INTERVIEWEE: JOHN W. MACY JR. (Tape #3)

INTERVIEWER: DAVID MC COMB

April 26, 1969

Mc This is the third session with Mr. John Macy. The date is April 26, 1969. Once again, I am in his offices in Washington, D.C., and my name is David McComb.

At my request Mr. Macy brought in for this session his Presidential Medal of Freedom and his citation to show me, and I thought at this point that I might read into the tape a description on both the citation and the medal.

The citation is on a piece of paper--I suppose it's paper, thick paper at least--approximately one foot by a foot and a half in dimension. There's a Presidential Seal at the top of it, and it says underneath that: "The President of the United States of America awards this Presidential Medal of Freedom to John W. Macy, Jr."

Underneath that, in smaller letters, there is a paragraph which states: "John Macy recruited more talent of proven ability into government service than any other man of our time. In demanding only the best and in seeking it out, he set a standard of excellence that will serve as a benchmark for many years to come. Our government is stronger today from top to bottom because of his efforts. The government is fairer too because John Macy insisted that equal employment opportunity meant what it says. He insisted only on ability and character without regard to religion or race or color or section." This is signed by Lyndon Johnson--his personal signature--and in the lower lefthand corner it says: "The White House, Washington, D.C., January 20, 1969."

The medal itself is in a walnut box which, again, has the Presidential Seal in silver on the outside of it. The medal is suspended from a blue and white ribbon. It is gold in color with golden eagles around the outside of it--five of them. On the inside of the medal there is a white star with a red background, blue center with gold stars in the center of it. There is also a smaller medal to go with this, which can be worn on a coat. There is an even smaller one to wear in a buttonhole and a bar with blue and white colors and a silver eagle in the center of it that might be worn as a campaign ribbon would be worn on a uniform. The main medal itself is approximately an inch-and-a-half in diameter, and, to say the least, it is rather striking in appearance and obviously something to treasure.

I'd like to develop a theme today of how you became what you might call the chief talent scout for the President, which was a seemingly unusual sort of arrangement. You mentioned last time that talent is always needed, but you seem to have carried this to a height of efficiency that it never had been carried before. I know that you did some work in computerizing information; and the President was able to gather information and make selections in a very quick manner which, I assume, you had a great deal to do with. So I'm interested in how all of this developed, your relationship to Johnson in this, and what you did to mechanically speed up the process, and then perhaps to give me some examples. I'm thinking in terms of, to illustrate his policies, Betty Furness as an illustration of a woman brought in; Robert Weaver as a Negro [was] brought in; and I mentioned to you once before John Hechinger. Hechinger himself was interested in how he was selected and said to be sure to ask you.

M: Many people are.

Mc It would be impossible to go through all of the selections, but I thought maybe these would serve as examples.

M: Yes. I'd be happy to do that. It's difficult to be concise on a topic that's as broad as this that involved so many different people. Perhaps it would be of interest to relate how I did become involved in this. As we have discussed in the two earlier interviews, I had had association with Lyndon Johnson during the Vice Presidential days and a rather early association with him after the assassination.

But to really pick up the threads on the talent search activity, it's important to skip most of 1964--perhaps we can come back and fill that period in later.

Following the 1964 election the Johnsons returned from Texas at the time a reception was being given on the eighth floor of the State Department for Walter Heller, who was leaving the government to return to the University of Minnesota. The President came through the room and received the plaudits of those who had been associated with him during the earlier days of his administration. It was a very happy occasion. He honored me by stopping at my point in the room and carrying on several minutes of conversation, during which he described the need that he had to move forward in filling a number of presidential vacancies that had accumulated during 1964.

Mc Were the Kennedy people slowly moving out?

M: There were a number of them that had moved out, but by-and-large it was still mostly the Kennedy people. President Johnson made relatively few appointments during 1964. A number of Kennedy people had left, and this had produced the vacancies that he referred to. So really he was facing for the first time any significant selection of people to fill the appointments that are his responsibility.

So he mentioned this in passing. Then when he turned to the next person in the room, he said: "Please come and talk with me tomorrow." So the following

day I met with him in his office about noon, and he talked to me about his philosophy with respect to appointments. He expressed to me once again the great accomplishment of President Kennedy in bringing so many able people into government, and how he desired to retain as many of those people as possible, but that he understood that most of them had served their country for four years, that they had other pursuits which they returned to.

He said that he had thought a good deal about how he wanted to approach the task of filling these positions, and that it had occurred to him that if the Civil Service system had been successful in recruiting people on the basis of merit for lower level jobs within the government, why shouldn't the same techniques and processes and standards be applied in searching out those who could serve him in top presidential positions. So he asked me if I would be willing to undertake, as an additional duty, responsibility for the search and evaluation and referral of individuals for his consideration for these appointments.

He made it very clear that these were to be his appointments, that he wanted them to made however with the concurrence of the superiors to those who would be appointed. He made it clear that as far as my action was concerned I was to evaluate only the qualifications of the individuals, that any political considerations would be injected in the process at some other point, probably at his point of review. He told me that he desired to pull together all of the activities relating to appointments into a single office, and that he hoped that I would be able to do that.

At that particular time there were a number of different personnel units. One was a vestige of the Eisenhower Administration which had never been entirely eliminated, and there were two or three people still occupying that office doing

sort of a special project job but still bearing the label and the executive order number that had created that office in the Eisenhower years.

He asked me to think it over and let him know whether I'd be willing to do it. He suggested that I spend some time before making my decision with Ralph Dungan. Ralph Dungan had been pursuing this responsibility for President Johnson during the first year, and he had gained a wealth of understanding and background in performing this function for President Kennedy.

Mc To your knowledge, has any President ever set up a Chairman of the Civil Service Commission to do this kind of work?

M: No. This had never been done before. This clearly was a first. And one of the points of consideration that I had to think through was whether or not doing this would in some way conflict with or undermine the responsibility as Civil Service Chairman. There were some people, I was certain, who would view this as an effort to politicize the Civil Service. But the President put it to me in such merit terms that it seemed to me that this was a logical extension of the responsibility of the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission and that there was no reason why rational individuals should criticize this. I felt that there were those who might very well wish to make political capital out of it and make such claims, but I had already been fairly well established in the eyes of the governmental community as one who was not performing just the traditional functions of Civil Service Chairman, but had become identified with the whole sweep of policy affecting personnel management throughout the government. So this represented less of a departure than it would have if the task had been the narrower one of the basic statutory responsibilities of the Civil Service Commission.

