INTERVIEW XXIV

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INTERVIEWEE: GEORGE REEDY

INTERVIEWER: Michael L. Gillette

PLACE: Columbia Hospital, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Tape 1 if 1, Side 1

G: I notice in looking at your appointment calendars--

R: Right.

G: --that you did have a great number of meetings with members of the press.

R: Oh, yes.

G: Were they trying to get a perspective on Lyndon Johnson, a new President? Is this why they would come to you?

R: Basically what they were up to, Mike--it's funny what a difference it makes to a man to go from vice president to president. As vice president, they weren't particularly interested in him except when he went on a trip or did something that was newsworthy because no one really cares too much about the personality of a vice president. The president is something else. In the presidency, personality is all important. I have since come to the conclusion that it is due to the fact that the President is the major symbol of unity in the United States, and consequently, what people are looking for is somebody they can identify with, and the press really does react to what it is that the people want. Well, here was Lyndon Johnson. They had known him fairly well as a leader of the Senate, but, again, they don't care too much about the personality of the leader of the Senate. They cared very little about the personality of the vice president, and, of course, every vice president is always subject to all

kinds of jokes. You know, "Lyndon who?" or that sort of thing. When the man becomes president, all of a sudden the thought hits everybody, "My God! This is the United States!", and they want to find out what the United States is like. Most of these people I had been dealing with for many years. I noticed, for instance, that Stu Alsop's on here a couple of times. Stu would always come to me if there were any issues involving national defense or foreign policy because of the hearings that Johnson had held into the space age and also the hearings that Johnson had held early in his senatorial career when he had the Senate Armed Service Preparedness Committee. Let's see who else we have here. Here's Jack McDermott, Dan McCreary--

G: Phil Potter.

R: Oh, Phil Potter will be there quite a bit. But you see, even though I had known all those people for years, my conversations with them up to that point had been conversations on some--on what was happening. Now they were after is, "What is Johnson like?"

G: Yes. How would you define your official responsibilities during this period?

R: That period? The same as they always were in a Lyndon Johnson office. The--Johnson never had an organized office. He might pass out titles to people, but the titles were absolutely meaningless. About the only real source of organization in a Johnson office was Walter Jenkins, which was why Walter Jenkins--the problem of Walter Jenkins was really disastrous because Johnson needed him badly, but Walter did have a good organizational sense. He could [keep] people from tearing each other's throats out. He knew fairly well how to pass out assignments and things of that nature, but with Johnson things are very chaotic, and what were my official responsibilities? I didn't have any. I was supposed to make them myself, but what happened practically is that because all of these people had

dealt with me during the years that he was the leader--and during the years that he was vice-president, they kept coming to me anyway.

G: Did you have a press function beyond this, or was [Pierre] Salinger actually the press secretary?

R: No. Salinger was actually the press secretary, and it was rather interesting. Salinger assumed that I would take over as press secretary, so the first day he invited me over to the office. I told him, "Nothing doing." I didn't want to get into one of those things. You know, I think that one of the worst situations one can get into is where the--you have two press secretaries, so to speak, and I knew that Pierre did not want to leave the job at that time, and Johnson had adopted a very intelligent policy. I think it's one of the best things that he did although he overdid it of keeping all the Kennedy people on that he possibly could. The--I know that Bill White was one of the first to pound that home to him, Bill White of *The New York Times*--but he--

G: That he overdid it?

R: Yes. Johnson definitely overdid it.

G: How so?

R: Well, what he did was to keep on people for--he kept them on too long. There was a certain point where he should have established his own staff because he had too many people in the White House that didn't have their primary loyalties to Johnson. Now I don't mean by that that they were traitors or that they were betraying him or anything of that nature, but there is a difference between a staff whose primary orientation is toward one man and a--toward the man that they're working for and a staff whose primary orientation is toward the man who was there before.

G: Yes.

R: He had a White House in which I think quite a few of the people sort of looked upon him as a usurper. You know, there was only a question of time until--I don't know what they thought would happen: that Bobby would take over. If not Bobby, Teddy, or if not Ted, Jo John or something like that.

