

## INTERVIEW I

DATE: December 19, 1968  
INTERVIEWEE: STEVE MARTINI  
INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ  
PLACE: White House Barber Shop, Washington, D.C.

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F: Mr. Martini, tell us a little bit about your background and how you happen to be in this position.

M: Well, let's see, it was about 1942 when I first came to Washington. I applied for a job at the Pentagon Barber Shop and they put me in as manager of the shop. After going through all of the security checks and so forth, I was employed there as manager of the barber shop. And as manager of the barber shop I was obliged to go up to a private barber shop in the general offices, the main offices of General [George] Marshall and General [H. H. "Hap"] Arnold. They had a small private barber shop there, and I would be privileged to go up there and cut General Marshall's hair and General Arnold's hair and Secretary of War [Henry L.] Stimson, and Mr. Bundy, McGeorge Bundy's father, Mr. Ball, many of the big people who didn't have the time to come down to the regular barber shop to get a haircut. And with this security check, of course I was privileged to work there.

Then I met a young captain there--he was working at the time in transportation--Captain Schultz, Robert Schultz, who didn't have the privilege of using the private barber shop but had to come

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downstairs. And most of our work at the barber shop there was all by appointments.

F: Was the private barber shop a one-chair shop?

M: A one-chair shop.

F: You were it.

M: Either the gentleman who had the concession or myself went up. And all of my other work at the shop was all by appointments with men that were always busy and could get a haircut only when time afforded them. So naturally I worked down there by appointments. But to get back this young captain always wanted me to take care of him, to cut his hair and trim his mustache because he was a very finicky, particular sort of fellow. When I had the opportunity I always called him to come down, I had an opening, and he'd come down and get his hair cut and his mustache trimmed, which he was more fussy about than anything else.

So as it turned out this young captain went in with the Secretary of War's office and then was assigned to General Eisenhower. He left the Pentagon and went over to the European Theater, and when he came back to Washington he looked me up again and I was still taking care of him. Then I left the Pentagon and went into my own business, and this captain came over to see me in Washington where I had a barber shop at the Chastleton Hotel.

F: At what hotel?

M: Chastleton, 16th and R Streets, Northwest. We had a barber shop and beauty salon there.

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I continued to cut his hair, and then General Eisenhower left the Pentagon and went to New York to the university, as president of the university. He left the Pentagon, went over to New York, and this young captain called me and asked me if I knew of anyone in New York that would go over and cut the General's hair. I recommended someone up in New York, and I think Captain Schultz, Colonel Schultz then, called him and General Eisenhower used him.

Then when General Eisenhower ran for president and was elected, Colonel Schultz called me one day and said, "Steve, I'd like you to come down and give General Eisenhower a haircut," or he said, "I'd like you to come down and give the President a haircut." So I was a little bit beside myself, you know. I said, "What time?" And he said, "Seven o'clock in the morning." So I said, "Seven in the morning!" And he said, "Yes, come down at seven in the morning. He's an early riser." I said, "Do I have to have clearance or something?" And he said, "No, you just come to the gate and they'll let you in. We've got your name with Jim Rowley, who now is the director of the Secret Service, and they'll be checking you out."

So I got here at seven o'clock in the morning and waited outside and was very nervous, you know of course. Colonel Schultz came in and he said, "What are you so nervous about?" I said, "Well, it's the president, the president of the United States?" I went in and General Eisenhower greeted me very cordially and very warmly, and I gave him a haircut. From then on it was once a week every week to give him a haircut. He became very friendly with me,

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and then I took care of all of his staff. The reason for that, taking care of his staff, as we have done with each president since I've been here, is because the members of the staff work pretty hard and they have hard hours. They get in early in the morning and leave late at night, when there's no barber shops open. And it's easier for someone to come in and give them a haircut than to waste all their time going out. Many times papers will criticize this, but of course they don't understand how late into the night some of these staff people work. Whether it was for President Eisenhower, President Kennedy or President Johnson, they work late, and it's easier for them to get in and get a haircut by having somebody come in. If they went out to get a haircut it would take them an hour, an hour and a half, two hours, and that's a lot of wasted energy and wasted time that they could do something good for the President. Because he has too much to do anyway to have a man missing from his staff out getting a haircut.

I used to cut General Eisenhower's, President Eisenhower's hair in his office.

F: Up there in the Oval Office?

