

INTERVIEW IV

DATE: June 15, 1976  
INTERVIEWEE: SAM HOUSTON JOHNSON  
INTERVIEWER: Michael L. Gillette  
PLACE: The Alamo Hotel, Austin, Texas

Tape 1 of 3

J: Well, let's see, we were talking about Congressman Dick Kleberg. Who was he? Where did he come from? What's his heritage? Because heritage is a most important thing. He became famous, of course, on account of his grandfather and the King Ranch. But I guess the reason he got connected with Lyndon--what success he owed should go, I say, to my father in this regard. I put it in my book [My Brother Lyndon] and I've said it otherwise. When Daddy got up and defended the Americans of German extraction in the legislature back there on account of there was war, that was the most famous speech that he made, you see. Well, up in the house gallery was a young student there listening. He was an American of German extraction, none other than Dick Kleberg, a law student. So he went down to shake the hand of the man that had the courage to get up and make this speech.

Of course Mr. Dick's father was living at the time that Dick Kleberg was elected to Congress. He was elected to fill an unexpired term in 1931 at the death of Harry M. Wurzbach, who happened to be a Republican, one of the few Republicans that Texas ever [elected]. I think he's the only one that Texas ever had at that time. The reason why he was elected was because of the German vote in that district.

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He was from Seguin. That's Guadalupe County. Well, Gonzales County, DeWitt County, Bexar County--San Antonio is full of Germans. That district extended all the way down to Corpus Christi, Kleberg County and all that, you see, in that district.

So when Wurzbach died, well, they had a special election. My father was working for the [Texas] Railroad Commission. So he had been in touch with Kleberg, mostly with Caesar Kleberg, who was a cousin. But Daddy passed several bills, to go back into the history of my father in that book that was prepared by San Marcos [Lyndon Baines Johnson: The Formative Years], you know, this legislation for the cattlemen to take protection and all that.

G: Right.

J: All that stuff affected the King Ranch, you see, and the cattlemen. That was one reason. Then you take it that the general counsel for the Texas Cattle Raisers Association was none other than Dayton Moses, an old-time friend of my father's. For years he used to be district attorney up at Burnet. But then he was general counsel, up until his death, of the Texas Cattle Raisers Association. So Mr. Kleberg, Mr. Dick, had been president of it, of course. Then that brought Daddy into the campaign for Dick Kleberg for Congress, At that time, understand, Blanco County, Kendall County, and some of those counties in this upper part were in Kleberg's [congressional] district, the Fourteenth. The upper part of the district used to be in my father's legislative district, including Blanco County, you see, [which] was in Kleberg's district.

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So Kleberg--Dick--said he'd run if Sam Johnson would support him. That's the story. Well, of course I was just a kid in college at the time, but Daddy traveled with Mr. Dick. They were very fond of each other. Only thing was Dick drove too fast and scared the hell out of Daddy. He had had no knowledge of politics whatsoever, Kleberg had, and he didn't propose to have. He never did propose to know anything about politics.

G: Let me ask you how you heard about him being in the gallery when your father was making his speech?

J: From my father and from him.

G: Both of them?

J: Well, from him. He was the one that was telling me this. Now, it made an imprint upon him as a young student in law school. That came from Mr. Dick, and most of this stuff that I'm telling you will be coming from Mr. Dick.

G: I see.

J: It would come from Daddy but verified by Mr. Dick. The thing of it is, in their travels Daddy of course helped him. Daddy at that time was living in San Marcos while us kids were going to school. I say I was, Lyndon was just finished; he was teaching in Houston at the time.

So there were several men in the race. But the main thing that was important over Kleberg's election was this: his predecessor was Wurzbach, a Republican. John [Nance] Garner was minority leader of the House. Well, when Kleberg was elected as a Democrat during a special election, that one vote reorganized the House and put Garner

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in as speaker. People forget those things, but I don't forget it. Well, I mean, why should I forget it, because it's history and it affected our whole lives.

Anyhow, in talking to Daddy, he said he'd name either one of the boys his secretary. So Daddy of course said me because he was kind of partial to me. He said, "Sam Houston would be the best but he's too young. He's got to go on to school, so it would be Lyndon." Of course it would be substantiated by Dick Kleberg, but that's not the point. That doesn't affect it. What's very important about Lyndon--I tried to bring it out in the book. I knew it would make Lyndon mad. I mean, it was not the way he wanted it, but this was the way it was. And that part can be verified by my mother. She's gone. But my sister, too, can.

Lyndon, you know, gives Welly Hopkins credit. His version of it gives Welly Hopkins credit for getting him the appointment as secretary to Dick Kleberg. Understand, I'm very fond of Welly Hopkins. I know him. I have nothing against him at all. He was a [state] senator from Gonzales, and when Lyndon was a senior in college he managed Welly Hopkins' campaign. I remember. I was a freshman, too. He got us all to come up there. Bill Deason of course was up there, you know. He [Lyndon] had Welly Hopkins make a speech. Welly Hopkins would come down, "Well, listen, I'll tell you this. . . ." And Lyndon would stand up there and clap and wave for all of us to clap. That's Bill Deason's memory today.

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Anyhow, Welly Hopkins was elected to the senate. Gonzales being in Dick Kleberg's district, naturally Welly Hopkins supported Kleberg. Made a good campaign. So the first person Daddy called up was Welly Hopkins to ask him to help him get Lyndon a job. Although I don't think Daddy needed it but, you know, when you apply for a job or something--although I don't think I've ever applied for many jobs in my life. I'll tell you one I applied for. That's beside the point, the point is Daddy called Senator Hopkins and asked him. He said, "Well, Mr. Sam, I don't know about that. I hate to ask Dick right now, right after the election, to do it." Daddy got mad of course. "By God, that's the only time to ask him, before he fills it!" Daddy got him on the phone and called Dayton Moses; he was president of the Texas Cattle Raisers. He and Daddy used to drink up there at Johnson City with my uncle, Clarence Martin, you know. All the political leaders assembled up there at Daddy's ranch before Daddy even got married. Dayton Moses said, "Hell, of course, Sam." He put a call in to Roy Miller. That was the man that had managed Dick Kleberg's campaign.

Never forget the name of Roy Miller in conversations, because to me, well, he was one of the shrewdest public relations men that I have ever seen operate. I don't have to brag on Mr. Miller because when you get one hundred and fifty thousand dollars a year and [inaudible], you know he's got to be on the ball. He was the one that got Garner the vice presidency, and he handled all Garner's work, too. He handled everybody's work for them. He handled the Ways and Means Committee, every one of them. That's the tax committee, you know. Although Roy

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Miller was on the Rivers and Harbors [Committee], he worked for Congressman [Joseph] Mansfield on that, the Intracoastal Canal, all that stuff. But anyhow, the point of it is the man to contact was Roy Miller.

Now Dayton Moses--Daddy at first had Dick Kleberg where he'd name one of us, you see, just like that. Daddy said Lyndon, of course, because I wasn't the best qualified one anyhow, too young, you see, still in school. But anyhow, Dick didn't forget about it, what Daddy told him. So I go on. He called Lyndon--he was teaching school in Houston--and told him about it, that he could get the job as secretary to Dick Kleberg. I'm not saying that Lyndon never heard of Kleberg, but I don't think he had paid any attention to him because he was way out away from Hays County, you see, hundred of miles away, so there was no reason for Lyndon to have known anything about Dick Kleberg, except what he read about in elections. As far as Lyndon having anything to do with Dick Kleberg's original election, he did not, because he was teaching school.

All right, then Daddy called him to meet him in Gonzales. We met there at Welly Hopkins' home on a Sunday. Daddy and Mother and I drove and had Sunday dinner with him down to Corpus Christi and met Roy Miller and then Kleberg. And that was all there was to it. It was all over with. The next thing to do was to get ready to be sworn in. Now whether Lyndon rode up on the train with Dick Kleberg to be sworn in or not--I think he did but I'm not sure. It makes no difference particularly, because in a special election the minute you're

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elected and get certified by the secretary of the state, then you get sworn in. Otherwise you wait until March, back in those days, March 4. That's been changed now to January 3. The point of it [is], anyhow, that was 1931, the last part of 1931. Like Lyndon has said, which is very truthful, he served up under Hoover, because Hoover was president in 1931 and 1932. So he saw the Bonus Marchers, you know.

Of course Kleberg had always been a great friend of Garner's, because up until they redistricted, Kleberg County used to be in Garner's district. But anyhow, the point of it is that Dick Kleberg was congressman. I don't know that you're the one I told about the girl up there that Roy Miller [recommended], that Lyndon had trouble with, or not. Well, there was a girl that used to work for or was connected with Roy Miller. Estelle Harbin is her name. I don't know where she's living or anything, I've never met her so I don't know. You might be able to locate her if you think it's important enough.

The thing of it was, you've got to take in perspective Mrs. Kleberg. She was named Mamie Searcy, from Brenham, Texas. Father was a lawyer. She was a sweetheart of Texas University, a very beautiful woman, and that was who he married. Very socialite. The thing of it, I don't mind saying it because you can ask anybody else, she married him for his money, period. I can prove it later on in several different instances.

Anyhow, back in, I'd say 1933, yes, Lyndon came through San Marcos on his way to Corpus Christi, 1933 or 1934, to see Dick Kleberg. So he stopped by and talked to Daddy. I was off at law

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school at Tennessee. But anyhow he was telling the trouble that he was having with Mrs. Kleberg. Here is what the trouble was. She thought her husband, Dick, was going with Estelle Harbin. Lyndon lived in the basement--you've heard this, of course--of the Dodge Hotel. This was not a basement it appeared, but it looked like it anyhow. They have in the Dodge Hotel a women's side where my sister stayed, too, when she went to work in Washington. That's thirty dollars a month, you know, at that time. Lyndon knew better, you see, [about Estelle Harbin]. But she accused Mr. Dick and she called Lyndon to meet her at Rock Creek Park. Lyndon assured her that it was not true, you see.

Then Mrs. Kleberg charged several thousand dollars worth of stuff. Dick Kleberg didn't have any money in his own name. He got five thousand dollars a year as chairman of the King Ranch corporation [and] ten thousand dollars a year as congressman at that time. Now, of course his mother was secretary and treasurer of the corporation, and she had it all under her control. But whenever any crisis might happen or something, he had no trouble getting it from her, anything. His father was living at first but he died back in 1932, 1933, something like that--Dick Kleberg's father.

So then Daddy told Lyndon, "Well, the best thing to do, Lyndon, is to get rid of her. I'll get her a job with the Railroad Commission here." Daddy was working for them. No use letting all that stuff blow up. She [Mrs. Kleberg] left Dick, you know, went to Corpus Christi. Well, Lyndon goes down to Corpus Christi. She wouldn't see



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him and finally Lyndon said, "I'm going to stay here until you do."  
And so finally he came, slept out there on the porch or something.  
She finally saw him. He patched it all up between Mr. Kleberg and  
her.

G: What was her name?

J: Mamie. Mamie Searcy Kleberg.

G: But he was going to get the other woman a job with the Railroad  
Commission?

J: Daddy was.

G: Yes.

J: Daddy got her a job.

Well, then as you probably got there in tape, Lyndon hired these  
two star debaters in Houston. One of them was L. E. Jones, Luther  
Jones, and the other one was Gene Latimer. So they both went to  
school to take typing and shorthand. So they were the boys instead of  
women in the office, you notice. Well, that would have been a pretty  
good thing now, wouldn't it?

But anyhow, so everything was going all right. Lyndon lived  
there at the house with Mr. Kleberg. But then Mrs. Kleberg inter-  
cepted the mail, or went through Lyndon's trunk. I forget how the  
story goes; it was something [like that]. She found a letter addressed  
to Lyndon from this girl, Estelle Harbin: "Lyndon, you don't know how  
much I appreciate you getting me out of that mess." Well, Mrs. Kleberg  
interpreted that that it was true that Dick was going with her and  
that Lyndon lied to her when he assured her that he wasn't. She

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interpreted it the way she wanted to interpret it. I'm saying that from past knowledge of other things I know. But anyhow, that turned her against Lyndon. I think that happened in 1933 or 1934, when she discovered that.

Well, then 1934 they redistricted, put Blanco County in the Tenth District, the Austin district, you see. Everybody wants to get credit for how Lyndon got in with the National Youth Administration. It's real funny about it. There's not but one person. . . . I know how he got the job as secretary to Dick Kleberg, he got it through my father and my father's friends, including Welly Hopkins, of course, but Welly didn't take the lead in it. He was more hesitant, you see. But Welly Hopkins is a good man. I have nothing against him and he was a great lawyer and Lyndon's great friend, too, don't misunderstand me. But it works both ways, because Lyndon helped get him a job in the Department of Justice, too, and got him lined up. Now he's chief attorney, general counsel--was, the last I heard of him--for John L. Lewis, maybe still is, probably retired or dead now, I don't know. Maybe he's still alive.

Well, Maury Maverick was a congressman that represented San Antonio. They took that out of our district, Kleberg's district, and made it independent. Maury Maverick was tax assessor-collector there, and that one county was his district. So Maverick came up there in 1935, elected in 1934 and went up in 1935. And he was the one--[he was] very liberal at that time; [I'm] not saying I minded--that discussed things with Lyndon. See, when Lyndon was secretary to Dick

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Kleberg, San Antonio was in that district. So Dick Kleberg had a re-election campaign in 1932, you see, that was a hot run on that. So Lyndon, as you know, named Dan Quill postmaster of San Antonio--Dick Kleberg, I mean. Lyndon, he's strictly a no-fooling-around administrator. He would tell Mr. Dick, "You've got to do this." So when I say that, I don't know of a person living that Lyndon didn't try to control. Well, I've said it, I see no reason to retract it, because it's the way I feel. I can see no reason for him not wanting to if he wanted to, if he could get by with it.

But when I came up--see, I graduated in 1934 and I was too young to take the bar so I got a job at the bank in Houston in 1934, Federal Land Bank. In 1935 Lyndon, through Maury Maverick, he was the one that was running around with what I will call the Young Turks up there, the liberal bunch, that got Lyndon the job with Aubrey Williams as state director of NYA.

