INTERVIEW III

DATE: July 1, 1982

INTERVIEWEE: SARGENT SHRIVER

INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE

PLACE: Mr. Shriver's office, Washington, D.C.

Tape 1 of 1

G: Let's start today, Mr. Shriver, with some discussion of the Job Corps program and how it was implemented. Was the CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] experience used at all in setting up the Job Corps program?

S: Yes, to some extent it was. But I would not say that it was crucial in setting up the Job Corps program. The part where it was most influential I think was in the planning and work done by the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Interior with respect to the rural Job Corps centers. I'm not familiar personally with what the directors of those two programs did by way of going back to research CCC experience. They may have done quite a bit. But in terms of the Job Corps administration *per se*, as compared to the administration of Job Corps programs conducted by Agriculture and Interior, I would say the Job Corps administration *per se* did not concentrate heavily on the CCC experience.

G: Did you see the Job Corps as the component that would yield the fastest results in the War on Poverty, say as opposed to Community Action or VISTA?

S: That may well have been true, I'm not sure. I am sure, however, that it was one of the areas where I thought we could make some initial progress quickly and thereby demonstrate that we were actually quote "doing something" about poverty. But whether it would be accurate to say it was the one that we thought would be the quickest of all, I'm not sure right now. It was one of them, but I'm not certain it was *the* one.

G: Did you have problems getting staffed up for Job Corps because of the Bureau of the Budget and the Civil Service Commission? Even after you had the appropriation, was it difficult to get the Job Corps staff people on the job and in place?

S: I don't remember that it was any more difficult to staff up the Job Corps than it was to staff up other entities which were equally novel, maybe even more so, like, say, Head Start. I don't recall serious problems with the Civil Service which were regarded by us as actual roadblocks. Again, I confess my memory may be very weak on that specific point, and others, but I don't recall having bitter debates or arguments with the Civil Service people with respect to getting people on board to run the Job Corps as compared to any other entity we had.

G: Did you emphasize the Job Corps as an educational program with a work component, or a work program with an educational component?

S: The first, an educational program with a work component. That actually can be understood a little bit better, perhaps, if you'd permit me to recall why I was so enthusiastic about the Job Corps. The reason is relatively simple to explain. I had been president of the Board of Education in Chicago for five years. In that job I saw literally thousands of young men and women in the central city areas of Chicago standing around on the street corners with nothing to do. We expanded the vocational school system in Chicago greatly when I was the president of the school board of Chicago. The reason being that I felt that for a significant proportion of the total population in the central cities, job training was extremely important.

Secondly, I tried to get the Board of Education of the city of Chicago to permit me or permit us to establish boarding schools in what is known in Chicago as the Park District and Forest Preserve. Just by way of explanation, in Chicago there are very, very many large public parks and areas where they are preserving the forest in its natural state,

so that the city doesn't become just one asphalt jungle. When I say they're preserving, there are hundreds of acres of such undisturbed land. I wanted to get some of that land, let's say ten acres or twenty acres or thirty acres, and put a boarding school out there, and take youngsters from the central city of Chicago and put them in a boarding school which would be fundamentally a vocational boarding school. For the reason, I'll repeat, that I thought lots of these kids would enjoy that kind of school more, that kind of education more. They would be able to put it to better use than what they were getting, they would not drop out of such a school as quickly, and I thought that a school where we had a twenty-four-hour day opportunity to influence their outlook on life, their outlook on work, their outlook on their fellow people, their outlook on citizenship, was essential.

I felt--I still do feel--that thousands, hundreds of thousands of youngsters are growing up in the cities of America in a milieu where systematic, steady work habits, where what middle-class people would call normal ambition about their own lives, where the idea of a two-parent family living in a standard, methodical, dedicated, committed way, well, those concepts are just not there. They've never seen anybody live that way. That's like the other side of the moon. I felt that there was no chance of getting those youngsters, quote "out of poverty," no chance of getting them redirected, energized, focused, encouraged, infused with some ambition, if you only could muck around with them four or five hours a day, and as soon as they were finished their standard instruction in a standard vocational school they went right back out into a jungle or swamp or whatever you want to call it. So either you totally transform the city, or you try to transform the kids.

So long before there was a Job Corps, out in Chicago I was trying to get the same idea carried out in a regular big city school system--without any success. I didn't get anywhere. But when I was tapped to run the war against poverty, that old chestnut idea of

mine was something that came to the forefront of my head right away. Consequently, I saw the Job Corps as an opportunity to do nationally what I had felt we ought to have done in Chicago locally.

G: How much help did the Job Corps receive from the Defense Department in terms of supplies and logistical support?

S: I think we got quite a bit. But goodness, I can't put a dollar figure on it.

G: But was this done through your office or through the Job Corps office itself? At what level would these arrangements be worked out?

S: Well, I'll tell you, *approximately*. One of the people who was most interested in getting the war against poverty started was Adam Yarmolinsky, and Adam Yarmolinsky was Bob McNamara's special assistant. Bob McNamara was my great friend, and so was Adam Yarmolinsky. In fact, when we thought about starting the Job Corps, I said that it seemed to me the best way to get that through Congress was not for Sargent Shriver and Adam Yarmolinsky or Joe Blow or you, Mr. Gillette, to run it, but to let the Defense Department run it. Because if there was a hundred million dollar expenditure, or two hundred million dollar expenditure, for the Job Corps, and that was in the Defense Department budget, nobody would criticize it. Every congressman would be beating his breast and saying how he was saving the country and how wonderful it was that the Defense Department was doing this work.

Now, the truth is, the Defense Department was willing to do it; Bob McNamara was willing to do it, but some smart apple in the Congress--I don't remember who it was--wouldn't let us get away with that. He wouldn't let us get away with quote, you might say "dumping that problem" over onto the Defense Department budget. They could see easily that if it was over there nobody would ever get it out. And they wanted to have it out here

in their social welfare section of the government where everybody could pillory it and hurl anathemas at it.

G: Weren't there some liberals also who objected to it?

S: Oh, yes. They were talking about militarizing the young of America. We were caught on both sides. But I still think it would have been a good idea. Bob McNamara did, and so did Adam. But it was one of those sort of dream things, I guess.

But anyhow, the Defense Department helped us regardless. They helped us a lot. We'd take one of these old army camps, like Camp Breckenridge in Kentucky, and they would quote "give us" that, or give us part of it, and help us to equip it and fix it up so that it was useable. The same thing happened at Camp Gary in Texas, the Job Corps that John Connally was so interested in and the President was so interested in. You know darn well the Defense Department went out there and polished that place up in a hurry.

G: Did the President seem to be interested in expanding the Job Corps program too rapidly, do you think?

S: No.

G: And keeping the scale small at first?

S: Well, I don't think so. But you see, the President and I, that's one place where we surely did not disagree. In fact, we agreed. He had grand ideas, Johnson. Mine were surely not as grand as his but they were larger than most people's. I was keen about having the Job Corps big. I wanted to have a hundred thousand people in the Job Corps. That was my idea of a small Job Corps, well, moderate-size Job Corps. And I still believe that you could put two hundred and fifty thousand people into a Job Corps in the United States and you wouldn't waste a penny in terms of the national good that could be accomplished. So I'm sure Johnson was not opposed to that. I surely wasn't opposed to it. But from the budgeteers, you couldn't get the money. We could have got the funds if it had been in the

Defense Department budget; there would have been a hundred thousand people in it. Johnson was never--

G: But then it would have been a delegated program, wouldn't it?

S: A lot of it would have been, sure. Why not?

