INTERVIEWEE: LARRY E. TEMPLE (TAPE #2)

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

June 12, 1970 Austin, Texas

F: This is interview number two with Mr. Larry Temple in his office in Austin. The interviewer is still Joe B. Frantz. The date is June 12, 1970.

Larry, we got you hired at the White House yesterday.

T: That's good.

F: And so I think we will go from there. Did you know what you were going to be doing right off, or did your duties kind of settle down on you.

T: Oh, I think they really sort of settled in when I got there. The President was obviously familiar with my relationship with Tom Clark, and therefore, assumed I was on a good relationship basis with Ramsey Clark, as I was. About the only basic responsibility he initially told me about was that he wanted me to serve as his liaison with the Department of Justice. Whatever matters the Department of Justice was involved in that either related to the White House or needed to be communicated to the White House, he said should come through me. Now, obviously, there were a lot of exceptions where there were direct contacts between the President and the Attorney General or the President and the Deputy Attorney General, but by-and-large he wanted me to serve as the contact at the White House--or the liaison at the White House--with the Department of Justice.

So I guess the first thing that I did was go over to the Department of Justice and meet the people over there. I knew Ramsey. I knew him very well. I knew some other people--Frank Wozencraft who was over there

I had known him when he was practicing law in Texas. But they were about the only two over there that I did know. I went over there and became acquainted with the other people in the Department of Justice, and told them who I was and why I was, so to speak.

F: I think we hit everybody in the Department of Justice--at least Assistant Secretary up, and quite a number of others--Ed Weisl Jr. So I feel that it's my old stomping ground.

T: But Ramsey was nice enough to invite me over to the luncheons. I believe they had once a week on Tuesday or Wednesday between the Attorney General or the Deputy Attorney General and the various Assistant Attorneys General, who were in charge of the sections or departments. So the first thing I did was get acquainted with the Department of Justice and its' operations.

F: What were your principal problems vis-a-vis the Justice Department? One, I suppose, you'd be checking with them on Presidential appointments.

T: Not really all Presidential appointments, because only those that related to the Judiciary and lawyers, so to speak.

The way the Presidential appointment process was set up as I'm sure you know from your other interviews, is that most of the Presidential appointments initiated with John Macy. Although he was chairman of the Civil Service Commission, he also sort of wore a second hat--I think the newspapers dubbed him as a talent scout for the President--and the recommendations for most boards and commissions and Presidential appointments originated with John. But those related to the legal end in any way or form--obviously all the Judicial appointments and such appointments as the Board of Pardons and Paroles, appointments of that character--

originated with the Department of Justice. Those came through me, and I usually had a considerable number of discussions with people at the Department of Justice about the appointments and about the people involved before we got to the posture of a memo recommending people.

In a very broad sense most of the Judicial appointments involved patronage, but that's only in a broad sense. When you get to a federal district judgeship in Florida, the Department of Justice obviously checked with the Senator from Florida. Senator Holland in that case would make a recommendation. But that didn't mean that he had the power of appointment, as some people sometimes think because occasionally he would come up with someone and Ramsey and Warren Christopher, who was the Deputy Attorney General and really looked after most of the Judicial appointments, might conclude after a conversation with me that maybe there were more talented, more able, more qualified people than the one the particular Senator recommended. Obviously you needed the Senator's recommendation and/or approval.

F: You didn't name Carswell.

T: No, we did not name Carswell. But we'd go back and usually encourage the Senator to decide this was his nominee if we had an especially talented guy.

F: In the early stages when you first went there in the fall, you didn't have a great deal of civil rights problems, did you? This came--

T: No, not really at that time. I think in--October and November and December of 1967 was sort of an interim period after some earlier problems and before some later ones, the Resurrection City type thing and others that came on--the riots in Washington and all later on. But

during that period we didn't have any really significant problems. That's not to say there weren't any, just none of the significance of the others that came later.

F: Just something to be vigilant about.

T: That's right.

F: Did you run into any difficulties of lines of authority between you and Harry McPherson?

T: No, not at all. Harry McPherson and I had been friends for a long time. I met Harry when I was in Washington in 1959. He was then, I guess, an attorney for the Senate Democratic Policy Committee, working for Senator Johnson, and obviously had been a very able assistant to Lyndon Johnson for some time, and one of the people of whom Lyndon Johnson has been very fond for so long. I had no problems with Harry.

Harry was engaged in such activities as reviewing tariffs that came over from the State Department that were required to come to the White House for Presidential approval. He would review those and send them in to the President and make recommendations. Things like the international cases that came over from the Civil Aeronautics Board, the federal law requires that CAB actions on international matters come to the White House for Presidential approval. He would review those along with a fellow named DeVier Pierson who later became an operative on his own, but at that time sort of was an assistant to Harry. Harry was doing a considerable amount of speech writing. The Special Counsel tag may have been a little bit of a misnomer of part of his responsibilities, because he was a very able speech writer and the President greatly valued his judgment and his ability. So we never did quite cross paths in what we

were doing, and there was clearly no conflict. Partly because Harry and I were and are good friends, there wasn't going to be any kind of a conflict.

F: When you move on towards spring and you get into the appointments end, does this change what you've been doing, or is this just something added on to what you're already doing?

T: I think just an add-on. You know, being on the White House [staff] is sort of a kind of evolution type operation of any kind of position. That is that the longer you're there the more you know, and the more you understand and the more you're able to do and you wind up doing more. So it really was just an evolution where I started doing more. Obviously, at first I wasn't sufficiently acquainted with the operation to do very much more than just stay around and watch. When I got there I was located in an office there on the first floor of the West Wing that was just one office removed from the President's. His Oval Office, you'll recall, is in the Southeast corner, and then Marvin Watson had the office immediately adjoining it, and then I was immediately adjoining Marvin in an office that Jack Valenti had occupied and it had remained vacant after Jack left. So I was sort of in close proximity where I could watch, and the President told me that he wanted me to attend all of the Cabinet meetings and various other meetings that he would suggest from time to time so I could just sit over in the corner like a little bug and watch what was going on, and hopefully learn a little bit about what was going on.

F: You got a good political education.

T: Right. After I'd been there less than a month, I started what we referred to as the "bedroom duty"--didn't refer to it that way unkindly, but I

think you know that Lyndon Johnson started most of his activities in the morning really from his bedroom. He didn't get over to his office very early, but he would get up early and would kind of do a day's work in his bedroom in the morning.

When I got there Marvin Watson was going over to his bedroom between eight and eight-thirty every morning, and would stay over there and visit with the President, go over with the President the night reading which I will refer to in just a second; and take whatever instructions the President had for the day and relay them. I started going over with Marvin, and I started getting some of the instructions. The President found it much more expeditious to give twenty instructions to Marvin--later to me--and ask that we convey them on to the Cabinet members, some Senator, some White House staff member. He found it easier and quicker to do it that way than for him to call each one of them. So I guess, in a sense, we were couriers of information. Even though I might not have a lot of contact with, let's say, the Interior Department, maybe on a particular day he would say, "Call Secretary Udall and ask him waht such-and-such is," or, "Ask him to do so-and-so." Then I would come back with a response.

