INTERVIEW II

DATE: January 26, 1976

INTERVIEWEE: LEONARD H. MARKS

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: Mr. Marks' office, Washington, D.C.

Tape 1 of 1

G: We're on tape now, Mr. Marks.

M: Let's start with LBJ's interest in public educational broadcasting. In about 1952, I talked to Senator Johnson about the possibilities of establishing federal assistance for the construction of public broadcasting stations, stations that would be associated with colleges and universities, established by local community groups on a non-commercial basis. There were a substantial number of those already in existence, but they lacked substantial funds; could not enter into the FM spectrum, which was a new field that had just opened; they had poor equipment, and they certainly did not have enough funds to develop good programs. It occurred to me that the time had come for federal assistance in order to make this possible.

One Sunday afternoon I do remember I was visiting at the Johnson residence and I brought the subject up. I talked to him about the small towns in America where the level of teaching was mediocre and certainly not competitive with the big cities, and how, if we had television stations serving those towns, films by acknowledged experts in the field could be shown so that the quality of education would be improved throughout America. It wasn't necessary then to be

a resident of New York or Los Angeles or Washington in order to get a good lesson in physics or chemistry or to have an outstanding teacher talk about the humanities or to capture your interest in Shakespeare. This idea appealed to him very much. We discussed in detail how we would avoid Federal control over the content of the programs. It was my feeling that what should be done was pass legislation providing a subsidy for the purchase of equipment, and particularly on a matching basis so that there would be local involvement.

The very next day I got a call in which Senator Johnson told me that he had done some thinking about this, the idea was attractive, but that he thought that Senator [Warren] Magnuson would be the proper person to introduce legislation to that effect because he was chairman of the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee. So he asked that I meet with Senator Magnuson, whom I knew, but that he would prepare the way by telling him that this was something that he thought ought to be given high priority.

I subsequently met with Senator Magnuson and outlined the program. We evolved some legislation which pertained to assistance on a matching basis for the purchase of equipment; nothing to do with programs. The bill was introduced after careful review by Senator Johnson. He made some very helpful suggestions.

G: Do you remember what they were?

M: Well, he wanted particularly to have this administered by an existing agency of the government rather than to create

a new agency. We chose Health, Education, and Welfare because they did have the Department of Education and they had enormous capabilities in this field. He also gave us some practical suggestions on the kinds of hearings and witnesses that might be called upon to bolster this type of legislation.

G: Can you give us an example here of the kind of witnesses he [suggested]?

M: Well, he was very practical. He said, "Now, this is going before your committee. Let's take the roster of your sub-committee. Who's who? Are there educational stations in the areas which these senators represent? If so, let's get them to take an active interest, to call the attention of the senator to the benefits to the community. In other words, personal background on each community that was involved would be more helpful than the abstract theory of aiding education.

Senator Magnuson introduced the bill, and hearings were held. The bill was recommended by the committee, and as I remember it, it was passed. Now, my dates may be wrong; it may have been '56. I can't recall if it was '52 or '56, but it coincided with an election year, and when it got to the House side, nothing happened. Then the following term of Congress--and again I am groping for dates, I believe it might have been '58, '59--the bill was again introduced. Here Senator Johnson was mindful of the fact that we hadn't "done our homework," as he said, in the House.

After having passed the Senate, we should have had some arrangements made for hearings in the House almost immediately. He suggested that we start doing our groundwork and talking to people on the House side.

Well, the Senate again passed the bill. It came to the House, and I think hearings were held but there was no great enthusiasm. Just hold on a minute.

(Pause in recording)

M: Finally in 1961, for the third time the Senate passed the legislation. It had some amendments, but nothing very substantial. By now, LBJ was the vice president, and he didn't take as active a role because of his vice-presidential duties. He didn't have any direct relationships with the Senate in terms of the committee process. We had hearings in the House. I kept him informed of the progress of the hearings in the House, and he made a few calls. He talked to some people, telling them of his vital interest in this type of legislation.

G: Who did he call, do you remember?

M: I can't recall whether he talked to the Speaker . . . George Mahon . ... but people of that nature. My recollection is that Oren Harris was the congressman from [Arkansas] in charge of the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee, and [LBJ] may have talked with him. My memory is vague, but it's possible also that Jake Pickle was a member of the House committee, and he may have been involved. But essentially [LBJ's] contacts were with the leadership.

