INTERVIEW I

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INTERVIEWEE: TIMOTHY MAY

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: Mr. May's office, Washington, D.C.

Tape 1 of 2

G: Mr. May, to begin with, I think that in your background you were director of the Federal Maritime Commission.

M: Yes, I was the managing director. Subsequently I was general counsel to the U.S. Post Office Department.

G: Why don't you give us a summary of your rise in government service as you think it might be relevant to the [record].

M: I went to work in the government around October of 1961, and I worked for Kenny O'Donnell in the White House. From there I went up to the Hill and was counsel for a Senate investigating committee that Stuart Symington was chairman of. This was an investigation of the strategic stockpile, and President Kennedy had asked the Senate to have an investigation, specifically he had asked Symington who was chairman of the Stockpile Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee. Symington asked Kennedy to send someone up to be counsel for that investigation, and that's how I ended up on the Hill. I was there for about a year and a half connected with that investigation. Then I went back briefly to the White House and from there was appointed managing director of the Federal Maritime Commission in September of 1963. I held that job until February of 1966. Shortly after Larry O'Brien was appointed postmaster

general by President Johnson there was a vacancy in the general counsel's job, and Larry contacted me and asked me if I would be interested in it. I said I would, so President Johnson then appointed me general counsel of the Post Office Department.

G: Did you have any acquaintanceship with Vice President Johnson while you were working for the Senate committee?

M: No, I didn't, but the first time I met President Johnson was in the 1960 campaign. I was the advance man for President Kennedy's first trip into Texas, into Houston. At least I advanced the Houston stop, and the Houston stop took on some rather critical importance because of President Kennedy's meeting with the Greater Houston Ministerial Alliance. At that stage of the campaign, or in that time, there was some suggestion and some belief, particularly in the South, that Kennedy's Catholicism would be an impediment to his free functioning as a president of all the people. So Kennedy very much wanted to confront directly that issue, and as it had happened the Houston Ministerial Alliance, knowing that Kennedy was coming there, extended an invitation to Kennedy to meet with the ministers. I think there were roughly five hundred ministers who were going to be in attendance.

Originally the idea was that Kennedy would meet in a closed TV studio with selected representatives of the association, some three or four perhaps; however, the ministers as the time grew near became concerned, feeling that this really wasn't the format that would be useful and that meeting in such a way might make them political pawns. They were not interested in that. To make a long story short, as we got toward the time when

Kennedy would appear the ministers issued an ultimatum that Kennedy had to meet with all of them if he wanted to meet with them, and moreover that it could not be used as a political event. Which was kind of amusing, because of course that is obviously what it was.

There was a great deal of concern in the Kennedy camp, and a lot of his close advisors felt that this held the potential for real disaster because there was the belief that he was being set up, that there was great animosity and that he really wouldn't be able to handle it. I had been dealing on the scene with the minister's representatives, and I felt at least the people that I was dealing with were acting in good faith and were not trying to trap Kennedy or really get him into a hostile atmosphere where they could embarrass him. But that was my judgment on the scene, and there was, I understand, great debate within the campaign staff whether or not he should go ahead with this meeting.

Vice President Johnson at the time was most concerned to make an effective showing with Kennedy while they were going through Texas, among other reasons because there had been a great deal of suggestion that Johnson really was lukewarm about Kennedy as a candidate and that he really wasn't interested about being too helpful. Johnson wanted to do everything he could to scotch any such rumors and make it very clear that he was solidly behind Kennedy and was going to support him all the way. Johnson was concerned to make sure that he was there at every opportunity; moreover, he very definitely wanted to appear with Kennedy in the meeting with the ministers. At the last minute the ministers determined that that would be too political and that he couldn't be on the dais with Kennedy.

So a compromise was struck. It really wasn't a compromise, we just decided that this was the way we were going to do it. We were going to have Sam Rayburn and Johnson sitting in the front row of the audience, and this event was going to be telecast on statewide television. We would have the cameras pan across the audience focusing on Johnson and Rayburn in the front row, feeling that that would at least get that much of a connection between Johnson and Kennedy. At the last minute the ministers ruled that out and determined that nobody from Kennedy's staff or no one from the campaign could be in that room. When I notified Johnson's people to that effect they just said, "Well, we're not going to tell him that. If you want him to know that, you're going to have to tell him because we are not going to tell him that he can't be in that room."

As it developed, apparently Johnson was putting up his own money to pay for the telecast, some ten thousand dollars of his money, I don't know whether it was his personal money or out of his own campaign funds, but it was his money that was being used to pay for the statewide hook-up. They were very unhappy. Cliff Carter was very unhappy when we said he couldn't be on the dais. He hadn't really accepted the fact that all we could do was have him in the front row, but when I told them at the last minute that he couldn't even be in the room they just refused to tell him that. When we picked up the party at the airport to bring them in, once we got them in the hotel, I had to call Johnson's room and tell him that the plans had been changed and that no one was supposed to be in the room. He just refused to accept it. I don't remember exactly what

he said. He didn't know who I was from Adam, and there were some four-letter words and he at that point was not accepting it.

So later, before the telecast, there was a rally at the Houston Coliseum. We had put in a giant closed-circuit television screen, thinking that if we didn't do that then we would have an empty house at the Coliseum, because everybody would be staying home to watch the subsequent meeting with the ministers on television. In order to make sure we had a good crowd we told everybody that they would be able to see this on a closed circuit. So we had Kennedy and Johnson at the Coliseum, and during Kennedy's talk Johnson sent Lloyd Hand over to get me. Lloyd came over and said, "Senator Johnson wants to see you." I went over, and he was sitting on the dais and he wanted an explanation as to just what this whole thing was, why he couldn't be in that room. I explained as best I could that the ministers just took the flat position that they weren't going to turn this into a political event, and that they had made a determination that nobody except Kennedy himself could be in that room with the ministers. I said as a matter of fact that none of his staff could be there.

That wasn't exactly accurate. They weren't really going to make any point about anonymous staff members being in the room, but certainly the condition was that there could not be any obvious political types with Kennedy in the room. I told him, "As a matter of fact, even Ken O'Donnell can't go into that room with them." And I said, "Moreover, we do want you to stay here after we leave so that you can keep the crowd here, because these people just won't sit here unless somebody is here to hold

them for the forty-five minutes or an hour that will elapse between these speeches and the time he is on television." Johnson took that, it seemed to me, with considerable grace, under the circumstances.

