

April 13, 2005

MEMO FOR THE RECORD

It was recently discovered there is a misspelling in the oral history of R.J. (Bob) Long, Ac 84-55. The name "Kaiser" should be "Kinser" throughout. Please take this in to advisement when citing the oral history.

Thank you.

Laura Harmon
Archives Specialist

FORM OF DOCUMENT	CORRESPONDENTS OR TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
transcript	R. J. (Bob) Long Interview I portions of pages 34 and 36 re-reviewed 11/17/1985 sanitization upheld re-sanitized on 2/18/1986 Sanitized on 5/11/2016 portion of page 34	4/19/1972	C

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INTERVIEW I

DATE: April 19, 1972

INTERVIEWEE: R. J. (BOB) LONG

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

PLACE: Dr. Frantz's office, University of Texas, Austin, Texas

Tape 1 of 1

F: Mr. Long, I suppose the best thing to do is to go back and kind of figure how you got in the position to know Lyndon Johnson.

L: I was introduced to him by Gene Lasseter.

F: Yes, from over in East Texas.

L: Yes. She was from East Texas. At that time, she was C. V. Terrell's secretary. He was a railroad commissioner, and Lyndon's father had worked for the Railroad Commission.

F: Are you an old Austin boy?

L: No. I came here from Wichita Falls. I'm originally from West Texas, Channing.

F: When did you come here?

L: Came here in the fall of 1928 to go to school.

F: Did you go through law school here?

L: Two years. No, really just one year, and the next year I went as a student and then took my bar.

F: And you stayed on here.

L: Yes. I came down here as a member of the legislature, see, and tried to go to law school.

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F: Were you here with Gene Miller, or was that before or after his time?

L: I don't [know]. Senator Gene?

F: You remember him?

L: Yes. I know him. I imagine he was a little older than I was.

F: Yes. He's older. I was from Weatherford originally.

L: You know Jo Harris then.

F: Yes.

L: Dr. Harris' daughter.

F: Oh, yes. Very well. Geraldine and. . . .

L: The one in Fort Worth, I can't think of her name. Frances.

F: Frances.

L: Frances and Jo.

F: Yes.

L: Married Dewey Bradford here.

F: Right.

L: I used to know people, hell, I've forgotten. I'm getting old. I can't remember names.

F: Right. Of course, Jim Wright came out of Weatherford.

L: Yes. I don't know him. I've been out of politics and haven't practiced law in ten years. See, I ran an insurance company six years. Sold out and retired in 1967. And I've kind of been out of things.

F: Yes. So you were here in the legislature.

L: I was in the legislature from 1929 through 1935.

F: What did you do after that? Just become a practicing attorney?

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L: Yes, I practiced law here.

F: Okay. Let's go back and pick up Gene Lasseter. Where did you know her?

L: Well, my wife knew Gene.

F: She's from Henderson, isn't she?

L: Gene is. Yes. She works for the TV station in Tyler, station 7, I believe over there, secretary to the manager. And she married a member of the legislature that was in the legislature when I was, Log Lasseter.

I met Lyndon up in C. V. Terrell's office. I never will forget him. He had on a white Palm Beach suit.

F: Hot dog! A real dude!

L: Yes, a real dude.

F: Is that while he was NYA director, or was this earlier than that?

L: He was secretary to . . .

F: Kleberg [Congressman Richard Kleberg].

L: Kleberg. I never was around Lyndon but once or twice before that, and then Bird came down here to school. And, of course, she was a very close friend of Gene Lasseter's.

F: They lived in the same rooming house, didn't they?

L: No. As I remember, Bird stayed over there on Whitis, I believe. But they were good friends, came from over in the same neck of the woods. See, Gene was raised at Karnack, or somewhere. Her family originally came from there, and they knew each other when they were little girls. Gene was a good deal older than Bird.

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We got to know Bird through Gene, and we played bridge a lot that first year she was here in the University. Went over to the opera a time or two in San Antonio, and I remember went to see Strange Interlude. You remember that?

F: Oh, yes.

L: We had to go to San Antonio to see it.

F: That was an all day and night affair, wasn't it?

L: Yes, and I don't know, I guess sometime later the next spring--I don't know when it was--she met Lyndon. And boy, Lyndon, like everything else, he wheels and deals, and it wasn't very many weeks, he had her married. (Laughter)

F: On this occasion, when you first met him, did you have much chance to get acquainted, or was it just one of those casual things?

L: Oh, we talked a little while, there just with Gene. Later on, after he married Bird, then he came back here as NYA director and they lived way over there on West 35th. I think that's where Bird had her first miscarriage, when they were living there. And Betty would go over there and visit with her.

F: Betty is your wife?

L: Yes.

F: Had she known Mrs. Johnson in East Texas, too?

L: No.

F: She just knew her through Gene Lasseter.

L: Yes. She didn't know her till she came down here to school. And we used to go to the picture shows a whole lot. We'd come home,

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and Lyndon and Bird [would be here]. That was before air conditioning. We live up here at 39th and Red River and bought up there. We used to drive around at night and pick out lots we thought we'd want. We'd go up there and sit for an hour or two at night, to see which was the coolest place. This was the coolest, and that's where we bought and built. Now I wish I wasn't there on account of the traffic. It's still cool up there.

F: I can remember how you used to try to figure where you get a breeze in this town in the summer.

L: That's right. And that was the best breeze.

We'd come home after we'd gone to the show. And two or three times Lyndon and Bird were out there. Max Starcke and his wife I guess were there twenty-five times. I guess we never knew who was going to be out there. We always had a bunch of yard furniture out in the yard, had a big yard. And Senator McGregor [?] and his secretary, they'd be sitting there. There'd be no telling; sometimes there'd be five or six people sitting out there, just because it was cool. It was the coolest place in Austin, they said then.

F: "Let's go over and sit at Bob Long's place."

L: Yes. So I got better acquainted with Lyndon then.

But I had a kind of bad experience with Jimmie Allred. See, he came from Wichita Falls. Jimmie was a lot like Lyndon. If you went with Jimmie Allred, you had to go 100 per cent. Well, now, Lyndon's that way.

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F: Right.

L: Well, I never saw anybody I could go 100 per cent with. Once in a while, I had to differ with them. And for that reason, I never felt very close to Lyndon. Betty was close to Bird. I've always felt closer to Bird than I ever did to Lyndon. And that was the main reason: I just wanted to keep my distance a little bit. I didn't want to get [too close]. I'm not 100 per cent for any living human being.

F: Did you get the feeling that young Johnson learned much from Allred in those days? Observed him for trial and performance? Because, of course, Allred was quite a glamour boy there in the middle thirties.

L: Yes. I don't know. Of course, they were friendly, but Lyndon, God, he didn't need any coaching. He was a very ambitious fellow, a very energetic man, one of the most energetic, ambitious men I've ever known. And he didn't need any touting. He had the ability, and he had the energy. As far as I know, Lyndon's been pretty well his own man. About the only man that ever influenced him at all was Sam Rayburn.

F: What about Senator [Alvin] Wirtz? Did you get any opportunity to see that?

L: Yes, a good deal of it. I liked Wirtz, very fond of him. Of course, Lyndon was very close to Wirtz and admired him, and rightfully so. And listened to him probably; probably caused him to get defeated that first time he ran for the Senate.

F: How so?

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L: Well, I used to get hired by people doing lobbying, because I had the ability to get information. I don't know why it is, but I could get it. I could just walk into it.

I had become very close to the Fergusons [James and Miriam] while they were governor, although I voted for [Ross] Sterling and managed his campaign up in about thirteen or fourteen counties. My wife and her people were very close to the Fergusons. That was just before we got married, that summer when I managed his campaign. In fact, I was broke. And I wanted to get married, and they offered me five hundred dollars to manage Sterling's campaign up there.

F: That was practically a year's salary in those days! (Laughter)

L: Hell, yes! So I managed his campaign. That's the reason I did it. Otherwise, I'd have been for Ferguson. However, I liked old man Sterling, thought he was a very honest, honorable man. But, after I got down here, and Mrs. Ferguson was elected, on account of my wife's family being close to the Fergusons, why, I got to where I'd visit with Mrs. Ferguson a whole lot. I'd start up to the legislature and I'd go by her office and visit. I was very fond of Mrs. Ferguson.

