INTERVIEW I

DATE: March 19, 1971

INTERVIEWEE: NEWTON MINOW

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

PLACE: Mr. Minow's office, Chicago, Illinois

Tape 1 of 1

F: Mr. Minow, just to set the stage, let's identify you briefly--how you came to work into this world of national politics?

M: When I was a young lawyer, I was appointed law clerk to the Chief Justice of the United States, Fred Vinson, in 1951 and 1952. Then I went to work for Governor Adlai Stevenson as his administrative assistant in Springfield [and] was with him during the presidential campaign of 1952. Subsequently, after several years, he asked me to join him in a new law firm in Chicago. We began in January of 1955 with Bill Wirtz, Bill Blair, Governor Stevenson and myself, and we continued in that practice until the election of 1960, when all four of us went into the government.

F: Yes.

M: So I became involved in politics really through Governor Stevenson, and then to the Kennedys.

F: How far back does you acquaintance with--I don't know which title to give him--Senator Johnson go?

M: In the fall of 1955, I was playing golf one day, on a Sunday. Governor Stevenson called me off the golf course [and] said that President Eisenhower had had a heart attack, and the press was

descending out at his country place, in Libertyville. [He said] that Bill Blair was sick and that Bill Blair had intended to accompany Governor Stevenson on a trip the next morning to Texas.

F: Now, who is Bill Blair?

M: Bill Blair was one of our law partners. He subsequently was ambassador to Denmark and the Philippines. And the Governor asked me if I would go with him to Texas instead. And [he] also [asked me to] come out and work with him that day, which I did. The next morning we went to Texas, and it was like a presidential campaign all over again. We had about fifteen reporters with us. They knew that Adlai was going to be with Senator Johnson and Speaker Rayburn. It looked like Eisenhower was very, very seriously ill, and it was a matter of great importance that the three leading Democrats were going to be together.

F: In a sense you were girding for 1956, in case Richard Nixon should be the president before 1956?

M: Well, that at least was the speculation. So we went to Texas. Governor Stevenson gave a lecture at the University of Texas. Then we got in the car--the following people: Governor Stevenson, Mr. Rayburn, Grace Tully, the driver, and myself. And we drove to the Ranch in Johnson City.

F: What was Grace Tully's role in this?

M: She was, at the time, I think, one of LBJ's secretaries. She had, of course, been FDR's secretary. We drove through the night, and we expected that when we arrived, because it was quite late,

that the Johnsons would be asleep. But instead we found them all waiting for us out in the front porch there. A lot of lights on and everything. I could see Mrs. Johnson was very upset, very properly so, because her husband was still recuperating from the heart attack. And here he had stayed up--it was about two in the morning--to greet us, but he insisted on it. He said, "Now there are about fifteen reporters here, who, because Ike is sick, have descended upon us and who think that you, Adlai, and you, Mr. Sam, and I are here plotting about how to take over the government while Ike is dying. And we're not going to let them do that. We're going to be up and out tomorrow at seven in the morning."

F: I see.

M: "And we'll have a very early breakfast. And we're not going to let them think we're sitting here, plotting. Why, we're going to take a tour of the Ranch and invite them to come along." Which is exactly what we did. He had those little carts.

F: Golf carts.

M: Golf carts and little trucks. And at seven in the morning--

F: You went right on to bed that night after the amenities.

M: Went to bed, that's right. And then went out; spent the morning really taking a tour; came back for lunch. Then Governor Stevenson, Mr. Sam, and Senator Johnson had a private visit for awhile. And after lunch, we left. Governor Stevenson and I went back to Chicago, and we were talking about it in the airplane. He said, "Do you know what Lyndon and Sam told me?" I said, "I'll bet they

told you that if you are going to run for president, you're going to have to really run in the primaries and become an active candidate." He said, "That's right," and he said, "I'm not going to do it. If the party wants me, I'll run again, but I'm not going to run around like I did before and run to all those shopping centers like I'm running for sheriff in the primaries. The hell with it." He said, "What do you think?" I said, "What they told you is exactly right. The Democratic nomination until now was no prize, because Ike was an invincible candidate. But if Ike should not run, you're going to have a hell of a lot of other people running--Kefauver, others." He said, "Well, I'm just not going to do it." Well, I knew that he didn't really mean it, but that was the net of advice that he got from them at that time, and of course, subsequently, he did have to go out and run in the primaries and everything else.

F: Yes.

M: He [Johnson] also, when we left--I never forgot this because I was just really a youngster at the time; that's sixteen years ago. I was still in my twenties.

F: Still a little bit of stargazing?

M: Yes, very much so. And I remember that LBJ pulled me aside on the way out, privately. He said, "You tell him that he has got to keep out in the open on all these things. You also tell him that he has got to get along with the Congress."

F: Did you gather from that visit that he was LBJ's candidate in 1956?

M: I was very suspicious of LBJ, because I thought LBJ wanted to be president himself. I didn't think that he was serious about 1956 for himself, because of his health. But certainly Governor Stevenson thought--and that's the important thing, not what I thought--that LBJ was for him in 1956. He left that impression with Governor Stevenson.

F: Did you ever, in the months ahead, get any insights that either you or Governor Stevenson might be right in this case?

M: I certainly did later. Yes, very much so, because, if you'll recall, at the 1956 convention there was in fact an effort to try to get the nomination for LBJ. LBJ had a headquarters and everything else.

F: Did Governor Stevenson look at him as a rival or just as someone down the line?

M: I don't think he thought of him as a rival. Governor Stevenson, of course, you see, had known him a long time. He knew him way back to the Roosevelt years when they were both in the government. And Governor Stevenson liked him.

F: I was going to ask. Did they seem to have an understanding?

N: Oh, yes, very much so. Governor Stevenson, of course, had enormous respect for Mr. Sam. And he liked Lyndon, thought Lyndon was extremely capable man. I don't think he saw him as a rival at that time.

On balance, I think I was a little more right than he was.

F: Yes. How strongly did you feel Johnson's presence in the 1956

convention?

