INTERVIEWEE: LARRY TEMPLE (TAPE #7)

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

August 13, 1970, Austin, Texas

F: This is another interview with Mr. Larry Temple in his office in Austin Texas. The interviewer is Joe B. Frantz. The date is August 13, 1970.

I don't think we quite wound up the Barefoot Sanders story so if you have a paragraph or so to add to that, let's hear about it.

T: Only a detail that related to procedure more than substance on that. I recall since I last talked with you that what had transpired with regard to that series of nominations of which Barefoot Sanders was one, is that they were originally submitted by the President in the fall of 1968 and were not acted upon at the time that Congress adjourned and took its recess. Well, in fact it was the end of Congress. No action was taken. When the Congress reconvened in early January, during the last two or three weeks of the Johnson Administration, the President at that time resubmitted the names of Barefoot and several others. It was on the occasion of the resubmission that Ramsey contacted John Mitchell and told him that the President was doing it and why. All that transpired that I've already recounted took place at that time. The nominations were originally made in the fall and resubmitted in January.

F: On that subject of judiciary, and we talked last time about Ramsey Clark's use of his latitude in recommending appointments, there was also what I suppose you might call a flap that involved Ramsey and the ICC and Alan Boyd.

T: Yes. My recollection is not precisely accurate as to the time of that except, again, I think it was in the fall of '68. [There is] sort of a hybrid situation in federal government, and that is that actions by federal administrative agencies are not always final. For example, if the Comptroller of the Currency decides that two banks can merge and it has no impact on competition, and he permits them to merge, the Department of Justice still historically has come in on many occasions to file suit and say that that merger, even though approved by the Comptroller, is violative of the federal anti-trust statutes. That's an example of what they do.

With regard to the particular action that happened it was a merger of two railroads in the Northeast--I don't recall the precise names of the railroads--but anyway because of a failing situation with regard to one of these railroads they had made application to the Interstate Commerce Commission--that application had begun several years prior to 1968--had made application for approval for merger.

The Interstate Commerce Commission had engaged in extensive hearings with regard to that merger and whether or not it was anti-competitive, whether or not one was really a failing railroad--all the various factors that went into it had been heard out by the Interstate Commerce Commission in detailed hearings. As a result of those hearings the Interstate Commerce Commission concluded that there was justification for the merger. It was not anti-competitive. It would be beneficial to the general public for the two railroads to merge, and therefore they approved the merger.

The Attorney General concluded from his investigation--this was

at the time that Ramsey was Attorney General--concluded from his investigation that the merger would be anti-competitive; would be violative of the federal anti-trust statutes. He concluded that the federal government should bring action--which would be in the form of an appeal from the ICC decision--should bring action in the federal courts to preclude the merger on the grounds that it would be anti-competitive and there was not sufficient justification for it to permit that anti-competitive result.

Now this goes back really to the late fall or early spring of '68 initially. I know that Alan Boyd, who was Secretary of Transportation--and felt a keen interest in this area--thought that the decision of the Interstate Commerce Commission was the correct decision and was happy with the decision; thought that it ought to be left alone.

Ramsey Clark, on the other hand, thought that because it was anti-competitive that he had a responsibility to institute legal proceedings to prevent its consummation. In any event, Ramsey did institute that action, and that action takes the form of an appeal from the ICC decision to the Appellate Court. You don't ever get into the District Court. It goes directly from the Interstate Commerce Commission to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. Ramsey did institute that action in the United States Court of Appeals over the objection of Alan Boyd and over the objection, really, of the Interstate Commerce Commissioners. In any event, Ramsey pursued on appeal his position. The Interstate Commerce Commission and the railroads took the contrary view. At some point in the fall of 1968, the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia rendered its decision

in support of the Interstate Commerce Commission and contrary to the position urged by Ramsey Clark.

At that time Ramsey openly voiced the view that the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia had been incorrect--as had been the Interstate Commerce Commission--and that he ought to take the case to the U. S. Supreme Court.

The importance of this rests not only in the overall issue, but in the timing of it; because the railroads couldn't merge while the case was being litigated. While it was involved in the courts, they were still status quo. They couldn't really operate independently, and they couldn't operate jointly. So it was fairly important that some decision be reached fairly quickly.

At the time the United States Court of Appeals issued its decision, Alan Boyd went to Ramsey and said; "I don't think you ought to appeal that decision for a lot of reasons. One, the decision is right. I know you felt keenly that you ought to appeal it to the Court of Appeals. I disagreed about that, but at least, you've done that. You've made your effort. You've made your point, and you've just gotten overruled. Now let's leave it alone. Let's don't appeal it. Let's let these railroads get on about their business of merging and get on about their business of trafficking in people and in goods."

