I don't recall the details. I'm sure if he thought that it was something he could get done, he would get it done as soon as he [could]. He was a great one--he wasn't for waiting for the propitious time to ask for something.

G: Do you think that he felt [Allan] Shivers was behind this attack?

J: I don't know.

G: Now, that summer he and other senators were scheduled to go to Korea with [John Foster] Dulles, and the trip was cancelled because Eisenhower needed to have them stay and consider raising the debt limitation. The entry [from the 1953 chronology] I have on that is July 29 and continues--

J: Yes, I remember that.

G: It goes on to the next page as I recall. What do you remember about that?

J: I only remember that he was asked along with the leaders of the Senate to go and meet with [Syngman] Rhee. Eisenhower felt it was a matter of some importance, but [it was] apparently not important enough.

G: Was he enthusiastic about that trip, do you recall?

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- J: He was very interested in it. I don't know whether enthusiastic is the word. He was never really enthusiastic about long trips.
- G: Would you have gone along?
- J: I don't know. The first long trip I ever went on with him was in 19-- when did he go around the world?
- G: Was that 1961? 1961 or 1962.
- J: I might have gone. It would depend on his mood of the moment. I guess I went to Paris with Russell and him for the conference before that.
- G: That was NATO, wasn't it, NATO conference?
- J: Yes, NATO Interparliamentary Conference.
- G: Now, he had a speaking tour that fall, covered the state.
- J: Yes, he covered it pretty well, too.
- G: Tell me about that trip.
- J: I think he was convinced that he was going to have more serious opposition than Dudley Dougherty. Perhaps Shivers. He was a great one for trying to forestall trouble before it came, and so he went to all parts of the state and spoke in small and large towns. I think he covered the whole state, if I'm not mistaken, pretty well.
- G: Was this something he'd ever done before? A fifth-year [campaign], not in the Senate, of course, but--
- J: He'd done it in campaigns.
- G: Where did he get the idea, I wonder, to essentially campaign the year before you're up for election?
- J: I guess here, I don't know.

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G: Did you travel with him on any of those--?

J: No.

G: Did you stay in Washington or did you--?

J: Stayed in Washington. Guess I went to Wichita Falls with him, was all.

G: Now, I notice he flew to Uvalde and visited with John Nance Garner. Anything on that visit?

J: No. John Nance Garner was getting very old, and I think he spent most of his time picking pecans on his front steps. But he thought it was good to call on him.

G: I think it was that year that he spoke to the Mid-Continental Oil and Gas Association in Houston. Do you remember that speech?

J: No.

G: Okay, you weren't there at that?

J: No, what did he speak on?

G: Well, I think he spoke on how it was in their best interest to keep him where he was rather than try to defeat him.

J: Yes, that would have been the group he would have been worried about because they were the group that criticized him.

G: Is that right?

J: Yes, they were never happy with 50 per cent, 75 per cent, 80 per cent, they wanted a hundred per cent.

G: Did they? If you were going to talk to someone from that group, who would be a good one to [talk to]?

J: What was the man's name from Snyder? C. T. McLaughlin.

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G: Yes.

J: That would have been one good one.

G: Now, he was close to Mr. Johnson, wasn't he?

J: Yes. That's why I say he would have been a good one.

G: Yes. Okay, anybody else?

J: I can't think.

G: Okay. Now, late in 1953 Herbert Brownell attacked Truman in the Harry Dexter White case. Do you remember that, Mr. Johnson's attitude toward it, reaction?

J: His reaction was that it was crazy. I remember watching it with him on television; it seems to me like it was at 1901 Dillman. Were we living at Dillman then?

G: Yes.

J: And him feeling that he'd lost his mind, Brownell had.

G: Now, let's start in the 1954. The first thing I have for 1954 is that he began having weekly meetings of the staff to get ideas for his broadcasts and his columns. Let me ask you how those meetings worked and what the impetus for them was.

J: Just exactly what you said. He was by then doing a column every week and a broadcast every week and there just wasn't quite enough stuff, unless you had a few things prepared and some ideas. We just got together and suggested ideas.