G: Yes. How did Salinger work out as press secretary?

R: For Lyndon Johnson?

G: Yes.

R: Very poorly. The--he did not understand Johnson, and Johnson took a lot of understanding. You know, Johnson--Lyndon Johnson's attitude toward the press was one hundred-and-eighty degrees from reality, and he had all sorts of strange ideas. He once said to Pierre, "You elected Kennedy." Pierre almost swallowed his cigar because Pierre knew damn well he hadn't elected Kennedy, and he was kind of--I think he took this as an example of some naïveté on Johnson's part. But the difficulty was that Johnson thought of the position as primarily a public relations job or flacks job, and, of course, that's the one place in the White House in which there should be no razzle-dazzle public relations whatsoever. I'm not ruling out razzle-dazzle public relations, but the press office should be strictly free from it because what the--the most important single thing in a press office is that it--is that it be credible. Its word must be believed.

Now a number of things happened. At one point, Buzz [Horace Busby] wrote a couple of memos. One of them, he had a phrase on it that really was a humdinger, something about--what was it?--"an unrelenting search for peace." And he wrote another memo on "a nationwide talent search," and sent them to Johnson. Now Johnson--now what

Buzz thought was that these were just conversational pieces for Johnson as he was going along. What Johnson did was to hand it to Salinger. Salinger just had them reproduced, distributed to the press, which--I know at the time I nearly exploded when I heard about it because it--what it did, it gave a certain official sanction to a certain type of policy. You know, if "that unrelenting search for peace" didn't come through, then Johnson was going to look like a damn fool. And I think that as time went on, the disparity between Salinger's operation and Johnson's concept of what it should be became greater and greater and greater. Salinger was used to Jack Kennedy. Now Kennedy was one of the few presidents that really understood the press, and so Pierre knew what he was supposed to do and what he wasn't supposed to do. There was--I think that Kennedy understood that razzle-dazzle should not be in the press office although he took advantage of the fact that Pierre has a very attractive personality, and everybody likes Pierre. I know I like him. He's one of my best friends, but the--Pierre suddenly got that chance to run for the Senate in California, and boy, he went after it like a duck would go after a June bug. And he took--who was that--who was the assistant press secretary?

G: [Malcolm MacGregor "Mac"] Kilduff?

R: No. Kilduff I kept. The black one. Andy? Andy something. [Andrew Hatcher]

G: Oh yeah.

R: He took him with him, and I became press secretary at that point.

G: Was it a formal arrangement? Did LBJ call you in and ask you if you wanted to do that or--?

R: Ask me if I wanted--no, he called me in and told me to do it; called me right out of a hospital bed, believe it or not. I had had--I've forgotten what it was now, but it was one of

those things where I--I think it was a very severe case of flu. They had put me in the hospital, and Johnson called my doctor and said, "Look. Keep him in the hospital and get some weight off of him." Well, I was in the hospital, and all of a sudden I get a call from the White House, and I walked across the street. The hospital was just--it was about two blocks from the White House. Walked in, and there was Johnson and Pierre, and I forget who else. And there I was informed that I was the press secretary, and Pierre took me out and introduced me as the press secretary. Wham! Right on the line. That's how I became press secretary.

G: Okay. Let's go back to some of these initial issues. In mid-December of 1963, you had the airline machinists' strike.

R: Oh God, yes.

G: Were you involved in the negotiations there?

R: In the summer of 1963?

G: Yes.

R: I didn't get too deeply into that one. I remember the first one I got into was the railroad strike.

G: Yes. This was that spring, I think, wasn't it?

R: Yes. That one I--you know, I have a feeling that that machinist strike was later.

G: Well, there was one later on. There was one in, I believe, 1967 as well, but--

R: I guess it was 1967, the one that I'm thinking of. I don't remember it, frankly, the one you're talking about. No. I remember the railroad strike very well.

G: Tell me about that.