The bill passed the House, and President Kennedy signed it into law. I was privileged to be invited to the signing ceremony. Kennedy signed the bill and paid compliments to Magnuson for his leadership, and he had indeed shepherded the bill through the Senate for three consecutive times. Magnuson then turned to me and he gave me the pen which President Kennedy had used to sign it, and he said, "You're the father of this legislation." I said, "No, Maggie. You know that the real father is LBJ." He said, "Well, all of us have played a part in it." I relayed the substance of that conversation to the Vice President, sent him a copy of the bill, complimented him on his vision and having seen the merits of it. I got a very nice letter back from him on May 3, 1962, in which he says [Mr. Marks reads from the letter]: "Thanks for your note. You have good reason to be proud of the part you played in the legislation assisting the development of educational television. I know how long and how effectively you labored." Signed "Lyndon." But the truth is that he was the one who long and effectively labored. He had an abiding passion to bring the level of education up in the small communities, and this is what appealed to him more than anything else. He saw this as a chance to get top quality information, teaching into rural hamlets and poor states that couldn't afford it.

G: Was he pleased with its enactment and the performance of it later? Did he ever talk to you about it?

M: Yes, he frequently talked to me about it. I was instrumental

in getting an educational television facility installed in American Samoa--Pago Pago is the capital. We have the responsibility to administer that trust territory given to us by the United Nations. The governor of American Samoa called my attention to the poor facilities that they had and the inadequate teaching and asked about the possibility of Federal assistance, since he knew that I had something to do with the legislation. He was able to introduce legislation, get it passed by the Interior Committee, which supervises the island. Seven television stations were constructed on the island: one channel for grades one and two, the second for three and four, all the way up through the twelfth grade. I went out with Senator Scoop Jackson and Congressman Mike Kirwan from Youngstown, Ohio, who was chairman of the subcommittee.

When I came back, I told the Vice President about the Pago Pago installation and how his concept has now extended beyond the territorial limits of the United States. When LBJ was President, he was on his way to Australia on one occasion. I recommended that he make a fuel stop instead of at Hawaii at American Samoa, because if he spent several hours, he could see for himself the results of his activity. And that was done. He was very excited, thrilled by what he saw, and very proud of the part that he had played in it.

G: Is there anything else on that topic that you would like to add?

M: No.

G: I know he received a very warm reception in American Samoa when he went.

M: Yes. Everybody knew of his sincere interest in the islands, but they didn't know that he really was there to see this educational television facility.

G: Shal we talk about the '60 campaign now?

M: All right.

G: I believe that you really worked in at least two capacities: one as the liaison with some of the Eastern states, and two, with his media campaign. Would you like to describe the liaison work with the Eastern states first?

M: Well, for about six months before the actual announcement was made that LBJ was going to be a candidate, I and others had talked with him and with Walter Jenkins and some of his immediate staff, Cliff Carter, about the possibility of forming an LBJ for President Committee. These things don't happen overnight. Efforts had to be made to seek delegates, money had to be raised, and it just wasn't an activity that can be conducted in twenty-four hours. It required careful planning and organization. He discouraged it. He was very noncommittal. He would constantly say, "No, there's no point in running. I'm not going to do it. I'm Majority Leader; I've got the responsibility of running the Senate." He did everything to talk us out of it. However, we persisted, and finally the campaign was launched.

Let me tell you a little bit about the formation of a committee here in Washington. I was told that we would open

up an office, and that since I was familiar with some of the people who were in the real estate field here in Washington, could I obtain satisfactory space. Well, I knew Morris Cafritz, who owned a large number of buildings. I was a tenant of one of his buildings. He also owned the Hotel Annapolis, located at the corner of Fourteenth and K Streets. I went to Cafritz and said, "Is there any space that you have that we could use for about two months for campaign headquarters?" Just fortunately he said, "Yes. The ground floor of the Annapolis Hotel and the second floor are available. Perfect. You would have the streetfront window and you would also have private offices on the second floor." I also was able to convince him to make this space available to us. So with great pride I told Walter Jenkins. I think John Connally was also involved in the early planning of that.