Mc From a managerial point of view it made sense, didn't it?

M: Yes. It made sense. I found that it was possible--I'm getting ahead of myself in the story--it was possible to organize it such a way that there was not a mixture of the two responsibilities except in my person. There were not merged organizational elements or staff that were involved in the regular Civil Service functions and those engaged in this work.

Mc So the two functions were separate?

M: The two functions were separate except for my own person.

But to return to the chronology of it, I met with Ralph Dungan, whom I had known very well and with whom I had worked closely during the Kennedy years. He had been designated by President Johnson to become Ambassador to Chile, and so he was leaving at this particular time. That in itself presented a staffing problem to the President. Dungan had developed a staff during the period from 1962 to 1964 of able young staff people who were doing much of this work in support of him. These were young men whom I knew through frequent contact in the past. I had high regard for them.

Before the day was out, the President called me and said: "Have you made up your mind?"

I said: "Mr. President, of course I'll do it if this is your desire. I feel that I can organize this and will be in a position to serve you."

So that was the start.

The next step was a Cabinet meeting on the 19th of November, at which time the President read a statement which was not only given to the Cabinet, but released to the public, identifying my responsibilities, and laying out his appointment philosophy with respect to presidential appointments. He asked that the cabinet officers work with me in seeking candidates for presidential appointment vacancies within their particular departments. He made it very

clear that it was his desire that those selected be entirely acceptable to the cabinet officers, but also that they pass muster as members of the Johnson Administration. I believe that's almost a verbatim recollection of what was said.

Mc Did the other cabinet members indeed use your service?

M: Yes. I had a slightly different type of relationship with each one of them. In some cases the cabinet officer turned to me as he would have turned to a management consultant engaged in the search operation. In other cases they had names in mind which they asked me to evaluate for them. And in most instances when a name went to the President, it was jointly supported, either with the cabinet officer making his recommendation and then a separate endorsement of mine on top, or it was a joint memorandum, or I prepared the memorandum saying that the cabinet officer was wholly in support. So in that way it was possible to avoid any kind of conflict between the White House staff member, myself, and the cabinet officer. Really, I don't recall a single instance where there was any serious friction on this particular point. There may have been some disagreements with respect to the appointments, but in most every case there was an avoidance of friction. And there was a recognition that these were the President's appointments but that the men and women involved had to work with the cabinet officers.

So I felt that I had a very good send-off on this. It received some comment in the press, including a cartoon that appeared in the Post on November 28 where the cartoonist depicted Mr. Macy as really a representative in a casting office looking for talent.

I proceeded to organize the personnel function. This took a couple of months. We eliminated the duplicating functions that existed in the White

House. I organized the office so that I had two desk officers who divided up the government and each became a specialist in his particular segment of the government. He knew the key people in those departments and agencies in his sector. He knew the sources of talent for the jobs that had to be filled. Each of the desk officers kept a running record of not only the vacancies that were already known, but those that were anticipated.

Mc Now the dividing line here is whether the person is presidentially appointed.

M: Yes, I think we should be clear on that. The function was confined to the area of presidential appointees. It did not get into the area where the cabinet officer or the agency head had the authority to make the appointment himself.

Mc Or any other civil servant.

M: Or any civil servant activities. So these were positions where, by statute, the appointment authority was vested in the President.

Mc So it's a clear, sharp line.

M: It's a clear, sharp area. These were positions also in the Executive Branch for the most part. To some degree the office was involved in some of the judicial appointments--but only in a limited degree. The Attorneys General, Nicholas Katzenbach and Ramsey Clark, were the responsible officials who dealt with the judicial appointments. The actual papers came through this office of mine but largely to raise any particular policy issues that we felt the President might wish to raise himself. So we're talking primarily about an area of some 600 jobs in the executive branch. Now this includes the cabinet officers, the undersecretaries, assistant secretaries, the general counsels of the departments. It includes the heads and deputy heads of agencies. It included the ambassadorial corps. We had some 120 ambassadors during this

particular period. It included appointments to the regulatory agencies. So this was generally the universe with which we were dealing.

We developed in our records center a file on each of these positions, so that we had background information for the President on the statutory history of the position, on the individuals who had occupied the position previously, and then the correspondence relating to the filling of that position.

Mc What do you mean by that? What correspondence?

M: Well, in the process there was a development of documentation with respect to the search and the evaluation and, ultimately, the memorandum that went to the President with the recommendation. Then we had records with respect to each individual appointee, so that we had in the file the documents which had led us to that individual. We had evaluative material and then, if he was selected, the ultimate announcement, and then any subsequent information that was collected that might have some bearing on the President's decision to reappoint or to reassign or to take any other action with respect to that person.

Mc Was there a physical separation of offices for the presidential appointees and the rest of the Civil Service?

M: You mean as far as I was concerned?

Mc Did you have two different offices, one in the Executive Office Building and one--?

M: Yes. My physical arrangement, that was worked out early in the game, in November and December of 1964, was first an office in the West Wing. I occupied an office in the West Wing for this purpose from late November 1964 until April of '65. In April of '65, because I was only using the space part-time, it looked like a poor utilization of very valuable space. So I moved across West Executive Avenue into the Executive Office Building into Room 276. In that way I was closely associated with the people who were doing the work for

me. I had approximately twenty people in that operation when it was finally set up. As I indicated, I had the two desks with senior people. Each desk officer had a junior in support of his effort. Then I had a man who worked full-time on various part-time ad hoc and statutory advisory committees, boards, etc. These were also presidential appointments, and although they did not assume the same kind of public attention or importance, they nevertheless provided the President with appointment actions which were of value to the presidency.

Then I had a record keeping and clerical corps that included the computer under yet another staff member, and the work was supported by various clerical employees who were a part of this operation. There was a good deal of paper volume because this was the place where responses to correspondence from the public addressed to the President were developed. The mail concerning appointments was always one of the top categories of presidential mail, particularly if an appointment became controversial and it was necessary to prepare--

Mc This flowed through your office?

M: This flowed through this office as well.