M: Yes, up there in the Oval Office. This barber shop that we're sitting in now was over in the White House proper in the East Wing and it was put in by President Truman when they renovated the White House. It was supposed to be used for the President's purpose. But Colonel Schultz asked President Eisenhower if the staff members could go over there, so he said, "Sure, why not?" He said, "It's not being

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used." So he took the staff members over there. Mrs. Eisenhower one day went in to get her teeth fixed or something in the dental office which was below the barber shop and found a staff member sitting in the chair in the dental office. She asked him what he was doing there, and he said that he was waiting for me to give him a haircut. She said, "In the dentist's office?" Well, he didn't know where the barber shop was and instead of going to the barber shop he went to the dentist office. So Mrs. Eisenhower got upset about it and said she didn't want her home used for utilitarian purposes, so therefore we continued cutting hair in the West Wing. But I would go to their offices, and most of the time I used General [Howard M.] Snyder's, Dr. Snyder's office to give all these people a haircut in a little bathroom that they had set aside.

Then when President Kennedy was elected I stood by and waited whether he wanted me to stay or what they wanted to do and the first day in office I got a call to come down. Pierre Salinger called me to come in.

F: You hadn't known Salinger previously?

M: No, I had never know Salinger, but the word was passed on I presume that they had a White House barber. So I went and cut Pierre's hair, and President Kennedy walked in and I met him there and I asked him if I could be of service to him. He said, "No, but I'm delighted that you're here, and I will be calling on you if I may." I said, "Certainly."

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But in the meantime President Kennedy had a barber who he was very faithful to who was down at the Senate Office Building. On occasion he'd call him, and on occasion he'd call me. Then most of the time he would have his hair cut away. He was in Hyannis Port or in Florida, and he'd have someone cut his hair down there and he'd get back here and wouldn't need a haircut. But when he needed a haircut it was either this gentleman down there or myself who cut his hair in the White House.

After he passed away, after he was killed, then of course I still remained here and a new staff came in. I had been taking care of [Theodore] Sorensen and all the Kennedy staff, and they were very nice and they introduced me in turn to some of President Johnson's staff like Jack Valenti, Bill Moyers. And one by one they wanted to get their hair cut. In the meantime they had moved the barber shop from the East Wing over into the West Wing here where we are now. So that I could have a barber chair to use on these people.

F: This was during the Johnson Administration or Kennedy?

M: This is in the Johnson Administration, the first days of the Johnson Administration the barber shop was moved over here because they needed the room over there for some members of the White House staff. So they moved the barber shop over here and it became the President's barber shop. But it's the same equipment, everything is the same-- all the mirrors, the chair, and the back-bar, everything exactly the same as President Truman purchased it. Many people have asked who put the barber shop in. They thought it was put in by Kennedy or

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or President Johnson, but it wasn't. It was put in by President Truman to begin with.

Well, on one particular day Jack Valenti came down here, and said, "Steve, the President wants a haircut." So I said, "Fine, I'll be delighted." This was just right after he took office. I had met President Johnson as vice president and I'd been following a lot of his career as a senator. I knew a lot about him, more about him than I had known about President Eisenhower--well, of course, I knew a lot about President Eisenhower during the war--but about President Kennedy and so forth. During Eisenhower's administration I had cut Vice President Nixon's hair several times, and he's very cordial and very nice. Then when I met President Johnson here for the first time he came in to get a haircut, somehow or other I wasn't nervous, usually when you met a new man even if it's only a new customer that comes in, you try your darndest, a barber tries his darndest, to try to please him in every way. But somehow or other he just sat in the chair and shook hands with me and was very warm and made you feel as if you'd been cutting his hair for a long, long time. I was perfectly at ease. So I cut his hair and made a few suggestions and he thanked me very graciously and left.

Each week he'd come down, and we got more friendly all the time, and today I consider the President more of a friend, as a warm friend, than the president of the United States. When I look at him, I look at him with awe and think that I'm privileged to cut his hair.

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But he has done many, many things that have made me feel this way, he has done many things and said many things to me that have made me feel as if he's more like a real, true friend than the great president that he is. For instance, one day I was up in our beauty salon up on Connecticut Avenue. It was on a Saturday. And someone called me to the phone and said, "Somebody's calling you from the White House." So I got to the phone, and someone said, "Steve," and I said, "Yes." He said--this is whoever it was, I don't know whether it was Marvin Watson or whether it was Jake Jacobsen, someone called me--"Steve, how would you and Ann like to spend the weekend in Texas at the Ranch?" I said, "You've got to be kidding me. What would I be doing at the Ranch?" "The President wants you and Ann--he likes you and would like you to spend the weekend down there. Would you like to come?" I said, "I'll be delighted." I was so excited I forgot everything. I didn't even tell my wife! So I started walking in and out of the shop thinking of what I was going to do. They said they were going to pick us up at seven-thirty or eight o'clock, and we'd fly to Texas and spend the weekend there. So finally I thought about my wife and I ran inside and I said, "Ann, the President invited us to go to Texas to spend the weekend on the Ranch." She said, "Do you know any more jokes?" I said, "No, really I'm serious. You'd better hurry up and let's get home." So we rushed home and got some clothes together and pretty soon somebody picked us up, and we went out there and got on the presidential plane that was going back to Texas. It was going back there anyway.