We went ahead and we had a sign made: "Johnson for President Headquarters." I thought that this had all been cleared with LBJ, and we had the sign company erect the sign. Sarah McClendon saw or heard about it before the sign was actually up, and when it appeared she had a big story for the Texas newspapers that LBJ had declared his candidacy for the Democratic nomination. Well, he was just furious. He called John Connally and he called Walter Jenkins and he called everybody involved, and he said, "You get that sign down! I am not a candidate." So we took the sign down. John Connally was quite upset. He said that if that was the was he was going to run his campaign he could have somebody

else do it; Connally wasn't going to get involved in this kind of amateurish politicking. John threatened to go home. And then two or three days later, we got permission to put the sign up, so we were in business.

Now, at that time, we organized the United States into various regions. I think there were six, but I'm not confident.

G: Let me ask you one thing here. What do you think was the cause of his change of heart? I assume you got the permission from him to go ahead and put the sign back up. Would you like to comment?

M: Why do I think he changed his mind? Well, only a psychoanalyst could answer that question for you, or maybe people like Walter Jenkins and John Connally, who were closer to him on that subject. My own feeling was that he really didn't think he could win, and that he didn't want to start something that would result in a loss. He was a proud man, and he was a shrewd politician. My own feeling, again stated, was that when he announced his candidacy he wanted to be able to show that he had great strength and that he was a frontrunner. That wasn't possible. Now, in '52 and '56 he was a candidate, but just for strategic reasons: he wanted some delegates so he could play a role in the selection of the nominee and in the writing of the platform. That was understood. I had been part of his campaign committee in '52 and '56, but we never really thought that he would be nominated. But in '60 it was different. We just didn't

think that Jack Kennedy, who was after all a young senator, would have the kind of support that he actually developed.

We divided the nation into six regions. I will try to recall for you some of the people who were involved. Culp Krueger, who had the Northwest. Cliff Carter, who had the South. A lawyer from Dallas who later became our ambassador to Pakistan, had the Southwest. Warren Woodward had some states in the West. I think Bill Brawley was involved for the South, too. And I was given the Northeast. Northeast consisted of Kennedy territory: Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, Delaware, Maryland--coming down--District of Columbia. These were tough states to get delegates, particularly the New England states.

So I tried to recruit some people who might be helpful. Eddie Weisl, Sr. was in the New York delegation; he helped us. We got a few members of the House and Senate who would be able to give us some assistance, but essentially that was barren territory for us. We were not able to develop delegates there. I was constantly being kidded, because everybody else would be reporting some delegate strength and I wasn't able to show that.

G: Did you at this point see any weaknesses, say any sort of a split between the McCormack people in Massachusetts and the Kennedy people? It was pretty much a united front?

M: Absolutely. Kennedy had those delegations, and outside of a lone dissident, they were his states.

G: Now at the convention, were you involved in the campaign

there? I know you worked on the floor to get uncommitted delegates.

M: That's right. Well no, what happened was as regional manager for the Northeast, it was my responsibility to have people in each delegation with whom we could communicate. So I worked on the floor. I wandered through each of the states, trying to find out whether we could pick up any strength, reporting on any developments that took place there. Jim Rowe and I worked the floor for the Northeast primarily.

G: There was one point that you made in your interview with Dr. Frantz, and that was that about 2:30 in the morning at the Biltmore, you sat down with Senator Johnson and went over the campaign. He talked about where he thought he had made his mistakes and what the strengths and weaknesses were. Do you remember what he felt about that?

M: Not too much. And by the way, we didn't sit down; he was in bed. We sat at the foot of his bed and we discussed it. We were all dog tired. We had been up all day and all night and had very little to eat. He was very mellow, and he was appreciative of all that took place and grateful to us for our support. He didn't have a post mortem. He merely said, as I recall, that "Well, we tried. We did the best we could. We just go on now and support the candidate."

G: Do you think he felt he should have entered that West Virginia primary?

M: If he talked about it, I don't remember it now, and there is a possibility that he did, because Jim Rowe did conduct some

of that conversation. My recollection is very hazy, because I remember how tired I was and how late it was. But I do remember saying good night to him. He asked me what I was going to do, and I said, "I'm going on to San Francisco." I had some legal business there. As long as I was on the West Coast I thought I ought to make us some money. He said, "Oh well, don't stay too long. Get a little rest." And he said goodbye. No indication that the next morning he would want me back on the floor, which is what happened. I think I told Dr. Frantz that John Connally called me it seemed like eight o'clock in the morning or maybe earlier, got me out of bed and said, "Get dressed and get over here. There's work to be done." And that was the beginning of the discussion on the Vice President. There what they wanted me to do was to make darn sure that the District of Columbia accepted LBJ as the vice-presidential nominee and did not create any trouble on the floor.