G: Would he sit in on the meetings?

J: No. He sat in on the first one.

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G: Were these meetings a regular thing? Did they continue routinely or was it something that started for a few weeks and then tapered off?

J: I'd say a few months, I've forgotten how long, but it was more than a few weeks.

G: Now, one of the memoranda indicates that he had all of the male staffers working every Saturday and the women staffers every other Saturday.

J: I'd forgotten about that. Yes.

G: Tell me about that.

J: Well, he really believed that everybody ought to work on Saturday, but there was so much protest from the girls, they never had time to fix their hair or go to the beauty parlor or so on, that he finally succumbed to letting them off every other Saturday. But he figured the men didn't have to fix their hair, so it didn't affect them. I remembered it as soon as I read it. But we didn't particularly care because we had worked every Saturday for years.

G: Did you work all day long on Saturday?

J: Most all day long, yes.

G: Well, how did you get anything done that didn't relate to the Senate work?

J: We didn't get much done unless it could be done at night.

G: Were there slack times when Congress was not in session when you could--?

J: Well, gosh, there were periods, yes. However, not like there had been in earlier years when Congress would go till June or July and then be

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gone till the first of the year. During the war they stopped all that; they continued in session all the time until election time and [then they'd] take off.

G: Did the staff ever complain that they were overworked?

J: Yes, they complained among themselves all the time.

G: But not to him?

J: No, I don't remember anybody ever complaining to him, because he was always there. I mean I think there was a feeling that if they worked on Saturday, it wasn't quite so bad that he was down there working with them.

G: Well, what if, for example, he took the weekend off and went up to Middleburg, then would the rest of the staff take the weekend off?

J: No, no, they worked.

G: Was it just largely a question of answering the mail? The government agencies were closed, weren't they?

J: It was usually just catching up, because while he had a rule that we better get everything out the day it came in, we never did. So Saturday we'd catch up so we'd be through at the end of the week.

G: What about working on Sundays?

J: I've done some of that, too. A good deal of it.

G: Was this normal for senators' staffs? Were there other staffs that worked like that?

J: No, as far as I know not any.

G: Did the other senators, do you think, tell him he was working his staff too hard?

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- J: I don't know about that. I never heard much grousing about it. I mean, the objection was halfway in jest. Because I think we all felt like we were moving ahead, doing something for somebody who was going somewhere. And if he went to Middleburg, the phone would ring every hour or two with another idea or something. Wherever he was, he'd call in, not to see if we were working, I don't mean that, but with an idea of something that needed to be done that he had thought up.
- G: Do you think that he was unable to get some people to work for him because they were aware that he expected them to work six days a week?
- J: I don't remember that.
- G: Really? You never heard of anybody saying, "I don't want to work for him because he's such a slave driver"?
- J: No, I think they wanted to work for him even though they knew he was a slave driver.
- G: People are always telling me that "He kept his people there till eight o'clock, nine o'clock at night, made them work on Saturdays, but when I went to work for him I told him I wasn't going to do that, that I would just work till five, and that's all I did." Is that true? Did some people get up and put on their hat and walk out at five o'clock or six o'clock?
- J: The only one I ever remember that ever did that was Booth Mooney. Booth Mooney was an eight-to-five man. But he could turn out between eight and five more than the rest of us could between eight and midnight.
- G: Could he really? How about someone like Jim Rowe, when he came on?

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- J: Jim Rowe never worked for him that I know of.
- G: Well, didn't he work for him in 1956 or so?
- J: At what? He worked for him as a friend and individual and so on all the time.
- G: Wasn't he on the Policy Committee staff or something like that for a while, just one year?
- J: Maybe so, I don't remember it. I remember he was around all the time. I don't think that he ever had any regular hours.
- G: Bill Moyers started to work for him, I guess temporarily, in 1954. Do you recall that?
- J: Yes, I do.
- G: Let me ask you to remember what you can about that.
- J: His editor in Marshall--what's his name?
- G: Cope?
- J: Cope, Millard Cope--called me and said, "I've got a kid that I'm grooming to take my place one of these days. He's just a young kid. Could you all take care of him up there, give him something to do and learn something this summer? I'd like for him to get a little Washington experience." And I said, "Yes." He came up and ran the multigraph machine.
- G: Did he just stay that one summer?
- J: Yes, at first. Then he came back.
- G: Were you impressed with him or not impressed with him?
- J: Oh, I was impressed with him. He worked directly for me, so I was-- I was much more impressed with him than I was later.