R: Well, as you know, the railroads went on strike. Now, they didn't go on strike, but they voted for a strike, and they were right up to the lick log, and Johnson asked me what to do about them. I said, "That's easy. Call in all of the heads of the unions. Call in the railroad negotiators. Lock them up in a room across the street, and turn up the heat."--which is what he did. He stuck Bill Wirtz in as a negotiator, and he brought down what's-his-name from New York, the man that was head of the Urban League.

G: Oh. Whitney Young?

R: No. This was a white man. Not head of the Urban League but was--oh, funny. I can't think of his name. Well, he's basically a labor lawyer, and the railroads--the railroads' unions postponed the strike, and they finally hammered out an agreement, and I'm afraid that's what fooled him later on in the machinists' strike. You know, he never understood labor, and I was the only person on his staff that did know anything about it, and labor is a rather complex question. Johnson thought all unions were alike, that they all reacted the same way, that they all had the same structure, and that was one of his great weaknesses in understanding the American system. He did not have any comprehension at all, and I mean at all, of the workings of American labor. He got along personally with George Meany, but he still didn't understand what Meany did or what the AFL did or the CIO, and, you see, the railroad brotherhoods back at that period--I don't know what they're like now. I suspect they're quite different--but at that period, they were rather highly disciplined unions. They dealt with very complex questions. Those railroad strikes usually were not straight pay hikes. The issues were usually what they called "the Rules." You know, there are thousands of rules; there were thousands of rules governing the railroad operations. "A train crew had to be--could only be kept on duty for six or seven hours a day." There had to

be crew changes of certain areas, or there had to be very elaborate things as to where they got their watches, how they got their watches, and, of course, all of these things actually involve money, but if you check those railroad strikes, you're going to find something very interesting: the issues were never wages. The issues were always those rules. Of course, there was lots of money involved in those rules. But the brotherhoods would respond immediately to their leadership. I don't mean by that that the leadership had absolute control over them, but once they had voted a strike, then they just surrendered all strategy and everything else to the union presidents, and so the tactic of locking them up in a room and just making them sweat it out worked.

G: What about--Johnson seems to have had [a] particular problem with the head of the machinists' union, Cy Miller?

R: The machinists' union--I think I had better explain that a little bit. The machinists' union is a rather strange organization. In the first place, they're labor aristocrats; they're rather highly paid, and they're very highly skilled, and the power, what power there is in the machinists, is not in the international president. It's in the various lodge chairmen, and the only reason they have an international president at all is because they have a seat on the AFL-CIO Executive Board, and they've got to have somebody to fill that seat. I tried to explain that to Johnson many times. He never caught on to it, and so he thought that he could make a deal with the chairman. Who was the chairman then--I mean the international president? They've had three or four since then. He'd make what he thought was a deal with this chairman--or with this president, and it wouldn't come through. Of course, it couldn't come through. In the first place, I doubt if the President had really made a deal with them. I think what he had said was, "I'll see what I can do." But second, he didn't

have the power to do it, and that's why in the later strike you were talking about the thing ended up so disastrously. He didn't call in the lodge chairman. He called in the international presidents to negotiate it out, and they couldn't negotiate it out.

There's another trick to the machinists by the way. A long time ago, some lodge chairman submitted a contract, a proposed contract to the membership, and they voted it down at the lodge chairman's suggestion that they vote it down. So then he took it back and got a 5 per cent increase, and the machinists always vote down the first contract . This is a ritual with that union, and it's reached the point today where skilled labor negotiators--or it'd reached the point then when skilled labor negotiators, when they were dealing with the machinists, would always offer them 5 per cent less than they really intended to pay, get it voted down, and they'd come back with the extra five per cent and be accepted. Again something that really had Johnson baffled. You may recall that in that later strike they did reach an agreement. Johnson made a wild dash through the city. He went on TV with a great big announcement, "The strike was settled," and the next day, the machinists voted it down, and I think if he'd talked to anyone with any familiarity with labor, he would have realized that was what was going to happen, but, at that point, he had nobody around him that knew anything about the organization of labor, and I think that he only talked to Bill Wirtz. Now Bill Wirtz was a very able man, but his ability was more in the social service field rather than the union field, and I don't think Bill could--I don't think Bill really knew things like that.