F: Did you sub-delegate some of that, or is there a level below which you cannot go from that kind of a protocol standpoint?

T: I don't know that it's a protocol standpoint so much as the way Lyndon Johnson works. There's not much of that you can delegate, because he will recall that he told you to call Secretary Wirtz. Maybe at eleven o'clock in the morning after having told you that at eight-thirty, he'll suddenly think of Secretary Wirtz and want to know what the answer is.

He'll call and say, "What did Bill Wirtz say?" Well, it's not really a satisfactory answer to say, "I don't know, Mr. President. I asked my assistant to call him "because the President expected, when he asked you to do something, that you were going to do it. That caused a little bit of a difficulty at times because if he asked you to call fifteen different people, you might start calling them and have called fourteen, and he'll call and want to know what the fifteenth said; and you said, "Well, I haven't called him yet," and then you've got to explain why. So that caused some problems.

F: Did you ever just flat run out of time? You must have on a few occasions.

T: Yes. I think it's accurate to say "ran out of time." One of the problems was that a good part of the morning had already gone by the time I would get back to the office. If I would show up over there at eight or eight-thirty, I might stay over there with him until he came to the office at maybe ten, ten-fifteen, ten-thirty. By that time, a good part of the morning had gone by, and you had to start doing all these things. Obviously there were phone calls waiting and various activities to do.

F: Okay, now, you don't get back and get on your calls until ten o'clock. Secretary Wirtz has showed up at nine o'clock, at nine-thirty he goes into a fairly top level committee meeting. When they say the White House called, does that supercede the meeting, or do you wait until he gets out of the meeting?

T: It depends. That really depends on my gauging of the urgency of the call, because if I ask the White House operator to get Secretary Wirtz on the

phone and she comes back and says, "He is in a meeting. Do you want me to call him from the meeting," then that's my decision. And if I say, "Yes, tell him it's important," and call him from the meeting, he'll come from the meeting. Now, obviously, I ought to use some discretion about that. I'll probably be advised what kind of meeting he's having and how important that meeting is.

F: Did you generally guress right?

T: Oh, I think so. By-and-large the answer is "yes," you call him from the meeting, because when the President wants to know something, you're probably going to get a call from the President later on in the morning asking what response you've had.

If the President says, "Call Ramsey Clark and tell him that by tomorrow evening I want a written report on XYZ," obviously you don't need to call Ramsey from that meeting. On occasion he would say, "Call Ramsey and tell him I want a report on something." And I'd call and Ramsey would be tied up; and I would call Warren Christopher and say, "Warren, the President wants me to call Ramsey and give him this message--that he wants such-and-such report. I want to tell you so maybe you can get started on it, and I'll talk to Ramsey when he gets out of the meeting he's in." So knowing the Under Secretary or the Deputy usually had a pretty beneficial aspect to it.

F: Were the lines of responsibility and the lines of authority as tightly drawn in a sense as they were under John Connally? I realize you're dealing with a much different and larger situation. But the President reputedly has a fine sense of organization and then sets out to defeat it.

T: Well, I'm not really sure what the answer to that question is. You've

got to remember that the difference between the White House operation and the Governor's operation is maybe the difference between a General Motors Corporation operation on the one hand and a small closely held corporation in Austin, Texas, on the other. The lines of responsibility were very, very clear and were very closely followed under John Connally. When I was there as the first assistant, with some exceptions, such as budget--which I didn't handle--and press relations which George Christian handled before he left--with those exceptions most of the ultimate responsibility on the other matters relative to the Governor's office rested with me insofar as the Governor was concerned. Now I might delegate to various people on the staff--

F: You were the executive officer, in a sense, of this ship.

T: Right. When he wanted to know something, he looked to me. I might look to others. Well, the federal government is so overpowering, so to speak. There's not any one key guy who's running the show and everything is being funneled through him. Probably Marvin Watson fit that pattern more than anybody, but still there were many, many things that didn't funnel through him. None of the special assistants went through him when they needed to get information to the President except they might send a memo to the President and hand it to Marvin, and say, "Marvin, you'll be in the President's office before I will--will you hand this to the President." Or they might say, "Marvin I need to see the boss, and when he gets a spare moment ask him if he can see me." In that sense they might go through Marvin, but as far as saying, "Marvin, here's some information I've got, and would you talk to the President about it and let me know what his answer is," that didn't happen very much. It happened some.

The White House staff, it seems to me, didn't follow very rigid lines of organization.

I think the President, as you say, had a great sense of organization, but I also think that by-and-large when he had something to do, something that he wanted done, he would talk to whoever was the nearest and handiest. A lot of times I got involved in things that I guess on the organizational chart were outside of the realm of my responsibility, but I was there when he said, "Call Secretary Udall and talk to him about such-and-such a park. Find out what the details are of the gift of the Eisenhower farm as a historical monument to the United States government." I think a lot of what he did was get the nearest man unless there was some great exp rtise involved. If I were the nearest and closest, he obviously wouldn't ask me about some foreign policy matter because he knew I wasn't qualified. That's a Walt Rostow bailiwick, and Walt was the one he called, or Secretary Rusk, or someone else.

F: Was there much jockeying for power among the White House staff, or was it possible to attain power under this system?

T: Oh, I guess there's always some jockeying for power. I'd say that based on hearsay of what had transpired prior to the time I got there, that it wasn't nearly as prevalent while I was there as maybe before. But I think there was some jockeying for power and jockeying for favor. I never felt during the time I was there that I was in competition with anybody or that anybody thought they were in competition with me. Of course, I knew very, very well George Christian when I went up there. I knew Marvin Watson. I knew Harry McPherson, and obviously got to know the others. I didn't really feel like I was in any competition with them

or that they thought they were with me. And with regard to the ones I didn't know that I met up there and got to know while I was there, they didn't really know what kind of breed of cat I was. I had come from working for what they thought was the President's closest friend, John Connally, and I somehow got on the bedroom detail where I was seeing the President the first thing every morning when they weren't. I don't think anybody thought that I had anything that they particularly wanted, or that they wanted to be competitive with me--number one. Number two, they really didn't know how to appraise me.

F: Did you move your family up there right away?

T: Yes. What we did was to buy a house up there. Again, back to George Christian. My wife and his wife were very good friends and our children were good friends who had played together, so when we got up there we found that George and Joanne had just purchased a home in McLean, Virginia. When we started looking for a house, we found one about half-a-block from them down the street that was newly built and ready to be sold. It had a lot of appealing aspects, particularly the closeness to the Christians, so we bought it. They moved up there, I guess, within two weeks from the time I got up there.

F: Is there a tendency to jack the price on White House employees, or is there a tendency to play with them, or could you tell that made any difference?

T: I couldn't tell any difference one way or the other. I think the people that--

F: Kind of like buying a house here.

T: Yes. I think the people from whom I purchased the house had already

really made a deal with me on it prior to even knowing why I was up there. I didn't notice any difference.