So we rather hastily departed and got the group out of there and back to the hotel, the Rice Hotel, which is where the meeting with the ministers was. At that point I had to tell Ken O'Donnell and these other people that they couldn't go into the room because I had told Senator Johnson that nobody from the staff could be there either and that made him feel a little better about it so that it didn't look like it was just him that they were trying to keep out of the room. Kenny O'Donnell took that gracefully, and so I took Kennedy down to the ballroom. Ted Sorensen was with him, and Sorensen had largely written the opening remarks that Kennedy was going to make on the plane coming in. I tried to stop Sorensen when he got to the door, and I said, "You can't go in." He said, "I am going in." I reached over and ripped his credentials off, and he went in with Kennedy. But there was nobody in that room besides Kennedy with any credentials on, and Sorensen, in fact, really was the only staff member in there. Everybody else stayed up in the room and watched it on television.

Later on, when we rode out to the airport Senator Johnson complained all the way out to Kennedy about how he had to put up the ten thousand dollars for the telecast and they wouldn't even let him in the room for his own television show, which Kennedy was very amused at. Actually there was a great deal of humor out of it in a way.

G: What was his response, do you know?

M: I just can't remember his exact words. As I recall, Kennedy then tried to change the subject to Mike Mansfield. He was kidding about what a great job Mike Mansfield was doing and how he seemed to be working much longer hours than his predecessor who, of course, was Johnson. I think that was it. Both of them were quite flushed with the success Kennedy had had and the really super reception that Kennedy had gotten, at least in Houston. All the way along the long ride in from the airport there were crowds standing all the way in with homemade signs. Johnson was very proud of this and very proud of the reception that at least that part of Texas had given to Kennedy because he felt kind of personally responsible, for this was his state. As it turned out it was a great campaign stop, and his success with the ministers was far greater than anybody had anticipated. Everybody was extremely pleased with it, particularly Senator Johnson, because he was greatly relieved that his state had given Kennedy such a great reception.

G: Can you remember any specific statements he made about the crowds or maybe his, Johnson's,role in seeing that the crowds were there or insuring that people were there with placards?

M: No, not at that time. As a matter of fact the crowds were turned out, but I don't know if you are familiar with the political infrastructure of Harris County. But it was really Byzantine because they had three different Democratic parties in Harris County, and none of them really ever spoke to each other or trusted each other or had much to do with each other. So there was a Harris County Democrats for Kennedy/Johnson, an organizational setup, and it had some parts of all three of these factions in the party. It was an amalgam of leadership under the

co-chairmanship of John Crooker, who was pretty much Lyndon Johnson's man in the party there, he was one co-chairman; and Woodrow Seals, who was a Ralph Yarborough man and a great liberal, he was the other co-chairman; and Dub Singleton, who was also very close to Johnson, was also a part of this amalgamated group. It was kind of an armed neutrality. We did have a combined headquarters that was staffed, but the other factions still maintained their own separate headquarters.

G: Did this create a difficulty for you in setting up the trip?

M: Actually, it didn't, no, I didn't have too much trouble in setting it up. The biggest trouble we had was with getting the ministers squared away. No, I just paid court to all the different factions. Amusingly enough, the day I arrived in town there was a story in the papers about the advance man who was advancing the Austin stop or someplace else. He was from the East, and he had practically been thrown out of town because he came in with an eastern manner of speech and just kind of moved in and started ordering these Texans around. That was an amusing story. They literally threw him out of town, and it was in the paper the day I got there.

G: What was it?

M: I don't remember who it was. If I thought about it I could recall it. I do remember that when the contingent arrived at the hotel to meet me and they asked me where I was from, I said, "I'm from Colorado," because I was born in Denver, Colorado, and my mother in fact was from Texas. I immediately advanced that information, that I was kind of half Texan, and began to try to remember how my mother used to speak. I got along fine

with them as a matter of fact. I really didn't have that much trouble.

G: Was there much evidence from these co-chairmen of a Johnson-Yarborough rift then?

M: Yes there was, and that was perfectly evident. In fact I was taken off to lunch one day with a lady by the name of Frankie Randolph, and she spent the entire lunch telling me what a really awful person Lyndon Johnson was. But it didn't seem to interfere with the mechanics of the campaign. There was in fact the suspicion and this belief on the part of the liberals and Yarborough people that Johnson really didn't want Kennedy to win and that he really wasn't going to try to help him, which clearly wasn't the case. And certainly, as it developed, without Johnson Kennedy never would have won the presidency. But there clearly was that suggestion, there was that conviction on the part of a lot of the liberals, that Johnson really wasn't going to help and didn't want Kennedy to win. This was one of the reasons that Johnson was so concerned about making sure that he was there with Kennedy every part of the way, so that he could give the lie to this suggestion that he wasn't fully behind him.

G: Do you think that President Kennedy felt that he could not win the election without LBJ on the ticket?

M: Well, I don't really know. I think he made a shrewd choice. I think he realized that he had weaknesses where Johnson had strengths. Certainly his selection of Johnson was not a popular choice with his staff. I mean they were very much opposed to it.

G: Were you at the convention then when--?

M: No, I was not at the convention. No, I was not.

G: How did the staff line up on Johnson?

M: Well, I'm afraid that by and large they didn't like him. The Irish Mafia didn't like him. They didn't treat him all that well while he was vice president from what I could see. My office when I was in the White House was in the Executive Office Building right down the hall from Johnson's, in fact I think it was right across from his. Walter Jenkins' office was catty-cornered from mine, so I would see something of these people. I was also rather close to Dick Maguire, and Dick did a lot of the briefing of Johnson. In fact he was supposed to meet with Johnson and Walter, and Cliff, about once a week to kind of keep them abreast of what was going on, particularly politically what was developing. I know that Dick Maguire became very, very close friends of Cliff Carter and Walter Jenkins. I don't know what Dick's feelings for sure were about Johnson, I think he began to like him, but the impression I had of the rest of the Irishmen there was just no love there at all. That's not the case with Larry O'Brien because I never heard Larry knock Johnson at all, and as a fact in later years, of course, he was very, very high on him.

G: You were talking about the debate among the Kennedy campaign aides with regard to the wisdom of going to Texas to meet with the ministers, can you recall who felt he should go and who felt he shouldn't go?

