INTERVIEW I

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INTERVIEWEE: JAMES ROOSEVELT

INTERVIEWER: Michael L. Gillette

PLACE: Mr. Roosevelt's office, Irvine, California

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G: Did you have any knowledge of LBJ when he was NYA [National Youth Administration] director [for the state of Texas], any knowledge of his work as NYA director?

R: No, because--can you remind me of the exact years that he was NYA director?

G: He was appointed in the summer of 1935, right when the program started, July 1935, and served until he ran for Congress in 1937.

R: Right. No, actually, I was probably not too close to the White House day-to-day functioning until about the summer of 1936. Then I went with my father down to South America and back, and at that time he asked me to come into the White House proper. I came in on the latter part of 1936 and the beginning of 1937, so that I really would not have had much time to get to know the President [Johnson] at that time.

G: Okay. In retrospect, did you ever get any insights regarding his service as NYA director? Did he ever talk to you about it, or did your father or anybody in the administration ever talk to you about it?

R: As far as I can remember, no. Partly because NYA was in the hands of other people who were pretty close to the President [Roosevelt] anyhow, and there would have been not too

many occasions on which I would be pulled in on anything that he wanted, either directly NYA business or other political matters that might come up. So I really, to the best of my memory, had no volume of business--undoubtedly I must have talked with him on the phone, and if he had any problem that he couldn't solve, I'm sure he would have called me, but I think he--as far as I remember, he took care of his own business pretty well.

G: At the time of his election to Congress in 1937 in that special election, what was the significance of Texas to your father and to the New Deal at the time, politically?

R: Well, of course, it was a very important state to have good contacts and good people with whom he could work in order to not only be sure that the state itself was working harmoniously on the various programs that were being developed in that period. As you remember, there were an awful lot of new things going in, and to get an accurate report as to how they were being received in other parts of the country was a very important part of that process.

My guess would be that Father deeply appreciated having someone who felt a close personal tie to him, rather than just someone who held political office and because he held a political office was somebody you dealt with. I think he had a feeling of more personal understanding and interest in President Johnson--of course, he was not president then--than with many other people, but, as far as Texas was concerned, I don't remember being anything but sure that he felt that Texas was full of a lot of fascinating people. I remember that he was close to some people in Fort Worth, and, of course, at that time, if I remember rightly, my brother, Elliott, lived in Texas, and so in all probability day-to-day reports as to what was happening in Texas came from Elliott, even though Elliott was a bit of an

independent himself.

G: Any insights on the campaign itself when he ran in 1937? He ran on a pro-court reform bill platform, as did a number of the other candidates.

R: No, except that that would have been endeared him greatly to Father because those were difficult days, and, as you know, the court reform bill was eventually defeated. So I think that Father's reaction would have been that anybody who was willing to take a position and be part of the campaign for the court reform--because that's the nice way to put it because the enemies called it the "court packing" program--had a lot of courage and deserved a lot of cooperation in return, and I know that President Johnson earned that respect and appreciation.

G: Do you have any recollection of that train trip where LBJ met your father at Galveston and then rode back through Texas with him?

R: No, I don't think I was there. To the best of my knowledge, Elliott was along on that trip with his wife, and I frankly just didn't [interfere]. To give you a little insight in the family, if we had a brother or a sister [and] it was their sort of bailiwick, we didn't interfere with it too much. And Elliott sort of figured this was his territory, and I doubt very much whether I took too much part in it.

G: Did either your father or President Johnson ever talk about that train ride and what was discussed on the train trip?

R: Not that I remember.

G: One element that was apparently discussed was LBJ's appointment to the Naval Affairs Committee, and, reportedly, your father stressed the importance of a strong navy and

having LBJ on that committee to stem the tide against the isolationists who opposed rebuilding the navy, putting PWA [Public Works Administration] funds in for defense. Was this a concern at the time, and does this have a familiar ring to you?

R: Well, I think it was an indication, again, of Father's feeling of more paternalistic interest in the Congressman as such because, as you probably know, the navy was one of Father's what I call his "pet" parts of the government. Having been assistant secretary of the navy, he was fundamentally very, very interested, with a firm belief that the navy was an integral part of any possibly successful military operation by the United States. And the fact that he wanted Congressman Lyndon Johnson on that committee indicated that this was a sort of personal assurance and pat on the back, and "I'm entrusting you to do what I consider to be a most fundamentally important job."

G: Reportedly, the President also gave Lyndon Johnson your name and phone number and said, "When you get to Washington, if you need anything, call Jimmy Roosevelt." Is that your understanding?

R: Well, I don't think it was my understanding particularly in reference to the Congressman. Part of my responsibilities was to pick up and look after people that Father particularly either wanted to know about or wanted to make feel that they had a very sure line, direct line, to the White House. For instance, Wendell Willkie, when he paid his first visit to my father to talk about public utility properties in the Southeast, I was given the responsibility to meet him at the train and bring him out for breakfast and then give Father information about our conversation before Mr. Willkie arrived at the White House. So that anybody to whom I was assigned, I would get a little follow-up memorandum [saying] that "I have

given your phone number to so-and-so, and if he needs any help, give him whatever is proper and whatever you can do." So I knew from that that this was not an ordinary congressman. This was somebody that Father was really very interested in.

G: Do you recall the first time that you met Lyndon Johnson?

R: I have tried to do that for years, and I've never been able to do it, and I have talked, of course, several times to the President about it. He used to get me a little mixed up with Elliott every now and then, and I'd say, "No, that's Elliott; that's not me." So I never knew whether he ever really arrived at a date when we first met, although my inclination is to say that I first met him at the home of Amon Carter in Fort Worth. What the occasion was I just have no memory at this time at all.

G: It seems apparent from the documents that he would bring delegations over to meet you. This delegation of directors from the Lower Colorado [River Authority] came over, I guess in 1937. The files also indicate that you apparently helped him with that five million dollar allotment for the completion of the Marshall Ford Dam. Do you recall your role in that?

R: No. Only that where there were projects which were important to people in the Congress that Father wanted to be sure that they did not fail to get the backing that he wanted them to have, he would ask me to be sure to follow up on it and make sure that things were going all right. So the fact that I was obviously doing whatever I could in that matter was indicative of the fact that Father had given me the green light, if you want to put it that way. I guess I had a number of other people along the same line, whereas normally, I wouldn't get into anything of that kind at all because you just couldn't handle that many congressional contacts without having that as your special duty. So--

G: In this particular case, do you recall how you helped? Was it calling an agency or executive department?

R: I don't remember the specific agency, if there was any reason to call. I just know that if there had been some holdup, some difficulty along the line, or somebody who was dragging their feet a little bit, that I would not have hesitated, and would have felt that I was under instructions to smooth out whatever the problem might be.

G: Your picture was taken, I believe, [as you were] handing the working papers, or the project approval papers, to LBJ and the others involved. Do you recall that occasion when you were evidently the ceremonial, at least, representative of the administration and the--?

R: No, that was just part of my job. Again, though, it was limited to people whom you might call--were on the special list.

G: Your father referred to the South, I believe, in 1938 as the "nation's number one economic problem," and he was very concerned about the economic situation in the rural South at that time. Also, it concerned LBJ. Do you recall this particular problem in any connection that LBJ might have had with the President's articulating that?

R: Not on that particular subject, no, although I'm sure that there well might have been times when specific things--mostly in Texas at that time--came up where if Father felt that he needed some additional information and wanted to find out at first hand whether such-and-such was the situation [and] he would have relied on Congressman Johnson to get him that information.

G: One has the impression that LBJ developed an assortment of contacts in the administration, people like Abe Fortas and Jim Rowe and yourself. Let me ask you to recall if you can

who these people were and how he worked with them.

