

INTERVIEW I

DATE: August 27, 1971
INTERVIEWEE: EDWARD JOSEPH
INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ
PLACE: Mr. Joseph's office, Austin, Texas

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F: We'll make this informal, Eddie. Are you an Austin boy?

J: Yes, sir, I was born and raised in Austin.

F: That's what I thought. You went through high school here then?

J: Yes, I went through high school.

F: Did you know any of the Johnsons prior to Lyndon Johnson? Did you ever happen to run across Lyndon Johnson's father?

J: Yes, sir, my father and Lyndon's father, Sam Ealy, were good friends. My father, as a matter of fact, stayed at the house of Lyndon's grandfather when he first came to this country, and he peddled over in that area. Later on he opened a store here in Austin between 2nd and 3rd and enlarged the store to where he had a general mercantile store.

F: What was the name of that store?

J: It was Cater Joseph. In the rear of the store was a wagon-yard, a camp yard, and Mr. Johnson came down frequently. Long before I knew Lyndon I had an acquaintance with his father. I was a small boy and knew him very well.

F: Was he anything like Lyndon?

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J: No, he was nothing like Lyndon.

F: Lyndon took more after his mother?

J: Yes, sir. Lyndon took more [after her].

I knew Lyndon very slightly until he became National Youth administrator. I was a good friend of Congressman Dick Kleberg, and when Kleberg was a representative here in Austin from his district--

F: He used to come up here?

J: Yes, sir. I had a men's store on Congress Avenue, next to the Paramount Theater, which was the old Majestic Theater at that time. All members of the legislature visited with me, and I was acquainted with them all. Lyndon started to work with Dick Kleberg when Kleberg went into Congress. I don't recall whose seat that he took.

F: I don't know either.

J: I don't recall whose seat that Kleberg took, but he went in at that time as secretary to Richard Kleberg.

It was during that time that he met Lady Bird. My wife lived with the Terrells, C. V. Terrells, Judge C. V. Terrell, who was railroad commissioner. They had a home on 1806, I believe, Colorado Street.

F: I remember the old Terrell home.

J: The Terrell home was a large, two story house, and they had several apartments in the House. One of the occupants was Gene Boehringer, who later married a fellow named Lasseter, a representative named Lasseter.

F: She was born in East Texas.

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J: Yes, she was from East Texas. From what I understood she was older than Lady Bird, and when they sent Lady Bird to school here she sort of looked after her. Mrs. Joseph at that time lived with Carrie [?] Garner, who was Vice President [John Nance] Garner's niece. She and Mrs. Joseph lived with the Terrells and Gene Boehringer lived upstairs, as did the two nieces of Beauford Jester, the Jester girls, and Lois Trice who you probably know--taught at the University, and still teaches, I suppose.

F: And lived in that same neighborhood for years.

J: Yes, lived in that same neighborhood. Well, it was at that time that I had known Lady Bird.

F: What'd you call her in those days: Claudia?

J: They called her Claudia.

She'd [Lady Bird] visited there; she didn't live there, but she visited Gene Boehringer, because I think that Gene's younger sister was a good friend of Mrs. Johnson's. She was sort of a big sister to her and kind of looked after her while she was in the University. My friendship with Lyndon, as I say, dated back really to the time he was National Youth administrator, and I believe, and I'm not really certain about this, that he and Mrs. Johnson were married in about 1934.

F: Right.

J: They lived at 2808 San Pedro with Dr. and Mrs. Montgomery.

F: The economist. I stopped and talked to Bob yesterday.

J: The economist. I think that they had an apartment. I believe that

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the Montgomerys had an apartment there, and they lived there. We lived at 2717 Wooldridge Drive, and that was across a bluff.

F: Kind of way out west in those days. You must have lived pretty close to Judge Hildebrand.

J: No, I lived next door to Dr. Whitney, if you remember Dr. Whitney, and later on Claude Wild built a couple of doors north of us. Ed Clark at that time bought a little house over on Northwood Road. I believe it was about 1404 Northwood Road.

Lyndon used to come over to our house. He just was completely at home; he'd walk in and visit; we'd sit and have a sandwich, and talk, and then he'd walk up to Ed Clark's house. We had quite a lot of things that we talked about.

F: Did you talk a lot of politics in those days?

J: Yes, we talked politics.

F: This was when the New Deal is hot, and Jimmy Allred is--

J: Yes, and we had a lot of mutual friends. The next recollection I have was going down to my store which I had at the campus. It was a campus shop. Lyndon was sitting there at the door, waiting. And I asked, "What are you doing here?" He said, "Well, I've been worried, and I want to talk to you." And I said, "About what?" He said, "About running for Congress. I'm scared to death, and you know there's nine or ten people running. I want to run, but I just don't know what to do about it. I just can't afford to take the chance." I said, "Well, Lyndon, the more the merrier. Your

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chance is better than any of them, because I think the man who gets out and shakes the most hands, gets out and meets the people, will have the best chance." I said, "Let's get going now." He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Come on, I want to take you down and introduce you." So we started on down the Drag from 24th Street, and we ended up over on 19th Street; I took him down to St. Austin's Church and introduced him to the then pastor of the church, Father Bill Blakeslee, who was an Austin boy.