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G: Did he have any substantive assignments other than just running the machine, or were they--?

J: No, he was at first just pure errand boy.

G: Okay. I have a note, January 31, Wayne Morse comes to Austin, makes a speech criticizing LBJ. Now, normally senators go out of their way to say something nice about another senator when they're in his home state. Morse went out of his way to criticize LBJ. Tell me what would Johnson's reaction to that be, and why would Morse do something like that?

J: I don't know for sure, but I remember Morse very well. Morse was very erratic, very brilliant, and he would be very friendly, and then Johnson would do something he didn't like and he would switch and be the other way for a while. I'm guessing that this happened at a time when he was mad about something Senator Johnson did, I don't know what it was.

George Reedy and I were in his office one day, went up to see him to get him to sign some papers for the Preparedness [Sub]committee, I guess, I don't remember. He said, "I'm thinking about becoming a Democrat," the first time I'd heard anything about it. Sure enough, he did fairly soon after that.

G: There was a lot of speculation that spring about an opponent for LBJ in the Democratic primary. There was of course speculation that Shivers would run against him, and I think we talked about that last time. You really discounted that possibility, is that correct?

J: I never thought Shivers would run against him, but I--

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- G: Then Johnson didn't think Shivers would run?
- J: I don't know what he thought. I don't think he thought Shivers would run against him. Actually, beneath all the differences they had on politics, they were really fairly close friends all through it all.
- G: There was speculation that John Ben Shepperd would file against LBJ.
- J: Yes, but I never thought he would either.
- G: Really?
- J: He was a good friend, too, a very good friend.
- G: What about Will Wilson? There was some suggestion that he was--
- J: Yes, I always thought he would.
- G: Really?
- J: He was not a good friend.
- G: Was he more to the right of LBJ, or did they have simply different bases? Wilson was from Dallas; he was moderate when he was on the [Texas] Supreme Court.
- J: He was more sort of like Johnson as far as politics is concerned, maybe a little to the left of Senator Johnson. But he didn't like him.
- G: Why did he end up heading the Kennedy-Johnson [campaign] in Texas in 1960 then?
- J: Because he liked Kennedy.
- G: He did like Kennedy.
- J: Not because he liked Johnson.
- G: Dudley Dougherty was the opponent that emerged. How did you react to the Dudley Dougherty campaign?

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J: I never considered it very serious. He spent a lot of money. I never thought it would amount to much, and it didn't. Most people didn't know Dudley Dougherty.

G: Was Johnson's attitude to ignore it?

J: Pretty much. He'd campaigned the preceding year.

G: Now, Dougherty was related to Dudley Tarleton, is that right, who had been one of LBJ's lawyers in 1948?

J: Dudley Dougherty's father had been very close to Mr. Johnson. Dudley Dougherty was kind of a crazy, young kid. I won't say crazy--erratic sort of a guy. His father had been a strong supporter of Mr. Johnson's. Dudley Tarleton had been a strong supporter of Mr. Johnson's, his uncle, I believe [he was] his uncle.

G: Do you think that other people were behind Dougherty's candidacy?

J: I think Coke Stevenson probably was and certainly did everything he could to help him.

G: Johnson obviously had some enemies in Texas in 1954. I wonder why they couldn't get a stronger candidate than Dougherty to run against him?

J: Because they didn't think they could win.

G: Really? Do you know of anyone else that thought about making the race and didn't in 1954?

J: No.

G: Any other campaign strategy that year that you remember?

J: The campaign strategy was not to really campaign very much. To ignore more than anything else. To stay in Washington and be a senator.