F: She was pretty approachable, too, wasn't she?

L: Very approachable. So was the Governor. And of course, the Governor did most of the business of running the office. He'd be up there, and I'd go by there and talk.

F: Did he spend a lot of time in the office?

L: The Governor?

F: Yes.

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L: Oh, yes. He was there, as far as I know, every time I was there. He was really up there doing the business. I'd be sitting back there chatting with her. I'd go by there and visit with them, and became pretty close to them.

So when Lyndon ran for the Senate for the first time, the Governor was broke. He had tried to corner the market on butter, I don't know whether you knew this or not! And he did, but it broke him! And so was this--?

F: This is 1941.

L: Yes, that's the time.

F: Right when we're just before Pearl Harbor.

L: No, that wasn't the first time. Let me see. Yes, I guess it was.

F: He ran [in] 1941 against O'Daniel and he lost on that late count, and then he ran again in 1948 and won on a late count.

L: That was when he ran against Coke [Stevenson].

F: Yes. For the Senate. He had run originally in the late winter and early spring of 1937 for Congress.

L: I guess that Lyndon's first campaign was the worst managed campaign I ever saw.

F: You're talking about the Senate?

L: For the Senate. It was the worst managed campaign I ever saw in my life. Lyndon worked himself to death, as always, but he had the worst organization, had about three floors, as I remember, way up in the top of the Stephen F. [Austin Hotel]. I just closed my office and went over there, and tried to help out all I could, meeting people.

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F: What were they, just green?

L: Oh, egotistical bastards.

F: Yes.

L: I cuss a whole lot. I don't know whether you know it or not!

F: (Laughter) You've got some company.

L: It was awful. County commissioners would come in there. Who was the fellow that used to be insurance commissioner for a long time over in East Texas? I'll think of his name in a minute. Anyway, he and I were the men downstairs.

The county commissioners would come in there, and county judges, and a lot of them had five hundred votes; some of them, a thousand votes in their pockets. All we could do was meet them. Of course, they came in and wanted to see some of the guys upstairs. And you couldn't get those sons of bitches up there to talk to them. They'd come in there, and we'd keep them there for sometimes two or three days; just call up there and tell them who they were, and they wouldn't see them! Hell, I bet there was two to four hundred people came in there, enough to just turn that damned thing clear around. They wouldn't see them.

F: Were they just too pompous in their positions?

L: Just too damned pompous. Show you who the man in charge of that organization was, from over here, raised in Lockhart, not Coopwood-- what's the fellow that used to be district attorney over there?

F: I don't remember.

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L: Anyway, I don't know where the hell he is now. Jim--I'll think of his name. But anyway, he was supposed to be in charge of organization. And we couldn't get him to see anybody. We never did get that man to see county commissioners, county--I don't give a damn who they were, we couldn't get him to. Big shot! And that's who they wanted to see; they didn't want to see we little pigmies down there.

F: I also, coming from a semi-rural county, know that the county commissioner runs one section of the county.

L: And they still do, in most counties. And then it was more so than it is now. But they'd go off madder than hell. I didn't blame them. We'd keep them here sometimes two or three days, and they never would see them.

F: Did you ever try to get word to Johnson on that, or was he just way off somewhere?

L: I never did see Johnson. He'd come in there, usually come in at night and he'd be upstairs, and he'd be gone the next morning. I never did see him.

I tried to talk to some of the people, and hell, they was all about as bad. I think, as I remember, Connally was out raising money. Well, he was gone practically as much as Lyndon was. We couldn't get anything done. So it was back to Wirtz. So after it was over, of course, the biggest mistake Lyndon made in that campaign, and I understand Wirtz got him to do it, was to wire all the county clerks to get the votes in here. (Laughter) Well, his friends did. They got them in here. Then they went to doing their work on the

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ones that didn't send them in.

And so anyway, Monday morning, or Sunday afternoon, I ran into Governor Ferguson. He was sitting there in the lobby. I went over and talked to him. He says, "Bob, I'm for Lyndon"--and he was, personally--"I want to help him. But this is the last time I can make any money. And," he says, "I've got the difference in this, counting these votes." And he did have.

F: Yes.

L: You see, Governor Ferguson had a little black book. I don't know if you ever heard of it or not. But he had a little black book that he kept in his pocket, and it was his leaders all over Texas. He had the phone numbers; he had the addresses. He could call them, and there were men who would do anything in the world Jim asked them to.

He told me, "I can save him over in East Texas." Back in those days, especially over in East Texas, where Jim was so strong, Governor Jim, those precinct chairmen out there, after they'd close the polls, they'd go and stick that box under their bed at home. And they didn't take that thing out of the bed until the Ferguson man in the county seat called them and told them to bring it in. They kept it there a month.

F: Yes.

L: I don't know whether you remember that! (Laughter)

And so Governor Jim says, "You know, I haven't got much money, and this is my last chance I'll ever have to make a little money." And he told me a group was sitting over there in the Driskill, says,

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"They want me to come over there and go with them, go with O'Daniel."
I don't know whether Lyndon ever knew what I'm telling you right now.
Other people know it. And I knew who they were. It was Dies, Jack
Dies.

F: Martin?

L: No, Jack. That was his uncle. He was the head lobbyist for Humble.
Bob Hoffman, who was a lobbyist for Magnolia then, and I don't know,
you know, a bunch of those fellows over there. They were big Stevenson
men; they weren't for O'Daniel so much as they were for Stevenson, so
Stevenson could become governor, you see.

F: Yes. Right.

L: And they were over there with their money bags, and he says, "Now, I'd
rather go with Lyndon, and you know that." And I did. He and Mrs.
Ferguson were both very fond of Lyndon.

So I'd go back to the phone and get Wirtz on the phone. He
was upstairs. I was never up there until the night of the election.
I just worked downstairs, never was up there on that [floor], don't
know what floor it was now, 12th or 13th. But I got Wirtz on the
phone and I told him I had Governor Ferguson down here. And I says
there's a bunch over at the Driskill wanting him over there.
I says, "He's the difference." He said, "Well, we're not ready to
talk." I said, "Okay."

So I went back and reported to the Governor. And the next
afternoon, I walked into the Stephen F. [Austin Hotel], and there's
Governor Jim sitting there. I walked over to him, and he says, "Have

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you heard anything, Bob?" I said, "No, I haven't. I'll go call him." I went back and got Wirtz on the phone again; told him I still had Governor Jim down there; he was ready to go. And I said, "They're still waiting on him over in the Driskill."

Nothing. That went on for three days. And finally, I could see they weren't going to do it. I told the Governor, "Governor, hell, if I was you, I'd go on home." I says, "It looks like they're not going to do anything up there." He got up and walked across the street.

And that was the difference right there. All he had to do was to call those names in his little black book, and the boys at the forks of the creeks went to bringing those boxes in. I don't know whether you remember it. East Texas beat him, deep East Texas.

F: Yes. Well, O'Daniel got nearly every last one of the last four thousand votes.

L: He got them from Jim Ferguson. And Lyndon's bunch had the chance and didn't take it.

F: Why do you think Wirtz did that?

L: I don't know.

F: You never got any explanation?

L: I never have mentioned it to Lyndon. In fact, I haven't been around him a hell of a lot, you know, just social events, something like that. I never discussed it with him and don't know whether he even knows it or not.

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F: How come then, as a matter of tactics, to put the offices up there on the 12th and 13th floor, instead of getting an office arrangement somewhere that would be more accessible to people wandering in off the streets?

L: I don't know.

F: You know, as a rule, it seems to me, you want to make your people just as accessible as possible.

L: Well, they had the front office, Dick Waters. Remember Dick?

F: Yes.

L: Dick and I were downstairs. Gene Lasseter was down there, and two or three women. They were doing their office work. And these big shots were upstairs, organization men, and planners, and the route men, and all that kind of stuff, they were up there. And of course, the people would come in downstairs.

Dick Waters is still living, isn't he? I'm sure he is.

F: I don't know.

L: He can tell you the same thing. Gene Lasseter is. She can tell you. God, it was just horrible!