M: I remember very well that there was a headquarters and an attempt to get the nomination for him. Only at the end--I'm telescoping this because I think the same thing was true in 1960--my observation is that LBJ confused national presidential politics with congressional politics. He thought that if you had a senator or a congressman who was for you,that this meant that that state would be for you. The fact, of course, is that in many places the senator or congressman can't even swing a place on the delegation. But I think he was seeking support, it was natural, through the Congress. But he didn't realize that that didn't necessarily carry over to a convention. I think he had a lot of friends in the Senate and Congress who were for him, and he thought that when he got to the convention that things would happen, but they didn't.

F: I've wondered, for instance, whether one of Johnson's faults was that he was too much and too long a resident of Washington. And saw things [from that perspective]; in that sense, was parochial. Rather than a parochial Texan, he was a parochial Washingtonite.

M: I think that is exactly accurate, and I also think that Texas politics is very different. There, I think--certainly in Johnson's career--if you were in the Senate from Texas, you had a hell of a lot to say about Texas politics. That's not true in a lot of other places.

F: Now, as I recall, in that 1956 convention you leaned toward John

Kennedy for the vice presidential nomination.

M: Absolutely.

F: Did you have any role in the getting Senator Johnson to throw the Texas delegation to Kennedy, which did surprise Kefauver, among others?

M: No, I didn't. I was for Kennedy for many reasons. I felt he was a natural complement to Stevenson. I felt, also, that because he was a Catholic, he would help stem the criticism of Stevenson as having been divorced. I also thought that, being younger and vigorous, he would be attractive. I worked with the Kennedy people, but I did not have anything to do with the Texas [delegation decision].

F: Did you get to observe the Senator at all during the campaign that fall?

M: Yes, I was with Governor Stevenson once when he was campaigning--I'm trying to remember exactly where, it was in Texas--and LBJ did very vigorously try to help him there.

F: Was the Governor disappointed at the Texas attitude? Did he feel that Johnson and Rayburn were giving him the support?

M: Yes, he had no problems with them.

F: Of course, Johnson and Rayburn both were in a sense swimming upstream in their home state.

M: Right. I think Governor Stevenson knew in his heart that you couldn't beat Eisenhower in 1956. There were some of us, including me, who told him he shouldn't ever run, it was hopeless. Still, when he lost he was very disappointed, because you begin to believe. Every

candidate begins to believe he's going to win.

F: Right. You've got to have that delusion or you can't run.

M: That's right. But I don't think he had--I know he didn't--he had no recriminations or anything about Johnson.

F: Yes, did you see anything of the Senate Majority Leader in the intervening years.

M: In the intervening years? I went to the Gridiron Dinner with Governor Stevenson in 1957, and I know we had a visit with Johnson; I was only there very briefly. But then in the intervening years the Democratic Advisory Council was formed, and at this point Adlai started to have some trouble with Johnson.

F: I've rather gathered that the Democratic Advisory Committee was not favored by either Johnson or Rayburn.

M: That's right. They thought that the place for the Democratic Party to set policy was in the Congress, and that the best politics was to go along with Eisenhower wherever possible, and fight with him only when they thought it was very, very important. Governor Stevenson, on the other hand, felt that the party could be rebuilt by taking a very vigorous stand and going after the issues. There was a lot of back and forth arguing about this.

F: Did it ever reach the status of a confrontation between the two men?

M: I don't think so. Certainly Governor Stevenson was not that kind of guy. I think he would be inclined to sort of find a diplomatic solution and try to work it out.

F: Yes.

M: There never was that confrontation that I know of.

F: Superficially, at least, the relationship between the two men in those intervening years remained cooperative?

M: Remained good.

F: Remained good even though they disagreed on this?

M: Right.

F: Did the Governor nurse real hopes of being a possible candidate of the party in 1960?

M: Yes, and he always denied it, even to his intimate friends like Bill Blair and Bill Wirtz and me. But down deep I think he still hoped. He knew that this time it couldn't be Eisenhower.

F: Yes.

M: And that there was a good chance for a Democratic victory. And he thought that maybe the party would give it to him again.

F: Did he begin to see Johnson as a potential rival?

M: Well, this is where I hope you'll be able to somehow document this elsewhere, because I'm just telling you what I heard from Governor Stevenson. You see, I was for Kennedy for 1960, strongly. I thought Governor Stevenson should not be a candidate. I felt he didn't have a chance of getting the nomination. I wanted him to be secretary of State. I felt that if he backed Kennedy, he would be secretary of State. And I felt that if he tried to get it himself, he would be hurt by it; he wouldn't be nominated, and he would go out of history a defeated, bitter guy. We used to tell

him this all the time, and he just wouldn't listen. First of all, he didn't particularly like Kennedy, and second--this I found out much later--he did have a couple of meetings with LBJ during that period. LBJ kept saying, "Now, listen Adlai, you just hang loose here. Don't make any commitments. You may still get it. Don't help that kid, Kennedy. You just stay neutral." And I believe that Governor Stevenson, at some point, made a commitment to him that he would do so.

F: You don't really feel yourself that there was any genuine LBJ belief in Stevenson so much as this was the way to neutralize the thing.

M: Exactly. I think LBJ was using Governor Stevenson. I think he was attempting to keep the situation fluid in the hope that he, LBJ, might get nominated. Although, in fairness, I would say that I think he would have preferred Stevenson to Kennedy.

F: Did the Governor later feel any that he had been had by the Senator?

M: No, because he and I had a specific argument about that. And he did not.

F: He thought Johnson was playing it straight.

M: Yes, that's right. And I think, again, that's partially because Governor Stevenson was not for Kennedy.

F: In other words, he wanted to see it that way.

M: Yes.

F: Right. At Los Angeles, did you have any feeling it could be either Stevenson or Johnson, or did you think it was definitely all Kennedy?

M: I thought it was all Kennedy.