So I went to the delegation. I talked to some of them whom I knew. It wasn't easy to sell. Had there been a roll-call vote, the District of Columbia would have voted no. But it was a voice vote, and even then you could hear "No." It was a quiet "no" from the D.C. delegation. Michigan and D.C. were the ones we feared would be causing us the most problems on that.

G: Their objections were basically that he was a Southerner?

M: Yes, and civil rights was the issue, and what would he know about civil rights and what would he do? All of my entreaties

that this man was the one person who might be able to get legislation through just didn't mean anything; it just fell flat.

G: Can you recall who in the Johnson circle favored him accepting the nomination and who didn't?

M: Well, John Connally recommended it; Walter Jenkins did. I was not there when the critical discussion took place. When I came into the Biltmore Hotel, he was in his bathrobe; Lady Bird was in her bathrobe. John was fully dressed, and he was there. Walter was there, and a couple of others.

G: I was under the impression that John Connally was opposed to it.

M: Well, when he talked to me, he was behind it. He just told me to get to work and get the D.C. delegation straightened out. So by that time apparently John had assumed a public posture. I never heard him speak against it.

G: During the campaign you handled his electronic media, I think.

M: His radio and television, yes.

G: I know of the one occasion in New York when there was a joint appearance. What did you do there to set that up?

M: Well, let me give you the background. The press had carried numerous stories that there was rift between John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, that Kennedy was on the East Coast, Johnson was on the West Coast, that they were not in communication and that bad feeling had developed. This was not true. But in order to dispel those rumors I talked with Ted Sorensen,

Mike Feldman, Larry O'Brien, who were running the Kennedy campaign. There were others of us in the LBJ group that talked about this and said we ought to really do more than deny it. The best way to do it would be to have them appear jointly on a nationwide television program. Since it was coming near the end of the campaign, it was wise to do it very quickly. We looked at the schedules and we found that Kennedy would be coming into New York. Although LBJ was not scheduled to come East, we would bring him East. The idea was that we would meet in New York. There would be a torchlight parade down Broadway. They would wind up at Columbus Circle, and there we would have an auditorium where they could make speeches and then a thirty-minute nationwide television appearance, LBJ beginning and then Kennedy to wind it up.

That was agreed to, and we got hold of LBJ and told him this proposal. He readily agreed to it. He said, "All right. If that's what you want, if that's what Kennedy wants, we'll do it." But it involved coming from Los Angeles to New York with no intermediate stop. It was just a trip for this specific purpose, and when he was through, he was going to go back to campaign in the West or back to Texas.

He arrived in New York. I went up there, not only to set up the television program but to make sure that all the other arrangements were carried out. We had quite a large advance staff. It poured. The weather was just horrible. Kennedy was running late as he always did. About five o'clock

it became apparent that he wasn't going to be in New York by six. As a matter of fact, he was in New Haven working his way down. So we decided to cancel the torchlight parade on the ground that the weather was bad, but we probably could not have made it because Kennedy's schedule was so fouled up. Also we had serious problems with the New York leadership. Carmine DeSapio, Governor Lehman, Mrs. Roosevelt weren't talking to each other, and things were in an awful turmoil.

G: Were they supporting the candidates?

M: Yes, but there was an intramural rivalry within the state of New York which didn't contribute to any plusses as far as the organization was concerned.

So when we canceled the parade, we decided that there would be a meeting between Kennedy and Johnson at the Biltmore Hotel which was campaign headquarters. We would go from there directly to the television program, but it would give us an hour to talk things over and to get ready. I arranged for a block of rooms at the Biltmore Hotel for the Johnson party. They arrived on time; we had dinner, sat around. We kept getting reports that Kennedy was now at 194th Street and he would be there shortly. And then I got a call, and I was told by one of the advance men that Kennedy was going to the Carlyle Hotel, where his family had an apartment. "Well," I said, "I just can't believe that, but I'll check it out." I called and I found that, yes, he was going to the Carlyle.

