

INTERVIEW I

DATE: November 17, 1977

INTERVIEWEES: Lady Bird Johnson [CTJ], D. B. Hardeman [DBH], Ralph Huitt [RH],
Lindy Boggs [LB], J. J. Pickle [JJP], Lynda Robb [LR], Luci
Nugent [LN], Dean Reid [DR], Patsy Steves [PS], Carl Albert
[CA], Beryl Pickle [BP], Richard Neustadt [RN], Elspeth
Rostow [ER], Sid Davis [SD].

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL GILLETTE

PLACE: LBJ Ranch, Stonewall, Texas

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DBH: Well, thank you, Lady Bird, for this wonderful occasion and for this wonderful week that all of us have enjoyed so much--rather exhausting but very rewarding. Our friendship has gone on for so long through ups and downs. You have a reputation, like a mutual friend of ours, for being prompt and for enjoying other people being prompt. In 1959, Senator Johnson and Speaker Rayburn were due to address the House of Delegates of the American Medical Association in Dallas. (Gap in tape) But H. G. Dulaney, who runs the Rayburn Library, was going to drive us down, and Mr. Rayburn, for some reason, just couldn't get it together that morning. So he was late coming down and we were way behind schedule. We started down the road to Dallas, and he looked at his watch and we were going to be late. He just fussed and exploded, and he said, "I loathe being late, and I loathe people who are late.

Then he burst out in a chuckle and he said, "Well, I guess I ought to relax." He said, "There was an old boy down near Ector named Billy Bob, and he was going to get married Saturday afternoon. So he picked cotton till noon, and then he went home and they put the water

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on the fire and got the washtub out. He got everything starting to go and got water in the washtub and got in there to take his bath. He was taking his time, and one of the groomsmen said, 'Billy Bob, if you don't hurry up you're going to be late for your own wedding.' And he said, 'Well, they can't do no business till I get there.'"
(Laughter)

CTJ: Do you remember what it was he said about--he came from Flag Springs, wasn't it?

DBH: Flag Springs, that's right.

CTJ: What was that expression he used to use about every one of us being just--

DBH: He said, "I came within a gnat's ear of being a tenant farmer." And he used to say, thinking about his career, "It's a fer piece from Flag Springs." (Laughter)

CTJ: He had a keen feeling about how close he was to having lived a life that was dull and unproductive and just sitting there in Flag Springs for fifty years, and then I think he marveled all the time at how far in the world he had gone. That always endeared him to me, among a thousand other things.

I remember coming home--Lyndon and I and the Speaker--from down in Virginia on a Sunday drive and getting to sort of a rise in the land and looking down onto the Potomac and to the dome of the Capitol, and it was sort of a quiet, contemplative moment, and then he looked around at us and said, "How do you like my Capitol?" (Laughter)
And that's exactly what he meant. What he meant was every American's

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Capitol, and his very especially.

RH: Everybody here who feels like he's come from something he never expected to raise his hand. (Laughter)

CTJ: Oh, Lordy, Lordy, I'll raise both of mine.

LB: Bird and I were talking about that the other night when I was saying how beautiful Austin was here, and she was talking about the lighting on the buildings, particularly on the capitol there, of course, which is a replica of our Capitol. I said to her, "You know, one of my most favorite memories of Mr. Sam was that--" I used to pick up Hale because we had only one car, and I knew only one way to get to the Capitol the first year we moved to Washington. So I would come down the Mall and there would be the Capitol, and all the different aspects of a big, big birthday cake and sunny sunset and dark, dark blue with the great white lights at other times and so on. And one night when Congress was in session fairly late and I was waiting out on the East Front for Hale, there was the Speaker looking up at the dome just as I was. He took my hand and said, "Isn't that the most beautiful sight in the world?" (inaudible for 45 seconds due to static) There I was looking at Mr. Sam's Capitol dome, and mine, and every American's, and they doused the lights. It was a very traumatic experience. I guess I sort of thought the dome and Mr. Sam, all of us--as long as he was there we knew those lights would always come on again.

I'd like to tell a Lyndon Johnson story that I think is very apropos to tonight. Lynda, Bird and I were talking this morning

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and Bird was concerned about putting anybody off in another room.

(Laughter) I didn't tell this story this morning because she would have immediately not done what Lynda and I thought was the sensible thing to do, and that was to put another table in another room.

But Hale always hated to separate tables, and so he would always crowd everybody into one room. I think it was our wedding anniversary, or it may have been my birthday, and we were all crowded into the dining room there on Bradley Boulevard because Hale wanted us all to be in the same room. When Lady Bird and the President arrived there were just two seats left. The President pulled out one of those little chairs Mr. Ridgewell rents and looked at it very suspiciously, and Hale said, "Mr. President, you may as well use it, it is the only one left." So he crowded into that little thing. I was asking DB about it, trying to refresh my memory, and he said, "Don't you remember? That's when he went out to the kitchen and got a second helping of duck." (Laughter) He looked at a half duck on his plate and he said, "These come with two sides." (Laughter)

JJP: I like the story Bob Hardesty tells about when they were having the party at the White House one night. Everybody was finished and they thought they were ready to have a toast, and he turned to Westmoreland, I guess, and he said, "General, are you finished with your plate?" He said, "Yes." He said, "Then, may I have it?" And he reached and got it. (Laughter)

LB: Once the President was seated in that weak chair he relaxed completely. For instance, I hadn't seen him do the Homer Thornberry impersonation

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in several years. (Laughter) He just did all kinds of things like that. He was absolutely marvelous.

LR: Tell them the whole Thornberry story.

LB: That was the night that Pueblo happened. You know, we thought, "Darn it, he just can't have more than twenty minutes of fun for anything under the sun."

DBH: Everybody said how relaxed and happy he was, and he had pictures of the grandchildren he showed everybody.

LB: Once he sat down in that little chair--he really didn't like that. But Bird, we were right, you know, you really can't crowd people in like that, especially the President. (Laughter)

LR: We did exactly what we are doing in here; everybody told a story. Well, we shouldn't tell them because it would make all those other people jealous. Now, tell the Homer Thornberry story, everybody doesn't know that one.

JJP: I don't know. Mrs. Johnson ought to tell that one because she was here. I was not here.

LR: Mother won't tell it.

LN: I can tell it.

LB: Well, come on.

LN: Mother, do you want it told?

CTJ: I don't think it's a very sweet thing to do to Homer.

LN: That's right, but I can tell just sort of a sweet, sentimental story about Mr. Sam and Lynda Bird and myself. Those of you, like Jake Pickle, might have come in contact from time to time--and Lindy--with the Texas State Society years ago in Washington. Mr. Hardeman,

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I know, was very much a part of those days as well. The Texas State Society would give Mr. Sam a party every year around his birthday time. One year I think the times were especially tough, and Congress and life was getting just hectic, and there was too much pressure going on. I remember sitting in a room, and Daddy and Speaker Rayburn came in and Daddy said, "Well now, Mr. Sam, we're just not going to be able to have two parties this year. We're just going to only be able to have one, and the children just aren't going to be able to have a party for you because we just can't crowd it all in. Thing's are just too wild, and it's going to demand too much."

LR: What she's going to say is that his birthday was in January, and every year the children had a birthday party for Uncle Sam, the Speaker. When I say the children, I mean like me, Luci and the Thornberrys and some of the little John Connally children and Christy. I know we have a picture upstairs with the Carpenters in it and the Barkleys and the Worleys and all these little [children]. Everybody in the Texas Delegation had little bitty children, and also a few other people who weren't in the delegation, but you had to be young. We always had the party, and we had no other grownups except Mr. Sam, the Speaker.

LN: Now, have you finished? (Laughter)

LR: You have to give that background, Luci.

LN: I was getting to it.

LR: Now, you weren't going to get to it.

LN: At any rate, my father just announced that that was going to be just

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too much commotion and we could only have one. Mr. Sam sat there and listened and he said, "Lyndon, I think you are right. We have had an awfully demanding time recently and things have been very taxing. It does make sense that we only have one party this year, but if we're going to have only one, what makes you think it's going to be yours that we are going to have?" (Laughter) I'll never forget, from that moment on I've always known that Mr. Sam loved us deeply. You know us unimportant children had just risen to the occasion, and my father, who has never had a lack of words, was just sort of going, "Uh, da, da, da."