F: Did the President take an interest in that sort of thing--the fact that you are well-housed, where you're living, and so on; or is he too busy for that?

T: No. He did, and does. He didn't really get involved in my house purchase as such, but he told me that he would be interested and that if he could be helpful, he wanted to and he mentioned it a time or two. He didn't really do anything, but I always felt like if I had any problems I could have called on him. I wouldn't have.

F: When did you find time to look?

T: Really, the first week I was up there. I went on the payroll and started working. I'd take off three or four hours. George Christian put me on a real estate agent who was very helpful and found some houses. Then I finally narrowed it down to a couple. Louann came up and picked the one she preferred. We just bought it and closed and moved in fairly rapidly.

F: Not to get personal in your situation but being general, is there a problem with what you might call White House staff widows on an overall basis--?

T: There's a great problem. I'm willing to get personal on mine. I think mine is probably a typical situation. My wife is as devoted--

F: You plunked her down in a strange town--

T: Yes. She was and is, I should say as devoted to Lyndon Johnson as I am. She was delighted for me to have this opportunity. She obviously enjoyed being in Washington in the sense of letting our children see some of the history of this country. It was an added benefit to us in that my wife's

brother--whom you know--Pope Atkins--was teaching at the Naval Academy; and he and his family were living in Annapolis, only fifty miles from Washington, so there was that closeness.

But there is a difference between what I did in leaving the house at a quarter to eight or so in the morning, and being gone till--well, I'd say maybe seven-thirty or eight is the earlist I'd leave, and it might be twelve or one. That clearly is a long day, and could be a very tiring day except there's a stimulus to being involved in the activity of the White House that just overcomes the tiredness that you have. Well, there's a difference in that on the one hand, and being, as you say, the White House widow on the other hand who is there at home grappling with children and living out in the suburbs with not a whole lot to do. You know, not having much family life in the sense of my being home to eat supper with the children and going out in the evenings and that sort of thing.

F: You were never counted on for the evening meal.

T: No. As a matter of fact--

F: If daddy came home, it was a bonus.

T: As a matter of fact, I believe it's accurate to say that during all the time I was there I never had dinner in the evening during the week with my children. There were many, many times that my children were in bed when I left in the morning and they were in bed when I got home. I might be four or five days or from weekend to weekend seeing them awake. Now, that clearly was a problem. It wasn't just a problem with my wife. It was a problem I think with all the White House wives.

The President did his best to compensate for that. He recognized that

problem--he wasn't blind to it. What he did was he would try to do things for the wives and include the wives when he could, particularly on social occasions, to compensate for it. The President and Mrs. Johnson were exceptionally generous to me and to others, like the social occasions at the White House, being invited to a State dinner, or some other social occasion. They invariably had two or three or four White House staff members and their wives. They knew that this was a special thing that the wives enjoyed--well, the husbands enjoyed it too. You know, being invited to a State dinner is not the run-of-the-mill sort of thing that a guy's ever going to get a chance to do again.

F: Not only the Ambassador or somebody that you may be meeting or the head of state, but I think so often the guest list itself is quite intriguing.

T: Then on weekends, as I mentioned to you yesterday, the boat trip. During the spring and summer when the President would go out on the Sequoia or one of his yachts on a Saturday afternoon late or a Sunday afternoon, he would invite us. After we'd been there for a good period of time, maybe I'd been gone and working, I'd have a tendency to decline what I thought was a thoughtful and generous invitation because it really was only a husband and wife sort of activity, and understandably so. I would decline and want to go home and be with my children as opposed to going out with him. That was fine with him. He was just being nice to invite us, and it wasn't a command performance of any kind.

F: Incidentally for the sake of the typist, these double names are always a problem--does your wife spell hers together or--

T: All one word--Louann.

F: All right. Did you get up to Camp David?

: I never got to Camp David during the time I was there. He invited me one weekend. That was again one of the cases where it was just an invitation and not a command performance, and I begged off to be with my family. He didn't use Camp David as much while I was there as apparently he had done earlier. He probably went up there only a half-a-dozen times--

: When he was out on the Sequoia or something similar, did he relax?

: Yes.

: Now Harry Truman used to go on the Williamsburg and play poker, you know, around the clock and so on, but you didn't have anything like this? This was just sitting around talking, wasn't it?

: Sitting around talking, maybe having a drink, and eating. Food was usually served.

I started to say what he does as a pasttime, or did as a pasttime, and I think still does, is tell stories. In my judgment Lyndon Johnson unquestionably is the best story teller I ever heard or knew. That's not to say he didn't mix in a little business, because he did. But it might go from telling stories to mixing in a little business and making inquiries.

I learned a good trait by being around him, and that is that I always carried a pen or pencil and some kind of paper with me wherever I was around him, because invariably something would come to his mind that he'd ask you to do. My memory was not sufficiently good that I wanted to remember fifteen different things. So I started carrying little cards or pieces of paper, that I would write on.

I would say that while he relaxed out on an activity like going on one of the boats, I don't think he really relaxed as much as he did when

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he would come down the the LBJ Ranch. I started that trek with him--well, every trip he went on while I was there, he was nice enough to take me with him. After I'd only been there about six weeks, I went on the around-the-world trip with him to Prime Minister Holt's funeral where we left Washington going West and came back from the East four-and-a-half days later. But I would come with him when he came down to the LBJ Ranch, and I think unquestionably that was the best tonic he had because he loved that country. As I think you know and anybody knows that has ever been down there, what he usually does is just get out in the car and drive around the ranch. It really is a great tonic for him because it relaxed him and took his mind, at least temporarily, off some of the problems. I think it helped him sort of recuperate from the tiredness of being President and ready to go back full-steam-ahead again.

F: You believe in the short Presidential vacation?

T: Oh, yes. I really believe that whether it's President Nixon going to Florida or California, or President Johnson coming to the LBJ Ranch--

F: Kennedy to Hyannisport.

T: Kennedy to Hyannisport, I really think it's almost imperative that a President get out of town on weekends when he can. There's nothing that he can do for relaxing other than walk around the White House grounds, I guess, there at the White House; because he's right there where all the heat and all the pressure is. He needs to kind of get away from it.

F: He really is, in a sense, imprisioned by those fences.

T: Yes. I know from newspaper accounts Harry Truman used to get out and walk around. No one else seemed to do that. But I think getting away is just an imperative thing for a President.

F: Did Marvin move out at the President's initiative, or was Marvin getting restless and this seemed like a good place to put him? Did you get any feeling for that?

T: I think that the President viewed Marvin, and correctly so, as the most loyal White House assistant he ever had and more than that. I heard him on many occasions refer to "dear, kind, sweet Marvin." He found Marvin not only to be loyal, but dependable. He never had any questions about Marvin carrying out what he asked him to do. I believe, although the President never said it, that once he decided that he was not going to run again and the vacancy was then created when Larry O'Brien resigned as Postmaster General to assist Senator Robert Kennedy's campaign for the Presidency, I believe the President decided that the appointment to the Cabinet was a way that he could reward a dear, loyal, dedicated friend. I think that he was appointing Marvin over there really as a reward more than anything else. Moving him out or getting rid of him I'm sure was never a thought that crossed his mind at all. I don't think it crossed anybody else's mind that I knew of.