R: Well, Jim Rowe, of course, I knew very well because he succeeded me in the White House proper, but before that, he had been a law clerk, I believe, for Felix Frankfurter, and I would say that this was indicative of the manner in which a young congressman went around being sure that he had the contacts that would help him do whatever he wanted to do. And, as you know, Jim Rowe became a long-time assistant and friend and booster for the career of President Johnson. So I would have thought that this was indicative more of LBJ's capacity to make sure that he knew where to go for whatever he might need in the program that he had set himself out to follow. And it wouldn't surprise me at all if he had made probably the most judicious list of people to approach of anybody working in the Congress at that time.

G: How about Abe Fortas?

R: Well, my impression was that--several times I had the opportunity to talk about Abe Fortas with LBJ. He really admired his intellectual capacity and had the vision to recognize somebody who was not an ordinary run-of-the-mill lawyer, and this again was indicative of the fact that he would pick people who he felt pretty sure were on their way up and going to arrive at a destination where it wouldn't do LBJ any harm to have good access and good friendship with them.

G: And what did these people see in LBJ on the other hand?

R: An intriguing person with endless, boundless energy and a determination, once he made up his mind that he wanted something to happen, to make it happen. Of course, I couldn't speak for them individually as to all the things that they might have seen in him, but in

general, I think--you know how you get a feeling, "Now that's a fellow that's going places." And they all recognized that this was a young man who was going to go places, and, of course, who did go places.

G: Did you ever hear your father speak of LBJ?

R: On a particular subject?

G: No, just on anything. Did he ever talk about Lyndon Johnson or give his impression of Lyndon Johnson?

R: Not as far as I can remember as a sort of a lonesome topic, but only because on a matter like the dam there would be a tone of voice in which he would say, "Now, go get that straightened out or work out that problem," that you felt that he had decided that this was a fellow who was worthy of giving some time and some help to. I don't remember ever having a discussion, let's say, pro and con, though, on where this young fellow was going or what he could be useful in accomplishing or doing, because I think he felt sure that here was a loyal man on the team and that he understood the value of playing it that way in Washington. As far as I know, I never heard him say anything critical or disparaging about LBJ in any way, and, at the same time, many times I'm sure that--well, I can't remember the specific topic--I would be sure [to hear], "Why don't you check with LBJ on that and see how the people in Texas feel about it?"

G: You had the third-term fight in 1940, and here the Texas congressional delegation was split, and you had John Nance Garner on the one hand and Lyndon Johnson and people like Alvin Wirtz on the other. Do you recall this fight, particularly as it applied to the Texas delegation and what sort of support you got from them?

R: Only that, again, I would have thought that what happened there--and I'm not sure I'm correct in my memory--was that the so-called non-New Deal side of the party was opposed to the third term and that it took a lot of courage to be willing to enter into that fray, particularly when it was John Nance Garner who was the individual involved. And if I remember rightly, that was the time--although it might have been four years earlier, but I don't think so--when my brother Elliott was on the delegation and when he voted for John Nance Garner in the convention along with that part of the delegation and against his own father, which has never, as far as I know, ever been documented as to whether that was a true story or not. But Elliott says it is true, so I guess it must be. (Laughter)

G: Anything on Lyndon Johnson and Sam Rayburn in that situation, Rayburn apparently supporting Garner and Johnson supporting your father?

R: No, not in that situation. Years later, of course, when I was elected to Congress in 1954, I remember the Speaker asking me how well I knew Lyndon Johnson. My reply was that I just felt he was a friend of the family's and that I didn't know too much about his political life in Texas and how he was proceeding but that I had always admired him. I remember Speaker [Sam] Rayburn saying to me, "Well, get to know him because he can be [valuable]; he is one of the people that makes things work around here." But, of course, that was a good many years later.

G: Interesting. Anything on his Senate race in 1941 when he ran against Pappy [W. Lee] O'Daniel?

R: No, I really have no recollection of that period at all because that was a period when I went on active duty and was doing things either that Father had sent me to do as a marine or I

was actually participating in Marine Corps activities.

G: Okay.

R: So that was sort of a blank period there.

G: Sure. I'm going to cover a couple of points during that period and then if you have no recollections of them, well, we'll just go on from there. But [first], extension of the Selective Service Act in 1941, that very close vote. I think it passed by one vote.

R: One vote, right.

G: Were you gone at the time, or do you have any recollection of how that--?

R: I was gone at the time. I was not in Washington, so all I remember was the tenseness and the importance that Father put upon it, and he was willing to risk it and felt that if he lost, it was a real setback to getting prepared for what he felt was an inevitable conflict.

G: How about LBJ's World War II experience?

R: When he went on active duty?

G: Yes.

R: I think Father got a kick out of that.

G: Did you?

R: And I remember his saying that "you can't blame a young fellow who's in the Congress and wants to get out and get into the active part of it." But he said, "It's fundamentally wrong. If all the politically bright fellows go out and join the combatants, we would have a Congress that just couldn't function and wouldn't function." And he said, "I know LBJ"--and I remember his specifically mentioning it--"is going to be very upset with me because I am just going to tell him he's got to stay home." And I think, however, he felt

very, very warmly and very admiringly that he had wanted to get into active duty.

G: He did recall the congressmen who were taking leave, didn't he?

R: Yes, that's right. He did, and I've forgotten who the others were now, but there were two or three others who also had to be called back.

G: Now, I understand they had the option of resigning their seats if they really wanted to stay on active duty, but LBJ did not do that. Do you recall?

R: Well, I recall Father saying, "I have told LBJ that I need him here, and he doesn't have an option. This is where I want him to be and where I think he can contribute to the war effort more effectively than by resigning and going into active duty." So I think Father put the pressure on him pretty direct.

G: LBJ did meet with [Douglas] MacArthur on a mission that apparently your father sent him on. Do you have any insights regarding that meeting and the purpose of it or the result of it?

R: None whatsoever, and I doubt whether too many people would because that would be something he would entrust rather personally to LBJ.

G: Did LBJ in later years ever talk to you about MacArthur, particularly MacArthur *vis-à-vis* your father?

R: No, not directly. Indirectly, he asked whether I had had any contact with MacArthur out in the Pacific, and he always said to me, "Remember, he doesn't like marines." And I said, "Well, I've heard that, but I haven't had any firsthand knowledge of the animosity that exists."

G: LBJ was also very interested in public housing during the New Deal period. Any

recollections there of his getting a public housing project for Austin?

R: Not directly, no.

G: You were named Democratic national committeeman from California in the late 1940s, weren't you? I don't know exactly when you went in.

R: Yes, I was state chairman from 1946 to 1948 and national committeeman from 1948 to 1952.

G: Any relationship with LBJ in that connection either, say, at the national conventions or any other Democratic Party matters in which you had occasion to work with him?

R: No, from the time that I came back to California after being relieved of my Marine Corps duties, I really didn't see very much or have too much contact with LBJ until I actually was elected to Congress in 1954.

G: Anything on your mother's friendship with LBJ?

R: I think I draw almost a perfect blank. I don't think that Mother really understood LBJ, and I think because she felt probably they saw alike on many things such as public housing, and generally on [other things], I think she always had in the background, "I don't know why he is such a liberal. Look where he comes from." I think, if anything, he had a job in overcoming her fears that he really wasn't wholeheartedly for what he appeared to be. I'm sure there are some to document it better than I could, but I don't know if there are in existence too many instances of her having a very close day-to-day personal contact with him, and I think that she felt that he was Father's boy and not particularly hers.