So I got in a car and I went out to the penthouse. Dave Powers, one of his assistants, was there. I said, "Is Kennedy coming here?" He said, "Yes. I've got his dinner ready and his clothes laid out. They'll be here in about twenty minutes." "Oh, for Christ's sake."

So I got back to the Biltmore Hotel, told Senator Johnson that there had been some changes in plans and that we were going to rendezvous at the Carlyle and that I had gotten a couple of rooms so that we could rest there waiting for Kennedy. So we got all the cars and all the people in the pouring rain, and we went from the Biltmore to the Carlyle. When we were at the Carlyle waiting for Kennedy to arrive--I was in the apartment with Dave Powers--word came over the intercom that Kennedy had just checked in at the Biltmore and would Dave please bring his clothes down. So I went down and told a now very angry and impatient Senator Johnson what had happened.

He restrained himself. We got cars and we went back to the Biltmore. When we walked in on Kennedy in his suite, he had just come out of the shower and he was just furious that his advance people had been so inept, had confused things so as to cause us to travel back and forth between the Biltmore and the Carlyle, and he apologized. He was really ungracious and very, very harsh on his advance people. At the same time, he was very complimentary on the Johnson people. Senator Johnson accepted the compliments with good grace, very pleased actually that it wasn't due to any lack

of organization on our part.

Kennedy had his dinner, and we went to the Columbus Circle. There was an argument preceding that performance which I think might have some relevance. We had thirty minutes. The question was how much time LBJ would get and how much time Kennedy would get. I remember that Ted Sorensen had suggested to me that LBJ needed about two minutes. I said, "That's awful! He's Majority Leader, he's the vice-presidential nominee. You can't do anything in two minutes." "Well, that's all he's going to get." We battled that one back and forth, and then I think we finally settled for around six minutes. I was to be the prompter. I would sit in front, and I would flash LBJ when he had one minute or two minutes so he would know when to conclude.

G: I believe there was some suggestion that unless he got at least five minutes or so he wouldn't do it.

M: That's exactly right, absolutely right. I talked to him on the phone from California. I told him what was going on, and I said, "If you're going to come here for two minutes, I would recommend you not come." So he said, "Well, if we don't get five minutes, we just won't do anything." So I told them five and I think we finally got six, but it was a pretty serious argument.

G: Did it involve the two candidates other than that, or was it primarily Sorensen.

M: Staff. Staff. I'm sure Kennedy never knew it. It was Sorensen and me, and I think Mike Feldman was in on it, too,

for Kennedy. But I was talking directly to LBJ, and I was pretty upset that they would try to confine him to a two-minute interval on a nationwide television program.

The plan was that he would come in before the television time started and he would be on the platform. As the program opened, there would be rousing cheers from the audience. Finally he would quiet them down, he would speak his piece, and then Kennedy would walk down the aisle to applause, mount the rostrum and make his speech. Johnson was a little upset that day because of the circumstances I have described: the indecision on the time, the confusion over the arrangements. He wasn't happy with the speech that he had had prepared. I think you may have been told in the past how concerned he was that the podium be at the right height and the light be at the right angle, all of which had been carefully checked out by an advance man.

So he came in and stood at that podium. I was there in front of him with the prompt cards. At that point, the light on the podium went off. I'll never forget. He looked at me and he said, "You bring me three thousand miles from California and you turn out the lights on me!" That just shows you the tension that existed. I laughed and I said to the electrician, "Put the plug back." So he put the plug back, and [LBJ] was able to deliver his speech with the light on. But there was great tension, great excitement.

G: Bill Moyers introduced him, I believe, didn't he?

M: I don't remember who did. We also settled who would sit on

the platform--Carmine DeSapio, Lehman, Mrs. Roosevelt--and it which order, which let me tell you is another story.

G: How did you devise that?

M: I didn't have much to do with that. Kenny O'Donnell took over on that one, because that was Kennedy's problem, really, not LBJ's problem. You might talk to him about that part. But he was pretty rough on them and told them, "This is the way it's got to be."

But that program, carried nationwide, dispelled the rumors about a rift, went very well. I think that was the last joint appearance they had before the election.

G: Do you think that Senator Johnson felt because they had not appeared together much before that, that the Kennedy people were snubbing him at this point?

M: Yes, I think he did have that impression.

G: That perhaps they were more effective without him, and this sort of thing?

M: I think that was part of it. And the two minutes versus five minutes, you see, was merely a crystallization of that feeling.

