INTERVIEW I

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INTERVIEWEE: EUGENE McCARTHY

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: Senator McCarthy's residence, Washington, D. C.

Tape 1 of 1

G: Senator, let's start with your earliest association with Lyndon Johnson when you first came to Congress. You were elected in 1948, as I understand it.

M: Yes.

G: Did you know him before that at all?

M: No, I didn't. He was gone to the Senate then, wasn't he? Yes. Was he majority leader then?

G: No, he went to the Senate in 1948, so he would have been a freshman.

M: In 1948. That was the same year that [Hubert H.] Humphrey went, that's right. But I didn't know him, no. I never really got to know him much until I got to the Senate.

G: I understand that you were one of the young congressmen that Sam Rayburn would have into his office at the Board of Education.

M: I was not in there very often, no. I used to eat at the Texas table some, and once in a while Sam was there. But I never considered myself one of the Board of Education people, although Sam and I got along very well. I was told that when I went to the Senate that he had advised Lyndon to give me good committee assignments because I was a reliable person or something like that.

G: Did you have a chance to observe their relationship when you were in the House?

M: Oh, I don't know. The Texans used to refer to Sam as "the man," and I think they referred to Lyndon as "the other man," as I remember, when he was majority leader. But I never watched much of it firsthand.

G: You are credited with founding what became the Democratic Study Group when you were in the House.

M: Yes, I think I probably took the initiative; Lee Metcalf and I and Frank Thompson I think were the three people principally responsible for it. When we proposed our manifesto, we talked about going to Rayburn, and I said I didn't think we should. It would be better just to do it and not ask him to approve it in advance because I thought he would accept it anyway. As I recall, Dick Bolling took it upon himself to go to the Speaker and tell him we were going to do it, and came back and said it was all right. But he wasn't our messenger, it was something that Dick took upon himself.

G: Did Rayburn tacitly support the group, do you think?

M: I don't know what happened there. At least he didn't raise any objection to our publishing the manifesto. About all we said was that we thought that all of these issues should be raised for consideration, which was a modest enough proposal.

G: Was it in reaction to the Southern Manifesto?

M: Well, we used that name. It was largely because we felt a kind of passivity towards Eisenhower, an acceptance of whatever Eisenhower [wanted], as though we were going to run it out. We thought there

ought to be a challenge, especially [then]. That was after Eisenhower had been reelected for the second term.

G: You worked in the Stevenson campaign in 1956, I understand.

M: Well, we all did in Minnesota. The party endorsed him. I didn't work in it very much, but. . . .

G: Did you ever have a chance to observe Lyndon Johnson's relationship with Governor [Adlai] Stevenson?

M: I never did. I wasn't really on the inside control group even in 1960 when I nominated him. I would think that whatever record Humphrey made on that would be much more informed than anything I could say. I wasn't in any control group, the planning group.

G: You were also one of the first members of Congress to take on Senator Joseph McCarthy. Did you ever get a feel for Lyndon Johnson's position here?

M: I don't know what it was. The initiative in the Senate, as you know, was from the Republicans at first. How Lyndon was playing, I don't even remember having heard anyone talk about it.

G: Did Rayburn or Johnson or anyone like that commend your [stand]?

M: I don't think I got any calls from them. There weren't very many people who were taking Joe on at that time. The only favorable comment I remember was a TV columnist here named Bernie Harrison [?] who wrote about it. I don't think it was even mentioned in the editorials and maybe not in the news. Because Joe was riding pretty high at that time, 1952.

G: I guess Senator [Edward J.] Thye, whom you defeated, was unpopular with the Democrats. I would imagine that they were glad to see him defeated.

M: Well, he had a mixed sort of record. On some things he was fairly liberal. He had joined with Margaret [Chase] Smith, I think he's one of the four or five who signed that declaration of conscience against Joe McCarthy. But he was sort of caught with Ezra Taft Benson, with the Eisenhower record. He was a rather passive person in any case.

G: Did Johnson give you any support in that election?

M: I don't remember. The only people who came in and campaigned for me were Wayne Morse and Paul Douglas from the Senate, and I asked them to come. I got some financing, not much, from either the [Democratic] National Committee or the Senate Finance Committee, whichever one was doing it at that time. It wasn't very much, but I guess they didn't have much money at that time. It didn't look like a race that I was likely to win.

G: During that race you were quoted as saying something to the effect that LBJ leans the way things are going to be.

M: Oh, somebody asked me--I didn't know him very well--whether he leaned with the wind and I said, no, I thought he leaned slightly ahead of it. I told him I thought it was a compliment. One of the Texans came over and told me that Lyndon didn't like that. I said well, I don't really care.

G: Really? Did LBJ ever talk to you about that later?

M: No, he didn't. I think the Texan said he'd like to talk to me about it at the time and I said, "Well, I don't think there's anything to talk about. It's not that serious," or something like that. I think it was Homer Thornberry. But nothing came of it; I never heard from him afterwards. Sometimes he could just kind of give it to you on the side, saying he remembered, but he never did.

G: Normally he would call a newly-elected Democratic senator and congratulate him after his win. Did he do that with you?

M: I don't remember.

G: Okay. Well, you went on Finance and I think that was after you opposed his position on the change in Rule 22, wasn't it?

M: Well, I opposed him on Rule 22, but I don't think he ever thought I would be for that, as long as Humphrey was against it. So he couldn't have made much of an issue. The only people, like northern Democrats, he raised that issue with were people from small states.