G: You think he's the one that did it?

J: I know he was, period. I wasn't there when he made the call but I damn sure was there when Lyndon met me at the airport when I came to take Lyndon's place. I was right there having breakfast with Lyndon and Maury Maverick the next day after I arrived, and Lyndon was asking Maury who he should hire to handle his stuff in NYA. And he recommended Herbert Henderson, you know.

G: Oh, really?

J: Yes, we were having breakfast that morning. Lyndon had Bill White. Bill had forgotten this until I reminded him of it.

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G: Bill White was there, too?

J: Bill White. Lyndon wanted Bill White--he was working for the Associated Press--to be his deputy, to help. Bill, of course, didn't take it. Maury Maverick told Lyndon, "Why did you wish this job off on your little brother, working for Dick Kleberg? Why do you wish this off on him?" Anyhow that was it.

G: Well, you know, some people have suggested that Sam Rayburn was influential in getting that. Booth Mooney says that in his book [LBJ: An Irreverent Chronicle]. Do you know anything about that? Where he got that idea?

J: As for Booth's idea, he dreamed that one up. He was very fond of Mr. Rayburn. But he had no basis at all except imagination on that. I wouldn't mind telling Booth, "Booth, where did you get it?" because Lyndon never met Sam Rayburn before. I mean he'd been secretary to Dick Kleberg. Sam Rayburn was a friend of Daddy's, but I mean they weren't close at that time.

G: I see.

J: Maury Maverick was close, because Maury helped elect Dick Kleberg to Congress. Now, Maury wanted to run for Congress himself. He was tax assessor-collector for San Antonio. But Roy Miller comes up there, so it goes, and put a quietus on Maury. He just had a satchel, a briefcase; he said, "We've got it, and we're going to get it." That meant money, you know. That counts in a special election. It counts in any campaign. So Maury stayed on as county tax collector, full well knowing that probably in 1934 they would pass a law redistricting and

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take San Antonio out. So Lyndon became close with Maury when he was secretary to Dick Kleberg while Maury was county chairman of the Kleberg campaign in San Antonio. So then of course when Maury got elected in 1934, came up there in 1935, well, he was noted as one of the most liberal congressmen--well, the most liberal in Texas by far. But he ranked along with [Vito] Marcantonio of New York, kind of commie, communist. Of course Maury wasn't.

G: With the tension between your brother and Mrs. Kleberg, did you have a hard time filling in where he had been?

J: Me?

G: Yes. Did Mrs. Kleberg have the same attitude toward you that she had toward him?

J: Quite the contrary. Now, it goes into things. For instance, the way Lyndon had it set up for me was he divided the duties of the office three ways. It was Carroll Keach then--L. E. Jones had quit and was going to law school--and Gene Latimer, and me. And [he divided] the salaries three ways. But when I arrived on the scene it was entirely different. Mr. Kleberg introduced me as "my new secretary. He took Lyndon's place." So he let it be known who was the man that took his place. But there you go. But anyhow, that's not bragging, but that was the way Kleberg was.

Mr. Dick was never known [to--] I would say that the four years I was with him I don't think he ever came to the Corpus Christi office. First I had it in the federal building. He might have been there once and maybe to Corpus Christi in the Jones Building, too. I moved to

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the Jones Building, because it was right across from the hotel and more convenient for me. I never saw him in the Corpus Christi office over twice. I did go to his house all the time and so forth. But Mrs. Kleberg--like for instance you'd come down there, you'd want to see the Congressman. You're a power man. You're pretty strong in DeWitt County, we'll say. I'd take you over there. Now you would naturally know that Lyndon Johnson used to be Kleberg's secretary. "Well, Dick, how is Lyndon getting along?" Then Mrs. Kleberg would say, "I don't know, but Sam Houston is a whole lot better." And I didn't know them; I hadn't had a chance to prove myself. I knew I wasn't. I took offense at that. Because every time she could stick it in Lyndon, she did, and [then] brag on me. I'm not holier than thou, but that's kind of something I learned from Daddy. You brag on one and then hit the other one. I knew I wasn't, didn't have an opportunity to show any ability, hadn't been there long enough. But she took those digs at Lyndon all the time.

Now, we got along fine; Mr. Dick [and I] got along what time there in Washington when I'd see him. I dictated most of the mail and signed his name to it. But you see, here it is, me a kid, saying I put him on the team like that. Lyndon was doing everything with him, see what I mean? Telling him what to do, this and that. But then Mr. Kleberg would come in, you know--what's that old fellow's name, I never will forget it, head of the General Electric Company. They lived up at the Shoreham. [He] would come in and he would have Mr. Kleberg dictate his speech against Roosevelt, you know, to one of his

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secretaries. He would. Mr. Kleberg had the most wonderful vocabulary of any man in the world. You couldn't find it in the dictionary, any of them, but he knew what he was saying. So then I would say, "Fine, that's wonderful, Mr. Dick." In other words I wouldn't say, "You can't do this," you see. Then I would say, "Fine, I'll tell you when to deliver it when it can get the better play." And [I'd] put it in the top drawer. And [so] he'd gotten his speech written, dictated it in front of this fellow. It was buried down at the bottom of my desk. My purpose was to keep his name out of the papers, the way he voted, because it wasn't popular to be anti-Roosevelt. But if he wanted to make a speech in the office and get it out, that's all right.

Now, I'd have some things to go over with him in the morning when he'd come, some letters maybe. But he'd send Rats [?], the Mexican chauffeur for Mrs. Kleberg, to go get a racing form, and [he'd] pick up the phone. "Sam, I want Max Hurst [?]." Well, Max Hurst is the trainer for his horse. He's at the King Ranch, you know. "Max, where are you going to run my horse today? You going to put him in the money or out of the money?" He'd talk like that. And he'd study that damn racing form. Well, it kind of aggravated me a little bit, you know, but I won't say I wasn't conscientious about it and good. But as long as it thrilled him to make his speech that didn't even get delivered and got it out of his system and he thought he was working like hell and doing it, it was all right with me. As long as he got re-elected. That was the difference between me and Lyndon.

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G: Didn't Mrs. Kleberg use the argument with her husband that your brother was trying to sabotage the Congressman, or that he was trying to take over the office, and he was developing his own relations with the constituents and this sort of thing?

J: Oh, yes.

G: Did that argument work with him? Do you recall what happened in that?

J: What do you mean? Did that argument work with Dick?

G: Did it make Dick Kleberg somewhat suspicious of your brother?

J: Never. Well, when I came to work for Mr. Kleberg, Mr. Dick didn't cry when Lyndon left. He didn't beg him to stay on or anything. He picked up the phone and called Roy Miller for me to come up. Then of course he put me in charge and changed the salary schedule around. So I was going to tell you something else.

Anyhow, I took over Lyndon's apartment there at--oh, I think it was Kalorama Road was what it was. And his car. He had two cars; Lady Bird had one and he had one. So we went down. So here comes Lyndon. Gene Latimer, one of the boys, I got him a job with the Federal Housing Administration during the summer months. He still was to operate up at the office, to watch over things. Then I took the other boy, Carroll Keach, who had been up there for a while, with me as a secretary to Corpus.

So anyhow, [we] got down to Corpus then. This is 1935 now, my first year. Well, Lyndon called me to come and bring the car [to Austin]. I hadn't bought it from him, you see. He had just lent it to me, but I was going to pay it out by the month, the car. Because



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he wanted Charlie Henderson--that's Herbert's brother [who] was getting married and was going on a honeymoon--to use it. Well, Carroll Keach and I both started driving to Corpus Christi. So I stopped off in San Antonio to see my sister Josefa. I got a room at the Gunter Hotel, ordered a bottle of Scotch, I think, sitting there, got a date, too.

Anyhow, Carroll Keach goes to deliver Lyndon's car. Then Lyndon [said], "Where's Sam Houston?" "Well, Chief"--they called him Chief--"he stopped. He's at the Gunter Hotel." Well, of course Lyndon, that protective air, you know. Don't think I haven't lived with my family. Boy, he quit everything and he and Lady Bird came right in there. I had a date with one of Lady Bird's friends that knew her back at school there, and my sister was there, too. "Come on, Sam Houston, we're going to Corpus. We'll let the boy have the car to go on the honeymoon." But then he said, "Well, I gave you your chance. You had it but you messed it up, drinking here in San Antonio and all that." It was on a Sunday. Carroll Keach was with him. I guess he exploded about right after you--he didn't stop to read Burma Shave wrong, but after he'd get through reading--you don't remember any Burma Shave at all?

G: Yes, I do.

J: I'm throwing that in as a joke, of course.

But every few minutes he started, "I gave you a chance. Now you lost it. I'm going to put Bill Deason in as secretary to Dick Kleberg." Bill was an attorney friend of Lyndon's. I roomed with him in Houston.

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I roomed with him when I was working at the bank. He kept on at me. I didn't say a word. You ask me, well, were you scared? I really wasn't, because I thought I knew Dick Kleberg. At that time I was living at the Plaza Hotel [in Corpus]. Lyndon, oh, every ten or fifteen minutes he was going to do this and going to do that, you know. Finally, Lady Bird said, "Oh, Lyndon, lay off Sam Houston for a while." She's done that for me several times. In other words I think she got fed up listening to it all the time. But Lady Bird was kind of protective to me when she thought I was being cussed out, even though I probably needed it at times. I said that on the David Frost show one time but I didn't go into detail. That's beside the point.

Anyhow, we got there. He called me up, went over to Mr. Kleberg's. I went directly to the office and then Carroll Keach said, "Oh, you ought to give me a big kick in the ass. I didn't know it was going to start all this trouble," you see, like that. "Carroll, I'm not worried. If it's going to be that way, it's going to be that way. I have a wonderful record at the bank and I can go right back to work at the bank." Because I had about the best record of any man my--well, they didn't have anybody my age that ever worked for the department. So [I] went on.

Then I met Lyndon at lunch. He'd been over there, talking to Dick. He was telling him what all I did. Then Lyndon came back to the hotel. He said, "Well, if you promise not to do this anymore or anything, you can stay on." Well, I knew what had happened. I knew that Dick didn't do what Lyndon wanted done. I knew it. "No, Lyndon,

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I think I'll go on back to Houston and work that way." "Oh, now, you can stay on, but you've got to learn how to do this." That upper hand, you know. "Well, I'm going to call Bill Deason and tell him to come up." Bill doesn't know any of that. I never did tell him nothing that Bill didn't get [inaudible]. So I had Lyndon, believe it or not, begging me to stay on. Mr. Dick said, "But Mamie is crazy about him." That was it, you see, at the time.

G: Why was he upset with you in the first place?

J: Lyndon?

G: Yes.

J: My God Almighty, man, don't you know if you don't follow Lyndon Johnson's orders a hundred per cent that he--?

G: Was it going to San Antonio instead of coming to Austin?

J: Well, it was the idea of stopping off in San Antonio instead of reporting directly to him.

G: I see. That's what he was mad about.

J: Oh, hell, mad a thousand times if you don't do what he said to do. Hell. The simple thing--why should I drive all the way to turn the car over to him and then turn right around and catch the bus all the way back here? It meant no difference. But he took it as an uprising. He told me to come and bring the car. I stopped off and got a bottle of whiskey and had a date in San Antonio. He was going to show me who was boss. And if you doubt me you can ask anybody that ever worked for him. I got the same treatment. But his kind of treatment, it didn't work with Dick Kleberg.

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G: Do you think that he had a role in Dick Kleberg's hiring you--do you think that was his [idea]--as his successor?

J: Well, I think it was my father.

G: Do you?

J: Yes, had a role in it. Because when Lyndon went out and resigned, according to Dick Kleberg he said, "Well, get Sam Houston on the phone because I've been watching his record down in Houston there." So that was it. Now I'll gladly give Lyndon the credit for it, because I love my brother and he loves me. So I'm sure he recommended it. And I'm sure he had it, but I don't think he had to have any persuasion from Dick Kleberg on it. See, Daddy had talked about both of us to Mr. Kleberg way back there in traveling in the campaign and things. I'll say this, that it was easier for Lyndon to put me in to succeed him than it would have been someone else. Because Dick might have taken a second thought. Not only Dick might, but Roy Miller. There you are. He might. You see what I mean? Keep that name Miller right in mind, because that's the man.

G: Let me ask you. You were talking about Maury Maverick as a Young Turk, and it seems that during these New Deal years, in the thirties, both he and your brother were idealistic New Dealers, you know, ready to roll up their sleeves and make the world over. Do you think that Maury Maverick's experience of going down in defeat after two terms up there, or whatever, influenced your brother to be more pragmatic or more cautious in terms of espousing, say, liberal legislation or taking. . . ?

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J: Well, Maury Maverick going down in defeat never changed my brother's views. If so, what view do you have that changed? I didn't recognize any.

G: It seems to me that he was more pragmatic than Maverick. That he was more careful about the stands he would take in public and how he would take them. I was just wondering if this had anything to do with seeing a colleague defeated by perhaps--

J: I don't know. Well, of course I was up there at the time Maury got defeated in 1938 by Paul Kilday there. He of course--oh, I can go on more about Maury's defeat. I think it slipped up on him in hindsight, because he came right back and got elected mayor. So it was I think Maury probably got too big for his district. I started to say britches, but too big--you see what I mean? He became a national man, and way over there, what you want to call left, if you want to call it [that], progressive or whatever you want to [call it], like Marcantonio. But Maury is very liberal. Now, understand, Lyndon was elected in 1937, special election. Maury was defeated in 1938.

Well, I'll go in to tell you a story that happened in 1937. Eastern Airlines wanted to get [a route from] New Orleans to Houston to Corpus Christi to Brownsville, Eddie Rickenbacker. Braniff Airlines had the route from Brownsville to Corpus Christi to San Antonio to Austin. Well, I took the position, what the hell do I owe Tom Braniff? Dick Kleberg, you know. Even though they came through Corpus Christi. Wouldn't it be better for Corpus Christi to have Eastern to come on in there? We'll have better service for Corpus

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Christi. And besides that, Dick Kleberg knew Eddie Rickenbacker. So there were no holds barred on it. It became a fight between the Johnson brothers, if you want to know it. Now, Red Mosier, if he hadn't quit Braniff I couldn't have won the fight. Red Mosier went to American Airlines instead. Then they hired a fellow, Bob Smith, to be the man to watch out after Braniff's interests up there.