M: As I get it, I was the only one who thought he ought to go. The people kept kind of threatening me: "By God, it's going to be on your head if this thing doesn't pan out." The people in the traveling party thought

it was just a terrible gamble. When I was sent down there the deal was, and it was just a possibility at that point, of three or four ministers in a closed TV studio. This was an entirely new format as it evolved down there, and of course, they weren't on the scene and I was. Woodrow Seals, who was the co-chairman--Woodrow is now a federal judge--was the leader of the liberal wing and certainly was a Kennedy man. I think the Reverend [Herbert] Meza, I think that's his name, was the one who proposed the idea originally. Woodrow was active himself in religious activities in Houston and knew some of these ministers well and Woodrow had confidence in them, that [they] weren't trying to lay a trap for Kennedy, and [he] met with them and so did I. But it was very difficult to convince people in Washington. I have the impression that Kennedy made that decision himself, that he was going to do this, against the advice of the people in his traveling party.

G: Did you report your observations to him directly?

M: No, not directly, no.

G: Whom did you report to?

M: I talked to my regular liaison back in Washington on the advance desk, John Nolan and Dick Maguire, and in fact I talked to Sorensen and O'Donnell on the campaign plane. They were flying here and there, and I talked to them on the plane about it. They called me from the plane.

G: Another question that arises from your discussion of this, who were the Johnson aides that said, "No, you'll have to tell him yourself?"

M: Cliff Carter told me that I would have to tell him, and Lloyd Hand. Cliff and Lloyd are the two I recall.

G: In the limousine, I guess on the way to the airport after the meeting, was there any evidence of tension between Johnson and Kennedy?

M: No, quite the contrary. Of course, Kennedy was so enthusiastic because he had had such a good visit there. He was kind of kidding Johnson most of the way out, pulling his leg a little bit.

G: How did Johnson take it?

M: He took it well, but he was still rumbling about how they cut him out of the room. He really did feel badly about that. In fact, I don't know how we ever kept him out of the room because he really was annoyed about that. But he kept saying he put up the money and couldn't even go to the television show that he paid for.

G: Was he doing this in a completely serious way, or was he somewhat lighthearted about it?

M: No, he was lighthearted about it. No, he was not angry at that point, I think he was just blazing mad earlier. In fact, as I understand it, he finally did not stay at the Coliseum. I think he talked and talked and talked, and then he finally just decided, "the heck with it," and he went back. I don't know where he went, I guess back to the hotel and watched it there. He did not stay at the Coliseum as we had asked him to. He stayed for a while, and then he left. But it was a long time, I guess it must have been an hour and fifteen minutes, an hour and a half from the time that Kennedy spoke at the Coliseum and the time he appeared on television.

G: That's an excellent narrative of that meeting in Houston which is

generally regarded as very significant. Did you have any other involvement with President Johnson during that 1960 campaign?

M: No, I can't remember. No, I don't believe so. I did some other stops, but I think that was the only one where he was also involved. By and large they campaigned separately and not together.

G: Then you mentioned that when you moved into the White House after the election that your office was near him. Did you have much contact with him then?

M: No, I didn't. I mean I would see him to say hello to, you know, walking down the hall, but I had no official contacts with him at all. I would see Cliff Carter a lot and Walter Jenkins and other people, but I had no official dealings with Senator Johnson.

G: You were a counsel for the Executive Office of the President then, weren't you?

M: No. I was just working for O'Donnell and Maguire on some political things, but I was technically a consultant to the executive office.

G: Then does that cover the vice presidential years of LBJ?

M: I think that covers the vice presidential years. Just to take them in sequence, the next dealings I had with the President was when he gave me an award, and there is a picture on the wall of him giving me that award. It's just kind of interesting the way he would do things. The Budget Bureau, which was always trying to instill ideas of efficiency and efficient management, employing incentive programs, did in fact have annual awards. But this is 1964, and Johnson decided that this was really important. To give it adequate emphasis, and I guess it was the tenth

anniversary of the incentive awards program in the government, he really made a big deal out of it. The awards were presented in Constitution Hall, and he turned out everybody in government of any rank at all. He had the entire cabinet sitting up on the stage of Constitution Hall and all of the under secretaries, all the agency heads. He had them all sit up there, and he presided over this awards ceremony, the first and the last time that's ever happened.

When he wanted to personally give emphasis to something, or he thought a program was that important, that's the kind of thing he would do. It was really an extravaganza, and he handed out, I think there were three different categories and they had five awards in each category. He just made a really big deal out of it. It was the kind of personal touch that he gave to government. Of course, some of the awards were to extremely low ranking government employees who just never dreamed that the President of the United States was going to hand them a plaque or that that would ever be possible. But it was the kind of thing that he would do and could do.

G: Your award I think was for reducing the operating costs at the Maritime Commission, wasn't it?

M: Oh, I don't know what it was for. There is a kind of a long citation for it, but it was basically for formulating a management program and then executing it. The Budget Bureau was ecstatic over it. That was the first time I think anybody ever listened to them or paid any attention to the Budget Bureau about how you should do something. I worked some with Budget Bureau when I took over at the Maritime Commission.

They had some ideas, and I said, "All right, I'll try to do it." So I drew up a hundred-page program, by objectives, what objectives we wanted to do, actually had a written program, listed the priorities. At that time management by objective was the new concept the Budget Bureau was pushing. So I had actually done--I don't think anybody else ever did this before or since, and they were so happy that somebody had done this. I think that's why they recommended me for the award.

G: What was your next contact with President Johnson?

M: I did some advancing for him while he was president. I can't remember when it was.

G: November, 1966, I think you did some advancing for some congressional elections, didn't you?

M: Well, yes, I did. This wasn't that time though. I was supposed to do an advance for Johnson out in Cheyenne, Wyoming. The President at that time was just returning, in fact he hadn't returned yet, from a trip to the Far East where he met I guess with Ky and Thieu and the top Vietnamese people. In any event, by the 1966 elections, there was beginning to be great disaffection for our Vietnam policy, not just among the liberals, but a lot of politicians were beginning to be concerned about it. Dick Daley was concerned about it, for example; I mean, he wasn't going to publicly say it, but others were publicly saying it. Warren Hearnes, who was then governor of Missouri, was beginning to be vocally critical of the policy because this was beginning to hurt the politicians where it hurt, with the votes. I don't think they were ideologically disaffected

from the policies, but they were beginning to think it was a real political liability.

In any event, a number of congressmen felt that they were in serious jeopardy. Johnson had carried in so many of these congressmen on his coattails in 1964; large numbers of them would never have had a chance to be elected but for his landslide victory in 1964. So these people were now quite vulnerable because they were from districts that weren't really Democratic districts, and many of them were weak candidates in the first place, there were a lot of them in trouble. They wanted help, and they very much wanted the President's help. There was great agitation to get the President out on the stump, just like Ford now is out on a stump. Well, they wanted him out on a stump because the people were predicting some severe losses in the congressional ranks.