G: Was it part of this sentiment that prompted you to make the suggestion to the Kennedy people that they have a joint appearance?

M: Absolutely. Sure.

G: Did he regard that broadcast as a success?

M: Yes, he was very pleased that it went very well.

G: Now, I think there was one more topic that we were going to

talk about, unless there is anything on that that you [would like to add]. You've certainly amplified that considerably.

M: Let me just raise one point here I don't know whether I have touched on before. He feared the television camera. He was never at ease. We brought in people who were experts on production to counsel him, to help him with the Teleprompter, with the large script on his manuscript, with his glasses, but he never really adjusted to the television camera. During the campaign in '64, recognizing his difficulties in the vice-presidential role, I said one day that if the public could only see Lyndon Johnson as some of us knew him sitting around the table and talking, it would make all the difference. I said, "Just throw away the script and just get a few people in and discuss the issues." Others agreed with that position. Bill Moyers, I think, particularly was strong in favor of that. For our first effort in that direction, we got together I believe four or five women.

(Pause in recording)

G: We're back on again.

M: Yes. So we invited four or five women to come up to the Waldorf Astoria, sit around in a parlor atmosphere, and just discuss the issues. We had Katie Louchheim, who used to be the Women's National Democratic Chairman, and a number of local women who were articulate and knowledgeable. He was just superb; it was one of the best performances I have ever seen. Although the polls showed him running 'way ahead of Goldwater,

he was so pleased with that he told me--and at that time I was treasurer of the LBJ for President Committee and also doing the media work--"Run it again on the network." I said, "My God, you're talking about $90,000." He said, "I didn't ask you the cost. Do it." So we ran it again. And then we followed that with a similar roundtable with four or five students, which also turned out well. The point I make is he was seldom pleased with himself on television. Those are the only instances I remember during campaigns where he thought he had done well.

G: You were an expert in this sort of communication. What were his strengths and weaknesses here? Why didn't he go over well on television?

M: There are some people who just have a natural ability to project on the screen. Actors have it, and that's why they are great actors. There are people who are very capable that just don't create the right image. No matter what they say, it isn't convincing. He was in that category. Jack Kennedy was an accomplished performer on television. Whether it was his appearance or his manner, he came across, and you felt that this man had great ability.

G: Does television require the politician to have a very good soft sell rather than a persuasive, driving appeal?

M: No, I don't think that's true. Look at John Connally, who I believe is as effective a performer as you will find; he's got that hard-driving appeal. It's just something that the Lord has given in your genes, in your ability to convince

people. And yet, face to face LBJ was the greatest advocate I have ever known, but on television you would never know it. And he was uneasy; he couldn't handle the script, he just didn't feel confident. And he was afraid to just throw the script away and just talk.

G: There was one more point I wanted to raise. I have in my notes something on the Cuban missile crisis that we should talk to you about. Do you have some recollections here?

M: Oh, very vivid ones.

G: Well, that was one area that I think was not pursued in the [previous] interview.

M: And it should have been. Let me tell you about that. John Burns was the representative from the Territory of Hawaii who came to Washington and sold Congress on the need for statehood. LBJ was one of his strong advocates, and he has given LBJ credit for getting the statehood bill passed. John Burns worked with us in the '60 campaign. He was a loyal, staunch friend.

In 1962 I was coming home from Tokyo, and I landed in Honolulu to spend a day resting up. I called John Burns, who had retired to private life. When Hawaii became a state, Burns was not made the congressional representative. There was a Republican governor, as I remember. I called Jack Burns, and we had lunch together. During that time, I urged him to run for governor, telling him that the people of Hawaii knew of his dedication and his abilities and I thought he could win. He was not very optimistic about his chances

and said no, he didn't have any money, he was a poor man, a former policeman, and he just couldn't run the campaign. So I seriously but in a whimsical way said, "Well, if you run, I will raise some money for you in Washington, and I will get the Vice President, Lyndon Johnson, to come out and campaign for you." He said, "All right. If we ever do it, I will let you know."

Several months later, Jack Burns announced his candidacy for governor. He got in touch with me and suggested I send the checks, which I did. But he also asked me when LBJ would come out. I called LBJ and said to him [that] I felt that he owed Jack Burns this responsibility and that I would hope he could do it. He said, "Well, I would like to do it. Remind me and I'll try to work it into my schedule." I told that to Burns and his campaign people.

