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INTERVIEW I

DATE: May 21, 1969

INTERVIEWEE: SHERWIN J. MARKMAN

INTERVIEWER: DOROTHY PIERCE McSWEENY

PLACE: Mr. Markman's office, 815 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 600, Washington, D.C.

Tape 1 of 2

Mc: This interview is with Sherwin Markman, Assistant to the President from 1966 to 1968.

Mr. Markman, could we begin by your telling me a little bit of your background and the government positions that you held up until your appointment to the White House in January of 1966?

M: Well, let's see, I was born in Des Moines, Iowa, on January 19, 1929, which makes me in my forty-first year. I graduated magna cum laude from the University of Iowa in 1949. I went on to Yale Law School where I graduated in the upper third of my class in June of 1952.

I went back home to Des Moines following my graduation; joined the law firm of Brody, Charlton, Parker, and Roberts, as an associate at the salary of $200 a month, but I got a rapid raise to $275 a month by Christmas. I stayed with that law firm first as an associate, later as a junior partner, and finally as a senior partner in charge of their trial work from 1952 until I left on June 1,1965, thirteen years. While I was doing all of that, practicing my profession, I had also been quite active in public affairs matters, both in the community of Des Moines and in the Democratic party, and I had held such offices as state President of the Young Democrats of Iowa in

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1955 until 1957; and I was chairman, served on and was chairman of the Des Moines Planning Zoning Commission from 1957 until I left in 1965. I had been state executive director for Governor Stevenson's Presidential campaign in 1956. In 1960 I had served on Governor Stevenson's national staff for a period through his defeat in the Los Angeles National Democratic Convention.

Mc: This was Hughes, did you say?

M: Stevenson.

Mc: Oh.

M: Governor Stevenson of Illinois. After that I was somewhat disillusioned about political affairs, because I felt so strong about Governor Stevenson personally. I was determined that I wasn't going to get into those kinds of matters again and [was going to] devote myself to my profession until Harold Hughes came along, who was Governor of Iowa, and asked me if I would help direct his campaign for re-election in 1964. Governor Hughes is a magnificent man, former alcoholic, a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, who was probably the most popular vote-getter the state ever had. One of the few politicians I've ever known who has no cynicism in him; that is, talks the same way at midnight where there are just the two of you in the room as he does in front of a thousand people. In any event, he asked me to do that. So I took it on with the title of something like State Chairman of Citizens for Hughes. And that was a long way around to tell you how I got to the White House.

But he asked me if I would go to Atlantic City with him. He had never been to a national convention; I had been a delegate in 1956 and

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1960. And then he asked me if I would serve on the Credentials Committee of the National Convention, because they were having a problem with the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and that the President's, President Johnson, major concern at the convention was to keep that from blowing the convention apart. At that time and until the winter of 1966 Harold Hughes was close to Lyndon Johnson. They had a falling out over Vietnam in December of 1966, but at least, as of that time, they were close. As a matter of fact, he seconded Johnson's nomination at Atlantic City.

So Hughes asked me if I would serve on the Credentials Committee. Johnson had asked him, apparently, to put some good people, if he could, on that committee. So I agreed to do that, but I wasn't going to go to Atlantic City, because I thought it was going to be a boring convention, and if there's one place I don't like, it's Atlantic City.

So we went there and turns out that the guy who was counsel to the Credentials Committee, Tom Finney, had also been chief of staff for Stevenson. And they were looking for somebody who was both loyal to their point of view, that is the President's point of view, and a trial lawyer to conduct a cross-examination on national television, of Fannie Lou Hamer and--I forget the names now--the Negro dentist, Dr. Aaron Henry.They were going to be testifying with Joe Rauh representing them, and they needed somebody to cross-examine them, had to be a member of the committee. And the cross-examination set them up in a way that they would agree to certain things, so that we could eventually compromise, work out a compromise if possible, and

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yet, at the same time, not antagonize the national television audience.

So he asked me to do that, Finney did, which I did. And apparently, it worked out pretty well because the next thing I knew, they asked me if I would conduct the Administration's argument inside the executive committee sessions of the Credentials Committee which I did. And then the full committee of 100, two from each state, decided that the problem was far too ticklish to be solved by 100 people. So they decided to have the subcommittee of five people, and I was asked to be one of those five. But still now at this time I was really representing the Administration. The other four were the chairman, Fritz Mondale, who was then Attorney General of Minnesota and was named Senator mostly because of his great work on this subcommittee; Price Daniel, who was former Governor of Texas; fellow by the name of Kohler from Georgia; a Negro congressman from Detroit, Charlie Diggs; and myself. And the direction was we were supposed to come back with a unanimous agreement, which was some assignment.

In any event, the problem was, of course, that they were trying to . . . The Mississippi Freedom people, with all of the dissident elements--this was really the start of this activist, political kind of things that we're so familiar with now--wanted to displace the Mississippi party. They wanted to be seated in their stead, and so forth and so on. The South would have walked out if that had happened, or anything like that. Of course, the problem was what could we do that would reach an agreement that they would agree to and the South

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would agree to, albeit Mississippi might not agree to it, or most of it.

So we met in the Pageant Motel, across the street from the convention hall, for three days and three nights, something like that, and tried to work out a compromise. Humphrey was very deeply involved in working out that compromise; he'd sit with us, counsel with us. Reuther came in and tried to help, Walter Reuther. It was a very, very painful negotiation. However, we finally did reach an agreement which was agreed to by all.

My own contribution to that, other than endless participation and conversation, was the idea on seating them. It was my suggestion that the problem of the Negro in Mississippi was a national, rather than a parochial problem. And therefore, why don't we, rather than giving them--they wanted two seats, I think, is what they finally came down to--rather than giving them two seats from Mississippi--that since it was a national problem and a symbolic problem--why don't we create two additional seats, out of the entire flag so to speak, from the Union, and give it to them, not taking it away from anybody, but just adding two delegates. That idea, after being knocked down a dozen times, finally sailed, and it was done.

As a direct result, I guess, of that--although I'm not completely sure of that--but Tom Finney and Marvin Watson and others . . . Finney at that time . . . He later turns up as campaign manager for Gene McCarthy; then was fired, and that's another long story of 1968. But, you see, those days were different, politically; that was before the schism in the party. In any event, the following winter . . .

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Hughes, in the meantime, is elected by a landslide, even a larger landslide than Johnson, who also carries Iowa in '64. I understand there were a lot of conversations about it, which resulted, finally, in Marvin Watson giving me a call, 1 February of '65, asking me if I'd be interested in coming to Washington. I told him I wasn't, for several reasons. First,I was making something like $45,000 a year. After having started at my $200 a month, finally, for the first time in my life for the last two or three years prior to that, I'd begun to make a good living, joined a lovely country club, started going out to Aspen to ski in the winter and living the good life. And Watson was asking me to come here; they could pay me something like $25,000 a year in a place where it cost twice as much to live and disrupting us both. By the way, Marilyn and I have three children--asking us to completely disrupt our [lives]. We were all born in Des Moines, all five of us. And anyway, this series of conversations, with me coming to Washington, went on over the period of a couple of months.

And we finally capitulated. What Marvin wanted me to do was to go over to the Department of State for a few months to help them get the foreign aid bill through. Then if I didn't fall flat on my face, he said the President, on his suggestion, wanted to bring me over to the White House, but that wasn't any guarantee; that would depend on how I performed over at State. So my wife and my friends in Des Moines thought that I was an idiot to take that kind of a risk and to take that kind of a cut, but I did. And I came to Washington in June of '65, June 1; started over at the Agency of International Development with

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the title of Deputy Director of Congressional Liaison and stayed there until about January 1; helped them get the foreign aid bill and a number of studies on the relations with Congress over there, too. Really enjoyed the experience. Bill Gaud, who was Director of AID at that time, and Dave Bell before him. . . I guess Dave Bell was Director when I left.

(Interruption: telephone)

M: Marvin called me up one day, the first of January of '66, I think it was on Saturday. He asked me to come to the White House, and he and Jake Jacobsen were there. They said, "You're going to start at the White House Monday morning." And I said, "Do I need to ask anybody at AID about it? Dave Bell?" And they said, "Oh, we'll take care of that. You'll stay on their payroll for awhile." I didn't even go on the White House payroll until March, which is how you got that. . . . This I can remember now.

I remember Dave Bell telling me, he said, "Since you're going over to the White House, you really ought to know, you may not know this, but I served over at the White House for a couple of years, the last two years of Truman's Administration. I just want you to know, for whatever it's worth to you, that those two years, in my book, were the worst two years that I've ever spent in my life." (Laughter) "So you have got that to look forward to," he said.

But in any event, I was, of course, delighted to do it, a chance to serve. And I came over and was given an office. I shared a

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suite in the West Wing with Jake Jacobsen; he and I had a three room suite over there. Jake, of course, is just a magnificent person. And I suppose--I've got to say this about Marvin Watson--I guess I had never met a finer guy than Watson. One of the many tragedies of the Johnson years, in my judgment, is the misapprehension the public was given about Marvin, mostly, I think, caused by some irresponsible press, but specifically, the columnists Evans and Novak, who Marvin says never met him, but who just went off on a vendetta over a period of years against him. But to me--and I worked intimately with Marvin, I consider that I know him well, at close range, at times of extreme stress--Watson was just magnificent. The things the President has said about Marvin--as loyal as my mother, or brother, or whatever it is--that famous quote--are absolutely true. Watson, as far as I was concerned, in my relationship with the President, protected me against the President's wrath. When I would make a mistake, Marvin would interpose himself to take the heat. When I would do anything which might be worthy, he would make sure that I would get credit with the President. He was that kind of a man and was just as honest and straight as anybody I've ever known. In any event, I started at the White House in '66 in January, working in congressional work and also at the same time, helping out Marvin and Jim Jones in all the various White House operations and matters in which they were engaged, and this dual kind of thing until this ghetto experience came up in January of '67.

Mc: Mr. Markman, before we go a little deeper into your responsibilities at the White House, could I ask you . . . I wanted to go back to some

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of the things you mentioned as you were telling me your background. Perhaps I had better begin with asking you when you first had any contact with Lyndon Johnson.

M: I'll try to recall. I know I first met Lyndon and Mrs. Johnson in the late spring of 1960. They were running for President; he was running for President, and they came to Des Moines; I was a delegate at that time and they had a breakfast for the delegates; and that was the first time I met the two of them, briefly.

That was a very painful year, '60, for me. Of course, having had the position with Stevenson in '56, [I] had been asked to help them out and see how many delegates we could get. And I was directed to go for Humphrey--who was still running then, and who was an old friend of mine, is dear friend of mine--and stay with him until such time as he might drop out of the campaign. I was told by Humphrey's man in Chicago . . . I said I wouldn't do that, unless Humphrey knew precisely where my loyalties lay. If he wanted to accept my help on the basis that my true choice was Stevenson, I would accept it; otherwise, I wouldn't. It was kind of an odd business. But in any event, the Humphrey people in Chicago did approve that, and so I rattled around the state.

And throughout the disaster of Humphrey's campaign in Wisconsin and West Virginia, [I] nevertheless managed to strike a deal with various people--most specifically, the Kennedy people--that would give us a certain amount of delegates. And the deal that we struck was struck before the disaster in West Virginia, which actually named

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delegates, and the deal was such that it was not to be dependent upon any of the primary results or any of the results and that deal stuck.