F: Did you go into places like the Co-op?

J: Yes, we went all the way down.

F: You just made the Drag?

J: Made the Drag. And so Lyndon was pretty enthused after that. So his campaign, I think, to my mind, began at that time.

F: Was he pretty outgoing with people in those days?

J: Very much so. He was very outgoing. He was liked, he was aggressive, and had just a lot of drive, so his campaign increased. He had great opposition. He had people like C. N. Avery and Houghton Brownlee, who was a very close friend of Congressman Buchanan's, who had just died. He had been Congressman Buchanan's campaign manager.

F: Stone.

J: Stone, Judge Sam Stone from Georgetown, and Merton Harris, who was from Bastrop County.

F: Was one of the Sheltons running then?

J: Polk Shelton, who was my classmate in high school. It was difficult

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for me to oppose Polk, and I was really on the spot. But I had made up my mind that Lyndon had the drive, and he had the personality, he had the know-how, he'd been up to Washington. I had known of his experiences up in Washington. I had known of his drive, and Dick Kleberg had often told me about how impressed he was with him. So we just did everything that we could to encourage and help Lyndon. About midways or somewhere during the campaign he had an appendectomy, and he was rushed to Seton. He thought that this was it, that he'd wasted Lady Bird's money and his friends' money who had helped, but I think that had a tendency to help Lyndon more than anything. In the end, why, he was successful; he was top man, and he was elected.

Among the things that we had talked about earlier was his support of Franklin Roosevelt's policy, his Court policy.

F: I was going to ask you, was that a conscious decision, to go into that?

J: Yes. He at first was hesitant about using that, but after urging him that he had to make an issue to run on, well, then he used that as the issue. And it turned out that it was a good strategy. At that time, as I remember, he had quite a few people who had worked in the NYA with him, young fellows who were aggressive, that he had helped, and had worked in the NYA. Everybody pitched in and helped, And in the end Lyndon was successful.

F: What did you do during the campaign? You just talked to people?

J: Well, I talked to people.

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- F: You must have known most of Austin just from
- J: And I helped him in a material way. He went unopposed for several terms, and later on he got into a bitter campaign with Hardy Hollers.
- F: Before we get into that, did he talk to you about running for the Senate in 1941 when he took on Pappy O'Daniel?
- J: Oh, yes.
- F: Tell me about your relationship with him then.
- J: Well, my recollection, my relationship with him at that time in--
- F: This was in 1941.
- J: In 1941. I don't know whether it was prior to that time that he had bought the station.
- F: I'm not sure about that either.
- J: I think that he had bought the station. No, I stand to be corrected. I think that in 1941 Morris Sheppard died, and Lyndon had to make a decision. He came down, he got together with a group of his friends. I recall vividly the meeting and the conversation, and it was decided that he would take on O'Daniel. So he got everybody that he knew, and he'd kept a good list of people who had been interested in him, people who had supported him. He determined he was going to make the race.
- F: Was there much hesitation, or was it pretty certain once the election was called that he would be a candidate?
- J: There was some hesitation--
- F: He was sticking his neck out.
- J: --at that time, because of the popularity of O'Daniel. O'Daniel

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had come into the picture several years before in a governor's race against--

F: Bill McCraw.

J: Bill McCraw and Ernest Thompson. Bill McCraw was a real close friend of mine, and we had various meetings. He [O'Daniel] was brought in to offset Bill's popularity and his lead, to cut down so that it would give Ernest Thompson a chance. Well, the people who planned the strategy didn't anticipate that Pappy would just run away with the votes. He was governor at that time, and of course the Coke Stevenson people wanted him in the Senate so that Coke Stevenson would be elevated from lieutenant governor to governor. He had that force to reckon with, but he was urged to go on. I remember Bob Long and Jake Pickle and John Connally and Jim Blundell and different ones, you know, that had gathered around, and others from around the state that came in. This was a big meeting, and they pledged their support and Lyndon decided that he would run. He made a real good campaign, and it was an aggressive campaign. Now I'm not certain whether he used a helicopter at the time.

F: No, that was not until 1948.

J: But he traveled by air quite a lot, he just flew by air.

In the end, he was almost certain that he was elected. I think that he'd received congratulatory telegrams, but he had overlooked the fact that Martin Dies was real strong. Joe Belden had made a poll in which he showed that some of the counties in East Texas were strong for Martin Dies, and some of the people who

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the President had with him at the time had not given him the proper advice. But Senator Wirtz and others had advised him that they ought to hold back some of the votes and not just declare them all. I believe at that time that Jim Ferguson had advised him that he had better spend some money over in that area and buy some of those votes, because he was very knowledgeable. Lyndon said, "No, I won't do that. I won't stoop to that." And he [Ferguson] said, "Well, I think that you'll regret it if you don't." He didn't, and that's the votes that came in, you know. He was counted out.