G: Did she press him on social issues, do you recall, such as civil rights or things like that?

R: No, I don't think she thought she had to press him. Because I think she thought he was too

well committed to that and knew that he had taken positions that were pretty difficult maybe politically to sustain, considering where he came from.

G: I wonder if his cooperation with President [Dwight] Eisenhower disturbed her during the 1950s when he was Democratic leader. A lot of the liberals in the party felt like he was too accommodating.

R: Yes, I think that was probably true. She probably did. But I think by that time she had decided he was more of a politician than she had guessed and that while she, of course, wasn't very close to President Eisenhower because he did not reappoint her to the UN [United Nations], I think that she never had any personal animosity toward Eisenhower. And I doubt whether she would have held it against LBJ, because I think she was practical enough to realize that he was the president, and LBJ was a Democrat, and if you wanted to get certain things done for your constituency, you couldn't be unfriendly to the power that was there.

G: Did you yourself feel that LBJ was not as active in promoting social legislation when he was majority leader as he should have been?

R: No, I never did. I worked with President Eisenhower myself as a member of Congress, and LBJ was always--whenever I had reason, as I did from time to time, to go over and talk with him about particular legislation, particularly that had to do with the Committee on Education and Labor, I always found that LBJ was a very practical, sincere fellow. If I wanted to get more than he felt was reasonable, he would just tell me so very frankly or would either tell me to come back later on when the situation might have changed. But I never felt that he was anything except practical in the politics that he played on the Hill and

worked for things that he felt were essential.

G: You have been given credit for helping bring Sam Rayburn around in the passage of some of the civil rights legislation in 1957 and 1960. Let me ask you to recall what role you did play here in terms of Sam Rayburn?

R: Well, I think part of the role that I had to play was due to the fact that I was chairman of the subcommittee that dealt with labor legislation. And I think that the fact that I had a chairman by the name of Adam Clayton Powell, who Mr. Rayburn had a little difficulty controlling, and the fact that he had relied on me to hold the fort, so to speak, from time to time resulted in my being given the assignment to either keep Adam Clayton Powell quiet or else find him and bring him back and make him be active, which was a strange type of duty to perform. But, of course, I do understand that I had a chairman and was working with a chairman who had really abdicated most of the chairmanship to a subcommittee chairman and that, therefore, I worked much more directly with the Speaker than I normally would have had the opportunity of doing, because that would have been the prerogative of the chairman, whereas I was only chairman of the subcommittee.

G: I see.

R: For instance, when we came to the Civil Rights Bill in what--1964?--it became my responsibility at the request of Labor and some other areas to ask the Speaker to tell the chairman of the Judiciary Committee that the Labor Committee wanted to handle Chapter Seven. That was a rather unusual request, to get the chairman of the Judiciary Committee to agree to give up any jurisdiction over any part of the bill, because the whole bill had been assigned to the Judiciary Committee. And I remember Manny Celler meeting with LBJ and

the Speaker and myself and being a little difficult to convince, but between the three of us, we convinced him. And the fact that I had the opportunity to take that responsibility for the Labor Committee, I think, gave me an opportunity to work with the Speaker very much more than would other wise have been true.

G: Now, this was John McCormack instead of Sam Rayburn that you were [with] in 1964.

R: No, let's see, it was--wasn't he still--?

G: He'd died before this.

R: Did he, before 1964?

G: Before 1964. It would have been McCormack.

R: Then it might have been McCormack.

G: Well, you are thinking of the 1964 measure.

R: Yes, I'm thinking of the 1964 measure.

G: How did you appeal to the chairman of the Judiciary Committee?

R: Well, we just pointed out to him that what was at issue were really fair labor standards problems and that, really, the Judiciary Committee had no background in this area and that if the bill was to maintain [Chapter Seven] in it and withstand attacks which might weaken that section that it really was going to take the people on the Education and Labor Committee to do the job. Sort of an appeal was made that, "All right, if we didn't let Adam run away with it and make himself objectionable, we could have that responsibility." But it was sort of a trade-off that we would agree to handle Adam Clayton Powell in return for their giving the Labor Committee that responsibility.

G: Anything on the 1960 campaign, the convention in Los Angeles?

R: Directly connected to LBJ, only that, as I remember, the California delegation was all for having LBJ on the ticket and felt very, very strongly that Mr. Kennedy needed him. I remember a number of things. My mother, of course, was for Adlai Stevenson, and she was bitterly, really bitterly disappointed because she wasn't very happy with President Kennedy's nomination. I think she didn't want to interfere with it, but I think, for the first time, she was a real partisan of having LBJ on the ticket because she felt that his experience was needed to give a balance to the young Mr. Kennedy, who, without LBJ's guidance and advice, she doubted seriously was up to doing the job. As you remember, it was quite a long time in 1960 before she really wholeheartedly accepted Mr. Kennedy.

G: Did you have any association with LBJ while he was vice president that we ought to talk about here?

R: Only that, of course, I was in the Congress and had the opportunity a fair number of times to have to go and ask the Vice President, or the Majority Leader at that time, what should I do and how should I do it. And I never found an occasion when he wasn't not only helpful but went out of his way to explain to me how the thing could be done or how I had better sit in the background and let him do it. I had to recognize and certainly did recognize that much of our ability to get legislation through the House and have it favorably considered on the Senate side came from LBJ.

G: Even while he was vice president?

R: Well, yes, while he was vice president, after he became vice president.

G: Now, of course, he became president in November 1963, and I want to ask you about some of the legislative issues there, but first let's discuss some odds and ends that happened

during the administration. One, he came out to California to campaign in October 1964. Do you remember that trip, anything significant about it?

R: I have a picture of him somewhere where my wife and family attended an LBJ rally, and, purely from a personal point of view, I was overwhelmed by his person-to-person contact that he was willing to do. There were tremendous crowds, and he would jump out of a car and shake hands with somebody and get back in, and the enthusiasm with which he was greeting people along the route of the parade or procession just made a terrific impression on me, that here was a man who really knew how to campaign with the people. I have a wonderful picture of my--then, I guess, he must have been about three or four years old--adopted son being held up, and LBJ greeting him and giving him a big bear hug. Of course, LBJ--we sort of felt that he was a member of the family more than just a politician running for office.

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G: I guess the chairman of the Citizens for Johnson-Humphrey was Sam Yorty up there, who was only nominally, I suppose, a supporter of LBJ's. How did this happen, do you know, and what was the result of it?

R: If I remember, Yorty of course was mayor [of Los Angeles], and one of the ways the campaign was structured was to simply say, "Look, if you want to go out and be on the revolting side of the party, why, go ahead. On the other hand, we're willing to accept you even though you haven't been much help to us, provided that you give us loyal support in the campaign." And Sam Yorty was, if nothing else, a practical politician, and he wanted to be on the winning side and knew that it might help him in California--in any ambitions that

he had later on in California. And he'd been pretty successful. I mean, he wasn't a discredited politician.

G: Did the people like Pat [Edmund] Brown and yourself object to Yorty playing this prominent role?

R: No, I think we recognized this was a good peacemaking gesture and that he wouldn't do any harm, and it provided a unity that was helpful to the campaign. But Pat, I don't think, was ever any great friend of Sam Yorty's, so he might not have been very happy about it, but he was practical enough to know that it was a good move.

G: Let me ask you about your role in the defeat of the Bolton Amendment, which would have barred surplus food sales to the United Arab Republic. Do you remember that? It was an issue that many felt would have tied the president's hands in foreign policy, and you introduced a substitute, I believe, the Roosevelt Substitute, that did pass.