In any event, interestingly enough, when Humphrey was defeated in West Virginia . . . It was just about the same time that Johnson came through Iowa. Shortly after that, Jack Kennedy came. And he and I had an interesting conversation, private conversation where he started out by talking about how it is to be young in politics; was interested in how I had done these things at the age I was at that time, and ended up saying that he had heard some nice things and wanted to know if I would lead his forces in Iowa--Kennedy's. And I told him that I just couldn't do that, I was completely committed to Stevenson. And he said to me, "Well, don't you know that Stevenson can't win?" I said, "Well, I can't argue that with you, because I think you're probably right. But nevertheless, I just can't. I just will not leave him." And afterwards, I thought, you know, any guy who is supposed to be in politics who operates on those kinds of premises has no business being in politics, which is one of the reasons I quit after the '60, because I'm just not hard enough to really operate in that milieu successfully. But it was in that spring that I met Lyndon Johnson, but it was only briefly.

Mc: I'd like to ask you, as a participant in the '56 convention, what your assessment was of Lyndon Johnson's political activities, since he was a favorite son at that convention?

M: I had no contact with him, and he was not a conscious factor in my own thinking. The only issue in that convention was when Stevenson

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threw that open for the Vice Presidential candidate. And it drew down to three men: Humphrey, who was very weak, and Kefauver, and Kennedy. And I finally cast my vote for Kefauver.

I was there . . . That's a culmination of my struggle with the state central committee that youth should be represented at that convention, and since I was President of the Young Democrats, it ought to be me and so they had done that. It was really a kind of a wide-eyed experience for me. I was twenty-seven years old, and enjoyed every minute of it.

Mc: Were you aware of any efforts on the part of Mr. Johnson, or his staff, to win the Vice Presidential position with Stevenson?

M: I was not.

Mc: To continue on to the 1960 convention, again let me just sort of ask you, generally, what your assessment was of Lyndon Johnson's chance of success in that convention?

M: Well, at that time, I wore two hats. I was both a delegate and a member of Stevenson's staff. Looking back on it from perhaps a standpoint of a little more sophistication, I would say that Lyndon Johnson's chances were probably pretty good and better than Stevenson's, if Kennedy could have been stopped. But from our perspective at that time, we felt that if Jack Kennedy could be stopped, that Stevenson's chances were excellent. The convention finally devolved into a joint effort among the various camps--specifically, Johnson's, Stevenson's, Symington's to some extent--to keep Kennedy from winning on the first ballot. After that, of course, every man would have been

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on his own.

But you might be interested--I did find myself in what turned out to be the key last ditch effort of that convention. There was considerable written about this at the time, by--There was an article about what I am about to tell you in The Reporter at the time, and Drew Pearson had a couple of articles about it.

What happened was that everybody felt--that is the Johnson people and the Stevenson people--that Kennedy was making an all ou effort to win on the first ballot and had nothing in reserve, and that as a matter of fact, some of the people who would vote for him on the first ballot were doing that only because they were pledged and would break away on the second ballot. And if we could stop him short on the first ballot, then on the second ballot, he would lose strength. And therefore, it would be a completely new convention.

It turned out that the key states to him winning on the first ballot were the states of Iowa and Kansas, both of which had similar situations. One, in both of those states, their state conventions had directed their delegates to vote for the two respective Governors, Loveless of Iowa and Docking of Kansas, on the first ballot. Both of those governors had either been promised, or thought they had been promised, the Vice Presidency. In any event, they were in the position of saying that we are withdrawing as favorite son candidates and releasing our delegates to vote for anyone, but we prefer Kennedy. The combination of the two states' delegates being thus released were enough to throw the first ballot victory to Jack Kennedy. The

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question which arose, legal and parliamentary question, was: if a state convention instructs the delegation to vote for a candidate on the first ballot, can that candidate, by his own act, release his delegates, or must they vote for him in any event?

Under the precedents of the Democratic conventions, it was clear to us that the rules obliged the delegates to vote for the favorite sons, regardless of their withdrawal, under those circumstances. Since Iowa came first over Kansas, and since I happened to be in a position of both on Stevenson's staff and as a delegate from Iowa, it was decided that I would raise this point in any way I could and try to get a ruling that the delegations would have to be voting for their favorite sons, which would have stopped Kennedy. I spent a day or two, a day and a night I guess it was, being briefed on the legalities of the thing and working on it with some lawyers who were familiar with this and probably were on Stevenson's staff.

Then, I first went to the parliamentarian of the convention--Clarence Cannon, old parliamentarian from Missouri--and presented the argument to him. A representative from the Kennedy wing was there and I won the argument; he ruled in my favor. However, soon as that became known--and I don't know exactly what happened, but something happened--the Kennedy people got to him. And within an hour or two, he reversed himself.

In the meantime, Loveless, my own Governor, was just absolutely incensed at me. He thought that I was standing between him and the Vice Presidency by having the effrontery to do this. And he really

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chewed me out in front of about . . . He ran into me in a hotel in Los Angeles with about ten reporters standing around; and this is how the whole Post story first became public. He stuck his finger in my chest and said, "You little son of a bitch. I am going to destroy you for what you're doing." But in any event, I persisted. I didn't give a damn whether he destroyed me or not.

The next step, of course, was to raise the point to the Chairman of the Convention, Governor [Le Roy] Collins of Florida. On the day the nominations started, the nominations for President, I was on the platform, in the little office that Governor Collins had behind the podium, conducting this argument which went on for hours. Collins would sit and listen to us, to me. There were others; I'll tell you about that. Then he'd go out and introduce a nominator or seconder; then come back and continue the nomination. At various times, Hubert Humphrey came up there to help me out in my argument. Gene McCarthy, who nominated Stevenson, spent all the time until he went out to make that nominating speech, helping me, and then came back after he finished. So I never did hear that speech. Somebody from Texas--and I don't know who--see, I wasn't close to those people--who was there . . . Charlie Brown, a Congressman from Missouri for Symington, was there. And Loveless, himself, was there conducting an argument for the Kennedy people.

Collins was adamant. He was going to rule against us on this thing. And Humphrey finally turned to me and said, "You've got everything on your side but power. The Kennedys control this con-

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vention, and you aren't going to win this fight." And Collins finally said, "When they come to the Iowa on the roll call, I'll recognize you to make this point of order. However, under the rules of the convention, it's not appealable. I will rule against you, so this will be a useless act. I'm just telling you now."

And that was really kind of the end of it. I turned to Mike Monroney, the Senator from Oklahoma, who was there also, and said, "Senator, what do I do?" And he said, "Well, you just do whatever you want. You can raise it or not."

So I went back to the Iowa delegation. In the meantime, they had just started calling the roll. The delegates were just ringed with reporters and cameramen, because this was now a well known issue, you know. And I absolutely felt completely cut adrift. Nobody was advising me, and I was way beyond my depth, I felt. Should I raise it, or should I not? If I don't raise it, I'm letting down the Stevenson people; if I do raise it, it's just a hopeless gesture. All we can do is just . . . Kennedy's going to be nominated anyway. And I finally just sat there in painful self-contemplation and decided, "Well, the only thing that will come out of this is you get a lot of personal publicity. And you really could hardly live with yourself if you thought that was your motivation. And so, just forget it." So I didn't. That was in 1960. So Kennedy won.

Mc: Had you seen much presence of Kennedy people in the state prior to the convention?

M: Oh, yes, they had control over the state, and the convention--control

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over the platform. Frank Sinatra and the so-called Rat Pack, or whatever they called themselves, were running around there on the platform keeping everybody else out, off. They controlled the communications facilities. They had it.

Mc: After the fact of the first ballot nomination was apparent to you, did you become involved in any activities regarding the Vice Presidential spot?

M: No, I was completely out. I was done. I was disheartened, depressed. And when that was over, we went back to the room. About two o'clock that morning, Stevenson came in, and he stood on the chair; there must have been fifteen or twenty of us there, and [he] thanked us. Tears were streaming down my face. The next day I went out to the beach with several other people on the staff, and heard about the Vice Presidential struggle on the radio.

Mc: Were you very surprised about Mr. Johnson accepting the number two spot?

M: Yes. But you know, that was the general reaction, one of amazement.

Mc: I think I'd like to go forward again to 1966, when you came into the White House, unless there's some other . . .

M: No.

Mc: . . . political developments in there. Well, wait a minute. We are jumping ahead. I haven't asked you about the '64 campaign and convention.

M: Well, I told you about . . . Of course, my entire experience with the convention was based on working out this compromise which was

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the one issue of the convention. And of course, that problem and my involvement, to the exclusion of everything else, started before the convention started in a day or two; and we didn't report on the Committee on Credentials, because we hadn't reached this compromise. It was delayed and delayed, and I think that we stayed in continuous session almost until the end of the convention. So I really experienced nothing at that convention other than that problem. We finally did work out a solution for the convention, having missed two nights sleep or something like that. I was just utterly exhausted.

Mc: Were you aware of any activity in your state to pledge that Johnson would have the authority to name his own Vice Presidential nominee?

M: Well, it was understood--this is '64--that whoever the President wanted, we would go along with. We were also aware of the fact that Humphrey was setting up an organization to campaign for Vice President. Bill Connell, his administrative assistant, had been in contact with me. They did set up an operation. I recall, I think, that Fritz Mondale had come down to try to organize some loyal delegate support and strength for Humphrey.

My understanding was that the initial signal that the Humphrey people had received from Johnson was a, "Go ahead and see what kind of support you can work up." And so they went along, and this kind of thing burgeoned until the point where they really were becoming too open about it. And another signal came just before the convention was started that Johnson--through Humphrey, through his people, that they were to close down their little campaign, which

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they did, at Atlantic City. But until they got that second signal, they were moving around pretty good there in Atlantic City. Of course, I was feeling very strongly in preference of Humphrey for Vice President.

Mc: The reason for my asking the first part of that question was, of course, early this year what became called the Bobby problem was developing and there was publicity regarding a pledge to Johnson that circulated throughout the various regional meetings of delegates.

M: I was not aware of that. It could have happened, during the time. I was not aware of that. If I did, I've forgotten about it.

Mc: All right. Were you . . .

M: You mentioned Bobby. You might be interested in this. In July of 1965, while I was over at AID, I received a telephone call from a newspaper reporter--a friend of mine, who subsequently won a Pulitzer Prize, not for this--that he had just received an advanced text of a speech Bobby was going to give the next day--an occasion where David Bell was going to be on the platform introducing him--strongly attacking the President's Vietnam policy. You have to remember, Kennedy at that point had not attacked, previously attacked us. I called Marvin at the White House--this was at about six o'clock in the evening--and said, "This is coming. I don't know what the speech text is, but I know it's coming." And he said, "Do you think there's anything you can do to stop it?" And I said, "Well, I'm going to try." So he said, "Do what you can and keep us out of it."

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So I hopped a taxi and went up to Bobby's office. The only previous experience I had had with tne Kennedys was in '60, when I had had something of an argument with them. They were more bitter against the Stevenson people because they thoughtwe should have been the same kind of people and been for Jack Kennedy [more] than anybody else. Anyhow, I walked in and introduced myself and got in to see Bobby and Adam Walinski. And they admitted that they had this speech; that they were planning to give it and that they had released an advance text.

And I said, "Would you show it to me?" And they did. So I read it there in the presence of Bobby and Adam, and I said, "Well, you know, Dave Bell is going to be on this platform, and Dave Bell was an old and dear friend of Jack Kennedy's. I just think that it would be very bad form for you, Senator, to do this. I wonder if there is any possibility of trying to modify this speech?" We went along that line for some time. And finally Bobby said, "Yes, I think so. Why don't you go to work on that speech and see what we can . . . Adam here writes a pretty fire-branding speech. Maybe it does go a little too far. Why don't you and he work on it; see if you can't rewrite it to not make this kind of attack?"

So Walinski and I then spent the rest of that evening arguing over that speech. Adam is very violently opposed to the war and is a fire-brander, but we finally hammered out a compromise text. And Kennedy came back down, late that night from home, came back to his office; the three of us went over it and we agreed on it.