G: Well, one of the criticisms of the Job Corps was that it was expanded too rapidly.

S: Sure. Well, everybody always says that. I don't care what's done, it's always too fast for some people. That's a psychological problem.

G: Yes, but in this case they point to enrollees showing up at sites before they were really ready.

S: Sure, that's right. That's exactly right. Let me tell you something, when we declared war in 1941 because the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, people showed up at sites that weren't ready; yet people showed up. They had no guns to shoot, and they had no proper military clothes to wear. Every damn thing that they criticized the Job Corps for doing has been done by the United States government through the Defense Department in times of war. The same thing happened in World War I. [It] happens any time you try to respond to a national emergency operation, which is what this was. Johnson called this a *war* on poverty; he didn't call this a skirmish. He said he wanted to start an across-the-board attack on poverty. Well, let me just tell you something. If you do that, you're going to start off with having the kind of start-up problems you've just described.

I personally was more than willing to accept them, those problems. It's, to me, the picayune-type mind that goes around cluck-cluck-clucking like an old hen saying, "Look, you drop this or you drop that!" It's the difference between the emergency attitude or the urgency that comes over people when something has to be done and it has to be done right away. When war is declared, like say in this country, nothing else is of any matter. Not money, not efficiency, nothing. It's, "Get going!" And nobody criticizes it. But if

you do the same thing about poor people, and the problems of poverty, and everybody criticizes it.

So when Johnson came up with the idea of having a war on poverty, it had its good side, that is, it energized people. It had its bad side, because by energizing them inefficiencies were inevitable. There was a considerable amount of waste and lost motion, which you just described. The Monday morning quarterbacks had a field day. They were like a bunch of chickens coming into a place and peck-peck-pecking at all the pieces that are left around after the party. And that still is true, right now. You've got the sociologists and the academicians saying, "Isn't this too bad, cluck-cluck-cluck. It should have been done this way, it should have been done that way." You know, after General Meade won the battle of Gettysburg you could have had seventeen professors from West Point come down and tell you about how he should have done it this way or done it that way. I'm sorry to be so vociferous on it, but I mean it really is difficult retrospectively, I'm certain, for people in the relative calm of today to look back and say, "Well, now, why did they do these things in such an obviously inefficient manner? It would have been much better to do it blah-blah-blah." You know what I mean? Well, the answer was it was an emergency program. It wasn't something that we were given three years to plan.

For example, the invasion of Normandy in Europe, which General Eisenhower led, that invasion was planned for years. I mean at least two years were put into the planning of that invasion. I'm not saying that was wrong; I'm perfectly willing to say it was right. But they had two years to do that. Johnson, when he launched the War on Poverty, he didn't have two years for us to sit around and determine exactly how to plan everything and land everybody and not waste any money and not lose anything. In fact, that legislation went through the Congress sometime in the latter part of October. Johnson then said he didn't want any money spent until after election day, which was

November 4, 5, 6, 7, something like that. Now, let's say that meant that we could start this war on the tenth of November, and Congress convened on the tenth of January. So we had two months, two miserable months, including Christmas, to launch the war. By the time we got back here to Washington in January, sometime in January or February, the Congress had already set up an investigating committee! I'll never forget it. They set up a formal investigating committee in January to find out what we were doing wrong, and we had only been working for two months.

The only reason I mention that is because it's so indicative of the hostility and the suspicion about the program. Everybody was convinced, at least in the Congress there were enough people convinced, that this effort would be fraught with graft, corruption, incompetence, *et cetera*. So before it was actually under way, they established the investigating committees to find out what was wrong and the committee went all around the country. I think they had hearings in about four to six different places in the United States to find out what we were doing wrong. And we had had ninety days! It was just as if you made General Eisenhower chairman of the invasion of Europe, and then started an investigating committee sixty days later to find out what he was doing wrong. It was a true American response, i.e., if you're doing something for poor people, it's wrong.

G: Did you consider it important to have a Ph.D. as director of the Job Corps?

S: Yes, I did. I was the only one, I think, who did!

G: Why? Why did you--?

S: Because I thought it ought to be educational. I didn't want a lot of people out there in academia to take the attitude that this was just a bungling, bureaucratic, botched-up job by Washington functionaries. Yes, I did. Everybody used to laugh at that. I did think it was important. I wanted the Job Corps to be respected as an institution with a serious

purpose of transforming through education the minds, hearts, lives, focus, *et cetera*, of these young men and women.

G: Why did you choose Otis Singletary, do you recall?

S: Well, there were a lot of reasons for choosing Otis. First of all, Otis was from the South and most people from the South were against this program. And in those days, you have to remember the southerners in the Congress were very influential. They are now, but I mean they were even more so then, in the House and in the Senate. So if you had somebody who could talk to them, who shared their background and outlook, that was an advantage.

Secondly, as you already pointed out, Otis was already a college president.

Third, Otis wanted to do it. Let me tell you something, having somebody who wants to do a job makes a big difference, rather than just hiring somebody who's looking for a job. Otis wasn't looking for a job. He wanted to do it, I think, because he believed in the possibilities and saw the need.

Fourth, Otis was married to a woman whose father was a very interesting, famous congressman from Mississippi. His name was Bill Colmer, C-O-L-M-E-R. Well, Bill Colmer was the prototypical southern arch-conservative. I really liked him, because he was so intractable. It was kind of fun to go talk to him. It was fun because he was so much opposed to everything we were trying to do. He was very courtly, he was very agreeable, he was very, very nice. He used to receive me anytime I had a chance to go in and talk to him. He was always attentive to what I said and respectful, you might almost say. And he was always completely opposed to what I was doing.

I always liked men who have some kind of a serious reason for being against you, or obviously, for being for you. So I never found it difficult to deal with people like Bill Colmer. I didn't get his vote, but I think we ended up getting some respect from Bill

Colmer, or from other people from the South, who, for historical and for many other reasons, were dead set against us. When I say us, I mean Lyndon Johnson and his ideas that national government should be involved in this problem of poverty. They just didn't think the national government should be involved in trying to help these kids. That's sort of like Ronald Reagan thinks, I guess, or some of his supporters do. So Otis Singletary being married to that woman, and her father being a congressman from Mississippi, that was another--how shall I say?--effort on our part to be sensitive to people who were against what we were doing.

G: Did it help, to your recollection?

S: No. You mean with Bill Colmer himself?

G: Yes.

S: No. I don't think it ever helped at all. But then you never know. I mean, it probably didn't help; I don't know that it ever did. But it's also true that maybe Bill Colmer, instead of being totally ticked off and angry and out to get us, singling us out as the number-one object of his ire, giving incendiary speeches against us, it may be that he just decided that he'd focus his attention on something other than us simply because of Otis. I don't know. That happens.

G: How were the women's Job Corps centers planned? Do you recall who was involved in the [inaudible]?

S: Oh, sure, I remember very well. We had this woman from Hunter College come down. I can't remember her name off-hand . . .

G: Jeanne Noble, isn't it?

S: That's right. Good for you. Jeanne Noble came down. I don't remember how we got onto her, but she seemed to have a very good record in the particular area we were interested in. She came down, and we had several quite large meetings and then several

smaller ones. With all due respect to Jeanne, and I don't remember whatever happened to her, she didn't find it very comfortable, I think, here in Washington. She just didn't swim very well in this particular Washington swimming pool; the Washington, governmental environment, I mean. It wasn't long before she checked out of the enterprise.