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G: Dudley Dougherty did something rather unorthodox at the time. He had some sort of telethon or televised straight-running, twenty-four-hour appearance, or something like that. He spent all his money in one--do you remember that?

J: I remember it, I don't think I saw it. I was in Washington.

G: There is a note in the files that LBJ was turning down virtually all out-of-town invitations to speak, that he was so busy in the Senate that he didn't have time to--

J: Yes, I think that he was busy.

G: Is that right, early 1954?

J: But I think he was maybe not quite as busy as we put on. I think he decided that was the best strategy.

G: I see, to just stay in [Washington]?

J: Yes, he was busy. I don't mean to imply that he wasn't busy, but I think he could have accepted a few things.

G: Okay. Now, a couple of other legislative issues here: the Albert Beeson nomination for the National Labor Relations Board, do you remember that?

J: Vaguely. I don't remember it very well.

G: Then on February 24 [the Democrats overrode the Republican leadership and voted to adjourn the Senate].

(Interruption)

J: Well, Senator Johnson felt that the leadership had to work together, and he and Knowland normally did. But on this occasion Knowland would call night sessions without informing him, and he felt that that was

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wrong. And again he got Langer and Morse and that was enough to [adjourn the Senate]. Knowland almost had to work with him, because all he had to do was to get one Republican. As I remember, a couple of Democrats had engagements that night, speaking engagements or something, where they were not going to be able to be there, and Johnson felt that they might lose the whole thing on the basis of Knowland having a night session when he hadn't told anybody that he was going to have a night session. So he decided he would show him that he'd better follow the rules, and succeeded.

G: Do you recall Knowland's reaction to this?

J: Knowland didn't like it at all.

G: It's really sort of a humiliation, I guess, for the majority leader--

J: It was a humiliation for the majority [minority] leader to take over, but--

G: Were you there on the floor when it happened, or were you in the gallery anyplace where you could see it?

J: I guess I was over in the office, but I certainly knew about it at the time.

G: What was LBJ's reaction to it? Did he feel a sense of certain--

J: Oh, yes, he felt good about it, he felt like he had killed a bear. He felt like Knowland wouldn't try it again, that again, which he didn't. It really helped his and Knowland's relationship. Knowland checked with him from then on on everything. And they got to be very close, as you may know.

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- G: Yes. Now, this was a question of a courtesy actually, wasn't it?
Being able to notify other senators that there would be a night session so that they could be there, is that the--?
- J: That's standard procedure that the leadership does that.
- G: And Knowland didn't do it. Why? Why didn't he know it?
- J: Because I think he thought that [if] he could get a vote up that night, he could win his point.
- G: Well, LBJ must have anticipated that because he obviously had more Democrats around than--
- J: Yes.
- G: Okay. The Dixon-Yates controversy the next day, to what extent was this a public power issue?
- J: Where is it?
- G: February 25.
- J: It was a pretty much straight-up public power [issue].
- G: Is that the way LBJ regarded it?
- J: I think so.
- G: Anything on his attitude regarding atomic energy at the time?
- J: Was he chairman of the [Joint] Atomic Energy Committee at the time?
- G: Yes, I think--
- J: Or had he become so then yet?
- G: I'm not sure.
- J: But whether he had or not doesn't make any difference. He was very much interested in atomic energy matters from the beginning.

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G: There were a number of other defeats for the administration on very close votes. One of them was on June 2, LBJ managed to increase the REA's lending authority over the opposition of the administration. Do you recall that one?

J: I don't recall it, but very often when there was an issue of that kind where he was sort of on the side of the angels, where he knew that he could get some Republican votes, he'd take advantage of it. I don't even see it on here [1954 chronology], but--

G: Let's see, June 2, bottom of page 21.

J: Yes. I don't recall that specifically, but I recall his feeling that any time there was an issue like REA where the Republicans would be embarrassed to vote the other way, he'd take advantage of it. Any time where he was on the side of the angels, he'd take advantage of it.

G: Another setback for the administration was May 8, the defeat of the proposed Taft-Hartley amendments.

J: Yes.