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And I said, "Well, you've already released an advance text, and this is not that speech. What are you going to say about that?" He said, "I'll just say I changed my mind. It wasn't what I intended to say." And I said, "Will you protect us, me?" Because that was the danger in the whole thing. Of course, I was extremely sensitive to being there, because it could have just been a disaster. The possibilities of disaster were just endless. He could just say somebody from the White House was out here trying to censor my speech and so forth. But I, perhaps foolishly, had decided I was going to take that risk, just barrel in there. In any event, he did change it.

So, I came down to the White House late that night with the changed text and gave it to Marvin and he was just ecstatic about the changes. Then went out to Dave Bell's in a little bit to give it to him, and he was. And then the next morning, I accompanied Dave Bell to this speaking occasion, and Kennedy did give the revised speech.

And afterwards, the reporters descended to the podium and wanted to know why that speech was changed. He said, as he told me he would, that he just changed his mind. Then they asked him quite specifically about it. I was only standing ten feet away. I heard it. He was asked, "Did anybody from the Administration, or the White House, or anybody like that, contact you in any way about this speech and try to talk you into making that change?" He said, "No. Nobody did. It was my own idea." Footnote. (Laughter)

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Mc: Very interesting footnote.

M: Those were different days.

Mc: Let me say that of course, I think it's very interesting and very essential development of the friction between the Kennedy and Johnson camps, as it developed. And if you have any further remarks that you can add to it as we go along regarding your . . .

M: No, because of that experience, I had developed a relationship with both Bobby and with Walinski, who was the most violently anti-Johnson member of his staff and also Peter Edelman, who was . . . I honestly liked all three of them, but because of the way things developed, you know, it was an impossible relationship to pursue. Bobby at one occasion--and I would run into him occasionally--he once told me he thought I was his only friend at the White House. "You're the man who kept me out of trouble once." And my personal relationships with him were always good, but there was something that could not be pursued because of the way things developed.

Mc: When these relate to any of your activities, add them, please.

On to your job in the White House.

M: Yes.

Mc: Would you describe for me what your responsibilities were at the first part of your assignment there at the White House?

M: They started out, as I said, in a combination between helping Marvin which is an endless amount of detail work relating to White House operations, this and that, that the President might want done. And also, of course, the congressional thing is more specific.

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I was assigned responsibility in the House of Representatives for a number of states: Iowa of course; and Wisconsin and Minnesota; the Dakotas; Missouri; the state of Washington; some of Florida; Arkansas; Louisiana--no particular relationship among those states. So my responsibilities were to maintain relations with those members, Democratic members, of those states. As the President wisely understood that, it means considerably more than just when you want a vote, to go there and ask them. To be enabled to do that, you have to have had a deep relationship for a long time prior to that. It's always a question of becoming friendly with them, so that they know you, trust you, like you. I happen to like congressmen, although I'm really not in any way that kind of person. I understand them well and their problems, and sincerely, I did try to help them in any way I could, not only in the government problems that came up, but politically as problems that came up. Things they might wish the President to . . . It worked, because we liked each other, I think.

And then, of course, in its ultimate practical sense, when key issues would come up, we could ask them for their vote, for their support; or if they couldn't vote for us, to not vote against us on the non-record votes, or go away, not be there; or all sorts of things could be done--not speak against us. There are, of course, gradations of lack of support.

Obviously, you get different degrees of cooperation from different members. Some wouldn't. Some would always. We kept a careful record, a book, on every congressman's vote on every issue,

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every key issue--of our own records. I was responsible for keeping the records in a rough sense. So we always knew, at an instant's notice, what kinds of support, kinds of percentage of support congressmen gave us. That would be the congressional part.

As far as Marvin was concerned, there was just an endless number of details. It is very difficult for me to pick out, from day to day, things that would happen. He wanted me to work with the President as much as I could. He wanted the President to get to know me.

Something that did happen slowly. I think that at the end, he finally did know me.I was not a Texan. I had no previous experience with him you might . . . My political background was more on the liberal wing of the party than his. And yet, at the end, I felt that--despite all of the pain, and all of the things that could have gone wrong, and which did go wrong, since, after all, I had been campaign director for Hughes in '66, and Hughes in '66 did have this terrible falling out with him--nevertheless, it was a trusting relationship. And I believe that he thinks I served him well.

On the wall behind you is the farewell letter to me. Of course, that's the typewritten letter. What I was most touched by was the bottom, which he wrote in his own hand, which says, "No one in the White House has been more dedicated to his country or more loyal to it. Thank you very much." Which I was very touched by.

Mc: Mr. Markman, did you have a specific subject area that you specialized in, in your legislative work on the Hill?

M: No, it went the whole gamut. There were certain issues which I

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was in charge of, you might say, as they came up. I was chiefly responsible for the reorganization of the District of Columbia legislation. I think one year I was in charge of the poverty program legislation. I think one year, maybe both years, I was chiefly responsible for the foreign aid, naturally. And there were others I can't recall. But periodically, I'd be given a certain bill and be given the responsibility of coordinating the whole effort.

Mc: I have some questions regarding what congressional relations entail; but I'd like to go on to an area that I know you became involved in and ask you just to tell me how your involvement developed and what you did in it. This is in relation to your ghetto work and legislation in the poverty program.

M: Well, I'd say that the most personally meaningful thing that I did in the White House was the ghetto work. Plus--and we'll get to this later I suppose--I was given responsibility for putting together, running, a summit meeting with Kosygin. Those two, I would say, would be . . . Although you'd have to say on the legislative work . . . You know, that's day-to-day, but that is, maybe, in the total historical picture, what made the most contribution.

But the ghetto business started in December of 1966. The President one day called a meeting with the staff. I think it was on a Saturday afternoon and somewhere between Christmas and New Year's or maybe it was the first of the year. And he said something to the effect that, "I want to know what's happening in the ghettos." And, "I get all these reports from the bureaucracy and the experts."

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And, "If I could go, I'd go myself, but I can't." And, "The next best thing is, I'd like to have some of you fellows, if you would go out there, and live in the ghettos, and then report directly to me, and tell me what's happening, any observations or ideas you have." So I was the only guy that took that up, that suggestion; that, to me, was just an intriguing possibility. Everyone else, for some reason or other, didn't react to that. So I decided I'd go ahead and do it, and I started out.

The first trip I made was into Chicago in January of 1967. The problem in setting it up was, first of all, how in the world does a fellow like myself, who's white, middle-class, and middle-western, go about living in the ghetto without getting his head cut off. And I finally decided two things. One is that I'd have to . . . I wanted to live in the ghetto. I didn't want to live in a hotel and go in during the day. And secondly, I wasn't going to worry about getting hurt or anything like that. I'd just go forward and hope that it would work. And I thought that the trick on that would be to find somebody, a Negro, who knew his way around the ghetto; ideally, somebody who had been born and raised in that ghetto. And if I could find some fantastic Negro guy, who had been born and raised, and because of his abilities, you know, had fought his way out--somewhere around Washington--that would be the ideal kind of person--you know, an outstanding guy, who at the same time . . .

And I found such a guy: a fellow named Ken Vallis, who at that point was over at OEO working, the Migrant Labor Department.

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He was just a program director or something. He was a guy about my age, and I had met him through this same reporter who had given me the tip on Kennedy, as a matter of fact. When I first came to Washington the three of us had had dinner one night.

Mc: Who is the reporter?

M: His name is Nick Kotz, K-O-T-Z. Nick--who is originally from Texas--is now with Cowles Publications--and his wife, Mary Lynn who is a graduate of Old Miss--happened to be our dearest and closest friends in Washington. And the reason for that is--and are today and have been since the day we came--because the two of them had lived in Des Moines, Iowa, and we'd known them well there. He'd been put at the Des Moines Register and brought to the Washington Bureau a year before I came to Washington. So he and I are partners. We own two football tickets to the Washington Redskins. We see them all the time. They're very, very close friends of ours. Nick, last year, won the Pulitzer Prize for national reporting at the age of thirty-six or something like that, on something which--and this is another story--on which I had a great deal to do in getting what was done done, which was the meat inspection legislation which he wrote about. But that's another story.

I'm getting away from the ghetto.In any event, I asked Ken. And of course, the other part was that nobody was to know that I was from the White House when I went to the ghetto. Obviously, Ken knew I was at the White House; we had to work out a cover. As I told the Secret Service guys, after the fact, I just never made a

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very good undercover agent, because the whole business of having a false identity was very painful through all these experiences. Because people naturally are curious, and they ask you a question, and you're going to have to make up more as you go along and it's difficult. But we tried to make it a very simple cover that I was with a private organization that was doing a survey of ghetto conditions and so forth.

In any event, Ken and I went to Chicago in January and lived in the South Side ghetto; spent the better part of a week there, talking to many people of all kinds--Negroes, I'm talking about--went into people's homes. We walked the streets at night. We went into apartments. We went into block meetings of Negroes. We talked to some extreme militants. We saw a good number of projects which were being [inaudible]. And tried to keep my contact at absolutely a ground level. Didn't talk to leaders. There was one difficulty: whether we should tell [Mayor Richard] Daley I was in there, because politically . . . We finally decided, Watson and I -- he may have consulted the President -- that we would not. We would take the chance of keeping it quiet, because, you know, it was potentially embarrassing, someone from the White House moving around.

In any event, I saw a great deal. It was a great eye-opener to me. As a result of that, I wrote a report to the President when I came back. The President likes short reports, and I just couldn't, I couldn't keep this short. It finally ended being a seven-page, single-space report which I sent in, with a great deal of trepida-

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tion, to the President, thinking, you know, I'd just catch all kinds of hell. But amazingly enough, he just was enthralled with it.

The next thing I knew, I started hearing from people like Jake Jacobsen and George Christian and Marvin and others that the President not only liked the report, but he was carrying it around with him and was reading it aloud in its entirety to various people who he'd trap into listening to it. Apparently, he did this on several occasions, because I kept hearing it back. And I know he gave it to Lady Bird, because Lady Bird caught me a week or so later and said she just thought that was lovely; she was just so impressed with it and she wanted to talk to me. And we did eventually talk about it.

And I know of one occasion months later; maybe it was a year later. We were in the Cabinet Room; he had a bunch of congressmen in there and he read that whole report, all seven pages, aloud.

As a direct result of that report, I guess, the President or somebody awakened to the fact that I could write. Marvin worked on me right after that to help write speeches, which I just did not want to do. I could see what the speechwriters went through. I didn't want any part of that. I did end up helping on some speeches, but not as a permanent thing. [Joseph] Califano wanted me to join his staff at the time, and I just couldn't, wouldn't leave Marvin and told Joe that.

In any event, I made a number of subsequent trips to the ghettos in that year and in the next, coming out with . . .

Mc: Mr. Markman, could you give the essence of your report, since it

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took seven pages. It's probably in the Presidential papers, and we don't need to duplicate too much of it, but if you could at least give me an idea of what you emphasized.

M: Well, the primary point of emphasis, at that time, was the disconnection the ghetto Negro feels with the rest of society. They just were adrift. They weren't part of the world as we know it. Whereas when we get in trouble, we naturally will think of going to the authorities, for instance, if the garbage isn't being collected, there's trouble in the block, or whatever kind of trouble. We would eventually call somebody in authority. They would never think of that because the authorities were their enemies. They certainly weren't in the same boat they were with their friends. There was this feeling of complete distrust.

And then, of course, the fact that they're cut adrift like that . . . Even their own world breaks out in all sorts of antagonistic, bitter, militant, if you would, attitudes. I wrote about that at some length, by example.