R: I'm not quite sure that I know what you want to know about it except that it came about as a result of consultation with the leadership. On an amendment of that kind I'd have to get it cleared with the Speaker, and then the Speaker would have to be sure that it was all right with the Senate and the President in order to order everybody out to get it adopted. It was just part of the normal maneuvering that we--

G: Sure.

R: --were supposed to do.

G: Did the President have a role in this legislation?

R: If I remember rightly, we were told that the President wanted that amendment beaten very badly and that if it was left in, it would bollix up the whole legislation and that, therefore,

we were given to understand that it was important to the President.

G: Okay, and the Fair Labor Standards Bill, the minimum-wage legislation, you were involved in this heavily. Do you--?

R: Merely because I was subcommittee chairman and, in the absence of the chairman, spoke for the full committee. Frankly, I think that Mr. Rayburn and the President couldn't find old Adam Clayton Powell most of the time, and if they did find him, they weren't quite sure whether it was worth finding him. So, again, I've always felt that I really had an opportunity for being given responsibility in the House which was largely due to the absence of Mr. Powell more than anything else.

G: Let me ask you to go into the committee for a little bit and to discuss the personalities and the way the committee worked. It dealt with some awfully important legislation. Let's talk first about Powell. Was he there when there was legislation that was important to him?

R: He was usually there when it was important in the final stages, either to him or to the committee. He had one or two very good staff members whom he relied on to tell him when it was worthwhile to abandon his hide-outs and his retreats and come in and brief him and get him so that he could even participate and make a final speech or summation on the floor. And one thing was he was a quick learner. It didn't take him long to grasp what really ought to be said and should not be said.

G: Who were these staff members? Do you recall?

R: I'm sure I could look it up for you, but one of them was a lady, who was the official secretary of the committee.

G: Was it [Louise] Dargans?

R: Mrs. Dargans. That's right, and she was a very large, heavyset lady, but she had a marvelous way of keeping all the committee members feeling happy that the Chairman was all behind them, and he relied on them to do the job, and what a great opportunity it was that we'd been given to assume responsibility we might not have otherwise. She was a true peacemaker, and I think if she had had her way, he never would have gotten in the trouble that he got into later on, although I'm sure she knew what was going on.

G: What sort of influence was Chuck Stone on that committee?

R: I really don't know, because I never had an awful lot of dealings with Chuck.

G: Did Powell have members on the committee who he was particularly close to and could work with?

R: Yes, he sort of had a team of us. When he came in town, he'd invite us in to have a drink in his office, and he'd call us his team. Congressman [Frank] Thompson was certainly one of them. To a lesser degree, Mrs. [Edith] Green was a part of it, and there were a number of others. There was Mr. [John] Dent from Pennsylvania, people that he felt pretty close to, but I would say that the main two were Congressman Thompson and myself.

G: You mentioned both Powell's absenteeism and his ability to learn quickly. What were his other strengths and weaknesses as a committee chairman?

R: Of course, tremendous charm and the feeling that you didn't want to get into a fight with this guy, and that gave him a strength which backed up the fact that he could really be very eloquent. When he was on the floor and you thought, "This is impossible. We have to take a beating," he had a way of presenting his case which forestalled anybody getting really personal and antagonistic to him on a personal basis. He was very effective on the floor;

not so effective off the floor. I think his weakness, of course, was that everybody knew that he hadn't done his homework and that he hadn't put in the time so that he was really responsible for anything, although he was taking the responsibility as chairman when he was actually in charge of the bill.

G: Did he usually exact some sort of, well, for want of a better word, "pork barrel" for his Harlem district before he would let legislation out? Was it customary for him to exact a price for his own constituents?

R: Well, he never did as far as I personally was concerned, but I always knew that he had a pipeline into the leadership that he felt free to use when he thought it was really important to him. He always had access to the Speaker and to the leadership and he had no compunction about just going to them and saying that, "I've got to have this." And mostly just to avoid a fight or disagreement that might become public, they would give him what he wanted. But he never relied on me to get him any of the--I had nothing to do with his district at all except holding hearings in his district when he would [ask me].

I remember going to one set of hearings on, I think, labor standards in Harlem where he said, "Now, I want you there. I want you up there when I have this outdoor [meeting]. I'm going to have to have an outdoor meeting and have them hanging out of every window in Harlem while we have this committee meeting outdoors in the street. And we did. That's exactly what we did. That's where the committee met. He had a sense of theater that was a tremendous asset to him, but it was also very annoying to an awful lot of other people.

G: There's some suggestion in the War on Poverty legislation that he insisted on an enormous

grant for Community Action in Harlem before he would approve it, HARYOU-Act or one of the programs there. Do you remember that at all?

R: I don't remember that specific thing, but I would think it was incredible if he hadn't acted that way.

G: Let me ask you about Edith Green. She had a reputation for being difficult at times.

R: Right.

G: Is this deserved?

R: Well, I think it may have been deserved. She could be awfully stubborn, and stubborn to the point where she was almost disagreeable, but she was awfully bright and awfully smart, and she had a devoted staff who kept her on the ball. She wasn't as effective as she might have been because she didn't spend the time on personal relationships with people.

G: Was there any formula for dealing with her that you had, for keeping her from being disagreeable?

R: No, we just tried to really--quietly to change her mind. Once you got her riled up, you had to quit for a couple of days to get things back to normal, but I always liked her. Of course, she was my seatmate. She sat right next to me in the committee. She couldn't truly understand Adam, I don't think. She felt very close to the leadership, and she felt, in a big way, that she was an important cog in the Democratic Party as such, whereas--much more important than some of the other members or colleagues.

G: Was her principal interest education?

R: I think so, yes. She wasn't one who put much emphasis on the niceties. For instance, if she was going to have a committee meeting and you were on the committee, she wouldn't

consult with you about the time for the meeting. The time for the meeting was when she wanted it. And if you needed her vote on your committee, in some ways you were able to get it because you said, "Now, I went to your darn committee, and I had a hard time making it, and now you've got to repay me by coming to mine and giving me the vote that I'll need at this meeting."

G: Was she pretty much a captive of the teachers' associations? Was she indebted to them? Was this her principal constituency?

R: Well, this was her strength. Without much question, this was where her basic political power lay, so you always had to take that into consideration.

G: How did she get along with the White House under LBJ?

R: I don't know the specifics of it, but I would have to say that I thought he handled her very well. He made her feel important, and yet he wasn't, shall I say, an enthusiastic follower. And she knew he wasn't too happy with her at times, but he never made her feel left out.

G: She was apparently blocking or holding up the Higher Education Bill at one point, evidently asking for concessions or something, and Powell threatened to retaliate by firing her sister from the subcommittee staff and doing things like that. Do you recall this particular conflict and how it was resolved?

R: No, I don't. I don't recall that particular one, but my impression always was that she and Adam were not very close, but that when Adam really wanted something, he would go directly to charm her to death, and a couple of times he won the round where we thought it was hopeless.

G: Really? Can you remember the particular ones you're referring to here?

R: No. One of them had to do with Mrs. [Martha] Griffiths who was from Michigan, I guess. [She] had an amendment that she wanted to put into the bill relative to the rights of ladies, and we thought it would kill the bill, so we were very worried about it, and we wanted Mrs. Green to take the opposition to it, which she finally did. But it was only because Adam went to her and said, "Now, just to prove that you're not a patsy like all other women, like sheep around here, we want you to stand up and take Mrs. Griffiths on." And Mrs. Green had not wanted to particularly, but she did. She did a good job of it.

G: I want to ask you about two of the southerners now, Phil Landrum and Carl Perkins. Let me ask you to describe their role on the committee.