F: As far as you could tell, was the President miffed by Larry O'Brien moving out to join Robert Kennedy's entourage, or did he feel that this was just part of his political perogative? There wasn't any question that Bobby in one sense, was running on an anti-Administration ticket.

T: Right. I'm not sure miffed is the word, and I'm not sure irritated is the word. There's something in-between in thinking that it's the usual political perogative on the one hand and being miffed on the other. There's some middle ground in there with a word I can't find that characterized his attitude. I don't think he was really very happy

about it.

F: It didn't really impair relations? The men didn't get non-communicable for awhile?

T: No. Of course, the President recognized that Larry O'Brien was close to the Kennedys. You know, he'd been brought into the White House structure by the Kennedys and was an assistant under President Kennedy. He was put in the Cabinet by Lyndon Johnson, not President Kennedy. But he understood and recognized the relationship between Larry and the Kennedys. I recall very vividly, because I was sitting on the appointments desk, and took Larry in and saw him come out when he told the President what he was going to do. It must have been a very traumatic thing for Larry, because Larry came out with tears in his eyes and told me when he left, he said: "I believe that's one of the finest, most understanding, kindest men that I have ever known." And he said, "I want to talk to you about it some time, Larry, but I just can't talk about it now." With that he left. I'm sure that the President just told him that "if that's what you want to do, I'll miss you from the Cabinet, but have at it," in a much kinder way than that probably.

F: As far as you could tell in your role, did the Cabinet tend to line up liberal-conservative, or pro and con. In other words, were there schisms within the Cabinet or did the Cabinet just sort of regroup according to issue?

T: You know, there weren't any kind of cliques within the Cabinet. The Cabinet didn't operate in a way that would permit cliques. You'll recall that the Cabinet met every other Wednesday, as I recall--records would reflect exactly when it was. Other than that, the Cabinet didn't really

get together on any organized basis. It might be that two members of the Cabinet would get together on some project in which the two were interested, but they didn't really get together. They sort of operated independently as each of them were heads of independent agencies. They had their communications and contact with the President.

But there were varying philosophies. I think as you would see toward the end of the Administration--to use the trite phrase as everybody uses--there were hawks and doves within the Administration on Viet Nam toward the end. I think earlier they were all what everybody would characterize as hawks, if you assume hawks are supporting the Administration and doves are those who don't support the Administration on Viet Nam. But I didn't notice any cliques or schisms or anything.

F: Did you ever get the feeling that the President would like to have had dumped one or more of them, but felt that it was politically unwise?

T: Yes. I'll tell you about a situation that I guess really isn't widely known that happened with regard to one of the Cabinet members. I guess this doesn't chronologically get us there, and we may want to come back to an earlier period. The President had what I would characterize as an interesting run-in with Secretary Wirtz that gives a pretty good insight as to both of them, and particularly an insight as to both of them, and particularly an insight to Lyndon Johnson during the transitional period.

In the fall of 1967, the President had met with all the Governors at the National Governors Conference which met in Washington. They met with him in the White House. At that time, he assured all of these Governors that there would be no changes made in any of the organizational structure or program operation of the federal government that had a direct

impact and a direct effect on state government and state government operations without prior consultation with the governors. He said, "If we're going to do anything up here that really drastically changes how you operate your state government or any part of it, we'll talk to you before we do."

F: Were they wanting this sort of reassurance, or did he do it on his own initiative?

T: Yes! Well, he did it on his own initiative, but it was very welcome, and they wanted it.

F: They felt a bit uncertain.

T: Right. And that was his policy. It was a policy that was clearly enunciated and articulated in a memorandum that the Bureau of the Budget sent around to all of the agencies thereafter. So everybody knew those were the ground rules.

Some time in the later spring or summer of 1968, Secretary Wirtz, Under Secretary Jim Reynolds, a man named Stanley Ruttenberg, who was head of Manpower Training as I recall--

F: We've interviewed him.

T: Joe Califano on the White House staff, and Jim Gaither who was his assistant, started meeting relative to a reorganization of the Labor Department, particularly relating to the Manpower Development Program. The reorganization had a very substantial impact on the way the state employment services operated their departments.

These preliminary discussions started, and I later found out were held without the President's knowledge. Once something got in a kind of firm order, then he was apprised of it. But they started working on this

reorganization, and I think either Secretary Wirtz or Under Secretary Reynolds, or maybe Mr. Ruttenberg--Assistant Secretary Ruttenberg--had a few preliminary contacts with some of the state employment service individuals--somebody like members of the Texas Employment Commission and their counterparts in the other states. But those discussions with the state employment service representatives were just discussions and seeking information as opposed to saying, "Here's the overall plan we propose. Do you have any advice, suggestions, or counsel?" That never happened.

In any event, October of 1968 rolled around. There's one other setting that I want to stop at as an aside to. In late September or early October, Secretary Wirtz made a speech in either Detroit or Chicago--I've forgotten which--in which he stated pretty strong views opposing the war in Viet Nam and what the Administration was doing with regard to the Vietnamese War. For some strange unkown reason, that speech was not picked up in the national media and was not picked up by the wire services. About four or five days later, there was a little story on the front page of the Washington Post which said, "Five days ago Secretary Wirtz spoke in Detroit, or Chicago (whichever one it was), and expressed views against the Viet Nam war. This is indication of lack of solidarity of support within the Cabinet within the Administration on the Viet Nam war," and just told the whole story. After some checking, it was learned that this story had been leaked to the Washington Post by one of Wirtz's assistants; and apparently Wirtz was unhappy that he had gone to the trouble of taking a position against the Administration on Viet Nam and it had not been reported. So he just got the story to the Washington Post, and had

it print it on the front page of the Washington Post. That is the setting that has to do with the rest of this story.

In early October, Joe Califano sent a memorandum to the President, and outlined all of the meetings that he, Gaither, Wirtz, Reynolds, Ruttenberg, and everyone else had had about this reorganization.

I'm out of order again. Let me tell you one other thing before I get to that memorandum.

The President had decided that about September of 1968 was the beginning of a transitional period from one President to another. Obviously, at that time no one knew whether it was going to be President Nixon or President Humphrey, but President Johnson knew that was about the beginning of a transitional period. He had definitely decided that it would not be the proper thing to do for him to start any major new programs or any major new projects that he couldn't complete, unless it was just not possible to hold those over to another President. He said, "If it's all possible to hold any major new program or any major innovation or any major change over until a new President comes in, I think out of fairness to him and out of the orderly operation of this government, I ought to withhold action until a new President comes in and let him take a look at it. He'd going to be there for four years, and he's going to be the one that has to implement it. He's going to be the one that has to live with whatever that problem or project or program is." He had decided that. He had talked to the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, and had told the Director of the Bureau of the Budget to put that in writing in a memorandum to all agencies and departments. And by late September had seen an early draft of this memorandum, and had sent it back with some

changes. It was in the process of being written and sent out, but it had not been sent out at the time of the Wirtz episode.