F: It was almost like you were running two different operations.

L: Now this, I know Lyndon knew. About three days before the election, a fellow who was running the mail room--he's dead now; his daddy was a court reporter over here in Georgetown; I can't think of his name; his daddy's dead, and he's dead, he was running the mail room. This was down at 10th and Congress, you know, one of those old buildings they used to use for political purposes. He knew me and he

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came up there and called me out of the coffee shop. I was down there in the coffee shop. He called me out, and he said, "Bob, I've checked up and there's a hundred and some odd counties that I haven't sent a bit of mail to, not any placards, not any campaign material; nothing have I sent to a hundred and some odd counties." I forget the exact number. Well, I ran into Bird that night. You know, that's been a long time ago.

F: I know.

L: But I think it was that same night I ran into Bird and I told her about it. And I told her who to talk to, or maybe I got him with Bird that night. It seems like I did. So I know Bird knew that.

Well, later on, I found out what was happening. This fellow, Jim--what the hell was his name, who was in charge of organization? Later on, I found out what this guy was doing. He spent all of his time on the telephone, and he was calling up mainly people that weren't for Lyndon, trying to switch them to Lyndon. Finally to get him off the phone, I mean other people that he'd called would tell me, he'd say, "Well, all right, put my name down." And he'd put that guy's name in the thing as being for Lyndon. And when, hell, he wasn't! Never was before, never was after.

F: Wasn't planning to be.

L: Just to get him off the damned phone. He'd talk to them an hour!

I tell you, it was the worst organized campaign I ever saw. Lyndon ought to have won that race with fifty to seventy-five thousand votes, if it had been run properly. He won it personally, he

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lost it in his headquarters; that is where he lost it. Hell, we ran off thousands of votes of those county judges and commissioners. I don't know whether a county judge or commissioner ever got upstairs. You see, they knew who they were; they'd read it in the paper. They'd come in, and that was who they wanted to see.

F: Right.

L: And Dick Waters and I didn't have any authority to tell them nothing. We were just greeters, volunteers. I was a volunteer. I don't know what Dick was. And I never will forget the night of--about Monday night. You see, Lyndon stayed at--

F: Things must have been pretty tense around there.

L: Oh, hell, it was. The only night I ever went up on that floor, 12th, 13th, whatever it was, about Sunday or Monday night, when Lyndon was ahead, and he began to lose, and O'Daniel pulled ahead of him. Dick Waters and his wife, and my wife and I, went up there. We decided we'd go up there. We'd never been up there. And just as we got off the elevator, we ran into Lyndon. Well, Dick Waters had run for Congress over there and got beat in the first primary, and then he came down to help Lyndon, I believe. Or maybe it was two years before he got beat. I don't know. There wasn't any runoff in that Senate race, was there?

F: No. Not in that one.

L: Well, I guess it was two years before that he had run for Congress over there, and had gotten beaten so he pretty well knew that area over there. As we stepped off the elevator, we ran into Lyndon.

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And Lyndon chewed Dick Waters' butt out. Of course Dick was just killed; he was just flabbergasted, didn't say anything. Hell, we just turned around and went back downstairs.

F: What for? I mean, why did he chew him out?

L: About him losing East Texas, see. We'd been telling those guys up there what was happening, and hell, I knew. I had worked and tried to get them to talk to Jim Ferguson for three days, and they wouldn't talk to him.

F: What kind of excuse did they give?

L: I don't know.

F: They just put you off?

L: I never. . . . That was my last one!

F: (Laughter) Had you helped in Lyndon's earlier campaigns, when he first ran for Congress?

L: No. The first time he ran for Congress, I had managed Houghton Brownlee's campaign for the Senate, and he had just been elected. Well, Houghton, of course, came to me right off the bat saying, "I want you to handle my campaign for Congress; I'm going to run for Congress." I said, "Okay." Well, of course, two or three days after later, Lyndon came in my office and asked me to help him, and I told him I couldn't do it; I'd already promised Brownlee. But I said, "I will go with you in the runoff, if you have one." I already figured he knew that. Well, he didn't have one, you see. The top man won it.

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F: Yes. Did Brownlee look on him as the sort of number one target in that campaign? Do you remember? It was one of those multiple entry things, you know.

L: No, I don't think when it started off, anybody knew. You had some pretty strong men in there.

F: Old Stone over there at Georgetown, and you had practically somebody from every county.

L: Polk Shelton; old man Avery, who had been the right [hand] man of Buchanan, you know. God, who all else was in that race? There was a bunch of them, some pretty strong men.

A funny thing happened after that. The only county Houghton Brownlee carried was Lee County. And Lyndon came to me and said, "Who the hell did that for you all down there?" (Laughter) And I told him it was the old postmaster at Giddings. I can't think of his name now, he's dead. That's a long time ago.

F: Right.

L: But that was the postmaster that started with Houghton and carried it down there. Polk Shelton, I remember, got the Negro vote, down on the river, see. Hell, everybody was buying it.

F: Yes.

L: And the last one there got it! (Laughter)

And after that, of course, then the congressmen named the postmasters, and Lyndon went with him. And of course, Lyndon never failed to carry Lee County after that, because he was Papacito down there, a good man, very popular postmaster. I can't think of his name.

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F: Well, we can find out.

When you pick up one of these kind of bloc votes, what do you do? Do you go for one man and get him to handle it for you locally? Somebody like a commissioner or postmaster or somebody like that, does he do that, or do you try to do it on your own?

L: You could in the old days. That's practically gone.

F: Yes.

L: Now, your county commissioners, I'd say, in this county that the county commissioner could control around five hundred votes apiece; that's their employees, their families, and their kinfolks. It's not like it used to be. Used to, thirty or forty years ago, God, I knew some county commissioners [who] could carry their precinct two to one for anybody they wanted to go for. There used to be an old man down in Washington County; he was county commissioner down there thirty years, out in the south end down there. What's the name of that town on the way to Houston down there?

F: Bellville or Sealy?

L: No.

F: That's Austin County.

L: Yes.

F: Washington County. Not Brenham?

L: No, a little town on down there; not Burton, Burton's this side. Chappell Hill!

F: Chappell Hill, right.

L: An old man down there, I guess he's been dead for twenty-five years,

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but he was a pretty old man. Boy, I can't think of his name, but that old man--they had had lot of Poles around there, and he was good to them; he was a good commissioner and all that. And if you got him, you got that precinct two, three to one.

But that's gone, practically all over Texas.

F: Did you have to promise him much to get it?

L: No, if he was for you, there wasn't any money involved with that old man. If he was for you, he was for you, and his friends were for you. But that type of politics is practically gone in Texas now.

F: Did they vote? Did the commissioner, for instance, or the sheriff, or somebody like that ever have just a bloc of poll taxes he could vote, that he was more or less authorized to vote?

L: Not much, other than South Texas. I don't know much about that down there. I've heard, and I pretty well know, but I don't know, you know.

F: But still it may be good hearsay, but it's still hearsay, right?

L: Twenty years ago, I knew most of the people down there, like the old Senator that used to control Duval. Called him the Duke of Duval.

F: Parr.

L: He was in the Senate, the old Senator. Not this one now, his boy.

F: Name was George, wasn't it?

L: George. His daddy was a different type man from George. His father wasn't a ruthless man. He did it by favors, and they had confidence in him. He had the power up here and he could get what they needed down there.

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F: After that 1937 campaign, did Johnson do anything to try to woo you over to his side?

L: No, he didn't have to, and he knew it. I just got committed before I even dreamed he'd run.

F: Yes.

L: I'd have had hell at home if Lyndon got to be first and I'd said no. I'd have gone for Lyndon the first time, if I hadn't just finished managing Houghton's campaign and he got there first. And Lyndon understood it; Lyndon's smart; he understood it.

F: Did you ever do any work for him, or with him, while he was NYA director?

L: No, but I got better acquainted with him, and he was here more. And that's where two or three times, he'd be out there [at my house]. It'd get so damned hot over there in West Austin, and he and Bird would be sitting out there.

But I was never close to Lyndon, never claimed to be, never tried to be.

F: Well, now after that, were you in at all on his decision to run for the Senate in 1941?