R: Phil Landrum, as you know, was a--well, I suppose what should be called a conservative Democrat, and the Landrum-Griffin Bill was a pain in the neck, and we didn't know exactly how to handle Phil. I came to be very good friends with him after a while, and while I don't think either of us saw eye-to-eye on some labor measures, nevertheless we always had a personal relationship which was very solid and very good. And I think he always felt that he was close to LBJ, and maybe he was. I have no direct knowledge on that.

Carl Perkins was a--you weren't always sure just where Carl Perkins would stand on something. You were pretty sure you knew where Landrum would stand, and there was an element of political maneuvering in Carl Perkins' soul that I don't think existed in Landrum's soul.

G: Really?

R: But I think it was true, although I didn't realize it until later, that Landrum really wanted to get on that Ways and Means Committee, which he finally did, and that this tempered his

willingness to work with people like myself and Frank Thompson and others on the committee due to the fact that when the time came for wanting us to support him for Ways and Means that he would have some reason to ask us to do it. And it worked. We did support him.

Of course, the interesting thing is that if Carl Perkins were alive today, even if I had stayed in the Congress, I would have become chairman of the committee just a year ago. It was about a year ago that Carl died, I guess. So he was chairman, I guess, as long as anybody has been; for a long while.

G: Landrum sponsored the War on Poverty legislation. How did that happen?

R: I think partly because he was a true Democrat, and this was not--this cut across part of what he believed in. But on the other hand, it was a very important thing in the South, and I think he felt that it was a part of what he needed in his own constituency and could support because of the tremendous moral as well as practical things that this fulfilled. I don't think it ever upset him particularly, and he wanted the leadership for his own standing, which, of course, he got and received.

G: How did the southerners on the committee, particularly Perkins and Landrum, relate to Powell?

R: Well, what was the gentleman's name from West Virginia? He once had a fist fight with Powell in one of the committee meetings, and it was Landrum who broke it up.

G: Really?

R: Yes, and, oh dear, I should know him. He was a character. [Cleveland Bailey?]

G: I'll think of it in a minute. Were you there when it happened?

R: I was there when it happened.

G: Tell me how it started.

R: Well, it came over some slighting remark that Powell thought that this gentlemen from West Virginia had made about him, and he said, "You're an old man. Otherwise, I'd beat you up." And this gentleman jumped up and said, "You think you're man enough to take me on?" and took a swing at Powell. And about that time, we rushed in to hold them both back and let them cool off, which they did, and apologized to each other. But it was the only time I saw physical violence take place in the Congress.

I would have to think that if they could have gotten rid of Powell earlier than he was gotten rid of that Landrum and Perkins would have been glad to get rid of him, because Perkins, I'm sure, was always looking forward to the day when he would become chairman of the committee, while Landrum was more interested in going to Ways and Means.

G: I have two readings of Perkins. One is that he was not as sophisticated as--

R: He liked to give you the feeling that he was a country bumpkin.

G: That is the other one, that he played this role, but he was--

R: He really was much more sophisticated than he appeared or than he wanted to appear, and it was a convenient sort of a mist that he could put out when he wasn't quite sure just which way he wanted to go. He'd appear confused, but he wasn't confused. He wanted time to consider how to handle a situation. He was a pretty smart fellow.

G: Can you give me an example of how he used this subtlety to his advantage?

R: No, I wish I could remember some specific cases. But there'd be some infighting where the committee was fairly evenly divided and where Perkins would almost be in a position of

casting the deciding vote or influencing the measure, and you always felt that you never quite knew just where Perkins would be until the final showdown was about to take place. Then you wouldn't be quite sure you could count on him until the last vote either. I liked him, but he was not a leader. He didn't program very heavily. Of course, he wasn't that close to Powell.

G: There was some fear when he took over from Powell that he was unable, or would be unable, to handle Edith Green, particularly.

R: Well, I'm not sure he ever did learn how to handle her. As you know, she left the committee. What committee did she go to? I can't remember. Appropriations, I think, but she left it primarily because she knew she couldn't--she wasn't going to be the reigning queen under Perkins.

G: Frank Thompson.

R: In relationship to LBJ or in relationship to the committee?

G: To the committee, yes.

R: To the committee. Frank Thompson was a kind of a fellow that LBJ could completely understand. He was a very practical guy with deep-down feelings about what he wanted to do and what he wanted to accomplish, but he was also somewhat of a playboy, which none of us realized, except we should have because we knew he was pretty close to Adam. He and Adam undoubtedly got together many, many times, and Adam would think nothing of inviting some lobbyist in to get him some football tickets or some free trip to here or there, and that never horrified Frank. It worried the devil out of the rest of us, but it never bothered Frank. So that while I never thought Frank would allow himself to get caught in

the kind of mess he got caught in, nevertheless I had to say to myself, "Well, of all the people that you know [the one] who would get caught eventually would be Frank," because this was just part of the way he did business in New Jersey, and it never occurred to him, I think, that he'd get involved as he finally did.

I personally liked Frank. He was practical. You could work with him. If he was unalterably opposed to something, you knew it, and, on the other hand, if you needed to fight out a question and get it resolved, he was right with you. I still feel that--I wish it hadn't happened to Frank because he was a pretty nice fellow.

G: Was he particularly interested in some issues as opposed to others? Labor measures, say?

R: Yes, he was strong--I think he wanted to be much more on the labor side of things, and, as you know, he was on the education subcommittee side, and I think he and Edith Green were always rivals, and Edith knew that she didn't have Frank lined up in her corner. So if she really wanted something, she tried to get it into her committee without having it go to Frank's committee. Frank was no fool. If he saw some advantages in ability to get a good reputation, he'd go after it, and he was quicker on his feet, and he was much more willing to make trades. You couldn't make a trade with Edith except after the greatest difficulty.

G: How about Hugh Carey? He was on the committee as well.

R: Yes, he was, and I always liked Hugh. I always thought he was a guy you could count on when you really had to. He had one issue which he, as you know, tried to attach to every doggone bill that came along, which was the education, church-state relationship. And you always knew he would be out there muddying up the waters. But he always did it at an early stage so that when it came down to being really damaging at the end of the run, he

would back down. But in return for giving him a little rhyme and attention and feeling of maybe he might block the whole thing, you knew that when the chips were down, he'd reach a compromise with you that would unlock the gates and let you go forward.

G: A formula was arrived at [for] the education bill that was used in a lot of other legislation where it was applicable.

R: Right.

G: Do you recall how this was reached?

R: Well, it was reached pretty much by everybody, I think, fighting to find a way to not really get backed into a corner where we would be paralyzed. And Hugh was willing to come quite a long way towards the proposition that the rest of us couldn't accept unless he was willing to come quite a long way. I don't remember who the--it seems to be that Frank Thompson was sort of a leader in that compromise position, but you also had to get our friend from West Virginia and others to understand and agree to it, too. I don't remember Carl Perkins ever playing a very important role in it, but it was generally the so-called liberal majority on the Democratic side who wanted to accommodate Carey and, at the same time, for political reasons just couldn't accept what he would have done otherwise.

G: Let me ask you briefly about the Republicans on the committee. I guess the ranking Republican was Peter--

R: Peter Frelinghuysen.

G: That's right.

R: Well, it sounds sort of unfair to say it, but Peter was a typical Brahmin from the East Coast, and I guess we all felt that Peter was kind of stuffy. But he wasn't a bad guy; he was a nice

guy, and he played along. He was in awe of Adam.

G: Was he?

R: Oh, completely in awe of him.

G: Why was this?