G: He'd never try to do a quid pro quo, say, on committee assignments?

M: No. Never. Of course, I thought I deserved Finance. I'd spent, you know, Ways and Means time. I think Rayburn probably, if he did anything he might have supported me on that.

G: Why did he put you on Public Works, do you know?

M: I don't think so. I guess there was nothing there. I mean, it was just a second committee. I didn't have any special interest in it.

G: Did he talk to you about putting you on Finance?

M: I don't remember, because Humphrey was sort of representing me, too, so I don't think I dealt [directly]. I don't remember any special

talk about that. Or Public Works, there was nothing on Public Works that I was interested in or that he was interested in, I don't think. Or that Bob Kerr, who was on there, was concerned.

G: With your election, I guess, came a big majority of Democratic senators for the first time in a long time.

M: It was a pretty significant election. I've forgotten how many came in, twelve or fourteen. But it changed--it wasn't just the numbers, it was really what set the stage to break the filibuster and pass the Civil Rights Act, although that didn't happen until 1964. But the potential was there, and it was just a question of when they made the fight and Kennedy hadn't decided to do it, as you know.

G: Do you recall the details of the [Lewis] Strauss nomination?

M: Well, I started that, you know. I was sort of a constitutionalist. He'd said some things on other matters about how the executive branch didn't have to keep Congress informed. I think it was when he was with the Atomic Energy thing [Commission], or they didn't really have to carry out our mandates or something like that, which was pretty ridiculous. So I raised the issue about whether he should be confirmed, and then it sort of was taken [from me]. I didn't mind it being taken away from me. Clint Anderson and the people moved in on it. They had some resentment against him from when he was in charge of the Atomic Energy Commission.

I just sort of made my constitutional [argument]. I testified, I think I was the first witness when he was up, but then Anderson

and these others moved in on political grounds. I guess the final vote was Margaret Smith who voted against this, because she said he didn't tell the truth or something. So it was a long way from the constitutional issues that I opened with, to what he did on Atomic Energy, and to Margaret Smith deciding that he didn't tell the truth. But I had nothing personal against Strauss, it was just his position to state what I considered a very gross misunderstanding of the constitutional distinctions that really doesn't make much difference. If you're a secretary of commerce, anyway you don't deal with great constitutional issues. But in any case that was the basis of my challenge to him.

G: That was a close vote, I understand.

M: One or two votes, I think, yes.

G: It's, I think, been reported that Republicans were surprised when Margaret Chase Smith voted against it.

M: I think she would have been the determining vote or very close to it.

G: Have you ever heard the report that it was a trade of her vote for keeping open, what was it, the Portsmouth Navy Yard?

M: I never heard that, no. I didn't think they wanted to get him that badly, unless there was someone--I didn't know that, no. I think she would have had other leverage with that on that Armed Services Committee. I just don't know. As I said, sort of the initiative went over to Clinton Anderson, who took it on as a kind of a crusade against Strauss, almost personal. I had no personal concern over Strauss at all, and it had nothing to do with it.

G: How would you describe Johnson as majority leader at this time?

M: Well, I don't really know about the particulars he was supposed to have achieved. I thought he was inclined to overcomplicate things oftentimes when he could have played it pretty just straight and let it happen, sort of the way [Mike] Mansfield did. Lyndon was inclined to--I think sometimes he would make a complicated issue [simple]. He'd sort of simplify, which was good. And sometimes he'd take a simple issue and overcomplicate it, sometimes for the benefit of the press. Also, of course, I think when things were sort of uncertain he was inclined to confuse things in the hope that out of confusion something might emerge.

G: Was he inclined to favor secrecy then in terms of--?

M: I think he was a little bit manipulative or at least he planned to do that and the press liked it. I remember when we lost a vote on the Medicare the first time it was up, Mansfield was leader, and someone said, "Lyndon wouldn't have lost it by one vote." I said, "No, he wouldn't. If Lyndon was going to lose, he would lose by five or ten." If he was going to win, he might win by one vote. If he was going to win by one vote, he'd make the closing argument. But if he was going to lose by one, he would sort of be wondering what really was up that day. Whereas poor old Mansfield, if he was going to win by one vote, wouldn't say anything. If he was going to lose, he would make a speech, to sort of go down with the ship.

G: What were Johnson's tactics as majority leader?

M: Well, I don't know what they were. We played it pretty straight. Of course, I was only there two years. Whatever he did I never really said he did it for me. I figured that you were in the Senate, you have certain claims on assignments. Especially being in the House, because you come in there, it's a little as though you've been at the prep school at the same college. When you go to the college, why the sophomores or juniors can't really tell you what it's all about. I think that's true with House members coming over, like Clair Engle for example. We'd been in the House ten years. And Bobby Byrd. So they have to accept you on a somewhat slightly different basis than if you'd come in from having won the oratorical contest or something.

G: But Johnson must have needed your vote on occasion. What arguments would he use when he [did]?

M: Well, I'm trying to recall. See, there wasn't much in 1958 to 1960. I don't remember much in the way of pressure on particular issues.

G: Did he defer to Harry Byrd?

M: Well, everybody sort of deferred to Harry. He was sort of a nice person. He was carrying on in the tradition of old Senator [Walter] George, who evidently was a powerful chairman, and this carried over. I remember I offered an amendment of some consequence. It had to do with a deduction of dividend income for tax purposes; I was opposed to what they were doing. It carried on the floor, and one of the staff people said this would never have happened under

Senator George, if there was a principle involved in it. At least Lyndon let it happen. I don't remember that he was involved in it particularly, but it was a liberal position on dividend income. That was while he was still leader. That was in my first [term].