As far as the computer is concerned, I think that some of the publicity in 1965 was a little misleading. The reporters tended to look upon this as something that would automatically flush up names of individuals who would automatically be right for every position. Basically, the computer was a storage and retrieval device for the names and backgrounds of about 30,000 people. These were names that had been developed during the Kennedy years, were names that we developed from a variety of sources.

The computer made it possible for us to get print-outs of names by various criteria. Most of these were biographical criteria. For example, if we were

looking for somebody to fill a particular vacancy on a regulatory commission and we wanted to have a lawyer, Republican, from the west coast, we would be able to get a list of the names in the file that met those three criteria. This was very useful in giving us a quick entreé into the file. This was the first time that any effort of this type had been made. This was a constantly evolving system, because we were putting names in and drawing names out. This gave us the first cut of the names that we had. Now very frequently we'd decide none of those names really met the requirements of the position.

Mc The computer then was an index to your files.

M: It was an index to the files, broken down by a number of characteristics so that with the marvel of the machine, you could pull forth a listing of people who met a certain set of criteria. All of this was coded.

It also gave us the means for providing the President with a variety of data. President Johnson was always interested in statistics. I sent him periodic reports on the status of his appointment actions throughout the four year period. In fact, I have one here that I prepared late in the fall of 1968 and presented at a cabinet meeting in November. I might just read it through to indicate to you the kind of information that was of interest to him. Almost all of this data reflects what he desired in the way of information.

"In the past 62 months the President has appointed 624 persons to major full-time executive positions, including 148 to ambassadorial posts, and 216 persons to federal judicial positions, for a total of 830 positions."

Now I might interject here to say that this represents a quantitative measure of the work that was performed in the office that I headed in the White House.

"Of the total number of executive positions 261, or 44.8 percent, spent the majority of their professional careers in the federal service. 130, or

22.3 percent, came from the career Civil Service. 98, or 16.8 percent came from the career Foreign Service. 20 appointees had their principal experience in the Legislative Branch, and 13 in the career military service. Appointees from either business or legal backgrounds account for another 35 percent of the major presidential appointments in the Executive Branch. They're nearly equal in number--103 in business, and 104 from law. University backgrounds have characterized 72, or 12.4 percent, of the appointees, while state and local officials have been called upon for 37, or 6.5 percent. Labor unions have appointed 5 appointees. 25 of the full-time appointees have been 35 years of age or under at the time of their appointment by the President."

The President was always interested in seeking more younger people. This was one of the criteria that he generally used.

"A total of 50 Negroes have been appointed to major executive and judicial posts, including the first Negro in the Cabinet and the Supreme Court. This total includes 21 executive appointees, 19 judges, and 9 ambassadors. In addition, 58 Negroes were appointed to part-time assignments on boards and commissions.

"The President has appointed 25 women to full-time executive and judicial positions, and 201 women to part-time assignments.

"97 of the executive appointees are Phi Beta Kappa, including 5 cabinet members--Rusk, Wirtz, Freeman, McNamara, and Connor.

"Of the appointees 69, or 9 percent, possess Ph.D.'s. The total number of earned degrees represents 936.

"No presidential appointee has been disapproved by Senate vote during the Johnson Administration. The largest negative vote on any nominee was 20. Only 13 major nominations are still pending confirmation before the Senate as of the close of business September 17, 1968."

Then I went on and spelled out what those were.

"The judicial appointments of the President have been highly rated by the American Bar Association. Of the 216 judicial appointments 173 appointees have been rated by the ABA. 54 percent have been found either highly acceptable or extremely well qualified or qualified. 45 percent have been found qualified. 4, or less than 1/2 of 1 percent, have been found not qualified.

"174 Democrats have been appointed to judicial vacanacies, 16 Republicans have been selected, while 7 were nonpartisan."

And I point out that this is the largest number of appointees from an opposing party in the last six presidencies. The final comment was:

"Significant geographic distribution has been secured in these appointments. Each state in the union has at least one appointee, with the leading states being the District of Columbia, New York, Maryland, and California, Virginia, and Texas."

He was pleased to note for the Cabinet that Texas was in sixth place, not in first.

This is representative of the type of data that it was possible to collect. Every two weeks I would send to him a summary of his appointments statistically. I would send him a list of vacancies known and anticipated so he could be thinking about them and would be in a position to know. Periodically, I would send him a breakdown as to the states of origin of his appointees. From time to time he felt that he was appointing too many people from the northeast.

Mc This would indicate he was very conscious about geographic location at this point.

M: He was conscious of all of the characteristics. He followed the appointment operations with the closest care, was very much involved personally in every selection.

It might be helpful to you for me to rough out for you the process that we followed in working with him on an individual appointment because I think that illustrates the degree of his personal involvement in each stage of the process. He had a number of general criteria that we developed together early in our experience. One was that he was seeking people of high intellectual attainment. As was illustrated by what I've just read to you, he was proud of the academic honors of his appointees. He was interested in the number that had advanced degrees.

Mc Was this the measure of the intellectual attainment? The number of degrees or--?

M: This tended to be the statistical measurement, but he was primarily interested in people who had not only the degrees but had demonstrated high intelligence in what they had done. He equated success in individual professional fields with intelligence.

Secondly, he sought people who were relatively young. He was constantly looking for those who were in the bracket below 40.

Mc Why?

M: Well, the feeling that there was need to have the vitality of the younger generation in these appointments. He was always concerned about having too high an average age. Every now and then he would ask me: "What is the average age of the Cabinet at the present time. How does it compare with previous administrations?" He was particularly pleased with the success of young men like Ramsey Clark and Alan Boyd and Alexander Trowbridge. He took particular interest in younger men.

Third, he was interested in people who had attained professional recognition in their field; a successful lawyer, an outstanding professional from the academic ranks, or a businessman who had demonstrated not only financial success

but innovation in his business or had evidenced social consciousness in his community.

He was interested in seeking people who had a commitment to the program that they would be administering. He was always interested in knowing what previous involvement in government people had had. He shared my view that previous government experience made it possible for the individual to get off to a faster start in his responsibility and to have a greater degree of sensitivity of the ways of government, particularly an appreciation of the importance of Congress and a knowledge of the interplay of various elements of government. Many people successful in industry without government experience had difficulty in making that adjustment. Of course, Charlie Wilson of the Eisenhower era is always the prime example of the problem that a successful businessman faces.

Then he looked for people who had a general commitment to the Johnson Administration and to him personally. Loyalty was an important word that showed up.