R: Adam just overwhelmed him. He didn't know how to handle him. Adam knew exactly how to handle Peter. He just cut out three or four positions on the minority side or would tell them they couldn't have any travel allowances for this or that or the other thing, and then when he'd squeeze them hard enough and they were ready to really revolt, he'd come in and give a little bit. And Peter wouldn't realize he was being played like a jockey. So I guess we all liked Peter but never really felt that he was an effective minority leader.

G: Who was the most effective Republican on the committee?

R: I guess the most practical guy was the fellow also from West Virginia who became governor of West Virginia later on. [Arch] Moore. Anyway, later on, he left the Congress and became governor of West Virginia. And he was a very practical fellow, and he pretty much--the minority was not--well, there were a few of them, and I'm trying to remember who they were, who you would have to really work with to get them from muddying up the waters too much.

G: [Albert] Quie and [Charles] Goodell seem to have been somewhat independent of the--

R: Yes, you could work with them. You could bring them to your side. They came from districts that were not rock-ribbed conservative Republican districts. So both Quie and Goodell--especially, I suppose, Goodell--Goodell was less respected for his intellectual capacities than Quie, but Quie on education was pretty good.

G: Any other personalities on the committee that you want to talk about?

R: A fellow who was underrated was this fellow [John H.] Dent from Pennsylvania. He looked as if he was not much of a fireball, but he did his homework, and he had an excellent staff, and he knew how to work his staff in with the committee staff and get the fullest use out of it. He understood Adam, and Adam understood him, and he was a very valuable individual on the majority side. I wish I had a list of the committee. It's so long ago now that I have forgotten who all of the--

G: Yes. Let's talk about some of the legislation that the committee handled. First, I want to ask you about the poverty legislation, the Economic Opportunity Act.

R: Right.

G: Any recollections of how this was formulated?

R: When was this finally passed?

G: Well, it was passed in--I believe it was August 1964. It was introduced in March and passed, I believe, in August.

R: I don't remember too much about it because, if I remember correctly, what we got was pretty much of an administration bill, and I don't think in our committee that we changed it very much. We did have a church-state problem along the line, but it was the easiest one of the so-called measures that President Johnson put through. My impression is now that this legislation was so well worked out beforehand that the committee didn't have much to do in the way of changing it.

G: Criticism has been made that Congress really didn't understand what they were voting for when they passed the War on Poverty bill, particularly community action and approaches

like that.

R: I think that would be a fair thing to say, that they didn't realize the potential of it.

G: Is that right?

R: And particularly didn't realize the political value that would come out of putting it into effect, that you really got down to the grassroots, that it dealt with the grassroots, and that when you really got it working, that it gave you, let's say, some machinery for political campaigning that went beyond anything that anybody really understood or had thought it might.

G: It also apparently bypassed a lot of the established political structures in that--

R: It gave the President an ability to have a force to counter the machinery of big cities, for instance, because they couldn't oppose it. The big city politicians couldn't oppose it, and yet it gave somebody else outside the party machinery the opportunity to come in and become a political force.

G: Did it create political problems for you and your district?

R: No.

G: Really?

R: No, because I didn't have a machine anyway. I worked with all the assemblymen from my district and the local member of the Board of Supervisors. I had a campaign manager who was also in charge of my district office, who fundamentally believed in everything that was part of that package, so that he just used it, frankly, to see that the right kind of people were appointed to administrate within the district, [those] with whom we would get along.

G: A number of congressmen complained about OEO, some of the abuses or excesses, some of

the conflicts generated by the programs, but they continued to appropriate the funds for it, authorize the approach. Do you recall this aspect of it, the fact that while they would criticize it they would continue to support it?

R: Well, my feeling always was that that their criticism was more one of personalities rather than of objections, that they recognized that it was a tremendous political tool within their district, and they wouldn't want to oppose it or get rid of it, but that they were constantly at war with whoever was running it as not being one of their people. In other words, that the patronage necessarily didn't follow the line that they wanted and that this was the basis of their criticism more than it was a deep-felt antagonism to the program itself.

G: How do you think the President reacted to the program after it was implemented?

R: I really couldn't tell you because I went to the UN about that time.

G: Okay.

End of Tape 2 of 3, Start of Tape 3

G: First, the Higher Education Act. Can you describe the committee's work on this measure?

R: You know, I've forgotten what it was that was occupying my committee at the time, but while I was a member of Edith Green's and Thompson's [sub]committee, I didn't really play an important role in the development of the education bills, just because I had so much to do as chairman of the Labor Subcommittee that I just couldn't take on that much of a--I really supported the subcommittee chairman. Frankly, the way we really worked was that if I had some of the education people on my labor committee, they would say, "Okay. You tell us what to do, and now when you come over to our committee on education, and you haven't had too much to do with it, we'll tell you how to vote towards its support," and it

was that kind of inter-reaction that worked pretty well.

G: I see. There really was a division of--

R: There really was a division between those who were sort of responsible and had developed the basic ideas in the education bills whereas we had not. We had worked on the labor side, but they were also members of our subcommittee, and they didn't interfere with our development of what we wanted to do on the labor side.

G: Okay. Let's talk about the minimum wage issue. You were apparently a proponent of raising the minimum wage--

R: Right. I still am.

G: --in each session. The White House didn't seem to be as enthusiastic as you were at the times, fearing inflation and things like that. Can you recall this question and--?

R: Actually, the hardest time I had on minimum wage came in Kennedy's day, not in LBJ's day. In LBJ's day we had more frank testimony, more willingness to come forward and take positions on the minimum wage, whereas I can remember--who was the secretary of labor from Chicago who eventually went--Wirtz?

G: Yes. Willard Wirtz.

R: Willard Wirtz. I tried to get Willard Wirtz to come and testify, and he would tell me he couldn't; the administration hadn't made up its mind yet what to do about it. Well, I knew the administration had made up its mind and had to be for the bill, but they weren't ready to go on the line for it, and I had a terrible time getting him to come up, because I couldn't advance the bill without an administration position being taken on it. Now, after LBJ became president, it was a much easier task.

G: Did you ever meet with Johnson about the labor legislation?

R: When he was vice president?

G: No, while he was president.

R: Oh, yes. Gracious, we would have a--not all the time, but we would certainly--the door was always open, either by direct visit or by phone; so that we could not make mistakes by going too far too fast.

G: Okay. How about legislation regarding migrant workers? Was that something that came before your committee?

R: For some reason or other, I think we didn't have jurisdiction over migrant workers. While we had views, and we were fairly active in trying to get better conditions for the migrant workers, I don't think it ever came before our committee. Could it have come for some reason through the Judiciary Committee?

G: I see. Any other legislative aspects of your service that brought you into a working arrangement with the White House?

R: No, I think probably I was closer to the administration after I went to the UN and had more direct day-to-day communication than I did actually while I was in the Congress itself.

G: How would you assess the congressional liaison operation that Larry O'Brien headed?

R: I thought it was very well done. I thought Larry was understanding, that you would go and tell him what your problem was, and that he would give you some thought and ideas as to a way to solve it. And I think we felt that we could trust Larry if we needed to get directly into the White House for some reason or other, that he would see that it took place. So we didn't have any sense of antagonism. I mean, it really was a team effort.

G: Did the operation vary from the way it had been under Eisenhower?

R: Well, it was more friendly, more understanding, but the Eisenhower years, I had no trouble with the White House in the Eisenhower years, partly because I don't think we had a program that was particularly forceful or required that we take positions that were strongly held as against the position of the White House. In other words, we didn't have any really effective legislation until the Kennedy-Johnson days.

G: Yes, but was the liaison team more aggressive under Kennedy than it had been under Eisenhower, do you think?