But I want to say one other thing, Mr. Hardeman. I asked my father the day before he died about his relationship with Speaker Rayburn, and I was very interested that several people were talking about his relationship with Speaker Rayburn as being a father-son relationship, which is what I had always thought of it. Speaker Rayburn's portrait is the only portrait you'll see in our family's living room, and it's the only one that's been there since I can remember. My father paused for a minute, and he said, "No, it really wasn't a father-son relationship. It was much more like a big brother relationship, because you see, a father-son relationship has an element of distance and fear that really just didn't exist in our relationship. There was a lot of respect and a lot of love, and I'm not saying there wasn't some fear, but it was closer than I think very often a father-son relationship can be." I just thought that that might be an interesting comment for you all to have, because

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it was contrary to everything that I had really ever thought of, and since it was his relationship I figured you could take it for what he said.

LR: You talked in the meeting about how he really did like young people, and we found this very true in our family. I think I've told several people this, but when he would come over he would really make a play for us, and we were really little children. But he would always come over and he would sit down with me and he'd ask me about school, and then he'd say, "Now where is my popcorn?" He had this special kind of popcorn that he wanted, and it was my duty to go to the kitchen and get him this special kind of popcorn. I would go, and then we'd talk and everything was going on. He treated me like an equal, which was of course a marvelous relationship if you were six years old or eight or whatever. Because I knew he was somebody very important.

Well, a few times I had a run-in with my father on this, because Daddy would come in and Daddy invited the Speaker over for a purpose. They'd want to be talking and these things. And I remember once or twice Daddy would try to excuse you. He'd say, "Lynda, it's time for you to go to bed now." But, of course, I had read all those books about how if you always told the truth you'd be all right. So I'd say, "Oh, no sir, I don't have to go to bed till eight o'clock." And one time I was brash enough--I was in a conversation with the Speaker, it was maybe at the Ranch, and Daddy wanted to talk to the Speaker. And I was talking to the Speaker. That's the way I looked on it. He came over and he said, you know, "UMMMM." I said, "I'm

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talking to Uncle Sam, the Speaker." And Daddy then just hustled me off again. But he really believed, the Speaker really did make you feel like you as a young person were very important to him.

One of the best stories though is about Luci, when Luci just barged into his office one day. Because he was always saying, you know, "Come and see us some time." Well, Luci took him for seriousness, and you can fill in on this, Luci, but Daddy was just amazed. Even Daddy was amazed, because one day Luci just [barged in].

LN: Mr. Hardeman told that story to me.

LR: When? Now did you tell them the story? Well, anyway, I just remember hearing Daddy tell about how Luci just decided one day [to see Speaker Rayburn]. We were very free children. We were just let run loose on the Hill. (Laughter)

LB: Hill children.

LR: We were raised up there. We all knew where the rooms were. But anyway, Luci just walked into his office one day. And you were there with a friend, too. Weren't you with a friend?

LN: No, it was more than one.

LR: Oh, several friends?

LN: Yes, I invited three or four friends. (Laughter)

LR: You go ahead and tell the story.

LN: Well, I asked to see him.

LR: How old were you, about eight?

LN: Eight, nine.

DBH: No you were older, I think, than that. Say, 1959. When were you born?

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LN: I was thirteen in 1960.

DBH: You were about eleven or twelve.

LN: Anyway, I asked if I could see him one day and he said that, no, that particular time couldn't work, but why didn't I come up Saturday and we'd go to lunch. So I said, "Oh, gosh, that sounds just wonderful." Well, I appeared on Saturday with several of my friends, (Laughter) and Speaker Rayburn took me and my friends out to lunch. This is little known, a little fact I didn't remember: according to Mr. Hardeman, we all had doubles on ice cream. (Laughter)

You didn't tell them, Lynda Bird, about. . . . I don't know which one of us it was honestly; I always thought it was me until you were sitting there telling the story. It may be me I remember it about, but one of the two of us. Daddy asked for us to excuse ourselves, and we indicated, no, that we were talking with Mr. Sam and he was very interested in what we had to talk about. Daddy had another concern that he felt was more significant than the kind of conversation that we were having, (Laughter) and he tried to get us to excuse ourselves. About the third time around we didn't want to excuse ourselves, and he just got outright mad and said, "You're going to bed, and you are going to go to bed right now." One of us, I assumed it was me, turned to Speaker Rayburn as an ally and said, "But I was talking to Speaker Rayburn." At which point Mr. Rayburn spoke up and said, "Lyndon, didn't you hear the child? She was talking to me." (Laughter) And Daddy sat down and you could just see . . . (Laughter)

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CTJ: I used to just love to watch the counter play between them. Lyndon thought the Senate was the finest institution that this government had produced, and the Speaker was very positive that the House of Representatives was. His respect and closeness for it was something to watch. The little interplay between them--it was not in either one of them to denigrate the other's body, but they both let you know which one was the one that you ought to think the most of.

LN: Dean, tell the story you were going to tell yesterday.

DR: Okay, as a newspaperman I prefer to tell other people's stories; I call that reporting, and they call it plagiarism. (Laughter) But I'll tell two very briefly, both about President Johnson. The one was told me just yesterday by my good friend, Horace Busby. We've all heard and read of the President's driving habits, and Buzz said when he first was riding to the Capitol with President Johnson, then Representative Johnson, that was when he lived on 30th Place, he would always come down Rock Creek Parkway in the mornings and drive in. He said that not only did Mr. Johnson believe that he could direct men and events, he believed he could direct inanimate objects. (Laughter) He would be driving down Rock Creek Parkway, and he would talk to the cars. He would say, "You there, blue car, move over." (Laughter) "Red car, you're in the wrong lane." (Laughter)

PS: If he had had a CB they really would have done it.

DR: Buzz said sometime someone on the staff would be driving him or something, and that if Mr. Johnson finally decided he didn't

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particularly like they way this driver was driving that in heavy morning rush hour traffic there was suddenly a very fast change of drivers right across the front seat. They just switched places, and no one knew what happened. (Laughter) Mr. Johnson was driving now.

The other story also has to deal with machinery. It's a story of my good friend Les Carpenter, who printed it as I recall. He said that President Johnson was noted for his use of telephones, and the story was that some poor fellow had the misfortune to go to the airport--let's say it was in Austin--and try to use the telephone. There are four phone booths in a line, pay telephones. This fellow opened the first phone booth and the phone was off the hook, and he picked it up and the operator said, "I'm sorry, this telephone is being held for Lyndon Johnson. He has a call." The fellow puts it down, goes on to the next booth, picks it up, same story; goes to the third booth, same story; goes to the fourth booth, there's President Johnson on the telephone. (Laughter)

CA: Can I tell one of my Johnson experiences?

In the summer of 1964, during the Republican National Convention, the Democrats as usual had a recess. So we recessed until they finished, then we came back and we had our convention. We took off, my wife and I and one of my children, and decided to go to Canada, to Quebec, unknown. We didn't even tell our secretaries where we were going. We got into Quebec, and I was going to have dinner with a friend of mine who is a professor at Laval University. My wife was dressing in the bedroom, and my child and I were sitting out in the living room looking at the television. I think it was my boy,

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David. They were talking in French, and pretty soon it started in English and said, "Has anybody seen a white Thunderbird car with a license PB827, Oklahoma? It belongs to Congressman Carl Albert. If so, call the Royal Mounted Police at the University."

So I got on the phone, decided I better call the Royal Mounted Police, told them that was my car. They said, "The FBI has been calling us all day to see if we could track you down up here. [They] haven't been able to find you in the United States, and they left this number." I called the number, and it was President Johnson on the other end of the line. (Laughter) "What's the matter?" He said, "Well, we're going to have our convention in about two or three weeks, and I want you to be chairman of the platform committee." I said, "If that's what you want, okay."

I went on back down to Washington the next day. I got there and the White House staff brought me a proposed platform and a list of the one hundred members--one hundred plus, because the territories were involved, too--of the platform committee and then a list of about sixteen members of the drafting committee. Every convention has a drafting committee that goes over the proposals that the President and others make and tries to bring it into shape. I looked over this thing, and I said, "My God, what a group! I never saw anything like this in my life!"