G: 1959 I think it was, wasn't it?

M: Yes, 1959 or 1960.

G: My notes indicate that that was an amendment that was adopted by maybe one vote, 42 to 41.

M: Yes, it was very close, yes.

G: And that two votes switched, Byrd, although I think he was talking about Robert Byrd.

M: It must have been Bobby Byrd, because Harry wouldn't switch on that, yes.

G: And the other one was [J. Allen] Frear, I think, Senator Frear.

M: I don't remember.

G: Do you recall how he got them to switch, and if in fact he did play a role?

M: I don't know that he did or not. It was kind of a liberal position it was a party position, so he might have done it for party purposes, I don't know. But I just sort of offered it and I was a little surprised it passed.

G: I think there was also an attempt to remove telephone and transportation taxes that he blocked. Do you recall?

M: I think that was a little different. I think that--I'm not sure--we repealed those taxes at one point prospectively. I don't know what

year that was, you might have it. Then before it went into effect they came back and asked us if we would vote to suspend the suspension or something. I don't know what year that was, I'd sort of forgotten about that.

G: I think it was 1960 according to this.

M: What this was--I voted to take it off and I don't know whether they ever moved to--they were asking people whether they would vote to suspend the suspension. I don't remember the consequences [?]. I do remember telling them that I'd given the [pen away]. It was one of those things where Lyndon had signed it with like a hundred pens and everybody had a pen. I gave mine to the lobbyist for the local telephone company, the state guy, and I said, when they called me, "I gave the pen to the telephone company guy and he's got it enclosed in permanent plastic. If I can get the pen back I might change my vote." I've forgotten whether we ever repealed it or not, but I do remember voting for it to take it off.

G: That's a good story. Didn't you also work to delete the oil depletion allowance in the late fifties?

M: Well, I voted a couple of times to take the oil depletion allowance out. Usually it was when there was an organized effort with the committee's support as I remember. It got sort of mixed up because Paul Douglas and Bobby Kennedy raised this on me in the 1968 campaign. But Paul Douglas and John Williams on the Finance Committee would raise the depletion allowance issue on practically every bill if they thought--both of them were against it. I don't know whether

John was really against it, but he thought it embarrassed Democrats. So there were votes there where I'd vote against it because if there was no place for it on the bill and so on. But my position on it was a mixed one. I was not absolutely opposed to it but I voted a couple of times to tighten it up, things like they were applying it to all their operations and things like that. But I never was in favor of the total withdrawal of it. I think there are only two times, as I remember, that the position I took against oil depletion prevailed. But there were some in-between votes where I voted against it or voted for it, just sort of defensively. But I never thought it was a big issue, even in 1968 when Bobby was talking about it. I said the issue is really oil imports, it's not depletion allowance. But it was not a great cause with me.

In 1959 or 1960, when I was on Public Works--to divert to talk about myself now--we did pass a clean water bill which was an amendment to the administration's bill in the committee, and then it carried on the floor and Eisenhower vetoed it. It was later passed out again and Kennedy supported it. I wasn't on the committee then. That wasn't really in that. I guess it was against the Policy Committee, because they were going along with a rather restricted bill on water pollution. We passed it in the committee, over Kerr's objection, but he then took it up. Kerr was willing, he just didn't think it would pass. So he carried it on the floor in the Senate and it passed, both the House and Senate.

G: What was the relationship between Kerr and Johnson like?

M: I don't know. Evidently he was very close. At least I know they worked together in fund-raising and things like that. But Bobby Baker and people like that would know more about it than I. I do remember getting campaign contributions--and this would have been 1964, not 1959--when Bobby would say, "You might want to say thanks to Lyndon if you see him, and you might also say a word to Bob Kerr." That was when they moved finances up to the Capitol, which was a bad idea, away from the [Democratic] National Committee. It sort of put the hair brand on you as you went by. I remember going in to get mine and [William] Proxmire was just coming out. [Laughter] So I didn't feel so guilty. We reported it all, it wasn't illegal at all.

G: It didn't seem to have influenced your votes any either.

M: No. It was the campaign [committee]. I think [Warren] Magnuson at that time was the chairman of the Senate Campaign Finance Committee. It sort of put the label on you. It wasn't as though you were getting it from the national committee. It was all clean, purified money. If you remember when Jerry Ford was challenged, he'd raised forty or fifty thousand and they said, "Well, what about it?" "Well, I gave it to the national committee." "How much did you get from the national committee?" I've forgotten, I think he said forty-five thousand. So it was almost the same amount he'd collected, but it had been put through the purifier, whereas the Democrats really were kind of caught in that. I always thought that was a little bit the way Bobby Baker got involved. He began to handle campaign finances outside the national committee.

G: Do you think this could be traced to the Johnson rivalry with the national committee.

M: Yes, I think it started to happen in the fifties, yes, when Paul Butler was the chairman and they began to take all the power, including raising money, away from the national committee. Then the Eisenhower people took the post offices out of politics in that period, so whatever was left over for Democrats to collect there would have been gone, too. Under Butler the national committee became kind of a policy committee, almost a debating society. But the financial thing was shifted both to the House and to the House Finance Committee and then the Senate Finance Committee. Then I'm sure that was--I suspect that was more Lyndon's doing than Sam Rayburn's, because Sam wasn't that much of an operator.