G: He--Johnson also launched an effort--an initiative to hire more women in government during those years.

R: Yes.

G: Tell me about that.

R: What he did, he assembled a list of women. I remember they included Rose McKee, for instance. That's the only one I can recall right now.

He went out of his way--he operated--I didn't have too much to do with that--he operated that through [John] Macy, the head of the Civil Service Commission, and as I recall, I think that he did succeed in getting--oh maybe some twenty or thereabouts placed in reasonably good jobs. Of course, Liz [Carpenter] went on as Lady Bird's press secretary, and Bess [Abell] became Lady Bird's secretary. What did he give Rose McKee? That's what I'm trying the hardest to remember because he liked Rose. Then later he put that woman that was opening icebox doors, he put her on the Consumer's Council.

Voice in background: Betty Furness.

R: What is it?

Voice: Betty Furness.

R: Betty Furness. That's right. And it--I think to a great extent some of that was probably Liz's prodding. You know, Liz was one of the major advocates of women's liberation at that point.

G: Yes.

R: Very strongly so.

G: Any sense of LBJ's environmental sensitivities during this period?

R: No. It--environment was not really an issue at that point, Mike. I don't mean that it should--possibly it should have been an issue, but it really wasn't. Nobody discussed environment, and the--I can't think of any time that it actually came up during any of the meetings. If so, it would have had a--I think it would have been kissed off with a few

words because there were many other issues that people regarded as more important. The main thing that Johnson was after when he came in--at heart, Johnson was an up-to-date populist, and his idea of what a president should do for the people was to increase everybody's income as much as he could. I think Johnson really believed that if you put a floor under wages, a floor under farm prices, gave everybody free electricity, gave everybody medical care, and gave everybody education that you were going to solve all of the problems of the world, and the--he was torn between that and a number of foreign policy crises that kept jumping up. I don't think he particularly relished those foreign policy crises although in my view he handled most of them rather well.

G: He sent Robert Kennedy to help resolve the hostilities between Malaysia and Indonesia. Do you recall why he did that?

R: No. I think that was to get him out of the country.

G: Kennedy did affect a "cease fire" apparently.

R: Oh, yes. They were tired of shooting at each other.

G: How about the situation in Panama?

R: That was an interesting one. I think my pet recollection was the point at which things were really getting hot, and all of a sudden Johnson barked at the White House operator, "Get me the president of Panama." Some State Department-type in the room said, "You can't do that!", and Johnson said, "Why not?" and went right--and had a direct conversation with the president of Panama, and they worked it out right there. Actually, you know, one thing that should be said--I don't think it's ever been stressed enough--Johnson did have a sort of an instinctive understanding of the Latin world. The--he may have been a little bit off in other fields of foreign policy, but when you got him even into South America where he'd never

been at that point, he still really understood the Latin temperament, and I think that from the standpoint of Latin America he probably did better than almost any other president.

G: When you say, "He understood the Latin temperament," what--give me a manifestation of that, or--

R: Well, let me get you a--let me go back a few years to the point when he was a senator, a rather simple story that is well worth telling. We had Lopez Mateos, president of Mexico. He had come to the United States, and, of course, what they had--what the Mexicans had done was to give a--to put together a very elaborate press kit which had all kinds of very fancy printing on it and beautiful art work.

G: Yes.

R: So we had to put one together, too, and had to do it damn fast, and they were going to meet on the Ranch. So among other things, we had one sheet on San Antonio. I'll never forget Johnson--Johnson, going over the sheets, said, "Hey. Get all those dead Mexicans out of there." I wondered what in the hell was he talking about. We had the Alamo in it. I later discovered he was absolutely right, you know; in the Latin world, the Alamo is an insult.

And when he went into the Dominican Republic, that's another example. He understood very well that no matter how justified it was--and I think it was justified under the circumstances--that it was going to be misinterpreted in Latin America. He went way out of his way to send in soldiers instead of marines, and he went way out of his way to get some concurrence from the Organization of American States. He did not pull what Bush pulled in Panama--just to go in. But he somehow--I think it may have been because of his experience as a school teacher in that segregated Mexican school down on the Texas border. I don't know how--when I say Latin, I don't know how well he would have done with the

Argentineans or the Chileans, but they weren't any particular problem to him during the time that he was in the presidency. He was dealing mostly with the mestizo countries.