F: There were about four thousand out, and they nearly all came in for Pappy.

J: Yes. It was about twelve hundred and some-odd votes in the lead in the final analysis.

F: He never thought of contesting it? He never talked to you about that?

J: No. He said, "That's the way the ball rolls. That's the ball game, and I've lost."

F: I'm sure he wasn't happy, but he took it.

J: Yes, he took it. He just took it like a true soldier. He was bitterly disappointed, but he tried not to show his disappointment. His friends had urged him to contest it, but he said, "No. That's the way the ball rolls. There'll be another day." And so he let it go at that.

Well, we go now to the matter of his security. One day he was

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talking to me, and I just don't recall whether it was after this race or before. We were talking at my house, and he said to me, "Eddie, I want to talk to you about a matter that is giving me a lot of concern." I said, "What is it?" He said, "I have been up in Congress, and I have seen men who had been there a long time, and were defeated, and wound up as committee clerks or some menial job there. I have a horror of having that happen to me, and I wonder what you think and what your reaction is. Do you think that there's anything that I can get into that would afford me some security in the event that this happens?"

I thought a while, and I recalled this station, KTBC, which was then located where the Nixon-Clay Business College is. It was owned by a fellow, Senator Stewart from Fort Worth, former Treasury Secretary Bob Anderson, and Judge Walker from the University and a couple of others. It was in difficulty. They'd had hot checks all over town; they couldn't meet their payroll. I told Lyndon about it, and he said, "I don't know anything about running a radio station." I said, "Well, you can get someone to run it, and Lady Bird's a good businesswoman; she can supervise it." And he said, "What will I do?" I said, "You have a lot of people who can give you sustaining programs, commercials, that would insure you to meet your overhead and then to make money." Shortly after that he acquired the station, and it proved . . .

F: Did he pretty well do it with his own money?

J: No, he didn't have any money. My understanding was that Lady Bird

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used her money.

F: But I mean he didn't have to go outside the family?

J: No, I don't think so. I don't know. He didn't discuss that phase of it with me. But I think that Lady Bird had had an inheritance, and she put her money into it. She managed it, and, as you know the story, they did very well.

F: She was good in business.

J: Later on he had bought the house at 1901 Dillman and they were living out there. I was a frequent visitor there. We had discussions from time to time about various things pertaining to the business. Lyndon was very searching. He just plied you with questions, and he retained everything that was said, he just turned it over in his mind.

But in the background Lady Bird was there. She never made herself obvious, she never spoke anything, and he'd say, "Lady Bird, go get some hamburgers, we need to eat." She'd say, "Yes, darling," and she'd just go on. But over and above all, one could see that she was the guiding genius. She was the one that unconsciously had advised him and helped him along. She is a wonderful person. She had a lot of personality, she had a lot of savvy, and she was very knowledgeable in the matter of his congressional business as well as his other business. So she contributed, to my knowledge, quite a lot to his success.

F: A good mind for keeping up with the nuts and bolts of an operation too.

J: Yes. She had a tremendous personality, and she was a driving force.

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But with all of that, she just remained in the background. She was not very ostentatious.

F: Had you known Hardy Hollers prior to the time?

J: Yes, I had known Hardy Hollers.

F: Had he a long-time dislike of Johnson, or was this just that he got caught up in the campaign? Because, you know, so many of the charges that were made against Johnson later pretty well came out of this Hardy Hollers campaign against him.

J: I don't know whether it was so much his dislike for Johnson. I know that probably a contributing factor was Dan Moody's dislike--

F: I wondered if Dan were kind of at his elbow.

J: --for him and the advice that he had given Hardy.

F: Where did Dan Moody pick up this dislike, or Mildred, for that matter?

J: Didn't Dan Moody run for the Senate?

F: He'd run in that 1941 campaign, had been an also-ran.

J: I don't know. I really don't know where he picked it up.

F: It may have been from that.

J: I think it emanated from that campaign.

F: Did the Congressman ever talk to you about these charges against him? How to handle them?

J: No, but I had heard. He had talked to people like Everett Looney and John Cofer and Senator Wirtz, and he really relied upon their legal ability. While I'll say candidly that Lyndon had never had much faith, or no, I shouldn't say faith--he relied upon the

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attorneys to represent him, but he just didn't have too much confidence in attorneys, in lawyers.

F: Did you know Senator Wirtz very well?

J: Yes, very well.

F: Was he as much of an influence as he generally is taken to be?

J: I think he was the greatest influence in Lyndon's life. Lyndon worshipped him almost as a deity. He had a tremendous influence in Lyndon's life, and Lyndon respected his judgment. He relied upon it, and almost in every instance where he went contrary to Senator Wirtz's judgment it proved to be a mistake.

F: Was the Senator a pretty calm and deliberate person?

J: Very calm. Very calm, very deliberate, very exacting.