G: Did you attempt to form a sort of a Democratic Study Group type organization within the Senate after you [came over]?

M: I didn't think so. There may have been some talk about it, but I just figured you couldn't hold senators that way anyway and the numbers are small enough. I don't know, there might have been some talk about it at one time, but I never had much of an interest in it.

G: There's an anecdote in one of the books about you, I think, that there was a news story on this or column on it, and LBJ came up to you one time and said, "I'll get even," and you said, "That's all right if you get even. Just don't go any farther," or something like that.

M: Yes. Well, that was a different issue.

G: Was it?

M: Yes.

G: Can you recall the circumstances?

M: Yes. After the election of 1960 Lyndon was vice president, and in the first caucus of the Democrats, Mansfield offered a resolution to let Lyndon preside over the caucus of the Democratic senators. It wasn't much of an issue, but Wayne Morse and I and a couple of people objected to it. Wayne made a speech on the separation of powers, and I made a speech sort of on the history of the British parliamentary system in which the executive branch, the agent of the king, was kept out of the meetings. I think we got thirteen votes or something. But Lyndon was very mad about it, he never did come.

G: He regarded it as a defeat, I gather.

M: Yes. But I think he won 34 to 13 or something like that. But we really thought, after all, it's a Senate caucus and there was no need for it, I felt, even though we didn't have many caucuses. Then this sort of confrontation occurred sometime soon after that at a reception that Mrs. Agnes Meyer had had at her house. Lyndon moved in. I don't know, it was like a shoot-out in a saloon; everybody dropped back to the wall. Adlai Stevenson was there, he dropped back, and the Meyer people, and Lyndon was sort of going on. I don't remember quite that conversation. It was reported that that's what he said and then that's what I said, and that's close enough I think to what went on.

But he never came to the caucuses. It was one of those things that didn't amount to very much, but I was surprised he was so upset over it, you know, especially since he carried--but I guess he thought we'd just all say, "Good work, come on in, Lyndon."

G: He appointed you chairman of the special committee on unemployment problems. This is in 1959. Did he talk to you about it? Did he explain why he was doing it?

M: Well, I don't think so, but I mean, that was a good committee and I think he went out of his way to make that appointment, although I had been in the House all through the years, had been one of the principal advocates of an improved unemployment compensation program and had some claim to going on that committee. We did a good job; that was a good report. They were using it for some years as a text at a lot of colleges on unemployment problems.

G: Did this have an input into the War on Poverty?

M: Well, I don't know whether they used the report or not, but I think half a dozen of the things we recommended eventually became either completely or to a large degree part of the law. Unemployment compensations, we practically have national standards now. That was one of the things we advocated. We advocated a supplemental--we advocated the payments in the case of industries that were closed down because of trade concessions that were not related to economic issues but to policy issues. We raised the question about the possible need to redistribute work in this country, which is one of the things that hasn't been done yet. But it was a good report, and as I say, I think there are half-a-dozen things in it that [were enacted].

G: How about the migrant labor issue? Here was another area where you devoted a lot of time.

M: Well, I don't know that Lyndon particularly liked that. I started on that in the House of Representatives, I guess it was on the Agriculture Committee in the House, which would have been 1951, I guess, after the 1950 election. Then it was just a matter of challenging on appropriations and so on. We got some standards for the migrants. Then Pete [Harrison] Williams I think took it over in the Senate, and they began to do something about domestic migrants. I remember we used to say you're better off if you're an immigrant migrant worker than if you are a domestic. All we ask is that you give domestics the same kind of protection that the migrants have. Yes, that one the Texans didn't like very well. I don't know about Lyndon. The only person that covered it was Sarah McClendon. Do you know Sarah?

G: Yes.

M: You might ask her about it in those early days. She got into trouble, I guess. [She] said she did over just reporting it. That was kind of a long fight. It was sort of a war of erosion until they finally did something about the immigrants, or I mean the contract people, and then eventually began to do something about the domestic migrants. We kept that up under Eisenhower, remember, when [James P.] Mitchell was secretary of labor.

I think [of] a little anti-Texas thing when I was in the House of Representatives. I was on Interior for a short while over there

and it was a time of tidelands oil. It wasn't very successful in the House, but the proposition we raised I think finally carried in the Senate. I think the original bill said that the states would have control within a six-mile [limit]--Texas said twelve miles--and then have a share in anything outside it. What we proposed was that the federal government have everything outside and that the states have only a share inside the six-mile limit. I remember in the debates saying that evidently in 1806, whenever the law of the sea was set at six miles--it's the measure of what you could claim was a cannon shot; you could only claim six miles--I said evidently a Texas cannon in 1806 could shoot twice as far as any other cannon.

I then left the Interior Committee sort of midterm at the request of Rayburn. I think that he sort of liked me for that. He said, "You don't have any interest in this?" I said, "No, not much," and went on Banking and Currency for a year. Subsequently they put me on Ways and Means. That was an act of Rayburn and [John] McCormack, the Ways and Means thing in the House. And that's a good committee assignment because it was also the committee on committees.

G: The Steering Committee in the Senate was the same, right?

M: Yes, well, except the Steering Committee wasn't the finance committee. But in the House if you're on Ways and Means--I was on the Steering Committee in the Senate, too--you were automatically on that. Actually they sort of elected you on a regional basis to the Ways and Means Committee.

G: Was the Steering Committee really a creature of the Majority Leader? Did he dominate it?

M: Not really. Occasionally they would interfere, but the committee was pretty tough. Yes. It had to be a marginal thing, if it was a clear case of someone deserving it. But it wasn't dominated. The burden of the power was with the committee.