All right, here comes Bill Deason up there in 1937 or something like that. He was working for NYA. First trip up there. Well, he went and saw Lyndon at his office. Then he came over to see me. See, I used Mr. Dick's office when he wasn't there, and he wasn't ever there. I came in there. He heard me. Captain Rickenbacker called me at the Carlton Hotel and I agreed to meet him down there. So Bill says, "I'll be down. I want in on that. I was over there when Lyndon was talking to Braniff. Now I come over here and I hear you talking to Eddie Rickenbacker. It looks like you all are a lot torn." I said, "Yes, we got torn. He wants the Braniff's interest, because Braniff brings all the traffic through Austin; [it's] Maury Maverick's interests to get it all through San Antonio rather than have it come from Brownsville." See, 90 per cent of the traffic that came in from South America came in through Mexico, and it figured out that if it all goes to Brownsville it's going to end up East in New York. So Braniff didn't want another airline to compete with them, at any price. Now, Braniff could only take them up to Kansas City. They'd have to change there to get on TWA. See what I mean? Oh, this was a big fight. I'm telling you it was personal.

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Now, it all depended on one thing, who got the bid to carry the mail. Harllee Branch, the second postmaster general, was the man to make the decision. This isn't the first time--well, I think it was about the first time Lyndon and I had locked up, because he hadn't been there long enough to lock up more times. I can tell you more cases later on. But it wasn't personal, it was different.

Anyhow, what happened, I walked into Congressman Lyle Boren's office. He's been defeated now, but I talked to his secretary, Jeff Lariot [?]. "Jeff, how are we doing on Braniff?" He didn't know. He thought I had been inquiring on my brother's interests, you know. He didn't pay any attention about Corpus. "Oh, I just signed a petition, Lyle Boren did, signed a petition of all the congressmen from Oklahoma" and all of that. He gave [inaudible]. I went and called up Eddie Rickenbacker and told him to get telegrams from Florida, North Carolina, Georgia, where Eastern covered. Send telegrams on it. I was keeping up to see what Lyndon was doing through this boy Lyle Boren from Oklahoma. You can call it any way you want to but that's the way you ought to.

Anyhow, this fellow Bob Smith, he used to be head of the WPA for Texas, you see. Now, the thing of it is this was a big fight. It meant millions of dollars for these two [companies]. I mean, it meant business. Well, the man there, the aviation committee, Dick Furman ia his name, from the Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce, it didn't take much to buy him off. The only thing he had to do was to have Captain Rickenbacker call up and invite him to come to New York, stop by

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Washington to see me, go on to Captain Rickenbacker's office. Then that you know. So I got the Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce, through Dick Furman, aviation man, strong behind Eddie Rickenbacker. [Inaudible] just about taking him on up to New York. You could see it.

Poor old Dick, he didn't know that people who knew Eddie Rickenbacker didn't call him Eddie, they called him Rick or Captain. But Dick Furman writes a letter, "Dear Eddie, I'd like you to send me a copy of it." If that had come in Rickenbacker's office, "Dear Eddie," I'm not saying Rickenbacker didn't see it, but I mean it kind of shows how people know he's not a close friend. If I had been Rickenbacker's secretary I'd say this fellow here is just trying to get an acknowledgment, because if he's that close he would have called him Rick or Captain. [Rickenbacker was] called Captain or Rick.

But that's beside the point. The point is we kept pretty close tabs on Harllee Branch. Where was he from? Atlanta, Georgia [?]. So then this boy here was getting information as to what Lyndon, Maury Maverick, Lyle Boren, all that bunch, were doing. Then we'd account, and I counted him. And I was at the Indianapolis races with Captain Rickenbacker, too, and all that kind of stuff. Don't think I didn't enjoy going up there to New York and being entertained by the Captain, too, impressed. But Captain Rickenbacker would come down, he and Mr. Dick would talk about goddamn automobiles while Paul Bratton [?] and I would get in the other room--that's his assistant--and do the work. Because I don't know which one loved to brag on themselves more than



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Eddie Rickenbacker or Dick Kleberg, and on each other. But that's beside the point.

Anyhow, I got a ruling [on] what bidding would the Post Office Department hold up. If you've bid zero, would that stand up? And Mr. Harllee Branch, the man that was going to approve, told me it would. So Eastern Airlines' contract came up, they bid zero, Braniff bid one tenth of one thousandth per cent. So the zero held up. Eastern Airlines got the contract. Don't think I didn't call Bill Deason in Austin, as well as Lyndon. I said, "Lyndon, I haven't heard the news from Washington yet. I thought maybe you were keeping in closer touch with things than I am. Who got that contract up there?" "All right, goddamn it, but you wouldn't have done it if that damn Bob Smith had played fair. I told him to work like hell for Maury and he laid down on the goddamn job. And I gave up. You wouldn't have done it if Bob Smith said. . . . He's supposed to work like hell for WPA, the people he used to work for. He controlled those votes. He didn't even get them out and so the hell with it." That was his excuse for the fight. So that was the first. . . .

G: He wasn't mad at you for supporting the interests of--?

J: He really I think kind of got a kick out of it a little bit. Now like this, for instance. He was giving a cocktail party, and my mama was up there. Well, I didn't attend; I was at the Carlton Hotel with Captain Rickenbacker. We were down at the bar. Bob Smith was there. He came through. Lyndon said, "Mama wants to know where Sam Houston [is]. When is he coming in? What's happening?" Bob Smith said,

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"Well, I can tell you where he is now. He's right down there at the bar with Captain Rickenbacker, planning, plotting against us." Lyndon just smiled, said, "There you are." So those things. . . .

Well, I'll say this right now. I never asked Lyndon Johnson for a thing he didn't give me. I never asked him for a nickel or a penny that he didn't do it, or for anything that he didn't do it. I knew when to ask, I'll tell you that.

G: When was a good time to ask him?

J: Well, when you had something that you really needed, [that] you were in trouble on.

G: But would you catch him, say, at the end of the day or at the first of the day?

J: Well, I always talked to him early in the morning, while he was having breakfast. If it was something that I really needed, why, to me, I didn't give a damn, I'd ask him for it. Say for instance I wanted you to get appointed federal judge or something. See what I mean? [Inaudible] At least these things very seldom--it would not be personal or anything. There was only one time where we very seldom disagreed because that's when I worked for Lyndon.

Now, here was something that I don't know whether I told about. Did I tell you about stealing his park over here, CCC camp? Well, it was in the line of duty. It was 1937. My father was in the hospital. We went to Johnson City and moved Daddy to Seton [Hospital in Austin]. They were taking away this CCC camp in Gonzales, the Warm Springs camp, closing it up. The mayor and the president of the chamber of

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commerce were contacting me here in Austin. See, Mr. Kleberg was gone most of the time, Mexico, you see. And Conrad Wirth, the top man of the National Park Service, was going to be in Fort Worth. They wanted, these men, the mayor, president of the chamber of commerce, and the newspaperman, Henry Reese, who owned the paper there--I don't know anything about it; I know he fought us [and was later for] Coke Stevenson, but that doesn't make any difference.

Anyhow, we all went to Fort Worth. Before I left, though, I went to the doctor, Dale Martin [?], and asked him how my daddy was doing. Could I leave for a couple of days? He said, "Sam, he's liable to last a month, can't tell." Well, of course what I did, I picked up the phone and I called my secretary to send me a wire over Mr. Kleberg's name, asking me to go to Fort Worth to confer on this business. I handed Mother the wire. I also called my girl friend, who was secretary to Congressman Hugh Rigney of Illinois, to meet me in Fort Worth.

Anyhow, when Mother showed Lyndon that telegram, he said, "Oh, hell, Mama, Sam Houston is up to something else. Dick Kleberg never signed a damn telegram in his life, or ever wrote a letter or signed it. Sam Houston is up to something. He just had his secretary to send him that. You can't kid me. The question of it is, what is he up to, running off here at this time like that?" Well, you ought to get a picture of this because it would be worth a million dollars if you could have seen it.

All right, I meet there at the Texas Hotel. There was Conrad L. Wirth, head of the National Park Service. There's Tommy Thompkin [?],

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head of the state National Park Service. Those two men [were] there. There I had the mayor of Gonzales, the president of the chamber of commerce there, the postmaster, and all in this room. I said, "Mr. Wirth, you issued orders to close down the CCC camp in Gonzales." Thompkin conferred, "Yes, we have." "Mr. Wirth, that's not because Dick Kleberg has voted against some appropriations. I want you to explain to these men here that it's not the way. . . . Kleberg, because he voted against Roosevelt, you didn't take it away on that account, did you?" "Oh, no, we don't do that at all." I said, "Now, as I understand it, when you got the order from the President, you had to shut down so many camps. Now, you're doing it proportionately to the congressmen, whether they be Republicans or Democrats or what. I want you to explain to these people now." "Yes, that's right." Then I hit him. "How in the name of God can you sit here and tell me that? How can you lie like that, Mr. Wirth, when my brother, right across there, keeps four CCC camps? One's at Lockhart, one's at Burnet, one's at Brenham and one's at Luling." You know, right there, named them all. "He's keeping four and you're taking mine right after him. How can you justify that?" He turned around to Tommy Thompkin and said, "Is that true?" "Yes, sir."

Well, I had him. "Mr. Johnson, all the orders have gone out. Your camp's been closed. Tommy Thompkin reported it." I said, "Take one from Luling, my brother's, and move it just twenty miles to Gonzales." "Well, Tommy, do you see anything wrong with that?" I said, "No, he doesn't see anything wrong because he's already done too

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damn many things wrong by letting my brother have four. He's not going to see anything wrong with that, I can guarantee you that." Then of course he said, "No, that would be all right." I said, "Now, in the presence of these people here, so we can all rest at ease, Mr. Wirth, I wonder if you could send a wire tonight to support Sam Houston, giving them orders to move there. Is there any reason why now that we can't tell this group here that it just had to be done, so Mr. Reese can file the story that it has been done in the paper?" "No. Telegraph." I walked over there with Tommy Thompkin and sent an order to San Antonio moving that camp to Gonzales.

All right, that was it. My girl arrived from Chicago in Fort Worth there. We got on a plane and came right straight to Austin to see Daddy. I was in the waiting room with my mother and sister and this girl I had been dating. I married her later on, but I had been going with her. Lyndon knew her, you know. So he looked up at me and smiled, "Well, Sam Houston, I saved your CCC camp." "No, Lyndon, I lost it." "Well, let me tell you something, Sam Houston. You've got to know how to vote. As long as, by God, you allow Dick Kleberg to vote, by God, Republican on every damn thing, how in the hell do you expect to get anything out of Washington?" He said just stand and listen [?]. I said, "Well, I lost mine, but I got one of yours, Lyndon." "I know you did, yes." About that time the nurse came in, said, "Your father will see you." So he turned around to [my girl friend], Albertine, said, "He's lying, of course. He's kidding me."

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She said, "I don't know, Lyndon. I wasn't there. I just got in this morning," something or other. "He told me he did but. . . ." I got a chance to tell Daddy that while he was still conscious.

G: Did you?

J: Yes, I did. I told Daddy.

G: What was his reaction?

J: He just smiled like I don't know what. He was tickled to death, so help me.

Anyhow, I came out of the room. "Sam Houston, you were kidding me, of course." I said, "No, Lyndon, I'm not kidding at all. See, they had a little re-evaluation up there in Fort Worth, and they figured out"--this was before you heard of computers, you know--"you had one too damn many. And I took it." I just walked out. He still thought I was kidding.

So I went and spent the night with my sister, with Josefa. She's the one that's dead now. Got down the next morning, he called up Tommy Thompkin. Goddamn, you talk about raising hell, he did. "What did you do that to me for?" "Lyndon, what we're going to do is to operate a side camp out of Gonzales to finish up your work. But it's going to be moved to Gonzales and operated, certainly." See, he'd talked to Tommy Thompkin. That wire went out that night, you see.

He said, "Sam Houston, don't you know that I'm not going to let you get by with it? Don't you know that? Don't you know I'm going to call up [Harold] Ickes?" See, he's the overall man. I said, "Yes. I

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know you can, Lyndon. I don't know that Secretary Ickes is going to override Mr. Wirth's telegram. But I've already gotten the credit. It's already in the paper there, Dick Kleberg." He said, "Well, listen. You're not going to do that to me. I've just been elected to Congress. The first damn thing this will do is show the people in Luling I don't have any influence in Washington. I'm going to Roosevelt." I said, "Lyndon, you're too smart for that." "The hell I am! If you think I'm going to sit around, and while I'm taking care of Daddy, keeping him alive, you're up there stabbing me in the back. You're not going to get away with that."

I said, "Well, Lyndon, I think you're too smart to do that." "What makes you think I'm too smart to do it?" "Lyndon, in your campaign for Congress you promised to build about fifty million dollars worth of dams. That was your campaign promise, to finish Buchanan Dam and go on and on and on. You're going to spend fifty million dollars or more to carry out your pledge. Now, I think you're too smart to be running to Roosevelt on a little CCC camp. But it will only take Roosevelt to do it, and I don't think I'd use up that. You're too smart." "Well, all right. Now about these men there." The top job, you know, superintendent, back in those days made twenty-four hundred [dollars] maybe. [There were] two or three of them. "Do I get to keep them?" "Oh, hell, yes. I won't change that one bit. Your man stays on. Because if I opened up that. . . ." See, we were still having a Depression in 1935. There would be fifty applicants

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for each job and, boy, I don't want that started. So that's the way we ended the fight.

See, I lived with him when I was working for Kleberg. That made Mrs. Kleberg suspicious, you see. She hated Lyndon.