Now here is the story that I want to be sure goes in the record books. I told this story in the Kennedy oral history, too. But I think it's important. May 29, 1960, I remember well, because it happens to be my own wedding anniversary and it was Jack Kennedy's birthday. And it was the day after the Oregon primary. Bill Blair and I had arranged for Jack Kennedy to stop in Chicago to have a visit with Governor Stevenson. Jack Kennedy was on his way back from Oregon to Hyannis for a family birthday party. Bill and I picked Jack Kennedy up at the private airplane hangar of Butler Aviation at O'Hare in the morning. I think it was Saturday, but I'm not positive, but anyway, it was May 29th. And the three of us drove in the car out to the farm. Bill was driving; Jack Kennedy was sitting in the front seat; I was sitting in the back seat. We were talking about politics, and I said to Jack Kennedy, "If you don't get the nomination, who do you think should get it?" And he said, "Johnson." I didn't believe it; I was incredulous. I said, "Johnson!" He said, "Yes, Johnson. He may be a son-of-a-bitch, but the man has talent." Quote, unquote. I was astonished by it; I just couldn't believe it. And this is what he felt; this is what he felt. In fact, Bill Blair and I--mostly Bill Blair--started thinking then that Johnson would be the vice presidential candidate.

F: So you weren't caught by surprise at the developments in Los Angeles?

M: Not at all, not at all. In fact, when Bill and I were going out on the airplane to the convention, Bill said it again--he said this is what will happen. It was a brilliant stroke, politically.

F: Yes. How did you find out about it? Were you privy to any of the inner workings or any of the reactions?

M: Governor Stevenson--I was with him--was, I think, I don't know if I'd say consulted or informed by Jack Kennedy before it was announced, and I heard it through him.

F: Did he think it was a good move?

M: Yes.

F: And just as a pragmatic politician he thought it was good?

M: He thought it was a good move, and he also agreed with Jack Kennedy that Johnson was a talented man and that this would be good.

F: Were you in on any of the sort of immediate anti-Johnson reaction that broke out, or instilling it?

M: Oh, I heard a lot of it. In fact, I argued Johnson's case, because I felt that Jack Kennedy had made a very smart decision. And I thought that Johnson had done a very good thing in agreeing to do it.

F: Was the Illinois delegation in any sense in revolt or were they willing to accept him?

M: No, no. They understood; they thought it was smart.

F: Was it the general expression that the revolt was sort of a just a handful of dissidents or was it pretty widespread?

M: Oh, I think that the very liberal people, some of the labor people,

but I think that even they, after they thought about it awhile, you know, for twenty four hours, realized that it was a smart thing to do.

F: Did you see the vice presidential nominee at all during the campaign?

M: Yes.

F: Under what circumstances?

M: I was the secretary of the National Business and Professional Committee for Kennedy-Johnson. And we had a meeting with Kennedy and Johnson in the Senate during that rump session. Remember the Congress was called back.

F: Yes.

M: And there were a number of us. The headquarters of that particular committee was in Chicago. I flew down with the group. We had a meeting with the two of them. And Johnson gave a little speech to us, with Kennedy. Johnson was terrific.

F: Incidently, where did you hold it?

M: It was right off the Senate floor. There was one of those sort of reception rooms. And there were not more than thirty or forty people. We announced that Luther Hodges was the head of it, and had some pictures taken. It was really for the press, to show that there was some business support for the Democratic ticket.

F: Did the presence of Johnson on the ticket give you much trouble in selling your particular group of clients?

M: No, I would think the contrary. I would think that he was an asset.

F: When the election was over--and shortly after that, when you went

to the Federal Communications Commission--did you have any more dealings with the now-Vice President?

M: Quite a few.

F: In what way?

M: The first thing that happened was that the Vice President gave a party for John Connally. It was a big party to welcome Connally to Washington. The Vice President sent us an invitation, and also his office called and said they really would very much want me to come. So I went to that, and the Vice President--

F: Where was this held?

M: This was held at a big hotel. I think it was either the Sheraton Park or maybe the Shoreham. And it was a very elegant, big cocktail party. And when I went through the receiving line, the Vice President introduced me to Connally. And he said, "This young man has a big job here at the FCC. I've known him a long time," and so on and so on. So he remembered me.

Then I worked with the Vice President on the space satellite, communication satellite venture. He was head of the Space Council by law, and we worked fairly closely in developing the administration's plan. We had a series of meetings at the White House. I remember one where Jim Webb spoke so much that the Vice President got furious, cut him off very preemptorily because Jim Webb just went on and on and on and on.

F: And he could do that.

M: And LBJ got mad.

We would see LBJ around town. One time I went on a trip, again having to do with the space program, with the President and LBJ. They went on separate planes, and I was on LBJ's plane. We were going to visit all the space installations. We went to see Werner Von Braun in Alabama; we went to Texas; we went to St. Louis and so on. And LBJ came and sat down next to me. There were four seats, two facing each other, and on the other side, I remember, one was Jerry [Jerome B.] Wiesner--

F: We have him.

M: --and the other, I think, was Werner Von Braun, but I'm not sure about that one. He [Johnson] gave a very impassioned talk, for about an hour on what this could mean for education in underdeveloped countries and on educational television. I told him what we were doing at the FCC to try to help the Peace Corps in an educational television project in Columbia, which he did not know about. He was deeply interested in educational television. He talked about it for an hour--what the satellite might be able to do.

F: He was not a perfunctory chairman of the Space Council?

M: Oh, no. He was very serious about it.

One story I forgot. I'm trying to do it chronologically. Very shortly after I went to the FCC, in fact, it was almost exactly ten years ago now that [Alan] Shepard made that first trip through space as first astronaut. And the National Association of Broadcasters was meeting in Washington. They called me and said could I please try to get [Shepard]. Kennedy was going to come to

speak to them. The President's office had called and said would I come over there when he went and ride up to the broadcasters convention with him. It was up at the Sheraton Park. So then they called me back and said, "You know Shepard's in town. Could you get the President to bring Shepard." And I said, "I'll try." So I called Pierre Salinger, and he called back and said, "Impossible. Shepard's got a very tight schedule; you can't do it. He has got to be up on the Hill and everything else." So I reported this back to NAB. Then I went up to the White House to wait for President Kennedy. I was waiting in that little anteroom when the President came out and he said, "What about taking Shepard up to the NAB?" I said, "Terrific. They want to have him." He said, "Okay, he's in my office with his wife; he has got to go somewhere else in the White House. You come with me now, and then we all ride up together." I said, "Fine."

So we went upstairs. He was changing his shirt, and he wanted my recommendation on what he should say to the broadcasters. I said I thought he ought to say that in our country we televise these space-shots to the world, whether they worked or they didn't. We could have had a disaster, but we let everyone know about it. It turned out all right, but we're an open society as contrasted with the Russians. He said, "That's good." He changed his shirt and we came down.