So basically this formed the broad set of criteria that was applied.

Mc What about minorities and women?

M: There was emphasis on trying to get diversity, trying to bring more blacks into the Administration.

Mc What about Mexicans?

M: He had a particularly strong interest on this in the period of '67-'68. Really from the beginning, really prior to my time in 1964, he was very strong on trying to bring more women into the administration. And this never let up. I used to open many of my public talks, particularly to women's groups, by saying that "My theme song these days is 'Everyday Is Ladies' Day With Me,'" because that's what Lyndon Johnson insisted on. So this never let up. We had special

lists of women and Negroes and Mexican-Americans that we would always try to inject into our consideration.

But then, turning from these general criteria--and I'm glad you brought up this other dimension--it's necessary to look at each job. Our view was that we were not seeking lists of names of people, but we were seeking people for specific jobs. The job was seeking the man. So we went through an initial process, sometimes with the President, sometimes with the cabinet officer, depending on the degree of immediate interest, and we developed what we called a profile of the position's requirement.

Mc In other words, you'd define the job?

M: It was a matter of defining the job, then defining the human characteristics which were most appropriate to that job at that particular time. I'm a great believer in the importance of the current time frame.

Mc So the profile may change.

M: Oh yes, if we're filling the same job several times, the profile wouldn't necessarily be the same. The reason for that is that you may need at one particular time a strong manager as an assistant secretary. Or you may need a particularly skilled professional in a subject matter area. Or you may need someone who is effective in his advocacy before the Congress or before public groups.

Mc So there was a political thread in this, too. I mean, if the current political climate was such that you needed a prominent Negro, would this be a consideration in the job profile?

M: Oh yes, this would be. But on the Negro, Mexican-American, women, it was a matter each time of seeing if we couldn't find somebody from the list.

Mc They were there all the time.

M: That was almost a static political situation. So the variables were more in terms of program needs, organizational needs, personality mixes, geographical concentrations. I mean, obviously, we'd want to avoid getting all the presidential appointees in the Department of Commerce from the City of New York. It was important that we get them from different economic and social strata, if we possibly could. So the profile was developed in discussion before we started playing with any names at all--at least theoretically. Now sometimes the President would say, "Now evaluate so-and-so," before we'd ever get to this stage. So what I'm describing is really sort of the ideal which certainly was not followed the same in every case but generally was the way we tried to proceed with it.

Once we had worked up the criteria, or the profile, then we started the search in three general areas. We screened the computer record in terms of the characteristics that we'd identified, looking concurrently at special lists that we had.

Secondly, we searched appropriate names within the career services--Civil Service, Foreign Service, military service.

And third, we contacted from a group of about 400 people who had been identified as reliable recruiting sources.

Mc You would contact them for advice or recommendations?

M: For names. If we were looking for somebody for the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve, we would go to economists and bankers and financial advisers. If we were looking for somebody in the housing business, we would go to people that we knew in that field. This list of names was made up of leaders all over the country, a great variety of social groups. Some of them were political leaders, but certainly only a small percentage. And the list was very fluid,

because we would add people as we found new ones who were helpful. We would drop others who appeared not to be productive. But this was a very valuable network of contacts, and they were contacted selectively when we were seeking names.

Mc Was the contact by telephone?

M: Always by telephone.

Mc Never written?

M: No.

Mc Is there any reason for that? Is it more efficient that way?

M: It was more efficient. Also, we received a higher level of candor by not asking anybody to put anything in writing. These were people whose reliability we had confidence in. We knew that there wouldn't be any character assassination, and we knew that there wouldn't be any puff pieces delivered this way.

Mc Where did you get these names?

M: Where did we get the names?

Mc Yes.

M: Well, these were people that we had found in our accumulated experience to be particularly helpful. They were people that had been known to the President. I received from him a list of people in whom he had confidence--and then from other key people in the Administration.

Mc And then you probably knew people yourself.

M: And I knew many, many people myself. Also Dungan had built up a significant portion of this list, and this was part of the legacy that he passed along to me. So it was a very valuable resource.

Once we had scanned those three sources, then we began to make evaluations with respect to the names that looked most promising. Usually we tried to get

a triangulation evaluation. We tried to get at least three comments. Then we put together a preliminary memorandum for the President from those evaluations.

Mc Let me ask this now. Where did you get the comments?

M: Back to the same list.

Mc You might use that list both for gathering names in the first place and then for evaluation.

M: And then for evaluation. Right. And we'd use different people from that list than those that had made the recommendations.

Usually we met around the table and agreed upon the leading candidates, and said: "All right, now, let's get readings on Mr. X from A, B, and C; and Mr. Y from M, N, and O." Then we'd get on the phone and we'd pull those together, assess them, and then prepare from that assessment a preliminary memorandum to the President in which we'd cite a number of names. We'd vary all the way from one name that looked just so good that there was no point in putting it in competition--or up to about six names. We'd give the President a very brief biographical sketch on each person. And then a summary of our evaluation.

Mc Did you name in that memo the people who had given you recommendations?

M: Sometimes.

Mc What I'm driving at, was the President impressed by the people you--?

M: Oh yes.

Mc And did he have more faith in those he knew than those he didn't know?

M: Yes. Sometimes he'd send the memo back and say, "I'm interested in Mr. X, but see what so-and-so and so-and-so and so-and-so has to say about it."

These memoranda went to the President in his night reading. There would always be a ballot at the end of the memorandum for him to check. It would

read: "I am interested in X, Y, and Z," and he could check that. Or he could say, "None of these are appealing to me. Give me more names." Or, "Discuss with me." And sometimes after he'd read it, he'd pick up the phone and call me. Or he would hold several of them for a few days and then ask me to come over and discuss them with him. So there was a running communication on this. But most often the memorandum would come back the day after--

Mc The next morning?

M: The next morning, with his handwritten note on it. Then we'd proceed from there. We'd make some further readings, send back usually a second memorandum, and if he agreed that one person clearly appeared to be his choice, then we'd initiate the FBI investigation. We would turn over to the congressional liaison people the name to make some appropriate political checks. Usually we would, somewhere in that process, bring the individual in for further face-to-face discussion and, in almost every instance, for a visit with the President.