We replaced her with Bennetta Washington, who was right here in Washington. Bennetta Washington was the principal of a big high school here; I think she was the principal of Cardozo High School. Anyhow, it was a big city high school, and Bennetta Washington was the head of it. And Bennetta was a high school principal, a high school teacher. She was black, she was experienced, she was here, and she was eager. So we brought her in. I always had a very high regard for her. A lot of people were critical, you know how they always are. But nevertheless, she did a damn good job. She was loyal, she worked hard, she ran the program I think pretty well. Theoretically I guess there was somebody in the world that could have done it better, but she did it very well.

G: Let me ask you about Bill Kelly. What was the background in his selection as Job Corps director?

S: Well, again, that's not too hard to explain to you. Ted Berry, who was running Community Action, got sick. And Ted Berry was in the hospital for somewhere around four to eight months. I had to get somebody to run Community Action whom I could trust personally and implicitly, and whom I respected as an extremely competent government administrator. There was an emergency there. I called upon Bill Kelly, who had done excellent work for me when I was running the Peace Corps. And Bill Kelly came into the Community Action Program at OEO as the acting head of it, because Ted Berry being in the hospital, we weren't certainly going to appoint somebody as a permanent head while he was sick; and he had a presidential appointment.

In six months, Bill Kelly got Community Action totally organized. I mean, it was a miracle to see. It had been somewhat disorganized, to be kind about it. A lot of our things were somewhat disorganized, that didn't necessarily distinguish Community Action too much. But Bill Kelly really got that program running right. He brought in a lot of very good people and in six months, eight months, "Community Action" was really tight and tough and sharp and competent. As I say, it was a little bit of a miracle.

Then Ted Berry got well enough to be ready to come back, and I wasn't at all sure that it was a good idea for Ted Berry to come back into that job because it was a twenty-four-hour-a-day job. You were in the eye of the storm or the hurricane. I proposed to Ted Berry that perhaps he'd like to get out of that slot. I had some alternative--I can't remember what it was--to propose to him, which I felt was a dignified alternative and an important alternative. But Ted Berry, he just wouldn't consider it. He wanted to go back to running Community Action. Well, I'll tell you the honest-to-God truth, I was very skeptical about his ability, coming out of the hospital, to go back in there and take hold of that hot potato, or pick up that hot potato. Ted Berry did go back. In part because Bill Kelly had gotten it so well structured and organized, he was able to survive, if you will, in that hot seat subsequently.

Then Bill Kelly, of course, was free, you might say, because Berry was back. And just at that moment, the Job Corps needed the same kind of emergency surgery or "emergency ward" attention as the Community Action had required. So it was providential that Kelly was free and able to do it. So I was delighted. He went in there and he did the same damn thing with the Job Corps. Bill Kelly is as competent, dedicated, smart, hard-driving a government executive as you ever want to see. He's a prototypical perfect bureaucrat, and I mean that as a compliment.

G: Was there any thought of naming James McCrocklin to replace Franklyn Johnson as head of Job Corps rather than Kelly, let's say?

S: I can't remember that. I'm sorry. Look, when we picked a guy like Kelly to run the Job Corps after Frank Johnson, we probably gave consideration to a number of people and we may have given consideration to that man. Unfortunately, when you mention his name to me right this instant, bells don't go ringing upstairs in my head. But I've got a poor memory, so it's no criticism of him.

G: Did Harding balk at the selection of Kelly, do you recall?

S: I don't know. I really don't know. You know, I wouldn't be surprised if he had, and if I had the time or you gave me the records, I could probably recall whether he did or he didn't. But Bert Harding was a person who was a very careful, low-key type human being. I had had such a turmoil in my time in Washington with that Peace Corps and then with the start-up of OEO, that I was accustomed to people who said what they thought in a very strenuous way. And Bert Harding, if he was opposed to Kelly, is the kind of a fellow who would have come in and in a very low key voice some concern, which for him might have been very outspoken, do you know what I mean. But for me, accustomed as I was to the hurly-burly of Chicago and the hurly-burly of the Peace Corps and the hurly-burly of OEO, Bert was not likely always to get through to me. There was such a din, D-I-N, literally, around those programs, so much controversy and creativity, that you really had to yell to be heard and Bert wasn't that kind of a fellow. So he could have been opposed to Kelly, but I don't recall him coming in and making a big to-do about it.

G: Let me ask you a little bit more about costs.

S: Costs of the Job Corps, oh, yes. More than going to Harvard, you mean? That was my friend Charlie Bartlett's contribution to history.

G: Could have sent him to Harvard, if they could get in.

The details of a meeting that you had with LBJ in December, 1964, where you apparently obtained the Job Corps' full budget for the next year in spite of a BOB recommendation to the contrary. Do you recall that meeting?

S: I recall such a meeting. President Johnson said to me, "Well, Sarge, you'll always be able to say to anybody that you got eighty million dollars out of the President of the United States in eight minutes," or sixty million dollars in six minutes, I can't remember what the precise figure was. I had the meeting with him at an office he had in Austin, Texas, where he used to go to conduct business while he was staying at the Ranch, occasionally at any rate, and meet with people. The government fixed up an office downtown; he used to go to his office in the city of Austin. I don't think it was at the airport, but somewhere downtown in Austin they had a nice office, not a pretentious office but a nice office. When he was considering the budget that he was going to send up to Congress, a process that went on during October-November-December, with the heat really building up in December, and then the submission in January. So I was down there sometime in December, I think, and I went to see him in that office. I even have a picture of that occasion with him and me sitting discussing OEO in that office.

G: Did it require a considerable amount of persuasion on your part?

S: No. I'd like to say, yes, I really had to go to the mat with LBJ and get into arm-wrestling or something, but that's not true. Let me tell you, I really think that President Johnson liked the Job Corps. President Johnson liked the Job Corps, first, because it was reminiscent to some extent of the CCCs. Second, it was reminiscent of the Roosevelt era. Third, it was structured, and fourth, it was what I would call relatively easy to understand. It wasn't as if it were some new kind of a billiard ball, do you know what I mean? It fitted into a traditional American outlook.

I'll give you another illustration of what I mean. I went over to the White House sometime there in 1965 to invite Mrs. Johnson to be the national sponsor of Head Start. I described to her what it was like, and she said, "Well, now, Sarge, what about the Job Corps?" So I told her what the Job Corps was. Adolescents, boys and girls, *et cetera*. She said to me, "Well, you know, I'm much more interested in adolescents who are having trouble than I am in those little children." And I said, "Well, I understand that, Mrs. Johnson." She said, "Wouldn't it be better for me, since I'm interested in the adolescents, to be the national sponsor of the Job Corps?" So I said something to this effect, "Well, Mrs. Johnson, look, I'd love to have you to be the national sponsor of any program we run. But the Job Corps is a program which most people understand and which it's relatively easy to be the national sponsor of. It's traditional, the President likes it, he's all hopped up about it, so you and he would be fitting together like a hand and glove on it, and I would be happy if you did it. But, Mrs. Johnson, if you want to go down in history, the thing to do is Head Start." She said, "Why?" I said, "Because Head Start has never been done by the United States government. This is new. This is as new in the 1960s as the CCCs were in the thirties. You see, sociologists and other scientists have come to the realization, or they're now of the opinion, that intervention early in a person's life can actually change them more than intervention later on. So by intervening at the age of six, or five, or seven, we have a much better chance of success in turning that human being around into being a different and better type of human being than if we wait until they're sixteen, seventeen, eighteen. Now this has never been done before by the government, so if you're the sponsor of Head Start you've got something totally new. And Head Start will be remembered." And she said, "Well, Sargent, that's very interesting." We had a little conversation about it and she said, "Well, I'll let you know."