I wrote about, of course, the conditions that you find. The fact that the first place we were supposed to stay at--which we didn't finally, this old man in the west side ghetto -- you have to understand, the areas which had rioted the previous summer, and which rioted that winter right after I left, rioted the next summer -- brought us up to a walk-up--three or four stories. And there were these two women with about ten kids, in this filthy place. The old man says to me, "Now, when you sleep here at night

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you keep your shoes. Don't put your shoes on the floor. They won't be there by morning." I said, "Well, what do you mean?" He said, "Well, the rats'll take them." You could see there were rats and roaches all over the place. We finally decided not to stay there, not because of the filth, but because it was my judgment that a White House guy spending the night with just two women with kids, if it got out, could conceivably not look right. So we finally stayed at another place.

And so we wrote about the conditions. I wrote about it, of course, from a very personal point of view, what I observed. And the response was quite emotional. It's a direct result of this stuff on the rat business. The idea, which was first suggested by me, I think, for a rat bill which was eventually adopted, was enacted. I saw the schools. I described how the ghetto schools were so inadequate, even the best schools, the schools that were supposed to be the best schools in the ghetto, by absolute testing standards, by reading levels and so forth; its top people were below a national average. So I wrote about what I saw and I had a whole series of ideas: special summer monies, which was taken up and got 250 million dollars in special monies that summer.

The impact of the report was . . . First of all, I think that it had an emotional impact on the President. More than anything else, I'd say that here was somebody who had no ax to grind who he trusted and whose judgment he had some faith in, saying this is how it is. So it had a little bit to do with motivation

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of the President, maybe, which, I can't, nobody can answer that one. He also used it in a practical sense: to read it to people to persuade them. "This is how it is." That's why he read the report, obviously. Then the specifics of it are, of course, a rat bill and the summer monies.

Other things happened in other reports. For example, when I went to Philadelphia, I lived in the ghetto. And what I did in Philadelphia was: I had a classmate of mine who was going to take me into the city. It's a question always of who's the Negro. I happen to know a fellow named Leon Higginbotham who's a classmate of mine at Yale, Negro, who is now a United States District Court Judge. Well, United States district court judges don't normally get involved in this kind of stuff, but the President had decided from the Ranch one Thursday that I should go over a weekend. I'd been trying not to go on weekends at all. And I had about one day, and who do you get? And so I called Leon; I said, "Leon, this is my problem." I said, "I know you've got a lifetime appointment and you're on top of the Administration, but would you do this for me?" Well, Leon did.

Mc: When was this?

M: This would have been in . . . later on that same spring. You know, Leon then was brought into a White House connection that way, and Leon was subsequently used in various capacities by the President. Think about it. He sat with Califano and actually stayed at the White House during the riots following Martin Luther King's assassination to help direct matters. He was appointed by the President

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as one of the President's appointments to the Commission on Violence and was brought into the White House several times to sit in on these policy meetings.

And the other thing that happened on the Philadelphia trip was on Sunday; Judge Higginbotham took me to a church. And it was just an awful day, in the sense that it was just raining so hard; I thought, well, there will be nobody going to church on a day like today. But the church was just jammed. The Reverend at that church, a Negro, Leon Sullivan, tall, six foot six man. Higginbotham introduced me to Sullivan afterwards. Sullivan ran an operation called OIC, Opportunities Industrial Center which is a job training operation started in Philadelphia, which has since burgeoned nationwide. I was so impressed with Mr. Sullivan that I thought that he was just the kind of guy that has got the idea of positive approaches to the problems and the things he does work, that I wanted the President to see him. So in '67, the summer of '67, over objections of the Secret Service and Watson, I was finally able to persuade the President to make a trip to the ghetto. Then we brought the President to Philadelphia to walk through the ghetto and see Sullivan's projects. There was only one other thing on that, and that is I got Sullivan into the White House to sit down head to head with the President, to talk to him. Some of Sullivan's ideas, the President heard: and OIC; and he's been doing a great job, nationwide, since then.

What are some of the practical results of these trips? I also

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went into Oakland, Berkeley, Richmond, California, and then a year later I retraced my steps, suggesting to the President that it would be good to go do the same things a year later. If possible, even see the same people to see if I could detect any change in movement and report to him, and so I did. And therefore, in January, February, March of '68, I retraced my steps and reported back; what I saw there, more than anything, was the tremendous burgeoning of the concept of black power. And the reports I wrote were directed toward: what is it, and what does it mean? And of course, amongst the people I saw were a guy who would . . . I spent three hours in the home of a fellow, a Negro, who co-authored Black Power with Stokely Carmichael, in Chicago, and of course, talked to hundreds of people. I wasn't after black power. I was just retracing; that was the thing that came out of all of this; and of course saw it in all of its militant aspects, but the concept of black power, of Negro power, was so obvious all over the country. There was such a similarity.

And what I, in brief, tried to say to the President was that the black power is really something that, in its deepest meaning, is good and good for the country. It's absolutely essential for the Negro, maybe not in its militant aspects, but the concept of pride in race, which is really what this means, is a necessary ingredient to move the Negro forward. Other minority groups had historical traditions which brought them along. They had an intellectual, or some kind of a sociological history, which they could hold on to

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which pulled them out of being lost in the new country to make something of themselves. That certainly was the case with the Jews, and the Italians, the Irish, and before them the Germans, and so forth. The Negroes don't have a history. There's none. So this concept is something which if properly developed, can serve as a substitute for that; and if we can live through all of the distasteful parts of it and all of the destructive parts of it, it's going to be, eventually, good toward the objective of pulling them along with the rest of the country.

Mc: Did you participate in any of the involvements in the civil disturbances that erupted from '66 on?

M: Participate? (Laughter). I'm . . .

Mc: From the White House side?

M: Well, with Watson I did some peripheral work in helping man the White House command post, but nothing of any significance.

Mc: What do you see as some of the direct developments from your tours of the ghetto? You mentioned, very thoroughly, regarding the first one, a report. I was wondering about the others.

M: It's hard to separate, the way that was really combined . . . You might be interested in knowing that, at the moment, I am writing a book, completing a book, in fact,I'm on the last chapter, which I've been writing now, nonstop, since the first of November, which is very closely based upon my own thoughts, or whatever I think I see in the relationship between what's going on in the ghettos and the political processes, the Presidency and the White House to the revo-

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lution and cyclical revolutions going on in this country right now.

The book is in quasi-fictional form, because I'm trying to make a point, trying to persuade people. There are certain things I believe and I think you can say things more persuasively, sometimes, fictionally than you can writing straight prose. Now maybe this will or it won't work; , but I thought about it for a year before I left the White House and I actually started writing . . . As I say, of course, I've been writing nonstop for seven months. And I don't know whether anybody will publish it, but (laughs) it's almost done.

Mc: I hope so. Did you becomeinvolved in establishing the Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders?

M: No. Only in the sense that I helped with the notifications, and that was part Watson's thing, but not substantively.

Mc: I really hate to leave this area. I find it so fascinating. Do you think we've covered what your activities were, what the developments were in the ghetto relation . . .?

M: Well, of course, I have a whole series of reports that will be in the President's files-- I assume they are in the President's files-- which willtell . . . I haven't reviewed them. It's been fifteen months, I guess, since I wrote the last one. I can't recall all the things that were in it then. The only other aspect that I guess I didn't mention was: from time to time the President asked me if I would get other members of the staff to do the same thing. And I tried hard, and I guess, eventually, we did finally get a dozen or so guys out. And maybe they visited twenty or thirty cities; they all

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wrote reports which were collated, summarized at various times for the President. I was involved in that: of organizing, and then summarizing and so forth.

Mc: Were your visits and their visits still kept on an anonymous basis?

M: No, the President eventually decided to release it, and he and George Christian . . . I know the President personally and Christian on various times, released it to the press that this was going on, specifically; and a great deal of publicity finally came out of it. All sorts of newspaper articles and so forth.

Mc: Did this lead you into working, or perhaps coordinating, positions in such projects as Head Start, in the . . .?

M: Well, no. The legislative part of it I don't think really related to this. I think they are two different things.

Mc: I would like to go into the legislative part of it. Just kind of as openers, about how much of your time was involved on congressional relations?

M: Well, it started out to be maybe 65 percent of the time and it ended up being maybe 10 percent of the time, at the end, especially after Marvin left. Then there was just Jim [Jones] and I got to the position where I was serving kind of the same function that Jim, you see, had been to Marvin, who needed somebody to help him. It was virtually . . . It was just almost full-time and all the stuff that was involved in that. So the congressional thing tuned out, became less and less.

Mc: How was the setup in the West Wing on congressional relations? What

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was your direction? Who sort of planned it out?

M: Well, Henry Wilson was the guy that was in charge at first; then when he left in June or May of '67, then Barefoot Sanders took it over. But everybody got involved in congressional action, everybody at the White House, just about. You know, the President's idea was that nobody's immune from that. So depending on how crisis a situation was, the aspects of congressional relations were not limited to the congressional relations staff; and somewhere in the middle of my White House experience, I was really, almost formally detached from congressional relations to the point where I wasn't really answering to Barefoot. I was just there as a resource for him to use. I still had a responsibility for these states, but it was kind of an anomalous position. I wasn't really responsible, except on congressional stuff, of course. It was a typical unformed White House position.

Mc: Mr. Markman, there are a lot of talk and articles written on the strategy and tactics emanating from the White House used on the Hill. I wonder if you could sort of tie this in, in telling me if there was sort of a basic strategy; what you consider some of the key legislation that you worked on; and using these as specifics of sort of explaining what the tactics were on the Hill and Mr. Johnson's direct involvement and/or any pressure involved.

M: Well, I think that the so-called arm-twisting, direct pressure kinds of things are completely overstated. Successful congressional

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relations--and I think that the President's operation was certainly more successful than any other President previous to him; certainly more attention was paid to it, and it was more formalized than previous Presidents--didn't work on the tactic of threats or that kind of direct pressure. And of course, if you try that kind of business on members of Congress, it won't work on Congress. Congressmen and senators don't react well to that, and that will hurt you more than anything else.

But I think one truth, which hasn't been explored by anybody yet--and I think it tells you something about how we did things -- is the difference between how the Congress operated and reacted then and how it's doing now. Congressmen that I've spoken to this year--they feel cut adrift. They feel leaderless. They feel there's nothing to do. There's no direction. All that means is that there's no White House leadership being provided. And they feel kind of lost.

Under our Administration . . . The beginning of it, of course, is the very close and constant relationship which the President established and maintained with the leadership. Obviously, he had a very close relationship with [Senator Mike] Mansfield. But he also knew how to play the [Senator Everett] Dirksen machine, too, which was in many ways more successful than Nixon's--what they're doing these days. But Dirksen was, in a sense, simple. Dirksen had a shopping list. He'd come in the White House, periodically, with literally a list of things that he wanted; none of them normally of any great moment from a Presidential perspective, patronage

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kinds of things and so forth, which the President would more or less grant him. And Dirksen's part of that unstated bargain would be that he would cooperate on most things, which helped a lot in the Senate.

Of course, the President's personal relationship with the senators, especially the powerful committee chairmen, was such that he had contact. And my work wasn't with the Senate, but the President, being a Senate man who, primarily, through the personal relationship he maintained, was able to get a great deal done. And, of course, he understands politicians and senators, particularly, what they want and what they react to. But the key, as I said earlier, is the constant personal relationship, the never-ending personal contacts.

On the House side, of course he had a close relationship with the Speaker, and with Carl Albert and with Hale Boggs. His operations on the House side, though, were more through the staff than personally. They key on the House side was, as I said, to have his fellows maintain constant personal relationships. He used to say often, "Invite them over to you home. Have them to dinner. Have them for a drink. Know their wives. Get them to know you and like you, trust you." And as far as that worked, we would attempt to maintain that kind of constant relationship so there was never a break in the action, so to speak.