G: Normally if you had a question of seniority, if two senators wanted the same seat and you had seniority versus, say, qualification, because the other member or the other senator had had a lot of experience in this area, which senator would win out?

M: I don't know. We would make some tough decisions. It would depend on the personality and a lot of other things, I think, of who was involved. Because sometimes it was showdown, guys really wanted to get on and they weren't giving anything, you had to offend people.

Lyndon's disposition always was to try to ease the blow. His strength was generally in concession, trying to soften it up, than to really lower the boom on anybody. He might talk that way, but. . . .

G: Do you think he ever used committee assignments?

M: Oh, I think he did. I mean, I don't know what he would have done, but the thing about [Edmund] Muskie, when he came in they said he gave him bad assignments because he wouldn't vote with him on cloture. I don't know whether that's true. There was such demand for good committee assignments then, because as I said, there were five or six of us who had come over from the House. We were pretty tough, like Engle and myself, Steve Young and Byrd and these guys,

[so] that there wasn't much left for some of the people who were fresh from the governorship. But Lyndon might have said, "Look, you know, if you're going to do it that way I'll give you. . . ." I don't know. That wasn't the interpretation as you know.

G: Do you think he ever gave a senator a committee assignment that he wanted in order to get that senator off another committee where he was obstructing something?

M: Oh, sure. Oh, he would do that, sure. I'm sure he would do that. We did that in the House in the Ways and Means Committee, too.

Muskie tells a good story, when he first went in that Lyndon was giving him the treatment on the small states should be against cloture. Muskie said, "Well, I committed myself in the campaign." Lyndon said, "In the Senate you're never committed until the roll is called." He went on talking. As Muskie was about to leave, he said, "By the way, can I count on your vote?" Muskie supposedly said, "I can't tell you because the roll hasn't been called." (Laughter) This is a Muskie story. If he said that, I can see where Lyndon would say, "All right."

Ed also said, after one of those meetings, that if you were shorter than Lyndon he'd lean on you. If you were his height he had trouble getting an angle. If you were taller he'd kind of come up at you from underneath, kind of like a badger. Muskie came out of one of those meetings and said, "My God, I never knew why people had the hair in their nostrils trimmed until I met Lyndon." So

there might have been that assignment, but I've forgotten what Muskie got, Banking and Currency. They weren't really bad, but. . . .

G: Post Office.

M: I had Post Office and Civil Service my first year in Congress. We had a whole lot of people then that had to be assigned.

G: What was the source of Johnson's strength, power, as majority leader?

M: Well, I think he worked hard at it. He had a sort of purpose. He had a liberal commitment. He really worked at it. He knew what was going on and where things were. As I said, sometimes he was a little inclined to overmanipulate, as Mansfield was quite open and simple. Of course, Johnson had to work with a Republican Administration most of the time, whereas Mansfield had Democrats, which made it a little bit easier.

See, I thought Mansfield's conception of how to run the Senate was a better one. You'd have to let things happen. Lyndon sort of changed it into a House of Representatives with a lot of roll calls and quorum calls and committee work and committee assignments, that kind of thing. He didn't encourage prolonged debate. This might have been part of his experience in the House. He was modeling it after Rayburn or just saying, "We've got to make this place efficient." But he did change it, I thought, away from what I considered a proper concept of the Senate and how it should operate.

G: Was he dictatorial in the sense of establishing a one-man rule in there as Senator Proxmire felt?

M: I don't think so. As I said, he was more inclined, that his disposition was to make concessions to get things rather than to be dominating. He might have moved in on some people. Of course, I never had any real confrontation with him on issues.

G: If he had a piece of legislation that you were interested in, would he hold it up slightly until he could get your vote on something else?

M: I don't know, because what he would have done most of the time--you know, Humphrey and I had about the same interests anyway and if he was doing that, why, Hubert would probably have dealt with him, not me. See, we were there together and Humphrey was closer to him than I was. We were there, as I said, until Humphrey went to be vice president. Some others might have had experiences with him different from what I had.

G: How did Johnson get along with the southerners? Because as you say, he was advocating an increasingly liberal program by the late fifties.

M: I don't know how he worked that. He seemed to get along with them, but he was prepared to challenge them. It might be interesting for the record. It had to be early in 1963, yes, it was 1963. There was Humphrey and I and Muskie, and Pat McNamara of Michigan, and Phil Hart came off the floor of the Senate in the late afternoon, and Lyndon had that suite, and he called us in. We stayed a long time. Some of the fellows left early, but I stayed to the end. He got to talking. One of the things he said is we ought to

have a fight on civil rights. This was early in 1963. He then gave kind of a medical report on all the southern senators, the condition of their health. I've forgotten which way, but he sort of had a book on them all, and he said he could break them down in two weeks. This was before cloture; this was the straight filibuster. And he said, "There are some of them that don't really care about civil rights, but," he said, "you could break them down in two weeks."

G: He did seem to favor the use of all-night sessions and things like that.

M: Yes. Oh, physical breakdown, ordeal. Yes, he believed in that. I think that's one reason he was partly right against cloture, said, "Look, you just leave this thing and you get a really tough issue and people are serious. It's showdown time, physical as well as every other way." In contrast with the way this cloture thing works now, I'd almost settle for the old system, where you didn't really do it unless you were prepared to die almost. Now they can just manipulate it and play around and act silly. But at that time it was looked upon, as the Texans say, you're up to the lick log. I think that's the way he looked at it, it was part physical challenge and he thought it was worth keeping it.