G: Did she ever try to get you to live elsewhere? Did she talk to you about it?

J: No, no, no. She's the cause of my not being in Congress right now, too. Yes. 1938, Mrs. Kleberg called me and told me he wasn't going to run for Congress. He said, "You're the only one I'm telling. She doesn't like it up here. I'm not going to run for Congress." Now, what was I to do? Talk about dreams, you know. I was the only man that knew it. Now, it was getting approaching time to file. You see what I mean? Well, this might have been a little bit off color, but what would be wrong, since I was the only one knew it, of filing the name--we had no opposition, you see--at the proper time? Filing Sam Houston Johnson before the opposition could form. Yes, yes, perfect. But then I wake up one morning--I'm living with Lyndon and Mama was up there. It was 1938. But when you wake up in the morning and you find out that you're twenty-three years old and you have to be twenty-five before you can go to Congress, that's [a problem].

Now, you got to get Dick Kleberg to reconsider, to run for another term, so I would be eligible in 1940. How are you going to do it? Roy Miller, I told him about it. Now, Mrs. Kleberg liked society. Tallulah Bankhead had a period there at the National Theater and her father was speaker of the house, Bill Bankhead. That was up in her



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category. So Roy Miller arranged a luncheon between Bill Bankhead and Mr. Dick, and him and her. I wasn't there, but this is what report I got, which was verbatim. Bill said, "Dick, you've got to stay on in Congress." Now, you wonder why Roy Miller was doing it. I was doing a hell of a lot of undercover work for him. Don't misunderstand that, because he officed there, too, with me. I was taking his calls. I did plenty of them. Don't think I didn't. That's the reason I decided instead of being a lawyer, I'd rather be a lobbyist or public relations man, whatever you want to call it.

Anyhow, Bill Bankhead said, "You know I have to go along with Roosevelt or I wouldn't be speaker. You don't. We need men of your stature." Goddamn, I don't know what kind of stuff. He convinced Mrs. Kleberg that it was all right, that they needed him at least one more term. Roy Miller came back, "Well, we did it."

I then flew to Corpus Christi to announce Dick Kleberg for re-election. First thing I did, I knew we had opposition already forming. There was a fellow named Wilson [?] there that owned the radio station and he owned the newspaper, the Corpus Christi Chronicle. It was a daily, just started up. He entered my suite and said, "Sam, tell you what. If you'll get my brother-in-law, Gabe Garrett, off my neck, I'll keep him from running for Congress against Dick Kleberg. Because he is going to run." There you are, sitting there. Garrett, get him off, pay him off, get him a job or something. I looked at him and said, "Mr. Wilson, I'd rather have Gabe run. I'd come near paying you to get him to run. Because if he doesn't, somebody of stature

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will run and will cause me some trouble. That's the answer." He wrote it up in the paper: "Sam Houston Johnson, the astute diplomat in politics, arrived to announce Dick Kleberg's candidacy." It was in the paper, a column by this fellow. Well, that wasn't my problem. I was all right there. You go back to your files way back there, you can see plenty of clippings.

Now, the thing of it is, Mayor Harwood [?], from Taft, Texas, head of the Farmers Union out there, a graduate lawyer from Harvard, but a farmer, was wanting to run for Congress. Well, what do I do there? He was having a farmers meeting, district meeting, right there. Who's the principal speaker? Dean E. J. Kyle [?] of [Texas] A&M. He is known throughout as being the farmer's friend. Dick Kleberg was on the Agriculture Committee. God knows how many errands I ran for him. And in the lobby at one, I asked him in his speaking tonight if he could say a few kind words about Dick Kleberg. "Mr. Harwood is going to run against us if you don't. A few words from you might do the trick." "Oh, Sam, I can't get into politics. That's in politics." He said, "This meeting is not a political meeting. Miller [Harwood?] has talked to me about it, but he's not serious about running." I said, "Yes, he is. I know him. I've checked him." "Well, I can't have anything to do [with it]. This is strictly--I've never done anything, blah, blah, blah." "You know how it is, holier than thou crap. That ain't worth a damn to me in getting [inaudible].

So I was at the head table. A fellow named Hayden Perry, he is a little hard of hearing--multimillionaire, big farmer, but he also had

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oil on that farm--he was at the head table. So he said, "Sam Houston, how is Dick getting along?" I said, "He's getting along all right now, Mr. Hayden, but he won't when I get back to Washington." That's about the way I talked to him. "What do you mean?" "Oh, Mr. Hayden, I asked Dean Kyle this morning to do one little favor, to mention Dick Kleberg's name and so forth, just to say a kind word for Mr. Dick. And, by God, the son of a bitch wouldn't do it!" I used the word son of a bitch, too. "So when I tell Mr. Dick that, it won't be the same. It won't be the same." All right, here comes Dean Kyle--oh, boy, I love this--"I never come to Corpus Christi that I don't think about the people that discovered and made Corpus Christi, the Klebergs. Here comes one of the greatest men I know." Every farmer in the meeting. . . . You think I'm going to sit there after eating that shrimp cocktail and go through anything else? Hell, no, I just took it off and go back across the street to one of the bars. It was all over with. He didn't run.

But to make sure, you see--I don't know, you haven't been in this business, but I have--the Washington Pictorial News Service, you've never heard of it? Well, here's what I did. You see, I couldn't use the press media very much on Mr. Kleberg's accomplishments because there weren't many. I'm not trying to build myself up and run Dick Kleberg down, but what I'm saying is, you have to. . . . So Mr. Belson [?]-that's his name--now here's what he'll do for you. He'll charge you twenty-five dollars to take a picture and then send the mat. You write the story yourself, send the mat with it. Twenty-five

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dollars plus a dollar for each paper that it goes to. Nixon, hell, he doesn't know anything.

But Mr. Kleberg came in one morning. I said, "Mr. Dick, Mr. Marvin Jones"--he's chairman of the Agriculture Committee--"would like to have a picture made with you this morning." "Mr. Jones, Mr. Kleberg would like to have a picture made with you." I had already gone over this, rehearsed it, with Belson before Dick Kleberg was there. So we have here HR 2135, laid that on the table before Dick got there. All right, here was this picture. "Congressman Kleberg, I wonder if you would pick that up and kind of give an impression here, point to this like that. Turn it around like this, see."

Oh, well, [I] wrote the story up. I sent it to the papers, every one of them. "Our photographer was fortunate enough to catch your congressman in this position, in which he is pointing out the highlights and the effectiveness this bill will have for the farmer." And all that crap. "If you would care to subscribe to our news service, it will cost you two dollars a month." That was the way he hammed [?] it up. That appeared in every daily newspaper. And that was in the front page of the Corpus [newspaper]. "Our reporter just happened to be along to get this momentous occasion at which your congressman, Richard M. Kleberg, is pointing out to Marvin Jones what effect this bill will have upon you farmers." Fortunately enough he said [inaudible] practically that was word for word. That was 1938.

G: Did Kleberg appreciate what you had done?

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J: He didn't know I had paid him, no, he didn't. I wasn't going to tell him.

G: But he liked the story, I suppose, that appeared?

J: Well, I showed it to him. He didn't pay nothing to it. You don't do anything like that.

But here is what I did do. The opposition, understand, the opposition paper, this man had wanted me to get his brother-in-law--

G: The Chronicle.

J: --a job. They began to turn around and say how a loyal secretary [was really congressman]. Dick Kleberg isn't the congressman, it's Sam Houston Johnson. How do you think Mrs. Kleberg liked that? She came up to the office to see me, said, "I hear you're undercutting my husband." I said, Mrs. Kleberg, you have to expect that from the opposition. I can't control the opposition. I'm not running for any office. The fact of it we don't have anybody but the owner of this paper running against us and it's no opposition. We don't have a thing to worry about, no campaign." And actually Mr. Kleberg, they went to Mexico. We beat then three to one. He returned a couple of days before the election. I was concerned enough to get calls from every county how we were coming. Oh, Mr. Dick called me up Saturday night: "How's the campaign?" "Mr. Dick, as of tonight you've got two-thirds of the votes, he's got one-third." He wasn't having to make any speeches. He wasn't even in the district.

Now, Mrs. Kleberg, prior to that--she began to get suspicious. She always liked me, but the minute Lyndon was elected to Congress she

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turned on me. He was elected in 1937; this is 1938. She directed that the mail be sent to her house. That didn't make any difference to me. I sent a secretary out there to get it. So she began to intercept some of my mail, or this and that. On a Monday morning, after the Saturday night, she came in demanding my resignation for being disloyal to Dick Kleberg. "I have enough on you, what you owe," things like that. "It won't do you any good to go to Dick."

So Sam Houston lost his temper. I said, "You get out of this office. Don't you ever come in here." She said, "Out of this office?" I said, "It isn't Dick Kleberg's office. He's never been down here. You get out and stay out. Don't ever come to see me anymore!" That's all. They could hear me down the hall. I said, "I run Dick Kleberg's business." Not at all.

You're walking down the street, you see. Let me tell you, Dick Kleberg was known to not pay his bills but once a year. I'd bundle everything up and take it to his mother's bank. They would audit it, you know, and send them a check. Her bills, too. But, you know, people would call there at the house. Old Abe Klein [?], I never will forget it, run a men's store, called there and asked about a bill. Mrs. Kleberg said, "I saw Dick give Sam Houston the money for it." I was walking down the street with the postmaster one morning, Abe said, "Oh, I talked to Mrs. Kleberg. She said that she gave you money to pay the bills." I said, "Well, she probably did but I haven't had time. I've been busy." "Well, she told me that, you know."

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Next day I made out a check for [inaudible] Dick Kleberg. Of course he was on the board of directors of the Texas State Bank, the Corpus Christi State Bank, and the Kleberg bank, had an account in Washington, sergeant at arms' office. I made out a check to Abe Klein. I backdated the check to conform with what Mrs. Kleberg had said. Then I took it to Mr. Dick. I said, "Mr. Dick, will you sign this check?" "Oh, Sam, go on and send it down there to the bank there along with the others. Don't bother me with that." I said, "This one is particular." "What's the reason for it?" I said, "Oh, Mr. Dick, Abe just talks too damn much." "Oh, well, all right." I never told him why. I never told him why.

G: Was this in Corpus or Washington?

J: Corpus. She began a campaign on me, She told everybody--Dick didn't know it, you know--that I was going back to Washington. This fellow, Bill Elliot is his name, of the Corpus Christi Caller, he wanted my job, of course. He worked there for the Caller. Well, I knew what he was up to. I had him followed every time he had a conference with Mrs. Kleberg. Don't think I didn't have him followed. Who did I have follow him? Hell, I controlled the customs, immigration offices, they were all working for me, following him. I knew what he was up to. But I never said a word to Mr. Dick about it.

A fellow in San Antonio--the rumor had gotten up there--named Glen Blackshoe [?] who used to work for Maury Maverick, he had heard that I was going to quit, being fired. He wrote a letter to Mr. Kleberg applying for the job. It just so happened one morning that he

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was out there when I went out to get the mail, and there was a couple of other letters there. We talked and got ready to--

Tape 2 of 3

J: I waited until the man left. I said, "Mr. Dick, Mrs. Kleberg doesn't want me to work [for you]. She came down and told me that I should resign and so I'm just waiting for the proper time." "Oh, God, Sam." I didn't tell him what she had done to Abe Klein, talking about that. He said, "God, Sam, this comes as a shock to me. Do you know what? Hell, I thought she was crazy about you. The only inkling I had of this was back in 1937 when Lyndon came to Congress and you went and lived with him. She told me then, 'You've got to watch those two boys.' I told her never to mention your name or Lyndon Johnson's name to me again, and she hasn't. But don't worry, Sam, it will be all straightened out. Oh, God, I don't know. What else has she done?" I said, "Oh, just rumors going around, Mr. Dick, all the time about it, but that's all right." "Well, I'll talk to her. Don't worry about anything." My mother was down there visiting me in Corpus, too. So I told him Mother knew about it, and he picked up the phone and called Mama, "Mrs. Johnson, I want to tell you, as long as I'm in Congress, why, Sam Houston is going to be my secretary."

He went out to the King Ranch. Goddamn if he wasn't a good diplomat, he went up there and blew his top at her. She locked herself up in the room, by God. He called in the family. This is a long story. Anyhow, it went on and it was getting about the time to go back, you see, to Washington. So Mr. Dick for the first time, he



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wanted me to ride back with him on the train instead of going by car, so everybody could see us going back together. He left her there. Now, you'd think that was pretty hard to believe, but they had trouble before, you see. She accused Mr. Dick of going out with an Argentine woman, and she'd run off and things like that. So anyhow, why, there it was. Then you'd look at Dick Kleberg coming in the office in the morning--he really loved that woman.

All right, I walked in. I found me a job with the Federal Housing Administration as director and then I went in and told him that I resigned. He said not to, no, no. I said, "Mr. Dick, I can tell by your face you're lonesome, and I'm going to be gone." He cried and I did, too. So I got a job with the Federal Housing Administration as territorial director. Then they decided not to go in there, and so from then on I went and got NYA then. So that's the story behind Dick Kleberg.

Now, another thing that happened that was kind of funny--well, it's not funny either, it's pretty serious. Lyndon and I, we moved in together after Daddy died. What I did, I got an apartment, a nice apartment, for Mother and me and my sister Rebekah.

G: In Washington?

J: Yes. Because I was going to take care of my mother. So Lyndon comes up there, and he and Bird spent the night in my apartment and went looking for apartments. Well, Rebekah, who I was going to live with, which would help me take care of it, she found something wrong with my particular apartment. And I'd already bought the furniture for it.

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So we'd ride, you know, and Rebekah would see something in Georgetown. Lyndon was driving us. "See that bunch of niggers over there. Is that where you want, Sam Houston?" He was just needling, just playing one against the other, you know.

