

INTERVIEW II

DATE: May 17, 1982

INTERVIEWEE: ARTHUR KRIM

INTERVIEWER: Michael L. Gillette

PLACE: Mr. Krim's office, New York City

Tape 1 of 2

G: Mr. Krim, let's start with that weekend of August 6, [1965], the first time I believe that you went to Camp David.

K: Yes. My wife and I first went to the White House where Lady Bird introduced us to Bill Deason, whom we soon learned had been an old friend of the family dating back to the President's college days. Then we all went into the Oval Office for a moment's chat with the President before taking the helicopter ride to Camp David. In the Oval Office there were a few moments we spent while Mac Bundy was briefing the President on some foreign affairs situation.

In the helicopter, as I recall it, we met Marianne Means for the first time, and her gentleman friend, and Cissy Morrissey of Life magazine. This was the first time we had been in a helicopter with the President, and so I recall it as an exciting trip for us. When we arrived at Camp David it was our first glimpse of the different ways in which LBJ used to impress us with his informality and the extent he would go to to make his guests, such as us, comfortable. Starting with the fact that it was the first time we drove in one of these golf carts with him when he would always be the driver, and then he would show us to the cabins and make sure that everything was right. We were of course terribly

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impressed with the atmosphere that he was creating for the weekend. He did everything quickly to diminish the awe of being in the presence of the President of the United States on occasions such as this. Of course later this feeling became a part of the relationship, but at that time I recall it as being a time when every new evidence of his informality made an impression on us.

That evening at Camp David we met William White for the first time, and his wife June, and John Chancellor. The evening was pleasant. I remember we discussed a lot of things generally, but from this vantage point of years later I don't recall the specifics of what we discussed on that night.

The next day was spent in various activities, swimming, bowling, and walks and driving around the compound and having relaxed conversations. In the evening John Chancellor showed us a sixteen-millimeter film which he had just taken of the ranch country, and specifically of the LBJ Ranch. That was the first time the President started to talk about our coming to see him at the Ranch. It was the first time also we heard him talk about his roots in that area and what it meant to him.

G: What did he say about them? Do you recall?

K: Well, he talked of how much the land meant to him and how rugged his youth had been on the land. It was the first time also that he mentioned how he had left as a youngster to go to California and then came back, you know, the history of his youth generally and how much of it had to do with the Hill Country. And he bantered back and forth with John Chancellor about the contents of the film. At this time I don't recall the purpose of that film, but I would imagine it had to do with the fact that Chancellor was then the head

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of the USIA and it was going to be broadcast through the facilities of the USIA.

It was also during this period that he talked about Abe Fortas, who he had just appointed to the Supreme Court, and as I told you before we started the interview, I was surprised when he said that he didn't know Abe particularly well socially, not as well as he knew my wife and myself. You know, I put that down as a rather hyperbolic statement. It was the kind of statement which I remember to this day, because it sort of confused me at the time. It was almost as if he was thinking of the friends we were to become, rather than what had gone on up to that time.

After dinner we went into a meeting that I will never forget. It started with a rather casual discussion about a whole variety of things, some of which are listed on this memo of topics that I did shortly after the weekend. Along about nine or ten o'clock Lady Bird went to bed and so did the Whites, and that left in the room Marianne Means, Cissy Morrissey, John Chancellor--what is the name of Marianne Means' young man?

G: Drummond, is that right?

K: Riordan?

G: Yes. Emmet Riordan.

K: Emmet Riordan. And Vicky McCammon, who was there as his secretary, and myself.

The meeting lasted until after six in the morning. It was an extraordinary window into much of the President's subliminal frustrations and--I don't know quite what word to use, I don't want to use the wrong word, but revealing of the complexity of his character and his personality. Taken out of context with all that I learned about the President in later years [it] could have left me with a different perspective on the President than I

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ultimately had. And this is an evidence of one of the reasons why the President is viewed so differently by different people, because over the years I noticed that with his frankness, his predilection to say whatever was on his mind, he would frequently startle people in a first meeting. Some of them, if not many of them, would not have the opportunity of seeing it in a broader context. I was impressed with what I heard that evening, but it gave me a special view of the President which was not the view I ultimately had of him.

He did a lot of drinking that night, fixed the drinks himself, must have had ten or twelve Scotch and soda or Scotch and water drinks. He was an angry man, and his anger was triggered by something that either Chancellor or Marianne Means said to him, and I was entirely on his side in the anger. What was said to him was that they laughed at Jack Valenti for having said, "I sleep better knowing that the President is in the White House." I don't think whoever it was that started this realized what a sensitive chord he or she was touching with the President. But the President lashed out at their failure to recognize loyalty. He spoke of Jack's ability, he spoke of how condescending it was of them to look down on that, and attributed it very early on in the conversation to the fact that he was a Texan and that this is the snob approach to Texans.

And Chancellor and Marianne Means would not let it go. I know that to this day Chancellor--because I've talked to him about it once or twice over the years--looks back on that particular night as one of the watersheds in his own career, because after that lashing out it was very difficult for me to see how long he could survive in the administration. I don't know whether he had much of a past background with the

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President. Marianne Means did. It was clear in that meeting that Marianne had known the President a long time, and I was surprised at her vehemence. And actually, on the many occasions that I spent later with Marianne and the President, this never reappeared, this kind of strong, sharp difference on something.

Cissy Morrissey sided with Chancellor and Marianne, so I kind of ended up as the supporter of the President's view because I felt it--not only because I knew Jack, but to me to make a big point of criticizing somebody for that kind of loyalty just didn't sit well with me. My wife felt the same way.

G: What was Chancellor and Marianne Means' argument? How did they justify their [views]?

K: That it was saccharine and silly, the kind of statement that a mature person would not have made in a speech to the--was it a Harvard group?

G: I think it was, Harvard Business or something like that [Advertising Federation of America].

K: And that it was the wrong thing to say in that atmosphere. Vicky McCammon said nothing, but she was there. But this was only the beginning of what came out in that conversation. The President was very strong in his characterizations of the press, spoke of the fact that the three networks were dominated by communists.

G: But he had been getting a very good press at this point?

K: But I'm telling you what my recollection was. He attacked one of his own cabinet members as a pinko. He really laced into the witch hunt on Bobby Baker. He said, "There's only one reason for it. They're out to get me." He spoke very sharply about

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Bobby Kennedy, saying that people would think of him as snooping around with wiretapping and so forth, but it was Bobby who had done the wiretapping and he, Johnson, who had turned it off. There was going to be no wiretapping under his administration. He felt Bobby had gotten away with a lot in the public mind with his image, although he was one of the most--let me put it another way, as attorney general he had violated the law more than most attorney generals would do.

G: Did this have to do with wiretapping, things like that?

K: Yes, with wiretapping. It was the first time I heard about Bobby Baker at any length. He really felt that Bobby had been railroaded, that he may have made a mistake along the line, but the whole business of enlarging it was to get at him and had been to get at him so that Kennedy would not choose him as his vice president. This was kind of going back to--

G: Did he tie this to Bobby Kennedy, also?