Then after the investigation had been run and all the checks were made, then the office prepared what we called our final papers for the President. This would include the original files; it would include a draft press release; it would include an appointment nomination sheet; and it would include the FBI investigation.

Mc That might include several individuals though?

M: That would be zeroed in on the final--you see, most of that was relatively pro forma. But even at that stage there was still some variation in the process because the President was always very much interested in the manner by which an announcement was made. We had a great variety of experiences. Sometimes he'd call the individual in and take him out into the Rose Garden for an introduction to the press. Sometimes he'd have a group of nominees that he'd take

with him to a press conference and use this as a part of the press conference. Sometimes he would work the announcement into a speech that he was going to make. Sometimes he would just distribute it routinely through a press briefing by the White House press office. But in each case there was a conscious judgment about the announcement so that nothing was left to haphazard handling. And the President was always involved, himself, in that judgment.

Mc Is his reputation for secrecy in these things valid?

M: Yes. He wisely attempted to preserve his own options in the appointment process by trying to avoid any kind of premature leak. What is not valid is the claim that if anybody's name did get out, he was automatically off the list. This was a canard that was floated by the press. I don't know of any single case where an individual who hadn't already been taken off the list was removed as a result of a premature revelation in the press.

He did seek the hold the element of surprise for himself. I'm sure that frequently without my knowledge he used the appointment itself and the timing of its announcement to assist him in his political relationships with various people. So I certainly don't want to leave the impression that all of this was done in this kind of professional fashion without use of the appointment process to build up presidential power. I'm sure that the appointments in many cases were helpful to him in getting his legislation through, in working with various members of Congress. But that was not part of my responsibility. That was done either by the President himself, or by Larry O'Brien, or by others in the legislative staff.

I felt, philosophically, that this function was particularly important to the presidency because it did preserve the President's options, that without this kind of service he was likely to be buffeted by the press for individual

candidates. Now this didn't eliminate the pressures. But for the most part this system gave him names before the pressures could mobilize, because we had the intelligence as to where the vacancies were, when they were likely to occur, and we had inaugurated the search.

Mc So you're a couple of steps ahead.

M: We were a couple of steps ahead. And the President, consequently, was in a position to control the appointment process to the benefit and to the strengthening of the presidency rather than reacting to the National Committee or reacting to a powerful senator or reacting to a pressure group or reacting to friends. He could always say, "The process is being pursued by John Macy and his people. They're going to give me some names. If you have any names, give them to him." So he had an orderly process to rely upon if he wished to rely on it. And he claims that more than 90 percent of the time that he did rely on it and that most of the names that he did select came to him through this process rather than through the other processes.

So in constitutional terms I feel that this process is extremely important. And I think that some of the difficulties that President Nixon is facing in his appointments are at least partially attributable to the fact that he has scattered the assistance that he's receiving in this area among a number of people and, consequently, doesn't have a regular conduit that bears names to him.

Also, I think that he has decentralized too much of the selection to individual department heads, even to the extent of having the department heads introduce their subordinates to the press. I think it's very important to state and to reiterate that these are the President's people, that he's the appointing officer, that they're a part of his administration. There's entirely

too much fragmentation into the departments anyway--and a tendency for a department to try to establish an existence separate from the President.

Mc In all this process you described, Lyndon Johnson took an almost intense interest, you would say.

M: That's right.

Mc This would seem to be unusual for a President. You have had some experience with prior Presidents. Was Lyndon Johnson unusually interested in such appointments? Or are all Presidents like this?

M: I think all President are interested in appointments. Certainly John Kennedy was very much interested in appointments, not to the degree that Lyndon Johnson was, but particularly in the initial staffing of the administration, he was keenly interested.

Franklin Roosevelt was interested in this in a much simpler day than we've had in the last few years. I felt that Eisenhower was not particularly interested, that he delegated much of this, except for major appointments, to Sherman Adams and subsequently to other people.

But Lyndon Johnson had a keen interest in this. He used to say that "The character of my administration is going to beformed by the abilities of the people that work with me." I think this is an entirely valid view. His whole philosphy of the Presidency led to an intensely personal presidency; therefore, the persons that were associated with him were tremendously important.

Mc Is part of this also a desire to control or influence the bureaucracy underneath it?

M: Yes. I think that he was very conscious of the importance of the bureaucracy to the Presidency. He was devoted to the Civil Service, felt that he was a part of it himself. He was very proud of the appointments that he made from

out of the bureaucracy. And, as you note in the statement that I read a little earlier, he was pleased to point out that 40 percent of the appointments he had made were the professionals from government. He was always interested in pointing out how many people he had brought up from the career service to fill presidential appointments for the first time. He would point to William Driver as Administrator of Veterans Affairs and make quite a point of the fact that Driver was the first career man to head that agency.

Mc I can see how it might be difficult to get a bureau to change or to move with the majority of the people in it being civil servants and career people and who have been through a series of administration, and how a new President, or even an old one, in trying to get that bureau to change might have great difficulty in getting it to move, and how appointments perhaps might be a key to change.

M: No question about it.

Mc Was he aware of that?

M: Oh yes, very much aware of this. Very much aware of this. Also he made a number of efforts--more than any other President--to try to identify the presidency with the bureaucracy--a move that was wise both politically and philosophically. He was constantly seeking from me and from others ideas as to how to more effectively relate the presidential leadership to the two and a half million civilians that were a part of the bureaucracy. There was a desire on his part to select strong appointees of his own who could give leadership to the bureaucracy, could focus the bureaucracy in the direction of programs.

He was very admiring of Wilbur Cohen for his capacity to do this. Cohen, again a man who had been a part of the career service for so long and had become such a widely recognized professional in the program areas of HEW. Cohen's identity with the service made him tremendously effective in bringing them along with him, in making changes, in pushing programs forward.

It has been my experience that the bureaucracy thirsts for leadership, and that most of the professionals that remain in the career service are devoted to program. They're devoted to the advancement of their particular form of service to the public. So they're looking to strong, articulate, substantively oriented leadership. And this is what the President was seeking in these programs. He recognized that these people were important in their own right, but they were also important in the sense of their leadership of the large organizations that they were heading.

Mc It would be helpful to give some specific examples.

M: Right. Well, you've mentioned Betty Furness. I'm glad to talk about her case, because that was probably the most controversial one that the President has made.

Mc It was certainly a surprise to the public.

M: It was a surprise, and it was lampooned considerably by the press.