L: No, I was district attorney here then and had a race of my own. Of course, a lot of my friends were in his campaign. He had his headquarters over in the old Hancock home. You remember that?

F: No.

L: You remember the old Hancock home over on Lavaca, great big old wooden house over there. It's all parking lot now.

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F: How far down?

L: Just between 7th and 8th. It was a big old white house, was on the corner of 8th and Lavaca, on this corner. And on that corner was the old Burleson home.

F: Yes.

L: And back of that was old man Stark's home, who used to manage the Driskill. They're all gone. You see, the whole block's cleared off now. But he had his headquarters, and I'd go by there once in a while. Charlie Herring was there, and a time or two I visited with his brother.

F: Sam?

L: Sam. And I haven't seen Sam, I guess, twice since Lyndon went to the Senate.

F: What years were you district attorney?

L: I became district attorney in--God, I may have it here. [looks for photostat] I saw it the other day. [Governor Beauford] Jester appointed me. I'd been elected. I don't guess I put it in here. I ran across an old purse and found a little photostat of my appointment. I guess it was 1947.

F: Yes, that'd be about right.

L: Yes, 1947, I guess. I'd been assistant about a year and a half before that. Jack Roberts was elected district judge, and Archer resigned. What'd I say the governor's name was?

F: Jester?

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L: Jester appointed him district judge, appointed me district attorney. Then I served six more years, on up through 1956. I was up there eight years, a little over six years as district attorney.

F: Did you have any relationship with either the Congressman or Senator Johnson while you were in the district attorney's office?

L: Only one thing. Frank Hamer had been a very good friend of mine. (Laughter) I heard, in fact, Frank Hamer told me, Frank Hamer you remember filed a criminal complaint of perjury, I guess, either perjury or false swearing, I don't know which it was, against Lyndon. And he filed it one afternoon.

Well, the grand jury met the next morning, and I didn't get the complaint until the next morning. They met that afternoon or that morning, the grand jury did. And I just went in there and told them, "Hell, you haven't got any complaint." I said, "The smartest thing you can do is get rid of this damned thing right quick before you leave here and you get out of there, and your friends go to talking to you about what you ought to do, the anti-Johnsons." Then, Lyndon would carry this county about two-thirds and the other third were rabid against him, just hated him, you know. And, of course, they knew it. And I said, "Now you leave this grand jury room, and you go back to your offices and your stores, and you're going to get calls, and people are going to come to see you, and they say 'God damn, put it on him!'"

And there wasn't anything to it. You see, he'd signed these papers in a civil suit. Well, there is a statute that provides that

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you cannot prosecute for false swearing or perjury on any pleadings to a civil suit. And it was just black and white. So they voted no bill.

And I said, "Now, you do it right now or you're going to get in more hell than we've ever wanted." They said, "Well, can we quote you on it?" And I said, "Sure." Because one of them, I never will forget, he's a banker here, said, "I know who's going to be sitting at my desk when I go back to the bank. It's going to be Frank Hamer." And he says, "I've got to tell him something." I said, "You tell him, give him that number of the statute and tell him that I said there just wasn't any case to it and that's the reason I requested you to no bill it."

F: Was this Frank's initiative, or was someone like Hardy Hollers pushing him, or what?

L: No, who got Frank to do it . . . Frank hated my guts after that. He'd been a good friend of mine. I was district attorney, and thought very highly of Frank Hamer as a Ranger and I still do, and also was a good friend of Manny Gault, that he selected to go with him to catch. . . .

F: Bonnie and Clyde.

L: Bonnie and Clyde.

F: Right.

L: Right. And I never go into Scarborough's that I don't visit with Manny Gault's daughter. His daughter works down there; I always go see her.

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Well, who did it was Dan Moody and Judge Archer. Now this is what Frank Hamer told me, that they told him that it was a good thing. Because two or three days after that, I ran into Frank Hamer down in the Stephen F. lobby. I knew I would, if I just walked through there because he was always there, played poker upstairs nearly every day. (Laughter)

So, goddamn, old Frank grabbed me, and I said, "Frank, now let me tell you something. Somebody's just gave you some bad. . . ." And he says, "They're two damn good lawyers." I said, "Who are they?" And he says, "Dan Moody and Judge Archer." And I said, "Well, they're just wrong as hell."

But he never got over it.

F: He didn't blame them.

L: No.

F: Where do you think Johnson got at such cross purposes with Dan Moody? It was a clouded thing. He got even worse with Mildred.

L: Oh, well, she's to be pitied. I don't know. Dan used to give me hell, because he knew I liked Lyndon.

And every day that I ever went to the Stephen F. Austin to eat lunch--Dan ate lunch there every day--Dan was kind of like Howard Hughes, you know. He was a nut on. . . . He'd wipe a. . . . He was a germ fanatic. I don't know whether you ever saw him or not, you use to see him come into Stephen F., he'd kick the door open. He didn't open it with his hands. He didn't want to get a germ on them. Did you ever see him come in there?

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F: No.

L: He'd kick the doors open, or he'd wait until somebody would open the door where he could get in, so he wouldn't have to touch the door.

I don't know what his [trouble with Johnson was]. Of course, he got in that. Well, they were just anti-New Deal, first place, see. It wasn't Lyndon. Of course, it became personal, but they were just anti-Roosevelt, anti-New Deal. And anybody that was for the New Deal, why, they was against them.

F: You know in that first postwar campaign in 1946, Hardy Hollers and others brought up that business of whether Johnson had illegally gotten hold of that house out on Dillman. Remember that?

L: Yes. God, I hadn't thought of that in [years]. Oh, he claimed he got it from a contractor in Houston.

F: Yes, from Brown and Root.

L: No, it wasn't Brown and Root.

F: It wasn't the Brown brothers?

L: No, it was Bellows.

F: Bellows.

L: Well, is Bellows alive? (Laughter)

F: (Laughter) No, he isn't.

L: Well, that was just supposed to be one of his houses, Bellows. I understood he had one in nearly every city, and I guess he didn't have any more use for it, and he sold it to Lyndon. That was all I know. Of course, they tried to make something out of it, because Bellows had gotten, I guess, some big government contracts. But I

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didn't pay any attention to it, and I don't think hardly anybody else did. I know I didn't.

F: I know Johnson, in that case, read the transaction and opened the books, just laid them out down in Wooldridge Park, and told anybody in the audience that wanted to to come down and look at them.

L: Sure. I don't think there was anything to it. Bellows had a use for it when he had one of his gals up here, and something happened to the gal. I forget now. I heard at the time, but I've forgotten. And he didn't have any more use for the house.

F: Yes.

L: And Lyndon didn't have one. He'd already rented from old Dr. Brownlee, by golly, where he lived out there out on 35th. They rented from Dr. Brownlee, Houghton Brownlee's brother. Well, they'd always just had rented apartments here, and [then they] bought that house, which to me was a natural thing to do.

F: Did you ever go out to Dillman to any of those--

L: Oh, I was out there.

F: --after-hours affairs in which they talked politics?

L: No. No. I was out there to one or two little social things, but I never was on the inner circle with Lyndon at all.

F: You were too busy with your own district attorneying to get mixed up in that race against Stevenson?

L: That's right. And, incidentally, I was very close to Stevenson. I was in the legislature when he was, the first time he was elected speaker. I was very fond of Coke Stevenson and I still am, and

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I think he is of me. And I was for him for speaker.

F: I had, incidentally, a very good session with him.

L: With Coke? Coke's a very good man and an honorable man, and hell of a good lawyer, one of the best lawyers I ever knew.

He and I missed making several million together on the first lawsuit I ever had. I had just gotten my license, and the constitutional question was statutory, so I gave Coke half my fee to argue the constitutional question, and I argued the statutory question in the Supreme Court.

But where were we on Coke? I'm [in] the legislature, and I knew Coke wanted to be speaker, and nobody had ever come around with his petition. So I went to Coke, and I said, "Coke, nobody's presented me with your petition." So I said, "Hell, I want to sign it. Who's got it?" And he said, well, old man Kennedy had it down there.

F: Now who's old man Kennedy?