F: Exacting in what way?

J: He was a perfectionist. He wanted to be sure of his ground. He weighed his words, and he thought out almost every move just before he would plan it or would give any advice.

He had a tremendous admiration for Lyndon, so much so that when Senator Wirtz died Lyndon was his administrator, handled the administration of Senator Wirtz's will and his property. I had something to do with that, too. I don't recall when Senator Wirtz died, but I recall Lyndon asking me to go up to the Ranch with him. He had bought the ranch home of his aunt at Stonewall, and I had made several trips up there with him.

One day he called me to go up there with him, and we went up. The place was in shambles. It was just an old farmhouse, part rock

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and part timber, and was in a bad state of repair. He had real dreams of what he was going to do to the house and how he was going to restore it. As we walked along and looked over there he took me down to the family burial ground and showed me where his father was buried. He said, "Papa's buried over here," and so forth.

I didn't realize until afterwards that he probably had an ulterior motive in asking me to go up, because on the way back he began to put the pressure on me to buy a block of land that Senator Wirtz had owned over on Red River Street, diagonally across from the stadium. I told him that I couldn't afford to do that, and he said, "Well, we can fix it so that you can and sell it to you on time." Before we got back to town we had effected a deal. We didn't get back until about eleven o'clock, and the next morning about seven o'clock he was at my door with a contract.

F: You got the feeling he never slept, didn't you?

J: So I said, "My God, can't you wait until the sun comes up?" He said, "Business is business, we've got to get this thing going." I don't know whether he got Mary Rather up during the night and made her type the contract, but anyhow we signed the contract and I bought the property. But that's typical of the way he works. He gets something on his mind and wants to [get it done].

F: That's probably pretty much where the Library is now, isn't it?

J: No, ironically, it's south of the Library. It's south of the Texas Publications. It's that square block there that they use for parking.

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F: Just below Manor Road.

J: Yes. It's cater-corner from the junior high school.

F: There wasn't any need for all that haste, though, that you could see? It's just that once he started it--

J: It was just that he wanted to get it over with. Later on, the University started the expansion program, and it was done in the regime of Allan Shivers and while Claude Boyles was on the Board [of Regents, U.T.]. That was when they had started their program. They said they wanted it for the University expansion, and so I just sold it to the University at that time. It developed that it was years later before they just went through with their program, but I was glad to have made it possible for the University to get it.

F: Did you ever advise the Congressman on any of his land or property purchases?

J: Yes, he'd ask and I advised him. He didn't always take my advice, and then he would come back later on and just regretfully say, "Well, I didn't follow your advice, and I'm sorry about it. I should've not listened to somebody else." What he'd do, he'd ask you and then he'd ask someone else, and they would discourage him. But in connection with the properties that he bought, at the time he was going to relocate the KTBC-TV offices and all, he was at that time in the Driskill Hotel building. And he had called me to come out to the house there, on Dillman. He said he wanted to talk to me about that, and we sat out in the yard and talked.

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He sent Lady Bird for hamburgers, and we sat there and ate hamburgers.

He had told me about buying a piece of ground at Mount Larsen for his transmitter. He wanted to move his station out there, wanted to move everything out there, office and all. I couldn't see the economics of moving it from downtown. He said, "We can put in a cafeteria and everybody can stay out there." I said, "What are you going to do with your salesmen and your people going back and forth?" And I then told him of the possibility of his buying the property at 10th and Brazos from E. H. Perry. I had told him that Mr. Perry had bought that from the YWCA and he had no use for it, and because of their close relationship that I thought that Mr. Perry would let him have it at a very favorable price. I believe as a result of our talk he acquired that property, and he did acquire it at a good price, because Mr. Perry wanted to favor him. The result was that all of their operations were put at that place.

F: That's a good move because so many of the people are the type that kind of have to pop in and out all the time.

J: Yes.

F: Did you have anything to do with his buying some of the rental property he later owned?

J: No.

F: Did you get involved in that second senatorial campaign in which he

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squeaked it out?

J: Yes, sir, I was very much involved in that. At that time he was a little hesitant to get into that race after he was defeated before. But his friends prevailed upon him, and he thought that he would make another effort. He got into that race, and we had lots of strategy meetings, lots of meetings in different places. Lyndon was very optimistic. Lady Bird had gotten into the race, and I think that's probably the first time that she'd really got interested in politics. She organized women's groups and all sorts of groups that would help in his campaign, and I think it was at that time that he started using a helicopter.

I recall at one time we had a meeting of the 4th Degree of Knights of Columbus. Our strategy, or rather my suggestion, was that I was going to entertain the whole group at my house. There was about seventy or more there, including Bishop Reicher. The plan was to have Lyndon just casually drop in, because it's not a political organization, not knowing that we had a meeting there.

F: Just to come see his old friend, Eddie Joseph.