And waiting in that little driveway in the back then was Shepard and his wife, LBJ, and the President, and, of course, I was tagging

along. So I thought, well, I better get in the next car; it was going to be crowded. So the President said, "No, no. You come on in." So we got in the car: the President, Shepard and Mrs. Shepard sitting in the back seat, and LBJ and I on the jump seats. The President was in great humor; he was very happy and talking. And he poked Lyndon and said, "You know, Lyndon, nobody knows that the Vice President is the chairman of the Space Council. But if that flight had been a flop, I guarantee you that everybody would have known that you were the chairman of the Space Council." So Shepard and Mrs. Shepard and I were all sort of laughing, and LBJ was looking kind of glum. So then I said, "Mr. President, if the flight would have been a flop, the Vice President would have been the next astronaut." And LBJ looked at me as though he was going to kill me.

F: That wasn't his form of humor.

M: He didn't think it was funny at all. He put his face up to mine. I thought he was going to kill me right on the spot. I thought it was very funny, and JFK thought it was very funny; but LBJ thought it was not funny at all.

F: I've seen that kind of humor before, and it bombs.

M: So then we all went up to the NAB, and it was very successful. In fact, I noticed in this morning's paper, of all things--it's funny that we are talking about this--that Shepard is going to appear at the NAB here next week for the tenth anniversary of that trip. So I saw him then and then we'd see him around town.

When I was at the FCC, we had a number of matters that came up involving their broadcasting properties. Twice I voted against them. I never knew in my own heart if I voted against them because I wanted to show that we weren't automatically susceptible to influence. It was very hard to be objective in a case like that with the Vice President of the United States. But I voted against them a couple of times.

I became a friend of Walter Jenkins during the course of this time. I used to see Walter around town and worked with him on a couple of problems that we had in the government. There was another man that I think was fairly close to LBJ who was on the Space Council that I worked with. A tall, thin guy--academic person. I'm trying to think of his name at the moment. It's not Welch.

F: Well, we can pick that up later.

M: And of course, I knew Leonard Marks well, who was LBJ's lawyer and Paul Porter was close to LBJ.

Then I'll tell you one story that happened shortly before we left Washington. Mrs. LBJ called my wife one day [about] John Bartlow Martin, who was ambassador to the Dominican Republic. His boy was hurt in an accident while the Johnsons were in the Dominican Republic, and they flew him up with Mrs. Martin to the hospital. They came back to Washington, and Fran Martin--the Martins are very close friends of ours--were staying with us. And Mrs. Johnson used to call every day to see how that kid was. She was unbelievable.

I'm a great, enormous fan of Mrs. Johnson's. She called every day.

Not long after that she called one day and invited us to a party at their house in honor of Erich Leinsdorf. Leinsdorf was conducting a symphony, and this was to be after the symphony. It was a small party, and we went to their house. Liz Carpenter seated us with LBJ at like card tables, just the four of us. So we spent a long time talking to them, my wife and I. He was very friendly, and he was reminiscing a great deal that night. It was raining, and he took us to the door after the evening was ending. And in that corridor there, he had a lot of pictures of his career at various times. He stopped and really took a great deal of time, like about a half an hour, going through each one and reminiscing about this and about that. Then most of the people had a chauffeur, we didn't ever have a chauffeur. We had a little tiny compact Valiant, so I was going to get it. And he said, "No, it's raining. You wait here. I'll send somebody to get it." He sort of called, and a man came out of the shadows, a black man, a chauffeur. He said, "Give him your keys, and he'll get your car." So he was going to get my car. LBJ said, "You see that fellow. He's my driver. He's been the driver for the majority leader for many years, going back to Joe Robinson."

F: Joe Robinson from Arkansas.

M: He said, "Do you know he was my driver when I was majority leader. When I became vice president, I asked him if he would continue as my driver. He turned me down and I said, 'Why?' He said, 'Vice

President--that's nothing. I want to go with the man that has got the power, the majority leader." Then he grabbed my arm, and he said, "You know, many days I wish I had had him with me when I was out in Los Angeles at the convention in 1960."

And I could see that the vice presidency was killing him.

F: You could see the second thoughts there.

M: And it was interesting that he used this story to say that.

Well, it wasn't too long after that that we went back to Chicago. Then I didn't see him again for some time. Of course, when Kennedy was killed, I wrote and said I'd do anything I could to help him. I think when I got back there was a personal letter from him.

F: Before we move on to that, let's finish about COMSAT. I presume that the Vice President and President were in harmony on what should be done, and on the role of AT&T, and the general theme that developed, that there wasn't any problem there.

M: The President didn't really get into it that much. The FCC was of the view--and looking back at it now, it's hard to see the perspective--we were of the view [that] we wanted to get the thing going fast. We felt this was the one part of the space program where we were ahead of the Russians, and we wanted to go. And the Department of Justice had a lot of questions about it. We thought that the thing to do was to create a consortium of the carriers, RCA, Western Union, ATT, et cetera, and let them develop it. If the public wanted to invest in it, they could buy stock in any of

these companies. The Department of Justice didn't particularly like that. Finally it was compromised really by Senator Kerr with Nick Katzenbach and Bob Kennedy. And then President Kennedy himself came up with the idea that it would be a half and half thing and that stock would be sold to the public. They asked us for our view, and I thought it was a bad mistake because if the stock went sour, they would blame the government. But this was the political compromise that emerged, and we all supported it. And the last meeting of the Space Council I went to where we hammered out a policy was then issued by the President without a change in a comma. He really left it to the Space Council to settle.

F: He didn't try to dominate the Council so much as to just give it to you?

M: That's right, that's right. LBJ, I think, must have been in constant touch with Kerr and Katzenbach and so on. But I'd say President Kennedy did not get deeply in on it.

F: Was there an in-built conflict between the FCC and the Space Council?

M: No, I would say not.

F: Worked very closely?

M: Yes.

F: Did the Vice President ever comment to you on your own campaign to give television a little higher level?

M: No, except I sort of had the impression--and it was not from anything that was said--that I don't think he approved of it. I think he

felt that we were stepping too hard on the industry.

F: On private toes?

M: Yes. It was never said to me, but I had that impression.