K: Yes.

G: Did he?

K: Oh, yes. And then he spoke disparagingly about the Kennedy record, not about John Kennedy, but about the record. How really outside of the Peace Corps and the Test Ban Treaty, he hadn't done a damn thing, that he hadn't known how to operate, that he had tried to be more available than he was permitted by Bobby Kennedy to become available. Then he went into areas that we talked about in later years, but I recall that he went into them at that time, such things as the New England establishment looking down on a San Marcos graduate and the misconception they had about a Texan. I do believe he said that

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he was more out in front in the fifties on civil rights than Kennedy. [He] made reference to the 1958 [1957] Civil Rights Bill, and I seem to recall that he felt that he had stepped out more there than had been true of Kennedy, but my recollection could be playing tricks on that.

He spoke of the help that he got in his civil rights legislation from [Everett] Dirksen. He spoke of what he had to do to accomplish that. That had something to do with an appointment that Dirksen wanted.

G: Regulatory commission or something?

K: Or something. And he gave him the appointment and he got help on a big piece of legislation. I don't know whether it was civil rights or something else. But I remember he used that as an example of the kind of things he has to do.

He spoke of his frustrations as a president. He spoke then, as he did later many times about the fact that there is a misconception that he looks for power and that he was not looking to use the power of the presidency. He wanted to do good for the country. I notice here on my notes that he said he would like to be remembered as a president of all the people and a man of conscience. I don't know whether that was said at this particular night, but you can imagine in an all-night session that much was covered. I remember it as a period in which he did a lot of lashing out. I remember that I was absolutely and completely bewildered by the fact that he did that with three members of the working press in the room. Of course it was an off-the-record meeting, and in subsequent years I never saw anything written about it, either by Marianne Means or Cissy Morrissey. But things like that seep into the public consciousness, the fact that he would lash out at the

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networks as being dominated by communists, also the press.

G: Do you think he really believed that?

K: No. No. I know he didn't as subsequent events [showed]. That's what I meant before by saying the perspective, based on the one meeting, could be completely wrong. Was Chancellor asked to do an oral history?

G: I'll have to check. I'm sure we've got him on the list. Whether or not he's been interviewed, I don't [know].

K: I would like to read, if it's available, his recollection of that evening. He didn't last much longer in the USIA, and he conducted himself very stubbornly and as far as I'm concerned entirely on the wrong side of the argument. I'm talking about the Valenti thing. But in the course of that session he heard all these other highly charged, obviously exaggerated statements.

G: What do you think the President's motivation was? Do you think he was just letting off steam?

K: Yes.

G: Or do you think he was trying to get the press, to shock them into being more sympathetic?

K: No, I think he was letting off steam. I think he did that a lot of times, probably with too many people for his own best interests. But in the seven years that I knew him after that, I never recall a session quite like that one. Some of it may have had to do with the fact that he was enjoying a lot of drinks that evening, which he never did in later years.

G: That's unusual.

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Did he talk about the Kennedy staff?

K: Yes.

G: The aides?

K: Oh, he really disliked the Kennedy staff, because he felt that if Kennedy had a different kind of staff he would have been of more use to Kennedy during Kennedy's presidency.

He did talk about a problem he had following in Kennedy's footsteps imagewise. It was in that context that he downgraded the accomplishments of the Kennedy presidency and felt that with a lesser record of accomplishment he had been able to project the image of a better president. This was a frustrating thing for LBJ, and I think understandably so.

Lady Bird came back to the meeting at six in the morning and she was absolutely appalled that we were still there arguing about all sorts of things.

G: Did Vietnam come up at all that night?

K: Yes. Vietnam came up and he talked about the fact that he had the support of I remember Max Taylor particularly, who was on Meet The Press over that weekend. The support generally--this was not yet a period of great public opposition.

G: You're right.

K: Most of the people who later turned against him were on board at this time. There were some protests. He had, of course, only within the week or two before this meeting agreed to the big contingent to go to Vietnam. That was maybe the single most important turning point in his conduct of the Vietnam War, was his decision in July to send a very large contingent of troops to Vietnam. Prior to that we had only had a small Marine

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contingent there. He didn't talk about that decision as a decision, as I recall it, but yes, of course he talked about Vietnam. I think he had just been asked by some government to stop the air raids and the bombing. Do you want to ask me any other questions about that?

G: Did he tie the Vietnam thing to the Kennedy Administration at all and indicate that he was pursuing a wiser policy? Did he refer to anything such as the assassination of [Ngo Dinh] Diem?

K: He did say that he was following the Kennedy program in Vietnam, and that he couldn't have come in after the assassination to be the president that would abort the operation there, yes. He, at that time, did not say anything about Diem, but of course in later years he directly accused the Kennedy Administration of condoning the assassination in a way which made them real accomplices in the assassination. He was quite blunt on that in later years. I don't remember his saying that at this time.

G: Now he had just signed the Voting Rights Act.

K: He talked about the Civil Rights [Act] and the fact that he was doing more than the prior administration had done, and he stressed that he was proud of it. I think he was meeting with Martin Luther King the day before or the day after this weekend.

G: Did LBJ regard voting rights as a special remedy for discrimination?

K: Yes.

G: Did he?

K: Why do you question that, because in my recollection that was a given, and he was very proud of the way that he had persuaded [Richard] Russell and some of the other southern

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members to accept what he was doing and not read him out of the club, as it were. And how only he could do it.

G: Do you recall specifically how he described his conversations with Russell?

K: I recall that he described them in great detail, and I don't recall the substance of it. I'd have to have my memory jogged on it. But you know, basically I remember the time had come and this had to be done, and if a southern president did it it would be better for the country, that kind of thing. But there were subtleties to it which I don't recall. But he was very proud of that, the way he had been able to persuade Russell. Russell was very important to the President. That name came up many times as he spoke of his legislative accomplishments. In later years, it came up in connection with the Fortas appointment.

G: Sure.

Did you have the impression that Russell was much more supportive of LBJ than he appeared to be publicly?

K: Yes. I hesitated because I think the stress was that Russell had a constituency that he had to answer to, and there was in that an implication that absent the constituency he might have had a more sympathetic view toward what the President was trying to accomplish.

G: The LBJ Library plans were also moving forward that weekend with an announcement that there was an exchange of letters between the Chairman of the Board of Regents of the University of Texas.

K: Yes. Over the weekend--I don't know whether it was during this all-night session or not--he did speak of the fact that he had in mind the post-presidency and the important part the Library would play in that. That was the first time he had talked about the

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Library. I seem to recall at the same time he talked about having a School of Public Affairs. The two go together in my mind from the very beginning. But it was very much in passing. There was no suggestion at that time that he was going to involve me in the Library project. That came in the last year of his presidency.

Oh, in connection with the Library, he also talked about wanting to teach after he left the presidency. I seem to recall he talked about that as being a very important part of his plans after he left the office.

G: One more thing on Vietnam, a news report that Gerald Ford suggested that he should ask for a declaration of war in Vietnam. Do you recall the President's reaction to this?