J: It was really a fun meeting. We had food, and it was a social gathering. Lyndon had dropped in on us, and I said, "Well, how fortunate that you would come. Let me introduce you to these people." So he met all of the group, and he gave them a little pep talk. As a result, at that meeting we organized a caravan for Lyndon. I believe that shortly after that they had a rally in San

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Antonio, all the group had a rally over in San Antonio at the front of the auditorium. All these people had gathered up other people to go down, and they had a caravan to leave here and go on over there. I believe it was at that time that Lady Bird showed up. I believe she'd had a car turned over with her and Mrs. Brooks, Marietta Brooks. But she made no mention of it. Lyndon knew nothing about it, and we had a very fine rally.

Later on it was debated as to whether the eighty-seven votes he got was a result of his coming over there and picking up these eighty people with their wives, or whether the Joseph clan had contributed, because there was probably eighty or eighty-five in our immediate family; whether it was that, or what it was that had contributed to his success.

F: Well, any bloc of eighty-seven votes was important.

J: Yes, Lyndon was always grateful for things of that sort. It was during a time that he was president; he had asked Jake Jacobsen to come to see me and get the list of the people who had supported him in his first congressional campaign, if I could recall who some of the people were, and particularly the priest who had helped him. I said, "Well I think I can." I gave Jake a list of those, and I said, "Now this is Father Bill Blakeslee. He's not here, but he's in Atlanta, Georgia." I gave him the address in Atlanta, Georgia. I don't know whether he kept that for his memoirs or what he wanted, but there again, the point that I'm trying to make is that he never forgot who his friends were and who helped him. He was just always

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grateful for the help that he received.

I recall the time while he was vice president, the Patriarch of Antioch who is a cardinal now, Paul Peter Meouchi, and he's in Lebanon, made a tour of this country, and the State Department furnished him some people from the State Department. He was in this area, and Lyndon entertained him at the Ranch. He had asked me to get a group of who I thought was representative Lebanese people, and he had gotten some others. It was quite a large gathering at his Ranch. Everybody was taking pictures, and he kept after me to act as host, to drive them around the Ranch and show them. On that particular day everybody was taking pictures and everybody wanted to get in with him.

He said, "Now I want the Joseph boys to get in here with me because they're my real friends. I want to take one picture with them." So my brother Philip, who has recently passed away, and I gathered to take some pictures with Lyndon and some of these other people had gathered around. He said, "No, I just want the Joseph boys. They have been close to me and I just love them, and I want to take a picture with them." So we took a picture with the Vice President at that time.

Later on he had made a trip, I've gotten my dates a little confused now, it was during the time that he was vice president. I don't know if it was prior to this meeting or afterwards that he'd made a trip to Lebanon. He went over to Lebanon. At that

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time, all of these people gathered around and gathered to meet him at the airport, and in his talk there he said, "One of my closest and dearest friends, a man who contributed a lot to my success and one who was one of my first supporters, was Eddie Joseph from Austin, Texas. I just want ya'll to know this." About that time I had a niece there, and she said, "I'm his niece." She just walked up. She was born in Austin here and was a daughter of my oldest brother. She had married a University professor of engineering, and they went back over to Lebanon and were living over there at that time.

F: Was this in Beirut?

J: In Beirut, yes. So the Associated Press and UP came out with this story of his talk over there, and of course I was flattered. I didn't think that I had contributed so much, but I had always valued his friendship. I had spoken to you about his visit to Rome during the time that he was congressman. Well, he had written me a note, and he sent me a speech that the Pope had made to them and he brought me back four rosaries that the Pope had blessed. He wanted me to have them, and I did take them. I treasured them.

At the time of his mother's death, I was among the first to go over to his house on Dillman. He had received me very graciously, and he was opening up some telegrams and very interested in the telegrams he was getting there of condolences. To make a point of how thorough he is and how he wants to know, he said, "Who is this fellow here, Williams, B. H. Williams? Who is he?" And

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I said, "Well, Lyndon, I think he's a man who has a little second-hand place over by the police station over on Sabine street." He said, "He's a fine man, and I appreciate this. I want to know just a little bit more about him because I want to write him a letter." He just didn't let anything go by him even in his deepest grief, this sadness that he had. He didn't let that interfere with his appreciation of the things that people said to him or the expression.

I want to say too that I had taken the rosary, I had it in my pocket because I always carry a rosary. I had it in my pocket, and I said, "Now, Lyndon, this is one of the rosaries that you had given me, and I think that you ought to place it in your mother's hand in the casket." So he took the rosary and placed it in his mother's hand. Later on I got what I thought was probably the sweetest, the gentlest, and the most touching letter that I have ever received, in which he expressed himself. He said, "There is a solid language of friendship and affection that knows no tongue, but finds its expression through little deeds of kindness and love. No spoken words could have comforted me as much as your visit to me at 1901 Dillman and having you and Thelma come to Mama's funeral. Your presence there and the lovely flowers you sent were deeply appreciated by all members of the Johnson family, and it helped us to know that resting with her are your rosaries. No man could ask for better friends than Eddie and Thelma Joseph." That was just typical, you know, from the heart. That's just typical

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of the man.