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I said to my wife, "Do you believe this or don't you?" I couldn't believe it! We were sitting in the President's plane. This had never happened to us before. "I'll tell you, this man is really something. When he likes somebody, he really likes you." Ann said, "No, he's just warm this way. He feels he just wants to have people know that he likes them and wants them to enjoy life with him." So we sat on that plane and I'll tell you I just couldn't stop being amazed at the things in the plane and what the plane looked like.

We got off in Texas. I don't even know where we were, but we got off there and got into a helicopter and went over to the President's Ranch--it was about ten-thirty or eleven o'clock at night--and met Jake Jacobsen there. I said, "You know, I've got to see the President and thank him for this." He said, "Well, the President is about to retire." So I said, "Well, we'll see him tomorrow," and he said, "All right." They put us up in one of the cottages there that the President has. I just couldn't get over it. I just couldn't believe that here I was just a barber in Washington, you know, and the President should even think twice and invite us. So we were in this cottage and Jake came over again and he said, "The President said come on over and see him." So I went over and went into the bedroom with him, Ann and I, and we talked for about an hour, just like he was talking to a brother. It wasn't as if he was the big president of the United States, it was just as if he was talking like you and I are talking right now. About the family, how things were. He said, "Now I want you to enjoy yourself

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here on the Ranch. Tomorrow you go for a tour and enjoy everything."  
I said, "Fine, Mr. President," and we said goodnight.

The next morning we got up and somebody came over to the cottage and said, "The President wants you to go to church with him if you want to go to church." I said, "Ann, I don't know why we're being honored so much. This is great. Nobody's ever going to believe us!" We got in the car and we went to church with the President and came back and he then invited us to have breakfast with him in his own dining room, and sit at the table with him and his family like we were one of them. I just couldn't imagine that something like this could happen to people like us!

But as we went along, and I got to know the President better and found out how warm he really was, the things he used to say to me and the things that he used to tell people around when he was getting a haircut. [He'd say] different things about poor people and the old people, and how he wanted to do so much for Medicare, and he wanted to do so much for the old folk's Social Security, and how he wanted to improve working conditions and living conditions and how he wanted to try to do away completely with this segregation business so we could all have a better view of America like it should be, how he worked hard as hell trying to get this war over. Sometimes I'd come down here to give him a haircut, and if I had to wait ten, fifteen or twenty minutes, he'd come down and apologize for keeping me waiting, because other things were more important to him than getting a haircut.

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I have traveled with him and gone places with him that I would have never seen before. He took us along to Central America with him.

F: This last June?

M: June or July, whenever it was. He took us along on that trip and then he took us down to Puerto Rico with him, just as friends, just to go along, just to be with him. And we were with him, we dined with him, we ate breakfast with him, went to church with him, and I consider this an honor, personal honor for me and my family, and my mother was so proud.

But one of the greatest things I can remember about the President, one day sitting in the barber shop here my wife wasn't here, so he said, "Steve, where's Ann?" I said, "Ann went to visit her mother. She had a slight heart attack." So the President said, "That's too bad. I hope she gets better." Well, the next visit to the barber shop Ann was with me, and the President said, "Ann, how's your mother?" She said, "She's getting along much better, Mr. President, thank you." So he picked up the phone and called one of the secretaries and said, "Write Ann's mother a nice little letter and tell her that the President and Mrs. Johnson are praying for her speedy recovery." Well, you know a president, or a man, or a businessman, or anybody, they just don't think that way, they don't know how it makes you feel when you do a thing like that. So he dictated this little message and my mother-in-law got this letter from the President, from the White House, and you can bet she was pretty damn proud of that. I guarantee it, every Italian in Newark saw that!

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Yes, sir, she got better real quick! But it's just the idea of the personal feelings that this man has for people, the warmth in his heart. In my forty years in this business, I have met men in every walk of life. I have cut hair for generals, lawyers, doctors, presidents, vice presidents, judges, for staff members, and all of them have been pretty nice, and some of them have been pretty lousy. But I would say that I have never met in my life a man that had more interest in the poor people's problems and the problems of the nation like this man has.

F: Didn't you go to the wedding?

M: I went to the wedding.

F: This was Lynda's wedding?

M: Luci's wedding.