So a trip was planned, some thirteen states, a thirteen-state swing right before the election. One of the stops was to be Cheyenne, Wyoming, for Teno Roncalio. Roncalio was in serious trouble because he was regarded in Wyoming, and here as well, as a Kennedy man, and Kennedy was close to Roncalio. But his opponent was now suggesting that Johnson did not like Roncalio and that he had no clout with Johnson, and so he couldn't really do anything with the people in power in Washington because he was a Kennedy guy and he was out now. Roncalio was very concerned about getting Johnson into the state just to have the visible expression of his close relationship with the President. That was the reason that Cheyenne was picked as one of the spots for this last-minute swing that Johnson was going to make. As I say, it was right before the election.

It was to occur right after he got back from his trip to the Far East.

This was not publicly announced, but a number of advance men were assembled. Some were put on government planes and flown to their spots. I flew commercially out to Cheyenne with the Secret Service, and we were in there for four or five days. The day I got to Cheyenne there was a headline in the Cheyenne papers that Johnson was coming to Cheyenne. We began to set up for a short stop. This was just going to be a quick hit and out, and Johnson was only going to be there maybe for an hour. We decided that we would have the rally right at the airport, and we found an old hangar United Aircraft or somebody had abandoned that would literally accommodate easily a hundred thousand people inside, the hangar was so big. There are only fifty thousand people forty miles in any direction from Cheyenne. There just aren't any people there. We couldn't have this small crowd in this vast hangar, so we were going to drop curtains down from this enormous ceiling.

We went to really great pains and difficulty and expense trying to set up this stuff because there just isn't anything in Cheyenne. I don't know if you've ever been there, but Cheyenne is dependent upon Denver, Colorado, which is ninety miles away, for everything. I mean if you want to get a PA system you've got to go into Denver and get one. They don't have one in Cheyenne, Wyoming. I'll never forget going down to the union. We wanted to get a painter, and we finally found this little storefront office which was the state headquarters of the AFL-CIO. I went in, and I said, "Can you give us the name of some union painters?" The guy

looked at me and said, "We don't have any painters here, what kind of painters do you want?" I said, "Painters. Somebody who paints houses." "Oh," he said, "when anybody wants any painting done here we always bring it in from Denver." If you turn the television set on, what was on television was a Denver station being beamed into Cheyenne. You just couldn't get anything in Cheyenne.

Of course the party structure had very little money. What little money they had, we spent getting ready for this trip. But the logistics of it were quite severe because things had to be brought in from Denver. We not only used what little funds they had getting ready for the trip, but they went into hock to pay for some of the PA equipment and some of the bunting and decorations.

In any event, I got tipped off the day before Johnson was due to arrive, I got a call from Sherwin Markman, who was at the White House. Sherwin said, "I can't tell you anything, but turn on your television set in a half hour." We were out at the motel, and so the Secret Service agents and I turned on the television set. We were sitting there, and Johnson came on and was giving a press conference. Somebody asked him about the political trip that he was about to undertake--he had just gotten back from the Far East--and Johnson looked at this guy in the press corps and he said, "What trip are you talking about?" The correspondent said, "Well, you know the one everybody has been talking about, the trip you are supposed--the thirteen states you are supposed--." He said, "I don't know what you're talking about. That's the trouble with

you people in the press, you're always starting rumors and then you write about them." Something to that effect.

The Secret Service men and I were all looking at each other, and we said, "How are we going to get out of town here without being lynched?" I just threw my stuff in a bag and headed for the airport and called the townspeople. I knew I had better get out of there as fast as I could because these local pols, if they could have gotten their hands on me after spending all this money and all that, were really mad. But that again was another facet of the guy. He did love to confound the press. If they found out what he was doing and reported it in advance, if there is any way he could do it differently so that they wouldn't be right, he enjoyed doing that.

G: Do you think that was the reason he cancelled the trip?

M: No, I don't. No, I don't. I don't know. I'm just guessing, he probably cancelled it because first of all he was preoccupied with Vietnam and foreign affairs. He had just come back from a state visit to the Far East, and I think he, I'm just guessing, I suppose he believed that following that kind of a trip with a hard-hitting political tour would detract from the bipartisan support he wanted to generate and keep for his foreign policy. I mean, that's my guess as to why he cancelled.

G: Who sent you out there?

M: Marvin Watson, I believe.

G: Did he?

M: Yes.

G: Did you do anything in the 1964 campaign?

M: Yes, I was involved, but it was all for Humphrey. I never got involved in any of the campaigning for Johnson in 1964.

G: I believe you did some work in November of 1966. I think the files indicate that you rode on Air Force One around then, is that [right]?

M: I thought it was 1967. There was a trip we took that I advanced to Wilmington, Delaware, and you might be right, maybe it is 1966. I thought it was 1967.

G: I have Nashville in March, 1967, for a Jackson Day speech.

M: Yes, well, that never came off.

G: It didn't?

M: No, that one didn't. But the Wilmington trip, gee, isn't that funny I can't remember when that was? Anyway, the Wilmington trip was a tremendous event for Johnson. Again, it was just a noontime rally, and there's a kind of city square, a two-block square park, right in front of the DuPont Hotel. All of the main buildings front on this plaza, including the post office, and it takes quite a crowd to fill that plaza. When we went in we got aerial photographs of Nixon's visit there. The last big name who had been there had been Nixon. We had aerial photographs so we could determine what kind of a crowd was there by looking down at this aerial photograph. You could see how much of a crowd it was. It was important that we try to beat that record because we wanted the press to write it that way.

In any event, I must say that in advancing if things go well you get the credit, and if they don't you get the blame. Usually you don't really have that much to do with whether it is a good or a bad trip.

But this was a great trip. From the minute we began to get into the city at all we were almost an hour late getting to the rally in the square because the streets were so jammed with people we couldn't get the motorcade through, and Johnson loved that of course. He had these portable bullhorns. He had a very precise order that he wanted that motorcade to have. He always wanted a sound car right behind the Secret Service car in the motorcade because on an occasion like this he liked to stop and get out and go over and press the flesh and talk to the people along the way through the bullhorn, which is what he did. He had to stop again and again and again to get to this rally. I couldn't believe the enthusiasm of the crowds for Johnson. It was just incredible.