G: He used to contend that the southerners were better though about staying up.

M: They'd outlast us, yes. Yes. But by that time he figured that they were too old and too weak and too sick I guess, that he had

this whole new bunch of guys who had a little more dedication than what he had had before. Anyway, that was early in 1963.

G: Do you think that he felt left out as vice president?

M: Well, I only know what was reported. Other than that, that's the only time I ever heard him critical of the administration. Indirectly he was saying we ought to have a civil rights fight now. And the Kennedy [Administration] had evidently decided, I guess, to finesse it. They weren't going to have it then anyway. Whether they were going to have it in 1964 or try to finesse it through the re-election, I don't know. At least that's the only time I ever heard him suggest something other than what they were doing. But I didn't see him very often.

G: You also worked to establish a watchdog committee on CIA.

M: Yes. Well, I think on that one Lyndon put the squelch on that as much as he could.

G: Did he talk to you about it?

M: I don't remember that he did, but it didn't get anyplace. The power was on somewhere, and [William] Fulbright was in the Foreign Relations Committee. I'm pretty sure he didn't want that, and nothing happened.

G: What can you tell me about the relationship between Johnson and Humphrey? You must have observed that, being Humphrey's colleague.

M: Well, I don't know. Humphrey was pretty loyal to Lyndon. He didn't complain very much about him, not to me anyway.

G: Did the other liberal senators resent Humphrey's closeness to Johnson?

M: I don't think so. No, I don't think so. I just don't know enough about that relationship except that it seems that Humphrey was so grateful that Lyndon made him vice president, because he figured that after he had lost to Kennedy his chances for the presidency had been destroyed, and this gave him new life.

G: Why do you think Johnson named Humphrey?

M: Oh, I don't know. Well, it would seem a reasonable thing to do. It was a pretty good choice. Humphrey had labor support and liberal support, farmers and so on. It was a good choice. And he was very loyal.

G: Johnson seems to have felt that Humphrey's biggest weakness was that he talked too much.

M: Yes, I don't know. He said that. Humphrey sort of liked Lyndon, he sort of enjoyed him. He might say, "Oh, Lyndon," and so on. He really had an affection for him. And I think it was something the other way, but Humphrey's was quite positive. Did you read his memoirs about shooting the deer? Humphrey's?

G: No, I didn't.

M: He was one of those people who was taken out in the shooting car on the Ranch. This must have been when Lyndon was vice president. It might have been earlier than that. I guess Humphrey was whip, so that was when Mansfield was leader. But he writes about Lyndon taking him out and gave him the gun and said, "Shoot it." Humphrey

said, "I don't want to do it." But he said, "I don't like to shoot four-footed animals," or something. He said, "Anyway, I shot it. We went on. There was another one, and Lyndon said, 'Shoot that one.' I shot the second one. Then Lyndon said, 'Now you're even with Bobby Kennedy and you're one ahead of McCarthy.' I'd never shot a deer in my life. I don't know whether Bobby did," but it was--that's what Humphrey has in his memoirs. I never went shooting on Lyndon's ranch. I've never shot a deer. But he said that to him. What he was trying to do, I don't know. You know, "you've proved yourself" or something like this.

But it was funny, when I read it I remembered being in Humphrey's office, and he had this--you know, Lyndon would have the head mounted for you. Humphrey--there were a couple of Minnesota guys there--said, "That's the head of the deer I shot at Lyndon's ranch." He was sort of gungho. Then I remembered his voice changed in a funny way. He said, "As a matter of fact, I shot two of them." It was a strange experience. When I read the memoirs I remembered that he sounded different when he said, "That's the one I shot." And then he said, "As a matter of fact, I shot two of them." It was borne out by what he said in the book about not having wanted to do the first one, but especially not wanting to do the second one. That was sort of, I suppose putting some kind of--that whole thing of Lyndon and having people shoot the deer out there was a pretty strange psychological thing.

G: There's a notion that he bullied people into doing things that they didn't want [to do].

M: Yes. Well, this I think is one [example]. [William] Manchester has a reference in his book on Kennedy [The Death of the President] to the one that Jack shot on the Ranch, and Lyndon supposedly, according to Manchester, kept after him in the White House, saying, "Where is the head of the deer that you shot?" until Kennedy put it up somewhere in the White House. Dick Goodwin told me that Kennedy always said he didn't shoot it. The Secret Service must have done it, that he didn't aim at it.

I was never invited even to go out. The only invitation I ever had from him was to go swimming naked in the White House pool once, and I didn't do that, so. . . . That was the first test, I would imagine.

G: Was he temperamental around you?

M: Well, I really wasn't around him that much, I just don't know. I always thought, read about, that part of it was an act, that he wasn't that upset. But I just wasn't around him that much.

G: Let me ask you about your role in the 1960 campaign.

M: Well, I didn't really have a [role]. I've written about it in my book, The Year of the People, pretty much the way it was. I went to a couple of meetings for Stevenson, well, at least one here in town before the convention started. Then I was on record for Lyndon, along with Mansfield and some other people as you remember. Then Bob Kerr announced me out in Los Angeles--Kerr took that on

himself, I really hadn't said I was prepared to join a group or anything. But in any case, I think I said I really thought Lyndon would make a good prime minister. I wasn't so sure he'd make a good president. It's in my book, The Year of the People.

G: He must not have appreciated that.