It was now October; the election is November. LBJ called me from Seattle where he was at the World's Fair. Senator Magnuson had got him to go out there. He said, "I have looked at my schedule, and I can get to Hawaii and campaign for a full day on Saturday--" I have forgotten the date, but around October 20--"but I will do it on only one condition: if you go out and do the advance work." Well, I wasn't doing advance work in those days. But since I had gotten myself involved with Governor Burns I said, "Well, I'll let you know." So I called Burns and I told him, "Now, he can come out this Saturday if you want him." He said, "Oh, by all means! Of course we want him." I said,

"He wants me to come out." He said, "Well please do." I called [LBJ] back and I said, "Okay. We'll expect you, then, on Saturday and I'll line up a full day's schedule. But I do hope that you will spend Sunday on the beach just resting," because I understood that he had a free day and didn't have to be back on the West Coast until the following week.

So I left. I went out to Honolulu let's say on a Thursday. I set the schedule up. I met him at the airport on Saturday morning. We had a parade through most of the downtown area; we had various appearances scheduled. We would go to Maui in the afternoon, as I remember it, and then come back, and we would have an eleven o'clock thirty-minute statewide television program. Now, I had to be back in Washington that Monday morning for the first meeting of COMSAT [Communications Satellite Corporation]. I was on the Board of Directors and I just had to be there for the first meeting. The only way that I could make the connection would be to leave Honolulu at midnight, fly to Los Angeles, change planes, fly from Los Angeles to Washington, putting me in Washington late Sunday afternoon. I told Vice President Johnson that that's what I was going to do. It was a tough flight, but I had to do it. And he said, "Fine." I said, "I envy you. You'll be sitting on the beach all day tomorrow."

About two thirty in the afternoon he had developed a terrible hoarseness. When he arrived he was hoarse, and the

change in climate, the temperature, and the air-conditioned cars just exasperated it. So he called me in. He was in his bed, and we had a nurse there for him trying to work on his voice box, and a doctor. He said, "I want you to get me three seats on that flight you are taking at midnight to Washington." I said, "I don't understand you. You don't feel well, you don't have to be, why do you want to do it?" He got very mad and he said, "Well, if you want me to do it myself, all right. I'll just make my own reservations." I said, "No, no, no. I'll get you the three reservations," --two Secret Service and one for him-- "but I don't understand it." In the meantime Walter Jenkins called. I took the call and Walter said, "I've got to talk to him." I said, "Walter, he can barely talk. We're trying to save his voice. He's got to be on television tonight. We're trying to get a six o'clock plane to Maui and get back in time for that. Do you really have to talk to him?" He said, "Yes, I've got to talk to him." So I put it through.

Well, we went through the schedule, but we were interrupted throughout the evening by calls from Washington to him. I never was involved in any of the conversations. I got the reservations; the Secret Service picked up the tickets; and we went right from the television studios--it was at the Hilton Hawaiian Village--to the airport. They held the plane for us, and we flew all night to Los Angeles. Now, I was tired; I could have collapsed. But he wanted to talk, and so we sat up on that plane and talked all night long.

G: What did he talk about?

M: Everything! Everything! Stream of consciousness, politics, personal life, radio, television--everything!

G: Could you at this point get some idea of how he felt about the vice-presidency?

M: Yes, he had told me intermittently that he would not be on the ticket again in'64.

G: Through his own choice?

M: That this wasn't his kind of job and that the time had come for him to look elsewhere. He would be back in Texas running the radio-television, and he would accumulate more properties, and he was going to make this a principal business. I would say, "Oh, yes, yes, sure. You're not going to give up politics after all these years. And you're Vice President. Don't be foolish; Kennedy's not going to make any change." "Well, that isn't the point. I don't want to be Vice President." Anyway, we talked all night long.

We landed in Los Angeles around, let's say, seven in the morning. Now Lloyd Hand was living there; he was working on the West Coast, and he met us. He took us to his home, where we had breakfast. After breakfast we came back to the airport and we got on a plane for Friendship Airport; I remember that quite well. On the plane he talked some more. He didn't get five minutes of rest and neither did I.