R: Yes, because part of our problem in the Eisenhower days was that the committee was chaired by an ultra-conservative Democrat, who was right in the White House's pocket. Between that and Judge [Howard] Smith on the [Rules] Committee, you didn't have a prayer of getting anything done anyhow. Not because of the Republicans not being willing, but your own people were stymieing you. We really didn't have a prayer of advancing any liberal legislation under--who was the chairman in those days? He came from North Carolina or South Carolina. We ended up by having a revolt against him, and we finally made life so miserable for him that he quit. Oh, dear. Let's see. I should be able to remember that. [Graham Barden]

G: I'll think about it.

R: Maybe it will come to me after while. But the main reason he didn't want to resign was because Adam became chairman. And that, of course, was the ultimate sin.

(Laughter)

G: Do you recall the fight over the expansion of the Rules Committee?

R: Oh, yes. I always thought that was a good illustration of Sam Rayburn's leadership. It was that he understood the machinery and what to do with it in order to get done what he needed and wanted to get done. But he didn't want to make such an issue out of it that it became a divisive force to his own speakership. He understood Judge Smith backwards and forwards, knew that he was a stubborn guy, and, yet, time is taking him on in the final effort, so that he didn't bring the fight to a head until he knew he was going to win. He outsmarted Judge Smith in the end all the way down the line.

G: Did you feel like you had the votes to win it?

R: I think, when the final time came, the answer is yes.

G: The vote was postponed once.

R: Once, I think, but not because we didn't have the votes.

G: Really?

R: But because a request had been made by somebody to give them a little more time, hoping that they could work it out without a vote, but when it became obvious that it couldn't be--

G: Was the administration effective in lobbying for that expansion?

R: I think so. My impression is that it was a good team effort and that Rayburn and LBJ had a good thing going from the point of view of you knew where the leadership was, where it stood.

G: Any particular instance of Rayburn changing somebody's mind or convincing them to vote for the expansion?

R: No, I think he had the votes and knew who they were and put together his team, and I think the smartest thing he did was to handle the so-called Democratic Study Group so that he

never squashed it out of existence, which he could have done at any time. But again, he infiltrated the Democratic Study Group with people like Speaker [Thomas] O'Neill, who was really not a Democratic Study Group guy but who was a full-fledged member of the Democratic Study Group, so that he kept his far-left membership in the Democratic Party tied very closely to him while not letting them assume command and giving the more moderate group any reason for not going along.

G: With regard to the expansion of the Rules Committee, you had support from a lot of the Republicans, moderate Republicans as well. Do you recall how that was effected? Who got those Republican votes?

R: I don't know who was responsible for it. I have forgotten now, frankly, who, but it was--if I remember, [John] Lindsay was in the Congress at that time, and it was not a very large group of Republicans, but it was enough to make sure that you didn't have any trouble getting and keeping a majority. Of course, the Republican that you never knew how he stood, but who always would amaze you by standing up and helping you sometimes, was Mr. Gross from Iowa.

G: Oh, really? H. R. Gross?

R: H. R. Gross.

G: Joe Martin has been credited with playing a supportive role in that.

R: Well, he was much closer to the Speaker, to Rayburn, than most people understood, and I think if he had the opportunity he would have liked to have been a Rayburn lieutenant rather than a rival.

G: Let's talk a little more about your association with LBJ while he was in the White House.

The files indicate that you went with him to Adlai Stevenson's funeral.

R: Right.

G: Do you recall that occasion?

R: Yes, very well. I remember being invited to join the group that LBJ was taking on the White House plane to Illinois for the funeral and sort of wondering why I had been invited to go, because I would have gone to the funeral anyway. And as we went up, it was obvious that Justice [Arthur] Goldberg and the President were having intense discussions, and I wondered what it was all about, not having been told, and we were well taken care of on the trip, both ways. Just before we landed back in Washington, the President and the Justice came down, and the President said, "I've gotten the agreement of Justice Goldberg to leave the Supreme Court and accept appointment in Adlai Stevenson's place." I said, "Well, that's grand!"

He said, "Now, the Justice says that he only has one condition, that you've got to join the team." And I said, "Well, Mr. President, wait a minute now. I'm a member of Congress. I've got responsibilities to my district and can't just get up and walk off." And he said, "Well, this is an occasion when you've got to agree to go." He said, "It's of vital importance to me to have Justice Goldberg there and have the team that he wants there, and I'll get him the other members of the team, but you are a member of Congress, so you're going to have to resign." And he said, "I'm going to announce"--this was on Saturday, if I remember--"your appointment Monday morning, and I want you in the White House." And I said, "Well, Monday morning? Golly, that's only forty-eight hours from here. I don't know if I can get things set up to be ready." He said, "Well, you see what you can do."

So I didn't hear any more about it, so I guess I sort of hoped that he'd changed his mind or was going to forget about it. On Sunday night, the White House called--and I've forgotten who it was, but somebody said, "The President has asked me to call and be sure that you understand the announcement goes before this gathering at 8:00 a.m. on Monday morning." I said, "8:00 a.m.?" And he said, "Absolutely. That's when the President is going to announce it." So I said, "Well, what will I do about it?" He said, "You don't do anything about it. You just get up here."

So I had an opportunity to talk to the President about it afterwards and told him that I wanted him to know that it did come at a very opportune time because Adam Clayton Powell had gotten into his problems, and he had come to me and said, "Now, I've given you your opportunity. Now, I need your help, and I want you to be head of the defense on the floor of the House." "Well," I said, "Adam, how could I do that? Everything that is noted here I have to agree that you're guilty of." And Adam kind of laughed and said, "Well, it depends what you mean by guilty of.'" (Laughter)

And he said, "You can easily work out a defense for me." And I said, "Frankly, I just couldn't, and this gives me an opportunity to gracefully get out from having to do it." So the President laughed, and he said, "Well, I didn't mean it that way. That wasn't the reason that I asked you to join Justice Goldberg. We really want you to go."

G: Why did Goldberg want you on there? What was it in your experience?

R: I had known him quite well while he was secretary of labor, and I think he felt that we saw eye-to-eye, and if I was on the Economic and Social Council that I would be able to handle many of the things like the International Labor Organization and things of this kind that I

had worked with while I was in the Congress and on the Labor Committee. And he, of course, knew that Mother had been acceptable to a very widespread group of the delegates, and I think he felt that this would give him an entree to a lot of the people that he didn't know anything about. And actually that's the way that it pretty much worked out.

G: How did the President persuade Arthur Goldberg to step down from the Supreme Court?

R: Well, from the intensity of the talks--and you could hear them talking and occasionally some fairly loud voices--I think he had a hard time.

G: Really?

R: He had a really hard time. I don't think Arthur really wanted to leave the Supreme Court, but, you know, you don't tell the President no without--I don't think you do tell the President no. If he just says to you, "This is something you've got to do for your country," you do it. I don't think Arthur ever really wanted to do it, and I don't think he was ever very happy in the job itself.

G: He certainly regretted having left the Court later.

R: Oh, there's no question about it.

G: But there is an indication that he was restive on the Court, that he was looking for something that--

R: Well, he was an ambitious person, and I think he liked to be prominently up front in what was going on in his day. And I think he finally took it because he felt that the UN was going to be a platform from which he could talk about a lot of things which he couldn't talk about as a justice. But I think he also wanted to protect his rear by getting assurance that he would truly be a cabinet officer and truly be considered for reappointment at some time to

the Supreme Court if it didn't work out.

G: Was it also Goldberg's idea to appoint Jim Nabrit, or did that come from someone else?

R: I think that came from someone else. I think the President, whatever the reasons, felt that he would have a more balanced team with Jim Nabrit there and convinced Goldberg, because I don't think Goldberg--who was the lady who was appointed?