F: Did he ever talk to you about Luci becoming Catholic?

J: No. But he had talked to me really intimately about how he felt towards the Catholics and about the religion. He intimated to me very strongly the love that he had for the faith, and how he had hoped that one day that he might become one.

F: I had wondered myself if he might not.

J: Yes. On another occasion, and this was while he was vice president and it was a little embarrassing to me, he had sent on Christmas Eve Jesse Kellam over to my house with a pair of cuff links with the emblem of the Vice President of the United States. I was not at home. I received the links, and I was real touched because he had remembered me. The next day I picked up the phone and called him at Stonewall. I thanked him and told him that was very thoughtful of him and how much I treasured them and how I hoped that they would have a very happy Christmas and so on and so forth. He said, "That's fine, and we hope you have a happy Christmas, too. Give my love to Thelma." I was not conscious or didn't know at the time that his sister, his youngest sister, had died that day. I believe her name was Mrs. Moss, Mrs. James Moss. Not wanting to spoil my Christmas, he had not told me of that. He just accepted the good wishes, and he kept his grief to himself without wanting to pass it on so that it would spoil Christmas.

There again I think is an attribute that very few people have, and that's one of the things that endears his friends to him. He

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had never at any time looked back or regretted his friendship. He'd do things for people. He didn't expect anything in return. He'd never ask. But the only thing that he did ask was that he demanded loyalty. When he asked you a question he expected a direct answer. He didn't want any evasiveness. He was [what] is well described as a "can-do" person. I've seen him time and again to admonish the people who were working with him, say, "Now, are you with me or against me?" That's the attitude that he had. If you just were sort of hesitant he'd say, "Now, look, are you for me or are you against me? If you're for me, then let's get going."

Getting back to the race with Hardy Hollers. He [Johnson] was a great showman. He had gotten Gene Autry to come over to draw a crowd, and we had met Gene and were going over to Zaragosa Park. That's a Mexican-American area over there on Webberville Road, and no one seemed to know where the park was. He said, "Let Eddie lead the way over there." Well, hell, I had never been over there in my life, but I wasn't going to say to him that I hadn't been there.

F: You made a good leader.

J: So I said, "Let's go." I headed out in that direction, and I knew somewhere along there it was on Webberville Road, so I hit the place right on the button.

F: Well, great. I bet you felt

J: Lyndon was real pleased, and we had a big rally. All the people were there.

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J: Well, we had a big rally. It was a successful rally, and Gene Autry sang his way into the hearts of those people. As a result Lyndon was successful in his campaign.

F: Did you make a lot of the rallies?

J: Yes, I made all of the rallies.

F: That kept you out nights, didn't it?

J: Yes. I made all the rallies.

F: Did he get his message over pretty well to people?

J: He was very liked. If he could meet a person, come face to face with them, he would win their support.

F: He actually did better out in the crowd than he did from the platform?

J: Yes, he did, because he was very outgoing as I have said, and he was a good handshaker. He had a tremendous personality and very much of a driving force.

I never was much of a politician, didn't take much part in politics other than with the people that I loved. Probably the first campaign that I had ever gotten into was Jimmy Allred's.

And the reason I had become very close to him was because he and my wife went to high school together, were raised together in Bowie.

F: I didn't realize he was from Bowie.

J: Yes, and when he came down here as attorney general I was one of the first people that he had looked up. We had formed a very close relationship. Jimmy and Lyndon became very good friends.

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F: Yes.

J: The people who supported Jimmy and were for him were also friends of Lyndon's. They were just supporters of Lyndon's. I had known Jake Pickle and John Connally during their University days when they were in the University, and I think I probably had something to do with the relationship or the tie-in with Connally and Lyndon.

F: How did that come about? I remember you from my student days because you were a handy place, among other things to the students. It was kind of a natural gathering place. If nothing else I'd meet people outside your store.

J: Well, John Connally was pretty much like Lyndon. He was a driving-- He had a fine physique, he was handsome, had a fine personality. Although he didn't have the financial status that some of the students had, he overcame that with his personality. John was a customer of mine, and I had observed him in his activities and all. I had mentioned him to Lyndon, but I think that Lyndon had already known about him. When Lyndon decided to take John on as his, I don't think it was administrative assistant but he was taking him on in his office, a couple of Secret Service men came out to see me and were inquiring about John, as they always do [about] anybody who gets a job of that sort. I had nothing but admiration and praise for him because he was just a high type man. So I realized at that time that he was being considered, and I believe I said something to Connally about him, which was probably the first knowledge that he had had that he was going in to be assistant to

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the Congressman. Of course, my knowledge of Mary Rather--I've known her since she first went with him, and Walter Jenkins and all of the others that he had.

F: He managed to keep the same crew with him through the years.