In any event, back to the early October--Califano sent in a memorandum relative to all the meetings that had transpired, and discussing with the President the reorganization of the Department of Labor and the Manpower Development Training Program, and recommended--and stated that it was a recommendation of all those who had met that this program be reorganized--and asked the President's approval for the reorganization and for implementation of it. There was a little place at the bottom of his memo for approval--disapproval. There also was attached to that memorandum a suggested press release where the President would announce all these changes. Because of his view about starting new program or making changes toward the end of the Administration, coupled with his recollection of what he had told the Governors, he checked "disapproved" and wrote on the bottom of the memo: "No, I do not want to put this program into effect."

About five days later Califano sent in the second memorandum, explaining again the reasons for the program, saying that he had met again with Wirtz, Reynolds, Ruttenberg, and Gaither, I guess; and that it was their combined judgment that this was important to get started and get implemented. And again he asked the President's approval of it, and said: "If however you don't agree that we ought to do this, will you please see Under Secretary Reynolds so he can explain it to you, because Under Secretary Reynolds and Secretary Wirtz feel very strongly that this program ought to be implemented." The President sent that memorandum back and said, "No, I do not want to put this program into effect,"

and, "No, I do not want to see Under Secretary Reynolds about it. I've made up my mind." He sent that memorandum back, and that message was conveyed by Califano to Reynolds and to Wirtz.

Some two or three days thereafter, without Califano's knowledge, without Gaither's knowledge, without the knowledge of anybody in the White House, Secretary Wirtz announced this reorganization, announced the changes and put in motion all of the details to implement the reorganization. Califano and Gaither learned about it when they read about it in the paper. The President had apparently overlooked it in the paper, or didn't realize what it was if he saw it--

F: That's hard to believe.

T: Well, it is hard to believe. The President learned about it the night it appeared in the Washington Post--the night of the morning it appeared in the Washington Post--when in his night reading he got a memorandum from Joe Califano telling him what had happened. The President saw that night reading about eleven o'clock at night. I'm advised from Califano who immediately got a telephone call from him that the President was substantially irritated, and asked if he--Califano--had delivered the President's earlier messages back to Wirtz and Reynolds. Califano assured him that he had. The President asked Califano why this was done. Califano said that he didn't know--that it was done without his knowledge at all. All he knew about it was what he had seen in the paper, as Will Rogers used to say, I guess.

The President called Under Secretary Reynolds. First he called Bill Wirtz who was out of town, coming back in late that night. He called Under Secretary Reynolds, [and] asked Reynolds if he had gotten the

President's message that this program was not to be implemented and the reorganization was not to be approved. Reynolds said that he had gotten that message; had gotten it from Califano--

F: He told the President--he talked directly to the President?

T: Right. Told the President directly. I, obviously, wasn't privy to that conversation except for what the President told me the next morning. Under Secretary Reynolds told the President that he had gotten the message; he did understand it; he had delivered it to Wirtz; but that he had announced this reorganization and started to implement it at the direction of Secretary Wirtz who said that in spite of that message, that he was going to reorganize that department and implement it.

Early the next morning when I got to the bedroom the President recou[illegible] this to me, was still very, very unhappy--

F: He hadn't talked to Wirtz directly?

T: Had not talked to Wirtz directly. The President told me to call Joe Califano, to get Joe Califano to call Secretary Wirtz and to tell Wirtz that he the President wanted to meet with Wirtz that morning at eleven o'clock. In the meantime he told me he wanted me to get familiar with the entire problem. At this point I didn't really know about it. To get familiar with the--

F: That's kind of a cram course, isn't it?

T: --entire problem and have abailable for him by eleven o'clock that morning a memorandum stating to him the substantive and the procedural reasons why this reorganization ought not to take place. Obviously the procedural reasons are no clearance with the Governors, violative of his decision not to make new changes during the transitional period.

I did put together that memorandum on a very quick cram basis. At eleven o'clock the President, Secretary Wirtz, Joe Califano, and I met in the Cabinet Room. The President was sitting in the President's place at the Cabinet table and Secretary Wirtz was seated immediately across from him at the place where the Vice President customarily sits during Cabinet meetings.

F: Why in there instead of in the President's office? Is there any psychology involved?

T: I think it was a more formal sort of thing, sitting across the table from each other as opposed to sitting around in the couches in front of the fireplace. I noticed that when the President wanted to be a little bit more formal he met in the Cabinet Room, even if it were two people, or three, or four, as in this case. He obviously could accommodate that many very comfortably.

F: That could make you feel a little isolated.

T: Yes. The President, I thought, was amazingly calm and amazingly collected throughout the entire meeting. He was clearly irritated and clearly mad earlier. There wasn't any question about his irritation and wrath earlier.

F: I don't want to intrude on your story, but I think I've seen this. When he is seething about something, does he deliberately shift into a lower gear?

T: Yes.

F: Because I've seen sometimes when I've thought that his rage would be white hot when he seemed his most deliberate and slow and careful.

T: That is correct. That characterizes his whole mood and appearance and all

on this occasion.

The President didn't have any pleasantries. There wasn't any of this "Hello, Bill, how are you"--"Fine, Mr. President." The President waited until Wirtz was there , and Wirtz was seated and Califano was seated, and I was in the President's office, having gone over with him this memorandum. He said, "Come in here and take notes." I went in and I sat at the end of the Cabinet table. They were in the middle across from each other, and I was down at the end.

F: He wouldn't use a secretary like Juanita Roberts on something like this?

T: No.

F: He'd stick with somebody like you--

T: Some inexperienced hand like me who doesn't really take shorthand. We went in and the President just walked in without saying, "Hello sit down," and said, "Bill, we've got a problem I want to talk to you about. You know what it is." He said, "I told the Governors there would not by any reorganization that had an impact on their operations without prior consultation. Your reorganization does have that impact. They were not consulted.

"Secondly, I decided that there was not going to be any late twelfth hour changes in this government that could be held off until a new President came in, and what you did is contrary to that.

"Thirdly, I gave specific instructions on two occasions when inquiries were made of me about this program that the program was not to be put into effect and was not to be implemented.

"Now what I want to talk to you about is how we change what you've already done, and how we put back the situation as it was prior to your

action yesterday."

Well, the first thing Wirtz did was to suggest that he hadn't really fully understood the President's message, and there was a little conversation about that. Upon some pretty rigid cross-examination by the President of saying: "Joe, did you tell Wirtz what I said on such-and-such occasion?" And Joe saying, "Yes," and Wirtz saying, "Well, I did get that message." After a little while it was apparent that Wirtz was ready to abandon his position that he didn't understand the message, because he obviously did.

The second position Wirtz had was that this reorganization was a matter that did not require Presidential approval, that he had the authority to make that reorganization and implement it without getting White House approval. The President's response to that was, "Well, I don't think that's right, but even if it were right, you came to me twice and asked for approval; and I disapproved it twice. What you did was in direct conflict and direct violation of my instructions. I'm just not going to have that! Somebody has got to be the leader in this government, and I'm that guy. When I make a decision, that's the decision. And if you can overrule it, if you can violate my instructions, then we don't have a government. We don't have somebody with the responsibility of making decisions. So what I want to know is how we can undo what has been done and put it back."