Consequently, when bills came up, we would present the bills. The Califano operation would present the bills, and then the congressional side would work very closely on a very personal relationship

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in shepherding the bills through. Of course, in specifics, for example, Harley Staggers, President of the key committee which has to do with all sorts of consumer legislation . . . Staggers is a very nice, very pleasant fellow, major committee chairman. Harley would love to be invited to the White House. He loved to have little things: in the receiving line, he liked to bring down three or four of his constituents, or friends, or family or what all, and have their pictures specially taken with the President. Now that seems a minor little thing, but we were politically astute enough to blow through all of the bureaucratic objections: this is too much of a a precedent and,you know, it disrupts the programs and so forth. Whatever the affair might be, we'd do that for Harley, and Harley would just love it. Not that there would be . . . we'd bring him through the line and bring out a bill kind of thing. We'd do those kinds of things for him and he'd be just delighted to cooperate. And of course, the President would take that opportunity to pat him on the back, or talk over the programs. We created a working relationship so that the end result of it was the White House provided absolute leadership in presenting the bills, and shepherding them through and getting the votes. We'd do what the whip system, for instance, should do. We'd have the counts. They were always accurate , and they knew that. They learned to rely on us. And of course, we would reward our friends, you know, with little things, not only patronage, but they would be invited to social functions and [invited] on the boat, and be with the President, fly

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with the President. But it was this kind of constant relationship which was key.

For example, the reorganization of the District of Columbia was a dramatic instance of a bill where neither the leadership, that is, Albert or the Speaker or the committee chairman involved thought that the bill had any chance of passing. They wanted to give up on it. But we knew better. And we had to literally take them by the hand and force it; push this thing through, telling them that we would win it and that we did have the votes, and we would get the votes. And we did. Of course, if you do that once or twice, it's a great lesson to the members; they trust you the next time, and follow your leadership the next time.

Of course, you wouldn't always get [the votes]. Members would vote against you because of all sorts of reasons. By and large, the President's program was very, very successul. He would have periodic and regular breakfasts with the leadership, meetings in the evenings with the leadership, briefings with the leadership. Constant relationship was really the key on how it worked, in my judgment. Of course, we had the votes which helped, but, even with the votes, we would not have been able to do what we did without that.

We were, I guess, politically aware. We knew what congressmen reacted to and we did those things.

Mc: That must be a fine line to walk without overstepping it or over-emphasizing. Did this run into any problem where your presence was

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just too heavy?

M: No, I don't think so. No, you just have to know instinctively what not to do and when not to press. I never ran into any difficulty along those lines at all. I think most of the fellows who'd do that, were alert enough not to do that. Pretty good men.

Mc: We are about to come to the end of this tape. Just about another foot on it. I'm going to cut this off.

Tape 2 of 2

Mc: Mr. Markham, I'd like to continue here and ask you what you consider some of the key legislation that you worked on; what the developments were of getting it through on the Hill or reducing the number of amendments that might have weakened it, or in some cases, even failed.

M: Well, you realize there are hundreds of pieces of legislation, and it's really an impossible task to go through them. There are just lists and lists of key legislation which we had enacted.

I mentioned before--and I might as well go into it now--the meat inspection act about which my friend Nick Kotz won the Pulitzer Prize which is an interesting story on how legislation gets enacted sometimes and in which I had a role.

Nick, who is a reporter, had gotten on to the fact that there were filthy conditions in meat plants all over the country and that there was a hiatus in the inspection processes. That is, that on those plants that were federally inspected, you did get clean meat, but there was an amazingly high percentage of plants which were not

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subject to federal inspection, only state inspection, which was very, very inadequate. Therefore, there was something like 15 or 20 percent of all the meat you bought virtually uninspected and unhealthy which was bad. People out here didn't realize what they were getting into. And [he felt] that this could be a problem which could be very easily solved by just redefining the federal jurisdiction. You could take up almost all of that by causing federal inspection to be added to virtually all plants.

And he had been going around the country, and he had written twenty or thirty or forty stories. He started talking to me in the winter of--I can't remember, it must have been in the spring of '68--it might have been the spring of '67. In any event, he started talking to me, and I didn't pay much attention to him. He said it's a problem, but people are always coming with problems. He'd see me in the hall over at the Congress or the White House. And finally, he got through to me, and I started listening to what he was saying.

Then I became very interested in the subject and started reading the stuff he sent to me. And it turned out that the situation was that the Department of Agriculture--we had originally proposed in the inspection bill--but that the Department of Agriculture had made a deal with the congressional committee to, in a sense, destroy our own program. They were being compromised, in a way, and there wasn't going to be any.The powerful lobbying forces on the Hill were prevailing.It turned out on investigation, that the President in a message has asked for one thing and that the Department of Agriculture was sub-

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verting it for what they considered good and sufficient reasons. The Chairman of the Agriculture Committee, Chairman Poage, a very important person of the Department, was dead set against it, and he controlled the Department's appropriations. And they felt that, on balance, it was better off for the total Administration to give away this in order to get the cooperation on the rest of it.

Well, I disagreed. I felt that the President, at that time, was very badly in need of a winner in the eyes of the public, something on which he would come down on the side of the angels and there's nothing like consumer legislation to do that; nothing quite as dramatic as dirty meat, and the Department was not operating in the best interests of the President and that their judgment was absolutely wrong. The question, then, was whether the White House staff, including myself . . . And then I started talking to Larry Levinson and DeVier Pierson--and primarily those two--about what was going on. They agreed with me that this was something the President ought to get on and we ought to get through the Congress.

Barefoot Sanders, on the other hand, heading the congressional liaison side of it, tended to agree with the Department of Agriculture and was specifically saying to me that they'd already made a deal with Poage and they'd have to break their word, and we would be forcing them to break their word, it was impossible, it would ruin all kinds of relationships. Well, I was stubborn and would not let it drop and over a period of months just continually pressed it all over the White House. In the meantime, Nick was writing umpteen stories

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on the thing and other newspaper reporters were starting to pick it up; I'm bargaining, now with some urgency that we ought to get on this before . . . so that we could claim it as a winner; if it loses, as it will unless we do get on it, we're going to really get saddled on something which is harmful, which the President really can't afford. And regardless of everything else, the total balance is in the President's interest to push this thing hard.

So one day we had a key meeting with guys from the Department of Agriculture, Larry Levinson, DeVier Pierson, and myself, and Barefoot Sanders in Barefoot's office on this subject and all these issues, ones, I know, were expounded at length. We finally agreed that DeVier would draft a memo saying what these arguments [were] to the President, and get the President to say yes or no--which way we go. We did, and the President said yes, and so the Department was just incensed at this,something that they felt would bring on total damage to them.

But Barefoot went along, manfully, on the thing and we managed to get that bill through. And of course, it was a winner, a great winner, and a great ceremony when we signed it. That was really the the beginning of the President's great involvement in consumer affairs. As soon as all the publicity we got from it, which was all great, was apparent, then it became apparent to everybody that all this consumer legislation was a winner.

The mechanics of getting it through were that we had to . . . Barefoot really took responsibility of calming down the chairman,

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Poage. Once we got it by the chairman, it couldn't possibly fail in the Congress. The lobbyists had to beat us at the level they almost beat us at, which was the administrative level, that is, the Department or the chairman level. Once they got out in the open, it was a winner, and it did and was. So I consider myself having made some contribution to that. If I hadn't done that, it would never have been, never. Kotz got a great award out of that, too.

Mc: What were some of your activities regarding War on Poverty legislation?

M: I coordinated in getting the OEO legislation through in the fall of '67. I coordinated it; that was the continuation of the War on Poverty. Coordination means that you hand out the assignments to all of the guys who are going to be contacted, everybody that has to be contacted; keep count of the count of where you are and sit in on the meetings with the various staffs of the agency and who else they bring in. In an instance like that, OEO does not have a very large congressional operation. We didn't have a sufficient one. We would bring in other departments who have congressional liaison staff and assign them to work on this problem going up through their agency. We would meet periodically with the leadership, the Speaker, with the Majority Leader and go over the results, and they'd give them assignments. The Speaker was always very cooperative. You could call and talk to him, and we'd suggest this to the Leader till we'd finally work up a winner, a package that is going to win. We have enough votes. We have to work with the committee chairmen. We have to give and take on amendments sometimes. It's difficult

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for me to describe the specific amendments that we knocked down and agreed to. I do recall that on this specific legislation, nobody thought that we were going to pass it. And we may not have passed it, except, the Republicans made a grave tactical error, pushing too far on dismantling the program, I think, which gave us an opening on the floor, which we were able to exploit. I'm very sorry I can't recall the specifics of each of these battles. They were very dramatic at the time. Sometimes you only win these votes by one, two, or three votes.

Mc: What about your activities on foreign policy?

M: Well, I didn't have anything to do with foreign policy, particularly, except getting the AID bill through the Congress. I mentioned the Kosygin experience, which was a fascinating one. For my grandchildren I wrote it. I think this was somewhat maybe . . . Marie Fehmer once asked me after it was over, to just write down my recollection of it which I did for her, and I don't know what happened to it, but I expanded it for myself.

What happened was that in June of '67, when the President decided to meet with Kosygin . . . I think they agreed on the place, Glassboro, New Jersey, which was equidistant between New York and Washington, something like five o'clock in the evening. And at six o'clock Marvin called me downstairs, and said, "You're going to be in charge of this. They're going to be in at eleven o'clock tomorrow morning. This is what the President would like. He wants to meet in some comfortable surroundings, have a chance to

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have lunch. He wants to have adequate security. He wants a place for the press to meet. He wants the facilities for private meetings with his own staff. He wants Kosygin to have his staff. He wants to be able to meet in a small room, if possible, with Kosygin." And he gave me a whole bunch of other things that the President had in mind.

And he said, "You've got till eleven o'clock tomorrow morning to do this, and all we have agreed on is the place: Glassboro State College. We don't know where. We don't know what we're going to do. You just set it up and be ready when we're there." So that gave me twelve, eighteen hours, something like that, less than that, fifteen, seventeen hours.

By eleven o'clock that night I was on an airplane, Air Force plane, with a whole plane load of people of which I was in charge: our press people, Dick Moose, from Rostow's office for policy aspects, Secret Service people, communications people. We called ahead and asked Governor Hughes of New Jersey to meet me there. Didn't know anything about it. All I could think of, as I was flying up there was, "My God, if the Russians would do as we would do under similar circumstances; that is, send somebody down there to set it up with me, I'm just going to never get it done. Because I'll just have to negotiate every step of the way." But I was lucky. The Russians didn't send anybody down.

By the time I got there which was eleven or midnight, I was free to make whatever decisions or do whatever had to be done. So

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I had something less than twelve hours to decide on a place and then set it up. Governor Hughes was just magnificent. He was there when I got there. He took me aside and said, "Only one guy can be in charge. It's going to be you. Whatever you want, I'll make sure you have. I've got my whole state at your disposal." He had his chief of police, others on hand. Of course, I had my own people there, and he was just great.

The first thing, of course, I decided on the home, poor Dr. Robinson's home, as the place. They had four or five [inaudible]. First of all, they didn't have any power in the house. They didn't have the power to put in a hundred-watt . . . Well, they had power, but they had only enough to put a hundred-watt bulb in the house; and it was hot. So the first thing I had to do was to air condition the house. And then, before you can do that you've got to get the power in. And then there weren't doors between the rooms; we had to get those constructed. And the furniture, of course, wasn't right; we had to find the furniture. And then, of course, there were no decorations. They wanted to have lunch and the kitchen was inadequate so we had to bring in stoves and refrigerators and freezers.

Mc: Oh, God.