L: He was a member of the legislature. Back there, then, old men were in the legislature. You didn't see many young men, and you didn't see the young men come until after the Second World War. And so, I went down there, and old man Kennedy pulled this petition, and it had six names on it. So I took it back to Coke, and I said, "Coke, do you object to me taking it around and getting signatures on it?" And he said, "Well, I wish you would." Well, I took it back to him before the session was over, and I had sixty-some odd names on it.

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My wife and Mrs. Stevenson were very close friends. In fact, they just worshipped each other. Coke and Faye. They never came to town that Faye didn't call Betty, and they'd go to town shopping. I guess they've shopped together a hundred and fifty times.

I've always felt close to Coke. And, coming back to that second race, Betty had a tea or something out there one day, and Faye was there, and I walked out with her. Of course, Coke was lieutenant governor, and he was going to be governor if O'Daniel was elected. And I said, "Now, Faye, Lyndon's been my friend, and Bird, for a long time, and you and Coke have been our friends." And I said, "I've got to go one way or the other." I said, "They're directly involved. You and Coke are indirectly involved." And I said, "I'm going for Lyndon."

Well, we weren't near as close after that. But still, there had been so much before that, and I'd helped Coke a whole lot. I came to the legislature from Wichita Falls, and I handled practically all--if I didn't handle it, I maneuvered it--the legislation affecting the oil business. Clint Small handled it when he got to the Senate. And at that time, when I went out of the legislature in the middle thirties, I guess I knew 90 per cent of the oil men in Texas. Well, I had made Coke acquainted with everybody I knew. nearly, and had praised him, you know, and all of this.

Coke's a man--he's like Lyndon. He doesn't forget his friends. You may part ways, but he remembers the obligation. And I look for men in politics that way. There's no use in supporting a son of a

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bitch that his word isn't good. And I haven't found many of them. But I'll say that about Coke. If he ever told you anything, you never had to look back. Same thing about Lyndon. Same thing about Ben Ramsey. Same thing about Charles Herring. And that damned near covers my book.

F: You kind of halfway raised Charlie Herring, didn't you?

L: No.

F: What I mean, he kind of came along in the background.

L: Probably. I just heard from a rumor that Charlie might run, and then I ran into Herman Jones and asked him, and he said, "Well, I think he's thinking about it." So I went on up to see Charlie and asked if it was true, and he said, "Yes, but I never ran for office in my life. I don't know what the hell to do." And I said, "Well, I'll tell you what I'll do. Charlie Green's a good friend of mine. I'll go talk to Charlie and get him to run a story on the front page that you're thinking about running." Charlie [Herring] hadn't made up his mind. He was just thinking about it. And I said, "After that hits the front page, you'll get enough calls that you'll decide whether you're going to do it or not." And I went to see Charlie [Green] and old Charlie said, "Hell, yes. I love Charlie. I'll be for him." And I said, "Well, goddamn it, put it in the paper. So let Charlie know whether he's got any friends." And that's what happened. And Charlie ran and I helped him all I could then. He and Maggie. Do you know Maggie? Mrs. Williams.

F: Yes.

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L: We wrote his campaign literature and his ads, and I'd fuss at Charlie and make him get out. Charlie's kind of a bashful fellow really. And I'd just make him get out.

F: There's nothing pushy about him.

L: No. And I just almost had to get somebody to make him go out to these community centers, because he wasn't known. Like right now, this [Charles D.] Mathews running for district judge, the lawyers know him and a few of the businessmen, but the people don't know him. And I had an awful time getting Charlie [out]. It kind of embarrassed him standing out there in the community center and handing those women cards. But that's what it takes. But I'm very fond of Charlie.

F: There's a period in there when I don't think I ever went anywhere in my life around this community that Obie Kelton wasn't standing there when I came out.

L: Well, old Obie's a funny fellow and a nice fellow, too. I'll say this about old Obie: he ever told you he'd do something, he'd do it. At least, that's the way I found it.

F: Did you ever consider running for Congress?

L: No.

F: Were you in office when that Doug Kaiser [Kinser]-Mac Wallace thing came up?

L: I figured you'd want to know about that. (Laughter) Oh, God, yes, that's what beat me. Yes. That's an involved thing, and you can check my story, some of it, as I relate it. I'll tell you who to check with. I'll tell you who knows practically everything that I

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know about it, and that's a Texas Ranger. He's stationed up at-- Clint Peoples. I knew he was going to be a hot potato. I had a very small staff, three assistants and an investigator, and really just two, because one of them didn't do anything but tend to child support cases. And there probably would be some witness to talk to, you know, all over the state where my jurisdiction ended right here. So I asked the DPS to get Clint to help on it and, for that reason, Clint knows everything I know about it. As far as I know, he does. So you can verify anything I say about Clint.

And don't let me forget to mention Dr. White over here at the--

F: The Health Center White?

L: The Health Center White. He knows some of the things I'm going to tell you. Why I lost the case, I let a sinker, what we call a sinker, get on the jury.

F: Explain that to me.

L: Well, you know, the state's got to have twelve men unanimously to convict.

F: Right.

L: The defense works to get one man on there that won't convict.

F: Yes.

L: That's all they have to do, is get one. I've got to get twelve.

They got a sinker on there, a fellow by the name of Johnson, who worked for the Highway Department. I don't know whether he's still up there or not. And when I let him go on there I didn't even know-- well, in fact, he didn't know what's his name. The guy that did the killing?

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F: Was it Kaiser [Kinser]?

L: No.

F: Mac Wallace.

L: Mac Wallace.

F: Yes, Mac Wallace. Right.

L: He didn't know Mac Wallace. And so I let him on the jury because the highway people, engineers and people like that, had always made good state jurors.

I'm getting a little ahead of the thing, but the day after the jury trial started, they brought a lawyer in here where this Johnson was from--I forget his name--and sat him there with the defense counsel for three days for that fellow Johnson to see. His cousin, I believe it was his cousin was the lawyer. I don't remember where the county was now--some East Texas [one], I don't remember the county. But anyway, they brought that lawyer in here and introduced in the court as an attorney for the defense, and he stayed there about three days. The trial lasted ten days or something like that. They let this guy on the jury know that he was a friend of Wallace's. That's all there was to it. Of course, he hung the jury. Of course, they came out with a murder with malice and a suspended sentence. And this fellow Johnson talked another juror into going with him; but now, if Johnson hadn't been on there though, I'd have gotten a conviction. I got a conviction, but it wasn't worth a damn.

F: It left a sour taste.

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L: It was, of course, a circumstantial case. And I tried, I wanted to get Mac Wallace on that stand or his wife on there, and I'll tell you why in a minute. So I put 95 per cent of the evidence, I just crammed it in there and made a strong circumstantial case. And the funny thing is that Wallace wanted to take the stand. The lawyers, Cofer and Polk Shelton, told me after. But he wanted to get up there and deny it. Well, I'd made such a strong case they said that they wouldn't let him go on the stand and get up there and deny it. They said, "The jury would convict you sure as hell." And so they wouldn't let him take the stand. Well, I was hoping they'd put his wife on there, because what it was, his wife was a lesbian. We knew all this. At the time of the trial she was having an affair with
~~SANITIZED~~ minister's wife here.

F: I see.

L: And this minister's wife, and he would, too--they'd come up there and sit right in court. I don't know whether he knew or not. After that trial, it got talked around. And they moved him out of here; they moved him to Houston, I think.

So this is where Dr. White came in. See, if we'd gotten him on the stand or gotten her on the stand, because the whole thing wasn't somebody screwing a man's wife. It was perversion.

F: Yes.

L: The man that was killed was a pervert.

F: Well, that's what I was going to ask. Was she being bisexual in

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this thing, or was this just a mistaken identity sort of situation?

L: No, this fellow that was killed, I can't think of his name.

F: Kaiser [Kinser].

L: Kaiser [Kinser], yes.

F: Doug Kaiser [Kinser].

L: He was a what you call a bisexual. He'd take it any way.

F: Male or female.

L: Male, or female, or every way, really.

F: Just run it by.

L: But, see, I couldn't prove that. Because we'd talked to--God, before [that was over] I got to know every pervert in Austin at that time.

F: You must have met the whole fraternity.