Wirtz said: "I don't know. I'm not prepared to do that."

F: Was he truculent or soft-spoken?

T: Very soft-spoken, puffing on his pipe. It was all a low voice operation between the two of them--and a very direct and pointed confrontation.

Wirtz said: "I think this program is right. I think it's what ought to be done. I think from a merit standpoint this is the way the department ought to be organized."

The President said, "I'm not prepared to argue the merits with you. I'm not telling you that you're right or you're wrong. You may be right. It may be a good program, but if it is the next Secretary of Labor and the next President will recognize the merit of it, and they'll put it in. If you're wrong, it'll stand that test. I'm not talking to you about the merits of it. I'm just telling you whether it's a good program or a bad program, it's not going to be a new program. It's not going to be approved right now. You're going to unapprove it."

Wirtz said: "Well, I'm afraid the next President might not put it in."

The President said, "That's immaterial to me. What I'm telling you is that I have disapproved it and it's not going to go in. Now we've got to undo it."

Wirtz said: "No, sir, I will not undo it."

The President said: "Well, we have to have somebody who makes the decisions in this government, and that's me. I have told the Governors that no changes will be made; and no changes are going to be made, Bill. We're going to undo this, and I'm telling you--we will undo it."

Wirtz said, "Well, why don't you tell the Governors that I did it, and you can make me the son-of-a-bitch, and that it was done by the Secretary of Labor, and the President didn't have anything to do with it?"

The President said: "I can't do that, and I won't do that because it came to the White House twice to me and I disapproved it. Now, you

undo it and you tell me how we're going to undo it."

Wirtz said: "I'm not prepared to do that, and I won't do that."

The President said: "Well, if you won't, then we will get somebody in there who can undo it and who will undo it."

Wirtz said, "Well, then that's what you're going to have to do."

The President said: "I assume then that I will have your resignation."

Wirtz said: "I think you have my resignation already on file, don't you? Didn't all of us submit resignations to you when we took office that was acceptable at your pleasure?"

The President said: "I don't know, but if your resignation is here, it's accepted. If it's not, then I will expect to have one from you."

Wirtz said: "If you don't have one over here, another one will not be forthcoming. You can fire me if you want to!"

The President said, "I don't want to fire anybody. That sounds like removing people, like removing demonstrators; and I don't want to do that. That's not becoming of your office or mine. I will expect a resignation from you."

Wirtz again said: "It will not be forthcoming."

The President, obviously alluding to the Chicago or Detroit speech, said: "Bill, there are a lot of people that think that you've been trying to put yourself in a position of wanting to be removed, or wanting to be a martyr, or wanting to have me do something about you for some time on other areas."

Wirtz said: "Well, I hope you know that's not true, Mr. President."

The President said, "I don't know what is or isn't true. I'm just stating what I know the situation to be. I just will say again, if your

resignation is here, it's accepted; if it's not here, I will expect one by the end of the day," and got up and left.

He motioned for me to follow him, which I did, and I assume that Wirtz then went out of the office. I went into the President's office with him and in sort of a quizzical way--and not really a mad way--he really was amazingly well composed. I think more than I would have been under the circumstances. He said: "What do you make of that?"

I said: "Mr. President, I don't believe what I just saw. I don't believe I ever would have thought that anything like that would transpire."

He said: "I want you to check and see if we have his resignation. I hate like hell to do this because I think it's a mistake at this late hour of the Administration to be doing this sort of thing, but let's check and see if his resignation is here."

So we checked and there was a resignation that, as I recall, was like late '64--after the President's election in 1964. And it was just there on file, and it says: "I hereby resign effective at your pleasure." I think it may have said "in accordance with custom and policy, I submit this resignation to be accepted at your pleasure." The President said, well, he didn't think that was really satisfactory, and he said that he wanted me to check and see what the precedent was for removing Cabinet officials.

I called Warren Christopher at the Department of Justice, told Warren that we wanted quick research on the precedents of removing a Cabinet official. He undertook andthen later gave me a memorandum for the President showing when in history a President had removed a Cabinet official--I think in a couple of cases, maybe non-Cabinet officials, but heads of agencies.

At about that same time that Warren started working on that, the President called Ramsey Clark to tell him what had happened, and to also talk to him about the legal implications of it.

Ramsey had gone to New York for some kind of a speech and some kind of a meeting. The President recalled--Let me just say as an aside: The President has a wealth of information that he just stores away that seemingly is of no value, but all of a sudden turns out to be at a later time. He suddenly recalled that somebody had told him several years earlier that Warren Christopher and Bill Wirtz were good friends, and that something Christopher had done had elicited words of praise from Wirtz, and that Wirtz was very fond of and had great respect for Warren Christopher. So when Ramsey was gone, the President talked to Warren, recounted the entire episode to him, and said, "You and Bill Wirtz are friends, aren't you?" He said, "Well, I want you to go talk to Bill Wirtz, and tell him that he really ought to reconsider, and to remove what he has done, change the situation. I don't want to fire him, and I don't want to accept his resignation. I'm prepared to do that if I have to, because nobody can defy the President's orders. We just can't have a continuity of government by somebody defying the President's orders, particularly a Cabinet official. So encourage him to change his mind and to withdraw what he had done and put the situation back like it was. But if he won't, then ask him for another letter of resignation. He says he won't give it because he wants me to remove him. He wants to be a martyr. He wants to get the publicity. But explain to him that that's not the way to run a government, and that's not the posture he wants to put himself in, and that's not the posture he wants to put his President in. Tell him the

gentlemanly thing and the appropriate thing and the proper thing is to submit another letter of resignation."

Warren Christopher said that he would do that and did go. I was there when he talked to Warren on the telephone because I guess I was there at the start he kept me in on all of this.

By this point the President was just getting all sorts of letters and wires from Governors, just irate about this. He got one from Buford Ellington, the Governor of Tennessee, who was chairman of the National Governors Conference, speaking for all of the Governors, just insisting that the action of the Secretary of Labor be rescinded.

At about the same time Warren Christopher was talking to Wirtz, the President also recalled that the relationship between Secretary Wirtz and Secretary Clark Clifford was good. Obviously this isn't a Secretary of Defense problem. It's more of an Attorney General's problem than a Secretary of Defense. But the President talked to Clark Clifford and told Clark about what had transpired, to the great shock of Clark Clifford. The President talked a little bit more politically with Clark about it, and said: "You know, I'm prepared to do this; and I am willing to carry it through, but I really hate to do it because it's unfair to Humphrey. If this comes out, there'll be a great outcry that I'm purging the members of my Administration who disagree with Viet Nam. It'll have an adverse impact on his campaign, and that's not fair to him. I want you to go to talk to Wirtz. Wirtz professes to be for Humphrey. I want you to go talk to Wirtz, and tell him that if he is really for Humphrey, he ought not to give him this black mark. Changing his order and going back to where we were isn't going to help Humphrey any, but leaving it as it is and requiring

me to accept his resignation or fire him, as the case may be, is going to have an adverse impact on Humphrey's campaign; and maybe that will be appealing to him." In any event, the Secretary of Defense did go talk to Secretary Wirtz, as did Warren Christopher a couple of times.