I called the President and I said, "Here are the names of the people that are on the drafting committee. I only know three of them, and they will destroy you if they can. If you want them it's

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all right with me, but if you don't I want to change the drafting committee. I don't want to kick off anybody if he's been put on, but I do want to be sure that the drafting committee is one that will have some feeling of cooperation with the President." He said, "Who are they?" And I read them. He said, "My God, I've never heard of any such thing." I said, "I'd like to find out whether this is a committee that has been announced.

So he called the National Committee, they called him back, and he called me. They told him, "Yes, this is a definite drafting committee. It's going to draft the platform for the 1964 campaign." I said, "What do you think of it?" He said, "It's the worse thing I ever saw, but they have said that it is the drafting committee." I said, "The only thing we can do is to add to it. I'd like to add about eight or nine people to it that I can have some confidence in." We had about ten congressmen on the platform committee and not a single one was on the drafting committee. We had some governors. Governor Ella Grasso of Connecticut was one of the members, a friend of mine. I said, "I'd like to add some names to it. I'd like to be the one that does it. I don't want somebody else to do it. I don't want any more of your committee, your staff or of your national committee adding any names to this. I want to add them myself."

He said, "Well, my God, I don't blame you. Think of it. They've got sixteen names down there and not a Texan in the group." (Laughter) I said, "They've got sixteen names down there and not an Oklahoman in the group. (Laughter) I think we ought to fix that up." He said, "Let's do it. I want one Texan named." And I said, "All right. Name

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that person, and I think I'll put that person on the drafting committee." He said, "I want Mrs. Roland Boyd of McKinney, Texas--" you know her don't you? "--put on the drafting committee." I said, "All right. I'll put her on the committee." So I put her on. I put old Mannie [Emanuel] Celler, who knew more about the civil rights and the constitutional amendments generally that we had had than anybody, had old Clint Anderson, had old ex-Senator Benton there and we had old John Moss there and several pretty tough members of Congress. We had to use the horses that we had, so I put all of them on. I put on a very tough member of the leadership of the Oklahoma legislature, and I put on Mrs. Boyd.

Then when I got back the next day I went down to the White House. The President said, "I want to have lunch with you. I want to discuss the platform, and I want to discuss the platform committee." So I showed it to him. I had Mrs. Roland Boyd on it and Malone, and he said, "Fine. There are certain provisions in that platform that I have written myself, and I don't want them changed. Will you please cooperate?" I said, "Well, I'll do the best I can." One of them was the civil rights provision. It was the civil rights provision that led up to the 1965 act and so forth, we had just passed the 1964 bill, and another one was the 14-B provision, the right to work provision. He said, "I promised George Meany that we wouldn't change that provision, that we would try to repeal 14b of the Taft-Hartley Act, the right to work provision of the Taft-Hartley Act." I said, "Fine."

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To bring the story to an end, we met every night, this little group, which was only a part of the drafting committee. And we decided that we would have Mannie Celler sit right here, we would have Clint Anderson sit right there, we would have John Moss sit right there. We picked out the places where they would sit, and I would have somebody to recognize in each session to take over every time somebody jumped up. (Laughter)

LB: Very democratic of you. (Laughter)

CA: I played the game according to the democratic rule--the rule of winning! (Laughter)

So we got through practically all of the provisions of the platform until we came to the repeal of 14b, and up jumps Mrs. Roland Boyd and says, "I move that this provision of the platform be stricken." I thought, "My God, here's the President's nominee wanting to do something the President told me he could not under any circumstances do." So I said, "Well, let's talk it over a little bit." I said, "John, get down there and move that we adjourn until this afternoon." He did. We came back, and we had somebody fixed up to do it. We counted. We weren't worried about the outcome. We knew the majority were for the repeal of 14b, so we took it to a vote. We defeated Mrs. Boyd. I said, "Mrs. Boyd, do you know that that was the President's number one provision in that platform? He gave his word to George Meany that that would be in the platform and that he would submit it to the Congress. Why on God's Earth did you do that?" She said, "Because John

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Connally called me and told me to." (Laughter) Call her up and ask her if you don't believe me.

LR: We were talking earlier about his phone calling habits, and he really did. He would just pick up the phone and he would say, "Hello, this is Lyndon Johnson." And they didn't know whether to believe him or not. They'd say, "Oh, it's not. No, it's not."

I remember one time when he was vice president and --I think any father of daughters will understand this fact: he was always giving us advice about our boyfriends. He wouldn't say, "I don't want you to go out with this one," but he would just kind of say, "Now, I think maybe--"

LN: "Knowing how mature and intelligent and sensible a girl you are, I am sure that you will only do the following." (Laughter) You couldn't do it under any circumstances. I wouldn't have any problem disobeying him after he told you how wonderful and smart and intelligent you were.

LR: That's right. "You will use your own good judgment." He would always say, "You're going to use your own good judgment."

LN: "And this is what good judgment is--" (Laughter)

LR: People were not scared. As I learned later, he would blow off steam and he'd get angry and he'd fuss and he'd fire everybody about once a day, but the time when you really got scared was when he got quiet. He'd come up--he was always at least two feet taller than everybody--and he'd look down on you and he'd say, "I know you are going to use your own good judgment." That's when we all were petrified, because

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we knew if you didn't do what he wanted, it was really bad.

But I remember one time I had a date with some young man, and I just thought he was the most marvelous person. Not only that, he was a marine. I started early with marines. (Laughter) Anyway, I was going to have a date with this young man, and I was very excited about it. Well, Daddy then--I shouldn't be telling this story, Luci?

LN: No, finish it.

LR: Okay. Mother, I shouldn't be telling this story? (Laughter) Anyway, I had a date with this young man, and it got time. The young man was going to come and pick me up that night, and it was all settled. He was down at Quantico. So Daddy then said, "I want you to go out on the boat with me tonight." I said, "Thank you very much, but I just can't. I have a date with this brilliant young man, and I've got to stay here." He said, "He can come, too, then." Of course, my idea of an exciting date with this marine was not going with my father. (Laughter) I just said, "Well, you know, I just don't think we can reach him."

Daddy then picked up the phone, called Quantico, and he said, "I'd like to speak with the officer of the day." He got the officer then. He knew this young man's name, so he got the officer and he said, "This is the Vice President." And the officer of the day said, "The vice president of what?" (Laughter) This was not the first marine I dated. Every time I meet somebody new in the Marine Corps they will come up and say, "Is that true? We heard that story."

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You know, they're small enough that everybody knows, and these stories go around. One of the first dates I had with Chuck he said, "I have heard this ridiculous story," and I had to tell him yes, it was absolutely true. (Laughter)

He wouldn't have any introduction. A lot of times he'd call you at any time of the day or night, as I think some people were telling earlier, and he would just break right in. He just didn't have anybody precede him and say, "Such-and-such is calling." He would just call right up and say, "This is Lyndon Johnson." And you could just hear the people, you know, a big pause on the other end.

I remember one time he called. This must have been in November, 1960; we were still in 30th Place. He told me, "I am going to take a nap." He didn't want people to know that he did fragile things like that. (Laughter) He'd say, "I want you to answer the phone. Don't tell anybody I'm going to be asleep. Don't wake me up. Just tell them I'm out." I was doing the same kind of phone answering that he did sometimes. The phone rang and I picked it up, and this person said, "I'd like to speak to Lyndon Johnson." I said, "Oh, I'm sorry, but he's out. But may I take a message?" And this person said, "This is Jack Kennedy." (Laughter)

CTJ: But I want to ask, out of all of those good, wonderful vignettes that you gave, Ralph, is there one that you didn't tell that comes to mind?

RH: I would like to tell one that I heard the President tell himself two or three times. He loved it and I'm sure that many people here know

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it, but I would not like a tape like this to go down without hearing this story, because it illustrates a lot of things, including the President's grasp of the legislative process.

In 1965, the most controversial bill and the most important bill was the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Now this was the first time that the government of the United States ever faced a church-state issue and did something of education aid to the schools all over the country. The President knew that you could not go up there and put in something which would give money and things to the parochial schools on the same basis as the public schools. That, of course, was the great barrier. We had to get over the church and state issue, but you at the same time had to include the Catholics or else nothing would move.

So he came up with a formula of the public schools having all of these things given to them, books, equipment and that kind of thing, but they could lend them to the parochial schools. In communities where the parochial schools were strong that worked very well. So that the Catholics in 1968 were our strongest allies in fighting amendments to this ESEA, because where they were strong they'd worked out very good relations with the public schools. All right, now this was the formula. But again we've talked a lot over the last two days about that first year business: get it done, get it done. Well, this bill is still called the Express Train Bill in the histories of the House and so forth, because in order to get this through it had to be done before opposition could mobilize. The

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President realized that there were Protestants all over the South who would catch on very quickly to what was happening and come roaring in.