Ramsey said, "No. I think that this is a decision that ought to go to the U. S. Supreme Court. It's a basic policy decision. We ought not to end right in the Court of Appeals."

The issue came to the President because Alan Boyd came to the President. Let me say at this point that this was not a case, at all, in

which the railroads tried to intervene and contact the President to my knowledge. With regard to my awareness of this, I never saw the footprints. I don't even know the lawyers for the railroads were, for example, nor did I see the footprints of any of the railroad people. It really was a matter of disagreement between Cabinet Officers over a very basic policy decision. Alan Boyd went to the President and went over all of it with him, and said, "Now, Mr. President, this is going to cause a little harm because of the delay. I implore you to instruct Ramsey not to appeal this thing." It was clear to me that while I wasn't present the first time Alan Boyd went over there, that Alan Boyd had been there earlier when Ramsey was talking about appealing from the ICC to the U. S. Court of Appeals.

The President had periodic conferences, as I've indicated earlier, with Ramsey- and he had a conference in which this came up and I was present. The President repeated the arguments that had been made to him by Alan Boyd, and frankly and candidly admitted to Ramsey that they had come to him from Alan.

Ramsey said, at that point, that he recognized the sincerity of the view that was held by Secretary Boyd. He understood the reasons why Secretary Boyd felt the way he did, but that he, Ramsey, still felt that this was a basic policy decision. Here were two railroads, and the decision would have an impact on other mergers in other transportation industries as well as the railroad industry; and that while he felt keenly that the law was correct in his interpreting of the law that this was anti-competitive without justification and ought to be precluded, that even if he was wrong he thought the decision ought to ultimately be made

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by the Supreme Court and not by the U. S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia; and that if the broad policy was going to be entered contrary to his position, it ought to be done by the Supreme Court.

The President talked to Ramsey two or three times, and he had me talk to Ramsey two or three times about it. The President said, "As a matter of policy, I've looked at this because it has been brought to me," and I think maybe one or more members of the Interstate Commerce Commission had also talked to the President about it on the merits. The President said, "I've taken a look at it. I agree with what the ICC held, and I agree with what the U. S. Court of Appeals held. Now Ramsey, you've had your day, and I don't think you ought to appeal this to the Supreme Court."

In any event, without being repetitive, and the meetings were repetitive and the conferences were repetitive and the positions taken were repetitive. This didn't just happen once, it happened three or four times, without repeating the same conversation that took place each time. The President said to Ramsey his position was not the same as Ramsey's. He agreed with Alan Boyd and the ICC. Ramsey with the same fervor expressed his opinion in the same characteristic independence that Ramsey had.

I think the significant thing about this story is the end result of it, to show the relationship between Ramsey and the President. At the last meeting they had about this, and it was just the day before the deadline for the filing of the appeal--the period of time between decision of the Court of Appeals and the time to file an appeal in the Supreme Court. It was the day before the deadline. It seems to me like the

deadline was on a Friday, and this was a Thursday, or whatever it was. The President and Ramsey once again had a meeting and once again went through the same colloquy about the positions of each. The President ended up by saying, "All right, Ramsey, I've told you what my view is. I recognize that you're the lawyer for this government and I'm not. I've told you what my position is. It's not really a very flexible position. I've looked at it. I've decided what I think the right thing to do is, and I've told you what that is. But I recognize you're the lawyer for this government. You go back and you decide what you're going to do. You don't have to come back and tell me what it is. But you know what my position is. You know I think that this case ought not to be appealed and that if I were doing it, I would not appeal this case. But you're the lawyer; you go back and decide; and whatever you decide is the decision. You do whatever you think the facts justify in merit. Whatever that is, I may disagree with it, but I won't disagree with your right to do whatever itis."

Ramsey left and said, "Well, I'll think it over in that light." And the next day, filed the appeal--to the great, great consternation and unhappiness of Alan Boyd, I might say. Just as an aside, after we left office the Supreme Court upheld the United States Court of Appeal decision, and upheld the ICC, Alan Boyd, and Lyndon Johnson position.