He was damned interested in what else we were doing on the educational television.

F: He backed that?

M: Yes, very much so.

F: Did you ever feel that he resented your having voted against his own station?

M: I kind of did. He never said so; nobody ever said so. One day Walter--no, I can't remember whether it was Walter Jenkins or Liz Carpenter--called me, and it was almost like they were a little apologetic. They said Mrs. Johnson is getting some award somewhere and would I send a letter or telegram of congratulations. And it was almost as if they were a little afraid to ask me. Of course, I did so. I meant it in a very positive way, and I know they were very grateful about it. But I think they were a little afraid of talking to the chairman of the FCC about broadcasting things, you know. I think they thought, "Well, it's a Kennedy guy, and we can't trust him."

F: Wayne Morse and Ralph Yarborough, as well as others, had conducted a filibuster against the COMSAT bill. Of course, Yarborough was from Johnson's home town. Now [he's] Texas' senior senator. Did you ever get any flak from Johnson on this?

M: No. But, of course, I knew Yarborough hated Johnson and vice

versa. That was made very clear to me on that trip I told you about in 1955, because Adlai saw Yarborough on the trip. He'd kind of see him on one side of the room and Rayburn on the other, and it was very clear to me that this was . . .

F: Did you get the feeling that Rayburn's lack of regard for Yarborough was just about identical with Johnson's?

M: Oh, yes.

F: They shared it. Any particular reason that you could determine?

M: No, but they were just total opposities.

F: Did you get any opportunity to watch the Vice President in his relations with Bobby Kennedy?

M: No, I did not. I subsequently, going quite on in time, knew that Bobby had no use for him, and vice versa. But it was nothing at that time that I saw.

F: You had that remark out at the occasion of the Leinsdorf party. Did you get the feeling throughout that Johnson understood the role of the vice presidency or that he did feel under-used? Were you able to get any insights on this?

M: I had the feeling that he felt that he was under-used.

I think he genuinely liked JFK. I think he really did. But I think he thought that a lot of the young people Kennedy brought into government, including me and that type, were wet behind the ears and that we were screwing things up.

F: Did he ever give any indication that he felt that some of you had just kind of caught the rung and were not seasoned in the political ground?

M: I never got it personally, but certainly this was the feeling that I think a lot of the Kennedy people have. You know, that he just didn't--

F: Now did they laugh off Johnson and a sort of make shunting aside jokes about him, or was this so much press criticism?

M: I never heard anything like that, never once. I kept reading that they were rude to him and they pushed him around and so on, but I never saw it firsthand.

F: As far as you know, he was treated with whatever status the vice president holds. It's a difficult position.

M: That's right. That day in the car, I could see that Kennedy loved to tease him a little bit. And we were invited to the White House for dinner a couple of times, you know. It was a big thing where the Johnsons were, and I don't remember any specific incidents, but it seemed to me the President always went out of his way to be respectful and friendly to the Vice President.

Now I did go to the National Security Council one time. This was in the Cuban Missile Crisis--a long story which I won't repeat, it's in the Kennedy Oral History--where we set up a network of stations so the President could broadcast to Cuba. And I did go to the National Security Council and report on it, twice. The Vice President was there and certainly was a very key center of the whole thing. He was very involved with it.

F: He wasn't ignored in this sort of thing.

M: Not at all.

F: After Johnson became president, did you ever consider re-entering government service? *

M: No, except there's one thing I wanted that he wouldn't appoint me to. I wanted to be a director of COMSAT. The President appoints three directors of COMSAT. And I was recommended to him by a hell of a lot of good friends of mine and his.

F: Did he give any reason, or you just ignored it?

M: No, but I know he didn't do it. (Laughter)

Then Joe Califano called me one day and I was going on vacation. He said, "There's a big airline strike, and they're going to set up an emergency board. Would you serve on it?" I said, "God, Joe, I'm just leaving with my family on a vacation." But I said, "If you think it's important to the President's support, I will." Then I never heard another word about it. I think this may have been Joe's idea, and the President vetoed it. [This] is my theory. Or Bill Wirtz's idea and the President vetoed it.

I was invited to the White House when they signed the Educational Television Bill, and in 1967 I was chairman of the Democratic Congressional Dinner. That's an interesting story.

F: Did the President Johnson ever comment on your work as FCC commissioner?

M: I have a picture that he gave me. I asked him for a picture after he became president some time. I remember I got it. I haven't got it here. And it said, "To Newt Minow, a great American and a good public servant." (Laughter)

* I was asked by Bill Wirtz to come and work in the White House while President Johnson was in office. I cannot recall exactly when this was. I was not able to accept the invitation.

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F: So you got that much favorable comment, anyhow.

M: Well, I thought it should have been better if it would have said, "A good American and a great public servant." (Laughter)

F: Did you ever have any opportunity to observe his relationship with Bill Wirtz?

M: No, but I heard it was a terrible at the end. And I'm not surprised about that.

F: Just on account of the nature of the two men?

M: That's right. I'm surprised it lasted as long as it did.

F: Was there any feeling--now you'd left government service--that Johnson was pushing aside the Kennedy people? He kept, it seems to me, an inordinate number of them for an awfully long time.

M: He did, I think, right at the beginning. In fact, in my opinion, he kept them too long, you know.

F: Quite apart from the Kennedy connection, you wear out.

M: Sure. I have a theory, which David Halberstam expressed independently of me, that one of the reasons we blundered so much in Vietnam was that the people that Johnson inherited from Kennedy were afraid of Johnson and never levelled with him, and vice versa, that Johnson was afraid of them. Neither of them ever really communicated with each other in an honest way, and that's how we kept getting more and more further into the war. I think that if Johnson had had his own guys, they would have said, "Listen, hold the phone here a minute." I think he might not have done it.

F: Yes, I think, among other things, you get hung on your own mistakes.

M: That's right, that's right.

F: And then you attempt a justification, extrication?

M: That's right.