M: And then, of course, by this time, we were inundated with national television. All the networks were going to cover this thing live. So just working frantically, I'd just make decisions and I spent money like.. . I didn't know where it was going to come from, how much I

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had. You know, there was just no limit. But I just worked, I guess, as frantically as I have ever worked in my life. But it was just magnificent. People would come from all over that part of New Jersey who'd heard what we were doing, people with skills, and just volunteer -- electricians, carpenters. A power company guy came here and says, "I brought a truck load of my crew, because I thought you might need me." And I remember standing out there--at something like four o'clock in the morning--where the place was floodlighted, and there must have been a hundred people working. For the air conditioning, we got the largest air conditioning distributor in central New Jersey, and he brought in sixteen air conditioning units and installed them. We got an interior decorator out of bed at five o'clock in the morning to make draperies, and to bring in furniture, and . . . Oh, Jesus. We ran a power line from the main transformer on around across the lawn and into the house.

I remember standing out there on the lawn watching these hundred people working and meshing as if we'd planned this thing for a month, all these skills. I never had such a feeling of pride in my countrymen as I had at that moment that they just showed up and volunteered, and everybody was working and, by gosh, we made it. And it was ready. We had, you know, everything the President wanted. It just came out just right.

When they arrived, we had provided a private room for Kosygin just below a room we controlled. I remember when McNamara came in there, I said, "Mr. Secretary, the Russians may not buy this because we could bug

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it from above if we wanted to." And he said, "Well, just try it."

I remember, of course, we didn't have any phone system for the Russians, and they had to make a call. The guy came to me and asked me, "Where can I call?" I said, "Well, the only thing we have is our own system, which we've installed. You're welcome to use our phone. You have to go through the White House board." He said, "Fine." And he did.

The only bad moment was when the President arrived, after having done this all night, you know, and I explained to him what we were supposed to do. And the President said, "I don't want to do it that way. I want to do" such and such and such and such. And I said, "Mr. President, we can't change it." And Mrs. Johnson was standing next to him and said, "Lyndon, Sherwin has worked here all night, and you do it the way that he says!" (Laughter). And he backed off. Thank God for her.

The meetings went all right. The only thing I had,, at the meetings, other than to just keep things from blowing apart, was that the first dozen or so Russians . . . Kosygin, and Gromyko, and so forth, had lunch with the President. The next dozen, in order I had to take to lunch, which really involved the guys about on my level of staff, you know, which is assistant to Kosygin at the Kremlin, which was both that day, and the next day, and the next. Which was a fascinating experience to me because--they all spoke fluent English--and in just comparing innocuous notes, it was obvious that they did the same kind of things we did. They had kind of the same kind

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problems as we did. It was very interesting.

As they finished the meeting I, of course, was just exhausted [and] was just looking forward to coming home and going to bed. Kosygin and the President came out there and said, "We have decided to meet again on Sunday." This was a Friday. And I just died. So I had to work on that Saturday, improving things, and then Sunday, they met again. Sunday night, of course, it was over. It was an interesting experience.

Mc: I guess it was. I have some just general questions. To return to one subject on the congressional relations, I wonder if you could sort of go into, through your contact with the congressmen, the relationship between the President and then his Administration with Congress, and as it tightened up, and as objections and criticism were a little more rampant.

M: Well, of course, one of the things that helped this: as matters tightened up on the House side, the President's relations with Congress were maintained in good shape because we had such a well of strength in our contacts, that the House was always in pretty good shape. We didn't have, except a congressman break-off here and there, the kinds of problems we had in the Senate. And I say that was as much because of the constant work that was done. There was just, you know, layer upon layer of depth in the relationship. Which notwithstanding the weakness of the . . . Of course you hear this: people will tell you all the time the President is losing ground, the President, this and that's happening. But insofar as the

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legislative program's concerned, we were able to maintain momentum, which I attribute, in large measure, to the fact that these guys had an image of the President, but they had a personal guy from the President's staff, who had the President's ear, and they would relate to the President through him. Consequently, there wasn't the kind of deterioration that there was, in my judgment, nationwide and in the Senate. Did not occur in the House. Of course, there were liberal congressmen who blew off, but by and large, as I recall it, the relationships were maintained.

Mc: Did you sort of withdraw from those people that became really strong critics?

M: Yes. I'm trying to think of the guys I was assigned to. Only John Culver of Iowa expressed--an old roommate of Teddy Kennedy's--and I did withdraw. It was almost impossible to maintain a relationship with him, even though I like him personally. You couldn't. He'd just take off on Lyndon Johnson. It began, when we first started, and this started early, I'd report to the President the reactions of Culver as well as other congressmen. But it became so bad that I finally decided to hell with it. I was not going to pain the President with this kind of thing.

Mc: Did what became called the "freeze-out," from the White House end of it, develop from these indications that these people were strong critics of the Administration?

M: Well, in the general course of things, we would decrease our help to people who were not being helpful to us. I guess you could call it

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freeze-out. It did happen to some extent to a few members. It wasn't as general as your use of the term implies. Now a guy like Culver got "cut off." But of course, we would try to protect the President, too, from his own very human reaction to this kind of adverse things. The President, very naturally, would react strongly against a negative statement by a congressman. And his instant desire would be to cut him off of the list. But from the standpoint that we might need that congressman's vote on a piece of legislation that the President wants, it was important, notwithstanding the President's immediate reaction, to maintain sufficient relationships with that guy that we could get him on a vote where we needed him. So you had these two factors in conflict oftentimes, personal conflict against the more historical perspective of getting the legislation through. So I, personally, would oftentimes just maintain contacts with guys like Culver, which I just wouldn't necessarily report to the President, because I felt that it was important to get his vote. I would never not see a guy. There's no point in making an enemy of a guy who would otherwise vote for you. An individual congressman is only important insofar as his vote on a piece of legislation is concerned.

Mc: Did you detect a polarization of Kennedy-Johnson camps in the House?

M: Not so much. Of course, it never got to that. Lyndon Johnson had not . . . It may have been coming to that, but in my judgment . . . The last few months before the President withdrew in March, I was becoming more and more involved in the politics, with Marvin, of delegate support for the President. I'd been working with various states and

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doing all the things you have to, politically, to get delegates. Let's see . . . Congress was not in session during . . . They were just beginning a session; that's what it was.

But politically, I would say that, given time, the kind of polarization that you were talking about would have occurred, but that it really was just beginning to. Most of the congressmen with whom I worked were, by and large, loyal to the President, as of the time and up to the time he withdrew. The Minnesota guys were all right. In Wisconsin, Zablocki was leading our forces in Wisconsin. Kastenmeier was,at that point, neutral or tending toward McCarthy or Kennedy. Royce was neutral. Polarization was just starting. Let's see. Missouri, they were all virtually for Johnson. Of course, the Southern guys were. We were in good shape in Washington state, except for Brock Adams, who was leading the Kennedy forces there. And I was collecting these reports, as I recall it now, from not only the states I was responsible for, but throughout the country. What was happening was that we were getting political readings from members of Congress. Specifically, I was keeping a record of it. And I think that, by and large, with some breakoffs here and there, that we were in good shape with the Congress as of the time the President withdrew. There are records, which I probably have copies of, and which Marvin has, which would give that specifically.

I recall quite vividly that the last report we sent into the President, on Saturday evening, March 30, 1968, on the delegate count, was that the firmest conservative count we had showed that he

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was going to win the nomination by several hundred votes and had that many committed. This was a count which was conducted carefully, with no fat in it, in an attempt to give as honest a picture as we could, and evaluation as we could. All of which means only that the President certainly didn't withdraw under an apprehension that he could not be nominated. The last count he received from his people, and from the objective reports that we gave him, was that he had considerably more than enough to be nominated and was gaining.

Mc: Did you have any activities in the beginning of that part of the year in setting up what would be the Presidential campaign?

M: I was working very hard in that area from about December on, with Marvin. What my function eventually would have been, I don't know. But I was being . . . Obviously, it would have been something full-time. It was full-time, even though I was White House staff.

Mc: The articles and reports talk about the fact that the Democratic party, at the beginning of 1968, was highly disorganized, at least, as a campaign apparatus for the President.

Mc: The party became highly disorganized after the President withdrew. After March 31, the central peg went out of the organization; when people say it was highly disorganized, that's what they're referring to, or that's what they ought to be referring to, because it was disorganized after that. Prior to that, however, the party machinery was ours, and it was being very actively used as an aid to the President. It was not at all disorganized. It was a very careful organization which was being employed through Marvin and John

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Criswell. Marvin had a separate organization which was specifically for Johnson. But I would say that the party machinery was poised and ready for the campaign up until March 31, and had been working on the President's campaign.

Mc: Did you become involved in the New Hampshire primary at all?

M: Oh, no. No. Except peripherally, in the sense that I would sometime work with Bernie Boutin. I never got out of the White House. What I did was always from the White House. I did quite a bit though.

Mc: In thinking back now, was there any indication of a lack of interest in the political developments that year from the White House as a result, of course, the March 31 withdrawal?

M: After the March 31 withdrawal?

Mc: No. Before it, that led up to it.

M: I don't understand the lack of interest. We were damned interested.

Mc: Was there any indication from the President of lack of interest or lack of emphasis on the political campaign?

M: No. We were going full steam ahead. I think everybody was working with the President's complete understanding and direction, as a matter of fact, as if he were a candidate. Obviously, this is the way it ought to have been, so long as he had not finally made up his mind not to be a candidate.

Mc: Do you think now that there were any indications prior to March 31 that he might not run?

M: None.

Mc: Caught you by surprise?

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M: Yes.

Mc: Were you notified prior to . . . ? Or I think it was that evening, when some notification went out that this was . . . ?

M: No, I was not. I immediately came down to the White House and helped on the calling and other details that had to be done that evening.

Mc: What was your reaction?

M: I was shocked, distressed. [I] thought that it was probably the finest act of individual political courage I'd ever seen.

Mc: Did you think, at that point, there would be any opportunity to draft Mr. Johnson at the forthcoming convention?

M: None. I was convinced he meant it and that it was an irrevocable decision. And of course, events made it even more irrevocable. I don't believe there's such a thing as a draft, anyway, in politics.

What I'm saying, about events making it irrevocable, is that the presience of the President's is most apparent, or it has been to me, by looking at what would have happened to this country. If you postulate that Lyndon Johnson remained a candidate and had been a candidate at the time of Bobby Kennedy's murder, if you postulate that Bobby Kennedy had either just won or just lost in California and then had been murdered while Lyndon Johnson was a candidate, the disaster that that would have brought to the country and the Presidency is incalculable. If you just imagine what people had always said, or implied, or believed in their sick way, about the President's involvement in Jack Kennedy's assassination, you can't ever really do away with . . . You can see how sick the country can sometimes be.

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You would never have been able to convince a significant part of the country that the President had not, somehow or another, conspiratorially been involved in that. It would have been just the most terrible thing this country had ever seen.

I've always felt that it was just the height of wisdom, because the President, in a broad sense, saw that. I mean, when he says he doesn't want to be the point of the divisiveness of the country, what he meant was that--not on all specific issues--that the mood of the country was such that for him to remove himself as a candidate removes that point, which in all sorts of unseen ways, could cause harm to the country. Of course, in an unseen way, this could have been just terrible.

Mc: Mr. Markman, one area that you mentioned that we haven't gone into very much, other than in the Kosygin meeting, was your coordinating work on trips and working with Mr. Watson. Could you tell me a little bit about some of your activities and some of the significant events that you took part in or contributed to?

M: Well, when a President travels, obviously, there's a great deal of detail that's involved. When the President travels to more than one place in a single trip, it becomes that much more complicated. There are communications problems, and security problems, and political problems, and policy problems; and somebody has to coordinate them. Many times, I did that from the White House which is just . . . We always, of course, had a political advance man who would be there. And there'd be a Secret Service man in charge; a Signal Corps man in

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charge; a press man, oftentimes, in charge. Well, somebody had to pull all of that together. Primarily, that was Marvin's responsibility, but he would delegate it, oftentimes, to me--just an endless amount of detail to just make sure that the trip comes off correctly. The Secret Service and the Signal Corps are all professionals. The advance men learned to be competent.