G: He did upgrade the Alliance for Progress.

R: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Although I think--I think he recognized that eventually--that the Alliance for Progress was based upon an incorrect assumption. You know the difficulty with the Alliance for Progress, and I saw this myself when I spent a lot of time in South America trying to get that newspaper started, the difficulty was it assumed that the economies down there were like our economies. In effect, the Alliance for Progress was a Latin version of the Marshall Plan. Well, it's not like that in Latin America. They did not have the kind of economy or the kind of development that could absorb American capital or could absorb American technology and American technique. The biggest single problem--this is the one part of the Alliance for Progress that really worked well. They built a lot of airports. Your big problem in Latin America is transportation, and it is terrible. You cannot--you cannot go from Chile to Argentina any way except flying or an incredibly long boat trip--

G: Yes.

R: --around the Horn, which nobody likes to take--around the Cape of Good Hope rather, which nobody likes to take.

G: One other Latin issue that you had early on was the water supply at Guantanamo--

R: Oh, yes. That was funny. The--what happened there--Johnson, I think, handled that beautifully. There was, you know, some--we had quite a few hotheads that wanted to really go into Cuba and do something about it, which would have been a horrible mistake. What Johnson did was just to cut off the water supply. He loved saying that in a speech:

"Someone wanted to cut off Cuba. He had just went in and cut off Castro's water" and let it go at that.

G: Wasn't it the reverse? Didn't the Cubans cut off our water supply?

R: No. They threatened to. What they were trying to do was, of course, to hold us up for more money.

G: Yes.

R: What we did, we quick shipped some salinators down there, and just turned off the water supply, and that was a very famous incident.

G: Okay, you also had the Foreign Aid bill, which the House reduced dramatically, and the Senate restored at least some of it during that time.

R: Right.

G: Do you remember that issue?

R: No. I remember very little about it.

G: The [German Chancellor Ludwig] Erhard visit?

R: I remember that which--there wasn't anything particularly dramatic about it, or I think particularly significant about it. To me, the only thing I discovered is that I could not possibly understand Erhard's German. I had been able to translate [German Chancellor Konrad] Adenauer. When Adenauer spoke down at the Fair Grounds in Fredericksburg, I translated for the report of *The Austin-American Statesman*. Thank God it was Adenauer. Erhard, I would have been completely lost.

G: Okay. Johnson had, as vice-president, been chairman of the Space Council.

R: Right.

G: I know early on there was some question about who would succeed him--

R: Right.

G: --as there was no vice president. Do you recall the deliberations there?

R: I think the thing was just left in abeyance until the 1964 election. You see, there was a complication here. We had originally written the Space Act--this was when Johnson was a senator--to provide for an Advisory Council to the President, and I forget now whether we said the vice president should be the chairman. But the point was that the council to advise the president shouldn't have the president as its chairman. Well, Eisenhower for some reason that I don't understand, insisted on being chairman of the President's Advisory Council on Outer Space. And so, that was--we gave in to them simply to be sure that we could get the bill through the Congress. One of the first things Kennedy did when he became president was to send a bill up to Congress to amend the Space Act so that the vice president would become chairman of the President's Council--what is it--the President's Council on Outer--on Space Science, Technology--no, Science, Engineering, and Technology [National Aeronautics and Space Council], and as I recall, I think we just left it open until the 1964 election when we got a vice president.

G: Anything on the decision to re-name Cape Canaveral after President Kennedy?

R: Not that I know if. I can't recall anything on that, Mike.

G: All right.

The genesis of the War on Poverty--you recall that he in the spring declared unconditional war on poverty?