But again, the significance of it is that most people, as we talked about before, think well, Lyndon Johnson's the President. He's the boss. He can do whatever he wants to. I guess technically that may be true. But as a practical matter I never saw him order--I'll say Ramsey Clark, I would say any Cabinet member because I wasn't the liaison with all the

Cabinet members--but I never saw him order Ramsey to do anything. He strongly expressed his views, and the independent guy that Ramsey was and is came to the fore. Ramsey ultimately did, in every instance I saw, just what Ramsey thought the right result was.

F: So far as you could tell, did the President ever seem to regret not being a lawyer himself; or did he feel that he'd been mixed up with enough law--?

T: Not really. I think the President probably thought before and thinks now that He's as good a lawyer as any lawyer he ever knew.

F: You wouldn't altogether dispute it.

T No. He used to sort of poke fun at me and other lawyers about, oh, people being hyper-technical or thinking because they're lawyers they're so much smarter than anybody else. But it was a poking fun, but it also--when the President came down to wanting to put a case together, put an argument together, he always said it, "Well, now, do it as if you were a lawyer preparing a case, defending a fellow for his life." He always would come back to the characterization of a lawyer. Whether he was talking about a presentation on a bill to Congress, or whatever it was, in spoke in that type of language.

F: Was he ever, in a sense, casual about anything he advocated? You and I know that for most people there are things that are of extreme importance and then varying degrees of lesser importance to those that you give lip service to. If he embraced for something, were all things kind of equally necessary?

T: Maybe it was because of the office, but he operated with whatever he was doing as the most important thing, which I guess is the only way you

can operate that office. I never saw him casual about anything. I saw him not indecisive, but with his mind not made up about things, willing to hear arguments. But as I indicated to you before, the way Lyndon Johnson operates, unless you've watched the whole spectrum of the whole decision on a particular issue, you might not know that he had not yet made up his mind; because he'd be devil's advocate with you. If you came in and you'd voice an opinion or a view, he might immediately take the contrary view; and just in effect say, "You're just the most ignorant person in the world to take that view. It's without foundation. It's without basis. It's without logic," and really take you on. Yet if you'd stand fast with your view, if you felt you were right, and make those arguments that you thought supported your view--I have quite frequently made arguments that he just really pooh-poohed and said, "That's silly. You don't know what you're talking about. You're wrong. You don't understand the situation," and really demean in a not unpleasant sort of way and in not a really unfair sort of way, but sort of demean what I was saying of what my view was. Then the next day I would hear him stating the same arguments as his position, which is the real tell-tale sign.

F: Was much of his time spent in mediating in things like the ICC case where you've got an overlap between Departments?

T: Not really. That's more of an exception than the ordinary rule of the situation. I don't recall--

F: Were there any subjects that a Cabinet member could not come to him with, or in a sense was his eye on the smallest sparrow? I mean, did all things matt

T: All [illegible] mattered. Of course, some Cabinet members decided things

they didn't want to bring to him. First of all, Lyndon Johnson was amazingly accessible as I found out.

F: Those long hours he kept helped. If he couldn't see you eight to five, he could see you five to eight the next morning.

T: That's right. I do not know of a single instance in which a Cabinet member or a key member of Congress asked to see the President that he was not able to see him within--probably within twenty-four hours. Now if somebody said, "I've got something I want to visit with the President [about] some time. There's no hurry on it," it might be five or six days. But he could see an amazing number of people.

F: There were no restrictions either on when you could call in if you had something on your mind?

T: No, not at all.

F: I presume his nap, except in an extreme crisis, was inviolable and sometimes--?

T: Sure. What happened on that is when he was taking a nap, you had to ring him through the White House operator. I must say, with regard to that, if I were willing to assume the responsibility for awakening him, if I thought I had something of such importance that he ought to be awakened, I could awaken him. There wasn't any problem about that. Usually only somebody like Walt Rostow would do that. Walt's about the only one that usually had something like that of that kind of urgency, handling foreign affairs.

F: You probably saw him awakened a few times. Does he come out instantly alert, or does he--?

T: No, he comes out instantly alert. When he awakens, he's right on top

of things.

F: He never had to be told where he is and what day it is.

T: That's right.

F: You took at least two trips that I'm aware of with him--one around the world and one to Central America--El Salvador.

T: Right.

F: Let's talk a little bit about those.

T: The first one was the around-the-world trip which I must say--

F: Did you have an idea it would be an around-the-world trip?

T: No, not at all.

F: Did you go prepared yourself?