Sure enough, one day, before this bill had gone very far, there was a call for the President. It was from--I don't know the Reverend's name, but I'll call him Dr. Jones, who is the president of that Baptist Seminary in Arkansas where Bill Moyers came to be a Rev. He called and he wanted to talk to the President, demanded to talk to the President right now: "I want to talk to the President." The people in the White House, sensitive to these pressures and so forth, recognized the name. They thought, "The best person to placate him will be Bill Moyers." So they put him on the line with Bill Moyers and Bill said, "Dr. Jones, how are you?" "Don't put me off, Bill. I want to talk to the President." He said, "I'm sorry, Dr. Jones, you can't talk to the President. He is tied up now and cannot get away." "Well, Bill," he said, "I've got to talk to the President [about] something very, very, very important, [an] emergency." "Well, you can't talk to him now. He's tied up."

So the Rev hung up, but in about fifteen or twenty minutes he's back on the line and they put him on with Bill again. He insisted he had to talk to the President, so finally Dr. Jones said, "Bill, you tell me the President's too busy to talk to me. What in the world is the President doing?" He said, "Dr. Jones, I'll tell you. He's in the swimming pool having a swim with a guest." "Well, who is the guest?" Bill said, "The Reverend Dr. Graham." (Laughter) There was a long pause, and the old man said, "Our Billy?" (Laughter)

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- CTJ: I've heard Lyndon tell that with great pleasure several times.
- RH: So Bill said, "Yes sir, he is with the Reverend Dr. Billy Graham. Our Billy." The old man waited a minute and he said, "Tell the President of the United States I wish him well, I have great regard for him, and I hope he lives a long and happy life." (Laughter)
- CTJ: That really did happen. Billy Graham was there a lot of times, much to our pleasure, and Lyndon's.
- LR: On that Billy Graham story, I remember in the 1964 campaign Dr. Graham had said that he knew us and liked us and so forth, but he just felt it would be better if he didn't come out, get involved in the political race and endorse Daddy. During the campaign it was reported that Dr. Graham's daughter was at a Nixon rally, so Daddy called up [Dr. Graham].
- LN: Goldwater.
- LR: I beg your pardon, a Goldwater rally, yes, right. I knew I was wrong there, but anyway, a Goldwater rally.
- RH: That would be even sillier.
- LN: Well, you know, Daddy was always a tease; he liked to really needle you. So he called Billy Graham up and he said something to the effect--now I only heard Daddy telling this in hindsight--"Can't you control your own family?" Not too long after that Luci converted to Catholicism, and so Billy Graham called Daddy up and said, "Can't you control your own family?" (Laughter)

I know, Dr. Neustadt, you said that you had some stories that you wanted to tell that you didn't tell. Now, we want to hear them.

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RN: Oh no.

LR: Oh yes.

RN: I was treasuring one story for today. I thought it would be very useful, and, it would have been if Elspeth Rostow hadn't taken pains to sort of puncture the issue. So I didn't have to tell you the story, but I told you I would so I will.

This was also in 1964. It was just after the election, late November, and I was not intimately involved with the administration. Mr. Johnson had me in from time to time when I could do something, or others had me in. On this particular occasion, because I knew some of the people in the British government, I had been sent over to talk with them a little bit before Harold Wilson came for his first visit to the States and to see the newly elected President. And the issue between them was complicated, neither here nor there, but that's how I happened to be involved.

The President was having a meeting with his chief circle of foreign policy advisors. Bob McNamara was there. Dean Rusk was away somewhere so George Ball was there, and McGeorge Bundy, and as I remember Dean Acheson had been signing in. There may have been one or two others. I was sort of there in the corner. I was supposed to be a happy witness to the scene. There was a long discussion of business at hand which envisaged the possibility of a treaty. Treaties were not something that Mr. Johnson was taking lightly. After a great deal of discussion of the substance of the foreign policy issue he paused, and then he took on sort of a

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"father at the lecturn" note. (Laughter) It was wonderful to watch. He spent some time instructing these gentlemen on things that it was perfectly clear he wasn't sure that they perfectly understood. All right, I was included, but I wasn't very important. I wasn't very important at all.

It was marvelous advice. You all can understand the intonations I can't possibly imitate. He said, "The only thing that I think you should get straight, it's very important that you understand about that election, is that was a big majority, but that wasn't a love majority. That wasn't a love of me. That was a fear majority. That was fear of him." He said, "As I've got that majority, everybody up there in Congress is just waiting, just waiting for me to stub my toe." (Laughter) "Remember that's not love there," he said, "I've got to be very careful, very, very careful. I've got to look at everything that goes up there very carefully."

"Understand," he said, "I've got a year. You may think we've won a great victory and this second term is going to be a tremendous thing. One year, maybe two, but one year at the top. They're going to watch every step I take, everything I do. This is the year; this is the time for me to get our critical programs through. I've got to watch every single one. I'm not so concerned about what you put in them, I'm concerned about what could be done with them. And don't try to get me into something that's going to wreck that year." He said, "If we can get through the first year, we won't do as well, but maybe we can have a second year. At the end of that second year there is going to be an election, midterm elections, and

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we'll lose seats. Then pretty soon there's going to be a presidential election. It's all this year. Don't you mess up this year."

It was marvelous; just marvelous. And you all know what was involved and the care that was taken, issue by issue, there. But for the people who think the pendulum has swung, the only point that I wanted to make with that story was that it took an enormous effort, and he was conscious of the effort, to get the successes of 1965. It wasn't so much a pendulum swing, that was human effort.

CTJ: It sure was, (Laughter) just tremendous on every one of them.

RH: Mrs. Johnson, may I say one thing serious here?

There has been a lot of talk, and properly so, about that great first year and all the pressure that was put on it, but I think the record should show, and I'll stake my life on this, that things which were established then continued. And in the last year of the Johnson administration our programs were cordially received on the Hill. The principal criticism we got up there was that we were not asking for enough money. We couldn't do that because there just was not enough money for that. But we are still going to members of Congress in higher education who became our friends then and are talking to them in terms of legislation which was started then and getting in Congress support that we have to have. Congresses are a haven. That's where we go when we want something--not OMB, not HEW, but to the Hill. The people up there who dedicated themselves to these Great Society programs in the sixties and 1965 and so forth who are still there are

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still our stoutest friends, and are still receptive to any appeals made that, "This is an extension of what you did back there."

CTJ: Oh, that's good to hear. And you know, one of the things that I relish most happened very late in the day, actually October of 1968. There were about four bills that we signed in the East Room in October. I remember one of them was the bill for the California Redwoods. Granted it's not perfect, it's just a beginning. Then the other one was getting a bite out of the offshore drilling to put into the fund for land acquisitions. It was something just right to me that from the dissipation of fossil fuel, which it took millions of years to produce, the money comes to the government and can go into buying more park lands. I think that is just the right use for it, kind of plowing it under. (Laughter) Up to that time that fund, which has been so wonderfully productive, only had in it little bits and pieces from taxes on gas sold in national parks and boat licenses. Now that fund has burgeoned into something that has produced wonderful acquisitions of park lands.

You know what I wish, I wish Mr. Jake Pickle would give us a piece on [his harp]. Jake, somebody said you brought your harp, did you? (Clapping) I don't know whether he did or not. Did you really?

JJP: No, of course not.

?: Play it, Jake, go ahead.

JJP: No, I'll tell you some of my political stories and 1968 and all.

No. But I will tell a story. And it's not a harp; it's a harmonica.

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If Preston Jones was here I'd play it.

LN: Well, you played it with me in East Austin, Jake.

JJP: Did I? We must have had a beer or two.

LB: He'll put you in one of his plays, first thing you know.

JJP: Aside from legislation, I was thinking that here we are at the Ranch, and so many times when I came up to the Ranch it was associated with traveling over the Ranch to see the deer or it was in deer season and you had to go deer hunting. If anybody was visiting here, particularly if you were from the North and East, you had to go get a deer. That was the test. And if you were able to get a deer you had to be an excellent shot, because he would harass you every way in the world to keep you from getting a fair shot. He would holler in your ear, accelerate the car, and he would scream and he would look and whatever it took. But he took great pleasure out of that.