R: Right. That was actually an idea that had been kicking around in the Kennedy administration. I forget who. I think it may have been Sarge Shriver that originally played with it, but it never got very far under Kennedy, but I think that there was enough work

done on it at that time that it didn't--it wasn't too difficult to take the work that had been done and shape that into a meaningful bill. One of the things that he had promised very early was to do some[thing] about Appalachia, and I think that Appalachia was very much in his mind in the War on--when he did come out with the War on Poverty. He had been--he had had one or two trips to West Virginia and parts of Pennsylvania and the various--Kentucky *et cetera*, and I think that he really had been almost overwhelmed with the nakedness of the poverty in that area. I don't think he knew too much about urban poverty, but it doesn't matter. What he did was to shape this anti--this War on Poverty bill and to get it going.

Unfortunately, I don't believe it was very sufficiently well-funded.

G: Were his conceptions of poverty largely those of the New Deal?

R: Oh, I'd say pretty much, yes. I think--in a way, yes. I think that's true, Mike, because as I look back on the New Deal, when the New Deal thought about poverty, it usually wound up rural poverty. You know, the Okies, the--that sort of thing, and I think Johnson thought to a great extent in terms of rural poverty, but he did know that urban poverty existed, and, of course, there were plenty of people there that were willing to go ahead and administer urban poverty programs. I myself had a feeling at the time that this was going too helter-skelter so that we were rushing into a number of things without giving it sufficient thought because what you did, you had quite a few ideas which may basically have had some merit, you know, such as sending in organizers to organize the poor people to struggle for a better life. That sort of thing. I think basically it may be a good idea, but I wish it had have been thought through a little more carefully. Of the various poverty programs that were going on, the one that, of course, attracted big attention was the Head Start Program, and there we

did run afoul of something. It became so popular that at one point he announced that he was going to double it. I'll never forget poor Joe Leighton who was over at the Budget Bureau then calling frantically around to point out that there wasn't one cent in the budget that had been allocated for doubling the Poverty Head Start Program. Basically, a good idea, but I think it needed a lot more planning.

G: What did you do as a result of the announcement that he would double it? Did you find some money from another program, or did you--

R: Take it out of the President's Contingency Funds.

G: Yes.

R: Oh, Lord! That was the--I had been hearing that for a long period of time and using it myself. I finally called Joe Leighton who was still in the Budget Bureau and said, "Now look, Joe. I want to know about this Contingency Fund." Joe hemmed and hawed, and I finally heard about the Contingency Fund.

G: Tell me about the Contingency Fund.

R: There wasn't any such thing. What it really amounted to was that at the end of the year--you know, the last bill passed by Congress--well, it's usually the third supplemental appropriation, and so what happens, everything that the president has ascribed to the Contingency Fund that he's got to do something about they stick into that Third Supplemental Bill. That's the Contingency Fund.

G: Yes.

R: They feel they can go over the budget on that one because it's not a regular. It's not like the Agricultural Appropriations or the Defense Appropriations. It's a supplemental appropriation.

G: One of the first priorities was to get the tax bill passed, the tax cut.

R: Yes.

G: Tell me about the President's strategy on this.

R: Well, it wasn't much strategy. It was one of the easiest things that ever came down the pike. He had no trouble with that one at all.

You never have trouble getting Congress to cut taxes.

G: Did he want to get that cleared before the civil rights bill?

R: I don't think the two were tied to each other, Mike. Actually, I'm trying to recall some conversations at that particular point. It seemed to me that there were some suggestions that there would be an advantage to holding up the tax cut until after the civil rights bill in order to put a little more heat on the Senate to go ahead and enact the civil rights bill, but you remember, he made the civil rights bill the cornerstone of his first speech to Congress after he became president.

G: Did you have a role in shaping that legislation?