It got to be where almost the primary problem at any stop was demonstrations and how could we bring a President into a point without embarrassing him or causing harm to him. [This] became both a political and a security problem. There were a number of trips in which I concerned myself with that. Probably the most important one, which is often cited as the beginning of the so-called credibility gap, was in September, October of 1966, when the President went to Southeast Asia.

I was supposed to go to Manila, which was going to be the coordinating point of the whole trip. But at the last moment, I was told that the President, when he comes back, may want to make a swing around the country, just before the congressional elections. And I was instructed to see what I could put together--something like a three-day trip that would bring him into eighteen states--if I could work that out; do whatever I could to work something out, making sure it was politically right and logistically feasible. I was just given a completely free hand to work out whatever I wanted to work out, or thought might be workable.

So I spent several days in the President's Jetstar. Instead of

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going to Manila, I stayed here; I spent several days in the President's Jetstar along with Clint Hill, who was a Secret Service agent, and we made a swing around the country. As a result of which, I worked out a planned itinerary for the President which would involve him going to--when he came back from Korea--was his last stop there--Alaska; go to Washington; then he'd rest a day or so; then he would go out. And this trip was to take him to Boston, Chicago, Minneapolis, Minot, North Dakota, Boise, Idaho, Spokane, Portland, Sacramento, the Jet Propulsion Lab in Pasadena, Las Vegas, Albuquerque, Phoenix, San Antonio, Corpus Christi, Memphis, and back here, as I recall.

So I wired, or rather I put on the communications network we have in the White House, this planned itinerary of what would be done. It was a great, great, big, long document, which was sent to Watson. Then it came back to me that the President had tentatively approved it or approved it. I don't remember the exact words of it. I was to now scatter my teams to each of these places. And of course, the details of the trip got changed when they were negotiated, but they'd come back with suggestions for the Presidential party. So I loaded on a great, big Army transport full of tons of equipment and literally hundreds of men; started dropping them off at these places to make the preparations.

In the meantime, out there, where the President was--I guess it was in Malaysia--the President, I understand, authorized Bill Moyers to release to the press, not for attribution, some[inaudible] that he was going to make this trip. In the meantime, we had these people all

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over the country. In the meantime--and this is hearsay--I understand Mrs. Johnson was against it, the trip, because it would be too exhausting for the President. And the President had this problem something, physically, I forget what it was now--with his stomach.

by the time when they got to Korea, in the meantime, my people were all over the country, and I was told by Watson to go station myself personally in Portland and continue to coordinate this thing, but from Portland, because at Portland we were going to have some terrible demonstrations and they were a little worried about that.

I got a call from Marvin, while they were in Korea, that said, "Everybody drop out of sight. Don't talk to anybody." And this was the order that went around the country to all of our people. Of course, you can't put that kind of people and equipment around the country without having them surfacing. There were Administration people all over the place. And besides, we would have been linked unofficially with the Presidential party.

And then when they got to Alaska, the next word I got was, "Everybody is to go home. The trip's off." Of course, signs had been made; communication had been set up and there were pictures. Of course, in Portland, where I was, there was this operation where they were making thousands of LBJ signs. All of which would not have been so terrible, if the President came back and went in the hospital the next day, or a week later. I forget what the time was.

But the thing that caused all the problem was that when he was

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asked at his press conference the next day, he said something to the effect that, "I never planned to make a trip." Which people who work with Lyndon Johson understand--I understood to mean--that, in his mind and eyes, didn't plan means, "I didn't absolutely, finally, irrevocably decide." That's what he means. Of course, the public would never believe it that way. Planned means something else. Planned means prepare. And so, this is always cited as one of the great beginnings of the credibility gap. And it was a very, very unfortunate experience because I think it hurt the President immeasurably.

Mc: Did you see the President, by '68, as being sort of what became known as a "captive president" because of the level of demonstrations around the country?

M: He was. He could not freely appear anywhere he wished. I don't know whether that's . . . I'm not sure Dick Nixon can appear anywhere he wishes. But obviously, the trips we started making in '68, and even prior to that, had to be under carefully controlled circumstances. And they became increasingly more difficult to find places. We had to go to Army bases, or situations where you can minimize the chance of a disruptive demonstration. But in that sense, he couldn't . . . I don't think, in '68, he could have made . . . In '68 he could not have . . . Before he withdrew . . . After he withdrew, I think that may have removed that problem. He couldn't have made, say in March of 1968, the same kind of walking trip to the ghetto in Philadelphia as he made in June of '67, which indicates in how short a time the

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situation, in my judgment, had changed.

Mc: Do some of your other activities, in this area, come to mind that you particularly worked on?

M: I don't know. There was a great deal of detail work I did. I did a lot of reading of FBI reports and FBI investigations; did a lot of the reading, night reading, of what was brought in for the President, to determine whether he ought to see it. If so, I'd summarize it for him. That took up a lot of time. We watched the tickers assiduously--the UPI, AP, Associated Press, United Press International, immediate news for matters of interest--and kept a very detailed file on all matters which had any political context. Then the four or five months before he withdrew, I did an awful lot of contact work with the Administration, politically, to help out on projects in which our friends, political friends, might have been interested. There were so many things.

Mc: The FBI reports that you mentioned became quite an issue. Can you . . .

M: An issue?

Mc: Well, as far as the fact that they were held, with some substance, in hiring and firing practices.

M: Well, I don't know. If there may have been an issue about them--

Mc: Particularly related to Marvin Watson.

M: Well . . .

Mc: Can you shed any light on how much emphasis . . . ?

M: Well, I don't agree in that sense. Of course, I imagine there's a lot of people that dislike Marvin. And I suppose they might point

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at that. But I don't see that as an issue and never have. The law requires that there be a security check on anybody who is being considered for hiring. And, as a matter of fact, that a man, who is hired in a substantive position, be rechecked from time to time. That's the law. Neither Marvin Watson nor Lyndon Johnson have any control over that. So the FBI is obliged to do that kind of an investigation. These reports would come in. They'd be bulky; they'd be thorough; they'd be read. And oftentimes, I would be obligated to read it. Of course, you might say [that] who is reading your report would make, say, a difference on what the President thinks. In the sense that, the President would never read the report itself; he'd read my summary, or Marvin's, or whoever was summarizing; you'd give him a couple of pages summary of it.

And it is true that you have a discretion in what you put in that summary. You're not trying to cheat, but there's often things. The FBI comes in with raw information. For example, I'll give you an example. There's a woman that we were thinking of appointing to a position. The FBI came up with somebody who said that she had had a lesbian experience a number of years ago. Well, that was idiotic to put that in the summary. That was one single accusation which had not been verified. I suppose somebody else could have--if they wanted to shoot her down--put that in, and that would have been the end of her. I mean, you have that kind of judgment.

But you give them straight readings. To me there was no issue about that. And I never saw an instance where the reading that

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we gave a man from F.B.I. was anything other than fair. Usually, if he got to the point where he was being considered for a job, you're not trying to find something that's going to hurt him. You read these reports with the hope that there's nothing in it that's adverse. You really bend the other way.

The only issue I would see about the FBI reports is the fact that [J. Edgar] Hoover had direct access to the President; in the sense, that he would send these things in, oftentimes not sending the Attorney General, his nominal boss, a copy. I noticed Nixon has changed that which I think is a good move. He makes Hoover, now, send everything through [John] Mitchell, the Attorney General. I think that's highly preferable. But Hoover would not only send a security message but he'd send us all sorts of stuff in all sorts of areas. And some of it would be repetitive. And of course, his own perspective toward matters, and I think someone can make a pretty good issue about that, whether that's legitimate.

Mc: Then you did see other investigations, say, of leading people, citizens in the country, on the far right and the far left?

M: Well, now, security, investigations would not be made, except where a person was being considered for a major appointment as such. We never just make a security investigation of a person just for the fun of it. On the other hand, the President was kept informed of activities of key public figures. And the FBI would know and would tell us some things which the public does not know about famous people, who are in the public eye, in which the President has a legitimate

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interest. Leaders of movements, we would be kept informed of what they were doing. And it was quite legitimate knowledge which the President ought to have. And that would include stuff which never has been and never will be printed.

Mc: What I was aiming at is, of course, there was a lot of talk during the last year of there being a conspiracy afoot in the country. It was emanating, attributed to be emanating out of several different areas. Did you see any validity to this?

M: I don't understand. Conspiracy to do what?

Mc: Overthrow the country, or revolutionary sort of activity to throw out the political establishment.

M: You mean the far left?

Mc: And far right, in some cases.

M: Yes. Well, I mean, you get reports all the time about activities in the SDS, the John Birch Society, the Communist Party, obviously. We got reports daily on what these operations were doing.

Mc: And that . . .

M: There are people and there are organizations around the country who would--some make no secret of it; some make a complete secret; some make part of a secret--that they would like to overthrow the establishment of the government, violently or otherwise. And the Negro militant movements, we had a constant stream of information. We'd receive a constant flow of this kind of information. One thing you have to do from the perspective of the Presidency, is look at things in perspective. I mean, there were people who were trying,

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but the country was never in danger. Everything was being watched. The law enforcement agencies had matters under control, and none of these operations pose any threat, did not at that time. Now, there are things going on in this country now which I do think pose a threat, but in which these radical elements certainly have their hands in muddying the water. Those are the problems which Nixon and other presidents are going to have to face up to: about what's going on with the colleges, and what's going on with the militants. The problems are going to get worse.

Mc: Mr. Markman, the last area I'd like to talk to you about is working on the President's staff: Mr. Johnson as a boss; your access to him; the frequency of your seeing him. Could you just sort of start, and I'll ask you some questions?

M: Well, first of all, the way I'm built, just whatever I'm about, does not tend very well toward being on a staff. I had never been on a staff before. I'm not only an attorney by profession, but a trial lawyer. I guess there's hardly any more independent kind of animal than that. I was a fairly successful one before I went to the White House, and I hope, perhaps, to be that again. So therefore, going from that into a situation where you have a direct boss, and no freedom, hardly, of movement and discretion, working for one fellow, was a very, extraordinarily painful experience for me, psychically. It was very difficult to adjust to, [and] I never did completely adjust to it. So for those reasons, for me personally--having nothing to do with Lyndon Johnson--it was as if free at last, when I left the

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White House. And, although others may have problems with decompression and so forth, I had nothing but pure joy out of being my own man again. So that was a constant adjustment problem to me.

I did it, went through all of that, took all of the tremendous cut in income, and made the adjustment we had to make because of two reasons. One, I felt that I owed it to my country. And secondly, on a more personal level, I believe that a person goes through life but once; and that you should be stretched all the way and that not to be causes one to vegetate, and you're not doing justice to the precious gift of life. For those reasons, I accepted and stayed with it for those three plus years.

As to how much I saw the President, I would see him about every day; mostly because of when I was going to help Marvin, which meant every time he had any kind of public function, I was there to try to help out, and sometimes I'd be with him in short, pungent conversations. As to a more substantive level, periodically we'd have a chance to talk about--I'd see him, I'd actually be in his presence all the time, but--not all the time, but once or twice, three times a day. What were your other questions?

I want to say this, however: I'd always thought that I would leave the White House at the end of 1968. But I'd planned to stay through the year and not make any move to try to decide what I was going to do until after the election. Of course, when the President made his March 31 speech--especially since I had been doing nothing but the political stuff for the last couple or three months--I felt

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that I was really free to think about myself, and did. But with some considerable trepidation, I sent in a note to the President asking if that was all right, because I didn't know how he'd react to a person that was going to leave. But his reaction was just wonderful, and he was helpful and interested, and took time to counsel with me on what I ought to do, kind of like an uncle. He was just great.