Then this is it. So the way Rebekah acted, when Lyndon found an apartment on Columbia Road, three-bedroom, two-bath apartment, he came to me with this proposition: "All right, Sam Houston, tell you what we'll do. How much money do you owe?" This was back in 1937. Let's see, yes, it was at the convening of Congress in 1938. But, anyhow, the reason I'm backtracking then, he said, "If you want to, you give me a hundred dollars a month for you and Mama. I'll pay up your debts, all you owe, and then you pay me a hundred dollars a month on the debt." That's too good a proposition to turn down, so I moved in with him.

Well, after my first paycheck came in, Lyndon sent Sherman Birdwell--I don't know whether you've met Sherman or not--to collect. The hundred a month was all right, but he was going to take the hundred and write a letter and apply it every month. Hell, I could do that. You see what I mean? Instead of paying them all up like he said he would, he was going to take it and apply it to my debt. So then this was funny--it's not funny, it's a tragedy there in this way--I told Sherman to go back and tell him that he wasn't going to get a damn dime of it until he paid up all of my debts and then I'd give him the hundred.

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Then it just so happened that Dick Kleberg--I listed all my debts, including his bank down there that I owed at Kingsville, and one I owed that he was a director of, a couple of hundred dollars, a hundred and fifty. I listed all those loans. So Lyndon came in, voice determined, you know. I was sitting there talking to Congressman Sanders, Morgan Sanders, from up in Canton, Texas. Lyndon walked in, he said, "I'll give you one more chance. If you don't give me that check, I'm going right on in and tell Dick Kleberg exactly who you owe." I said, "Go ahead." I called a girl friend, I said, "Let's go to lunch early. Let's go." Well, we went and I said, "Well, I want a whiskey sour." She said, "This morning?" I said, "Well, it's nearly noon." "I never saw you do this before." "Well, I want one. I need a double one, too." Then I told her what had happened. I said, "Well, that's mean, about that, but we'll see."

Of course when I went back to the office, why, Mr. Kleberg was gone. Lyndon didn't mention it anymore. I didn't bring it up anymore and continued on. Then Mr. Dick was getting ready to go and leave, he called me over. All the times I'd see him--Roy Miller kept a table, only congressmen can eat there, but he paid the headwaiter. Hell, I always went over there and I ate with the congressmen. I sat in on all that bunch. One day Mr. Dick called me, "Come over and have lunch with me. Sam, I'm leaving. I'm not going to tell you where I'm going because I don't want to be bothered. I'm leaving--Mama will know where I'm at. I know you won't bother her unless it's extremely important."

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G: That's his wife?

J: No, his mother. Oh, no. That happened way back there, you see. "All right." "Oh, by the way, Sam, Lyndon came over here the other day, told me about your debts. I told him to tend to his own business, we'd take care of our own." He said, "I'll see you in a few months." And he goes on back. Goddamn it, hell, boy, if you don't think that I didn't get a kick out of that! And Lyndon told Daddy about that, incidentally, before he--let's see, that was before Daddy died. No, no, he told Daddy something about me and Daddy said, "Well, what did Dick say?" He said, "Oh, that damned Dick Kleberg, he's crazy! He takes up for Sam Houston all the time." Daddy said, "Hurray for Dick."

G: Do you know what that was about? That's a good one.

J: It was something that I had done or something that Lyndon was complaining--it might have been that first time that I took that San Antonio trip when Daddy was still alive, in 1935. But anyhow, that was that. But I remember Daddy telling me about that, "Hurray for Dick," and Mama--so much for that kind of stuff.

But let me show you. Now, of course, I quit; I resigned and went to FHA, and then from there I went to Mr. [Aubrey] Williams. And Lyndon did get me the appointment with Mr. Williams, but that was to go to Puerto Rico to be head of the NYA for Puerto Rico. I can tell you all about my NYA days later on when you want to know about that. It was beautiful. But anyhow, the thing of it is, Lyndon made his

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first mistake when he complained and reported me to Dick Kleberg, and Dick said, "That's all right, he gets along with me."

Now let me tell you something. Now when Lyndon heard that Mrs. Kleberg was getting me, you know, we had a room together--I was up in Washington on business--at the Raleigh Hotel. He said, "Sam Houston, I bet she's not going to do that to you. You deserve that seat in Congress." I said, "Lyndon, I'm not worried about anything." "By God, you ought to be worried. He'll stick with her." I said, "Well, so be it. I'm not putting any pressure." "Goddamn it, you don't understand. That bitch--" He went on, you know. He got back to Texas and so did I. So he goes to Sam Fore in Floresville, Lyndon Johnson, and said "Now, Sam, that woman is trying to do to Sam Houston what she tried to do to me, but I quit and went to NYA. I want you to go see Dick Kleberg and just lay the law down. He said, "Oh, I heard a rumor, but Sam Houston never asked me to do anything." He said, "No, and he won't. But by God, I am." And he stopped off at Denver Chestnutt's; he owned the Kenedy Advance. You know Sam Fore? [He owned the] Floresville paper. Denver Chestnutt, the Kenedy Advance. So then Lyndon called me up. "All right, I've talked to Sam Fore and I've talked to Denver Chestnutt. They're coming in the morning and they want to see Dick Kleberg." I said, "Lyndon, don't do it. Don't do it. Please don't." "By God, they are. If you can't take up for yourself, your own rights, by God--" this and that.

All right, I called Mr. Dick. I said, "Mr. Dick, Mr. Fore is coming in in the morning. Mr. Chestnutt is. I want you to know I

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didn't ask them to, but will you see them? They're coming down to plead my case before you." "I'd love to see them. Sure, I'll see them. I'll make it a point to be here in the morning." All right, he'd come in there. Dick Kleberg, if you'd go to his house, you have to get a pitcher of coffee everywhere. He drank coffee like I do, you know, served it with cream and sugar [inaudible]. "All right, Denver and Sam, I know why you're here, just a lot of unnecessary trouble. It's about Sam Houston. Sam Houston has a job with me as long as I'm congressman, and then after me he can have it. So if you'll just go back and report to Lyndon that you made a useless damn trip down here on gasoline and get it all over with." That was it.

Now, that's hard for a person to believe. But anyhow, to keep on the subject, after I quit Mr. Kleberg, you see, then Mrs. Kleberg came back with him and stayed a while. Then first when she came back, she brought this secretary, the newspaperman there. So then Mrs. Kleberg lived with him a few more months and sued for divorce.

G: She sued him?

J: She sued him, took everything he had, for divorce. You see, I read Henrietta M. King's will. I read it even in the bank when I had to examine abstracts, you know. He was the only grandson--Henrietta M. King is the widow of Captain King. See, Captain King died in the Menger Hotel of alcoholism. Mr. Dick's father had married Captain King's daughter, you know. But he left a widow, Henrietta M. King, and she was the one that had the control, the old lady. She lived to be ninety something. But again, in that will she gave Dick Kleberg

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the home that they had in Corpus and then the other property there in Corpus. That was all he had. It was the [most] hideous deal ever [?]. That's not all, that's final [?].

So then there came a scandal out on him. At that time, I [went] from the NYA, then I worked for the Independent Petroleum [Producers?], then to the War Production Board. Then in 1944, yes, Bill Elliott, his secretary--now listen, when he took Bill Elliott on, you see, at that time I was director out for twelve states. From Memphis you went to twelve states in Denver. He told him, "If Sam Johnson wants anything day or night, you're to give it to him or get in touch with me." They had their orders. So anyhow, it came out that the boy on patronage, Bill Elliott had been getting a hundred dollars a month salary from him because if you're on the door, you don't have to work but two days a week, two hours, and get a kickback. Drew Pearson discovered that.

So I called up Mr. Kleberg. Now understand this, I had decided at that time--I was on the War Production Board--I had already made my application to go with psychological warfare. It had been approved. I was getting ready to leave to go to Africa and Italy. I dropped by Mr. Kleberg's office. Now, Bill Elliott had gotten this money--he had died of a heart attack and his wife, Mary, then [worked for Kleberg]. "Honey, I came by and I want to get in to see Mr. Dick. I want to tell him goodbye." "I think he's coming down today." I said, "Let me look at your political file." "What file?" I said, "Oh, about Frank

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Harrison [?]. I know"--he owned a little county paper, you know. "Do you keep any clippings on him?"

Okay, a young man, a lieutenant, former [state] representative [John Lyle] stationed in Italy was going to run against Dick Kleberg. And when I left Mr. Dick, his secretary being--I'm saying this, never hire a press man as your top man, because they don't understand administrative work; the only thing they understand is press. When Mr. Dick came out against Roosevelt, you see--

(Interruption)

So anyhow, I read that file, and Mr. Dick came in. I said, "Mr. Dick, I'm getting ready to leave and I'm going to Europe. I notice in this file you're going to have opposition." "Oh, Sam, I never have had more favorable publicity." He'd come out against Roosevelt in the war, you know, because he heard from everybody they were against the goddamn war. He got old Earl Godwin, that's the old bastard up there on the radio. Earl Godwin used to come on while Dick Kleberg-- Earl Godwin was a news commentator before you were born. Anyhow, he was quoting what Dick Kleberg had said--I would shudder when I'd hear [it]--how he was against the war and all that damn stuff, being a German name and so forth. He said, "No, Sam, you don't have anything to worry about. I never had it easier. I never had it easier." Understand now, his wife had already [left]; he'd been divorced. "Everything is fine." I thought, "Well, I'll find out for sure."

What did I do? I went from the New House Office Building to the Old House Office Building to see my brother. I can see him right now.



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I walked in and on the table is some purple stuff that you dip your hands into for nerves, you know, a rash or something like that. "What are you doing up here, Sam Houston?" I said, "Well, I came up to see Mr. Dick and say hello." "How do you think he's doing?" "Oh, hell, Lyndon, he's not going to have any opposition. He's running good, better than ever." I thought I'd smoke him out, you know. "They tell me, Sam Houston, now I don't know, but they tell me"--see, I'm trying to look to him [?]"--"that they're going to vote to send one Kleberg to war. There hasn't been a one yet. Mr. Dick evaded the war, World War I, on account of the ranch. But they're going to vote to retire Dick and give little Dick a chance to serve the country. Now, of course I don't know anything about it, these rumors you pick up and everything, but I think it would be a pretty good idea to have one of them serve the country." I said, "Oh, well, Lyndon, you just keep along, that's all right. Go on."

Anyhow, why, I was in Italy when he got beat about three to one. Came back 1947, and Mrs. Kleberg had divorced him. But what he did, he got to go on with Mrs. Elliott, I assume, they became pretty close.

G: Mrs. who?

J: The press secretary that died, [his] wife became his secretary. Even though he was no longer in Congress, he kept an office at the Shoreham Hotel to handle farm matters, you know it was a blind or something. It was coming all out of the King Ranch anyhow, and he never returned. So I saw him there at the Shoreham and so forth, and he said, "Well, how are you doing, Sam?" I said, "Well, pretty good, Mr. Dick."

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"Well, it's been tough," he said, "I lost my mother and all, my wife and all that, but I'm getting along fine, I'm happy." This was in 1947. I was up there helping Lyndon plan his campaign for the Senate. I picked up the paper, and Dick Kleberg had had a heart attack in Washington. He was in the hospital. Mrs. Kleberg flew all the way up there and remarried him in the hospital and former Lieutenant Governor Walter Woodul was the best man. His mother died, and he was a billionaire, not a millionaire. She got that little old property there in Corpus, but then she turns around and remarries him.

So after he got well, he recovered from that temporarily, and then he used his money, bought a plane. See, he had a hard time getting money. People think it, but he didn't have it, you know. His brother Bob was jealous of him, and Bob was the one that ran the ranch. His daddy, old man Kleberg, said, "I trained Bob to be conservative and trained Dick to be the public relations man, Bob to save the money for Dick to spend." He didn't tell me that, because he was dead, but that's the way the story goes. So he got a plane, had a pilot, and he did nothing but fly roosters. He liked to have cock-fights. You know it's illegal, but he'd have them in his backyard, private party. He died of a heart attack in 1955, I believe, in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

In the 1948 campaign that I was with, he didn't support Lyndon Johnson, but he didn't come out wholeheartedly against him.

G: Did you try to get him to come out and support him?

J: No.

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G: You didn't?

J: Oh, hell, no. I wouldn't try after that.

G: How about getting money from him? Did you try to get a contribution from him?

J: Oh, God, no! No. Do you think I'd ask Dick Kleberg--you see, Lyndon never--he was always--Lyndon was bitter against Dick, you see. I think it was over me. You know, the funny thing, Mr. Kleberg had a yacht called The Fore Fin [?]. It had won a race in Galveston, Corpus, you know. So Lyndon had to call me to get to use the yacht--it's kind of funny--after he did all that kind of stuff. But anyhow, those things happen.

I'm trying to think of another story in regard--Lyndon got up on the floor of the Senate, though, and made a beautiful speech about Dick Kleberg then. Then while I was living in the White House, he called up George Brown. See, Bob hated them--Kleberg--conservative, you see, and Bob controlled the money. Lyndon tried to change Mr. Kleberg's way of voting in office, but I didn't. I let him vote the way he wanted to, but I didn't publicize it. You see the difference? All right, the thing of it is, while I was up at the White House, George Brown was sitting there and he said, "Lyndon, I talked to Bob Kleberg"--this is 1968--"and he says you make a wonderful president and he told me just to let him know how much you wanted." Lyndon said, "Bob Kleberg? That son of a bitch. What have I done? That means I'm not making a good president if he's for me. Let me re-evaluate. Tell me that one over again. If you say Bob Kleberg wanted

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to contribute to my campaign, I must be making some hell of a mistake."  
And George Brown said, "No, Lyndon, I think he is pretty sincere."  
See, in the campaign in 1941 Bob Kleberg put up money for Pappy [W. Lee]  
O'Daniel.

If you want to know something funny, I think this is an amusing  
story about Lyndon. Here is how it goes. I guess you know Warren  
Woodward, don't you?

G: Yes.

J: Well, Senator Rogers Kelley from Edinburg--there's about three people  
that I would meet downtown in Washington with. John Connally was one;  
I would go to his hotel and talk. Rogers Kelley was another one.  
Then Edgar Linkenhoger was another one. I'm talking about when Lyndon  
was majority leader. See, Lyndon was chairman of the Preparedness  
Investigating [Sub]committee, and if you were found talking to some  
lobbyist or something like that, they make a big play out of it, you  
know. But those three I would see.