Frankly, I would like to say that we were responsible for whipping all this up, but we weren't. We publicized to the extent that we could the fact that he was coming. It was well publicized, and we publicized the parade route, which was always a little problem with some of the people around Johnson. Some of them were so fearful that protesters were going to show up they never wanted you to tell anybody anything. We had pointed out to them on a couple of occasions, "Look, if we can't tell people what time he is going to be there, where he is going, how are we going to get the people who are friends? How are we going to get them there?" They were very concerned about making sure that you would avoid protesters, and they didn't want to tip them off. In any event, we had managed to publicize the parade route. Of course, we were working closely with the local party leaders, and I am sure they did what they could.

But this was more spontaneous than organized, this vast turnout for Johnson, particularly the turnout all the way along the street. Of course, we picked noontime as a good time to come into the city, but this is all the way in, and the minute you got to any part of Wilmington where there were any people living, I mean the streets were absolutely jammed. The motorcade had to stop because of the crowds that were spilling over onto the streets. In any event, he gave a rousing speech, and he really felt great about it and was enthusiastic about it. You could see him sitting there counting the house.

G: Really?

M: Oh yes. He was, "How many people were there?" and, you know, looking around. He was a great student of the nuts and bolts of politics. He was very precise about how things had to be done: the microphone had to be at just such and such a height, the TV banks where they were being set up had to be at a certain angle to the side. He was very particular about a lot of the mechanics of advancing that other candidates kind of leave to chance and don't focus on. The only trouble was they would never let you write any of these things down. They never wrote them down, and you just kind of learned. They didn't want anything written down because if they were ever written down "Some newspaper guy will get hold of it and make a big story out of it." And suppose he does, what kind of a story can they make out of the fact you like a microphone exactly five feet nine inches or whatever. But they had this morbid fear that the press was always going to give him a bad story if they got this [information].

I rode back on Air Force One, and Johnson came back. He knew I had done the advancing and that I worked for the post office, and he congratulated me on a good job. But he said, "You know, I didn't see very many postal workers out there." And he said, "I noticed that the post office was right on the square." But he said, "Didn't you tell them all to be out there?" I said, "Well, no, I didn't." And he said, "Well, the next time make sure all those postal workers are out there." I couldn't believe that he was--and he was--serious, he wasn't kidding. He noticed that the post office was there, and of course postal workers wear uniforms and he didn't see a lot of uniforms out there.

G: Didn't leave anything to chance, did he?

M: No, not a thing.

G: Was it more difficult to advance a speech for him than for President Kennedy? Did he demand more in the way of having things set up properly?

M: He did, but advancing at that time was considerably more of an art than it was in 1960. It is more difficult now because there are just a lot more mechanical things. In other words, it has become more of a science than it used to be.

G: What about the trip there in Wilmington? Did he stay long after the speech, or did he just go?

M: No. After the speech was over we got into the motorcade and went back out to the airport. Another thing, he was outraged--he wasn't mad at me, it was the chief Secret Service agent, he just ripped him apart--because the motorcade didn't have the sound car in the order that he wanted it in. He just chewed that guy out, up one side and down the other.

G: Was it Rufus Youngblood perhaps?

M: No, it wasn't Rufus. It was the head of the Secret Service detail on that trip.

See, with the president the motorcade becomes the responsibility of the Secret Service. When you've got a candidate, I guess all the candidates now have Secret Service protection, too, but in the old days you were responsible for the motorcade. You set it up and decided what the order would be and who would be in it. But in advancing now for a president the Secret Service is in charge of that motorcade because they decide where the staff car will be, where the candidates' car will be, who will be in it, where the sound cars are. They decide that. And I had told them, you know, "You have got this motorcade set up wrong." I said, "You don't have all the cars." In fact, there was a car missing. "You don't have the requisite number of cars, and you're not in the right order." The Secret Service agent said, "Oh, that's our responsibility." And I said, "Okay." He really got [chewed out]. What it was is that Johnson had to use the speaker system in the presidential car, which was also equipped with speakers and a kind of a hand speaker, but they didn't have the projection and the carry that you could get from the sound car. So that's what he was mad about.

G: Why did they do it? Do you know?

M: No, I don't.

G: Was it a security measure?

M: I don't know. It seemed to me like a screw-up. I figured, "Well, it

is not my problem," and I just didn't get into it. That guy really got reamed out for it.

G: Did you have any connections with him in your capacity as counsel for the Post Office Department?

M: No, not directly, I didn't. The Post Office never rose to the level of his concern. I would see him, and I must say we often were invited to the White House for social occasions because Johnson was very, very democratic in his treatment of the people who worked for him. Under Kennedy there was almost a caste system. As close as he was politically to the Irish Mafia, I don't think those people ever felt that they were socially welcome at the White House. Kennedy and the Kennedys had their socially elite friends, and those were the people they socialized with at that level. I don't think the Irish people who worked for him ever really felt that they were acceptable coming through the front door. Johnson was a very expansive person. He really made you feel that you were socially equal, that you were all part of the team, and the invitations were frequent and there was just a better feeling about it. The Johnson White House was a very friendly White House to those people that they thought were loyal to them. They went out of their way to do things that were nice personally. There were nice personal touches. Marvin Watson was extremely solicitous of the personal feelings of the people who worked for him--a very, very different style.

G: Was there much change in the Post Office Department from Larry O'Brien to Marvin Watson?

M: Not really. Marvin was only in for about six months, and about all he could do was try to execute whatever good plans that were ongoing, whatever was in the mill. The one thing about the Post Office itself, in terms of the function of moving mail as distinguished from its other capacity as a supplier of patronage jobs and a federal presence in every city which had political significance, but in terms actually of the job it was supposed to do, which was to move the mail, the President did become involved when O'Brien made his proposal to convert the Post Office into a government corporation, which subsequently did occur.

(Interruption)

The President, of course, did get directly involved in working on this proposal that O'Brien had advanced and the President appointed the Kappel Commission. This was all done rather quickly, as a matter of fact, and an executive order had to be cut immediately. I did work very closely with the White House staff on getting the executive order drafted for that and on selecting the staff of the Kappel Commission and then working as liaison with them.

Tape 2 of 2

G: When we finished the first tape we were getting on the subject of the Post Office reorganization.

M: Right. As you know, within the week after O'Brien made his proposal the President had appointed a Great Americans Commission which was chaired by Fred Kappel, the ex-chairman of AT&T, and [which included] people like Rudy Peterson, the president of the Bank of America, [W. B.] Murphy, the president of Campbell Soup, you know, just people of that

caliber, Dave Bell, the ex-head of AID and vice president of the Ford Foundation. This commission went to work, and they were due to make a report. O'Brien left and Marvin Watson came in, and part of the proposal was that they would remove the postmaster general from the cabinet.