F: Tell me about that.

M: Well, I came down to give the President a haircut before the wedding.

It was on a Saturday morning. And the President said, "Steve, are you ready for the wedding?" Are you going to come to the wedding, are you going to see the wedding, or something like that. I said, "Yes, Mr. President, I'm going to see it on television like everybody else. I just can't wait." He said, "Why aren't you coming?" I said, "Well, Mr. President, I didn't get an invitation." I said, "I didn't get it, that's all." So he turned around to Paul Glynn, who is one of his assistants up there and said, "Where is Steve's invitation?" He said, "I told you specifically that I wanted Steve and Ann to come to the wedding." And he said, "Yes, sir, I'll see

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where the invitation is or what happened to it." He dashed out and within five minutes he was back up there with the invitation. Somehow or other it had not been mailed out, either someone was supposed to have given it to me or mailed it out, they didn't have the correct address or something happened. But he had the invitation, it was all engraved and everything, it was all ready for me, and I had about forty-five minutes to get home and get to the wedding.

F: How far did you have to go?

M: I had to go all the way out to Silver Spring almost. The White House is about four miles--

F: That's a forty-five minute round-trip.

M: On a Saturday morning. The President had Paul Glynn call Ann and get her home to change her clothes. In the meantime I had called for a cab to meet me at my house and I called my home and had the girl get my black suit out and my shirt and everything. When I got home-- I drove like crazy to get there--and changed my clothes, and the cab was waiting for us. We had all these tickets inside the envelope for passing the police and where to park and so forth, but I never had time to look at them. I just kept waving one out the window, and the police kept letting us go. We got to the wedding about two minutes before the President. Just as we sat down the wedding march started. Then we came to the reception, and I tell you it was one of the most glorious moments that I can ever remember, being in the same room with the President of the United States, dancing, being in the same place with him and all of the cabinet members and his

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friends. And, believe me, he doesn't treat one better than another. I mean whether you're the cabinet member or the barber or the guy next door, it's just the same.

F: You're one of the guests.

M: You're one of the guests. He treats you just the same as anybody else. And as I say, we became quite friendly. Every time he'd take a trip somewhere and come back, he'd always remember us. He'd always bring my wife a gift, bring me a gift, little mementoes from all over the world. Rome, everywhere that he's been, he's always remembered to bring us back a little gift. I don't know, there isn't much that I can say--what can I do for this man? What can I do? I can do nothing but take care of him. Because he gets his hair cut when he goes on television, I try to come down so that he looks as well as a president should look in the medium of television. We do nothing especially but just give him a haircut, trim him up and so forth, because his clothes are impeccable. He looks magnificent, he just dresses so magnificently that it's a pleasure to even look at him or try to help him in any way possible.

F: Does he talk when he's in the chair?

M: Yes.

F: Just whatever's on his mind?

M: Whatever's on his mind. He'll talk to me, he won't talk about state affairs to me, but he has conducted a little business in here with his staff members.

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- F: Does someone usually come with him to be at hand?
- M: No. Sometimes they do, sometimes they don't. Sometimes he's alone.
- F: Do you plug in a telephone?
- M: No. We have a phone here which is plugged in, and if he gets a call I'll ask him if he wants to speak to the person or would they rather wait while he's relaxing, and if he has any members of his staff down here he talks business with them. There have been times when there have been two, three, maybe four or five down here talking with him while he's getting his hair cut and maybe a manicure. But their conversation--only they know what they're talking about.
- F: When you're in a period of a crisis, like the Dominican Crisis or the Washington Riots last April, does he go ahead and come in in a period like that, or do you not see him for some time?
- M: You don't see him! He doesn't think about getting his hair cut, and the only time he comes down is if I keep calling him. I keep calling Jim Jones or whoever his secretary is, I keep telling them, "Look, the President has to get a haircut, he needs a haircut." This is my job. I've got to keep the President looking well. I don't want the President to get a picture [taken] of him if he doesn't look right. So I keep after him pretty much so that he does get a haircut. And these crises when he goes a week or ten days without a haircut, then I'm on their back.
- F: Have to scold him a little.
- M: I know that he wants to come down but just doesn't have the time. And then he comes down and he apologizes for not coming down sooner.

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But all the members of his staff have been wonderful. Just to name them one by one would take a long time, but I could say that most of the members of his staff have been wonderful people, I've learned a lot from them by listening to them, and I dare say that if President Johnson had members of his staff here that it there could be a second cabinet, in my estimation these men could fill those shoes very easily. Because these men are men of experience, men of know-how, and of course they had the best political leader in the country. They had a man in President Johnson who had been with politics and Congress for thirty-seven years. I call him a political encyclopedia. I would just listen to him; he could rattle off names and things and people so that I would just listen, you know, but he has an amazing mind.