Rogers Kelley called me, and I met him at the plane, went to the  
Statler Hotel. He said, "Sam, Harry Ridgeway [?] gave me this letter  
here and he wanted to know if Lyndon wrote that letter. It's about  
Pancho Avila [?]. Pancho is the one that gets the votes in Hidalgo  
County and his son is on his way to Korea. Ridgeway wrote you and  
asked. . . " you know, and like that. I looked at the letter. I  
said, "Oh, hell, Senator, that's a form letter, and that's usually  
what we send out on people that are trying to stay out of the war,  
things like that. That's the usual thing. Of course, Lyndon didn't

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see it. He wouldn't call him Dear Friend, he would call him Harry." He said, "Well, he didn't think that Lyndon would do it." I said, "Well, what is the problem?" He said, "Well, his boy, he didn't want him to go to Korea." I said, "Well, how old is Pancho?" He said, "He's about sixty." I said, "Do you have any good doctors down there, good Mexican doctors?" "Yes." "I think he ought to have a heart examination, and [get] a couple of sworn affidavits that if he has heart trouble--now remember something, if he does, have these doctors to swear to it. They don't have to swear to it, but be damn sure that if he does, have Harry to rewrite that letter enclosing these, but to send me copies of it at my apartment the same day he mails it to the office."

Well, you didn't have to spell much out to Rogers. When I got my letter, I went to Warren Woodward, who handled those cases. I said, "By the way, Senator Kelley was up here some time ago and he whined and [was] crying about Harry Ridgeway." "Oh, yes, I got here this morning, Sam, a couple of affidavits, a lot of bull, a lot of bull, a lot of bull up there. The doctors here say that he has heart trouble and won't live and so forth and so on." I said, "Well, tell you what, Warren, show Lyndon the affidavits and show him where the letter is from, Harry Ridgeway. If you don't want to, I will, but I think it would be better for you just to let Lyndon see it."

Well, this is fine. Warren went in there and showed him the two letters. "Warren, let me tell you something. In 1941 Harry Ridgeway was against me and I lost. In 1948 Harry Ridgeway was with me." See,

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Hidalgo came in with about 700 extra votes. We don't know it, but I mean, he didn't have to spell it out. "In 1948 Harry Ridgeway was supporting me and I won by 87 votes. Since when, by God, did you become an authority on medicine? Since when, by God, are you an authority to question a doctor's statement? Where did you go to school at?" "Sam told me to show it to you," and he buzzed me. Lyndon said, "Sam Houston, you handle this."

Well, I called Fred Korth. He later became secretary of the navy, but at this time he was assistant secretary of army under Secretary of Army [Frank] Pace. I called him to come to my office. He came in. I said, "Fred, this is a must." Well, this boy had already left San Diego and was on a ship that just left. They stopped the ship and took the boy off the ship and stationed him at Fort Sam Houston, and in less than six months Pancho Avila died of a heart attack.

G: Isn't that something?

J: That's true. So that's politics for you. You can call it whatever you want to, but I never reminisced about my brother--now, like he'd take up for John Young in whatever trouble he's in. Who is John Young? Well, I came back from overseas. I was sick, of course, been poisoned. I was living with my mother. I ran into John Young at the Tavern, 11th and Lamar [in Austin]--he was going to the University [of Texas]; he had been in the navy, lieutenant, second officer--and I drank beer with him. I'll never forget, [it's] one time, and I think the only time in my life I believe about half [inaudible]. [We]

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decided to ride a horse through Zilker Park. We went out here where you could get a horse, you know. We had a bottle of whiskey. Had one to hold the Coke, the other one to hold that, and we'd ride a horse, you know, passing it back and drinking.

Anyhow, in 1948 he was assistant district attorney in Corpus Christi. So he was approached by a Coke Stevenson man to manage his campaign. He said, "I can't do it because Lyndon Johnson's brother, Sam Houston, is my friend." All right, after we won the campaign in 1948, Ed Linkenhoger, who I mentioned before I worked for, I went down there and opened up the Dragon Grill, that was a place to eat, and had a big party for me and John Young [inaudible].

But before that, in 1948, we had a man in each county to tabulate the votes. You know, you vote on one Saturday, you certify it the next Saturday, the county clerk. I didn't have a person in McMullen County. Hell, they didn't have a hundred votes. Anyhow, I called the assistant district attorney, John Young, to go down there just to see. That was enemy territory, you know. Coke Stevenson got them all. Wasn't much, but I didn't want him to get any more. He called me from George West and said, "I've got a certified copy of it, Sam, it's just all there."

Well, what happened to John Young? 1948. Now, coming along, I was down there in Corpus working for Ed Linkenhoger, passing through there, and John came up to the penthouse where I stayed. I said, "John, why don't you run for Congress?" Although Johnny Lyle was a great friend of Ed Linkenhoger and was a friend of mine, as far as

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that's concerned, too. I said, "I'd like to see you in Congress." He said, "Sam, how do you go about it?" I said, "Why don't you run for county judge first?" He did, got elected. You don't remember Corpus Christi, but that big old [inaudible] bridge, by God, you had to wait, it folded up, you know, wait an hour. But he built a big bridge. I don't know whether it's named after him, but by God, he was a fire-cracker. Of course, he and the sheriff there got--Ed Linkenhoger didn't particularly care about John, [inaudible].

Anyhow, that was it. The next thing that happened about John, in 1956, you don't know, but they had the congressman up to see [?]- Johnny Lyle resigned as congressman to go into private practice, and this Johnny Bell from Cuero was elected congressman from that district. Then he got into this land scandal stuff, you see. Understand?

Now in 1956, John Young decided to run for Congress. He called me, you know, just casually, that was all. That same time was when we took on Allan Shivers to control the delegation. You understand what I mean? Now, I had the opportunity in contacting the leaders to vote for Johnson against Shivers, to everybody, hide and hue. It also was a plug for John Young, even though Lyndon was for Johnny Bell. He didn't know John Young. See, John, he wasn't up, you see. He was just a county judge and John Bell had been in Congress and all that.

So John Young wins, of course--I don't say of course, but he won. [By the] time he got up there, of course that was 1956. 1957 was when I broke my leg. John Young comes up there to see me before I'd broke my leg. Sworn in January 1957. All right. He said, "Well, Sam, tell



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me what to operate on." "First damn thing you do, John, is to go see Sam Rayburn. Say, 'Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you I'm up here and I want to work with you. I'm a freshman, I don't know the ropes, but I want to work with you because you've been up here forty years more than I have and I have always admired you and I want to get started off right.' Go tell him." He went in. The Speaker said, "You know, you're the first man the first day to come right in here and tell me that. Some of them wait for years before they tell me that." John Young said, "Well, frankly, I did exactly what Sam Houston told me to do. I've known him for years." He said, "Oh, Sam Houston, hell, we're both named Sam, he thinks too much of me," and this and that. "No, you go ahead, you vote the way you want to. I don't try to tell anybody how to vote. But I'll tell you this, I'll remember what you said."

All right, there we are. Now, after that I broke my leg. I laid in a body cast. One night Lyndon called me about ten o'clock and he said, "Sam Houston, who is John Young? He told me that he wouldn't have been here if it hadn't been for you. The Speaker has been inviting him to [the Board of Education]," the little drinking party at five o'clock that Lyndon always went to. He said, "Tonight I asked him--it seemed like a pretty good pull--how he got started coming, and he said, 'Oh, I've known your brother for years. He's a hell of a fine fellow.'" I said, "Oh, well, Lyndon, it goes back there that when you ran for the Senate he drove a hundred and fifty miles to check on a vote," this and that. He said, "Fine, fine."

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All right, now here's another story. It all goes into one damn thing. The reason why I'm saying this is loyalty. All right, now in 1958 it was, Ed Linkenhoger, the fellow whom I used to work for, had a bid in for Kwajalein Island, to operate that. He went over there at his own expense to get that contract and he was the low bidder on it. So the Navy was going to award it to him, but then they held it up. Pan American won. What about Pan American? Who's on the board of Pan American? Henry Luce. So then they started in on investigating it. Oh, before they started in on it, Ed said Pan American was working against him, you know, [so] I called John Young. I said, "John, I want you to help out Ed Linkenhoger." He said, "Sam, this is one thing you and I disagree on. Ed voted against me. He's a Johnny Lyle man and all that, and even though he's your friend--what is it?" I said, "You're not doing it for him. You're doing it--I guarantee you this, John, if you will help, he damn sure will vote for you next time." "What is it?" I said, "Well, we've got to declare the Linkenhoger company a small business. Wright Patman is chairman of the small business [subcommittee] and you know the general counsel. Now you work on that." All right, he made the call. Sam Houston Johnson did not make one goddamn call to that Navy Department at all, at any damn time. But John Young got the Small Business Administration to step in and fought it through the Navy, where he got the contract, several million dollars contract to operate on.

G: Whose idea was it to go through the Small Business Administration, do you know?

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J: Mine and Ed. Ed figured we could go ahead and divide up his whole corporation. He used to be the largest truck hauler in the world, two hundred some odd trucks. But he had several corporations and he worked it through Small Business. It wasn't my idea altogether, but it was some of my thoughts. I think someone told Ed that that may be the way he could keep the competition. But John Young is the one that contacted the counsel of the Wright Patman committee. Understand now, Mr. Eisenhower was in office; Tom Gates was the secretary of the navy. You understand that? So he got the contracts. I don't know whether you have it in the Library--I'm sure you do--the Fortune magazine article on how not to get a contract. It accuses me, Johnny Lyle [Young?], and all for getting the Congressman. . . . So that when Kale [?], whatever the fellow from Fortune magazine, called me, see, I had retired and I was on a consulting fee basis on one of Ed's companies. It had nothing to do with the contract. Roane [?] Trailer Manufacturing Company up at Roane, Texas, when I retired I was put on there. But it had nothing to do with contracts.

Anyhow, so the point is I flew into Corpus and was sitting here and the naval base was going to be shut down. John Lyle was there, he was a lawyer, he'd retired from there, you know, and he was out there at Edgar Linkenhoger's one night. Incidentally, I saw John Lyle on the street at the Mayflower Hotel the other day in Washington. Anyhow, he came by and he said, "You know, I made a mis-take. If I had stayed on in Congress--I think I let the people down when I quit." See, he quit to practice law. He made this remark. He kept his home

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in Corpus, too, you see, and practiced law in Houston. Well, I could kind of smell something there that he might want to run against John Young, particularly if he lost his base. This is 1956. This is Corpus Christi Naval Base is what I'm talking about.

G: Right.

J: And it was a headline in the paper. I talked to John [Young] about it. See, he'd just been in; he hadn't been there very long in the Congress at all. So he called me. I said, "I'm going to fly on up to the Ranch and see Lyndon and I can get him to support trying to help you save the naval base, John, of course. Because he's the one that put it in here in the first place." He said, "I sure will appreciate it." And Ed Linkenhoger's daughter was going to have her debut the next week, you see; he'd invited Lyndon to come to his daughter's debut. I went on up to the Ranch and told Lyndon. I said, "Lyndon, I want you to send some wires to Tom Gates," secretary of the navy and all that. He said, "I sure will. I want to see that base held if at all possible." See, it was in line with Lyndon's duties, too. So he sent a wire to Secretary of the Navy Tom Gates. And I said, "John [Young], I don't think he's in trouble politically, but I think if he loses his naval base now, Johnny Lyle might try to run for it, or someone down there is liable to run against him." "Well, hell, I'll do it, I'll send these wires." I said, "Well, I want it to appear, because I'm going back to Corpus for Ed's daughter's debut and so I want something on the record to show that you lost it instead of John Young." If the Majority Leader can't keep it, nobody can. See what I

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mean? Well, I been listening about this yesterday so that's the reason I'm leading up to it.

Anyhow, Ed's plane at that time met me at Fredericksburg. So I got the copies of these telegrams that we had sent, and I was going to hold a press conference with what Lyndon had done on it. If he was majority leader, why should they blame John, you see, on it? We knew we were going to lose on it. He [Lyndon] said, "By the way, Ed invited me to that thing, didn't he?" The debut, you know. I said, "Yes. You never have been to one in your damn life that I know of." "Well, I might attend that one. Getting back to this John Young thing, do you think he'd talk about how much and what all I've done?" I said, "Yes, I think so." "Tell you what you do. You call me at one o'clock. Now, Lady Bird has me scheduled for a party tonight in Austin. If I can come down there, I'll do it, but you think that over and call me at one o'clock."

All right, I got in. Ed asked me--met me at the airport--"Is he coming to the party?" I said, "I don't know, Ed, it's possible." So I called John Young's office. The secretary came up there, and we had copies made of all these telegrams for me to distribute to the press, the chamber of commerce and everybody.

I called Lyndon. He said, "Well, all right, Sam Houston, I tell you what you do. You set up a press conference there. Have a plane up here about four and set the press conference up at five. I want to hold a press conference in regard to that base. Then I'm going to make a showing at Ed's daughter's debut, but I've got to be back in

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Austin at nine o'clock." Funny brother, you know. He knew how close I was to John, and of course to Ed. So I did, I set it up. I invited the chamber of commerce, the mayor, everybody that had anything to do with anything about Corpus Christi, together with the TV. Vann Kennedy owned the TV station there; he didn't like Linkenhoger much. Corpus Christi Caller, Bob Jackson, you know Bob.

So Lyndon had his press room across from our suite. I had the Jim Hogg Suite--I think [that's] what they called it--over there at the Driscoll Hotel in Corpus, whatever it was. I was crippled, you know, and just couldn't get around, just kept on canes and anything that would help. So I told John Young to have everybody there, and they did, and then he sent for me to come on in. He only does that when he wants to show off, make me look how big he is. Well, I know how big he is, biggest man the country ever had, so help me God.