J: Yes, he managed to keep them. He drove them hard; he worked them hard. They loved him and they were very loyal, everyone was very loyal to him. He took care of his people, but he just demanded of them that they carry their full load, that they would just not shove work off on anyone else. I recall at one time I was up in Washington during the time that he was congressman, and he was away, he had left. I had asked John Connally to go to supper with me, and John wanted to be sure that Lyndon had gone before he left because he didn't want to leave and incur the wrath of Lyndon. But he went on.

All of these little things like that that I could just recite about Lyndon and about how he's affected people. I recall one time that I was up in Washington and I had a call from Lady Bird. She said that they were having a reception at their house, The Elms. They were entertaining Sargent Shriver and the Peace Corps. I tried to make excuses, and she wouldn't accept them. So she said they would send a White House car for me. So I went on. I had a very enjoyable evening. I met the various people there, Shriver and his wife and Bob Kennedy and others. But I had met McNamara and Kennedy and others during a reception that they

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had that the Johnsons had given for Connally during the time that he was secretary of the Navy. I recall asking Lady Bird if I could take someone along with me, and she said, "Yes, that would be fine." I had a friend, an attorney from Dallas named Edwin Tobolowsky, and I took him along with me. We attended the reception, and it was a very gala affair, McNamara and the Kennedys and all of the Cabinet and everybody worthwhile in Washington. I had met quite a lot of the people, and Lyndon was very devoted. He just would introduce me to people and wanted to be sure that I was having a good time. He is very considerate, and he just never spared anything to be sure that you were completely at ease. During one of the visits that I had there with him in Washington I had this same man, and we went to the Oval Room and sat with the President and visited. He reached over and gave me some things to bring back to the children. He had a bookmark and some pens with his name on them and a cigarette lighter, [about] which I said, "Well, Lyndon, I don't use them." And he said, "You just take it anyhow." I have it right here.

F: Very nice.

J: But he was just always wanting to give you something, always wanting to do something for you. He was just like a young boy that he wanted to see how you reacted. He was just always in a loving, giving mood.

When he became president after the assassination of Kennedy I had

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written him a note and told him that I felt like that he didn't want to be president under those circumstances, that I was sure he would make a fine president, one of the best, and I pledged my support to him. Shortly after that he came down to Austin. They had a reception for him at the Commodore Perry Hotel, and I was invited among the friends there, the close friends that were with him. We got into a debate or something. It wasn't of any importance, but the people there were sort of awe-struck that I would talk to the President in this way. But I didn't think that he had changed to the extent that I couldn't just talk.

F: State your position?

J: Yes. State my position and talk with him in a manner that I had talked with him previously. When we finished he said, "Now I have some pictures that I want to show." I think it was a 12mm pictures that he was going to show. So he took me by the hand, and he held my hand and we sat down on the floor to watch the pictures. He kept holding my hand, and he kept telling me, "I'm just still nervous." He had just never gotten over the shock of what had happened. But he held my hand firmly. We just sat on the floor there all during the picture. But his was a heart that was compassionate, loving, trusting. He just felt like that his friends were his friends, and those of his enemies, why he just didn't care anything for them.

F: Did he ever talk to you about Near Eastern affairs?

J: Yes. He discussed that with me, and I recall he was very sensitive

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as to what people were thinking and what they were saying. I recall one time I was in the White House in the Oval Room, and Lyndon was visibly worried because they were taking the polls. The polls were down, were showing his popularity low. I kept telling him, "Lyndon, you oughtn't to pay any attention to that. Quit taking these polls." He said, "I haven't paid for a single poll. I just haven't taken any." I said, "Well, you've been authorizing them." He raised his voice and he was just very adamant, and he said, "I told you that I haven't paid for one damn poll." I said, "No, but the government's been paying for it." This man that was with me there was just sort of flabbergasted; he was just awe-struck. Well, now, he meant nothing by it. When the thing was over we went ahead just like nothing had happened. But that is the measure of the man; he is a great man. To my way of thinking, history will record him as one of the greatest Presidents of all times.

F: Were you involved in the dinner that they were going to give for Kennedy the night of the assassination?

J: Yes.

F: Tell me a little bit about the planning for that. You must have had some contact with Vice President Johnson at that time.

J: Well, we had had the dinner planned. Everything was all set to have them all here. The young fellow across the way and my son and I were at the Austin Club having lunch that day, and we had been looking forward to that evening [because] they were coming down.

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One of the hostesses at the Austin Club came running up and said, "The President's been assassinated." We thought she was joking, and she said, "No, I think it's on TV now." So we just went over and watched it on TV.

But Lyndon had been intensely loyal to Kennedy. I recall being up in his office, and I had made some snide remark about him being stashed away over there. He said, "No, my job is an important job." He took me outside, and he had some naval man or somebody, and they were just getting ready to work on that space thing. He was in complete charge of that, and he went on to explain that to me. He had at that time with him Mary Margaret Wiley, who was his secretary.

Speaking of Mary Margaret Wiley reminds me, brings back the time that I had met her as a young girl at the University.

F: I had her in a class.