T: Not really. Let me put it in the context. I'd only been there a couple of months. I was still as green as anyone who'd only been there a couple of months, and was still feeling my way around and was still in the process of being educated by the President. He was allowing me and asking that I sit in on meetings to kind of get the feel of what was going on. I already even at that time was making the early morning bedroom detail with Marvin Watson. So I really didn't know much to be helpful to him. I had been to Texas with him when he had come down right after I got up there on Veterans' Day in November of 1967. He took a quick run. It seems to me that was the time we went out and spent the night on a carrier off the coast of San Diego and stopped in military installations on the way and coming back, and we got the Army, the Air Force, the Navy, the Marines, the Seabees, goodness knows what all. Then I had been on the very abbreviated trip to the settling of the Chamizal. But here, I hadn't been up there very long. But I hadn't been

on enough trips and I didn't know enough of the people, I didn't know enough of the operations really to make a contribution. I knew that and far more significantly, he knew that.

When Prime Minister Holt died, my recollection is that that was learned early on a Monday morning [or] late on a Sunday night. The President immediately and instinctively decided that he should go to the funeral. Holt had been a personal friend of his, and Australia had been and was a very good friend of the United States, particularly with its participation in Viet Nam. So I first heard about the possibility of going to Australia during the middle of the day, and the thought never crossed my mind that I would go. I knew I couldn't make a contribution about it. Late in the evening about five or five-thirty, he called me and said, "Larry, have you had your shots." I said, "Well, no, sir." He said, "Well, if you're leaving in the morning with me to go to Australia, you'd better go get your shots; and you'd better get your bag packed."

F: Did you have a passport?

T: No, I didn't have anything. I said, "Yes, sir." You know, [that's] all you can say. In a short span of about an hour-and-a-half-, I got all the immunizations that were required and got the passport. It's a whole lot easier when you're on the White House staff and the State Department is there--will bring their people to you. It seems to me like I got--

F: The President sort of likes to introduce subjects that way anyhow, doesn't he?

T: Exactly. I think we all got like nine shots, five in one arm and four in another, all at once.

F: You must have been sick for the trip.

T: No, as a matter of fact surprisingly the way they gave them, I don't know

whether they're more adroit at it or not, but I didn't have any after effect. But I went and he had two planes--two 707's--Air Force One, and then an identical copy to Air Force One with a little different configuration. I went most of the trip on the second airplane. When we got ready to go, he said, "Larry, I want you to go and I want you to watch and I want you to learn. If there's something that you can help on, Marvin will tell you, or I'll tell you, but I probably won't have much communication with you. I don't want you just to be in the bed all the time reading newspapers and magazines, or off in a bar somewhere. I want you to be around watching." So I understood that it was a learning process. I also understood that it was one of many characteristic acts of kindness and niceness toward me. He knew this would be a good trip that I would like and enjoy--

F: If you've got to learn, it's a good way to do it.

T: Sure. So I'll bet I didn't have five conversations with him from the time we left until we got back. But he knew I was there and he gave some instructions to Marvin a time or two for a couple of things for me to do. But by-and-large I was there almost like a tourist. I was watching. And when we got to Australia--

F: Were you with the newsmen?

T: No. That's a third plane.

F: That's their charter.

T: Right. When we got to Australia, I was three or four rooms down the hall from him. He was bringing in all these heads of state to see him and commenting the conversations. I was just around knowing what they were. Then when we went back I sort of watched the way that things were set

up on, really, the spur of the moment to go into Korat Air Force Base in Thailand and spend the night when we weren't expected; then go from there back around to Cam Ranh Bay and Viet Nam; and then sort of in mid-stream work out to go see the Pope in Italy.

I didn't go to the Vatican. It's kind of interesting. There were a lot of people that wanted to go to the Vatican with the President, and, obviously, the Catholics had more interest in it than the rest of us. The fact that he didn't invite me to go among the twleve or fourteen or whatever people it was that went in the helicopter and went to the Vatican didn't mean anything to me because the thought of my going never had crossed my mind. I was just glad to be on the trip anyway. But there were a lot of people that had their feelings hurt because it was really very important to them to be there and go to the Vatican. But that was a trip that I was just a go-along, almost sightseer--not really a sight-seer. I was a seer, watching what was going on, but I really made no contribution to it.

I did witness the President and the President's key staff evidencing, better probably than almost any other occasion, the resiliency of that whole operation, where with almost no notice the Secret Service--and when you go over to foreign countries, the CIA sort of works with the Secret Service--on the one hand; and George Christian and his advance press officers on the other hand; and Marvin Watson and just advance men on the third hand--could with little or no notice set up something in Paga-Pago America Samoa. There was a nice ceremony when we landed there for refueling in the middle of the night. Set up something in Australia! Set up something in Thailand!--in Viet Nam--in Italy--in Rome!!!