But anyhow, he started in. He said, "You know, I got this naval base way back there in the Kleberg days. I wired Secretary of the Navy Gates on it. But, you know, I think a lot of Corpus Christi because that's where I started out from as secretary to Dick Kleberg. I felt like coming down here and talking to you people here. I'm going to do everything I can. I've already wired, but I'm going to call when I get back." And the mayor spoke up and said, "Senator, should we send material when we get it, should we send that to you?" Lyndon went, "My God, no! John Young there is your congressman! He's the one to send it to, and he's the only one I'll talk to about it! I can't run around and be talking to the chamber of commerce man,

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newspaperman, and this and that. You send all of your material up there to John Young and then John will be the one that I contact. I don't need anybody else." That was it.

Then later on, I was married at the time and my wife went in and helped me put on my black tie and so forth. So then Vann Kennedy and Bob Jackson were there. Lyndon hollered, "Sam Houston, is she through dressing you? I want her to help me get dressed." "Senator, where are you going?" "Well, I'm going to Linkenhoger's debut, his daughter's. They didn't even think I knew it." Ed wasn't in society then. "That's what I came down here for, too." So we went there. We walked in and so forth. Then Johnny Lyle came in. He shook hands with Ed Linkenhoger and saw Lyndon. He just [inaudible]. He ran up to Lyndon. Lyndon was with Cecil Burney. That was our man down there in Corpus. Then he came and sat down on the couch with me and my wife, like this now, and then [he was] off, you know.

Well, it's funny, in reminiscing about things like that, because it shows what your brother will do. He knew John [Young] was very close to me, but John was loyal to him, too. Don't think he wasn't. But at that time, Lyndon didn't know him yet very well. All right, he called me up when he was here in Austin: "Sam Houston, how do you think I did down there?" "Well, this boy here says you're named here that you're going to fight down the line with John Young, and if you can't kick it, and John Young, nobody by God can." I said, "Then on the inside [of the paper] there--" "But what about the party?" I said, "The party shows you, Mary, and me sitting down there, a picture

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of Ed Linkenhoger and his daughter. That's all on the inside there."

"All right, is that okay now?" "Yes."

Now, skipping over that, getting up to this. 1967, of course, is when I went on up to help Lyndon in the campaign. John Young I kept in touch with all the time. He is the only member of the delegation that had a 100 per cent vote for everything Lyndon had done. Jake Pickle had a good [record], Jack Brooks had a good [record], but John Young, he had 100 per cent. I had him down to the White House swimming pool. And then when that bitch Eartha Kitt spit on Lady Bird or something, why, John was the first one to send a long telegram to Lady Bird. But that's how it goes with John and I.

So then I read this about John. I was up at my home, what can I do? John practically--oh, I Dr. [Glen] Wilson sent me the full story from the New York Times on it. What do you do in a case like this? How do you try to help a man, let him know that you're with him all the way? I just picked up the telephone and I called Timothy [Thomas] O'Neill, the majority leader.

G: Tip O'Neill.

J: And the next speaker. He wasn't available, of course. I told him who I was, the chief administrative assistant, Sam Houston Johnson, Lyndon Johnson's brother. "Yes, sir, Mr. Johnson, what is it?" I said, "Well, I want to congratulate the Congressman on becoming speaker. He's tall enough and big enough to handle the job." You know, Carl Albert had to stand on that thing. I said, "I called about another thing. He made a statement the other day supporting my friend John



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Young. John Young was loyal to my brother a hundred per cent. Tell the Speaker if he can help him in any way, I'd damn sure appreciate it. And furthermore, I know that we'll have a real speaker that knows what it is, who knows the score, what's going on." My opinion is, it's funny to me that nobody but Democrats were involved with these women. You see, that just occurred to me. I said, "I've been up there for forty years and I know, hell, half of them are guilty. Hell, I've been there. But it's funny that nobody reported the Republicans. Would you mind passing that on to the Congressman, please? And tell him I appreciate what he already said about John Young." And I put a call in for John, and I haven't heard from him. John hasn't called me back. That's one way of doing it.

Now I got that out of my system. Now what are your questions?

G: Well, let's talk some more about Senator [Richard] Russell.

J: All right, talk some more, we haven't even started on it. But anyhow--

G: Well, before we turned on the [machine].

J: I know that, I know that. I just said that as a crack. I'm used to sparring with the newspaper people, you know.

G: Oh, I see.

J: Here's a good one. Did you hear John Connally on "Meet the Press"?

G: Yes, I did.

J: I was up at my place out in the yard, and I had a tape recorder so I recorded it. It's real funny. What was that word that he used so much? You know the one I mean, that didn't come through--oh, hell,

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I've forgotten it. He said it three or four times. But anyhow, here's what it is. You see, I said John would be vice president, you know, with Ford, during my show [?]. I said [it] before that. When Helen Thomas was down here--I got a book from her--I told her they'd better watch out, John is liable to be president, or [Nelson] Rockefeller, on the ticket, you know. She carried that in UP.

Anyhow, John was sitting back there, and he said this, "In other words, I'm telling you, leaving it all out, you heard it, but I'm next [?]." In other words, about [Henry] Kissinger about it, that he was a great secretary of state and that he could see no reason why Kissinger would want to stay on, you see. That had been a campaign issue with Reagan, you know. He could see why he might want to really get out, but he had done a wonderful job as chief diplomat and that. Then the next thing was that--

(Interruption)

--had done an expert job. As a matter of fact, he went further than that. He, as chief diplomat, did a wonderful job, but then he didn't see any reason he should stay on longer than that year, you see. Well, why in the hell didn't they ask him, if he'd done a good job? Why wouldn't he stay on? But they didn't ask him that one. They went on.

Then they asked about Reagan. He left the impression that the South, that Ford had done so much, he's brought us out of this recession, but he didn't penetrate is what I'm--no, that's not the word, but I'll think of it in a minute--to the South, you see, like that.

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And then the Reagan support was more in the South than Ford's was, you see, his support, which is true, Reagan support. Articulate, articulate, [that's the word]. That Ford didn't articulate as good in the South, even though he'd done such a good job as Reagan had articulated. The word is articulate here. And he said 35 per cent of the Reagan people say that if Ford gets the nomination they will vote for Carter. And then a fourth [?], 35 per cent, if Reagan gets it, they'll vote [for Carter]. So that means--of course I wasn't there to ask him the questions--that whoever gets the nomination, the Republican Party is going to lose 35 per cent. Do you follow me?

G: Yes.

J: It didn't come out that way, but that's just the same as spelling it out. Then you've got Mr. Carter; you've got to have someone there that can get votes from Mr. Carter in the South and all that. You've got to take away from him. In other words, that leaves nobody but Connally that can do it. It's the damndest thing. I taped that thing Sunday. I got up yesterday morning and played it. Then I turned it over on the other side and taped a note to John Connally about articulation: "Does that articulate mean that you can do a better job instead of losing that 35 [per cent]? Either one of the others now, Reagan or Ford, neither one of them can articulate. Their [supporters are] going to vote the Democratic [ticket]. Do you think you can articulate enough to get the nomination yourself? Then do you think that you can sell the idea that you're the only man that can beat Carter?"

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It was really funny, it was an amusing thing how John was playing it. I wish I'd been up there asking questions. Understand I was for John.

Now getting back to Dick Russell. All right, Dick Russell. He comes from a long line of prominent people. His father was on the [Georgia] Supreme Court, things like that, before him.

G: Didn't his father run against Walter George for something? Do you know why he and Senator George were not close?

J: I don't, not to my knowledge. Might have, but I never heard of it though. Although there was some--well, I don't know how you put it, but they were not the closest buddies. Senators are always liable, most of them are, you want to get what you did for the people before the other one takes credit for it. Same thing. You've got that with Lyndon and Tom Connally, and Lyndon and Price Daniel, and Lyndon and [Ralph] Yarborough, and you had the same thing [with congressmen]. Every congressman, you have to keep your eye on him because you want to beat him to the draw, because he might run against you. That's the way it is.

Anyhow, Dick Russell came up there. He was the youngest man in the Senate, came up there in 1932. I think he was elected in a special election because the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee had died, and anyhow, he came up. But he was the youngest member of the Senate at that time. Now, I met him, he lived at the same hotel that I did.

G: Which hotel was that?

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J: The Hamilton Hotel [?], that hotel at the time was where most Texans lived. Well, [Ewing] Thomason must have lived there, Dick Russell lived there, and then Dick Kleberg used to live there, and I lived there. He was an egotistical man. You can see it. He would never go down to the Rainbow Room and have a drink with me or the party, you see. But he would come down the hall from his suite into mine and have a good time. I provided him with dates, too, for this. It didn't cost anything, understand. He's a type of mind that. . . .

G: Was he reserved as a young man?

J: Very reserved and took himself very seriously, entirely too seriously. I liked him; he was always a good friend of mine. Don't misunderstand me, but I know him. In a little joint, a beer joint back of the hotel, one time I stopped by and I could see him with his hat pulled down, drinking. That's kind of [inaudible]. When he was in my room one night--Lyndon was calling me all during his Congress campaign--that's when he said, "Tell him to get on Roosevelt's coattail and don't ever let loose of it." I told Lyndon, I said, "I'm talking to Senator Russell here." At that time Lyndon had never met him.

G: Do you know when your brother first met him?

J: I guess when he got to the Senate. I had no reason to know. I wouldn't have met him myself except I lived in the same hotel with him.

G: You mentioned that your sister had a date with him.

J: Well, see, my sister visited me at the hotel, too, and then he escorted my sister several times out, as far as that is concerned. So my sister

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claimed. Yes, she claims she went with Senator Russell and she also claims she went with old Arthur Capper, by God, that old bastard out there. She used to be proud of throwing those names around, you know. Arthur Capper from Kansas, I believe, he's an old bachelor out there. She had a few dates with him. But anyhow, Dick Russell, he was egotistical, but he doesn't show it very much. He's reserved. All right, now. . . .

G: Why do you think he and your brother were such close friends?

J: How do you know they were? Who told you that? Who told you that Lyndon Johnson and Sam Rayburn were close friends? Whose word are you taking for it?

G: Whose word on that?

J: Are you taking Lyndon's?

G: Well, I suppose his public statements on that. But I've always thought that Senator Russell was his best friend in the Senate, among colleagues. How do you feel about that?

J: Well, here comes the Lyndon Johnson strategy. I told you the story, at least I've told enough of it, about how I said Lyndon made Rayburn instead of Rayburn making Lyndon. See what I mean?

G: Right.

J: I was having lunch one day with Bill White here, and he said--I was talking about Rayburn or something--"Sam, did you ever detect a little jealousy between Rayburn and Johnson?" I said, "Shit, yes." Rayburn was jealous. You would be, too, if Roosevelt told you, "Sam, you will be speaker but I'm putting Lyndon Johnson there to watch

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you." He said, "I detect that. He is fond of your brother, but I can detect that. I'd bring up something, and then he would take a little sly." Well, Lyndon's strategy was every man that liked power, he made him, you see. "Russell showed me the way around the Senate." See what I mean? Now, do you think if Lyndon Johnson--tell me what you think now. You've heard all this. What led Lyndon Johnson to the presidency?

G: What led him to the presidency?

J: Yes, what all did he do that led him to the vice presidency. We know that, but he was presidential material. He kept his eye on it since the day he was born, period. Now, what made him president?

G: Well, I think his rise to leadership in the Senate was important in getting him on the ticket.

J: All right. I told you about the story in 1952, how he supported Adlai Stevenson. Do you see what I mean? Or did I? Well, let me tell you--

G: Yes, you did.

J: Now, you take it in 1952. Well, let's go back to 1951. You see that picture in there of Lyndon?

G: The one in your--?

J: In my bedroom, right above my bed.

G: Right.

J: That says June of 1951. Do you know where that came from?

G: No.

J: All right, I can tell you. That was on Collier's magazine, 1951.

[They had an] article written, "Can Lyndon Johnson Do What Truman

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Did?" in Collier's. Millard Tydings [was] chairman of the Armed Services Committee, which Lyndon Johnson was a member of. Now when the Korean War broke out, Lyndon Johnson introduced a resolution to investigate the war. He didn't call it the Johnson Committee, he called it the Preparedness Subcommittee of the Armed Services Committee. Well, why would he do that? It was the same thing as the old Truman Committee that led Truman to the vice presidency and then on. Well, that meant--you see he was just up there a couple of years and he didn't want to offend those with more seniority. Do you understand? That man, they don't make them any bigger or more [inaudible]. So then Millard Tydings, I think he was defeated by John Marshall Butler. Then Dick Russell became chairman of the Armed Services Committee. The first speech that Lyndon Johnson made in the Senate, it just so happened I was there, and it was against civil rights. Check it.

G: I have, yes. Against cloture, though.

J: All right, I heard it. You see this course now. I read that Collier's article over, and this and that, but it wasn't but a few days after that Collier's article came out that I went to Washington to work for Lyndon, in 1951. Now, the thing of it is, Lyndon, in 1950, he became assistant leader, 1951, [after the] election, you see. You don't know who was responsible for that. But you don't usually serve just two years in the Senate and then become assistant leader, do you, unless you have some backing?

G: Right.



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J: Lyndon gives everybody credit for it, but Bob Kerr was the one that did that. Bob Kerr.

G: How did Kerr do that?

J: He just liked him. He was a fighter and a hell-raiser. He had a woman in every damn office, every floor. Hell, you talk about this kind of stuff, that didn't make any difference to Bob Kerr. He had one in every damn office. He was governor [of Oklahoma], you know, chairman, keynote speaker of the Democratic [National] Convention. He took a liking to Lyndon. And then when they put [Ernest] McFarland in they had to take Lyndon Johnson. Kerr was by far more well known, but he just didn't want it. That's how it was.

Now, the next thing comes 1952. Dick Russell, I was there when he announced for president in his office, because it wasn't but just two doors away from mine, or Lyndon's, I mean. Anyhow, I went around there and saw the lights on. That was the delegation of the South. Well, [Estes] Kefauver was running also, and no one knew whether Truman was going to run again. He was perfectly eligible to. But you see, the New Hampshire primary, Kefauver got it, you know. He was chairman of a crime investigating committee, and he was getting more publicity than Lyndon was. In addition to that he was on the Armed Services Committee and a part of the subcommittee that my brother was chairman of.