In 1964--you asked about the government--I got so mad at Goldwater, I wrote a speech. I did it myself; I just sat at my typewriter one day, and sent it to Bill Moyers. It was on the theme: most Democrats, most Republicans voted for this, "but not Barry Goldwater;" most Republicans, most Democrats voted for this, "but not Barry Goldwater." There were about six things and all of them, "but not Barry Goldwater." And it ended by saying this year we're going to elect a new president, "but not Barry Goldwater." So I sent it to Bill Moyers. And I went to the Democratic Convention in 1964. I was a member of the Illinois delegation. And Humphrey gave the speech, my speech verbatim, and it was a great success. It was the success of the--the crowd started reacting. It was the kind of thing that the crowd will pick up after.

F: They would come in on the chorus.

M: In unison they were all saying, "but not Barry Goldwater." So Bill Moyers gave it to [Humphrey]. How that happened I don't know, but that's where it ended up.

F: Did you have any advance notice this was going to happen or did you sit there and suddenly you heard it?

M: Never, never. Never got a line of credit for it, either.

F: You must have been the most surprised man at the convention.

M: It was very surprising.

I usually can come up with one about every couple of years. In the 1968 campaign, I came up with the one about Agnew says, "If you've seen one slum, you've seen them all." I say, "If you seen one slum, you seen one too many."

F: That's good.

M: So whenever I see Humphrey, he says, "Write faster; write faster." But I say, "I'm only good for one every four years. That's the trouble."

F: Now let's talk a little bit about that convention in 1964. It was pretty cut and dried, wasn't it?

M: Completely. The only interest was in the vice presidency. We were very strong for Humphrey. And I did everything I could on Humphrey.

F: Did you have any doubt?

M: Yes, I sure did. I sure did. I thought that was outrageous the way LBJ handled that; I thought it was a disgusting play on people, with McCarthy and with Dodd. It was childish.

F: Was that a consensus feeling? I hesitate to use that word now. (Laughter) But, generally, did people feel that way in the Illinois delegation?

M: Oh, I think they thought that LBJ was just playing with people, just having some fun. I think they felt he was trying to give

it some excitement because it was so dull. And, so for that reason, I don't think everybody was mad, but I think the feeling was that it could have been handled in a better way.

F: When the President campaigned in Illinois, were you part of the local machinery?

M: Yes, but not in any kind of a prominent role. There really wasn't any kind of a citizens thing. I mean, we were certainly for Johnson-Humphrey, but there was not very much of an active campaign here.

F: You, though, had no great doubts?

M: Oh, no. It was clear to me that--

F: Despite the fabled conservatism down South?

M: Oh, no. I thought that this was going to be a cinch.

F: Did you write any more speeches for Humphrey?

M: I wrote some more, a couple more speeches for Humphrey. They weren't as good as the other one, but I did.

Actually, before we go to 1968, I do want to go to 1967. One day Muskie called me, out of the dark. I've known him, you know, for years. He said, "A group of the younger senators have taken over the Senatorial Campaign Committee and I'm the chairman. They've asked me to ask you to become the chairman of the dinner this year." So I said, "Me? Why do you want me?" He said, "Well, we'd like to get a younger fellow from out of town who has a good reputation," and so on. So I did it with him. Part of the arrangement is you go call on the

President to invite him. In fact, I got a picture of it right here of what happened. Mike Kirwan, Ed Muskie, and I went to see the President to invite him to come to the dinner. It's supposed to be a protocol thing for three minutes, and he kept us there for an hour and a half. He was just back from Guam, and he was full of it, about the war. And I started to argue with him a little about the war, because I've been a dove since 1960 about Vietnam. I served in the Far East during World War II, and to me it was not that complicated. You could see what was going to happen.

F: Yes, I was out there with you.

M: Yes. And I started to say something, and, boy, he cut me off, just cut my water off. And he said, "Listen, I just went to the hospital the other day, and I see a guy with his ass blown off." He said, "What do you want me to do about that? Just throw in a towel?" You know, this kind of talk for an hour and a half. Hopeless.

F: Do you think he personalized the war to a great extent?

M: Yes, at least in that one experience that I had.

Then we had the dinner which was an enormous success; it was two hundred and fifty dollars a plate.

There's another picture from him where we gave an award to Richard Daley. He had just been elected mayor by the biggest margin in the history of anything. And when the dinner was over, the President came over to me. I was seated next

to Humphrey, and the microphone and the lecturn was between us. The dinner was over; the President came over; I was the MC. He said, "Do you know, Newt, I've been going to these dinners for a long time." He said, "I want you to know this is the best political dinner I ever went to. I'm very grateful to you, and I mean it. If there's anything you ever want from me, you tell me." And that was it. I think he meant it. He was very grateful. The party was in kind of bad shape there; the war was becoming unpopular; and this was sort of a unifying thing. I think the one reason maybe they asked me to become chairman was that I was identified with Stevenson and Kennedy. And I think he appreciated that I did it, even though I didn't agree at all about the war.

F: But you never asked him for anything, for that one thing.

M: No, no.

F: Did he ever, in his presidency, approach you on broadcasting problems?

M: No.

F: Did he ever talk to you at all about his TV image?

M: No, although Arthur Goldberg once told me a funny story about that. Arthur is my wife's cousin. And Arthur told me one time he was giving a speech at the U.N., and he got a very urgent message to call LBJ. And he called LBJ. LBJ says, "Arthur, I just watched you on television. Arthur, don't look down and mumble so much." (Laughter)

F: Inexcusable under the circumstances.

Did he ever express himself, as far as you know on your own suggestion that perhaps there ought to be more free TV time for presidential candidates?

M: I think he was against it because he didn't want to debate, obviously, in 1964. So I don't think he was for it. I'm still pushing that and I'm going to make it one of these days.

F: Let's talk about that just a minute. Do you get the feeling you're gaining ground?

M: Oh, yes. I testified in the Senate two weeks ago. And it's clear to me that there's going to be a change. There's got to be. The majority is there now.

F: Is this education or is this inflation? Or a combination?

M: I think it's a combination of both. It's a combination of both. But I think there's going to be a change. I don't think they're going to do exactly what we propose, but they're going to do something.

That dinner in 1967--I'm trying to think--I think that was the last time I saw Johnson personally.

But Jim Rowe is a great friend of mine.

F: Yes.

M: He and I worked together professionally in some matters.

F: I always thought of him as a real pro, too.