L: I got to know all of them, and oh, you'd be surprised.

(Interruption)

L: God, Old Clint will tell you, because he worked with me there for a month or more. We brought perverts up there of all kinds and took statements from them, trying to figure what the hell this killing was all about.

F: You know, that was one thing the public could never get a handle on.

L: No.

F: This guy really didn't seem worth killing, on the surface of the thing, just drive in there and kill him one quiet, hot afternoon.

L: Comes from Washington down here, and just kill him, and go on back to Washington. Of course, the case to start off with, the police messed it up. The police messed up the investigation. And so,

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after a day or two, after I saw what a mess they'd [made], I got Clint in on it, Clint Peoples, right quick. Well, they got jealous of Clint, and they wouldn't let him know anything; they wouldn't let me know anything.

F: Got one of those jurisdiction things.

L: So finally, I just pushed them aside, and went in there with Clint and my own people and investigated it.

But, God, we found out two or three women she'd had affairs with here. Well, right after she married Wallace, I think about three weeks, Dr. White told me--this is where Dr. White comes in, he was a big shot over on the campus over there, when he married her--he knew there was something wrong with her. And so he went to Dr. White and talked to him and asked him if he'd treat his wife. And he said, "Yes. Send her up here." Well, I never will forget. Old Doc White said, "Oh, hell, I didn't have to talk to her five minutes that I knew what was the matter, what the trouble was." Some of those people, you know, they just don't mind, you know, don't think anything about it. She told him everything. I never could get--see, I either had to get her on the stand, because that's what it was over, really, was perversion. And we even found out who told Wallace that his wife--see, she'd go down there to this golf thing when he [Kaiser] was painting the inside and working on it down there. She'd sit down there, and sometimes take her child down there with her, and stay down there all day with him while he was working.

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So some professor at Denton, who was a pervert of some kind-- I forget now what kind; you know, there's all kinds, a thousand kinds-- came down. He kept trying to have something to do with Wallace's wife, and she wouldn't. So he wrote Wallace and told him his wife was having an affair with--he admitted it to him.

So Wallace just got this pistol and hell, we even traced the pistol. Remember, an FBI agent? Wallace had gone to school with him somewhere, and that was before this man was in the FBI. And he gave him some little old foreign-made pistol.

F: I remember Wallace seemingly made no effort to cover his tracks. He just got in his car and drove off and let them catch him. I mean, it may not have been that simple.

L: No, he was trying to get away. They caught him up here at Bee Cave. It was on the dam, wasn't it?

F: I think it was.

L: Yes, on the dam. Yes, out there at Marshall Ford, they called the DPS, and hell, they threw roadblocks all over that country, and caught him. No, he was trying to get away. He didn't leave any tracks, and nobody could identify him.

See, one man walked up there about the time of the shooting-- he was playing golf out there--and pretty well identified him.

So I sent my investigator--and incidentally, he's dead now-- up to Washington to talk to the FBI man, take the pistol up there and get him to identify it.

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Right after the killing, I was out here at something at the country club, some social event, and--can't remember his name--a doctor, a dentist, who was stationed at Bergstrom, and kind of a good-looking fellow came up to me. And we hadn't finished investigating; we didn't know what the hell was behind it. And he said to me, "You better look into Josefa Johnson." Said "She's involved in that thing." Well, he's the guy, I've forgotten his name; I could find out what his name was, he was the one that spread the rumor that Josefa was involved in it.

And of course, the anti-Johnson people here. Boy!

F: That's what I was wondering, how that got going.

L: He walked right up to me out there at the country club. And of course, he told everybody he could, and when Bill Drake--

F: I can think of about three people I could have told in this town, and that's all I'd need.

L: In twenty-four hours, it'd have been everywhere.

F: Yes.

L: And of course, it just tickled old Bill Drake, who's dead now, and old Milady [?] [Mildred] Moody, and Dan Moody, and all that bunch. God amighty, in twenty-four, forty-eight hours, it was all over town.

And so when I sent my investigator up, this FBI man that had given Wallace this gun was stationed in Virginia. So I sent him up there to get [the information]. And while he was up there, I had him talk to Josefa and see if she knew these people, or how'd the rumor

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get started. This is what Josefa told him: this fellow, Bill Drake had helped finance that thing down there.

F: The Pitch and Putt.

L: Pitch and Putt. And it was in financial trouble, and the Congress had passed some of these small loan, small businessmen bills, or something, and this fellow Kaiser [Kinser] was wanting to get a loan. So he somehow got acquainted with Josefa and he had Josefa out to his mother and father's house, over on the south bank of the river. I don't know whether they're still living or not.

F: I don't either.

L: And he had a brother here. I don't know; I haven't heard of him in years. So they had Josefa out there to a barbecue a time or two, just a family affair, and tried to--she says she didn't know what. I remember now, at a table one time down here at this little thing on Lamar, a beer joint between the river and Barton Springs Road, you know, that beer joint over on the East Side, I can't think of the name of it.

F: Yes, yes, I know, something like the Wagon Wheel or Broken Spoke or something like that.

L: Yes. Well, she was in there and met this fellow Kaiser [Kinser]. And several of them--she said she didn't remember, seven or eight of them at the table--sat there and drank some beer. And I guess that's when the idea entered Kaiser's head to try to use her to get her to help him get one of those loans on his Pitch and Putt down there. Of course, after she found out what it was, she never went around him any more,

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because she didn't know anything about it, and said, "Lyndon wouldn't listen to me anyway."

F: She wasn't in any position to be used.

L: No. And I imagine Lyndon pretty well laid down the law to his family anyway. And so that ended it. But this doctor knew about it. See, this dentist had been going with Josefa.

F: Yes.

L: And had tried to marry Josefa. He'd gone with her several months and tried to marry her, and she wouldn't marry him. And I guess, as I remember, she broke off from him, and of course, it made him mad and he went spilling this stuff.

Now, that's the whole [story]. That's all there was. That's the whole connection of the Johnsons to the Wallace killing. But of course, these people picked it up.

F: It was noised around here all the time, and you never could, I myself could never get [any connection]. I even heard, you know, that either Mrs. Wallace or Doug Kaiser [Kinser] or Mac Wallace was kin to Johnson; Johnson was trying to kill the whole thing. And I mean, I heard the whole gamut of gossip and never could pin anything down as to where there was any relationship.

L: I have seen Lyndon a few times, I'd say, socially, since then. He has never said a word to me. I've never mentioned it to him. Bird has never mentioned it. Hadn't a member of the Johnson family ever mentioned that case to me, and I haven't mentioned it to them. I presume they know what the facts are.

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F: Yes.

L: This happened--her going out there, Kaiser inviting her out to the mother and father's house, and having a barbecue and all this at least a year before the killing. See, she'd been working in Washington about a year before the killing ever happened.

F: I want to get this on the record. You never were then under any pressure from the Congressman's office to knock that off.

L: None. In any shape, form or fashion.

F: But you were accused of it. Lord, you were accused of it!

L: They have never mentioned it to me. I have never mentioned it. It was embarrassing to me. Now if I'd gotten fifteen years or something like that, had stuck him, I think it would have kind of quieted down. And it was my fault. I shouldn't have taken that fellow. But I was down to about three more challenges.

F: Well, you never know.

L: And I thought, good, there's a fellow on the Highway Department. Of course, I didn't know his connection. And they brought this lawyer in here and stayed about three days, and he was gone. Of course, I knew what it was, but it was too damned late then. I couldn't do anything about it. And then the foreman of the jury came up to my office as soon as the judge dismissed them. Judge Betts is responsible for a lot of this. The jury got in there and this fellow Johnson talked that jury into that they couldn't retry him if they had a hung jury. Who was that fellow? He was in the Insurance Department, I believe, this foreman of that jury. I couldn't get a real intelligent

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man on the jury. See, all the businessmen--

F: Just weren't there.

L: Hell, I remember, Taylor Glass, God, I don't know, a bunch of businessmen were on the panel, binary [?].

F: They ducked it like. . . .

L: Oh, hell, they had an opinion and they were out of there in three questions.

F: Yes.