Of course Texas, we go with Rayburn and Johnson, we go up to the convention. Truman was out of it. That's one of those stories that never tell a lie to my mother, but he found a note that he had written

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that said he'd never run for a second term. I love Truman; I like him, but isn't it funny that when New Hampshire went against him he could reach into a safe and say, "I wrote this note a long time ago saying I wouldn't run." Isn't that funny? But Truman held the power, partly. Now, Kefauver was going like a house afire. Lyndon didn't like Kefauver. Why didn't Lyndon like Kefauver? Because Kefauver got more publicity than Lyndon got and he was more competitive for president than Lyndon would be. Do you follow me?

G: Sure.

J: So when it looked like--Stevenson was sitting back there, governor, he was going to be shot before he'd take it. He'd rather die than have it, all that crap. Oh, my God! So it was either Stevenson or Kefauver. So Lyndon switched, and Rayburn--put that to you, you never knew which one was telling the other one what to do, they would both agree on things. So they agreed to switch their votes, the Russell votes, you see. Russell, Rayburn went to Stevenson to stop Kefauver. They got the nomination for Adlai Stevenson. And Adlai Stevenson promised Russell and Rayburn that he would name Lyndon Johnson as vice president. Do you follow me? Who did he name?

G: [John] Sparkman.

J: Sparkman. Do you think that that endeared Stevenson to Lyndon? All right, I'll give you a date when this can be released. I think I've already told you a lot of it anyhow, but anyhow, this is off the record; I thought I'd already told you. Anyhow, as you know, we had a split delegation up there, that Texas Shivers bunch and Maverick bunch

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in 1952, things like that, but Shivers won out, bolted the ticket, and was for Eisenhower. All right, I was up there in 1952. After the convention, Lyndon Johnson came out with a statement that he would support the Democratic ticket all the way, but that's all. I talked to Lyndon Johnson and told him I liked that statement that he made. "If you think so goddamn much of it, get down here and answer these sons of bitches' letters that I'm getting!" All right, I came down on Herman Brown's plane, went right over here to the Federal Building. I dictated a memo, and you can find it up there at the Library I hope, because it was signed by George Reedy first and my name is at the bottom. Really, you'll get a kick out of it if you can find it. I hope it hasn't been destroyed.

G: No, I'm sure it's there.

J: Anyhow, you see, in order to act on something you've got to have a little humor, you've got to have some kind of something to make Lyndon want to speak even if he's losing, go down, you know. So I said in that, wrote this, that what we'd do, we'd have a caravan. I always picked Floresville because that's where old Sam Fore was, you know, and we'd load up a trailer where Lyndon could eat and sleep on it, and with Zephyr [Wright] along and Lady Bird cooking him breakfast, one wasn't washing the [inaudible]--

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G: --the oil people were going to be against Stevenson.

J: Yes, they were going to be for Eisenhower, because Eisenhower had come out for the tidelands bill, you see, and all that. So who contacted

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these oil men that called Lyndon again and urged him, "Everything's all right if you just keep your damn mouth shut," or something, words to that effect? You see what I mean? So then this happened on the front porch. "Now, Sam Houston, you have to evaluate this. That's it, I have. First, I don't like him. [He's] not a man of his word. And next, he's weak; he let Shivers trap him. That's it. Now, I said I was going to support the Democratic ticket, but that's as far as I'm going to go. And now you're asking me to come out actively." Do you follow me?

G: Yes.

J: All right. Sam Houston said, "That's the same as bribery. That's a threat." I didn't tell him that John Connally was the one behind it, because he loved John. More than he did me, as far as that's concerned. That's where these things turned on. I can't prove it but, you know, that's the same as bribery, saying if you don't stay there and keep quiet and take an active part, then you won't be re-elected in 1954. Do you follow me?

G: Yes.

J: "Now, Lyndon, if you do this, that makes me more mad. Now, after telling me what all they said, and then if you follow that you'll never be president of the United States, and they will look upon you as a man that they can control. And they won't respect you for it. Now that's it. Do you think you can tell a newspaperman that a man called up and threatened you with the press, [you're] not going to do it? You don't come up for [re-election until] two years from now.

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And you get down and say, 'All right, I won't,' do you think they will respect you to be president? And that's just all there is to it." He picked up the phone, called George Reedy and said, "Come on out and write a speech." He had it on every damn radio station--that was before TV. Came by Mama's and picked me up and went down there and made it at KNOW, [on the] Texas State Network.

Now, that decision made him president. That is what did it. Was he liked before by the northerners? No. He was nothing but a southerner, a Russell man. Do you see what I mean? It took guts for a man to call the press and his closest friends, [Sid] Richardson, Amon Carter, and all that, to come out and say, "You can't bribe me." He didn't say that, but he went ahead. See, I don't know, I'm pretty much of a preacher. I think the Lord takes care of things; I do. What happened? He did it. Of course Rayburn had nothing to lose. He'd been up there, had four little counties, and no one had ever run against him that got over 50 votes. So it was all right there, you know. It's just like if you're safe, you can do what you want to. But if you're going to come up in two years from now, and you know Eisenhower is going to win, and all these people [are] against you that were your friends, urging you, and you defy them, not on account of friendship, but principle, you see, that they can't bribe you. That's what got me; I used the word bribery to Lyndon. The only thing they did, they just threatened him. See what I mean?

G: Sure.

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J: But don't take a chance on that; if you do it, if you listen to it, they think you're scared. They're liable to come up with somebody sure enough if you do it.

Anyhow, he made that speech. What happened? McFarland defeated. Correct?

G: Yes.

J: 1952? Majority leader?

G: Sure. [Barry] Goldwater, I think, wasn't it?

J: Goldwater defeated McFarland, 1952. That left a vacancy, didn't it?

G: Yes.

J: In the leadership. Who would be Democratic leader? McFarland was the Democratic majority leader, defeated. Scott Lucas before him was defeated. Now, here is the thing. Lady Bird came by and told me that Lyndon wanted me to come up there by plane. I forget which one, or how it got there, but we were staying at the Mayflower Hotel and so was Dick Russell. Congress was not in session. You understand?

G: Yes.

J: Lady Bird had closed up the house. Here you are in the room, Dick Russell, Lyndon Johnson. "Dick, you've got to take this." You looked at Dick Russell like I looked at him--

G: Were you there in the room?

J: I was present, period. Lyndon sent for me to come up. I don't say he sent for me to come up and make any damn decision, because that don't go. He called me, "You can do what you goddamn--help if you can,"

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this and that, for advice. But I was there. And Lyndon didn't know what I did on that until he read some of it in the book.

But anyhow, I looked at Dick Russell. Lyndon said, "Dick, you've got to take it." Well, Dick didn't come up for re-election. He came from a safe Democratic state of Georgia. You see what I mean? Did Dick want it? Of course he wanted it. Egotism? He was top man on the Appropriations Committee, you know, top man; chairman of the Armed Services [Committee]. Of course, we had a Republican Congress at that time. He wasn't chairman of any committee, but he wanted it. I figured he did. Now [here's] how it was to do it. The southern senators, Spessard Holland, Burnet Maybank, [Allen] Ellender, [John] Stennis, [James] Eastland, don't you know they were all against Stevenson?

G: Yes.

J: You know, get them all. We'll get Bobby Baker and others to call up Dick and ask him to take it. You see what I mean? If you refuse--I told this to Bobby Baker, all right. Oh, yes. Bobby never heard of it now at all. He never will hear it. Anyhow, he got Maybank to call Dick Russell. Dick said, "Oh, no, Burnie, I don't want it." "Then it'll have to be Lyndon. He's assistant leader, you know." Then Dick couldn't say no. You see?

G: Yes.

J: After that, old Spessard Holland. I hate that son of a bitch, too. But he did it. Go on down to Ellender, then go on up to Eastland. All those calls were made, urging Dick to take it. See what I mean?

G: Yes.

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J: Now, Lyndon's sitting there pleading with Dick to take it, and Dick saying, "No, Lyndon, you ought to have it. You're assistant leader." Why would Dick tell Lyndon he ought to have it? Because he thought he wouldn't take it.

Now, here is what happened. The next morning, or the next one, I don't remember, Walter Hornaday, of the Dallas Morning News, came into my office. He'd been up there for I don't know how many years. "Sam, what's going to happen?" Understand, Congress was not in session; they were waiting to convene in January. This was before Congress convened. [It was] in the latter part of December. I said, "Walter, I don't know. I can't tell you what I know now. I'm busy." When you tell a man you can't tell him what you know now, that means that you know something. That's the way you've got to work, you know. That's just playing. So I kept him waiting thirty minutes, partly because I wanted him to and partly for goddamn meanness. Because he was a mean bastard, by God, at times. But he can be useful. I'd pick up the phone like this and [say], "Hello, Mary, how are you?" And just talk in the phone and let him just be standing, you see. "Let's go someplace where we can talk."

Well, the cafeteria is next to our office, second floor of the Old House Office Building; a cafeteria is right there. We went in there, and I'm the only man that he ever bought a cup of coffee for in his life. That's the truth. He never bought anybody a cup of coffee, or a drink of whiskey, or anybody--these newspapermen are stingy as hell. Anyhow, we go down there, have a cigarette and talk, "What's



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going to happen?" "Walter, you've been up here longer than anybody has, than I have. You know politics from A to Z; you know it." Well, of course he accepted that as flattery but secretly he really believed it, so that led him on. I said, "You know what, Walter, where Lyndon made his first mistake? It was when he took an active part in the campaign when his friends urged him not to. Now, he did that and what we're going to do--the last two Democratic leaders have been defeated, Walter, and the purpose of a Democratic leader to a Republican president is to oppose that president and what he stands for. Lyndon Johnson can't do that, because [of] things like the [oil] depletion [allowance] and tidelands and things like that, that's the way Lyndon Johnson has voted. He can't stand up there and give him hell on that. So he can't be the leader, because he stands with what Eisenhower stands for. Does that make sense to you, Walter?" "Yes." "And look at [inaudible]. Goddamn it, why he did that, I don't know, but there's two years now that we've got, and there's Allan Shivers just waiting, by God, to run. Just itching." [He would] come up for election in 1954. "Do you think he can say, 'I want to be leader,' take it, knowing that he's going to have opposition? No, no, I know he won't. No." "Well, who is going to be [leader]?" I couldn't think of anybody that Texans hated worse than that they did Hubert Humphrey. And I said, "Hubert Humphrey would take it." I naturally didn't mention Russell sitting there in the wings waiting for it. No, Hubert.

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What do you think the headlines in the paper were? "Johnson will not take it, according to brother." In other words, Walter Hornaday wrote the article that made old Jesse Jones, that son of a bitch--is he still alive or not? I think he's dead. He was the first person to call Lyndon up, urging him to accept it. Then Amon Carter, and then everybody: "You got to take it. Don't let Hubert take it." And there you are, the same people that were going to run against him called begging him. And it even made Allan Shivers call him and tell him he wouldn't run against him, to take it. That's the pressure, my friend, of oil money. You turn that same pressure around.

Now, Hubert, that's the first time he had thought of it, is when he read it in the paper. The AP picked it up. That's the truth. I remember that. Now, they meet on January 3, therefore they held a caucus to select the leader. Now, the day before the caucus, whenever it was, Hubert came in our office with Senator [Lester] Hunt, that dentist, you know, from Wyoming. I waited, I waited, and finally I got tired of waiting to see what was going on. But I was there at seven-thirty or eight o'clock that morning, in Lyndon's office. "What happened?" "Well, Sam Houston, goddamn it, I spent three hours with Hubert last night. He said he wouldn't run against me if I let him be chairman of the Policy Committee or the Steering Committee." You see, the Republicans in the Senate have it divided up among three men, but the Democrats, the man that's leader there has the Steering Committee, which selects what committee you get on, and the Policy Committee, which selects the policy. And Hubert just wanted one of them. I

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said, "What did you do?" He said, "Hell, I told him no." "All right, now. Who do you have that's going to nominate you?" "Well, who do you think, Sam Houston?" I said, "Lyndon, I think Senator Walter George. Not Dick Russell, but Walter George." "Well, that's one thing we agree on. I've already asked Walter George. That's one thing right there."

About that time the phone rang; it was Hubert. You've got to picture this: Lyndon in his office, like this. I'm sitting over there in a chair. The phone rings; it's Hubert Humphrey. When Lyndon Johnson lights a cigarette and starts standing up and pacing, then you know something is happening, because when he jumps up and lights a cigarette, he's articulating, if you want to use it somewhere. "God-damn it, Hubert, I told you yesterday that I wasn't going to do it, and I haven't changed my mind! Goddamn it, Hubert, I'm tired of fucking with you! Now, listen, you've got nine goddamn votes; that's all you've got. I can name them: [Herbert] Lehman"--went on and on and on. He said, "Now, take your goddamn nine votes, go over there and get humiliated. And that's all you've got. I'm too busy. I've got a dozen senators out here waiting to escort me over there. Good-bye." I stood up and I said, "I want to congratulate you on getting it unanimously. Now let's get out of here. You know, Lyndon, you don't have any trouble at all. Goodbye, get going," and I walked over there with him. And I stood outside and he got it unanimous. Now, that is what happened. That is exactly what happened.

G: Fascinating.

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J: You know, I've often thought about how--I told this to Barry Bishop; you don't know Barry, but he used to work for the Dallas Morning News. He was stationed [?] with me. He's retired now. The Dallas Morning News didn't want to get Lyndon Johnson president, being our enemy, sworn enemy, and doing us more good indirectly without even knowing it. The story Walter Hornaday gave out--and then when they spat on Lyndon and Lady Bird in Dallas, that turned everything around to be vice president.

So there you are. Now, what are you going to do?

G: Shall we take a break here?

J: Yes, I'm ready.

End of Tape 3 of 3 and Interview IV

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