R: Oh, and how. You see, it was shaped under the Kennedy administration, and I sent it over to Johnson for comment when he was still vice president, and Johnson gave it to me. Well, I took one look at that bill and came to the conclusion that it could never pass Congress. They had loaded it with "whereases." You know, "whereas minorities cannot take advantage of the recreational opportunities in the country because of discrimination in transportation *et cetera, et cetera, et cetera*." I'll never forget Dick Russell once telling me the most foolish thing you could do with a bill is to put "whereases" in it. He was right because that always starts arguments. Well, who was the--oh, Ted Sorensen and I got on the phone with Johnson listening in and argued it out, and I couldn't--I couldn't get Ted to

see the point, which was that the bill was just loaded with the kind of hooks that would make the Southerners filibuster until they died. You see, the only hope in those days of getting the Civil Rights Bill passed was to get something where the Southerners would finally roll over and play dead so you could roll over their dead bodies, and I think Ted was thinking primarily in terms of the "whereases" and all the political value that could be gained out of them. I couldn't even get them to take out that business about the minorities not being able to take advantage of recreational facilities because, you know, to the average Southerner that would sound as if you were saying, "Look. You've got to have a Civil Rights Bill so these people can go down to Miami Beach or Las Vegas" or something like that. Actually, when Johnson became president, the bill was reshaped, but that--how it should be reshaped was already fairly well-known because I had left him a lot of notes on that original--the Kennedy bill.

G: Did you have a role in helping with the legislative--

R: No.

G: --phase of that, getting it through the Congress?

R: No. By that time, my--well, the press secretary doesn't have much time. That's one of the worst parts of that job. The trouble with the press secretary is that he gets bogged down in all kind of administrative details. You know, people think of us solely as being a spokesman. Actually, about ninety per cent of the job is making the mechanical arrangements so that the press can cover the President. There are all kinds of mechanical arrangements that have to be made: transportation, passes so they can get through police lines, schedules of surveys.

G: And the President didn't always want to announce his trips ahead of time, I understand.

R: Oh, that became horrible. The--he never wanted to announce them ahead of time. That was rather amusing, and I finally got to a point where frankly I made an agreement with the Civil Service. [Secret Service]. We'd trade back and forth with each other as to where he was going. You see, he wouldn't tell the Secret Service where he was going to the last minute, and I was usually able to get--they'd get some hints from me, or I could get some hints from them, and I'd wander through the lobby of the White House remarking at the top of my voice, "If I were a prudent man, I'd come in tomorrow with a bag packed." That became known as "the Society of Prudent Men."

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G: --he liked to give them some lead time on this.

R: I think to some extent he liked to make life complicated for them. Some of it was pure cussedness. But, in addition, I think that he was always worried about demonstrations against him being organized where he was going. I'll tell you what finally cleared him of at least part of it though: Labor Day in Detroit, the opening of the 1964 campaign. Do you know about that one?

G: No.

R: God, that was funny. There was a newspaper strike on in Detroit, no newspapers. Here he was going to open his campaign in Detroit on Labor Day, which is traditional for Democratic presidents, and he wouldn't admit it. He wouldn't let anybody do anything about it but let the people of Detroit know he was coming in. I remember late that night getting a call, "For the love of god, can't we at least get an announcement on the television. We've got two television stations." He would not even permit that. Well, we landed in Detroit. You know that Detroit Airport is farther from Detroit than San Francisco is, and

we went this long, long, long, long motor caravan into Detroit with absolutely nobody along the side of the road anywhere. We got into Detroit, nobody was in Detroit. We got to the Cadillac Square, which is one of the big places for rallies and of course all of those automobile workers had taken off and gone out into the country for picnics. There was nobody there. Walter Ruether managed to drum up a few automobile workers and especially that chorus and then we drove on the back to the airport and nobody in Detroit knew he'd been in Detroit except Walter Ruether and a few other people like that. Well, when he looked out at those barren, empty streets that is when we started to get permission to put out a schedule for him. But, god, that was funny.

G: Any insight on the selection of the vice presidential running mate in 1964?

R: My own guess is that he had probably decided on Humphrey early. He really liked Hubert although I don't think he treated him too well once he became vice president, but he really did like him. But he loved to play games and he kept throwing out all sorts of names. He even set up one trip with Tom Dodd to make it look as though he was considering Tom Dodd as a vice president. And he threw out Gene McCarthy a couple of times. Of course he ruled Bobby Kennedy out originally. He said that he--

End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview XXIV

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GEORGE E. REEDY

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