Betty Furness' name had come to me on two or three occasions in the search for able women to fill positions in the administration. Miss Furness had been active in a number of programs as a volunteer promoter. The one that really brought her to my attention was the work that she was doing for VISTA. She was touring the country, talking about VISTA to various groups.

Mc She was on radio, wasn't she?

M: Radio and television. She made a lot of lectures for them, and made a small film for them.

Also, she had evidenced a strong interest in public service. I had met her in connection with the Federal Woman's Award Program. She had served as a judge one year in that program, had attended the banquet where the women were honored, and evidenced a very strong interest in government and asked very wise questions.

And, too, she had evidenced in discussions which various people had had with her in the government a deep concern about the consumer problems.

Mc So you had her name then--?

M: I had her name in my file, and we actually looked at her for other possibilities. So the President decided that he wanted to have somebody on this full-time, rather than to have Esther Peterson serve in this capacity as well as in a very important Assistant Secretary position in the Labor Department, why, we looked at a number of names.

Mc Did he insist on a woman?

M: Oh yes. This clearly was a woman's post. I would say that in this case we were looking exclusively at women.

The names that immediately came into mind were the women who were active in the consumer movement. And, as in every other movement in this country, that one is loaded with organizations. And these people tend to become rather rigid in their advocacy; they tend to accumulate a constituency which either controls them or influences them. So it was important that we find someone who was committed to the consumer issue but not totally absorbed by and in the movement itself. So the idea of Betty Furness became increasingly attractive. She was someone who would be a very effective platform performer--

Mc Was this part of the criteria?

M: That was a very important part of the job. Also we wanted someone who would be articulate in dealing with the Congress. So her name went over to the President with two other names about a month before the decision was made. He became interested. He asked me to call her in and see if she would be willing to serve. He also in this case asked Califano to talk to her. Califano had been carrying the ball on the legislative program for consumership.

So I got hold of her. She was out somewhere in the country. She got on a plane and came in to see me. We talked, and she said, yes, she would like to do it, and she felt she could do it.

So I sent that word in to the President, and he asked me to make a few more checks. I called a few more people.

Mc Did Califano talk to her at the same time?

M: Yes. I talked to her individually, and then took her over to see him in the West Wing, and the two of us talked. We asked her if there were any problems that were likely to be embarrassing. She said: "no, but you ought to know that after seventeen years as a single woman, I'm getting married again." We said that wouldn't produce any problem. However, it was my task to find out who it was going to be, just in case it might be someone who would have taken a strongly anti-administration position. He turned out to be Les Midgely, one of the talented producers of CBS, who was well received by everybody.

Then Betty came in and met with the President. He talked to her, and obviously was impressed by her knowledge of the field and her intense determination to make good. She was obviously impressed with the President's earnestness about the consumer program.

And the next step was the announcement, and then came the deluge. We had to go ahead and answer the mail, and Betty Furness was on the spot. I feel that she came through beautifully on the spot.

Mc That mail changed it's--

M: That's right. And when she departed, I don't think there was anybody who was making fun of her anymore. She worked very hard, and the legislative record in the consumer field during the last two years of the Administration was remarkable. I was intrigued to see that when they started hearings on a

Consumer Affairs Department, one of the witnesses called in was Betty Furness. Now there wasn't any need to call her in if her record hadn't been one that was admired by the people that she dealt with.

So that's the story on Betty Furness.

Mc Let me ask a few questions about it. Is it difficult to recruit women?

M: Yes, very difficult.

Mc And why?

M: It's difficult for a variety of reasons. One is that very few women gain sufficient professional visibility so that they're known--even to other women!

Secondly, those that do become known tend to have obligations which keep them from being as mobile as is necessary.

Mc This is marriage or a profession?

M: Yes. I remember we found one tremendously successful woman who was a vice president of a company in research and development. But she lived in New York, and her husband worked in New York, and she wasn't about to come down.

We tried very hard to find a woman to replace Mrs. Bunting on the Atomic Energy Commission. Mrs. Bunting was only willing to serve for a year. That's all the leave that she could take from Radcliffe. We looked high and wide for a woman with some scientific background, because that's what the Commission needed, and we were unsuccessful. I went out to Los Alamos and tried to persuade a distinguished woman scientist out there whom I had known during my days there to try to convince her that she ought to do this. But she was unable to uproot her family and make the move.

So the search for women is one that has to go on at all times. It's very important that new sources be sought, because we kept using the same women again and again on these part-time assignments hoping that we could convince some

of them to accept the full-time assignment. But it was very difficult to do. So this clearly constituted a problem.

Betty Furness was a professional woman who had been making her way in the business world for a long time. She was highly mobile, so there was no problem there. And she represented an ideal combination of circumstances at that particular time.

To me Esther Peterson was one of the really outstanding women of the Kennedy and Johnson years. I said many times, "I wish we had a hundred Esther Petersons," because she was called on really to an excessive degree to represent the Administration before business groups; to deal with the women's issues in the labor unions; to head up various interdepartmental task forces.

One source that we did turn to with some frequency were the women in the career service.

I remember one fascinating experience with respect to the Tariff Commission. I don't think the Tariff Commission had ever had a woman. A vacancy occurred, and we went to the list of former winners of the Federal Woman's Award, and we found in there the name of Penelope Thunberg, who was an economist in international finance for the CIA. And I called her one Saturday morning just about this time at home and asked her if she'd be interested in serving on the Tariff Commission. She was just stunned, and she couldn't give me any answer.

She said, "Well, I'll have to call you back." She called me back later and said, "I'm overcome. But of course, if the President wants me." And a few days later she was appointed. It was a magnificent appointment.

Another woman who was very good was Anne Rivlin, who was an economist over at Brookings. She went from Brookings into the HEW top strata while John Gardner was there. Then, when an assistant secretary vacancy occurred,

she moved up into that. Well, she was already here, and already in related professional work, so it was possible to attract her.

But it is difficult. There are not enough women in the professions, and much of this goes right back to professional attitudes in this country. As I recall it, only something in the neighborhood of 2 percent of the members of the Bar are women. Well, that means that when you're looking for lawyers, you've got a very narrow--

Mc And half of the appointments(?)--

M: Yes, and look how many lawyers you're using. There are virtually no women in the top structure of major corporations. So you don't have that source to tap. There are very few in the labor unions, so you don't have that. The medical profession is very weak. In fact, the participation of women in the medical profession in the United States is far behind that of the Western European countries, and even some of the underdeveloped countries. So this is a serious liability.