K: No, but I have a note which I can't quite interpret that he talked about Senator [Ernest] Gruening in connection with Vietnam. Now, of course, Gruening was I think one of the two senators who voted against the [Gulf of] Tonkin Resolution. But my note indicates that he talked favorably about Gruening at that time and it could be that at that time Gruening was actually supporting what he was doing in Vietnam. Or else the reference is that even though Gruening was not supporting him, he was doing it in a gentlemanly fashion. I don't remember references to Ford at that time.

G: Anything else that weekend that we haven't [covered]?

K: Yes. Oh, yes. That was only--

G: The all-night--

K: --the all-night session.

On Sunday we went to church in the morning just a couple of hours after this session had ended. That was our first meeting with the Reverend [George] Davis, who

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was the head of the Christian Church to which the President belonged. George Reedy and Horace Busby both showed up on Sunday and spent a good time around the pool. The President kept talking about all kinds of issues, even while he was in the pool, and it was fascinating to me. You see a list of the subjects that he covered on this exhibit that I have that I wrote down.

I remember that Busby took me aside and said, "The President was very impressed with the way you had handled yourself in the all-night session and kept asking questions about you, because it was more or less the first time he had been in that kind of conversation with you. I think you're going to find that he wants you to come into the administration." I said, "I hope he doesn't ask me," because that couldn't fit into what I was doing at that time. But it was a hint that the President was taking a look at whether I could play a part in his administration. Actually he talked to my wife about it that same day, and she told him that I was getting tired of the fund-raising uniform, and of course she was of the opinion that I could be of great help to him.

G: Did they give any indication of what role you might play?

K: No, but she also told him that she didn't think I'd be interested in a government job. No, the answer to that question is no at that time.

On Sunday the President talked to him about New York politics. He particularly got into a subject that was important to one of our contributors, Abe Feinberg, who was pressing for his brother to be appointed to the Circuit Court. He was then on the District Court. Mrs. Lehman was pressing for another candidate. This was a very hot political situation in New York. The President, whose antennae were always out for him to do

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these things right, wanted to make sure that I would convey to Abe Feinberg that he was going to come down in favor of his brother because he knew that I was raising money from Abe Feinberg for the campaign and for the Democratic Party. That's the usual thing of letting a senator have the benefit of something for his constituents. So I was the one who conveyed it to Abe Feinberg after that weekend, that night. I don't know how it got back to Mrs. Lehman, but she and I were very close and she was so bitter that she hardly talked to me for a year or two after that. So that came up.

I remember his talking about or asking my wife and me about [Levi] Eshkol, who had just become the prime minister in Israel. I had known him, and he wanted to get my opinion of him. My wife, I remember, who knew the history there a little better than I did, commented on the many ways in which Eshkol and Johnson were alike, because they both came from the soil and he was also a blunt, strong pragmatic man, and she predicted that Johnson would like him very much. And when in later years Johnson finally met him and said he did like him, she reminded him of the fact that she had made that prediction early on.

There's a note here in my notes that reminds me that he talked about his prediction that he would die at the age of sixty, even at that time. Apparently that's when his father passed away, his uncle, his grandfather. At the time he was talking he was fifty-seven years old, and so--this was also during that all-night session. It was a I'm-feeling-sorry-for-myself kind of statement at the time, and it tied in with the anger of that night, because it was an angry night for him.

Through it all, this whole weekend, he was absolutely the most gracious host that

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anybody could ever want to spend a weekend with. When it comes from a president it makes quite an impression because you know he's got millions of things on his mind. But we came away with a feeling of affection and the hope that we would get to know each other better. And he made many statements to indicate that that would be the case. He said how much he enjoyed being with us, that he wanted to see us a lot more and he'd like us to see his place in Texas. The next morning we flew with him to a ceremony at the Health Institute in a chopper and left him there. He made a big point of telling us at the time of goodbye that we've got to get together very soon. So when we did leave and went back to New York, both of us felt that it had been a watershed kind of weekend for us and would probably have a big impact on our way of life in the future, as it did indeed have.

G: Sure enough.

Anything else on civil rights? Did he talk about that meeting he had with Martin Luther King the day before?

K: Well, you see, if he did I just don't recall it well enough to talk about it.

G: How about the appointment of Robert Weaver to be secretary of HUD? There's a note here that Marianne Means had noted in a column that civil rights advocates were pushing for Weaver's appointment.

K: I don't recall that.

G: Anything over the dispute between Pakistan and the United States over Pakistani support of Vietnam?

K: Yes. He particularly talked about their foreign minister, who became the prime minister

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who was later hung. [Zulfikar Ali] Bhutto was then the foreign minister and the President had very unkind words to say about the kind of person he was. Yes, I recall that very specifically. He felt this foreign minister was anti-American.

G: Now Monday when you went to the National Institute of Health, did he talk with your wife about his health measures, the health program in which he was interested?

K: Yes, he talked about that with her over the weekend, and of course that was a continuing thing over the years. She and Mary Lasker used to pester him continuously for health bills and with considerable success, I may say. But that was an ongoing thing for several years.

G: Anything on the resignation of Dr. Luther Terry as director of that?

K: No. I think that was already accomplished at the time that we were there.

G: Okay.

K: He did talk about some of the personalities with Mathilde because she knew the NIH people. That was an area that she was very well acquainted with.

A couple of weeks later I had a call from Air Force One, and the President called to ask if my wife and I could come down for the Labor Day weekend. I told him my wife was overseas, but that I'd be happy to come down. He said Jack Valenti would let me know about the arrangements. I told my wife about it, and since she had never been to the LBJ Ranch she even thought of coming back from Rome to go the weekend. I said, "Well, look, why don't you call Jack Valenti and get his reading of it." She called Jack from Rome and Jack said, "Oh, my, don't do that. You're going to be invited many times." He said, "Don't think you're missing something that you won't have a chance to

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do." Which was the case. We thought this might be the one time we'd ever see the Ranch and she thought that was important enough to consider coming back to the States to do.

So I went down alone, that is, with Jack Valenti. We caught the Jetstar at Andrews [Air Force Base] and went down to the Ranch, at least we went to Austin. The President had come to Austin from the Ranch. The President and Lady Bird and I rode in the car with the Secret Service to a church service, an Episcopalian church service, and during the ride the conversation was about Lynda. Lynda had spent a week with us I guess in New York before that at our country place with a Marine escort whom the President did not like very much. He talked about wanting Lynda to meet nice young men, and he was sure Mathilde and I could help in that direction. You know, we had become very fond of her, and he was thanking us for the time we had spent to make her stay in New York a good one. He wanted her to get to know the New York scene and to mature and so forth. That's about what we talked about on the way to church.