We landed at Friendship. Howard Burris--I assume you've talked to Howard--met us at the airport, and he had a helicopter. LBJ said, "If you want, we'll drop you off at the

White House--I've got to see the President--and then a car can take you home." I said, "Sure." So I got in the helicopter. We landed at the White House, and I got a car and I went home and I slept for eighteen hours. Monday afternoon I learned that he had stayed at the White House the whole weekend, that that was the Cuban missile crisis. But he hadn't said one word to me or to the Secret Service as to why he was coming back.

G: He hadn't talked about Cuba or anything?

M: Not one word. It was Top Secret, and by God he recognized Top Secret.

G: Could you get an idea, though, from his mannerisms that something was in the works?

M: Nothing of that magnitude. He just said he had to get back, that there were some things he had to take care of. But I didn't have the slightest clue that there was a national crisis.

G: Fascinating. Now, I think we were going to talk about when you were USIA director and Vietnam.

M: The story that I told Merle Miller that I wanted to report to you was this. You may recall that in the midst of the Vietnam controversy, Senator George Aiken of Vermont made a speech in which he said we should declare that we have won in Vietnam and bring our troops home. It received international publicity. Some people thought it was facetious; others took it seriously. As director of the USIA, I was responsible for world opinion and reporting it to the

President. I reported that there was indeed a crescendo of support for the United States' withdrawal from Vietnam.

Several months later the Vietnamese held a national election. President [Nguyen Van] Thieu was elected. They elected a parliament; they elected provincial councils; they elected village councils. It was a demonstration of democracy in action in an Asian country. The United States had sent observers to see that the elections were honest. The press was there, and the Congress was represented. They all came back and said that it was an honest election; they didn't have any more corruption or incidents than we have in the United States.

Shortly after that, I was with the President in the morning in his bedroom. He would have these periods when he would sit there and he would read and hand you stuff, and there would be isolated conversations. He really wanted somebody around, and if you had any business you would try to work it in. So at an appropriate interval I said, "I want to talk to you, Mr. President, about the Vietnam situation. I know you don't approve of George Aiken's proposal, but I think we can adapt it. We can say, 'Now that the elections have been held in Vietnam, that they have elected a national and a regional and a local government and in a democratic fashion, we have achieved our objectives. We can now withdraw our troop support and continue our military support: arms and money.' " After I had made that statement I waited, and he just glared at me. He had an

ability just to look you down, stare you down so that you got impatient and you became nervous. Finally I said, "Well, what do you think?" He said, "Get out." Now, we had known each other since 1948, and I had never had a run-in with him, I had never had a cross word. We had differences of opinion, but our relationship I think was as admirable as any relationship I have ever enjoyed. So I picked up my papers and I left.

For several weeks I knew that I was in the doghouse. I was not invited to National Security Council meetings, which I had always attended. I wasn't told about Cabinet meetings, which I had regularly attended. I wasn't invited over to the White HOuse family quarters for little informal get-togethers. Finally one afternoon Lady Bird called and said that they were having a little surprise party for Lyndon and would my wife and I be available to go. So I did, and he was as warm and as effusive as if nothing had ever happened. The incident was never discussed.

After he left the White House, I spent a weekend at the ranch. The two of us [were] together in the living room; there was nobody else around. And again he was sitting there reading and handing me papers and musing. I said, "I want to ask you something." I recalled this incident where he had gotten angry with me, and I said, "I don't understand why you got so mad." He looked at me and he said, "Because in my gut I knew that you and George Aiken were right, and I couldn't do anything about it." We

changed the subject and went on to something else. But that indicates the fact that he was not an out-and-out hawk that just wanted to bomb and destroy and fight, that he knew the turmoil that existed and that he wanted to get out of it, but he was helpless. Now maybe he should have taken that suggestion, but apparently he knew more about his problems than I did.

G: That's fascinating. Well, is there anything else here that you would like to add?

M: No, I think that's about it.

G: If you think of anything else, then we can put it in a following one.

M: Good.

(End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview II.)

27 JAN 1977

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(1) The transcripts shall be available for use by researchers as soon as they have been deposited in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

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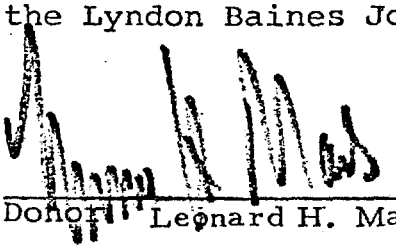

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