I guess it was a day later or maybe the same day, I don't know, she said, "I'll do it. I'll be the sponsor of Head Start."

So we had a meeting in the White House. She sponsored it. We had a big session there in the Gold Room. I remember it very, very well. She did a terrific job. She's a wonderful person. And she really pushed for Head Start.

But President Johnson, like his wife, was not a person you had to sell on the idea of the Job Corps. You didn't have to go in and bludgeon him or overcome hostility to it or skepticism about it. He had seen the CCCs work so effectively with so many people that he was sympathetic rather than opposed to the Job Corps.

G: Sure. Did he understand, do you think, that these were different kinds of kids?

S: No, I don't think so. Nobody did. No . . . not President Johnson, nobody did. I can guarantee you that's a fact because, look, I knew more about it than 90 per cent of the people in the United States--I'll say 95 per cent of the people--because I had been the head of a school board in a big city, and there were very few of us around then.

Secondly, when we recruited the kids for the Job Corps, I was surprised by the youngsters who showed up. I can remember going out on the campaign trail, if you will, speechifying and talking about the kids who came in. We found a kid for example wouldn't eat very much. He didn't say very much, and he was withdrawn and silent. Finally he went for the health checkup, he got in the dentist's chair, and they found out that the kid had nineteen cavities in his mouth and they had to operate, they had to take out most of his teeth and give him all new teeth. After we gave him all new teeth, like any other normal person, he started to eat. I have a hundred stories like that of kids who came into the Job Corps who couldn't read anything. We found out they couldn't read because they couldn't see; they'd never had glasses on their heads. So they didn't know what the teacher was talking about or writing on the blackboard. We had dozens of kids

who couldn't see the blackboard, sitting in a school where their teacher was giving an explanation on the blackboard and they couldn't see the blackboard. Nobody ever gave them an eye test. We had just scads of youngsters like that.

It was a shock, not just to me but to most Americans, what turned up on the physical exams we gave in the Job Corps. There was a whole research study made on that subject by the doctors, and the physical conditions they discovered were stupefying. I'm not talking about psychological or any other condition; I'm talking about the physical condition of the youngsters, male and female, who joined up to join the Job Corps. So when you say did Johnson know that these kids were different than the kids who joined the CCC, I don't think he did. But I don't think anybody did.

G: Did he become aware of this fact later on during the experience of the program?

S: Sure. Sure. He was extremely quick and smart, you know. Most of us, really, have very inadequate comprehension of how smart you have to be to get to be president. I don't care whether you happen to like this president or some other president; presidents are smart. And Johnson was exceptionally smart, and he had a huge amount of experience. So men like that catch on awfully fast.

G: Would more money for the Job Corps have meant fewer problems or more problems?

S: (Laughter) I don't know. I suppose it would have meant more problems, but we would have done more good. I mean, it's just like saying to a fellow, let's say you've got a guy and he's running the Bellevue Hospital in New York City, and the ambulances are going in and out of there one a minute. And you say, "Well, now, suppose you had two Bellevue Hospitals. Do you think you'd have more problems?" He'd say, "You're damn right I would." You say, "Do you think it would be good?" He'd say, "Yes, I could take care of twice as many people."

If you have a real war, I mean a physical war, the reality is that when the casualties start coming in, it's often true that there's not enough doctors. I've seen doctors operate thirty-six hours without even sitting down. The ship I was on in WW II, for example, had all these guys killed or wounded on it, and in the place we used to eat breakfast--the officers used to eat, and still do eat their meals in a space called the wardroom on a ship. The medics just took the wardroom and cleaned it out, and all the tables where people normally would be eating breakfast or dinner, those all became operating tables. The doctors were in there night and day operating. Then you could say, "Well, do you think if you had another ship and another wardroom you'd be better off?" You're damn right you'd be better off.

Well, if you think of the clientele--to use a fancy name--of the kids coming into the Job Corps as being--how shall I say? It was like a sociological laboratory rather than a surgical laboratory. When you understand, and it's true right this minute, that literally hundreds of thousands of young men and women in this country are growing up in need of "emergency treatment" in an educational-sociological-psychological sense. There's no question, if you had a hundred thousand people in the Job Corps or two hundred thousand people, if you had two hundred thousand you would have twice as many problems as with a hundred thousand. But you'd be doing twice as good.

G: Was there a limit, though beyond which it would have been difficult to manage?

S: (Laughter) Sure, of course. Of course there's a limit. But the question I always say to myself is this: I never heard of Napoleon saying that he couldn't recruit enough men for his army to go to Russia. He wasn't saying "stay away." When we went into Normandy, Eisenhower wasn't saying to General Marshall, "Don't send me any more troops over here, I have too many to manage." You see, the psychology is different between a very stately, well-paced, nine-to-five operation destined to run forever and an emergency

situation. At that time, maybe the legislators were wrong, maybe Johnson was wrong, but they considered that there was an emergency in terms of the number of poor people who were not getting adequate attention, and that something of an emergency nature had to be done to remedy that situation.

G: Now Congress pressed for a lower cost per enrollee.

S: Sure. Everyone wants lower costs, especially if one is trying to assist the poor, or the weak, or the crippled, et cetera.

G: Did that reduce your innovation and the experimental aspects of the program?

S: I can't remember.

G: Was the size of the center the most important determinant of cost? For example, the larger the center, the lower per enrollee cost?

S: Not always. For example, IBM ran a center up in Massachusetts where they were teaching computers and stuff like that. Well, that was a very high-cost center because the material, the equipment was high cost, and the teachers were high cost, and the number of kids there were few. But I also think that there were some centers where there were probably too many kids in an effort to drive the cost down, and then the staff couldn't control the population.

Looking backward at it, I have to smile at myself; but the reality is, if you go as we did to General Electric or IT&T, which we did, and other companies like that, IBM, and ask them to run a Job Corps center--we gave IT&T that place out there, Camp Kilmer, in New Jersey. ITT, the free, private enterprise system with the best managers in the world, went out there and they had one terrible time managing those youngsters and operating that place. So this allegation or canard that only the government mismanages things is just grossly inaccurate. ITT and all the large corporate managers had a terrible time managing those centers, not because they're incompetent, not because they were

wasteful, not because they're stupid, but because they were dealing with a clientele that they had never come to grips with before.

That's why, you see, I think the government takes an unfair, unjustified amount of criticism when it's dealing with problems which are on the edges. Everybody seems to understand, for example, that if you want to develop a "stealth bomber"--that's what they talk about now, "the stealth bomber"--everybody seems to understand that to develop that weapon, and to utilize in it the very most advanced technology and electronics, and go at the highest altitude at the fastest speeds, *et cetera*, that it's very wasteful and costly to build that pioneering instrument capable of doing all those things. They don't apply the same rationale, although I think we should apply the same rationale, to people who are working on the edges of sociological change or psychological change or cultural change. It's just as hard to transform people--maybe harder--than it is to build a new weapon system. We think nothing of spending eight or ten billion dollars to build a new weapon system, but we don't understand that it's just as costly to try to energize, enlighten, motivate, change human beings.

G: Let me ask you about recruitment. Did you anticipate a large response to the Job Corps program? I mean, did you have a fear that only a few kids would be interested in it or that you wouldn't be able to generate enough interest to have a successful program?

S: I guess I did, but I can't really remember very well on that.

G: There was essentially a Peace Corps type recruitment drive that just blanketed these areas with applications.

S: Sure.

G: Whose idea was that? Do you recall how that originated?