M: Right. Spring of 1968, he and I were in Washington working together, and I was having lunch with him at the Metropolitan

Club. It was a few days before the New Hampshire primary. Scotty Reston came over to our table, talked to us just for a minute. He says, "You know Bobby is going to do something here, become a candidate." So he left, and I said to Jim--oh, Jim asked me to go to Wisconsin to be the advance man for LBJ. I come from Wisconsin; I'd been the advance man for Stevenson in Wisconsin. So he asked me to go, and he said, "Would you do it?" I said, "Absolutely not." I said, "You know what? You're not even going to have a candidate within two weeks." He said, "What are you talking about?" I said, "Johnson isn't going to run." And he said, "Newt, you're out of your mind." I said, "Jim, I'll lay you any bet you want Johnson won't run." He said, "Why do you say such a dumb thing? I was with him last night at the White House. We were making plans for the campaign." I said, "Two reasons: McCarthy is going to do better than anybody expects in New Hampshire. He'll send somebody out to Wisconsin, maybe Larry [O'Brien] and Larry will look, come back, and tell him he can't win in Wisconsin. I know Wisconsin." I said, "LBJ will quit. He's smart enough to see that." And Jim said, "You're absolutely crazy." Well, I wasn't so crazy. I only wish I would have made a bet on it with him or something. But it was clear to me what was going to happen.

F: This was just your own divination then?

M: Knowing Wisconsin politics.

F: So you weren't surprised when he took himself out that night?

M: I was still a little shocked, except I had the feeling that he was going to go out. I had the feeling that Mrs. Johnson didn't want him to run. Now I think that story in the book--my opinion is exactly reversed. I think she did not want him to run in--

F: Didn't want him to run in 1968.

M: She did not want him to run in 1968, but she did want him to run in 1964. That was my theory. Whereas, I think in the book, it's the other way around.

F: Did you head the Illinois committee for Humphrey?

M: Yes.

F: Did you get any feeling that Johnson was either going to throw road blocks or help or was his hand visible at all?

M: You mean this is 1968?

F: Yes, I'm down to 1968 now.

M: I felt that Johnson lost the election for Humphrey. No, I shouldn't say that. I should say that Humphrey lost the election because he was afraid of Johnson.

F: From your knowledge of Humphrey, is this a nice guy trying not to offend or is it an actual fear of tangling? Is he to a certain extent skewered on an identification of Johnson?

M: I think it was a combination. I never understood it. Humphrey came out here the week before the convention. I'd been for Bobby Kennedy, formerly for Bobby Kennedy and wanted Bobby Kennedy. When Bob Kennedy was killed, Adlai [Stevenson] called me, young Adlai. They asked me if I would become the Humphrey

head and I said yes. Because I like Hubert, but I would have preferred to have Kennedy. Hubert came out here at our invitation a week before the convention. We gave a big luncheon for him, a fund-raising luncheon. After it was over, he said, "Come up to the room. I want to talk to you." So I went to the room. He said, "What do you think?" I said, "There's only one way you could win. You've got to disassociate yourself from Johnson and the war." I said, "And the way to do it is your acceptance speech; that's the way to do it." He said, "Well, how can I do that?" I said, "I think that you got to lay it out on the table right then and there, when you've got the country's attention. Don't be a hypocrite. Just be honest." He said, "Well, will you do a draft?" So, of course again, like a dope, I took him seriously, and I worked very hard on the draft. And if I must say so, I had some pretty good ideas, because I thought he should have started off--this was, of course, before all the trouble--by saying: "Eight years ago I ran for the Democratic nomination for president against Jack Kennedy. Jack Kennedy beat me. Then every one of us got together to help Jack Kennedy to beat Richard Nixon. Well, now it's eight years later and Jack Kennedy isn't here anymore. But Richard Nixon is still here. And I'm not going to see the man that Jack Kennedy defeated eight years ago, Richard Nixon, now become the president. And neither are you." I think at this point the country would have said, "My god. He's right." It's no longer a question

of anybody except Humphrey and Nixon. I thought he should have said, "Now, until now I have been the vice president of the United States and as such have had a paramount loyalty to my chief. My role has now changed. I'm still the vice president, but now I'm a candidate for president. And you've got a right to know from me, and I've got an obligation to tell you what I would do if I were the president. And I'm going to tell you right now. Here's what I would do: A. I would stop bombing. B. I this. C. that." And walked away from Johnson in the full presence of the whole country. That's what I would have done. He just wouldn't do it. I think he would have been elected. I know he would have been elected. And Johnson was at that point so inflexible about the war that he wouldn't let him do it. Humphrey was afraid.

F: Did you feel Johnson's hand at the convention?

M: And how! and how! Marvin Watson and then everybody else around there were really throwing their weight around. And you could see that they wouldn't let Humphrey move on the Platform Committee or anything else.

F: To a certain extent, it was still a president-run convention.

M: Yes. And I blame my friend, Richard Daley, for confusing loyalty to his chief with loyalty to an issue. Because Richard Daley, whom I admire greatly, is a dove on the war and has been a dove on the war for years and years and years. And nevertheless because he belongs to the school that what the president says is

right, he'll go along with him.

F: "He's my president."

M: But if Richard Daley had gone to the President and said, "Listen, Mr. President, I think you're dead wrong on the war. Not only that, you're making a terrible mistake politically. You're going to ruin the Democratic Party and ruin your chances for re-election," I think LBJ would have listened to that. He would have listened to it and he would have changed course. LBJ was a victim of the goddamned war. He didn't start it; he inherited it. But instead of anybody saying, "Now get the hell out," everybody kept on saying, "Do a little more, do a little more."

F: Right. Going back, do you think Bobby would have thrown in his challenge if Johnson had stayed in the listings.

M: You mean that Bobby would have given up?

F: No, do you think that Bobby would have gone on and made the primaries and made the campaign and so forth for the nomination?

M: Oh, yes. I don't know if he could have been nominated, but he would have gone all the way.

F: Do you think he was committed to take on Johnson?

M: Unquestionably. And I was one of those who urged him to do so.

F: He realized, of course, the uphill fights, since the President ought to be able to hold delegates?

M: Yes, but I think Bob felt that the country wasn't with the President and in the last analysis the delegates would have responded.

F: But we can guess on that forever.