The reason I talk so loud and long on this is that this has been one of my areas of great concern. I helped organize last year a series of meetings on the whole matter of women in the medical professions and what steps we can take to have more women receive the medical training. What has happened is that the medical schools, that are under heavy pressure to produce graduates, point to the fact that whereas nearly a hundred percent of the male doctors that they graduate stay in medicine, only half of the women do. And their claim is why use valuable training space for someone who is only going to be in it half-time. Well, I think this is short-sighted. I think there are many of the medical specialties where a woman can function on a scheduled basis so that she can combine a number of hours a week in her professional along with her

family responsibilities. Now maybe in the statistics she doesn't show up with a full-time medical practice. But she's augmenting a seriously short skilled category in our professional labor market.

There's a great deal that needs to be done. I think there's a lot that needs to be done on attitudes. I've said in many speeches that fathers are a serious deterrent to women entering the professions that are in short supply, because going into professional training that involves mathematics or science for some reason isn't viewed by fathers as being sufficiently feminine. We need to overcome some of these outdated stereotypes that we have with respect to women.

All of that is needed really for future talent searchers to have a broader reservoir in which to fish for the feminine talent that really should be a part of government.

Mc Now it would seem also that you would have a talent problem in regard to minorities.

M: Yes. Of course the blacks and the Mexican-Americans have been discriminated against for so long and their education has been so neglected that there were relatively few who had established themselves with sufficient visibility to be detected. I think one of President Johnson's greatest triumphs was the recognition that he bestowed on Negroes in the key appointments that he made. The appointment of Thurgood Marshall to the Supreme Court, the appointment of several Negroes to major judicial appointments, and then the appointment of Robert Weaver as the first Secretary of HUD.

One footnote on the Weaver appointment which I think it is important to remember from a historical point of view. One of John Kennedy's defeats was on the effort to create the Department of Housing and Urban Development back

in January of 1962. At that time he made an announcement that if the department was created he'd appoint Mr. Weaver as Secretary. He admitted to those who have written his history since then that that was a political error. Certainly it put Mr. Weaver in a difficult position, because the general assumption was that when that department was created--and that occurred in 1966--that he would become the Secretary.

The President wanted to be absolutely certain that in appointing, if he appointed him, that he could be certain that he was selecting the best man in the country. So he asked me to give him names even before the legislation was passed creating the department. He was particularly interested in making sure that we canvassed all of the mayors of the country who had good records. We canvassed the city managers.

Mc Was this looking for recommendations or--?

M: No, by canvass, I mean looking at them as possible candidates.

Mc So Johnson was not committed necessarily to appointing Weaver?

M: No, and Weaver understood this. I believe at the time that the President announced the appointment, which was in January and the legislation was signed in September--

Mc There was a long delay there.

M: Yes. He said that he had considered more than a hundred people. And he had. He had looked at a large number of names. He was convinced that Weaver was the right man.

Mc That must have been a strain on Weaver.

M: It was a strain on Weaver. But the President frequently, when he had a man in a job in an acting capacity, he tended to keep him in the acting capacity for a period of time which in some ways was a part of his testing. He kept Ramsey Clark as acting Attorney General for a period of time. There were other instances

where this occurred. I think this was a part of his feeling that he didn't want to have it just assumed that the natural heir apparent would automatically receive it and that there should be a period of adjustment to see how things worked.

But the Weaver appointment, in my judgment, was a great success. Weaver, as the first black member of the Cabinet, was a very distinguished selection.

Mc Now that's an unusual job. Here you create a new department, and you have to select the first Secretary of a new department. Doesn't that give some different dimensions to your job profile?

M: Yes, it does. That particular department took over the whole range of functions that had existed in the Housing and Home Finance Agency, which Weaver had headed already for five years. Then it added additional responsibilities to it, and gave it a total urban approach. The criteria that was set up to produce a profile for that job recognized that there had to be a marked departure from the past in the previous non-cabinet agency. And consequently there was some reluctance about just naming the man who had been the head of the agency. Did that constitute a sufficient break from the past? Would a man who had been directing the agency be in a position to get the broader view of urban affairs when he took on the other assignment? So this was a factor.

We went through the same process with the Department of Transportation. The Department of Transportation was created in a different way in that it brought together a number of separate entities that had either been independent agencies or had been parts of other departments, such as the FAA and the Coast Guard. Then it created certain new responsibilities. It created a Railroad Administration. It created a new Highway Administration. And the man who had been largely responsible for getting the legislation through was the Undersecretary

of Commerce for Transportation, Alan Boyd. And there was high expectations that Boyd was going to be the secretary. Once again, the President asked us to go through the process of setting up the profile and seeing who best fitted it. Well, it was very clear that there was no other man in the country who had the diversity and intensity of experience in transportation that Alan Boyd possessed. So the President arrived at that decision.

One thing that we did on filling cabinet positions that would be of interest to you, we prepared each time a rather detailed historical memorandum concerning the office. I remember particularly the one that we prepared late in 1966 on the Commerce Department, in which we reviewed the history of the Commerce Department and generally its dismemberment over the years, and then came up with the recommendation that the President might very well give consideration to combining Commerce and Labor. Now, I'm not claiming that that was the first time that the idea was presented to him, but he found the idea particularly appealing. There were various staff efforts put in motion which led to his recommending that organizational change in his State of the Union message in 1967. Again, I don't claim that that was the first or in any sense the exclusive recommendation. But it was out of this that the ideaat least bloomed. So the President decided, when Secretary Connor left, that he would hold off making a choice and he would try to bring off this reorganization. It aborted. And he decided then to name Assistant Secretary Trowbridge as the Secretary of Commerce with the traditional pattern of functions for commerce.

Mc But even for a cabinet position you'd go through this painstaking analysis that the job required.

M: Yes, but sometimes the President would have somebody immediately in mind. When Trowbridge left because of ill health in 1968, the President called C. R. Smith,

and in he came without any process on the part of our office. The President decided he wanted to do it quickly. Here was a man who had just retired from American Airlines whom he knew. He realized that it was a short time appointment at best, and so it was handled that way.