S: Well, I can't recall whose idea it was. I can recall being at a couple of meetings where we were sitting down with--I think J. Walter Thompson did that for us. It was J. Walter

Thompson and other people who knew how to reach these kids. And look, I was very sensitive about that myself. I came here to Washington from being in the marketing business. That's what I was doing for my living. I was well aware of the fact that you could have the best mousetrap in the world, but if nobody knew you had it you weren't going to sell any of those mousetraps. So even though I thought the Job Corps was the best new idea in the world, let's say, I knew we had to make its existence known to the persons who would be its potential clientele. Now that meant getting those two words, Job Corps, into the heads of kids in the inner cities of America. Well, I've been in that, I tell you, for five years in Chicago, the Board of Education, and I knew you did not go to them by advertising in *Vogue* magazine. You had to go to them through disc jockeys, billboards, handouts, *et cetera*. So, yes, we did try to mount a comprehensive sales program, I guess you could say, to reach that clientele, which is the clientele we were trying to get to with our message.

G: What sort of a job of recruiting did the Employment Service do for the Job Corps?

S: Well, of course, they were mad as hell we were dealing with anybody else. That was a typical governmental reaction. They figured, well, jobs are our business, and we ought to do all the recruiting. If anybody else gets into recruiting, that's an invasion of their turf. That kind of attitude in government always drives me right up the wall, because there's a certain attitude there that stems from the idea, I guess, that if anybody else gets into our business, maybe we will look bad, or lose face, or face competition. But my theory on it was very simple. I wanted to use every means possible to reach these kids. I wanted to use the Employment Service, I wanted to use billboards, I wanted to use handouts, I wanted to use disc jockeys, I wanted to use radio. Television wasn't so big back then, but I wanted to use television. My theory is not to channel everything in one direction you understand. This was a broadcast. We were trying to excite, interest, enthuse young men

and women who were at that point out of jobs, out of work, no prospect for jobs, badly educated, *et cetera*. We wanted to interest them in quote "joining something." Well, why in the hell should they join anything? They had never joined anything! Their big thing was to disjoin. Their big thing was to get out of school, get out of work. That's what their whole life was. How can you make a buck without working? That's the psychology of some of those people. So how do you reach those people? You don't reach them by saying, "Come to the government office at 155 South Mulberry Street between nine and three and get a form." I mean, that's absurd! They're not going to come there for that. So, I'm not against the Employment Service, don't misunderstand me. But I didn't think that we ought to say that they were the only means that we should use to reach this quote "population," that's what they called it, population.

G: Did you have to decide which kids to aim for, the kids that let's say were in the lower-economic level but might have a reasonably good chance of benefiting from the program, or those who were strictly at the bottom of the barrel?

S: Well, that of course was a continuing fight all the time.

G: How did you resolve that, both in your own mind and in terms of the program itself?

S: I'm not sure that I ever did resolve it. Not only was there the conflict between the two groups that you described, but there was also the conflict between the rural people and the urban types. I suppose my quote "resolution," although that isn't fair to call it a true resolution of the problem, was more pragmatic than it was theoretical. I believe that with the Job Corps, like with the Peace Corps, the idea had to work right away. Not because it was wrongly conceived or a bad idea, but because Congress wasn't going to give us any running room . . . or a second chance. I used to say to the people at the Peace Corps, we're like a guy going up for his first parachute jump. When we jump, the chute has to open. For example, you yourself could be appointed secretary of defense tomorrow, and

you could be there for six months; and, you know something? If you botched the job totally, there still would be a very big Defense Department there. No matter how incompetent you might be, or I might be in that job, the department is going to stay there. It's in the Constitution, it's going to stay there. If Ronald Reagan put his daughter in charge of the Defense Department, the department still would be there and would still operate. Let me tell you something, that was not true of the Peace Corps, nor of the Job Corps.

So pragmatically, to go back to your question, I felt we had to get some proportion of the kids who would be quote "success stories." That meant that we just couldn't focus exclusively on the bottom of the barrel, to use an old cliché. But then the big complaint comes from all the hot rock experts who accuse you of what they call creaming. That means you're skimming the cream off of the container of milk. You're doing the easy part of the problem. Therefore, you're a bum because you're not handling the really tough cases. You're not out there in the muck, you're creaming; that's the allegation. Well, we had to cream some! Otherwise we would have had a disaster record on our hands. But we didn't consciously, at least I never consciously said, "Look, we're going to take 70 per cent cream and 30 per cent milk," or like a barrel, 10 per cent on the bottom of the barrel and 10 per cent of the top like a bell curve. I never went into that kind of an analysis, but pragmatically and simplistically we had to succeed to some degree.

G: Was the fact that a lot of the kids that you were dealing with had police records a [problem]?

S: That was another thing everybody was yelling about, "My God, you're taking crooks! You're taking thieves, felons, into this Job Corps!" We're funny, aren't we? People are. We're so damn funny. Because you'd think that if we took some felons in and could turn them around, we ought to get the Croix de Guerre with five palms, because that not only

saves a life but saves society. But people aren't like that. They don't want to give a break to a fellow who's down; they don't want you to give a break to a guy who's a crook, a felon.

G: Did you feel that some of the recruiting agencies, school systems and the Employment Service were dumping really bad problems on you?

S: Damn right! Sure they were! Why? Well, it's natural, too. Just like everything else. They give you what they can't handle themselves. What's that? That's just human nature, that always happens. You go into a used car lot, they'd just as soon sell you the worst car on the lot if they can get it off the lot. Like you go to buy a suit, the fellow who's running a sale, he wants to get rid of the merchandise he hasn't been able to move. So, sure he'll sell you a suit if he can. There's nothing wrong about that; that's the way the world is. I remember now, suddenly, that some people in our place thought that others were doing that on purpose, some of them. You know, dumping the dregs onto us. Like they claim that Castro is alleged to have dumped all the prisoners onto those boats and sent them up there to Florida. Well, I don't know whether he did or not, but it would be normal, natural if he had.

G: In terms of sites, there is an anecdote that may be accurate, on the other hand it may be fictitious, that you all sent a list of prospective or possible Job Corps sites up to the White House, and the White House announced these as the first Job Corps centers. Do you recall that?

S: I think it sounds true. I don't recall it too well right now. But you see, that would have been natural, too.

G: Did you try to get a geographical balance in the selected sites?

S: Oh, sure. Oh, yes.

G: Now, let me ask you about the Yorktown Job Corps camp. This was one of the early controversies in which you had some local opposition here. Do you recall the details of that?

S: I sure don't recall the details, but it makes me laugh to think about it, because now that you mention it, I do remember it. Down there in Yorktown, Virginia, the Virginians, of course, are rather conservative people to begin with. They didn't want to have "a bloody damn Job Corps center" down there, especially when of course everybody got the idea right away they were going to be filled up with black people. I have never been to Yorktown, but I guess maybe it's a white area of Virginia. And brother, they didn't want those black kids coming in there. I can't remember why we went to Yorktown. Was there some kind of a CCC camp or something down there?

G: Well, I think it was a national park area.

S: Oh, that was the Interior, I guess, they were running that, Interior, yes. Well, what the Interior Department did is they picked out those places in the National Park System where they really needed some help to get the park cleaned up and maintained better. I didn't have anything to do with picking Yorktown, but I can remember the flap among the Virginians. It was very funny.

G: You also suggested that Fort Jay in New York City be converted to a Job Corps training center operated by NYU. Do you recall your efforts there?

S: Is Fort Jay on Staten Island or something? Where is Fort Jay? Is it across the river in New Jersey?