At the church as we were going past the press corps I noted Cissy Morrissey was there, and we were now old friends from the August 6 weekend. She obviously knew who I was. I tried to stay in the background, because I always had a sense from the beginning that the less my name appeared in the press the better the President would like it. But the next day it was in all the papers across the country that I had accompanied the President to the church, and I always thought Cissy Morrissey had indicated that. It turned out to be helpful, and I think even the President didn't mind it at that time because of the fact that to do the President's Club work it was good to have the image of being

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close to the President. So that if somebody would give me something for the President's Club, they could assume the President would know about it. And that weekend helped in that connection. The press noticed that I had been with him. Actually, the next morning at breakfast he came out and said, "Well, I see you made the papers again." And he seemed jocular about it, but I told him I had nothing to do with it. I also remember telling him about the J. P. Morgan episode, where this fellow was in financial difficulty and J. P. Morgan put his arm around him and walked him across the Stock Exchange, and that established his credibility. I said, "I'm a made man now that that's in the press."

We left the church, Sunday morning, of course, with Judge [Homer] Thornberry and his wife--and that was the first time I met the Thornberrys--and flew to the Ranch. When the President showed me to my room with Homer Thornberry alongside, he said, "This is your room, and I expect you're going to use it a lot." Homer on the way out took me aside and said, "You're going to have the pressure put on to join the administration. I can sense it."

G: Which room was it, by the way?

K: It was in the main house on the first floor to the left. We used that room quite a bit in the next six months. There were two main bedrooms upstairs, one to the left and one to the right. Occasionally we used the one to the right, but usually the one to the left. It was a room with two beds and a bath and a little dressing area. This was before he renovated the house, before there was a Lady Bird bedroom and before there was the new little sitting room, and before his new bedroom.

Of course, what happened was what came to be a typical ranch weekend, but

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every minute of it was new to me at that time, and it left an indelible impression. Again, I was surprised by a number of the things. For instance, the very first thing we did when we got there was take a helicopter ride to a place that must have been three minutes away, and we landed in Johnson City. The first place he took me to was an apartment that he was furnishing over the bank, the building where Judge [A. W.] Moursund's office was. To me it was again a source of amazement that the President of the United States would be worrying about furnishing an apartment that they were either going to rent or use for visiting reporters, I don't know what. But he was talking about the color of the drapes and the bed. And it was a very modest little apartment. They furnished it ultimately, and I never saw it again.

Then we went to a more interesting place and one that he was very proud of, and that was the Boyhood Home, and he took me through that. And then to a very interesting place, the fort--

G: Oh, the settlement, the old--

K: --where his grandmother or grandfather or great uncle or something had held off the Indians. He told me that whole story. And none of this had been developed. The present kind of park that surrounds those forts was then just a lot of eel grass. It was in a disorderly condition. But it was most interesting to hear that history for the first time from the President. I don't remember what the sequence was, but during the weekend, by helicopter, by car--and he would always drive; I soon got used to the idea that he was his own driver--by jeep we visited four of the ranches, the Lewis Ranch and the Haywood and the Reagan and the Scharnhorst. We visited one of his neighbors, Bill Heath, who

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subsequently became ambassador to Sweden and who was very important in arranging for the University of Texas to support the Library project. We took several boat rides, on the speedboat and on the big boat. It was a kaleidoscope of movement. I don't think we rested, except a little bit in the afternoon when he would take a quick nap. We'd go from one thing to another. He pointed out his vision for the area across the way from the Ranch.

G: What did he say about that, do you recall?

K: Oh, he was having a fight with some of the property owners on getting it, but he didn't want that to become a hot dog row. He didn't want it to do disrespect to the presidency for the people who would be coming there to visit the Birthplace and the Ranch. He visualized it as a park area, and as with so many things that the President visualized, it came to pass just as he visualized it. That was true of the Library, of the School of Public Affairs, it was true of that park. It is true of things that happened on his ranches. He had an extraordinary determination, once a concept had become clear in his mind, to get it done, and he knew how to get it done.

I played no role in that park across the way other than to hear about it over the years. But he had to accomplish a lot, with the federal government, with the state government, with the tax authorities, with the property owners, including one very anti-Johnson property owner who was a holdout for a long period of time. And he just took it all in stride, and I could see how he--you know, I would hear him on the phone with different people who played different roles in getting that done, including the architect, who later was the architect for our home, Roy White. On this first occasion, he had the

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blueprints in his mind because he described it, the rest places with the main house, and how it would protect the Ranch from being desecrated by the wrong kind of neighbors. And as the years went on he accomplished it, and by the time he left the presidency it was there.

So there was all this movement. It included one little visit that became important to us, and that is on I guess the second day I was there, we--just Judge Moursund, the President and I--went first to the Mary Margaret [Valenti] house. He called it the Mary Margaret house; it was a house that Mary Margaret had owned, and Jack and she had used it and then it became one of the stopping-off stations for the President on his trips around. They had drinks in the ice box and so on. I remember he said to the Judge, "Let's show Arthur the place where he's going to buy some property." First I heard of that. We drove to what were then called the ranchettes, the LBJ-Moursund property that consisted of a hundred and fifty acres I guess that were going to be divided into five-acre plots for little houses. They had already cut two pathways of a normal, urban street width that destroyed a lot of the shrubbery and the trees. They were going to pave those and then have offshoot streets.

We drove in a jeep and he drove me up in a rough area. In a corner of the property he said, "That's the Goldberg property. Arthur was here and he's going to buy five acres at five thousand dollars." I thought he was talking about five thousand dollars an acre, and I started thinking a hundred and fifty acres, five thousand, this is a big business these fellows have here. And then he said, "You and Mathilde should buy one of these plots. Buy five acres. Build a little house here. What I visualize, I want to bring

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a lot of my friends from up north to make this a great vacation place." I remember he mentioned, he said, "Arthur Goldberg is going to be here. I'd like you to get Sol Linowitz. Let's bring a whole group down here, and it will be just great. It will be great for us here in this area and it would be great for everybody else. You'll have the boating on the water and we'll fix up other facilities and so forth."

Of course, while he was saying this I was looking at this very rugged, rough terrain. I told him I'd have to talk to Mathilde about it. When I went back one of the things I did was, because I was puzzled by the price and I knew nothing about prices down there, I called Horace Busby. And I said, "Is that acreage worth five thousand dollars an acre or is the President putting me on?" Horace said, "I don't know anything about values either, but if his plans go through maybe it'll be worth five thousand an acre." Then I talked to Arthur Goldberg and I said, "Did you really buy that property?" He said, "Well, the President was twisting my arm. I don't know how I'd ever get to use it. I'm just stalling." Because I felt the President had been very serious and I was thinking, twenty-five thousand dollars just for five acres of that kind of land seemed a little on the exorbitant side. On the other hand, I didn't want to suggest that A. W. and the President were asking more than the property was worth. Subsequently it turned out he was talking about five hundred dollars an acre, not five thousand.

When my wife came on the next visit--not the next visit, the next visit I think he was recuperating. But somewhere along the line not too long after that--I think it was after the turn of the year into 1966--when my wife came, she did pick out a five-acre lot. She picked out the one that had a windmill on it, which attracted her. We then went into

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the landowner's syndrome, which is we wanted to own all the land adjacent to our land.