F: Does he tend to relax when he's in the chair?

M: For a time there it was a little tense. I mean he didn't know me as well as he does today, and he always seemed to have a little bit of tension. But the last couple of years when he gets in the chair, I try to make him feel comfortable, try to get him to relax. But he's a hard man to get to relax. I've met lots of people like that but this man here, he's just too full of energy. Even when you're cutting his hair his mind is going all the time, he picks up the telephone, he's thinking of this and thinking of that and thinking of the other, and he's just too energetic. I think one of the worst days I ever had in this whole administration was March 31.

F: You cut his hair that day.

M: That evening. Ann and I came down and we were called in, and I thought it was an unusual day for the President to be getting a



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haircut, Sunday. But they said he had to make an announcement on television and he wanted to look his best like everybody else, so Ann and I came down, never questioned the reason or anything else. But as I walked in his quarters, his room, at the White House in the East Wing, I noticed a lot of people around. There seemed to be a crowd there. I saw Kenny [Gaddis?] another one of his assistants and I said, "Ken, what's going on here? What are you so worried about? You look like you just lost your last buck." He said, "Well, you'll find out." So I didn't say anything more. I saw the Secretary of Defense there, and I saw all these other people there, but my business was with the President so I just went into his bedroom. The President took a shower and when he came out, he had his robe on, and I said, "How are you feeling, Mr. President?" He looked up at me and in the mirror and he said, "Steve, this is one of the biggest days of my life." So I said, "Well, whatever it is, Mr. President"-- I sensed something, I didn't know what it was--"I'm sure that you're the one that knows best. I'm sure that everything is going to be all right." For a minute there I felt, well, this is the day that the Vietnam War is going to be over--you know, this is what I thought. But it wasn't. Then Mrs. Johnson came in and she was talking to the President, and of course I was listening. I couldn't put two and two together, I just didn't know. First of all, I don't listen, I don't want to eavesdrop, but I'm there, and a few of the things that were said made me think that maybe it wasn't the war, maybe it was something else.

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So when I got through, the President put his arm around me and said, "Steve, this is the night I'm going to make a big decision." I said, "I hope to hell it's a good one, Mr. President." He walked out of his bedroom and went to the elevator, and I said, "Ken, what's up?" He said, "You'll find out." I said, "Well, when is he going on?" And he said, "In about fifteen minutes." So I got in my car, Ann and I, and we rushed home. On the way home I kept saying to Ann, "It's either going to be the war is going to be over, or something, I hope he's not going to leave the presidency, I hope there's nothing wrong with him, seriously ill or something like that." We had no idea.

When we got home we turned on the television and it was just starting, so I took a drink, Ann and I, Ann had one and I had one, and we kept listening and listening, and pretty soon he dropped the bomb. I turned around to Ann and I said, "Did you hear that or am I crazy?" She said, "I heard it." So I said, "Wait a minute, I've got to hear this again. So we stayed by the television to hear a rebroadcast of the whole thing and heard it again. Then I had another drink.

F: A strong one!

M: A strong one. Then the first thing you know I got a crying jag on. Then I started to cry and Ann started to cry. We cried ourselves to sleep.

F: You had a lot of company.

M: I just couldn't imagine that something like this could happen to such a man. But it did and I'm sorry to say that I regret very much

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seeing him leave, because there will never be another leader like him.

F: When he was talking in front of you, he never seemed particularly to try to tune you out of the conversation, did he? He went right ahead and talked.

M: No, he never did. One day we were sitting here and there were several of his staff members in the shop here, and the President told Marvin Watson to go upstairs and get something or other, I didn't know what it was. So when I got through with the President-- Larry Levinson was here, Joe Califano was here, Marvin Watson, I think Bill Moyers, and someone else was sitting around the barber shop talking to the President--the President presented me with this watch. And he presented Ann with another one. It says on there: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you, LBJ." Well, I was shocked! I never expected to get anything like this from the President. So he said, "Steve and Ann, I want you to know that this is a gift of my friendship for you two people. For your integrity, for your loyalty, for your honesty." At the time I didn't know what to say. All I could say was, "Thank you, Mr. President, thank you, Mr. President."

Then I realized exactly what he meant. Because many things, I suppose, that he said in the barber shop were not for my ears and nobody else's ears, but before they would come out of my mouth or my wife's mouth, you'd have to kill us! I wouldn't know how to repeat anything he said anyway, because I didn't know what he

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was talking about. But I believe that the President just wanted to show us or wanted us to know that he realized the things that were said in here weren't going to go any further than just this place. I have made it a practice never to answer anybody's questions, and if I answer anybody's questions I just answer, "I don't know." Because I really don't. I don't know anything about policy, I don't know anything that the President does or doesn't do, or what his intentions are or anything else. It's not my business to know.