M: We'll never know. I never felt that Bob, even if Bob had lived, would get the nomination away from Humphrey. I felt that what would have happened would have been a Humphrey-Kennedy ticket. That seemed to me to be the logical result.

F: Did the Mayor ever strictly consider giving up the convention because it was anticipated that it was going to be a rough convention? Or was he determined that it would be there?

M: He was determined; he was a victim of pride.

F: Did he ever talk to you about it?

M: Well, we talked to him; I was a member of the delegation. I never talked to him personally; I talked to his people. I felt that what we should have done was, one, before the convention he should have had a press conference. Should have said, "Look, we have a tough problem here. We got people coming from all over the country for the most important job, picking the next president. We also have a lot of people who want to come here and dissent. Both of them are important. How are we going to do both at the same time? Well, here's what we're going to do." And then he should have laid out a plan and said, "The convention is going to be in area A, and only people who are authorized can go to area A. And the other people who want to dissent can go to area B," and laid it all out. I'm not saying he would have stopped the violence.

F: Yes.

M: But the public at least would have understood what the hell we

were trying to do. The trouble is that the Mayor is very much like LBJ; he does things in the back room and doesn't take the public into his confidence. And the result was that nobody understood.

F: Was he a Humphrey man?

M: Not really. He was for Kennedy, for Ted Kennedy. I mean if he could have got him.

F: He was on a spot there. Did you have much problem of bringing former RFK supporters over to Humphrey?

M: Yes, we did. Humphrey started to help a little bit when he started moving on the war, but it was too late. They would have come in a minute if Humphrey had been responsive on the issues. I don't understand why Humphrey was so afraid of Johnson. I really don't. And that would be a good thing if you could ever dig it out of a lot people. One guy you should talk to is Dr. Edgar Berman, Humphrey's doctor. He traveled with him all the time.

F: I'll do that.

M: Because I am telling you there's something, something here. Down deep, I don't believe Humphrey agreed with Johnson; I think he was being loyal to him.

F: The question is: "How far?"

M: Yes.

F: In a simple declaration, I'm vice president, and will be to

January 20th, and will continue loyal until January 20th. Then I'll strike out on my own.

M: That's right. But he just wouldn't do it, just wouldn't do it. And Johnson wouldn't give him any leeway, either.

F: Do you know that he went to Johnson?

M: Yes, I do, and I heard that Johnson cancelled the appointment and didn't show up. Did you know that?

F: No, didn't know that. This was after the nomination.

M: Yes.

F: During the campaign?

M: There's a shocking story there.

F: Who knows that, Humphrey?

M: Yes.

F: Anybody else?

M: I don't know. Humphrey ought to tell you that story.

F: I want to get on to that.

During the campaign--this is maybe pipsqueak, but I want to ask about it--you resigned as a trustee from the National Citizens Committee for Public Broadcasting. And Tom Hogan [?] had been sounding off about that time. Does this have some bearing on it?

M: Well, I felt a conflict of interest because I do work for some people in the broadcasting business. That committee was set up to advance public television. And then they changed course in midstream. They started attacking commercial television, I

thought in many ways irresponsibly. There was plenty to attack commercial television for, which I still do all the time, but I think they were wrong on a couple of things. I also felt that they never told the trustees; I'd read what they did in the paper. And the trustees were never informed or consulted in any way. So I just resigned from it.

F: Did you get any insight from Humphrey himself on how he felt about Johnson during the campaign? Did he ever complain about the President's attitude towards him?

M: Never. I think he has sense. You saw that article in the New York Times. But I must say in the campaign, even when I had that meeting, I'll never forget that meeting I had with him at the Sheraton Blackstone, even then he wouldn't say anything bad. He's a gentleman, and he felt loyal; he felt committed; he was just going to stay with him.

F: And when you'd lay the facts out as you saw them, he'd still . . . ?

M: Yes. And of course, he had bad advice, bad in my opinion. He had a couple of people around him who thought that Texas was going to supply all the money for the campaign; that most people were still supporting the war. There were a lot of old Johnson hands around Humphrey. I used to argue this violently with Jim Rowe and tell him he was just absolutely out of touch with what was going on in the world.

F: Did you have trouble with Johnson while you worked for Humphrey in Illinois? Did Johnson drag on you?

M: Oh, absolutely, absolutely. If Humphrey could have gotten rid of any association with Johnson, we could have carried Illinois. I know that. We only lost Illinois by a hundred fifty thousand votes.

F: Yes.

M: And [if] Humphrey had come in here and said, "Goddamn, we're going to get out of Vietnam tomorrow and the hell with Johnson," he would have been elected.

Again, I want to make my own opinion. Johnson, in my judgment, was a victim of the war.

F: Yes, yes.

M: It was not his fault, but he nevertheless in the public mind became associated with the war.

F: It was "Johnson's war."

M: That's right.

F: Fulbright put that right.

M: Yes.

F: Did you get the idea that Johnson was getting systematic reports from the convention as to the platform?

M: No doubt. Yes. He wanted to come here, you know, for that big party.

F: Yes.

M: And they were just waiting for the last minute.

Johnson made a terrible mistake, terrible mistake, in picking guys like Marvin Watson, who didn't know a precinct from a

newspaper. He was a very bad representative for Johnson, and a very unsophisticated, unwordly guy. I don't know whatever happened with Bill Moyers. If he'd kept a guy like Bill Moyers instead of guys like Watson, he would have at least had eyes and ears telling him the truth.

F: Watson saw what the boss wanted to see.

M: Believe me. Even if he didn't see, he'd tell him he saw what the boss wanted to see.

F: Did you ever get the feeling Johnson was going to come? I mean was this [a real possibility]?

M: Oh, I think they wanted him to come till the very last minute. It was an embarrassment for the Mayor that he couldn't have the President of the United States come to the big city of Chicago. If he had come there, then he would have really had trouble.

F: Yes. Did you want him to come?

M: Hell, no. Hell, no.

F: Or did you think he would be a deleterious influence?

M: I thought it was a big mistake for him and for the convention.

F: Who do you think made the decision? The Mayor? I mean as far as the final decision: "Mr. President, you ought not to come."

M: I don't know.

F: It was LBJ's decision, of course, but--

M: Yes, but that I don't know. I don't know how they did it.

F: Okay, let's pause a moment.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I]

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