G: All that's mine and all that touches it, huh?

K: Before long, in the space of less than two months, we had bought the whole hundred and fifty acres. First we bought five plots ahead of us and then to the left, then to the right. Moursund and LBJ kept striking off on the map what was available. We kept the Goldberg five acres alone for almost a year before Arthur Goldberg said he passes, so we ended up with the Goldberg acres, too. But the seed for all of this was planted on this weekend in September that I was there.

G: Was this near the lake?

K: It's about a mile away from the lake. But we didn't want the lake. Actually the plot my wife took was the farthest away from the lake. The Goldberg plot overlooked the lake. Because we have a home on the water in Long Island. We were looking for anything but water there; we were looking for rugged Texas kind of land. At the time we didn't think we were going to ranch it. Later we--there, too, Moursund and the President sold us cattle. Of course, all of that grew as the years went on.

To get back to this Labor Day weekend, in addition to the frenetic moving around and getting to know the President in his own environment a lot better and really seeing all these things for the first time, in addition to all of that was the opportunity to meet some of the people who were close to him. I particularly remember meeting George Brown for the first time that weekend, under these circumstances. It just so happens--and we talked about it--I had met George Brown with his brother at least fifteen or twenty years before that when I was a lawyer for somebody and we'd come down on a business deal. We had

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spent a weekend actually at Fort Clark. But I hadn't seen George in the interim and I never saw him in this particular relationship with the President.

G: What was it like? What was their relationship like?

K: Very close, extremely close. George had obviously played a big part in the President getting to where he was, and the President had done a lot of things that were helpful to George, as his business was growing. I cannot say what the relationship was on one-on-one, but I would guess that apart from Lady Bird it might have been as close a relationship as he had with anybody.

G: How was this manifest? Was it just in the give and take?

K: Well, there was an easy intimacy to begin with. I did sense, even with George Brown but more so with some of the other people that I met, that the President was more liberal politically than his close friends. George was a loyal Johnsonian, but George had many political views that could be--where he would be more comfortable with, say, John Connally or with a Republican. At that time John Connally was, as you know, of course a Democrat. Do you want to ask any more questions about that?

G: Anything on, say, 14-B of the Taft-Hartley Act in particular that they discussed?

K: I think they would disagree on that, but I don't remember that kind of discussion.

At this particular weekend, Oveta Hobby joined us. She seemed to be very friendly with the President, a lovely lady. And of course the Thornberrys were there the whole weekend, and they were close to the President, both Homer and Eloise. I don't know why, but I'm almost certain, although your notes indicate the contrary, that John Connally joined us on Sunday afternoon. Because we all went to the Haywood, and I

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remember a ceremony, like crossing the equator, in my honor where Brown and Oveta and I'm sure Connally, the President, made me an Honorary Texan, gave me a little diploma that certified that I was now a Texan. They all had a good time doing that.

G: Was that at the Haywood?

K: Yes. Jack Valenti was there, and I remember I was pleased he was there because if he hadn't been I would have considered myself the shortest Texan in creation, and all these other big guys. A. W. Moursund, of course throughout, A. W. Moursund was at everything that I'm talking about, virtually every automobile ride, every helicopter ride and all the meals.

G: What was their relationship like?

K: It was very, very close at this time. There would be a constant communication. I mean, I would be driving with the President, he'd be on the phone to A. W. if A. W. wasn't here.

G: Was it mainly about the Ranch? Was it mainly about business? Was it mainly about politics?

K: It was about their common business. They were in business together. There was a lot of talk about the ranches. Not the Ranch so much as the ranches. They owned most of what I'm talking about together. They also owned things separately.

One of the things that amazed me this weekend were the communications and what was put out over them. Because this is the President--nothing secret, I don't mean that, but there was a lot of intimate stuff, a lot of swearing, and there were these open terminals that I later learned were one in the Moursund house, one in Dale Malechek's house, the ranch foreman. After two years we had a terminal, a walking terminal at our

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place, at our ranch that would be carried around our ranch all the time. It was an open conversation that covered a lot of territory, and the President was constantly giving the most minute instructions, such as "Have you caught that"--"There's a hole in the wire fence here, I want it fixed," or about the baby calf, or "Damn it, you were supposed to do this and do that." This went on all the time on the air, and this was my first exposure to it. It was another culture shock that you take at first impression.

G: He was really acting as ranch foreman?

K: And how! Every detail. And it was wonderful to see the people who would stop him, the really old Texans with the gnarled hands and the weatherbeaten look who worked the fields. He was not only their president, he was their friend. He had things to say about their families. If ever you can imagine a man being father to a tremendous brood, he was in those surroundings.

The other people who joined us at this time included Jesse Kellam and of course Lady Bird, and there may have been some others. As you can see, these were his very close friends. When you talk about Jesse Kellam and A. W. Moursund and Homer Thornberry--

G: Don Thomas.

K: --and George Brown, I think Don Thomas was there--you're talking about his inner circle. They all took to me and I took to them; there was an easy rapport from that time on. So in that sense the weekend was also important to me.

G: He had just resolved the steel strike crisis.

K: I know that, and there was some talk of that. But I don't remember anything specific.

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He also talked about a couple of things that weekend that were of personal nature with me because of my partner Bob Benjamin. Bob was having a big conference at the White House in November, having sponsorship from the UNA [United Nations Association], and he wanted the President to be there. I forget what it was about, but I think it may have had to do with the International Year celebration of the United Nations. And he agreed to be there. Subsequently he didn't go because of his operation and his convalescence. We talked about that.

I saw him in different moods over that weekend, generally relaxed, obviously enjoying every minute, but occasionally quite critical of somebody [who] hadn't done something completely properly, of Jack Valenti, of Dale Malechek, and of his Secret Service people who were following him all the time. He wanted everything done just right, and he could be very sharp and had a quick temper with these people who were working for him if things weren't right. I have to say that in the seven years I knew him, he never had a single sharp word with me. Even though there were one or two places where he would have been justified, because although I felt I had done most things in a way that protected him in every which way, there was the one occasion of the polling flap where the press attacked him, and it was something that I felt I should have protected him on, although he never said a harsh word about it.

G: Did he primarily criticize subordinates or would he have lashed out against someone, say, in the same status you were in?

K: Oh, I was about to say, there's nobody who isn't subordinate to the President unless you are talking about another head of state or something. You've asked a question which

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touches on an important aspect of the President's character as I saw it. He did very little distinguishing between people doing lesser jobs and heads of state or generals. At his table you were just as likely to see Dale Malechek or the neighbors who later became the guardians of the park or the secretaries or a governor. He had a very egalitarian approach to people. And he was himself, in my observation, whether he was with a head of state or with somebody working on the Ranch for him. He was always himself. I never felt he was a man in awe of anybody, or thought of anybody as being on a special pedestal. He admired people but he didn't kowtow, and at the same time he didn't browbeat for the sake of browbeating or look down on anybody. That's not what I was trying to imply when I say he was sharp with people; that was his wanting to get things done. He was sharp with Lady Bird in that context, but she was so used to it that it would just pass her by.