J: She was a novice, and I lived over in Ward 223. I had been visiting with Lyndon while Shivers was governor, and some discussion had come up about Allan. I told him that Allan was going to make a contest of his leadership of the state [Democratic] Party, and he said, "Oh no, I can handle old knucklehead." I said "Lyndon, don't underestimate him." And he said, "Don't worry about that. I can handle him. I'll take care of him." Well, the result was that there was a contest, as you well know, and so again I had to choose

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sides. They were both my friends, and I had chosen to be with Lyndon. I had some property, a building over where the present courthouse is now, and I let Lyndon use that for his headquarters. Sam Houston, his brother, managed it.

So we began to organize the precincts. I had never gone to a precinct meeting and had not been involved in that, and my precinct was all pro-Shivers. They were very conservative. So I was asked to take charge of that precinct. I had gone over and started organizing these people. I had gotten up at the convention, at the meeting, and explained to the people about my relationship with Lyndon, my long association with him and about what a fine man he was. While I didn't want to be on the outs with my neighbors, I considered it very important that he lead the delegation. I just put it to them as a personal thing that I felt that they all should rally behind him and elect him. Well, they elected me chairman of the precinct and Mary Margaret Wiley, that had been her first meeting, was there, and we carried the precinct.

Later on, Johnson defeated Shivers.

F: Yes.

J: I had a note from him thanking me, and he had knowledge of what had gone on. As I say, he was always cognizant of his friends, and he relied upon them. Another occasion was when he had asked a group of his old time friends to come up to Washington.

F: In his last year as president?

J: His last year as president. He had a dinner outside on the lawn,

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and I had been invited. I went up, and Mrs. Joseph in the meantime, prior to that for about three years, had become an invalid. She could not go, and I had to go alone. I had called and asked while I was there if it would be all right to bring someone along. They said, "Surely, just bring anyone you want." Subsequently I decided well, no, I wouldn't do that. It was personal. So I went, and when I got there, and I was there just a short time, one of the aides came by and said, "The President wants you to sit at his table." I said, "All right."

I went on just visiting with people I hadn't seen in a while, and a short while later another one comes up and says, "The President wants you to sit at his table." I said, "Well, I'll be there in a little while." I couldn't see it as any big rush, but he was just insistent. We went over and gathered at the table. He had there at the table; Harris Melasky from Taylor, Postmaster [Dan] Quill from San Antonio, and some of his just real old time friends. He was very exuberant and very happy and very festive, and they took pictures of everyone there. Later on they sent me a picture of the group, but unfortunately I think all that they had of me was the back of my head because I had been facing him and in another direction.

But I treasure the association that I have had with him over the years, and I hope that he will live to see and to hear, to really find out, the fruits of his endeavors, the seeds he had sown and what he had done. Because I think no living man has had

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the courage and has done as much as he has done for the under-privileged and for the oppressed and for the minority groups. I think it took real courage. It was at a time, you know, when it was not popular to do those things. It was not popular to bring a Catholic into the White House or to bring a colored person. I remember Hobart Taylor, whose father owned taxi cabs in Houston. He had taken Hobart from Detroit, as city attorney in Detroit, into Washington, just brought him in there. And I think that on European trips, on Asian trips, he had taken Carl Rowan and others along with him.

Well, no southerner--he had two strikes against him at the beginning--has ever done anything like that. But he's just real conscious of his fellow man. He's a dedicated man, and I think he's the greatest man in our generation. I don't know of anybody that has excelled him. I think that the one thing that might have hurt him was the fact that he was a southerner and the fact that he was from Texas. I think there was a lot of resentment [about that] and also his trust in people. I think that the people that he had retained, the Kennedy people that he had retained, were not as loyal to him as he had hoped that they would be.

F: Did he ever talk to you about this problem?

J: No, he had not talked to me about that.

F: Did he talk to you at all about the 1960 campaign and the fact that Kennedy was a Catholic?

J: Well, we had had some discussion about that, and he was very

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sensitive about getting into the race. I had hesitated to say anything to him because my good friend, John Cofer, at a convention in New Braunfels, I believe it was, got up and advocated Johnson for president. That was long before anybody else had openly done so. Well, shortly after that he got a letter from Lyndon admonishing him for taking this stand and saying, "When I get ready to announce for the presidency, I will let you know. I would appreciate your not--

F: "Jumping the gun on me."

J: --jumping the gun on me."

I could just go on and recount various things that have taken place. I know that the time is short. I want to try to be pleasantly brief, and we have gone on now for an hour and a half. There's a lot of other things I could say that I just don't feel like I want to talk about and make a public record of it.

But I'll say this to his everlasting credit, that the day that he met Lady Bird and the day that he prevailed upon her to be his wife was probably the most successful day of his life. I think of all the things that he has done that truly should be the crowning achievement of his success.

F: She sure did help him open lots of doors.

J: The fact that he had prevailed upon her to become Mrs. Johnson. I think that it's been good for both of them.

F: Yes. Thank you.

[End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview 1]

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