M: I think he--and I know I've said since--I thought he'd have been a much better president if he had been nominated by the party and elected straightaway than coming in the way he did, with the double problem of the Kennedy assassination plus the mandate of him sort of trying to overprove. If he had been nominated like in 1960, he'd have been a different kind of president I think.

G: Do you think that the Johnson people tried to help Humphrey in West Virginia in 1960?

M: I don't know. I don't think they would have. I campaigned a couple of days down there, but I didn't get any feeling for what was going on. I mean, the Humphrey people could tell you that. Because I wasn't really very [active]. Other than just campaigning for Hubert a day or two down there and a couple of days in Wisconsin, I wasn't in the control group and I don't know what was done for him.

Then I nominated Stevenson of course as you know, in 1960.

G: Yes, sure.

M: But that was not a fix with Johnson's people. I mean, Gus Tyler and people have written that I did it only to help Johnson. By that time Johnson was out of it; everybody knew he was out of it, and Stevenson had come in. I had gone to a meeting for Stevenson in

Los Angeles before I was even asked to nominate him. So it was straight Stevenson. I would have done it even if Lyndon had been running strong at that time, and he wasn't.

G: But it was not just a block-Kennedy thing?

M: No, no. Because I had been for Stevenson before the convention and at the convention and then in the nomination speech.

G: Did Johnson ever comment on your nomination speech?

M: I don't remember. Not that I know of. I called him up before I did it and told him I was going to do it. But I didn't ask him whether I should or not; I just said [I was going to].

G: What did he say, do you remember?

M: I guess he said all right or something, I don't know, because it was just an announcement really.

G: What was the relationship between Lyndon Johnson and John Kennedy?

M: I don't know.

G: When they were in the Senate together?

M: Yes. I really--see, I was only there two years.

G: How about Johnson and Nixon? Did you have a chance to observe that?

M: I didn't have any idea how that worked, no. No.

G: Let me just ask you about some more legislative issues, and if you can recall any specifics here, well, please do. Hawaiian statehood, do you remember the passage of that?

M: Well, I remember I was for it. I guess Lyndon probably put that Alaska-Hawaii combination together, so he could get them both. I would think he would deserve a lot of credit for that.

G: The 1960 Civil Rights Act? That's where you had--

M: The 1960 Civil Rights Act?

G: That's where they set up the cots, I think, at the first--

M: Was that in 1960?

G: I think so.

M: Yes. We didn't pass civil rights until 1964, did we?

G: Well, I think they were primarily voting. There was one in 1957 and then a second one in 1960.

M: Yes. Well, I don't know. As I said, Lyndon I think really wanted a civil rights act passed, but he thought he could pass it without cloture. I just don't know. I never saw any indication that he hedged on civil rights. There was more a question of when he thought it could happen.

G: How about abolishing the poll tax?

M: Yes, well, we did that in the House of Representatives first. That one was sort of compromised. The southerners were prepared to take that anyway I think. Then they did the constitutional amendments subsequently. Yes. What year was that one?

G: I think it was 1959 or 1960.

M: Yes. There was another vote when Teddy [Kennedy] was in the Senate on that, to abolish the state poll taxes, but Lyndon wasn't there then. I don't remember exactly, other than I think Lyndon was generally committed to civil rights. It was just a question of how you did it and when you did it.

G: The Depressed Areas bill?

M: I don't remember what happened on that.

G: Now there were some housing bills, omnibus housing bills that were passed over Eisenhower's veto.

M: Yes. Well, I think those are things Lyndon was really good at. He could get people lined up and so on. Those are probably his major achievements.

G: Do you think a lot of it was his ability to count?

M: Well, everyone said that. I don't know. Mansfield did pretty well, too, and no one said he could count. But it may be harder to count when Lyndon was doing it. They said Bobby Baker could count and so on. I don't know. As I say, I just guess he did do those things, say, "Hey, look. If you don't do this we won't give you a committee assignment" or "pass your bill" or do something like that. But he never did that with me, so I couldn't vouch for it on a personal basis.

G: Others have described that he could be almost shameless in asking for a vote.

M: That could be true, I don't know. I just never was in a position to have him--because most of the things he was for pretty much I was for, or against, like his opposition to cloture and so on.

G: Did you ever persuade him to do something or support something that you were interested in that he wasn't originally inclined [to support]?

M: Gosh, I don't really know. I didn't have many things that were that isolated from the general programs.

G: How about the Landrum-Griffin Act?

M: Well, I don't know what he did on that. See, that was so much compromised by the labor people themselves. Whether Lyndon persuaded them or not that they had to give ground [I don't know]. I always thought that labor made a serious mistake in not fighting the major part [?]. They really sold themselves out so far as a potential to organize for the Landrum-Griffin, because they practically admitted that their leadership was corrupt. And in a way it was a bill sort of to, I don't say whitewash, but to make labor leaders either say, "Well, we've been bad in the past," or "We're going to be good in the future." It really didn't deal with labor relations very much. For what was given away, it seems to me it made it very difficult for labor to organize. There were other forces running, too.

The second thing labor did--again, it's sort of trying to defend and protect their leaders--was the approval of the corporate PACs in the federal election act, sort of to justify what they were doing with union PACs. They said, "Well, maybe we've done some things that are illegal, but to cover for that we'll give the same privilege to the corporations," and they got themselves in trouble.

Lyndon was pretty active on that and so was Kennedy, of course. Jack Kennedy was handling that bill and the unions. I think there were a lot of compromises on that, and Lyndon was at the center of it, of course. But I just don't know, it wasn't my committee. I was prepared to vote against it if there was a showdown on it. So I wasn't involved in the compromise.