G: Did most of the aides just take it in stride?

K: Yes. Yes. But they got a big dose of it, the Secret Service particularly because--

G: Mexican generals I think he used to call them.

K: He really used to let them have it. They had to do everything under the sun, and they had to do it well, and from where I sat they did it well. He didn't hesitate to want them to do it better.

Now, I can't say whether he would have bawled [out] somebody else in the relationship that I had with him, because I wouldn't have the opportunity to be privy to a one-on-one that he might have had with George Brown or with Jesse Kellam or with Homer Thornberry. I did see him get testy with Don Thomas a number of times. I can't

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answer that question better than to say I don't know.

G: Let me ask you one more thing about his temper. How much of it do you think was just letting off steam, manufactured more or less to just release frustration, and how much do you think was just criticism to improve the performance of a subordinate or associate?

K: I would place most of it in the latter category. I think it was to get the job done. All his people that I know, like [Harry] McPherson, Valenti, [Joseph] Califano, will tell you that no matter how bitter the tongue-lashing, the graciousness that followed to repair the wound was always there. I mean, he didn't leave scars, permanent scars. I think all of them ended up amongst his greatest admirers for what he accomplished, but they all had to go through some pretty rough periods. And occasionally, not too often, it would be in the presence of somebody else like myself. I used to hear about most of it indirectly rather than observe it. At the heart he was really a kind and warm human being who once he got over that would worry over whether he had hurt the person too much. And so, yes, I think the motivation was to get the job done.

One of the things that started at this weekend, which is a side of the President that most of his friends know, is what I would call his kidding routines. He would develop certain frames of reference for--

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K: He would have a habit of kidding his close friends and would many times develop a certain frame for the kidding so it could be continuous. In my case it took two forms: one was he used to kid me about the dirty motion pictures that our company was making, that he could never invite Father [Wunibald] Schneider or his other decent friends to see.

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When we'd show movies he'd always make some cracks about whether it was my kind of movie or not my kind of movie. But the movie thing was a big running gag with him.

My riposte more often than not was that he slept through the movies anyway.

G: Which he did I gather.

K: But he'd always have a way of opening his eyes when there was a pretty girl on the screen.

He used to josh me about that. He used to josh me about New York and all that that meant. For a while he used to josh me about coming down there with a girlfriend other than Mathilde, and of course I never had. He would make this up. I remember when we drove to the State Department from the White House, just before he went to the hospital for his operation, Mathilde and I had been late because our plane had been sitting on the ground at La Guardia. We got there just at the last minute. He grabbed the two of us. We had a car waiting outside, but he grabbed the two of us and shoved us into his car with Fredric March and his wife. And on the way he kept telling Fredric March that I had been to the Ranch over Labor Day weekend with another girl, and Mathilde didn't know that, with another blonde. He was implying that my girlfriend was Marie Fehmer. It was wild. But he would do that kind of thing. He did it with a lot of his friends. It would be out of the blue but it would be kidding on the unsquare, let me put it that way instead of kidding on the square. Did you know him personally?

G: A little bit.

K: Well, did you ever see him in that kidding mood? He used to kid Marie Fehmer all the time. He did the same with Jack Valenti, with almost everybody. And he would have

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these routines that would go on from one meeting to the next.

Do you want to ask me any other questions about that Labor Day weekend?

G: Home rule for District of Columbia.

K: No, no, did not come up.

G: Anything on the Dominican Republic?

K: That had come up before, as you know, and I know he was proud of the fact that everything had worked well there and I'm sure he mentioned it. Because at this time he was talking about giving them some aid and it was working out.

G: Anything on escorting--

K: Of course, I had heard that story on the Dominican Republic before. Actually, it had been at the August weekend. He had already told that to Mathilde but I heard that story which he made into quite a saga of the ambassador ducking bullets and saying, "You've got to send the troops" and so forth. He repeated that, I remember that night, in showing that a president has to be strong. He can't be lily--he can't have a weak character. He had stepped into the Dominican Republic. But he knew what he was doing. I remember he was very critical of the Bay of Pigs and the fact that Kennedy went in without knowing what he was doing and hadn't done his homework and so forth. He was contrasting that with his actions at this time. Yes, any other questions?

G: Anything in the Dominican Situation, to smooth the job of getting rid of [General Elias] Wessin y Wessin, the Dominican military officer who was so controversial?

K: Yes, yes. That was an area in which he did talk about using Abe Fortas. Abe had gone to Puerto Rico on his behalf, and I think Abe had some part to play in what you're talking

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about.

G: He did.

K: Yes, I remember that that was discussed. But I don't think anything was said there that will shed any new light on the situation.

G: Anything on the Indian-Pakistani clash over Kashmir during this--?

K: I don't remember that.

G: Legislation creating HUD?

K: Yes, we talked about that. That I remember because--maybe it wasn't August, but at either of these times now I recall we did talk about having a black head up HUD, and therefore I think we must have talked about Robert Weaver, whom I didn't know at the time. Later I got to know him.

G: Now, I was going to ask you just in riding around the Ranch, did you ride in the amphibicar then for the first time?

K: Which car?

G: The little blue car that goes into the water.

K: Yes, we did. Of course, we did. Because what happened was that he took Oveta Hobby into the car with him and he asked me to follow with Bill Hobby, who I recall now was also at the weekend. At that time I don't think I knew what this was all about. I remember we failed to be where we were supposed to be, and he came out of the boat at the Haywood, said, "Where the hell were you?" I said, "We looked for you. We couldn't find you." He said, "Damn it"--by now we knew it was a boat, you see. He said, "I wanted that guy Hobby, I wanted to see what he would do if he saw the President and his

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mother about to drown." And he wanted the reaction of young Hobby and he didn't get it. Yes. So that was my first--now subsequently I used to watch when he tried different people out, including Joe Califano jumping out of the car before it went in. The President needed him for a long time about that, "let your President drown but you're going to save your own skin." I think Eppy [Ephriam] Evron, the ambassador to Israel, did the same thing. Yes, you refreshed my recollection. It's funny how I forgot that.

G: He was dieting, too, that month.

K: Oh, yes. Well, he was dieting all through that time and he was not smoking. It was something to see. I had my meals at the Ranch, and at night he would come in and open that icebox and, when Lady Bird wasn't around, take some cookies.

Another thing that weekend is I met his staff. They stayed with him many years, and so they became kind of part of the family, too. Actually we got our staff through them when we opened our place at Texas. But he had a wonderful loyalty from the people who worked for him. Deservedly. He used to give them hell on the intercom, and how Lady Bird managed I will never know because starting with that weekend I was with him when she wouldn't know until two minutes before if she'd have twenty people for lunch or three. Even though she'd ask him, he wouldn't make up his mind until the last second. You know, so many of these things will come back as we're talking. I don't suppose they come as new things to you.

G: They do, they do. He had gallstone attacks, too, that weekend.