Mc: What was Mr. Johnson like as a boss? You hear various talk about . . . ?

M: Well, he was mercurial. He's a great one for both overpraising and overcriticizing, depending on his mood and what the impetus has been on the instant. I mean, he could, at one moment, tell you that you're the greatest thing that ever came down the pike; and then, in the next instant, say you're the most idiotic, stupid son of a bitch that's ever been around him. So you learn, after a while, that either one of those extremes are neither accurate nor express his own deep judgment; that the truth lies somewhere in between. And of course, it's very exhilarating when he overpraises you; on the other hand, this can be very depressing when you get read out. The trick is, of course, to hold on to some philosophical perspective to all that, and to not let either extreme affect you-- the trick to survival around there was that. My own feeling about his readings out of the staff was that that was kind of healthy; in that, you should look at that, as I tried to, as the fact that a President really can't react very much in public, and this is his outlet, and this is very legitimate and very necessary. But, he was difficult to work with, in the sense that you never knew from one moment to another what the mood was going to be; but on the other hand, that he has all those qualities, others

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you've read about, of having a very sensitive heart, and you could have some wonderful moments with the man.

Mc: Were there any indications that you could sort of read that his mood was not good?

M: Oh, yes, I've tried . . . I'm not a psychologist, but you could sense it, before, by the set of his eyes, or the way he was walking, posture. You could tell, normally. So those were difficult; but on the other hand , he was extremely human; he is an extremely human man. One time, late one evening, he called and asked if I'd join him in the Cabinet Room. I didn't know what was going on . I was at my office. I put on my coat and tie, straightened out. And there he was with his shoes off, his coat off, his tie unbuttoned, and his feet up on the Cabinet table, and the tape recorder there. He'd just received a tape from Chuck Robb, who was in Vietnam, which I think was intended for Lynda, but which he was hearing first. He just didn't want to listen to it himself, that's all. So for over an hour, we sat there and listened to the tape, with the President commenting on it. It was a very warm and personal moment.

Mc: Did you have much occasion to be exposed to what is called his earthy use of the language?

M: Yes. He was, of course, a great raconteur, as others I'm sure have said. He was a good storyteller, a natural mimic. And depending on the audience, he'd tell a story with or without earthy by-play. He had some favorite stories. And he would oftentimes, especially in male-only company, express himself in four-letter words, and--coming right out of the soil -- but he would make himself understood that

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way; it was all his way of communicating. The President was just unbelievably effective in samll groups, with small groups. Anything up to twenty or twenty-five, or even a larger group in a larger room, he was unbeatable and persuasive.

I suppose if I heard it once, I heard it fifty times around the staff, people who wanted to just somehow or other capture that, put that out to the public, because it was in such contrast to his staid, forced public style, either reading a speech, or on television; that to catch him as he was, himself, was just magnificent. People, at various times, tried to talk him into bugging the Cabinet Room, you know, putting hidden cameras around and that kind of set-up. He'd never go for that, primarily, because he believed, as I understand . . . [was] concerned that speaking that way, extemporaneously, that he would make some kind of a slip or something which would come back to haunt him. My own judgment was that was a mistake of his; that he should've taken that risk, because the most important thing a President must do is to communicate with the people.

And to the extent Lyndon Johnson failed to do that, he was brought down. Probably more than any other factor, any other single factor, in my judgment, it was that inability to project himself to the country at large. The image . . . The Presidency is an ethereal thing, and the strength comes from presenting such an image; and the image which he brought across too much created negative responses. And if people could only have seen him as he was, rather than with this shield which went across him when he spoke to the country,

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things may well have been different.

Mc: How were relations--yours and the relation between members of the staff?

M: Mine were good, of course I was, as I say, just a spear-carrier; nobody need, nor did they, feel threatened by me. And anyway, I've always been able to get along pretty well with people wherever I've worked. It wasn't a problem with me. There were antagonisms between and among the various elements of the staff, which probably were in many respects healthy. We had the centers of power, Califano, substantive; and we had Harry McPherson, the speechwriters; and John Roche; and Kintner; and Marvin [Watson]; and of course, Moyers, before. They would overlap and clash, obviously. It would create varying degrees of friction and hard feelings. But it is inevitable, amongst people of that ability, that there's going to be that kind of struggle for access and a struggle for influence. But by and large, it never got to the point where matters ceased to function, and they would be maintained, I thought, on an acceptable level.

Mc: Was there an effort to have sort of a philosophical balance on the staff?

M: Well, now, nobody was on the staff on foreign matters who did not go along with Vietnam policy; there was no philosophical balance there. On domestic matters, there wasn't anybody involved, in policy matters, who had a conservative influence; so there really wasn't, I would say, in that sense. There were completely different personalities on the staff, but I would [say],I guess a guy could say, "Well,

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Marvin was conservative, or Jake was conservative." And if you look at the total staff, maybe John Roche was conservative, maybe he isn't. But in its real sense, you wouldn't say that was valid, because Marvin didn't deal with policy and Joe Califano didn't deal with foreign matters. Rostow and Roche dealt with Vietnam, but they looked at the problem alike. Harry McPherson may have disagreed on Vietnam, I don't know. But he had nothing particularly, except the speechwriters, because the policy functions were not amongst people who divided their philosophies, in my judgment.

Mc: Was there much friction in order to sort of obtain the ear of the President?

M: Well, there probably was. I can't really answer. Anybody, any assistant had access to the President. Nobody could stop anybody else from sending in a note and asking to see him, if the President wanted to see him. There were overlaps on different issues, I guess. I can't recall any, but I know there were.

Mc: Were reciprocal type relations with the President and members of the staff, they were in or they were out?

M: Oh, yes, there was that. Some guy--sometimes you'd be reciprocal and you'd never get back in again. I can't recall . . . Sometimes the cycle only went one way. I'm trying to recall some instances . . . [inaudible] and more often out. . . . . I'm trying to think of others . . . I can't.

Mc: Did you feel that Mr. Johnson enjoyed his Presidency?

M: Yes.

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Mc: What seemed to most motivate him? Or, I should probably add, even antagonize him or frustrate him?

M: I believe his primarily motivation was primarily the chance to make a contribution to move the country toward goals which evolved to its ultimate good. This great opportunity to contribute, which is so rare, which Presidents uniquely have--albeit their chances are limited, too--to me would be the primary motivation of the President. There are nice things about being the President, like all the cars and airplanes and so forth, the things about being President, which I'm sure are satisfying, but I would not say [they] are the primary motivation of any man who wishes to be President. I'm sure Lyndon Johnson liked all those other things, those nice things about being President. But the chance to make a unique contribution, the things which are so deeply satisfying to him, the educational bills which he enacted, the health bills that he enacted, he would come back to this time and time again when he talks about the Presidency.

Obviously, the frustration was the war, this war which he inherited, which he was really carrying out the policies set by Jack Kennedy, and beyond that, the same general foreign policy in the country which had been started after the Second World War, on which he really had no choice. His choices were so limited as to be almost nonexistent. The war just wouldn't respond to any of the maneuvers which were attempted to contain it. And then, there was no explaining it to the people, and pretty soon, it got to the point where the dissidents became more and more vocal, and it brought him down.

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Whether it would have brought down another President who had been able, more able to communicate, is a question no one will ever answer. I think that if he had been able to communicate better, and God knows he tried, it might not have brought him down. Obviously, Nixon is carrying on the same fundamental policy. Nixon's trying to liquidate the war, too. If Lyndon Johnson had gotten another four years, he would have gone, perhaps, in the same direction. I think he would have. Nixon's Presidency is going to stand or fall as to whether he liquidates this war. If he does get rid of the war, he will probably be re-elected, in my judgment. If he doesn't, he's going to be defeated.

Mc: Do you feel that the war really was the prime occupier of his time and mind during his Presidency?

M: Well, I don't know that I'd use the word "prime." I think it took over more than probably any other single problem. Obviously it did. But of course, he was occupied with domestic programs; he would have liked to have been occupied more with domestic programs.

Mc: I think you've probably almost indicated this, but let me ask you specifically: in part, from his inability to communicate, do you think that he did lose his so-called consensus?

M: Oh, yes. There's no doubt about that. He was able to regain it, in part, only after he withdrew as a candidate.

Mc: Do you think Mr. Johnson was treated unfairly by the news media?

M: No, I think he was, on balance, probably given as good a treatment as any President could expect to get. There were, obviously, a lot of

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reporters who are unfair. I mentioned Evans and Novak on Marvin . . . There are other columnists who had axes to grind; a lot of them were pushing Bobby Kennedy, things like that. But by and large, the press, in our years, were really as much a reflection of the changing ideas of the country as they were a cause of it. We just lost the country on that war, and the press was just a part of that.

Mc: Did you have to curtail any of your contacts with the news media?

M: Well, I never had many. I had this one friend, very close, and I had some friends with the media. But the first lesson that you learn if you're working on Lyndon Johnson's staff is that you don't talk to the press or to anybody, which wasn't a hard lessongfor me because as an old lawyer,I was well trained in that.I'd never felt any particular pressure, one way or the other, as far as this was concerned.

Mc: Mr. Markman, I'd really like to just sort of close this on a summary statement, or remarks from you, regarding the strengths and weaknesses of Mr. Johnson and his Administration, and how you think history will judge him.

M: Well, as to how history will judge him, really depends upon what happens, perhaps, in the next twenty years, which we can't foresee. Nobody, I think, can make a judgment now; not because we can't see Lyndon Johnson, but because we don't know what's going to happen. In other words, how he conducts himself with the war, in large measure . . . how he's judged on his conduct of the war depends on what

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happens in Southeast Asia. If certain things happen, you'll have one judgment for making our commitment. If other things happen, it'll be another judgment. I think, in a large measure, the President's contribution as a President will depend upon, as Dean Rusk said, "How we construct a durable peace."

On the domestic front, what we did was to really cap off the social legislation that was started in the New Deal under Roosevelt. We finally got the generation's past business enacted, and I think he will be well judged for that. On the other hand, perhaps deterring from that, is the fact that, in my judgment, we are now embarking on something almost entirely different, where different needs are going to be incurred. The President started talking, his last year or so, about the quality of life. But we're seeing something in the country, in the student unrest and the militants, we can't see the end of that, but there's going to be some fundamental changes made. And what we have done in the past is no longer relevant to the problems which I think we're coming to now.

So that may detract. But I don't think that anything can ever take away from the fact that the climax of the generation was Lyndon Johnson's legislative program. He's proud of it, and he ought to be proud of it. The country ought to be grateful to him for doing it. In the total picture of the Presidents, he'll probably be judged more for better than for ill, I would think. Because he was a strong President. Historically, strong Presidents fare well; weak Presidents fare poorly. Dwight Eisenhower will not fare well, as Herbert

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Hoover didn't, and others previously. But strong Presidents tend to attract historians because of their strength, and the issues of the day seem to fade away. Strong Presidents, by and large, even if they're strong, controversial Presidents, do well. Andy Jacksons, and Abe Lincolns, and Theodore Roosevelts, Franklin Roosevelts and so forth, they're judged well. I think that's probably the biggest thing Lyndon Johnson has going for him, that he was not afraid to lead and did lead. And, perhaps, he'll be remembered for that more than anything else.

Mc: I want to thank you very much, Mr. Markman.

M: You're welcome.

[End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview I]

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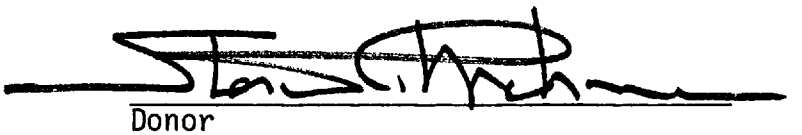

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