It became evident that Marvin did not like this idea, why I don't know. I believe there was a lot of infighting in the White House as to whether the President would endorse the recommendations of the Kappel Commission, which he did. The President did do it. Joe Califano was one of the principal supporters of the program. I don't know whether Joe really thought it was a great idea or if it was just because of his close friendship with O'Brien, but one way or the other, it got endorsed. But Marvin was not very keen. He thought some of the elements had some sound ideas in them, but the concept of removing it from politics, removing it from the cabinet, was not to Marvin's liking. That decision, obviously, was made by the President, because there wasn't anybody around who was going to override Marvin Watson except Lyndon Johnson. I mean that was the power structure, and Marvin did not want an endorsement of the Kappel Commission and the President endorsed it, which means that he made that decision himself.

G: What was your input into that, now?

M: Well, I was one of the group of three who did the study that led to O'Brien's proposal--Ira Kapenstein, Ronny Lee and myself. O'Brien asked us. Shortly after he was in the job, I guess he had been in it six months, he decided there wasn't anything any human being could do with the Post Office Department, that it was heading toward

disaster. Being the politician that O'Brien was, he understood that the thing really was not manageable. He understood fully its political uses and how it was a great political instrumentality because it was in every congressman's district, and there was a way of rewarding or punishing every congressman through the Post Office, either giving or withholding patronage, putting up new buildings or not putting them up, putting them up on the site that the congressman wanted them or putting them somewhere else. There was a great deal of political leverage that derived from the post offices. On the other hand, the whole way it was funded, the way it was managed with the most intimate involvement of congressmen--you tried to change the window hours of the local post office and you got a call from the congressman the next day--there was nothing more touchy than this. It was just unmanageable.

O'Brien saw that, and I guess he figured that he was going to be another one of the long series of unsuccessful postmasters general. So he decided that something radical was needed, and he asked the three of us to come up with a program for changing the whole structure of the Post Office, the whole way it was operated, without any limits on what we might propose. In other words, we were not to concern ourselves with what might be the politically feasible. For example, how should it operate? What should be done with it? That's what we did. We came up with a report that was given to O'Brien, and that report formed the basis of O'Brien's public proposal, which was then studied by the Kappel Commission. That commission ended up with a report that by and large simply repeated verbatim all the recommendations that we had made in our

staff report. But in any event, the President himself quite evidently got directly involved in the thing because he did eventually endorse it. He released the Kappel Commission recommendations and the report, and he endorsed their findings.

G: Did he ever talk to you about the report?

M: No, the President did not talk to me about it.

The President--just a couple of other reminiscences about him. I remember one day, I was really struck with it and I think I have a picture of it somewhere, I don't know where, but he called I guess about fifteen people over to the White House. They were all presidential appointee level; there were two or three assistant postmaster generals and two or three assistant secretaries of HEW, that level, about fifteen. I assume that he did this more than once to cover all of the people at this level. We met in the Cabinet Room, and it was known just that the President wanted to talk to us. So we all went over there, and we all sat around the Cabinet Room. We were all sitting in somebody's cabinet chair, and he talked nonstop for two hours. Nobody else said anything, and the whole two hours was devoted to Vietnam and what great people Dean Rusk and Bob McNamara were. That was two hours of a defense of Rusk and McNamara, and derivatively therefore of the Vietnam policies.

This was about, I would say, a month or two before McNamara suddenly left the Defense Department, and it was an extraordinary session because the President was just nonstop. He talked and talked about the personal qualities of these people, about what they were trying to do and what the government was trying to do in Vietnam. We all later received

a picture taken of us sitting at the table, and that was it. There was no real predicate for the meeting, we were just summoned over there. I guess that he and his advisors felt that there was a disintegration within his own house of support for Vietnam and for Rusk and for McNamara, and this was his way of trying to get the troops back in line behind their policy.

There was one subsequent similar meeting, but the President himself wasn't there. This one was presided over by Bill Bundy--Bill Bundy and Joe Califano and another fellow whose name I can't remember, but who was, I discovered, the guy who wrote Johnson's speeches about Vietnam. I forget his name. The three of them [presided], and it was a blackboard talk, you know, they had the blackboard and they were outlining the position of where the Viet Cong were. This was later on in the game and at a point where there was really widespread dissention everywhere over the Vietnam policy. By this time, there were some rather vocal people. I remember quite well--there were some under secretaries at this meeting, too--the guy who was under secretary of the treasury, and then Joe Fowler resigned and actually this guy was secretary of the treasury for a month, the last month of the Johnson Administration, he finally got up at the end of this and he said, "This is all a lot of crap. You want me to try to sell the Treasury program on the Hill, and every office I walk into there I get met with criticism of our Vietnam policy. What you've told me here is just a lot of crap, and I can't sell it on the Hill." Which is just about what everybody in the room was thinking, and he finally said it.

The lecturers didn't quite know how to respond to that, but it was interesting because there was this gradual and finally very pronounced defection within his own top level appointees on the Vietnam policy. I do know that Larry O'Brien was sending memoranda to the President, some of which he had shown me and had asked for my input on, about Vietnam. Well, it went beyond just the political repercussions of the policy, and O'Brien went beyond that, which was his expertise, and started actually getting into policy, foreign policy questions which were somewhat beyond him. But I mean he just was no longer able to limit his advice to that of what the political effects of it were because he was obviously finally at the point where he couldn't morally sanction our involvement any more, despite his personal loyalty to Johnson. So that [although] O'Brien never publicly departed from the administration position, he was sending that kind of advice in to the President.

G: Do you know if he had any effect?

M: Well, I don't know. I don't know whether it did. This was shortly before the President decided he was not going to run again, I know that. I gathered, piecing it back together, apparently these memoranda were going to the President at the time when the great battle was going on within the administration, when Paul Warnke and Clark Clifford and those people were waging a battle against the generals who were asking for a much higher troop commitment. That was their solution. There was this battle going on, and of course at my level we weren't aware that that battle was going on. But it was in that context that O'Brien was sending his memoranda forward. The final thing was that actually we were all

cranked up for getting the re-election campaign going for Johnson. O'Brien had been asked by Johnson, this was in February or March I guess, actually even earlier than that, to be his campaign manager for re-election.

G: Was O'Brien enthusiastic about that?

M: Yes. Which was a little--I mean this was at a time when Bobby was a candidate.

G: I understand that Bob Kennedy put quite a bit of pressure on O'Brien to go with him in that 1968 campaign before Johnson's withdrawal.