Mc Was it the same thing in the case of Wilbur Cohen going into HEW?

M: To almost the same extent. Although he was interested in having us bring other names to his attention, and I believe we gave him half a dozen names which he looked at on HEW. Gardner's departure was unexpected. Everybody throught Gardner would at least stay until the end of the Administration. But then he left on short notice. And Cohen really had been such a major force in the Department that it was a fairly obvious appointment.

But, also, Cohen had some very strong opponents. He was the bête noir to the AMA, and I think the President wanted to evaluate just how much static he was going to receive from that and other sources if he went ahead with Cohen. But he was convinced that this was the best thing to do.

I remember when there needed to be a change in the embassy in Moscow. We prepared a rather detailed paper giving the history of U.S. representation in Moscow, ever since the Roosevelt recognition of the Soviet Union in 1933, then suggested to the President that perhaps the best action was to send Llewellyn Thompson back again for a second round.

So there was an effort to try to give him as quickly as possible, when an important vacancy of that kind came up, sort of a summary to give the historical perspective, and then some general recommendations which he might wish to pursue immediately. And, as I say, in virtually all of these cases I had frequent communication with him. He would call on the phone. Usually I had an appointment every fortnight or so to sit down with him, either at

his White House office or at the Mansion, and about a half-dozen times down at the Ranch. So there was a good deal of give-and-take.

And the President liked to work off of pieces of paper. He liked to have these memoranda. Our discussions reached a decision because it was possible to get a signature on a piece of paper.

Mc What happens if a prospective appointee resisted--didn't want it? Or refused to accept? Now there's a case of John Hechinger, for example, that might illustrate this.

M: The Hechinger case has some background. The President had become aware of Hechinger a couple of years before his appointment to the City Council and had appointed him to the Land Agency. The reports that we had on his contribution there were highly favorable. Everybody was very much impressed with him. The checks we had made in the business community showed that he was viewed as a leader there.

The process of staffing the City Council was a fascinating one. I remember night after night during the hot stages of the summer trying to put together--

Mc The President was intensely interested in this.

M: Intensely interested. And he pursued this with great vigor. He looked at each one of these appointees himself. He had lengthy conversations with Walter Washington before Walter finally agreed to do it. He wanted to make the Council as representative as possible geographically, ethnically, politically. He had us going over lists.

I'll never forget one evening I spent trying to find a Negro woman Republican from the Northeast, and I finally did. I don't remember where the name was found, but she's on the Council today--as a lawyer to boot!

The original selection for chairman was Max Kampelman, and very quickly Kampelman's name drew fire because of a number of outside activities that he

had--enough fire so that we felt that he was going to take into the job more unfavorable freight than the mechanism could carry. So the next step was, how can we find somebody who would have the prestige and leadership. And it was then that we recalled these very favorable accounts about John Hechinger as a public-spirited businessman and about his energy and perception in his work on RLA.

I believe he was actually approached by Califano, and his name was substituted for Kampelman's.

But that whole process on the City Council was fascinating. One of the men I recommended was Yeldell. Yeldell at that time was the only Negro sales engineer for IBM. He had worked with me on this computer adaptation, and I was tremendously impressed with him. I had seen him on a number of other occasions and called him in. And so his name went over.

One of the problems on the City Council was that every name that went over immediately got in the paper.

Mc How did it get in?

M: I don't know. But immediately there was a leak somewhere along the line, and there was a vicious attack by the Negro militants on Yeldell. And he responded with a remarkable piece that appeared in the Daily News. I was quite moved by it. He talked about how his father had come up from Carolina, how he was one of twelve kids, and how he had gone through school and then had gone through college and taken all this training. And he just couldn't understand why he was viewed as an Uncle Tom, having gone through that kind of experience.

I clipped it out and I sent it in to the President. He was also moved by it. And he just stuck to his guns on Yeldell, even though it had been leaked, and even though it drew the wrath of the militants.

In fact, most of the names drew the wrath of the militants. They felt that the Negroes, with the possible exception of Fauntleroy, were sort of establishment Negroes. This is a traditional problem.

This reminds me of one other characteristic of the President. He was always interested in reading about candidates. I remember when the CIA vacancy occurred, when John McCone decided he wanted to resign late in 1964. This was an extremely sensitive position to fill. The President's inclination was to promote from within, but he wasn't sure that this was the right time to do it. And I suggested the name of Admiral Raborn to him. He had known Raborn very well.

Raborn had been eminently successful in the entire Polaris project. The Navy had set up a special project manager for the Polaris back in the late '50's, and Raborn had been selected to run it, and had been eminently successful.

So the President was very much interested in this, and pursued Raborn himself--talked with him himself and then asked me to get some additional information. It happened that I had called on Raborn back in '61 when I took office at the CivilService Commission because I wanted to know about the really hot programs that required civil service personnel. And when I left, Raborn had given me a book that had been written about him, and I had it in my office library. So I sent it over, duly marked, to the President, and he read it over so that when he finally made his decision he cited some of the things from that book in his announcement about Raborn.

But this was characteristic of his interest. If a lawyer had an article in a law review on an issue that might come before him in the work that he was doing, the President wanted to make sure that we had looked it over, and in many cases he wanted to read the article himself. Sometimes we overlooked

articles, and this subsequently raised some problems. One of the questions I asked when talking to prospective candidates was whether or not they had written any articles that were likely to be a source of embarrassment.

You raised the point, too, about what if people turned you down.

Mc What do you do about that?

M: I'm frequently asked how many people turned you down. I really don't have a figure, because rarely did we reach a point where an individual was asked in such a way that he would turn it down. It was a check of availability which was inserted in this particular process along the way.

Mc This would be perhaps in the initial interviews?

M: That's right. Or it would be part of the assessment. After we had decided that we were really interested in a man, we then would find some third party who could find out whether he'd say yes if asked. So very infrequently was there really an out-and-out no. And usually I tried to get some assurance of this before going too far with the President, because it was unfair to him to really come down on a man and then find he wasn't available. Sometimes the President would have the name of a man in mind, and he'd ask me to indirectly find out whether he'd serve if asked. It was frequently heard that so-and-so would be great, but he just would not be available, and I would say, "How do you know?" We never assumed that anybody who was of interest to us would not be available. We'd make sure that we checked it out. In many cases we were surprised.

End of tape.

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By John W. Macy

to the

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