I remember one time that we had come up here, I don't know whether it was in 1967 or 1968, it might have been 1967, but anyway towards the end of the year. He was going to have Charles Walker visiting, because as assistant secretary of the Treasury he wanted to have him here to ask his advice, and I always suspected to get some kind of ruling through before the end of the year came along, to see if it was legal, and just really milk him for all the information he could. Charles came and brought his wife and his son, who I think was named Chuck, a young man. I think he was about sixteen. So we were going to go deer hunting, and of course Chuck had never shot at a deer. The President said, "You must go deer hunting. Come on."

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He said, "Bird, we are going out in the pasture a little bit." She said, "Well, Lyndon, we're going to eat now in forty-five minutes." "Oh, it won't take us long. We will be back in thirty or forty-five minutes."

We went back up in here and didn't find a deer, so he drove down another pasture towards the Scharnhorst and finally I think went back over into the Lewis place, if I have my directions correct. He wanted me to get a deer, and we drove around. Every time I said, "I see a buck out there," and just when I got ready to shoot, he'd say, "There he is, shoot!" Well, of course, with that kind of sound the deer would run off. (Laughter) I'd have a hard time. Finally I got one and crippled him; we had to chase him down, and we finally got the deer. And he just lectured me right and left. So when we met up with the other car that had been circling around, here was Charles Walker with his son, Chuck, who had not seen a deer, hadn't gotten a shot. So the President would not come in. I reminded him that I thought Mrs. Johnson was waiting dinner for us. He said, "Oh, well, it won't take a minute. Drive over here." We kept driving. With all the deer up here, a lot of them, that was a day when there weren't any deer running.

It was high noon or one o'clock by then, so he just kept driving, just kept going. Finally we rode over the top of a hill and got to a pasture which had about twenty acres in it, I'd guess, in a triangle. Instead of going in what would be normally the gate, he went into the nose of the triangle. I had to get out and unwire the gate, which

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had been wired up, and lift up and finally strain to get the gate open. He drove the car in there because we had seen a big buck way over in the far corner. He said, "Here's your chance, Chuck." As we drove in he said to me, "Jake, you stay here now and guard this gate. Close it, and we are going to go down to get this deer." I said, "Yes, sir." I closed the gate, and I just stood there and waited.

He swept around to the right in that triangle, hollering, hooping, and the poor deer, of course, went back to the far corner. He went way down, and he kept saying, "Chuck, get your gun. Get your gun set." When he got down to the far end he made Chuck change over so his right hand was showing, and he started running that deer for the far corner with all the force that he could. He had that automobile revved up as much as he could as he would run along, and the poor deer was just running for his life. The deer must have been making forty-five miles an hour. He had his horn honking and [he was] yelling at the deer, and he said, "Shoot him, Chuck! Shoot him, Chuck!" Of course, the poor boy--(Laughter) This deer was the most frightened animal in all the world. Here was this big Continental moving up and running parallel with the deer, and the deer was trying to run for his life.

They just kept coming back and kept coming back, and I realized I was in the vortex in the point. (Laughter) There I stood as he was chasing that deer up, honking and going. There was firing, banging going on, and I could see right quick that this wasn't any

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we talked about the legislation that he was mad about for about a half an hour. (Chuckles)

JJP: Oh, well, he loved to roam his Ranch.

CA: And he loved to talk about politics, too, and legislation.

JJP: I tell you, this reminds me of another story that just flashed in my mind. He always invited us when he came back to Austin. You'd get to ride on Air Force One, and that was always a great privilege, pretty good accommodations. So quite often they'd call you and they'd say, "Come on down." And I'd say, "Yes, sir. About when are you going to leave?" They'd give me an estimate, and it always seemed like I couldn't make that schedule. He'd already got peeved a time or two, because I would always stay out and have another drink or eat at another place and try to get down there and I'd be a little late. Well, once or twice we did this down at the White House, and then you got in a helicopter and you flew out to Andrews and you took off.

Now I always seemed to be a little bit late. It worked out a time or two where he said, "How come you live here and Henry Gonzalez gets here before you." I said, "No, I told Henry I was going to be here, and I think Henry will be here in a little bit." He said, "Henry is already here." And he'd always make a lesson out of it. It got so [if] we were late one time and we finally got on board the plane, instead of fussing at me--I was a voting member--he'd call in Jack Valenti and he'd set him down, and General Ted Clifford and he'd set him down by one side. He'd say, "General, you sit here;

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Jack, you sit here." Then he'd say, "Congressman, would you like to have a seat here?" "Yes." Then he'd turn to Valenti and he'd say, "Why is it if we are going to leave at four forty-five you can't get Congressman Pickle here?" (Laughter) He said, "General Clifford, you got to be a four-star general not by being a damn fool. You could maintain a schedule. Why is it you are not able to get one member of Congress out here when we are supposed to leave?" Then he'd turn to Valenti, and he'd lace them over for about an hour. One trip almost all the way down here he just worked them over, and I just sat there like this. (Laughter)

Well, one morning you would know I got there late. It was here in Austin, because we were going to Amistad Dam to dedicate that dam and have a ceremony between the President of Mexico and the President of the United States. I headed out to Bergstrom and I got there. I swear I was supposed to leave at eight o'clock. Nine? I don't know, nine. I swear I got there two minutes before, but just when I drove up here was Air Force One (noise indicating flying plane). The man there, Mr. Bradley, he said he was the bag man, said, "The President said that he was leaving you." I said, "Well, hot damn--!" There Beryl and I stood, and I didn't know what the heck to do, because he had gone off and left me. I think he left about two or three minutes early; but no matter, he was going to teach me a lesson.

So about that time I heard over the PA system that Secretary Udall was coming and that he was due in about forty-five minutes,

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that he was coming in from Fort Worth. He had made a speech the night before--Stewart Udall--and he was to go down there, and so they were flying him in. Well, whoever gave the party for him had made arrangements to send him down in a Piper Cub, a little old one engine plane, from Fort Worth. It was a little put, put, put thing, and he like to never got there. And of course he was late. So they had left a jet behind to fly him. (Laughter) I was thinking, "Uh-oh, I know how I'm going to get there now."

About that time here came a car around the corner (sound of siren), and it was Henry Gonzalez. He was always late. He was later than Santa Anna was at the (inaudible because of laughter) with his yellow rose. Henry said, "Are they already gone?" I said, "Yes, Henry, they already have, and I'm sorry." He said, "Why are you here?" I said, "Well, Henry, I waited on you. I didn't want you to feel that we were going to leave you here, so I was just going to wait for you. We are going to make arrangements. I think I know how we are going to be able to do it." He said, "But you should have gone." I said, "No, no, no." (Laughter) I told Henry we had a plane coming in and that Udall was coming in, so we got in that plane. When it did land we got in that jet, and we took off for Del Rio. Of course, when Air Force One lands, everybody goes with it just like a tidal wave. The whole town just moves forward, and there is nothing left back here. When we got to the airport we couldn't get on the phone; we couldn't call anybody; they wouldn't answer it; we had no taxi; we had no way to get in from the airfield.

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CTJ: I'll tell you, "Ain't nobody else close by."

JJP: No, we finally had to walk over to one of these little adjuncts of the base, and I just commandeered one of the little privates to get his car, wherever it was, and take us. We got the Secretary, Henry Gonzalez and I, and we finally started off. We got to the bridge, and they wouldn't let us go across. We had to show our rank. We got to the bridge, and by that time, of course, the presidential group had long since gone. They wouldn't let us pass, and we had to walk over there. Well, we got over by the bridge.

BP: You got there and you said, "Whose car is that?" Remember? And they said "The President's car."

JJP: And I said, "Oh, well, that's all right." (Laughter) I wouldn't commandeer that one. (Laughter) We got in another taxi and got across the bridge and got almost up to the patio and had a flat tire. I said, "Come on, let's just walk." So Henry and I and the Secretary got out and we headed up to the patio. They took the Secretary one way, and Henry and I crawled in. Just as we got in and mounted up the steps the President was winding up his speech. He looked up and saw Henry and me, and he just paused. He was waiting for us. And I didn't go near him. I stayed away from him.