F: Now, you've cut hair for three presidents. Any essential difference in the way you approach them?"

M: No. I think I approached them all about the same way, as the president of the United States, and in my position here I just think that the President of the United States is the greatest man in the world, whether he's a Democrat or Republican or whoever he is, we're going to all follow whatever the president's methods of conducting his affairs are.

I like the way the President conducted his very much, President Johnson, I like all of the programs that he had. He made me more interested in politics than I've ever been in my life. He made me know all about it, he made me read all about these things, because he would talk to me sometimes about it. So I wanted to be at least politically minded or at least know what I was talking about when he talked about a Social Security bill or other bill or something else. I wanted to be able to say, "Yes, sir, I read about it." Now I read everything that goes on, I know exactly what's going on. I know that

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his Congress--there have never been more bills passed for the people of the country than there have been [in his Congress]. [I don't] think any president could ever pass any more. I think maybe they could try to improve on them, if the Congress will let them. I don't think I'll ever meet another president who fought more for the people than President Johnson.

F: Did Presidents Kennedy and Eisenhower talk politics to you?

M: No, no. They would talk--

F: So you didn't have that need for being aware for yourself?

M: President Eisenhower always spoke about world affairs and things in general about people, how they're getting along, but he never had a big gathering like President Johnson, which made me very proud of myself and my wife, for the President having such trust in us, to talk like this. But at the time of President Eisenhower's administration and also part of President Kennedy's administration, there weren't all these world problems that President Johnson had to face. Minutes counted with President Johnson. Every minute counted. He couldn't be wasting his time down here, he thought, getting a haircut for fifteen or twenty minutes and not doing business, too. It was necessary for him to continue; otherwise he would be fifteen or twenty or twenty-five [minutes] or an hour or two hours late on something else he had to do. So my thoughts were that it was necessary for him to continually do this business.

F: The papers had a good bit to say about, oh, around a year ago, his change of hair style. Were you involved in that?

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M: I had been suggesting to the President that--this is my business and, of course, I've been in this business for forty years and I make my recommendations not only to the President but to other men. So I had made my recommendations to the President, and asked him if I couldn't let his hair grow a little longer because it was greying and I thought that it would look better. At first he was very reluctant about it. He said, "I don't think so. I think it looks good this way." And I said, "Well, let's try it, Mr. President." And he would never say yes, go ahead, but I did it anyway. I went ahead and each time that I cut his hair I'd take less off, and less, and less. Pretty soon one day he said to me, "Hey, Steve, you're letting my hair grow pretty damn long here, isn't it?" And I said, "Well, it is, but it looks better, it looks much better." Then I advised him on his-- he was using some kind of a hair application, hair preparation, that would darken his grey hair and make it sort of lay back flat, because he combed it that way. But I'd seen pictures of the President when he was young and his hair was very wavy and his brother's hair is very wavy, and so I thought that this man must have wavy hair, too. So I suggested to him that he stop using this oil and let us shampoo his hair with a bland shampoo for white hair that would take out the yellowness and then not put any of this oily stuff on his hair, and just comb it loosely.

So he thought he'd try it. So he tried it and his hair started to get a little fluffier, and as it grew a little longer the waves started to come into it. Of course the newspapers came out and said

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that he had a marcel and he had this and that and the other, but that's not true. That's absolutely a falsehood because first of all he's too much of a man to be messing around with these preparations, and then again he doesn't have the time, and if you fool around with these preparations you need time. You don't do it one day and not the next. The President's hair looks the same all the time now since he's left this greasy, oily preparation off his hair and he just uses very little water and combs it almost dry and maybe something just to keep it in place, something that I suggested. He just keeps it in place, and his hair looks beautiful.

Of course, we received lots of letters and lots of comments from the papers about how well it does look, and of course one or two comments that we're doing something to his hair. But we aren't and that's the absolute truth. We are doing nothing to his hair that would change its color or put a wave in it, or anything else. His hair is naturally the way it is. He's taking more personal care of it since it's long because he must. Short hair doesn't have to have the attention that long hair does, but he takes more care of it, he combs it more often. He uses men's toiletries today that he didn't use before, but 99 per cent of the men in America are using it. Everybody uses it. I use it myself. And I think his hair looks very, very good, it looks excellent. He has to meet the people on television and we have to give the people on television the right impression of the President, because the television just does not do justice to anybody that doesn't have a good hair comb or a shave.