G: Any other legislative issues that you recall the votes on, or Johnson's maneuvering?

M: I don't think of any right now. I don't know. I think the Landrum-Griffin would have been a classical case of Johnson taking into account his own interests and the unions, the politics of it.

G: You didn't happen to meet with him in Europe when you went to the NATO conference in 1956, did you?

M: No.

G: He wasn't there?

M: No. I never traveled with him.

G: Some of the books I've read about you indicate that you were a member of the Club in the Senate.

M: Well, I don't know that the Club ever existed really. I think they just sort of generalized about that. I mean, yes, I was on the Steering Committee. I think they just mean somebody that's sort of a regular Democrat, other than people like Proxmire, who were criticizing around the edges or taking unusual stands. But I don't know. The only thing that I would say that was in the Club was to be on the Steering Committee. Somebody had to put you on that who figured you were reliable.

G: What do you think led to your being put on the Steering Committee?

M: I don't know. I don't know just exactly how that happened. Of course, Humphrey was there and so he was sort of representing the state interests of mine. I would think that would be an indication

that they accepted that you were a reliable member of the Democratic majority.

Then when I ran for election in 1964 I had a fund-raiser here and Lyndon showed up and Harry Byrd showed up. We had the whole spectrum.

G: In Minnesota?

M: It was here in Washington. There was some comment on at the time that everybody from Harry Byrd to the liberals were there, which suggested that you were accepted. But so far as sitting down in little conferences and making policy, I wasn't involved in that.

G: Any other reflections on Lyndon Johnson during this period?

M: No, I don't think so. You're not into the vice presidential thing?

G: No.

M: Yes. We had sort of a go-round on that when--

G: In 1964?

M: 1964, yes.

G: Well, do you want to go ahead and talk about that?

M: No, no. That's fine. We can do that later on. There's not much. Most of it has been written. It was kind of a funny period.

G: I, of course, know about your telegram.

M: Yes, yes.

G: There was some indication at the time that he preferred you to Humphrey.

M: I don't really know. I think not. I think he really wanted Humphrey. I don't know quite what--I didn't mind it, because I was running

for re-election and it wasn't bad publicity, especially in Minnesota where the sort of line was that Humphrey was the only person there and so on. It was something that the Humphrey people built up a little bit. So it was the best kind of publicity one could get. It was kind of fun. But we sort of kept after him and say, "Tell us the game plan." We were pretty sure, we [figured] a hundred to one against my being picked. We said, "Just let us know." We called him before the convention or my staff did or called somebody and said, "Look, we don't want to be embarrased. We'll just drop out. We'll go to [inaudible]." He said, "Oh, no, we want you to keep going." When we got to Atlantic City, it got down to about the day before and I said, "Call again. I don't want to look silly. Let us know," because we were reliable, we could play their game. I think it had to do with Bobby [Kennedy] some. Plus it had to do with keeping some excitement going. But it finally got down to where he wouldn't say anything. It wasn't a question of saying, "I'm not going to pick you." It was a question of saying, "What's going to happen?" so we could get off the porch before you picked the other girl, you know. And they still wouldn't do it. Then we sent the wire, and I think that's been written up. And I said to the staff, "Now, you say, 'the Senator then called.' [?] Tell him we're releasing it to the press, call the White House and tell them you've done it, and so they can't dissuade you." And we did it that way. I don't think he liked that very much.

G: Did he ever say anything to you about it?

M: Well, he called me up, you know. He said, "I got your wire about eleven o'clock. I'm going to do what you proposed. But I want you to know"--this was about eleven o'clock, and he picked Humphrey that evening, I didn't say anything--"I decided it before I got your telegram." I was going to say like about six months, but I just said, "I believe that." And it's true, I'm sure he had. But I just figured I ought to keep the lines clear, you know, no monkey business. He could have said, "Look, we're going to run it out and play it this way." I'd say, "That's fine." Instead of, I think, silly stuff.

In that case it was manipulation I think when it wasn't necessary. I would have said, "Let's have some excitement, play this thing along."

G: Did you ever hear reports that the Kennedy people considered you unacceptable and had let this be known to the White House?

M: I never heard anything on that. I think they did consider me unacceptable every time, but I was sure they would have. I don't think that kept him from it. They may have said that to him, and he may have said that. I just don't know what the position of the Kennedy people was or whether Lyndon would have paid any attention to them at that point. But everything was arguing for Hubert, you know, unless he was being challenged by Bobby, and then you didn't know what would happen. Even then Humphrey was his best possibility. So I don't think the Kennedys' [objection]--if they did--would have had much bearing on Johnson's decision.

I can't think of any other legislative thing. Let's see, what other committees was I on? Agriculture, I don't think I had any problems there. Banking and Currency, Public Works.

G: You went on Foreign Relations in 1966, is that right?

M: In 1965 I went on it. That was after Humphrey became vice president. But I don't think Lyndon had anything to do with that. He wouldn't have objected anyway.

G: Well, I hope we can talk about 1968 and also some other issues that came up while he was president.

M: Most of that 1964 and vice presidential, 1968 stuff is in my book. I don't have much to add to it.

G: I'll do this, I'll go through our files and send you what the White House had.

M: Yes. Because I don't know what they have, so I haven't bothered to--I figured it's one of those things that's past and you can't do much about it.

G: Well, I sure thank you.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I]

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