Late in the evening of this very same day we finally got a letter from Wirtz. He had changed his mind about wanting to be fired. We got a letter from Wirtz that said something to the general effect of "Dear Mr. President: Because you have instructed me to do something with regard to the reorganization of this Department that I don't feel I can carry out in good conscience, and because I disagree with it, I am hereby submitting to you my resignation effective immediately."

F: Not exactly the kind of letter you want in the Post, is it?

T: It's not exactly the kind of letter, and obviously that was a new letter. We had crossed the bridge of the problem of having to fire him. By this point we had the precedents for firing. There was no question but that the President has that authority. If he just wants to fire somebody, I think that can be done as we may have seen recently by President Nixon. So we've crossed the bridge of the firing, and have gotten the letter of resignation, but that still was not satisfactory to the President because he didn't want to create this kind of a furor toward the end of his Administration.

So he again sent Warren Christopher, and again sent Clark Clifford, to see Wirtz to urge him to withdraw that letter of resignation and to withdraw his action on the reorganization--rescind what he had done; one, in order not to have an adverse impact on the Humphrey campaign, and two, just because that was not the kind of way that he thought Wirtz wanted to

out of the Cabinet.

After some considerable discussion Wirtz agreed--never having had another conversation with the President about any of this. All the conversations were second and third-hand. He agreed to withdraw his letter of resignation, and agreed to rescind what he had done about the reorganization until the campaign was over. He told Warren Christopher that, "As soon as the November election is behind us, I am going to resign. I am going to submit my letter of resignation to the President. I am going to advise him that I am resigning because of disagreement on the reorganization." That letter was never forthcoming. That was the end of that episode--nobody ever discussed it. Obviously, the Governors were happy about putting things back as they were. Nobody ever discussed it thereafter, and there was no letter that ever came from Wirtz. Wirtz never offered to resign again.

F: What did Wirtz do--just cancel his order?

T: He cancelled his order, announced that he was halting the implementation, and rescinding what had been done, and putting it back. I think the truth of the matter is if you look at the Department of Labor very closely, you'll see that, while he rescinded his order, he did everything he could to take steps to implement what he wanted to do without really having a complete reorganization.

F: He did it without making a policy out of it.

T: Right, but he didn't really accomplish what he wanted to do. He just started taking steps toward that. It may be that--I haven't followed it, I don't know--it may be that what he wanted to do was the right thing to do on merit. It may be that Secretary [Charles[Schultze has done that

now, I don't know. The President never was really concerned with the rightness or wrongness of the program itself.

F: Well now, the President has asked in this case for Wirtz's resignation, says that it will be accepted. Now then he's moving heaven and earth, or at least a couple of friends of Wirtz's, to get him not to resign. Does this inconsistency bother the President because he's having to reverse himself. It's a closed sort of thing.

T: No.

F: Wirtz has got to reverse himself publicly, but the President is reversing himself to you and Wirtz and Reynolds and everybody who knows about it.

T: I don't think [so] really. Because the President was saying that, "You're either going to undo what has been done, or I will put somebody in there who can and will undo it." When Wirtz says, "I'm not going to undo it," then the President is saying--. I think what he really meant was this--. He didn't put it this way, but this was the way I understood it--that "if you refuse to comply with the instructions and orders I give you, then I want your resignation; and if it's here, I accept it." You never get to the latter part of that statement, because Wirtz ultimately decided that he would undo what had been done, and he would follow the President's instructions. So you never quite get to the last part. I never felt that the President was reversing his field. I felt he took a very hard, strong position, and Wirtz took a very hard, strong position, and Wirtz backed off.

F: Was Wirtz kind of a quietly stubborn man?

T: Yes. Part of the problem here is that--. You know, I guess everyone who reaches any high point in public life is a prima donna so to speak in

some form or another, whether they're a White House staff member or Cabinet member. But one of the problems was that it was common knowledge around the White House that Bill Wirtz was one of the individuals who did not want to get any kind of instructions or orders or information of any kind from any White House staff member. He thought he was a Cabinet member and he talked and dealt only with the President. If the President had anything to tell him or say to him, that the President ought to call him directly. If he had anything to tell the President, he didn't want to go through me or Joe Califano or anybody else. There may have been a little bit of conflict between him and Califano because of having to go through Califano on some things.

F: I gather that the men were not what you might call close congenial friends. Did you get a feeling that Cabinet men in one sense wear out--that their nerve or their drive goes--that there ought to be somewhat regular turnovers? You missed the McNamara resignation, didn't you?

T: No, I was there for the McNamara resignation. I was going to comment about that and one other one. I don't know about wear out and turnover. I do know about wear out. I want to say something about that. I don't know about turnover because if you say turnover, you know--how often? Two years? Four years?

F: Of course, obviously you have varying times with varying people.

T: Right. Nobody really has the awesome, overpowering burden that the President has, and we're going to elect him for eight years maximum, or ten years I guess under the Constitutional provision if you serve part of a term. So I don't know about that turnover. They get tired. I noticed that Secretary McNamara was a very tired man. I noticed that when I

when I first got up there. I noticed his tiredness may have only been exceeded by Secretary Rusk, who in my mind and judgment is one of the great men in this country; because he just trodded along and did I think a yeoman's job day-in and day-out. He obviously was a visibly tired man who had carried this burden and responsibility for the foreign policy of this country for ultimately eight years--seven years at the time I first saw him, six-and-a-half. I noticed both of them were very tired. Obviously, the were other members of the Cabinet that were newer and fresher and weren't quite as tired as they were.

I was not surprised to see Secretary McNamara resign and take the World Bank position, because I think he felt like he was all spent with what he had to contribute. I think he was a sufficiently proud man that he didn't want to keep on when he just was all spent. I wasn't in on all of the activity relative to his resignation, but I don't think there was any resignation because of disagreement or anything like that. He just was tired and was ready to do something else. So I do think that he was glad to have the opportunity to move on to the World Bank.

F: Was it as emotional a resignation ceremony as it has been depicted?

T: Very, very emotional. When the President had a ceremony in the East Room of the White House--which was a packed house by the way, people just clambering to get in--more so than a lot of activities. He said a lot of very effusive kind generous words about Secretary McNamara. McNamara, with tears streaming down his face and a choked-up voice, just said, "Thank you. I can't say what I want to say now. I will some other time." And that was the end of his statement, it obviously was a very emotional time for him. It was an emotional time for the President. You know, you

have one of your really key people. It's not like--well--

F: The Secretary of Commerce--

T: Well, I was just going to say not like the Secretary of Commerce. Sandy Trowbridge had to resign because of doctors' orders. He had a heart problem, heart murmur. The President was devoted to Sandy and liked him and was sorry he was resigning, but it wasn't quite the emotional buildup that a McNamara was. So it was difficult from everybody's standpoint. Of course, the President had the additional problem of trying to decide who he was going to put in this very key role--very key Cabinet position.