We went out to the airfield then when it was finished, and when we got out to the airfield they formed this big, long receiving line. It was Secretary Rusk and [U.S. Ambassador Fulton] Freeman from Mexico and the Vice President and on down the line--it was a big affair--and all the Mexican officials, about fifteen. So when we started to line

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up, why you do so by seniority. We were standing in line, and Henry Gonzalez said, "Jake, sit down right here." I said, "No, no, Henry, you're senior to me. You stand right here and I'll get next to you." So here came the President down the line shaking hands with everybody, and when he got to Henry he grabbed Henry and instead of saying, "Hello," [he said], "Henry, where in the hell were you out there when the airplane started to leave?" (Laughter) Henry, not knowing, said, "Jake said that we were to wait to catch this plane with the Secretary, didn't you Jake?" By that time I had gotten out of line. (Laughter) I took off. The punch of it was that he was waiting to stick that needle in me. He just couldn't wait.

He finally decided, "Would you and John and Nelly like to ride back here to the Ranch with us?" And we said, "Why, of course." So instead of going in Air Force One we got in the jet and we flew up here and landed. That was the evening that Beryl and I were having a party for Luci and Pat at the Headliners Club. It was your birthday or something. We were going to be with a lot of young people. We had about thirty guests at least, and we had a party at seven. The President began to drive us around, and I kept saying, "Mr. President, we need to get on into Austin." "Yes, fine, fine," he said, "Let's go here." We went to this place, we went to this place, we went to this place. We drove all over the Ranch. He would not let us go. He kept us here until eight o'clock! I don't know what time we finally got to the party that night.

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CTJ: Oh, you poor man. What did you do about your party?

JJP: Well, I got there about a hour and a half late. (Laughter) He said, "Now, you go ahead and get to Austin. Next time you get to Air Force One on time." (Laughter)

CTJ: Luci and Pat, did you get there?

BP: Yes. There were thirty young people there.

PN: Jake wasn't missed at all.

RH: I had one more thing I hadn't thought of until I heard our friend here giving us some realistic stuff. One of the things that the President did which confounded people who came to see him was that he would find out ahead of time what they were talking about, and he would know more about it than they did. This is awful, you know--you come in from a state, you're a state senator, and you find out the President knows more about your state in this regard than you do. This is very disconcerting. Part of this story I know firsthand and part of it I know from Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin who was a party to it.

After the great landslide victory in 1964, there were two seats in federal district courts to be filled in Wisconsin. One of them clearly was going to go to Jim Doyle, who was the pick of the Democrats out there and also a really first-rate lawyer, respected by everybody in the state. The second was, they hoped, to go to the ex-governor, who ran a good race but was beaten. And he was pretty weak on the legal stuff. He told me one time that the reason that he was a good attorney general was because, and he passed this on to his successor, "I never messed with the lawyers." He was attorney

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general, but any time anything legal came up he said, "I got the hell out of there and let the lawyers handle it." (Laughter) He was the principal lawyer in the state, but this is the way he handled it because he really was a politician, and I think a good man. I supported him. But I think, as the President did, his qualifications were pretty slight.

So I got a call one afternoon from George Reedy who said, "The President is up against this Proxmire-Nelson coalition, and he's going to try to put these two Wisconsin people through as judges as a package. The President wants to get somebody out there for this second position who is respected by every lawyer in the state. He wants a first-rate legal person." He said, "Can you get me some information on that?" I said, "I certainly can." I called the law school in Wisconsin, to a man there whose integrity is absolutely without question. He is a very high-level person, and I said to him what I had heard. I said, "Now, we want to give him two or three lawyers from Wisconsin who are the best, the ones regarded by the legal profession as absolutely the best lawyers in the state." He said, "Give me a couple of days." I did, of course, and he came back and gave me three names with the information on them. I called him in and dictated this very carefully to George, who took it to the President. I know that this governor got to be the district judge, all right.

The next thing came when Gaylord Nelson, who comes by our house about, I don't know, every three or four weeks because we

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are on his way home--he drops in at twelve o'clock or twelve-thirty or something and has three or four scotches and we talk, an old and dear friend--said to me, "You know that President of yours is an amazing man." He said, "Proxmire and I went down there to talk to him about these two judges, and we put the case for John Reynolds," who was the defeated governor," and this guy says 'How about so-and-so? Here's what he has done, so-and-so and so-and-so.'" He said, "Proxmire didn't even recognize the man's name." And he claimed that he did. (Laughter) There was nothing that they could say. This man was a first-rate attorney, a first-rate lawyer. He went down the line, and the three people that he suggested just took their breath away, because these three guys were better than Reynolds without question for this particular seat. They could not imagine how the President of the United States knew more about the lawyers of Wisconsin than they did.

Well, they hung in there, and they got out of there alive, and eventually they just kept pushing him enough that the President finally said, "If you want a bum judge, that's your business." He said, "Nobody should get any consideration from the Democratic President because he lost in 1964. Any Democrat that couldn't win in 1964 deserves nobody's charity." But finally he got himself appointed. And then the end of the story, according to Nelson, was that he was at a White House party and he was going through the line. There were ladies and men all along in this line, and he got to the President and the President said, "How dare you come through my line here when you just screwed me?" (Laughter)

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LB: The Rostows are bound to have worlds of stories.

ER: No, because unfortunately we didn't get to know the Johnsons until reasonably late in the sixties. In fact, I was thinking the only story, I mentioned it to Dick Neustadt on the way out, is a very slight one. When we came here trying to find a place to live in Austin, not knowing the neighborhoods, we looked at a lot of places. It was on very short notice. We finally decided to move to a relatively unkempt part of town where the leaves were not caught before they landed on the grass and where things were a little disheveled. President Johnson was very unhappy about this choice and said to us--it was out in Westlake--"You wouldn't want to go out there, there's no one out there but moonshiners, cedar choppers and supporters of Senator Eugene McCarthy." (Laughter)

CTJ: You would have to live in Austin to know about the moonshiners and the cedar choppers. That's exactly what lived in that area. (Laughter) And the charcoal burners, charcoal burners lived in that area. I'm just wondering, what did you people who first started coming down here to see us think? This must have dawned on you as rather an end of the world sort of place for a president to come from. Sid and Bonnie and Fran, when were you first here?

SD: I first came here in 1960 when you and the President, then the Vice President, welcomed Jack Kennedy here in the 1960 campaign. I was covering Kennedy at that time. We landed on your airstrip right here, which wasn't long enough, incidentally, for our airplane. (Laughter)

CTJ: I judge you did make it.

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SD: The first landing and takeoff we ever made with a left turn, because we didn't have enough room on the runway and we had to get enough speed on that apron out there. Our first tour of the Ranch was in a driving rainstorm that night with you and President Johnson. He was on one bus and you were on the other bus and took us around the Ranch. We couldn't see anything because it was dark and raining. But then I did not know the President when he was vice president. I covered Kennedy and I was in Dallas, and my first real encounter with Lyndon Johnson was on Air Force One in Dallas when he was sworn in as President. I was fortunate, or unfortunate, enough to be one of the three reporters on Air Force One when the oath was administered that day.

J: You and who else?

SD: Charles Roberts of Newsweek and Merriman Smith of UPI.

LR: How did it happen? Did they actually, even at that moment, pick a pool, or were you already flying?

SD: There was chaos. No, I didn't come back. There was chaos that day in Dallas. I had been the pooler with Kennedy going into Fort Worth the night before, and it was not my turn. Then when everything happened in Dallas I was at the hospital there, and I remember I had a telephone and I had someone hold the phone for me in one of the nurses' aids' rooms. I had commandeered a phone. I had a secretary holding it, and I was trying to run down the hall to get more information. Kennedy was then down at the emergency room, and Lyndon Johnson was down there in that area, too. I remember trying

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to get information. Kennedy was then down at the emergency room, and Lyndon Johnson was down there in that area, too. I remember trying to get information. I had been on the air on a telephone line, and I needed more information.

I had bumped into a fellow downstairs who was a Catholic priest, his name was Father Oscar Hubert, and he had come out of the emergency room and said, "He's dead all right." Well, that was a dilemma for me. Jerry TerHorst of the Detroit News was standing with me. It was a dilemma for me because Jerry TerHorst was writing for a newspaper, and a newspaper has a lot of time to get ready and go to print. I had this telephone upstairs off the hook into a live line to Washington going on the air, and I had a Catholic priest saying that the President was dead. That wasn't a doctor, and it wasn't an official; it wasn't the White House press office. What do you do with that information? It wasn't good enough for me to go on the air. I mean, you might do that with a mayor, but you didn't do that with a president. So I had that information, and I waited trying to get more. Then they announced that Malcolm Kilduff was going to have a news conference and announce it. I went down to Malcom Kilduff's news conference and he announced it, and I went back to my phone and got on the phone and announced that the President was dead.