G: I don't know.

S: Well, I tell you what that does recall to my mind is this; it may not even be relevant to NYU. You asked me some time ago whether I thought these things should be educational, and I said to you I did. So I tried to get the school systems of the United

States, the big city school systems, to run these Job Corps centers, the urban ones. I made an appearance before a meeting of all the superintendents of the large school systems of America--there are about twenty of them or thirty--and I challenged the superintendents of education of Chicago, Boston, New York, L.A., Philadelphia and so on to run these schools for us on the theory that they knew how to run schools. That was their business. Since a lot of the young men or women that we were taking in the Job Corps were right out of their own school systems, right off their streets, I challenged them to take a contract from us, from the federal government, and run these urban Job Corps centers themselves. They claimed, after all, to be the, experienced experts. I did the same thing with schools of education, like Teachers College of Columbia, University of Chicago School of Education, where they have what they call model schools. You know at a place like the University of Chicago they have a School of Education and they run a school there.

G: A demonstration school.

S: That's right. And the faculty kids can go to it, people like that can go. Nearly every school of education in the United States has a school like that, a demonstration school. I said, "Look, you people are the experts on education. We need to educate this group of people here, the Job Corps kids. Will you take a contract from the federal government to run a school and show us how to do it? I'm not standing here telling you I know how to do it, which I did not know how to do. You're supposed to know, you're the professors of education. Now, we'll give you the money, we'll pay all your costs, all your salaries, all your stenographers, all your rent, all your overhead, and you show us how to do it." I never got one city school system to respond, and I never got one school of education, never once! It made me so mad, because all these people were allegedly the great experts

on education. They were the ones who knew everything, they were the ones sitting in the professorship, and I never was able to get any of them to run a Job Corps center.

Now, you mentioned Fort Jay. I guess, I'm just guessing, that I found out about Fort Jay being up there near NYU. NYU is down at the bottom of Manhattan, the lower part of Manhattan. I probably said to myself, well, let's try NYU, see whether they'll run a school. I was so irritated with those educators, but they didn't want to get out there in the muck, you know. Not one! Not one in America! And you consider they're all endowed, and they've all been sitting there for fifty or seventy-five years grinding out these books telling us how to educate everybody, and there wasn't one of them, not one, that would try to educate these poor youngsters.

G: When the first list of Job Corps training centers came out, the Gary Job Corps Center was not among them, the one in Texas, but it came soon thereafter. Did the President have a role in getting you to hurry that one along?

S: I'm not sure, but I would just guess that he did.

G: Was he particularly interested in Gary?

S: Well, I would think that he was. It would be perfectly natural for him to have been interested. He was kind enough to come there to the opening ceremonies. He gave a terrific talk. He dragged John Connally over there and Jake Pickle and me and God knows who all to the ceremony, and I think that he was pleased that the Job Corps was opening up so close to where he lived. I believe he was optimistic about what it could do.

G: What was John Connally's attitude toward Gary?

S: Skeptical. John Connally had really a first-class John Connally attitude. John Connally wanted all the activities of the war against poverty in Texas to be run by him. He wanted the state to contract with us, or with the Labor Department or anybody else, and to run everything. If my memory serves me correctly, the state of Texas did contract with us to

run Camp Gary. Now, I'm not against that at all. But I believe that Texas was the only state that had the nerve and the self-confidence, *et cetera*, to run an OEO program as a state--the state of Texas. And I think that's because of John Connally's drive and his competence and his ego and his belief in the importance of state government. Now, I'm not opposed to that; I really am not. I wouldn't have cared if every state wanted to run a Job Corps center. But Texas I think was the only one that did, and I think probably John Connally felt, "Lyndon wants to have this thing run well, and Lyndon is my friend and I'm Lyndon's friend. The best way to run it is to run it ourselves and not get the University of Texas, or the school board of San Marcos or some other group to run it. We'll run it! We'll run it and we'll run it right." That's good. That's a good attitude to have I think.

G: Did Connally and Johnson clash initially over how the project would be run, whether it would be run through the state or how much influence the governor would exercise over it?

S: I don't know. I would imagine that they did clash. They clashed in the White House, but not where I would see them.

G: Gary had a very high placement record in comparison with a number of the other centers. Do you attribute its success there to any particular thing?

S: I don't know enough to attribute it to a particular thing, but once again, John Connally is a very competent executive. He knew that his name was on the line and he knew this was right under Lyndon Johnson's feet. He knew the President wanted it to be run well, and I think John Connally probably just made damn sure that good people were running it and when the youngsters graduated that they got jobs. Which proves that if people are sufficiently interested and powerful and competent, the Job Corps would be run well.

G: What was the first Job Corps camp that you actually visited?

S: Up in Catoctin [Maryland].

G: That was the first one opened I guess, wasn't it? Certainly one of the first.

S: Yes, it was one of the first, but I don't know whether it was the first.

G: What was your impression of that, can you recall?

S: Well, I was delighted with it. I was worried about it because the faculty, so to speak, the leadership on the site was so inexperienced. I was worried that the program was so rudimentary. I was struck by the distance, you might say, between the faculty and the students, the enrollees. I sensed how far removed those enrollees, in their background, life experience, outlook, hopefulness or lack of hopefulness, were, let's say, from me or from the faculty, how far we had to go to bring them up to running speed. Do you know what it's like? I just thought, it's like spring training for rookies in Florida before the baseball season starts. Earl Weaver or somebody goes out there and he sees all these rookies. You're looking at them and you know what you have to have to play in the major leagues, and you're looking around there to see whether there's somebody there that's going to be able to make it. Well, you go up to Camp Catoctin the first time and look around there, and you say to yourself, gosh, I wonder whether we can really help these kids to move out of where they are. Can we reach, them? Can we touch them? Can we get inside of them? Can we motivate them? Can we turn their head around? All those things.

G: Did you make any innovations yourself after that first visit?

S: I don't think so, maybe we did. I can't remember any offhand.

G: Now the President visited that camp also.

S: Yes.

G: Do you recall his visit there?

S: I'm almost sure I didn't go there with him. Did I go there with him? Does the record show that I went there with him?

G: I'll have to check that.

S: I think if I had gone there with him I would have remembered it. See, what I think, you know he used to go up there anyhow, and I think he just one day decided he'd zing over there and see it. But I'm almost sure I wasn't there with him. As a matter of fact, I'm almost confident now, I remember, because I was told he was going there. I had been there and I was told he was going to go there. It's kind of funny in the government--well, I don't know, maybe I'm kind of funny. But in the government, if the president is going to go to something you run, you get your butt up there as fast as you can, you know what I mean? Most guys wouldn't think of having the president visit something under their jurisdiction without themselves being there. Well, I frankly have got a peculiar idea I guess, but I had been there, and the fact that the President was going there, it didn't bother me ten cents worth. I felt it was a real giant waste of my time to go there. Maybe that's very egotistical, but my point is that I was happy the President would go to see it, I was interested in what he would say about it**,** but I didn't see**,** in my narrow-minded way, why if I were there with him that would be the place where I would be best spending my time to make the Job Corps run better. My theory is, if the president is at Camp Catoctin, then Shriver ought to be at Camp Jones or some other place. Because you should spread yourself around to try and make the program work better, not just hang around the president because he's the president. Kind of a crazy attitude I suppose, but nevertheless, that's the way I feel. I still feel that way. Don't misunderstand me, I want to make damn sure that you understand, I don't mean that in any disrespectful way. I was delighted that Johnson was interested enough to go out there. But Johnson was a very practical man, in my judgment, and my belief was that he'd rather go out there and see that place himself than to find Shriver suddenly truckling up there as fast as I could go**,** cluck-cluck-cluck-

cluck, to be there to be sure that everything went all right. I'd rather have him see it exactly the way it was without me there.