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F: No, it shows up every blemish.

M: Shows every blemish. But on a whole, I think the President is a man that knows how to guide himself on his satorail perfectness, he knows how to take care of himself with his hair and the preparations that he uses.

It will be a long, long time before this country ever sees another president like this. Because there isn't a hell of a lot more that a man can do. I mean how much more is left in this world that a man can do to better it?

F: From your vantage point, have you been able to make any conjectures as to the influence of a president on his staff? Can you see any difference between the attitudes in staffs under the three presidents? Or are the staffs pretty much the same?

M: Staff members, you mean?

F: Yes.

M: No. I would say generally that the members of the staff, as far as I'm concerned and in my particular business, have always been very, very nice and very kind. They've been very good to me. They haven't high-hatted me or anything like that, if that's what you mean. They've all been good men.

F: I didn't mean that so much but I thought maybe you could pick up a feeling of whether they were more tense under one than another or--

M: The other feeling that I could pick was that the Eisenhower Administration men were more friendlier it seemed when they came in than the Kennedy Administration. Some of the men in the Kennedy



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Administration seemed to be more distant. They weren't as friendly to begin with as some of the men on the Eisenhower Administration. The men on the Johnson Administration were more like the President, they were more friendly. They came in friendly and they're leaving friendly. They have their friendliness I guess through the association with the President.

Here's a man--I've known people to say that he's hard to work with. But, hell, I could work for that man anytime. I think he's an easy man. Everybody around here, all his staff, are proud to work for him, and happy, and don't care how long they work or how late they work. He tells them to go home but they want to stay, they just feel they have a job to do and they want to do it because they love him so much. I've never heard one of them, not one of them, since the first day President Johnson came into this White House, have I ever heard one of his staff members or his secretaries or anybody else ever complain about working overtime or working hard. Never, never.

So I think he has a wonderful, wonderful staff; some of the people that have gone through the White House here like Marvin Watson, one of the greatest men and one of the finest men I've ever met in my life. Jake Jacobsen is another one. Where can you meet people like this! You don't meet them every day, and I think the President was very fortunate to get people like that. Any president that comes into the White House in the future [who] can

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get people of this caliber to work for him, I think this is going to be a hell of a good country.

F: Under ordinary circumstances, when things are going fairly normally, how often does he come down?

M: Well, he may come down once a week or maybe twice a week, according to what's going on. If he has a state affair, or state dinner, something like that.

F: He comes before any sort of public event?

M: Yes, like any other man that has an affair to go to, this is normal, we have men to come up to our shop once a week, twice a week, have to be taken care of. Men that are in public life, lawyers and doctors, newspaper people, radio commentators, television artists, they come once, twice a week. And it's nothing unusual for a man to go to a barber shop twice a week. They get used to it, and of course they think nothing of it. Now some other people, they think they can't afford it, they go once a week, twice a month, or something like that. But the President, once, twice a week is not unusual. It's a usual thing for a man in this type of position. Nothing unusual about it.

But I have lots of good memories about the President and Mrs. Johnson, at the Ranch, at places we've been with them.

F: Where else have you been?

M: Well, we went to Houston with him, the astronauts' school, you know. Then we went down to Georgia where they had this great big plane [?], this new [inaudible] came out [inaudible], and several other places

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in Texas. I just can't remember them all now, but wherever it was, it was so exciting. He took us up to New York twice. Once was to Cardinal Spellman's funeral.

F: Tell me about that.

M: I came down to give him a haircut. He was going to the Cardinal's funeral. So he said to me, "Steve, are you Catholic?" I said, "Yes, sir, Mr. President," and he said, "Would you like to go to the funeral?" I said, "Well, I'd enjoy it." He said, "All right, get ready. We'll be going in about another hour and a half."

F: You're always rushing, aren't you?

M: So I learned to keep an extra coat in my car, so that if anything came up I could change right away.

We went up there with him, and it was a wonderful trip and we enjoyed it.

F: Do you fly up on Air Force One?

M: Air Force One with him, and then we landed at LaGuardia or Kennedy Airport, I don't remember which, then took a helicopter to Central Park. Then at Central Park we got in limousines, and the President had Ann and I ride in the car with him, which I thought [was wonderful]. I'd be glad to ride in the back in a police car, but he had us ride in a car with him, and it was wonderful. We sat in the front row with him, or second row, and we had pictures taken and everything, and of course all my family saw them and they were mighty proud of the fact, and so are we.