K: Well, I'm coming to that. Monday morning Jack Valenti told me he wasn't feeling well, but he didn't tell anything more than that. And Jack suggested that I go back to New

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York with Lady Bird, because he didn't know what the President's plans would be. So Lady Bird gave me a ride first to Wyoming I think, and then I had the plane to myself to either Andrews or New York, I forget which. Subsequently, Lady Bird told me after the operation that she was very grateful that I didn't press her on what had happened that morning and considered it a sign of discretion, because he was trying to keep it a secret, and he did. And I was as amazed as everybody else when he announced that he was going in for the operation and that he had first made that decision back that Sunday.

G: Had he had any problems before that weekend?

K: I wouldn't know.

G: I mean while you were together with him. Did he seem uncomfortable?

K: No. No. He kept eating. Not the slightest sign. It came as a surprise to me that morning. Of course, as it turned out, Oveta stayed and he got better in the afternoon, well enough to go back under his own powers. As a matter of fact, according to your notes he was better by twelve or one o'clock of that morning. But Lady Bird left very early in the morning. And she apparently left without worrying too much about it.

G: Well, I think she was worried, but they decided not to alert the press by altering her plans.

K: Now another thing that I--you know, there are so many things that were first here.

Another one was his feelings that the press had no right to know what he was doing when he was at the Ranch. He wanted them kept at a distance, either in Austin or San Antonio. And it was during this weekend that I got a very clear sense that if I wanted the President as a friend--and I did--that the first thing to understand was the privacy of the relationship. It came out so clearly. He never had to say it, but he went to such lengths,

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particularly when we went boating, to see that the press was not around.

G: What did he do, for example?

K: Well, he had the Secret Service check out where everybody was. He would go into Coca Cola Cove instead of into the area where they might see him. He made it abundantly clear that he didn't want them to know that he had the visits with George Brown or Homer Thornberry. He just didn't want them to know what he was doing. It didn't seem to have any real purpose, other than that he was determined that there were certain things that were private, and other things that were presidential, and the two were not to be confused. Of course as the years went on this became such a big thing with him. I mean, particularly in his relationship with my wife and me, and with me, the lengths we used to go to so that the press wouldn't know I was with him were really sometimes quite extraordinary, such as--well, as an example, if I joined the plane at Bergstrom [Air Force Base] I would get on in the hangar twenty minutes before it would be rolled out for him to get on.

I felt at times we were overdoing it, and at other times I wondered at the fact that we were not doing it. For instance, I knew every time we would go to church with him it would be in the press, and so I always said no, but on certain occasions he'd insist that I'd go. And sure enough, it would be in the press. So he was playing it very carefully. As the years went on, he explained to me that he didn't want me to be the target of the press, and he said, "You can't be this close to me without being the target, unless it's kept private." And he'd exaggerate a little again. He said, "You're my Colonel [E. M.] House," you know, that kind of thing, which I never took literally. He didn't want me to

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become what Bebe Rebozo became in the Nixon years. He didn't have the same social relationship with Clark Clifford or Abe Fortas that he began to have with me, and I guess felt that he didn't want me to be badgered to answer questions, and I think he knew--of course he knew by experience--that whatever he said to me went into a deep vault and never could be a source of public embarrassment to him if it came out the wrong way.

But he did go to those lengths, so I recognized early on that this was of importance to him. On my wife's first trip to the Ranch, which came just after the operation, while he was in bed recuperating except that he could get up and go to the car and do a little driving, the first thing he said when we got there was "You want to come to church with me?" I took my wife aside and I said, "I think he's being polite. I really feel we should not," and we said no and he accepted it with alacrity, so my instinct was right. Then we developed a pattern. He kept me away from the press as much as could be. He treated Moursund the same way. He knew Moursund was as close-lipped as anybody could be. He used to quote Moursund's favorite answer to a reporter who asked him something about the President. He said Moursund said, "I ain't in the interview business," and that was the end of the contact. He had the coterie of people who he could trust that way, Jesse Kellam and I'm sure--

G: Kellam was perhaps even more tight-lipped.

K: Yes. Jesse Kellam wouldn't tell a reporter what time it was. He had some others like that around him. He had some--and I see no purpose in mentioning names--who were very close to him but whose wives he felt would blabber, and therefore had to compartmentalize what he said. I'm rambling, but I hope you don't mind.

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G: No, this is all relevant.

K: Because it's related to what we're talking about. In 1966, New Year's Eve, 1966, we had finished our house in Texas and we gave a New Year's Eve party to the President with his closest friends, hand-picked. He said he wanted it absolutely kept away from the press, and he was insistent on it. I told everybody "not a word if you come to this party." The next morning it was in the press, and he was livid. He had Bill Moyers--no, whoever was handling press relations; it might have still been Bill—but he had them track it down and it turned out that the wife of one of the men there had called somebody in Austin, "Where are you?" "I'm at this party." "Who's there?" And that somebody had given it to the Austin press.

But those are the lengths he went to to keep things secret. We had a guilt complex about it, my wife and I, that we had somehow or other caused this. We felt he was over-reacting. The only reason he could have had for it, because he was in reasonably good company, was that he didn't want the impression of playing around on New Year's Eve. It was one of those places where we thought he was overdoing it, but it was within the pattern that he established. He frequently overdid it in our opinion, and I think in Lady Bird's opinion. Maybe not, but I would feel that all this cloak and dagger stuff we went through was probably many times not necessary. But we did go through it all through the years, and I got a sense of it this Labor Day weekend. Do you want to ask some other questions about this?

G: I think that covers everything that I have on that weekend. Unless there's anything on his association with John Connally that came out in that weekend.

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K: No, but I look at my notes here and I see that at lunch on Sunday he talked about settling the steel strike, he talked about the Dominican situation. But he did not talk, I see here, about a maritime strike, and that he had already established a new record for thirty-six presidents and I don't know what that referred to. The day before he had some reporter, about sixty thousand words. Would that mean anything to you? Which established a new record for presidents.

G: Perhaps it was the number of times on TV or number of press conferences.

K: I don't know. Now I'm reminded of a couple of other things that happened. One, on a personal note, I did ask him and Jesse Kellam about television in Houston, because our company had a UHF license at that time. I remember his suggesting that I go down to Houston to see his friend [Roy] Hofheinz, which I did. Subsequently we did not go forward with that.

I also made notes of seeing him as a real cattle rancher, calling the cows with the cattle horn and teaching me about foundering, and what a good calf looked like against one that had bad markings. This was obviously a big love with him and I think it came on rather late in his own life. I may be wrong, but I think this pride of possession in the land and the cattle and so forth was probably a later life development with him. But he really reveled in it.

So that takes us for the moment past that Labor Day weekend.

The next time that I met with him I believe was at the White House a week or two later, when he had a dinner that had been more or less planned by Eddie Weisl, Bobby Lehman and myself. You'll recall Bobby Lehman had been chairman of the President's

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Club dinner in New York in July. As a result of that, he was interested in the President's Club concept. We had talked to the President about the opportunity for a lot of the members of the club who were also important businessmen to come to the White House for a dinner. He was having a different series of dinners at this time. I had been to one in June. I think I was to another one in August, of businessmen. But this one in September was on a guest list that was 80 per cent given by Ed Weisl, Lehman and myself.