G: LBJ announced the establishment of a Job Corps conservation center at Ellis Island, to rehabilitate the island and create that Liberty State Park. Do you remember that?

S: Yes, that's right. I do, vaguely. Let's see now, what was the idea there? It seems to me, didn't the federal government give Ellis Island or a part of Ellis Island back to New Jersey? I can't remember. It seems to me that the federal government gave Ellis Island back to New Jersey, and the Governor of New Jersey had this idea that this ought to be--as you just got through [saying]--a state park, and he needed help to fix it up. So somebody came up with the suggestion that this would be a very good place for the Job Corps to work because they could fix up this place and it would be available then to all these millions of people who lived there in the greater New York area as a recreation center. And the Job Corps could do it. It still sounds to me like a pretty good idea. But I can't remember who proposed it or what happened about it. Do you know? Did it turn out to be a big mess of some kind?

G: Not necessarily.

S: I don't think it was a big mess. I think they probably got it fixed up pretty well. Also I can remember it being somewhat symbolic that the Job Corps would go fix up Ellis Island. After all, that's where so many immigrants came into the United States. So why shouldn't they fix that up?

G: In the summer of 1965 you had a youth opportunity campaign to increase the summer employment. Do you recall that and how that was launched?

S: Yes. Well, when I say "yes" like that, you have to remember that I don't remember all about it, I just have fragmentary memory of most of these things that you're asking me about. But I do remember these aspects of that effort: a) I can remember not being very

much in favor if it, because I'm now and I was then opposed to the idea that you could have "a quick fix" for the problems that these youngsters had. I didn't think that these summer programs to keep the kids off the street, which were in part I think motivated by a desire to minimize the possibility of riots, was the way in which we ought to be using the taxpayer's money when the taxpayer's money had been appropriated for us to get rid of poverty. We were not given appropriations in my judgment to stop riots. We were given appropriations to try to overcome poverty, and I didn't see that financing those summer programs was going to overcome poverty at all. So, first of all, I considered it an unwise--put it that way--ineffective use of the money we had to deal with a problem which wasn't our problem.

Secondly, I think that to some extent the programs worked. What do I mean by that? Well, I think that opening up the city streets, making playgrounds on the city streets, making it possible for those fire hydrants to be used for showers, putting basketball backstops on the city streets, making the city streets a playground rather than an automobile thoroughfare, trying to organize the play yards or playgrounds near to public schools so that the kids can use them rather than have them closed off to the kids, all of those things made the cities more humane and more habitable, more sociable, and therefore a better place to live. Probably they did help in reducing or minimizing the danger for riots. But the truth is, they didn't have any effect, in my judgment, on the elimination of poverty.

G: If you had to single out one camp as being the best of the Job Corps camps that you observed, which one would you consider?

S: Gosh, I really would be doing an injustice to all the camps to pick out any one.

G: Do you think that those that were run by universities were normally worse than those run by private contractors?

S: Well, first of all, we didn't have too many run by universities. And I would not say yes, that the ones run by universities were better than the ones run by private industry. No, I wouldn't say that. I don't have any basis for saying that the ones run by states or by private enterprise or by universities or by the Interior Department or the Agriculture Department were demonstrably better, one better than another. In other words, yes, the Department of Interior ran the best camps, the Department of Agriculture ran the worst camps, IBM ran a better camp than AT&T, I don't have any basis for telling you that. On the other hand, I think somebody must have made a study of that and it probably exists, some kind of a comparative analysis. I bet you Bill Kelly could tell you which ones were run best, but I can't.

G: I think normally there's a consensus that the university camps were the worst ones.

S: They were? (Laughter) Well, I'm not altogether surprised. You know, one reason why that is is that university people are not normally very practical-minded. That isn't their big thing. "Operations" are not the most important considerations for universities. They're dedicated to speculation, philosophical thinking, and ideas, to the search for truth.

G: What criteria did you use in selecting Job Corps sites?

S: I've forgotten. We had a great big thing on that. That's the kind of thing the government always does very well. They prepare huge check lists for evaluating one against the other.

G: Did you have much pressure, say, we want a site or we don't want a site from congressmen?

S: Yes, sure. Are you kidding? Oh, my Lord! Mostly we don't want a site. (Laughter) Some guys I'm sure at the beginning came in and said they wanted a site, some of the more naive, idealistic probably, congressmen came in and said yes, we'd like to have a site.

G: Well, I think of two examples. The first is St. Petersburg.

S: Oh, yes. (Laughter)

G: Do you recall that?

S: How that was chosen?

G: Yes.

S: No, I think that ladies group that ran it chose it. What women's group was that that ran that St. Petersburg [camp]? I can't remember. There was a ladies group, a women's organization.

G: Was it the YWCA or something?

S: Something like that, yes. They picked it. God, isn't that funny, St. Petersburg?

G: Now you ultimately closed that camp in the wake of a lot of public opposition.

S: Oh, God, yes. We're so funny. . . . We human beings . . . are so funny.

G: Do you recall how the decision was made to do that or where the pressure came from?

S: Well, I'm sure it came from everybody, from the congressman to the mayor, the governor, everybody probably was down on us about the Job Corps Center for Girls in St. Petersburg. The thing that is so sad in a way, but it's amusing in a way, too, about human beings, is how violently we react to the introduction into our lives of elements that are foreign to us.

For example, it was only about a year ago I think here in Washington that the city began a program of finding small homes, that is a home for five or six people, into which mentally retarded persons would be moved out of a big state institution, and they'd be put in a home, a regular house with house parents, so that these people would have some more social and decent normal life. One of the homes which was bought, completely aboveboard by the city for such use, was a home out in the area of Washington called Cleveland Park, which is a nice neighborhood of middle to upper-middle income people, 85 per cent, maybe 95 per cent white people. Well, you would have thought that the city

had just opened up a house filled with communists or whores or Cuban revolutionaries or something. There was the greatest hue and cry you could ever believe, and some of the most articulate quote "liberal" close quote journalists were up in arms about this home for six mentally retarded persons! They even called me because they thought that I, being associated with the Kennedy Foundation, which has done a lot of work with the retarded, that I might know something about this. They were in a fit. It was all over the newspapers. Their protests went on for about four or five days, or maybe two weeks, until in fact, those people were humiliated into silence.

Now, that house is right out there now. There are mentally retarded people living in it. Anybody who knows anything about mentally retarded people know that they're the mildest, quietest, self-effacing human beings almost on the face of the earth. They don't run dope dens, they don't rape people. They're not violent, 90 per cent of them, by nature, they're just not that way. God is good to them. He may cut them out of some brains, but He gives them a lot of other good things as compensation. And yet when that group--they weren't black people either going into a white neighborhood or anything like that, it was just retarded people. The fact is that they were different, and people thought that these different people coming into that neighborhood--last year, not 1960--were going to screw up the neighborhood!