Then Jigs Farber of the White House Press Office came by and said, "We need a pool right away." I said, "I'm busy, I can't do it. I was the pool last night going to Fort Worth, and I'm better off if I stay here in Dallas." I didn't know what he wanted them

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for, but I had a suspicion. I said, "It's Bob Pierpoint's turn." He was with CBS; it was his rotation. He said, "We can't find Pierpoint. You come with me." So I said to my office, "I'll be in touch with you later," and I put the phone down and went with Farber. We went down right through the room where Kennedy had been treated, and they put us in an unmarked police car at the entrance there. The presidential limousine was sitting out there, and I bumped into Pierpoint and I said, "It's your turn to be the pool. I'm out of rotation. They are in your pool right now, and they have commandeered and they have asked me to go." He said, "I don't want to go, you go." So I said, "Okay."

I just got in the car, and there was Roberts and myself and Merriman Smith and a policeman. Vice President Johnson had already been taken out a couple minutes before secretly. They maintained radio silence on the way to the airport because they didn't know whether it was a conspiracy. I might say that Vice President Johnson had raised that question to Malcolm Kilduff when he asked about whether the announcement ought to be made at the hospital. Vice President Johnson said, "Why don't you wait until we have left the hospital before the announcement is made. We don't know whether this is a conspiracy or not." He had the presence to think in those terms.

When I got out to the airport the President and Mrs. Johnson were on board, and there were about twenty-two people. I counted twenty-two people back there, twenty-two to twenty-eight people--twenty-eight I think in the rear cabin. All the shades were drawn

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on the airplane. Mrs. Kennedy was in the back room, and the casket had just been brought onto the plane. I remember Sarah Hughes. There was a woman there who had an oath. I never saw her before. I don't know where she came from, but it was Judge Sarah Hughes of Dallas. She said we ought to proceed, and Vice President Johnson said, "No, let's see if Mrs. Kennedy can stand with us." So they went back and talked to Mrs. Kennedy, and she said she would like to come out if we gave her a couple of minutes to compose herself. And she did, she came out. I have written it many times about Lyndon Johnson's compassion and concern for the Kennedy family from that very moment on, and I disputed some of the Manchester book material. I never did get to talk to Mr. Manchester, nor did Chuck Roberts. He was given our names about that episode. He questioned whether we were on the airplane. He told Chuck Roberts, "Your name was not on the manifest. You were not on the plane."

Well, anyway, the swearing-in took place. I remember there was a Dictograph in there, and Malcom Kilduff held the Dictograph up to get the recording of it. I clocked the oath, for what it is worth, at twenty-eight seconds. They came to Chuck Roberts and me and Merriman Smith and they said, "There are only two seats for the press on the airplane. One of you has to get off." Chuck Roberts and I looked at each other and said, "Smitty has to stay, he is the wire service. It's between Roberts and Davis." So I said, "Look, I've got a company waiting for me on the air. Newsweek magazine doesn't go to bed till Saturday night. You've got plenty of time to

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see, and we have people waiting in Washington for the airplane." So I got off.

I got off with Judge Sarah Hughes, I didn't know who she was, and I interviewed her. We got off the ramp, and I interviewed her a little bit. She told me who she was, and she gave me a copy of the oath that she had read. I couldn't get the whole oath. You have to understand the circumstances. There was Albert Thomas and Jack Valenti, and you and some of the Kennedy people, Kenny O'Donnell, people like that were on the plane. I tried to write down as many names as I could because I was a pooler. There were two telephone booths sitting near the airplane, I will never forget those two telephones, and no press. The airplane was parked in another part of the field away from the terminal for security reasons. They revved up the engines, and it started getting cold in Dallas, the sun seemed to go lower in the sky. I will never forget that feeling that everybody was in a state of shock.

So I went to a sergeant after I talked to Judge Hughes. She told me who she was [and that] she had been appointed recently by Kennedy himself. I tried to get a police sergeant to get me to the Parkland Memorial Hospital to brief the rest of the press on the swearing-in, which was my obligation, and I couldn't get a policeman to take me there. They just refused to take me anywhere. They said, "It's under secure orders here, and you can't leave the airport." I was standing right near two telephones there to call my office, and I said, "No, I'll carry out my obligation." I waited

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and fought with the lieutenant and the police force, and all of a sudden the press bus emerged. The press from downtown had been brought out to the airport. They had heard about it, and they were brought out. They all came, unloaded off the bus, and I got up on the back of a car and briefed them on everything that happened. I don't say this for sympathy or anything, but after I briefed them those two telephones were tied up and I was about the last man to file that story. But I had the eyewitness account. But that was my first encounter with Lyndon Johnson.

I do have a couple of stories, if you will bear with me, on my relationship as a reporter coming to Texas. I had never been to Texas except in the campaign year and in Austin. As you know, we would come for long stays, not knowing how long we are going to be here. The President never told us how long we would be here or when we would leave to go. We were always packed and ready to go. Many times I would take my wife, and I had a little boy at the time. We would have some fun and visit this house because they would have dinner here, and my little boy slept on the sofa back there, and so on. Some nights we were fortunate to be some of the reporters who were invited to dinner here. But I have some memories of Texas and Lyndon Johnson. Some deal with the press. One of the stories I liked about Lyndon Johnson was, you know, they always used to say that Lyndon Johnson believed that the shortest distance between two points was a tunnel. (Laughter) And secrecy was a way of getting things done in the Congress; if you didn't let anybody in on your

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options you got something done.

Joe Laitin was the assistant press secretary, and when we came down to Texas they would always have some news for you to give. The President would call up to Austin to find out how the press was doing and what you were going to do at the briefing and how were things going today. He would check in with them up there to see whether the animals were being fed properly. This one day, Bill Moyers had to go out of town to make a speech, and he told Joe Laitin to hold the briefing. Joe said, "Okay, what will I give them?" Bill said, "Slim pickings, there isn't much. You can tell them about the President's day." He said, "There is one other thing that is top secret and no one is to know about it. Don't breathe a word to anyone. Unless he brings it up don't say anything about it, but Larry O'Brien may be the next postmaster general. But this is top secret." So Moyers went off on his speech to make somewhere.

Our briefings were usually held at eleven or twelve, and President Johnson called up the Driskill Hotel and got Joe Laitin and said, "How are things going up there? What are you going to give them?" Joe said he had a couple of minor announcements and everything. He said, "Well, that's not very much." Then Joe blurted out inadvertently, or he just wanted to let him know that Moyers had clued him in on everything, "But you know, we could tell them about Larry O'Brien." There was a long pause. He said, "What?" He said, "We could tell them about Larry O'Brien." "What about Larry O'Brien?" He said, "About Larry O'Brien being the postmaster."

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He said, "Who told you that?" He said, "Bill Moyers told me that." He said, "I told him that's a deep secret and no one is to know about it and he wasn't to tell anyone." He said, "Oh, yes, sir. Yes, sir, Mr. President. Bill Moyers told me it's a deep secret and I am not to tell a soul." And the President said, "But you are telling me!" (Laughter)

The President had a personal involvement with the press--

CTJ: He did indeed.

SD: --and I will give you a couple of stories that were very personal. We went to Guam one year to meet President Thieu in his effort to find a solution to the Vietnam War. It was one of those typical Lyndon Johnson trips where you are out and back, no frivolous things. You never got time on the beach with Lyndon Johnson. You never went to Palm Beach or places like that. You usually went to Guam, Saigon, or Cam Ranh. I can't tell you any stories about the Riviera or places like that in my travels with President Johnson. They were all pretty much working trips.

But we went to Guam. We raced out there. It was an eighteen-hour flight, as I recall, and the humidity was terrible. You had a monsoon every twenty minutes. The dry season lasted about ten minutes. And you would get dehydrated. If you don't drink a lot of water in Guam you get dehydrated awfully fast. Rusk was there, President Johnson, MacNamara, Thieu, and Ky, and we had this meeting at the military base in Guam. We had to land in Hawaii first and then we went off to Guam. It was just a backbreaking trip.