L: And what I had to take was just what was left, on the jury. Now this fellow was in, I believe it was some department here, I can't think, the Insurance Department, I believe. He was foreman of the jury, and he came up there and sat in my [office]. First question he asked me, he said, "Mr. Long, if we'd have tied that jury up and had a hung jury, would he have been tried again?" I said, "Yes." And he sat there in my office and cried. And two or three of those jurors came to me after, of course, they got out of there.

I'll tell you another thing that had a whole lot to do with it. I don't know whether you remember it or not. I tried to get the commissioners to pick those jury rooms. See, they locked them up then. They didn't have a place to hang their clothes. They just had twelve beds in there, and that's all. They'd go to bed at night and they'd have to put their clothes on the bed.

F: A real prison cell.

L: Oh, it was horrible. They stayed up there about two weeks, you know, and one place they could shave. They'd have to get up at five o'clock

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in the morning so all the men could shave, and go eat breakfast by seven, and get back up there.

F: You can make your mind up pretty quick on something like that.

L: It was horrible on them. Of course, the jury got out of there, and they just cussed and raised hell about the accommodations up there. Then the county committee went up there and put two or three places in to shave, and put some things up there they could hook their clothes on. But that had a lot to do with it. And then they were mad at themselves, see; they let this fellow that hung the jury, let him talk them into the fact that if they didn't do something, he could never be tried again.

F: A good foreman would have come in and straightened that out.

L: Oh, yes. And they kind of knew it, but they were. . . . So finally, they agreed to this. There were ten of them that wanted to send him for fifteen, twenty years. And it was one of those things.

F: Did you ever participate in another Johnson campaign, later on?

L: No, when he was elected to the Senate, I had a race of my own and just visited in his headquarters a time or two.

F: When he ran for vice president and president, did you get involved in that, more than just an ordinary citizen?

L: A little bit. To this extent: I had some good friends in labor, and I called Bird a time or two in Washington, and called her in Los Angeles. I believe it was Los Angeles, where they had the Democratic convention that year.

F: Yes.

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L: And because I was getting through labor--you know, labor knows what's going on in this country.

F: Yes.

L: I didn't think he took the right men out there from Texas; that was his business. Of course, this fellow died not long ago, down here from Bryan.

F: Yes, Cliff Carter.

L: Cliff Carter, I imagine had a lot to do with selecting them.

But I was for Lyndon. I've always been, except the one time, when he was elected, I'd already obligated. But from then on, I've supported Lyndon and done everything I could for him. But never been close to him, never tried to be, didn't want to be, to be frank about it.

F: Have you kept up with Lady Bird pretty well?

L: Pretty well. Betty, my wife, runs into her in social [occasions]. I never go around them.

F: Did you ever see them in Washington?

L: No, I was up there when he was president, and took Betty up there to a luncheon that Mrs.--the party-giver up there--

F: Perle Mesta?

L: --Perle Mesta was giving for something. I don't remember what it was. And [we] flew up there. And I think Bird was at the luncheon.

It was the day before Lyndon was going to be operated on for his gall bladder. Well, Bird called me twice and asked me to come over, and [said] they'd send a car over to come see the White House.

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Well, I wouldn't go. And of course, I guess I should have. I shouldn't have looked at it that way. But I just couldn't go into--I consider the White House his home. And I knew he was going to be operated on the next morning, and of course, he'd have never known I'd been in it, but there was something--I just couldn't go into a man's home when he was going to be operated on.

F: I see. Right.

L: So I didn't turn Bird down; I talked to her on the phone; she called Betty and then I talked to her. After it was all over with and you get off, it was kind of silly that I didn't go. She'd go to a luncheon or go to one of those meetings, I'd just go down, and hire cab and just ride. I never had seen the Pentagon, hadn't been up there in years.

I was up there week before last; I got in there one afternoon and left the next afternoon. I don't like Washington. I just don't like it. It's a beautiful city, but, goddamn, we walked down 14th Street over there. I never saw such a sight. You've been down 14th over there?

F: Yes.

L: These peep shows and sex things.

F: Real tawdry.

L: We started down, and my wife got tired, and we just turned around and came back. But we walked about four or five blocks down in there.

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In fact, I don't like to travel. As soon as she got through, we came home. Didn't even go to New York. (Interruption)

. . . Primary, and beat four people. I ran on a platform that I wasn't qualified, but the others weren't either. (Laughter) And that I was young and ambitious, and that I'd learn and they were too damn old to learn.

F: Let's see, was Allred attorney general then, or was that before then?

L: That was before then. He'd run once and gotten beat, and the lawyers from Wichita Falls beat him.

F: Seems to me, most of my early life, either Tom Hunter or Jim Allred was running from Wichita Falls.

L: I'll tell you something funny about Tom Hunter. Tom was a good friend of mine, too. I'll tell you about Jimmie.

So I came down. I'd never been to Austin, and there I was, elected the first primary.

F: Came down to see what you'd been elected to?

L: Yes, and I got in the car with a friend of mine, and we came down here and looked around, went around the Capitol and the University. I was still going to junior college up there, and I was running paper routes. Hell, I made money, more money in the Depression, percentage-wise, than I have since then, nearly. I was making about four hundred dollars a month.

F: Hey!

L: Back in the late twenties, I was delivering thirteen hundred papers a day. Get up every morning at three o'clock, go to school in the

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day, deliver my papers in the mornings, go to school. I'd fall out. The teachers got to where they didn't--I'd just crawl out the window. I had a lab the last [of the] day, and I'd do my lab and crawl out, and go get in my car, and go to work. Work till nine or ten that night. I'd do all my collecting then.

So I came down here. And while I was down here, a bunch of the lawyers had been calling me from Wichita, wanting me to get the hell back up there. Jimmie's brother, Ben, was running for district judge, and running against old Judge Cook, and they were using my name in his campaign. I don't remember the details, but anyway, I got in my car and went on back home, and got in the campaign. We beat Jimmie's brother. And so Jimmie and I fell out for a long time after that.

So Jimmie ran for attorney general. First time he ran, he got beat, and the Wichita Falls lawyers beat him. So I was in the legislature, and Jimmie came down here, and he said, "Now, Bob, let's bury the hatchet." He said, "You're very friendly with all the oil men and the lawyers in Wichita Falls." And I was. I was probably the strongest man politically up there then and mainly just because I was helping the oil men and the lawyers who got their living out of the oil men.

F: Yes.

L: And he says, "You can help elect me attorney general if you go up there, and quiet those lawyers down, and get them not to fight me." He said, "I'll be elected." I said, "Okay." I said, "What little fuss we had, as far as I'm concerned, it's over with."

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So I went back up there, and went around to see practically every lawyer in Wichita County, and asked them if they couldn't support Jimmie, to lay off of him. I said, "I'll stand good for Jimmie." I had that understanding with them. I said, "Now, if I go up there, I don't want you to do anything for me. I just want you to be a good attorney general. That's all I want you to do." So I went up there, and I got all the lawyers off of him, and he got elected. All but four or five; there were some of them, you know, that I never could get off. But anyway, he got elected. They didn't fight him like they had before, didn't organize or anything. So he got elected attorney general. Well, a big fight came in the legislature over here, creating a new oil and gas commission. You remember that fight?

F: Yes.

L: Well, I had gotten so many scars. Old Carl Estes over in Tyler would print my name on the front page.

F: Just like it was a dirty word.

L: Oh, God, you know old Carl was vicious. But I never fell out with Carl; I understood him. And he claimed I was an employee of the Humble, Texaco, and Mobil, and everybody else, you know. So I decided the best thing for me to do was lay off of him. So Sidney Latham took the lead. Incidentally, did you know Sidney's very rich?

F: No.

L: Do you know Sidney?

F: No. I know the name, but I don't know him.

L: Well, he was secretary of state under Coke [Stevenson], and then he

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was attorney for H. L. Hunt for years.

F: Yes, Hunt.

L: And so I got Sidney to take the lead on the new oil and gas commission bill. Then I did the underground work. And we were sixty-something. You know, they have what they call suspension day.

F: Yes.