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He had us go up with him at the installation of the new Cardinal--what's his name? We went up there to the installation and, boy, everybody rose--I've never seen an applause in the Catholic Church as they gave the President a standing ovation. I've never seen this in the Catholic Church. I think it's the first time in history that the President or anyone's ever got an ovation like that in St. Patrick's Cathedral. They just applauded and applauded and applauded until I guess the Bishop or somebody had to stop them. It was just wonderful.

F: Was this an invited audience?

M: This was just the audience that was there, invited, everybody was there. Governor Rockefeller was there, Mrs. Kennedy was there, everybody who was anybody was there. They were all invited, and they all stood up and gave the President a tremendous ovation.

There are too many things to even remember about the goodness of the President, the thoughtfulness of the President, the way he thinks about you, if it's your birthday or your son's birthday, or Christmas, whatever it is, somehow or other he just manages to know these things. I don't know, I guess he's got a good staff but he always remembers us with something, always. One of the most generous men--

F: Has he met your boy?

M: Yes. That was a thrill that I'll never forget. I had my son down here one day, Steve, and he was sitting outside waiting for me. He wanted to meet the President in the worst way, so I said, "Mr.

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President, my son is sitting outside. Would you say hello to him?" He said, "Bring him in. What have you got him sitting outside for?" So I brought Steve in and he shook hands with the President, and the President looked at him and said, "My, you're a big fellow." And he got into a conversation with him, and my son was amazed that here's the President of the United States talking to him just like he was talking to one of his buddies. He does a lot of exercise, and the President asked him about certain exercises, and right there and then he invited him to come over swimming with him on a Saturday. He said, "You come over and swim with me. I'll try some of those exercises, too." And I don't think my son will ever forget that, you know.

F: Did he come?

M: Yes, I think he did. Just the idea of him inviting the boy, and my son still talks about it. It's been quite some time now, but he keeps talking about it. So I guess now that the President's leaving, we're going to miss him very much.

F: What are you going to do? Do you know yet?

M: I really don't know. I've been trying to feel out people to try to buy some of our places of business. I'd like to make a change. I'd like to get out of Washington. I think I've had a long time in Washington.

F: Where's your place on Connecticut?

M: Albemarle Street, the station WMAL, right across from the Hot Shoppe. And I have a place over at Seven Corners. I have five or six places

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that my wife and I have worked to build up. Trying to sell them today with the money market like it is, you can't get anything for them, and now I'm trying to lease them. It's very, very difficult to unload them, and I have long leases on these places. If I pick up and leave, these people are going to hold me to these leases. As a matter of fact I have one place that I'm selling and the landlord wants me to sign the lease, too! They not only want the guy who's going to buy the shop but they want me on it, too. Until the time that my lease expires. Some leases have three years, four years, five years. So it's been quite a problem as to what to do when January 20 rolls around.

F: You don't think you'll stay here?

M: I don't know. I don't think so. I will give every thought to having the President pick his own barber. I'm sure he has somebody in mind, somebody that he's used.

F: You cut his hair some when he was vice president?

M: Yes, I cut his hair and have gone to a football game with him. He was kind enough to come down one time to present an automobile to a friend of mine who was a football player. I invited him and he accepted.

F: Who was that, may I ask?

M: Gene Brito [?] He passed away since.

The President-Elect came down here and I cut his hair on several occasions, and he was very friendly with me, always very friendly and warm with me. But as I say, he may have somebody and

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if he wants to have them in here, I think he's privileged to have them. I also think if they want me to stay until this fellow gets cleared or whatever it is, I'll do everything I can like President Johnson does, to do anything we can to--

F: Make the transition.

M: Make the transition.

F: Did you cut Vice President Humphrey's hair?

M: Yes. I think Vice President Humphrey is a very, very capable vice president and I think he would have made an excellent president. Unfortunately, I guess things weren't to be for him; you know he got started late. But the country has chosen and this is what-- like President Johnson says, he's not only going to be your president, but he's also going to be my president. So let's all get behind him together and do everything in the world we can to make his life a little more easier. So that's what we all have to do. We have to follow the advice of President Johnson. To me, he's the greatest.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I]

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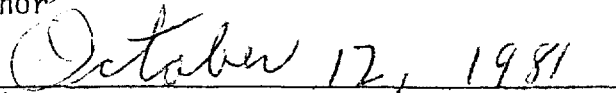
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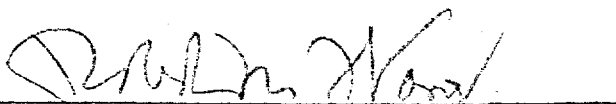
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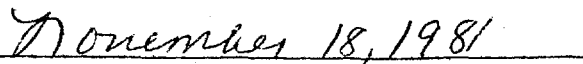
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