Now, compare this to St. Petersburg. I mean, can you imagine putting all these black and white girls together in this rather sedate part of old St. Petersburg? I mean, we must have been crazy. But I guess it was just that we were so naive. I never even thought about it. I didn't pick St. Petersburg, I don't know who picked St. Petersburg. But if I had to do it all over again, looking backward then and knowing as little I guess as I did know, then, I still would not have expected the people of St. Petersburg to react so violently. They got mad because the girls in that St. Petersburg camp were girls of let's say sixteen,

seventeen, eighteen years old. Let's say there were thirty young women there; I don't know how many there were. Let's say there were forty girls there, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen years old. Well, obviously young men are going to come over there to see the girls. Well, all these people living on the block--a lot of them are older people; St. Petersburg has a rather elderly population, at least part of it does--they were all out there watching all of this, and they all thought that these guys were coming up there, they were going to rape all these girls, and wasn't it awful they came up there. We'd get these stories about them coming up there in an open car and taking these girls out. What were they doing in those cars? I mean, it was like a soap opera. I say retrospectively, it's almost laughable. As somebody said, you'd laugh if you could just stop crying.

It's really sad about all of us, how scared we are of anything that's different. If you're white, you're scared of black people, or if you're Caucasian like us, you're scared of Orientals, or if you're smart, you're scared of the retarded. If you speak English, you're scared of somebody who doesn't speak English. We're so fearful, it's sad. There's no reason why we should all be so afraid.

G: Others who worked with OEO, particularly on the legislative side, have remarked how whenever the OEO appropriation was at a critical juncture in the Congress, there were always horrible incidents or very embarrassing incidents that would break out in the Job Corps camps. Do you recall, was this timing especially unfortunate?

S: I don't remember that. I think those incidents were going on all the time probably. But at the time the legislation was up there, they would become highlighted to our disadvantage. But that's just a guess, that's not based on any knowledge.

G: Did you have members of Congress who were privately enthusiastic about the Job Corps while publicly--

S: Attacking it?

G: --attacking it or keeping a very low profile on it?

S: Well, I'll give the congressmen credit, I do think this. I think most of them understood that what we were trying to do was well motivated. I think most of them wanted us to succeed. I think most of them liked us. I think most of them even liked me, personally I'm saying. But all of them had constituent problems, and all of them have to get reelected, and all of them would be in a position to say, "Sarge, can't you do something about this? What can you do about this situation? What can you do to help me?" Now, that to me would be typical of the vast majority of them. Others are very glad if you were falling down on your face and anxious to kick you further into the gutter. Anything to discredit the President or his party or "do-gooders." But that's a small number of the men or women in the Congress. And, moreover, there are people like that in all parts of society--cynics; people full of hatred; pessimists; *et cetera*.

Most Americans enjoy seeing something succeed, whether it's putting a guy on the moon or on that spaceship that's going around out there now; what do they call that? What is it, *Columbia*? Well, when it comes back and lands out there in the desert someplace, you know just as well as I do, that everybody will applaud. Why? They enjoy success. And I think that's true of everything, I think that's one of the great things about Jack Kennedy and Jackie Kennedy. They get kicked around now a lot, but people's spirits were raised by them. Ordinary people felt better about their own life. Why? Well, because here was a young couple, the man was handsome, the woman was beautiful, and they were young and they were bright and they had a nice child. God, isn't that the way the world is supposed to be? It makes you feel good. It's a real stinky kind of a fellow who rejoices in other people's failures. So I think the vast majority of the American people are people of very decent good will who would like the city to be clean, who would like there to be less crime, who would like the waters to be sparkling and blue and

capable of being swimmed in, who would like the kids that are in the slums to have a better life.

G: Do you recall any complaints to the President?

S: Well--

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview III]

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON LIBRARY

Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of

SARGENT SHRIVER

I, Sargent Shriver, of Potomac, Maryland, or my authorized agent, William Josephson, do hereby, except as provided in paragraph two below, give to the United States of America for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library, the content of the tape recordings and transcripts of the interviews conducted with me on August 20, and October 23, 1980, July 1, 1982, February 7, 1986, and November 29, 1990.

This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

(1) The tape recordings and transcripts shall be available for listening and researching, respectively, by researchers authorized by the Library.

(2) During my lifetime I retain all copyright in the tape recordings and transcripts.

(3) During my lifetime researchers wishing to copy the tape recordings or transcripts or any part thereof, other than for short "fair use" quotations from the transcript, must first obtain my express consent or that of my authorized agent, William Josephson, in each case.

(4) Copies of the transcripts and the tape recordings shall be deposited by the Library with my papers in the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library where they shall be subject to the terms and conditions as are applicable to those papers.

Sargent Shriver — 4/26/05

Sargent Shriver or Authorized Agent — Date

A. Ma Weinstein — 5/19/05

Archivist of the United States — Date

ONE NEW YORK PLAZA
SUITE 2500
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10004-1980

Direct Line: 212-859-8220
Fax: 212-859-8582

April 29, 2005

Ms. Linda M. Seelke
Archivist
Lyndon Baines Johnson Library
2313 Red River Street
Austin, TX 78705-5702

Dear Ms. Seelke:

This is in partial response to your letter of March 29, 2005.

Please include this letter in the Shriver oral history. There are a number of errors in Sarge's recollection as recorded in his oral history that I know from my own knowledge. For example, on pages 15-20 of the August 20, 1980 transcript he describes conversations he had with President Kennedy and Vice President Johnson about the independence of the Peace Corps. I am quite certain that he never took part in those conversations, if only because at the relevant time he was out of the country in India. So far as I know, the meeting between President Kennedy and Vice President Johnson, where President Kennedy overruled the White House staff recommendation from Mr. Ralph Dungan and the position of Budget Director David Bell, Civil Service Commission Chair John Macy and International Cooperation Administration Administrator Henry Labouisse, was entirely between the President and the Vice President with no one else in attendance. The story is well told in Gerry Rice's *The Bold Experiment* pages 65-66 and Scott Stossel's *Sarge* pages 223 to 225.

The long descriptions on pages 23-28 of the August 20, 1980 transcript of Sarge's conversations with President Johnson about the beginnings of Sarge's War on Poverty are probably extremely exaggerated, if not entirely wrong. The story, from my point-of-view, is told in my July 12, 2003 letter to Scott, copy enclosed. Scott tells the story on pages 343-45 of *Sarge*.

In the August 20, 1980 transcript, page 81, I don't think that Sarge's statements are correct about some presidential contingency fund and the amount of money he got out of that for the OEO start-up, compared to the amount of money the President allocated out of the Mutual Security Act contingency fund for the Peace Corps start-up. But I do not remember what the facts were.

In the October 23, 1980 transcript, page 66, if the Steven Smith is Jean Kennedy Smith's husband, that he was in, or even considered for, the Agency for International Development, is certainly news to me. I am not saying it is wrong or right, but I do think it is highly unlikely.

In the July 1, 1982 transcript on page 14, there is a little bit of confusion at the outset about Bill Kelly and Community Action and Bill Kelly and the Job Corps, but I think it gets straightened out.

In the November 29, 1990 transcript on page 19, Sarge has the so-called five-year flush wrong. There was never a Civil Service Commission vote, let alone agreement. John Macy, then Chair of the Civil Service Commission, was opposed to the legislation, as was whoever was then Director of the Bureau of the Budget, probably Kermit Gordon, possibly Charles Schultze. What happened legislatively was that the Peace Corps was taken out of Civil Service, and its personnel system was based instead on the Foreign Service personnel system which was not inconsistent with the so-called five-year flush which was also specifically authorized.

Also in the November 29, 1990 transcript beginning on page 19 and continuing on page 20, there is a little initial confusion about Sarge staying on the Peace Corps and OEO until he went to France in 1968, but the confusion straightens itself out on page 20. Sarge gave up the Peace Corps directorship in the Spring of 1966, but continued as Director of OEO until 1968 when he left for France.

Sincerely,

William Josephson

/jl
Encls.