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We got out there, and it was not a very pleasant trip because he couldn't get Thieu and Ky to do everything he wanted them to do, and then we flew right back to Washington. Of course, the stories all written were less on the substance of the trip and more on the gymnastics of it; that is, how many gallons of gas the airplane took, how many gallons of water to drink, how many gallons of whiskey there was on the airplane. You couldn't get any substance out of the trip, which is always difficult, in that kind of a situation.

But it was tough and everybody was tired. It was a long trip out, there was no rest, and you had that day and a half international time zone time difference, jet lag and all that. We came back to the White House. I think we were back in three days. We went out and just had this long meeting of twelve hours and flew back, and everybody agreed that the President looked exhausted. So we got back that morning, and then we had a briefing. Of course, everybody was interested in the President, and one of my questions was: the President looked tired; the President looked worn; is he exhausted, and is his health okay? I don't remember whether Moyers was the press secretary or Reedy at the time, I've forgotten who it was, and to all those questions the answer was, "The President's fine, and he isn't worn, he isn't tired." The briefing was over, and we went to lunch.

I had lunch with a gentleman named Frank Reynolds of ABC. I had a very pleasant lunch, during which I became somewhat ill. I never felt that kind of illness before. It was a very excruciating

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pain in my lower abdomen which turned out to be a very small urethral stone, not a kidney stone, but a very painful stone. I didn't know what it was. I went home, and I ended up that afternoon in George Washington University Hospital. For some reason Frank Reynolds relayed the information to Tom Johnson, the assistant press secretary. That evening I received a letter from the White House, and it said: "Dear Sid, I hope you are fine. I know you'll get better. It's nothing serious. Sincerely yours, Lyndon B. Johnson. P.S. I'm not tired. I'm not exhausted." (Laughter) When you asked a question in our briefings every day at the White House one of the secretaries of the press office wrote down the name of the reporter who asked the questions, so he [President Johnson] has known all the questions that were asked.

The last story that I'll tell you about President Johnson [is about when] I had wanted to come down after he'd left the presidency to talk to him. This is just before the Library dedication. I wanted to do a piece on him and the Library and on the Ranch with the White House press office gone from Johnson City. What was normalcy like for the hill country, for Johnson City with the President now in retirement? They told me that I could not see him because he had so many requests for interviews that it'd be unfair if he saw me, and he was just sorry, but that's the way it had to be. He had thousands of requests from very dear, old friends that had wanted to talk to him for stories or just off the record, and he just didn't have the time.

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So I accepted that, but I still decided that I wanted to do a story on the Library and on the Ranch and the hill country. I proceeded down here, and when I got here I was a little persistent. I called Mary Rather, and I told her I was here and I was still going to do the story. She said, "He still hasn't changed his mind. Max Frankel of the New York Times wants to see him, and Max would be put out. He's got this request there, and he's got a lot of interview and feature requests, so he just can't see you." I said, "Well, okay, Mary, I understand. I want to go see what the Library looks like, and then I'm going to go down and take a look at the LBJ Park down here which was built since we left and just stir around in the hill country." She said, "When are you going?" I said, "I'll leave the Press Motel at 7:00 a.m." So I hung up and thanked her very much for her help.

At five minutes to seven o'clock the next morning I received a phone call from Mary Rather. She said, "He'll see you. He doesn't have much time, but he'll give you a little time." So I drove down here [and] things had changed. I remember the Secret Service were all over the place and the state police were out here on this road. Mary had told me what I had to do about coming over that low dam causeway out here. I got there, the same thing happened with the bus tonight, and this voice came out of the tree and said, (Laughter) "Identify yourself." I expected to see Secret Service men all over, and they were gone from what it used to be. This voice came out of the trees and said, "Who are you?" And I said, "Where?" He said,

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"Look into the camera." There was a camera up there. "Look out your window a little bit." So I did. He looked at me, and I told him who I was. The gate opened automatically and then I drove in.

It was eerie after having all the press and Secret Service he'd had before. I drove in and parked in the lot, as we often did for his many news conferences and barbecues and celebrations, and there was no one out there. I was thinking, "You know, this is the President of the United States I'm going to see, and there's no one here. What am I going to do? I don't think that anyone is going to come out." I walked to that door and opened that door there and I walked in, and there he was sitting over here. There was a desk right here at this spot, and he was sitting at this desk just laughing. He never looked up at me. He was reading his mail and laughing. He had a letter from John Roche.

CTJ: John was supposed to come to this, and I'm so sorry he didn't.

SD: He read me a letter from John Roche, and he said, "Sit on the sofa." He never looked at me, just, "Sit on the sofa. I'll be with you in a minute." And he signed some more letters. He got up and he hitched up his trousers, you know, hitched up his trousers.

[End of Tape 1 of 2]

SD: . . . We drove down the runway to see bluebonnets, and there was a fellow cutting the grass out there on a big mower. He got on the phone and he called Mrs. Johnson and he said, "Bird, what are you doing?" She said, "I'm fixing to go to Austin," that day. He said,

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"We've got a friend out here, would you spend a little time?" So we came back to the house and picked up Mrs. Johnson, and we put her between us in the car. You were eating an apple. (Laughter) And we drove down that runway. Well, when I'd driven down that runway the first time with him [and] this fellow was mowing the grass he'd said, "Watch out for the bluebonnets, because Mrs. Johnson won't like it if you cut a single one." But he said, "You're doing a fine job." We got in the car and Mrs. Johnson got in the car, and we went back up the runway. He pulled over to the fellow and he said to Mrs. Johnson, "Now you tell him what a fine job." So you told him (Laughter) what a fine job of cutting the grass. (Laughter)

To make a long story very short, we spent the morning there. Then we came in and we had lunch at the long table in the other room. We drove through the park a little bit. Then in the afternoon we spent some more time in the park, and he said, "You know, do you remember when I was building that park and the criticism the press gave me over the fact that the state was going to condemn the land? 'President Eisenhower told Lyndon Johnson not to let what happen in Gettysburg happen here, with the hot dog stands, amusement parks, and turn it into a circus, make a commercial venture out of the land across the road.'" He made a very big point of talking about that. Was it Laurance Rockefeller or David Rockefeller that was involved in that?

CTJ: Laurance.

SD: Laurance Rockefeller was involved, and I was covering the story.

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Connally was governor then. The state would condemn the land so that they'd get park land. The people who owned the land were going to get their fair share or whatever the appraisal was for that land or more than it was worth, as I recall, something like that. The President said to me, "You know, when those stories were written that fellow Dealey up at the Dallas Morning News said that I wanted to steal that land and that was why they were doing all that, because Lyndon Johnson just wanted to enrich himself and make the Ranch bigger. Now you see that beautiful park out there where children can play without spending any money. You can swim in it. It's not commercial, and it's open to everybody. They can picnic. It's beautiful."

Dealey was dead by then, the editor of the Dallas paper who had been very critical of President Johnson and of Kennedy in the 1964 campaign and the 1960 campaign. But anyway, President Johnson said, he had Dealey's son, who was now the editor of the paper, down here in the house. "He was at this table with me three weeks ago. I took him over to the park and I showed him that land, I showed him what had been done with it. I don't want a stitch of it. It all goes to the government at a certain time. It's free to everybody. Children swim, even the poorest kid in America can go swim there without paying any money." He said, "That young fellow agreed with me that it was a wonderful idea and his father was wrong in criticizing me for it."

He said, "Now I open the paper and I see that young fellow is

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letting them write stories about how Lyndon Johnson has raised a million dollars to improve or build a new mansion for the chancellor of the University of Texas, and the reason he wants to raise that million dollars for that mansion is that he wants to be the next chancellor of the University of Texas." (Laughter) "It's that same young fellow who was sitting here and I explained about the park and how his father was wrong." He said to me, and I'll never forget this--we had some homemade barley soup and I forget what else we had; we had some pretty good desert, and I remember the President looked a little overweight to me--"Now what in the hell would I need with being the chancellor of the University of Texas after everything I've been through?" There's a long pause, and he put his long finger out and he said, "But if I wanted to be the chancellor of the University of Texas, I'd be the best one they ever had." (Laughter)

CTJ: Listen, you ought to come to see that park, and tomorrow I'm going to take Sandy. I'm going to take a whole bunch.

[End of Tape 2 of 2]