M: I don't believe that's true. I don't believe that's true, and I never got any indication of that from Larry. In any event, Larry was organizing his own group, and so he talked to me about it. I was going to handle New York. I wasn't just going to, I went to New York. I sat in on meetings with the fund raisers there, with [Arthur] Krim, met with these other people, picked Frank O'Connor to be the front man for our re-election campaign. We leased space in the Delmonico Hotel for the [re-election headquarters]. This was done, and we were having an opening with Humphrey. Humphrey was coming to New York on Monday to officially open the re-election campaign headquarters in New York, the Monday following the Sunday that Johnson announced that he was not going to run again.

It was another one of those deals, you know, everything is in place, we've got the staff, Frank O'Connor was going to serve, we got hold of [Mayor] Bob Wagner, who was going to be part of the effort. He was coming on board. We were collecting these different people, and they were all signed up to do this. Then again I'm sitting at home watching television,

and I was leaving for New York the next morning to go up to get this thing launched, and there on television again--I couldn't believe it--he said he wasn't going to run. Here I am with a space leased in New York and the Vice President coming up the next day, and that's how it happened.

G: It must have been a terribly deflating experience.

M: Well it was. You just didn't really know what was going to happen next.

G: After his decision not to run, was the political arena pretty much thrown open as far as, say, the Post Office was concerned, or were you sort of steered toward Vice President Humphrey?

M: I was free to do anything I wanted, if I wanted to leave the government. Of course we all had to eat, and Larry told me that he had made the decision that Bob Kennedy--I guess Bob was on the phone the same night to Larry, and then Larry agonized over it for a couple of days and decided that the duty was there, when the Kennedys called he had to answer. So he resigned, but he felt that he had served all the necessary loyalties and he had been totally loyal to Johnson all the way. It must have been extremely difficult for him. I think actually that Bob Kennedy was pretty understanding about it, much more so than some of the other Kennedy people were about it. I think a number of them held it against Larry that he stuck so long with Johnson.

In any event, I think that Larry felt that when the President said he was not going to run again, he was then free to work for Bob. He talked to me about it, and it was agreed that I might join the campaign later, you know, in six weeks or something. And of course Bob was killed before that happened. But nobody pushed me toward

Humphrey. I think I could have done work for Humphrey in a way without leaving the government, but I would have had to leave the government to work for Bob.

G: I suppose Lawrence O'Brien had a very unique role as being close to both camps.

M: Yes.

G: To your knowledge was he an arbiter between the two on occasion?

M: No. No, he wasn't. Oddly enough, he was extremely close to Hubert, very, very close to Humphrey.

G: I read that in his book.

M: Yes. Just over the years, and Larry's wife Elva became a very, very close friend of Mrs. Humphrey's, too. So there was this very, very close friendship. But, it is almost a sense that blood is thicker than water, and when the Kennedys called and Johnson had announced that he was not going to run, he felt that he was then free to run. But I don't think Larry felt he could perform that role. I think Larry maintained his very close relationship with Bobby all along but not with a lot of the other people. I don't think he felt he could perform that role of broker between the two, or ever tried, frankly.

G: Did you feel that the Post Office was too political during the Johnson years?

M: Yes. There's no question about it, but I mean during Johnson's years, Kennedy's years, anybody's years. Yes, the thing just couldn't be run. Anything that made sense from a management point of view, there were always a number of political reasons for not doing it.

G: Do you recall specifically any memorable decision that was handed down from LBJ with regard to political considerations, say in order to get a vote on a bill or in order to bring a congressman or a senator into line.

M: Not that emanated from LBJ himself. O'Brien did that, of course; O'Brien while he was postmaster general still retained his White House office, and he still ran the congressional liaison operation. For that reason also Larry was more successful in getting things for the Post Office than any normal PMG, because when he was dealing with a congressman that congressman knew that O'Brien was sitting there and he also was a guy who could get or deny funds for a thousand programs for his district. He was really somebody to be reckoned with, and he was a master at dealing with these people.

He had people who fronted for him. Larry never was the guy who said no. I mean that was Claude Desautels or me or somebody else who delivered the bad news. Larry never did that; we were the ones that took the heat. This was a very effective way to work it. Larry maintained his very friendly relations with everybody on the Hill. When he was trying to get somebody's vote he never made the call until all the rest of us struck out and couldn't get it, then he would make the call. He operated it just beautifully, and in a classic way that it had to be operated. I don't think anybody before or since has had that capacity and know-how for dealing with the Congress. This is what Lyndon so much admired about Larry. Johnson was one of the great masters of all time at getting votes out of congressmen, how you did it, and he recognized another master in Larry. That's why this great admiration for him.

G: Can you recall having taken considerable heat yourself in one of these deals or being the middle man?

M: Yes I can, but usually what would happen was that I was asked to try to justify doing something for a congressman and try to dream up some plausible substantive basis for doing it. I had to do lots of that. On another occasion, I remember when Wright Patman was absolutely furious because we closed down the office in Texarkana. There were sound reasons for doing it, and that was a decision that stuck. That was just something that should have been done for solid management reasons, and I had to take the heat on it. It was an operation decision, and O'Brien brought me into the thing, first of all to get a judgment as to whether or not it did make sense from an operational point of view and then to try to sell it. That decision stuck; we never reversed that decision. But we worked out some way of ameliorating the effects on the employees involved and made it a little easier to swallow than it was. These were the kinds of considerations you had again and again and again.

G: What do you think generally about the quality of the people around Johnson? As far as presidents go, did he have good people?

M: On his personal staff?

G: Yes.

M: He had a number of I thought very limited people whose loyalty he prized, but then he also had some outstanding people that he picked simply because they were outstanding. I mean he picked Joe Califano. Califano was not a Texan, if anything he kind of came out of the Eastern Establishment

wing. But he picked Califano because he saw in Califano a very gifted guy. I'm sure that rankled some of the Texans.

My own legitimacy was always suspect with the Texans as well. The crowning blow to them was when I was elected to the board of the Texas State Society. But I had a friend of mine, a kid who worked for me at the Maritime Commission, [who] was from Texas, so he got me into the Texas Breakfast Club and the Texas State Society. He said, "You ought to get into these things and join them." I thought what the heck, so I joined, and as a matter of fact I spoke to the Texas Breakfast Club and made a joke out of how I wasn't from Texas but that my mother was and all that. In fact Tex Easley, who handled the AP for the Texas papers, wrote a story about that speech I gave to the Texas Breakfast Club. But in any event it turned out a number of people actually thought I was from Texas, a number of the Texans. But most of them knew I wasn't from Texas, and they just couldn't stomach it when I was elected to the board of directors of the Texas State Society. That just about killed them, because I was a Kennedy man and they knew it.