G: Here we had all forty-eight Democrats plus Malone, Young, Langer, and Morse. Do you remember that one?

J: Yes.

G: Tell me what you can about that.

J: Well, I know he felt that the Taft-Hartley law as originally written was perhaps too stringent although he supported it in the final passage and got lots of criticism for it, lots of trouble for it. But it was almost another case where he felt that he could get every Democrat

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and get two or three Republicans. But he thought they would take the worst part of it out--well, I don't want to say that--the bad part of it out.

G: Well, how was he able to keep the Democrats together on this one? There must have been some extremes among the Democrats on this labor issue.

J: He had an easier time keeping the Democrats together when they were in the minority than he ever did when they were in the majority.

G: Why was this?

J: I think because the majority [minority?] had joined together and knew they would have a chance to win with one or two votes.

G: Now, on this Taft-Hartley amendment, either on this or the one we talked about before, the REA increase, do you remember his negotiations with any particular senator to get him to support the Democratic proposal?

J: Bobby [Baker] would probably answer that better. But I'm sure there was. Some promises to support some dams in their district.

G: Another defeat for the administration was on the farm bill. That was August 10. The Senate voted by one vote to approve Hubert Humphrey's amendment to the farm bill, and this would prevent the secretary of agriculture from limiting terms of conservation committee members.

J: Yes, I don't remember it, but I'm sure it was just something like the others. In some states these same guys had been on the committee for years and they felt like they had done a good job, and then--

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G: Well, apparently a lot of them were old New Deal supporters.

That was an awfully close vote, though, one vote.

J: It doesn't say who he got, does it? I don't know.

G: Do you remember the atomic energy filibuster that year?

J: Was that Morse's filibuster?

G: I believe he was involved. It's a liberal--

J: Where is that?

G: Let's see. 7-20 it began.

J: If it's Morse's filibuster, I know--

G: And went through 7-24 or 7-27. I have a note that LBJ's efforts to end the filibuster had alienated some of the liberals. Do you recall that?

J: [Marshall] McNeil said that anyway. Well, no, that isn't Morse's filibuster anyway, I don't think.

G: Okay. Now let me ask you a little about foreign policy.

(Interruption)

You had the fall of Dien Binh Phu this spring, and LBJ met at the White House and conferred with the administration at least twice on what course to follow. What do you recall about that?

J: Very little.

G: You know, the indication is that Eisenhower wanted to assist the French and that Johnson and Russell proposed some conditions upon our involvement. One was, I think, that the British and some other allies would participate, and then there was yet another. Do you recall LBJ's position here?

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J: Just vaguely. I think you're right.

(Interruption)

--much later than 1954.

G: Is that right? Well, I've just turned on the machine, let me ask you.

In 1954 when Eisenhower was interested in assisting the French, was

LBJ reluctant to commit forces to Vietnam?

J: Yes, I think so.

G: Why do you say that?

J: Because I think his position was that it was a problem of the French and if the United Nations would get into it or something, why, maybe we could be helpful or--

G: Did he see a parallel with Korea at this point?

J: I don't know.

G: Did he ever talk to you about this Indochinese situation? Did you ever hear him discussing this?

J: I heard him discussing it, I don't know whether he talked to me direct. It's possible he did. I heard him talk to other people.

G: Do you think Russell was of a similar mind?

J: Yes.

G: More reluctant than Eisenhower, would you say?

J: Yes.

G: Now, the question of foreign policy in general, was it bipartisan during this period? Did Johnson have a genuine input?

J: Yes, I think Eisenhower had more support from Johnson in the Senate and Rayburn in the House than he did from a lot of his own party.

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G: Well, did they merely ask Johnson to--

J: Ratify?

G: --ratify policies that Dulles had formed, or did Johnson actually consult?

J: I think at first it was like that, but as time came on, I think they got to be real partners.

G: Was there any turning point that you're aware of?

J: I can't say just when it was, but I think it was when [at] some point Eisenhower realized that Johnson and Rayburn were not going to play politics with foreign policy. I can't say just when that was.

G: Okay.

End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview XIII

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