L: The only way you can get a bill up. His number was sixty-some-odd. And I went to work, went around there and traded, got about eight or ten people that were members of the House that was close to the oil business. I went to the Lobby and told them what I wanted. I said, "Now, you talk to those boys, and when I trade their votes, I want them to stay with it." Well, I went around there and traded, swapped that thing; sometimes I'd have to swap eight votes, ten votes, twelve votes, some guy's private bill, to get his number on suspension. In a week's time, I traded that bill. I know the legislature was never so surprised in the world. In one week's time, I started at sixty-something and traded that new oil and gas commission bill to the top of the suspension list.

F: Great.

L: Even old Coke Stevenson said he'd never seen anything [like it]. Coke laid that suspension bill out that Monday morning, and there was that new oil--goddamn, they raised hell. (Laughter) They didn't know what I'd been doing all week. Well, the House passed it, and the Senate killed it.

What'd I start to tell? I get to telling these things, and I

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forget it. I'll tell you something funny about this Tom Hunter campaign. Well, anyway, what I fell out about again while I was working on that, Jimmie knew I was interested, knew all the oil men in Wichita Falls was for this new oil and gas commission bill. I found Jimmie up there working the floor against the new oil and gas commission bill. So I went to Jimmie, and we had another falling out. Well, we stayed out then till he ran for the Senate. I wasn't active in his campaign, but I was for him, and he knew I was for him. I just voted, and that was all. And Jimmie would have been elected that time, if Ed Clark and the Brown and Root and all of the money boys--they didn't think he could win. You remember, it was a close race, ended up, what, thirty-five, forty votes. If they'd have put up the money, Jimmie would have won that race. I ran into Jimmie on the street, and we stood and talked. That's when he started coming to my office. We got back together till he died.

One time, here's another funny thing that happened in the Tom Hunter and Jimmie Allred campaign. I believe it was Allred. Yes, it was Allred. That's when I was falling out with Jimmie, and Tom Hunter was running. I was for old Tom; he was dumb as hell, but a good old boy, honest, honorable. But he and Jimmie got in a run-off.

Well, old Jack Dies and all the oil lobby called me down to the hotel and said, "Tom Hunter wants to meet with Governor Jim up here, wants Governor Jim to help him." So we outlined what he wanted done. And I was to go to the meeting with them, just we three. I was to be the go-between, and I was going to tell Governor Jim, "Governor

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Jim, we don't want you to come out and vote. We want you to get your little black book out, and do your work out of that little black book, and that's all." I was supposed to meet them at eight o'clock, and Tom Hunter's supposed to come in here from Houston or somewhere, be in here by eight o'clock.

So my mother-in-law died that morning at five. Well, I went on down to the hotel. Governor Jim was there. We sat there, and we waited, and we waited. She'd just died that morning; we hadn't bought a coffin; we hadn't bought a cemetery lot; we hadn't bought nothing. I stayed there till ten o'clock, and I told them--

F: I bet your wife was ready to shoot you, wasn't she?

L: Oh, hell, yes. And I said, "Hell, I've got to go. I just can't do it." Well, I went on.

Of course, Tom Hunter came in as usual, late, and they put them in there together. And of course, old Tom couldn't very well say, "Now, Governor, I don't want your support openly." Of course, the next day, Governor Jim came out for him openly, and that beat him. That beat Tom Hunter.

F: Did Jim Ferguson--I only knew him in his later years--stay on top of the political situation very well? Did he know what was going on? Was he pretty effective? He always had a kind of do-or-die group with him, right up till the day he left this world, didn't he?

L: Yes, right up till the last. I tell you, he beat Lyndon that first time. That was his vote, came out from under those beds over there in East Texas.

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F: Well, what did he hope to get out of that?

L: I don't know. I know, and I don't know, you know. But like he said to me, "Bob, this is the last chance I'll ever get to make it." That was all. Of course, I know what he was talking about, and you do, too.

F: Yes.

L: And actually, if Lyndon would have gone and got that old man up there and put his arm around him, he'd have gotten him without a nickel.

F: Yes.

L: He could've done it. Whether Lyndon ever knew it, I don't know.

F: Just one good photograph that makes the country newspaper would have done it, you know.

L: If I called Wirtz once in that two or three days that that went on, Governor Jim and I down there in the lobby, I know I called him ten times, upstairs.

F: But he never

L: I don't know what happened. I don't know whether Lyndon ever knew I talked to Wirtz.

F: That's curious.

L: I've never mentioned it since then. Oh, I've told four or five people about it, but I mean I've never discussed it with Lyndon.

F: There's been a lot of history since you came down from the Red River Valley.

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L: Oh, I've known lots of things. I'll tell you this: the smartest woman I ever met in my life is Bird.

F: I was going to ask you about that. Even in those early days, was she pretty much of a force?

L: She was very sharp. When she came to the University, she got bids from some of the sororities here. And at that time, there was what was called the Big Four here. And I don't remember whether she got any invitations from them or not, but didn't any of them ask her to pledge. And I remember she came and talked to Betty about it, and Betty called one or two of her friends and talked, and called Bird back and told her, "From what I can hear, if you don't make the Big Four, I just wouldn't go."

And I remember Bird called her Daddy and said her Daddy asked her not to go in at the start, and that ended it. She had some bids from one or two small ones, you know. So that's one reason she never was in a sorority.

But Bird is--there's no question in my mind--the smartest woman I ever met in my life. She's well matched to Lyndon. Lyndon's got one of the best minds that I ever knew in my life. But Bird is a smart businesswoman. I don't think Lyndon appreciated Bird's ability for probably ten or twelve years after they were married. I wasn't around them much, but that's my observation. But I think, oh, probably when he was majority leader in the Senate that he came to realize what Bird meant to him. I think it was along in that time. And since then, when she pulled on his coattail, he listened.

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F: She undoubtedly filled in a lot of gaps along there that he kind of left behind in his rush.

L: And listen, back when he was running for Congress, Betty used to go with her on some of her trips. And Betty'll never forget, she went down there to Giddings with her, among those Germans. And they're cold people, you know. And old Bird, old country girl from East Texas, would go up against those cold Germans. She learned the hard way. She was a very bashful girl. And she is one of the few women that developed with their husbands.

F: Yes.

L: And she's just as smart and sharp as Lyndon ever was or ever will be. And Lyndon's not just a good politician, there's millions of them; he's a hell of a good businessman, smart as hell. He's a hell of a-- he'd have made it if he'd never gone into politics. He'd have been a rich man. He's just got that ability and energy. There's not many people got the energy.

F: He's working after you and I have gone to bed.

L: That's right. He's working every minute he's awake. But Bird is a hell of a good businesswoman. She can look at a financial statement and see just as much as any human being in the United States. She's smart. She's developed into a brilliant woman, with poise, everything. She's got it all, in my book; smartest woman I ever knew, and started from a bashful country girl.

F: Yes.

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L: And Lyndon, I knew Lyndon's daddy, knew his mother, knew most of his sisters and brothers. He had a wonderful mother. Probably in his early life, she influenced him more than anything else, and in later life, I think Bird has. And I don't believe that dependency developed until he was probably majority leader.

F: Was the father anything like Lyndon?

L: No. No.

F: Just a good country politician?

L: A good country politician. He was a likeable fellow, had a good personality, and made friends and kept friends, just like Sam Rayburn. Sam remained his friend as long as he lived.

I don't believe there's--Wirtz could probably, early, have some influence on Lyndon. And probably, the only other man, I'd say, is Sam Rayburn. And they were his friends; they were for the good; there wasn't anything bad about either one of them.

F: Right, yes.

L: Of course, after he became president, I think the big mistake he made was not kicking that Kennedy bunch out.

F: Yes.

L: He kept them too long; wrong ones. I think the biggest boondoggle that's ever happened in this country was that McNamara. (Laughter) Now, I think he's a good man, conscientious, brilliant, but he and Kennedy went in there to just take the Defense Department over and run it. And hell, there's a lot of generals, they're no damned dummies. There's a few of them that have got some brains, too.

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The biggest boondoggle was that swing-swept [swept-wind] plane they tried to build up here in Fort Worth. Never hear anything about it, but, God, what it cost this country! It's costing us now. I mean, we're behind in aircraft, and that's primarily the reason, right there.

F: Well, thank you, sir.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I]

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