The three of us stayed as house guests at the White House that night, and that was the second time I had slept there. I was given the same room, 303, and over the years that was more or less the room that I would use when I would go to the White House. The three of us spent some time with him both the day of the dinner and the morning after. The dinner itself was a huge success from our viewpoint. I looked at the list of those who attended the dinner in the papers you sent me, and it's more or less the leadership group of the President's Club that remained solid contributors over the years. Although as I think I mentioned in my first meeting with you, comparing the big contributions they made with those that Nixon used to receive is comparing pennies with multi-dollars. I don't think there was a single person on the list who had given more than ten thousand dollars and most of them are in the thousand to five thousand list. But we thought of it as important money at that time.

We took the occasion to talk to the President about politics in New York, and he could never get very excited about that. I think Bob Wagner had just indicated he was not going to run for mayor, and we were pressing the President to come out in support of Abe Beame. I'm not sure he did. He may have. I remember he wasn't exactly

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affirmative about Beame.

G: Did he know Beame?

K: No, I don't think he knew him too well. I think Ed Weisl told him he should know that Beame had been one of the very few on the New York delegation in 1960 who had been for him.

We talked about the President's Club, and that night after the dinner we went upstairs and chatted for an hour or more. I remember he had Bill Moyers join us, and he was effusive in his praise of Bill. This was a coming young man that he counted on a lot. And he did some business while we were there in the sense that I remember he called Hale Boggs to congratulate him on some bill that had to do with--my notes would indicate barges, I don't know what that could have meant. He talked to Lehman particularly about did he have any influence with the Ford Company not to raise automobile prices. I remember that came up. He talked to me about Abe Feinberg and his brother again, and the difficulties he was having with Mrs. Lehman. He talked about Lady Bird and beautification and the arts bill that was then apparently coming up.

G: Now he was really leaning on Congress to pass that beautification bill at this point.

K: Yes, and he talked about that a lot.

G: Anything in particular that you recall?

K: Well, yes. My notes would indicate that he was telling Moyers how important it was for him to get on that job. I have a note which would indicate he spoke about the need to have the money to do the beautification jobs as they came up, and I don't know whether he's talking about federal money or state money. I really can't remember that.

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Now he talked about [William] Fulbright. I know that earlier on, much earlier on, before he actually ran for the presidency, we had been to a White House dinner I think for the head of Denmark. This is 1964. He and Fulbright were very friendly at that dinner. I remember he even introduced Fulbright to Mathilde and me as a good friend and so forth. And I don't remember when the breach started. It might have started by this night. But I know we talked about Fulbright and I don't know whether it was because Fulbright was beginning to walk away from him on Vietnam. He referred to the fact that on Cuba Fulbright had been an out-and-out hawk, and I think he was beginning to give him troubles on Vietnam. Of course, that developed into a full-scale opposition as you know, but I don't know whether it started at this time.

G: Well, I have a note that Fulbright, too, had just criticized the Dominican intervention.

K: That might have been it. That he was a hawk on Cuba, but--that could very well have been it.

He talked favorably about his friend Frank Stanton and that he had offered him a cabinet post and Frank hadn't accepted it. Or at least I think it reached that point.

G: Anything on the resignation of Horace Busby or that of Richard Goodwin?

K: He talked about Busby, as my notes indicate. Had Busby resigned by that time?

G: Yes.

K: Because he talked about Busby working with Mathilde on special health projects. He also talked about Wayne Morse switching on the Dominican Republic. He talked about China's tough attitude on India. Generally it was a gossip session about a lot of things.

The next morning we met with him again. I think I met with him. I'm not sure

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about Bobby Lehman and Ed Weisl. But the next morning I know was my first meeting with the President when he was in bed. Most of the times I was in the White House after that we would have meetings while he would be in bed, but that was the first time. He would have his [blood] pressure taken and then he would be working in bed. Sometimes Lady Bird would be there with him. But it would be the place he would receive the early report, which at different times came either from Moyers or later from George Christian and at the very end from Jim Jones, before that from Marvin Watson. I guess I was present at a number of those meetings where they'd give him a list of the problems of the day and he'd give them instructions.

G: He would resolve each one as they came in?

K: Yes. He had the two work habits that I'm sure have been commented on by others, but the one was getting things started while he was still in bed, and the other was working at late night while he was having his massage. He would be with those papers in front of him and check off "yes," "no." It was more than just a chance thing that I would see; it was a habit. He would do it most of his working days. It was an evidence of the fact that whereas we saw him often in his so-called relaxation mode, he was always working. Every time we would have a ride at the Ranch, he would come back and go into his office and check off things that had to be done, make the phone calls and then he'd be back in the relaxation routine. But he was never far from the problems of the presidency. I began to marvel at the number of problems, and as the years went on at the fact that presidents are less powerful than one imagines them to be. And it is obviously the most wearing job one could imagine, with its special compensations of the euphoria that come

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at certain moments of acclamation and praise and public acclaim.

So that was the meetings that had to do with that dinner on September 16. Do you want to ask any questions about that?

G: He met with Walter Reuther and Robert Kennedy later that day on the seventeenth. Did you have any insight into those meetings?

K: He had us meet Walter Reuther but not participate in the discussion, and he referred to us to Walter as the people that were taking care of all his debts. We were then clearly the money men. Actually, that may have been the first time I met Walter Reuther, I'm not sure. I have a much later recollection of a much more vivid contact with Walter Reuther, and that appears in the paper that I left with you. It was a talk that he had with him a few days before he withdrew from running for the presidency.

Now the next two sessions that you brought to my attention were not particularly in any sense one-on-one sessions. When he came to New York to be at the Statue of Liberty, the only thing I really did in connection with that was I had been asked by Jack Valenti at the President's request to get a certain singer to appear at the reception or party that Arthur Goldberg was giving for them at the Waldorf. That was Anna Moffo who the President thought a lot of. I had arranged for that with Anna Moffo, but outside of that I hardly saw the President other than to say hello at the Statue of Liberty and at the Goldberg party. The only thing is I think that was the day that we learned about the fact that he was going to have an operation, and we did talk about it.

The next time that I saw him was the one I've already mentioned to you, when we delayed coming to the--

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G: The airport.

K: --White House and got there just as he was leaving. I think he caught us at the porch or something like that or at the Diplomatic Entrance, shoved us into his car, which incidentally caused our driver to look for us for four hours not knowing where we were. We went to the State Department with him and had this talk where he was kidding, sat with him at the affair, said goodbye with our blessings when he went for the operation, thought he took it all with absolutely heroic, outward calm. Called early the next morning and found out he was all right. A couple of days later, or maybe a week later, he called and asked us to come down to the Ranch. That was my wife's first trip to the Ranch. Maybe we can leave that for the next session. Is that all right?

G: That's great. Thank you so much.

[End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview II]

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