I'll never forget when I went down to Houston once in the mid 1960s and I looked up Woodrow Seals, who is now a federal judge. There is a very interesting and amusing story because Woodrow Seals and Dub Singleton were both appointed. There were two vacancies for the bench. Ralph Yarborough had a hold on either judgeship. He would block either judge unless Woodrow were made a judge. Of course Woodrow was the Yarborough guy, so they resolved it by appointing both of them judge, Singleton and Woodrow were appointed judges practically the same day, and their rooms

in the federal courthouse abut each other. I went down and visited both of them. I thought it was really amusing that the two of them were there together. I mean they couldn't stand each other, and they were both judges sitting side by side down there in the courthouse.

But I was sitting there, and Dub Singleton was telling me that he just thought it was an outrage. He said, "I like you personally, but it is just an outrage that you Kennedy people are still in power back there." It just rankled him that we were still around and still in. He just thought it was a terrible mistake, and he thought Bobby was going to undo the President in the end and that we were all of course working for Bobby. As I say, he and I were good friends. He liked me, but he never believed that I was capable of being anything but a Kennedy loyalist.

G: Do you think Johnson should have cleaned out the departments more and put his own people in?

M: Well I know he thought he should have at the end, but what he did do as a matter of fact was to elevate a lot of career people to power, people who weren't really Kennedy loyalists, but they were career people. The career employee never had it so good. There have never been that many career employees elevated to power in any presidency in modern times. In fact, Johnson really did, so to speak, clean out the White House. The people he didn't clean out are the people who were his undoing in the end, and those were the people who managed that war and who got us deeper into that war--the Rusks and the McNamaras and the Bundys and the Rostows. These were all people picked by the Kennedys.

He certainly should have gotten rid of them if for no other reason [than] nobody should be permitted to hold any high level job in Washington for more than three years, because at the end of three years the guy has finished innovating, he has finished any imaginative approach, and at that point and in the nature of the things he is defending his policies from that point on. That's the time that guy ought to move to a different job or try something else. I think it was a terrible mistake to have Dean Rusk be secretary of state for eight years, ridiculous. And McNamara, the job finally crushed McNamara. He just lost his stomach for it, but he had to eventually . . . his movement out of the Defense Department, he could not support the policies that he himself had fostered.

G: Are there any other reminiscences that you have of Lyndon Johnson that you want to share?

M: I think that's about it.

G: You know, President Johnson has been considered by many of the people around him as a great raconteur, a great storyteller, not only stories from the Hill Country that he told but stories about him that he would tell. Have you any favorite Johnson stories?

M: Well, just the obvious ones, and the stories that he told I have always gotten secondhand. He never told me any stories. I just didn't have that kind of relationship with him so that he was telling me stories. I've heard a number of the stories myself. Some of my favorite stories were about--

I'll tell you a very, very amusing story that probably nobody has ever told you, and it involves a guy named Chuck Roche. You might talk

to him. Chuck Roche was in Bobby Kennedy's wedding. He played football on the Harvard football team with Bob. He's a newspaper guy from Massachusetts. Roche is one of the saltiest, most difficult people to get along with you've ever seen. He's just mean and tough and nasty, except once you get to know him everybody likes him. His new job when Kennedy came into office was deputy chairman of the Democratic National Committee, and John Bailey was chairman. Well, they put Roche over there to make sure John Bailey didn't really do anything. They gave Bailey a car and a chauffer, and that was about it. Of course, like all presidents, Kennedy wanted to run his own party, and so Roche was over there a deputy chairman. Kenny O'Donnell actually ran the party, and he ran it through Dick Maguire and Chuck Roche. That's how they controlled the party structure.

A lot of Roche's dealings involved dealing with members on the Hill. He got to know them more and more, and so when Johnson became president he brought Roche in. He had gotten to know Roche, and he brought Roche to the White House to work on the congressional liaison thing. I think it was really as much Johnson as Larry O'Brien who was instrumental in bringing Roche into the White House to work in congressional liaison. Roche liked Lyndon Johnson very much, but he hated the Texans around him and they felt the same way about Chuck. Chuck's drinking habits were a subject of some discussion among the Texans in the White House. Roche couldn't care less about that, in fact, he used to go out of his way to annoy people like Marvin Watson.

I remember Marvin telling me one day that the first time he met Chuck Roche he couldn't believe it. He said he walked into this gathering, and there were four or five congressmen and a couple of senators there, and Roche lurched in and the language he used on these men [was], "There's a bunch of simple shit congressmen loafing around again." He said he just proceeded to insult all these congressmen and senators, and he said, "And they loved Roche." He could never get over it, Roche's capability with a certain group in Congress. But Roche tried their patience for the whole tour that he was in there. But Johnson understood that nobody was closer to the entire northeastern congressional group, Democrats and Republicans. The President kept Roche on board, notwithstanding Roche's irreverence and the fact that he didn't do things the way everybody wanted him to do them.

In fact Marvin Watson had his [Roche's] car taken away from him at one point because people were reporting that the White House car was parked out in front of Paul Young's every night until all hours. This story got back to Marvin, so Marvin cancelled Roche's car privileges. Well, Roche was over there with Mike Kirwan, who was chairman of the Public Works Committee, and Gene Keough, I mean these were real powers in the Congress that Roche used to wine and dine every night, sit around and drink with these guys. He used to drive Mike Kirwan, who was in his cups, home every night, and so Roche just told Kirwan that he would have to take a taxi because the White House didn't want him riding in their cars anymore. Oh, goddam, there was hell to pay over that. So Roche's car privoleges were restored.

But the classic story--the last Christmas in the White House Roche was out, and I guess he came in terribly inebriated. All the White House staff was lined up, and the President was signing autographed pictures for them, for each member of the staff as they came by. He used to call Roche Chucker. His name was Charles Roche, but he called him Chucker, Chuck Roche. Roche lurched through the line and got to him, and the President looked up and said, "How do you spell your name, Chuck?" And Roche said, "C-H-U-C-K." Everybody just about choked. The President didn't say anything, but I guess he kind of appreciated this nasty attitude and sense of humor of Roche's. But you ought to talk to Roche because he really is kind of a classic character. As I say, he worked very directly with the President for three years in congressional liaison.

G: That's great. Are there any more?

M: I think the other stories are stories you are very familiar with. That's about it.

[End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview I]

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