G: Eugenie Anderson.

R: Anderson. I don't think Goldberg knew any of these people particularly well. In other words, that team wasn't somebody that were close cronies, so I was never a close crony of Arthur Goldberg while he was a justice. So the team, I think, was put together largely by LBJ himself.

G: Anything during your service on the UN delegation that brought you into contact with LBJ?

R: No. The only occasion that I can remember [when] LBJ sort of wasn't too happy with me was [when] the Russians introduced a resolution favoring the right of each country which owned the oil to control their own natural resources. And, of course, I had been brought up that when a country had natural resources they would be protected and not exploited by anybody else but our own country, for instance. I hadn't realized that, of course, this bill was aimed at the Standard Oil and other people who were getting their oil from the Arab countries, and this was the Russian way of handling it. So when it was introduced, I was asked if I would support it, and I said, "Well, at the moment, it sounds certainly [like] something that my country has always believed in, the protection of its natural resources," and that was taken to mean that I would certainly not oppose it.

So I got a call from LBJ saying, "You better talk to the Secretary of State. He's real

upset by your remarks about that oil resolution, the Russian one." He said, "First of all, we can't be for it because it's Russian. Secondly, we can't be for it because it's aimed at one of our major industries, and so you've got to vote against it." And I said, "Well, in the first place, I'm not really against it. I think the principle is sound. From our own point of view, we don't want anybody interfering with our natural resources." And he said, "Well, it's a position we've never taken in the last twenty years or twenty-five years, and the Secretary of State says you have to vote against it." So I got a call from the Secretary of State saying, "Have you talked to the President?" And I said, "Yes, I've talked to the President. I understand you're unhappy. What do you want me to do?" "Oh, I want you to vote against it." I said, "Well, could I abstain?" He said, "No. You've got to vote against it." I said, "Well, are you saying I vote against it or I resign?" He said, "Well, I didn't say it. You did." (Laughter) And so I said, "Well, I didn't discuss that with the President, so I'll vote against it." That was the only unhappy time that I had while I was on the delegation.

The rest of it, as I told the President later, was sort of opening a window which I had not too well understood, about what a difficult time an ambassador, anywhere I guess, but particularly in New York, had to live. You know, we ran out of money to entertain anybody, and we had all our wives making sandwiches, and we just didn't have any allowances of any kind. The picture is much better now.

G: Is it?

R: Much better now. As a matter of fact, I was paid almost the same salary as an ambassador, without any allowances, as I was as a member of Congress.

G: Generally, in terms of your vote, did you have a free hand, or could you interpret policy

how you wished?

R: We were always given the opportunity to vote. We had staff meetings at which the administration's point of view would be explained by Goldberg or by his second-in-command. Then we would be asked to make our own comments, and it was a remarkably unified delegation. We rarely disagreed with the point of view of the administration. I think we all felt after a while that Justice Goldberg was getting disappointed with the cooperation he got from LBJ.

G: Can you give me a specific here?

R: Well, he'd call me up and ask me if I'd fly down with him on the plane to Washington, and I think that he was always a little upset that the ambassador's plane was an old DC-3, which certainly didn't conform to any of the other aviation standards in those days. I think that at times they forgot to invite him to cabinet meetings, and he was very, very sensitive about all his prerogatives, or his supposed prerogatives, and you could tell it by his attitude.

G: Do you think that when Goldberg took the job that he thought that he would be able to play a larger role in negotiating an end to the Vietnam War?

R: Yes, I do.

G: And was this also a source of disappointment?

R: Disappointment on his part. But I also feel very strongly that LBJ never promised him that.

G: Really? Is this a result of your being on the airplane at the time?

R: Partly being on the airplane, because I think that all LBJ told him was that he would have cabinet rank and that Arthur translated that into meaning things that LBJ didn't have in his mind at all. There was perhaps some responsibility that LBJ hadn't told him specifically

enough about where the water's edge would come to an end. On the other hand, that Arthur Goldberg expected more than he had any right to assume without being told specifically that he was going to be included.

G: Did Goldberg disagree with the administration's policy in Vietnam during this period, do you think?

R: Never publicly and, as far as I know, never privately with members of the delegation.

G: He never talked to you about it?

R: He never talked to me about it because, number one, I wasn't a part of that part of the work of the delegation that I--I had enough to do on my own side and not to get into it.

G: Okay. The President--excuse me.

R: No, I was going to say, in all of this I always felt a great warmth and friendship and understanding on Mrs. Johnson's part. I know that, for instance, when Kennedy died, I went over and left a note for LBJ simply saying that I knew this must be a terrible time for him after becoming president, that I wanted him to know that we were all thinking about him and would do anything that we could to help him get off to a good start. The next morning, I got a longhand letter note from Mrs. LBJ thanking me and telling me how much it meant to him to know that we felt that way. And she always saw that you were invited to the right things at the White House and that when he was ill, if you wrote him, she would write back the nicest letters, and we just had a wonderfully warm feeling which I would have to say I felt that Mrs. Johnson was mostly responsible for.

Now there were many--I remember going to a couple of parties in Washington where LBJ was just having the best time of his life. I have one picture on my wall with a

certain lady that I am sure Mrs. Johnson hadn't gotten us to take. But he could be so relaxed and so warm, and then if you haul off to some serious matter, he could change almost like that.

G: You accompanied him also in July 1965 to Kansas City to sign the Medicare bill with President Truman. Do you recall that occasion and why he asked you along?

R: No, except that I think he felt it was an extension of Social Security, which I had worked with my father on. He knew of that work and felt that, because I was in the Congress at that time, that this was an appropriate way of including members of Congress in the delegation that went for the signing and, at the same time, he knew that it meant something to me.

G: Any recollections of LBJ and President Truman together during that?

R: No, I really don't.

G: Let me ask you about your relationship with the White House at the time of the Watts riots. I believe that you met with the President, didn't you?

R: I met with the President, and he arranged for me to fly out with the gentleman who was in charge of something-Emergency Office. [Community Relations Service]

G: Yes, that was LeRoy Collins, I believe.

R: I think so. And he was very helpful in making sure, because it was in my district, totally, that I was kept up to date on all the information that they had, and, frankly, that he didn't give me any feeling of panic about it.

G: Really?

R: Which some other people did, and I just couldn't have asked for better cooperation all the way through.

G: The 1965 Voting Rights Act had just been passed and signed. Was it a disappointment to LBJ to have this rioting punctuate his legislative achievement?

R: No, because I think that we had been able to tell him that the situation in Watts had really nothing to do with him and would not hurt him. The causes of it were not connected with anything that he had tried to do. In fact, what he had tried to do in time would have alleviated much of the problem because, for instance, in Watts, there was no bus system. No buses were allowed to go into Watts, so that the ladies who went to work in Beverly Hills, domestically, had to walk a couple of miles to get a bus. There were no chairs in the public library in Watts, and these were all things that didn't happen by accident, and he never was to blame for it. I think he knew he was not to blame for it, and the fact that the congressmen like Gus Hawkins, who we had succeeded in getting elected, not only didn't blame him but felt that he was working toward the solution and openly were for LBJ. I think we removed any fear that he had that this might harm him politically. I don't remember anyone ever accusing him of being lagging in doing things that might have prevented it.

G: Did you yourself anticipate the rioting?

R: Well, we had talked quite openly that things had to change, that the absentee ownership of everything in Watts and the attitude of the Los Angeles police, that these were all things that had created tensions that we all knew about. I don't think we anticipated they necessarily would break out in the riot that took place, but we knew that there were tensions there which were potentially very dangerous.

End of Tape 3 of 3 and Interview I

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