F: Did he consider seriously, as far as you know, anyone other than Clifford?

T: Well, I don't know because again, as I indicated to you yesterday, Lyndon Johnson is a fellow who keeps fairly close counsel. You never really know whether he's considering other people or whether he's just throwing their names out to see what kind of reaction he's going to get.

F: I know in something like that he can throw out twenty possibilities, you know, so that you can't get a handle on anyone.

T: Names like Cy Vance and some others did come up. Clifford's wasn't the only name that came up, and I did hear the President talk about some of those other people. But he may have decided at the very outset that he was going to appoint Clifford. A lot of times I think what the President did--he never said this was what he was doing--but I think what he did was make up his mind who he wanted to appoint and then go through the process of deliberation and trying names just to eliminate everybody else to come back to the fellow he started with just to be sure he was right.

F: Kind of a check-off list.

T: Yes, to prove the correctness of what he was thinking about doing.

F: Let's go back to your job perse. Of course, all of this is part of your position. When you moved into the appointments' area, did this make any great change in what you had been doing. Also, how did you and Jim Jones work out your sort of fences so that you didn't fall into each other's yards?

T: It really didn't make a whole lot of change to what I had been doing, because even when Marvin -- I was there I was relieving Marvin, so to speak, on the appointments' desk. You'll recall that in the office immediately west of the President's office, which is where Marvin was and Jim Jones later was and which was the office immediately adjoining mine, the people who came in to see the President came through that office. The man who took care of the President's appointments really had the responsibility, which he could delegate, of getting word to the people when they were to be there, and getting them cleared into the White House gate. The secretaries looked after that. That wasn't a detail that had to be looked after by Marvin, or whoever was taking his place. But that individual then brought the people into the President's office and tried to keep the President on schedule by--maybe if the individual was supposed to be there at 1:30 and he was taken in at 1:30, and another appointment was there for 1:45, at 1:45 Marvin or I or whoever was there would go in with a note to the President saying, "Your 1:45 appointment is here." That would be designed to kind of keep things moving--to get the guy who was in there out so to speak.

Well, that sometimes didn't work because the guy that was going to be there for fifteen or twenty or thirty minutes might be in the midst of telling the President something he really wanted to hear, and the President

was not ready to terminate it. Or the President might have something he wanted to ask that man that would protract it and delay it. Several times we'd go back in three or four times before we got a man moved out--moved out not in an unkind sense.

But I was working with Marvin prior to the time Marvin left in doing that. For example, Marvin and I were switching with what we called late nights. Jim Jones and I later switched with what we called late nights. What that meant was that one of the two of us--either Marvin or I in one case, or Jim and I on the other--had the responsibility of staying there at least until the President left. The other, who had a so-called early night, could leave whenever he got his job done--and that getting your job done and leaving, your early night might be eight or eight-thirty in getting away from the White House; whereas the late night, very,very frequently could be as late as one or two, particularly if at ten-thirty or eleven the President said, "Well, I'm going to go eat supper now. Why don't you come eat with me." You just have a continuation in his dining room of colloquy and work of the day.

So I had already begun that with Marvin. I would relieve him at lunch time and handle the people going in and out, and responding to the in of the President's ring. When he'd see something come across the ticker tape or he'd have some general instructions, if he didn't think of anybody else, usually he would just ring whoever was outside his office--Marvin or Jim or me, and say, "I see on the ticker tape AP 131 that the Secretary of Commerce has made some announcement. Find out the details about that." Or that sort of thing. Or, "Call the Attorney General, and tell him I want to see him this afternoon." Something may have just come up that he

had thought about--that sort of thing. But I was doing that anyway, relieving Marvin, and more than just at lunch or in the evening; I'd be doing it sometimes during the day if Marvin would have some kind of meeting he thought he had to be at. Jim and I ostensibly took over the appointments. The truth is that, while from exterior purposes that might have been the appearance, Jim was doing it and I was relieving him. He still had the bulk of the responsibility. He was still sitting at that desk handling that except when I relieved him. So it was really a continuation of what was done before.

F: There were charges leveled that Marvin, particularly, screened people to see the President insofar as possible--I realize that's not entirely possible--so that they tended to represent Marvin's rather well-known conservative viewpoints; and that Marvin screend out the liberals. Did you get any feeling of this, or was this just--?

T: Yes. I got the feeling that it couldn't be further from the truth. Everybody that ever asked to see Lyndon Johnson, within reason--now let me say--

F: Not the guys that knocked on the gate.

T: Yes. If Joe Doakes from Pflugerville, Texas, would write up and say, "I sure would like to see you," well, that wouldn't get to him. But any agency head, any member of Congress, anybody of any position who ever asked to see the President had that request go to the President. The President was the one who made the decisions of who he would see and who he would not see.

F: Did the President buck some of those back to specific people like "have Califano see him?"

T: Yes, exactly. But in the President's night reading, which went into him every night--a package of information--memos that he had to have action on. Like the Califano memo or just for reading informational purposes that didn't require any action--there would be in every night's night reading at least one or more memos about people that wanted to see him, saying "Do you want to see this man? Yes, No."

F: Knowing his tendency for running overtime with people, did you tend to leave some soft spots in his schedule so that you could from time-to-time get back on schedule?

T: Sure. The one thing the Appointments' Secretary did do was to schedule the people after the President said he would see them. Once that schedule was put together--which individual he would see and at what time--then that overall schedule went back in to the President for his approval. By-and-large he approved it with some exceptions. Sure, there would be some soft spots left because in any day's time, you know that during the day he is going to want to see somebody who is not on that schedule in addition to the running over on time. Well, for example, just the Wirtz thing I was just telling you about. He had an appointment at eleven o'clock that day. Well, that was just put off. And most of the day was consumed with that little episode. It wasn't a little episode--a very major episode.

72-23

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE

Gift of Personal Statement

By Larry Temple

to the

Lyndon Baines Johnson Library

In accordance with Sec. 507 of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended (44 U.S.C. 397) and regulations issued thereunder (41 CFR 101-10), I, _____, hereinafter referred to as the donor, hereby give, donate, and convey to the United States of America for eventual deposit in the proposed Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, and for administration therein by the authorities thereof, a tape and transcript of a personal statement approved by me and prepared for the purpose of deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library. The gift of this material is made subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. Title to the material transferred hereunder, and all literary property rights, will pass to the United States as of the date of the delivery of this material into the physical custody of the Archivist of the United States.

2. It is the donor's wish to make the material donated to the United States of America by terms of this instrument available for research as soon as it has been deposited in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

3. A revision of this stipulation governing access to the material for research may be entered into between the donor and the Archivist of the United States, or his designee, if it appears desirable.

4. The material donated to the United States pursuant to the foregoing shall be kept intact permanently in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

Signed Larry Temple

Date January 5 1971

Accepted Harry L. Hamilton for
Archivist of the United States

Date DEC 9 1971