F: Was there a tendency on the part of the staff, particularly what was at that time the intimate staff, to prepare for any contingency, any change of schedule, so that if he'd gone anywhere within a reasonable distance there would have been somebody who would have just automatically had the thing ready to go if the signal had come?

T: Yes, I think so. That's particularly true of the military. You've got to remember that it's the military that flies the President. You sometimes forget it, but it's General Jim Cross who was the pilot--the military that would fly him. I think everybody generally had a notion that there was a possibility of going to Viet Nam. Here we were nearly at Christmas time, and to come to the conclusion that the President might like to go see what he referred to as "his boys, his troops," at Christmas time wouldn't be a very hard conclusion to come to. You wouldn't have to be very smart to figure out that's a distinct possibility. But the military did make that contingency preparation. When the President got to the point of asking Jim Cross, "Can we go to Viet Nam" Jim Cross was not only in a position to say "yes" but he was in the position to say, "I can get x-number of escorts; I've checked and the safest place is Cam Ranh Bay."

I remember just an interesting aside that Cam Ranh Bay is really half-sided by water and half-sided by land. It's a bay. The reason for going there, and that was the second time the President had been there, is that was much further north than Saigon. It was sufficiently far north that it was almost up to the demilitarized zone; but because of the water protection on the east side, it was thought to be the safest place in Viet Nam that the President could land.

I remember that when we landed there--. Gosh, it was an impressive thing, because General Westmoreland was still there and General Abrams and they met the President, and the President reviewed the troops. I remember not only the enthusiasm with which the troops greeted the President--I remember that very vividly--but I remember one other thing that kind of stuck in my mind.

The President presented medals, decorations of one form or another, to several people on that occasion. One was Ambassador Bunker, for example--and some of the other civilian representatives, and to General Abrams. But he also presented a decoration to General Westmoreland, and General Westmoreland's reception was far greater than anybody else's. When the President presented the medal to him, there really was just an extended ovation and cheering and whistling by all of the troops. I've seen something since that indicated perhaps Westmoreland wasn't really very popular with the troops, but I think that's a bunch of poppycock. With that one example, and I wasn't out there to see a lot of things happen but with that one example I never saw a military leader better received by his troops than Westmoreland was on that occasion. I think maybe his medal was presented last so you had a brilliant basis of comparison. But that was an aside.

What I started to say was about landing there. We looked back in the hills back off from where we were in the bay, the land part, [where there] were a series of hills. I remember asking one of the military people, I said, "How far are we away from any of the enemy."

They said, "Well, do you see those hills right there."

They seemed to be very close. I'm sure maybe ten or fifteen miles away

or eight or ten, but they looked like maybe they were just a half-mile or a mile away. I said, "Yes, I see those hills."

They said, "Well, they're just saturated with the enemy. They're just sitting there watching us right now."

That wasn't really happy news, I thought, at the time. I said, "Well, what is to prevent them from just shelling down here some way on us. I'm not sophisticated enough in weapons to know what they have."

The response was, "Oh, they've never done it because they know that this is a protected area, and this is just the safest place to be. There's not any real worry because we can react and get back to them so quickly that this is protected. They've never hit here, and they're never going to hit here." Which was enough to console me.

But I also remember that within sixty days from the time we got back, the enemy very greatly shelled Cam Ranh Bay to great devastation and great destruction. When I picked up the newspaper and saw that, I was reminded of just how safe that place was where we were.

But there isn't anything about that trip that I can--

F: Did you get the feeling from your observer's post that the troops did appreciate and were sort of glad that the President had come, or if they felt, "Here comes another piece of brass?"

T: No, they were delighted with his presence over there. He and Westmoreland both just got a tremendous reception, greatly extended.

F: By the time of the El Salvador trip, you're a seasoned veteran and it's a different proposition.

T: Let me mention maybe two trips in between. I can't remember where these went, [illegible] timing on these. I know one we were going to make. We were on the airplane to go, I think I indicated--or some of the press [illegible]

at the time of Martin Luther King's assassination.

The President went to Hawaii on two occasions. One was to meet President Park of South Korea, and the second one was to meet with President Thieu of South Viet Nam. I went there with him on both of those occasions and stayed out at the Kaiser estate, which is where he stayed over there--which is a very expensively built but I did not find a very attractive place. He was sort of isolated out of the way--

F: Where did it get the name Kaiser?

T: It was built by Henry Kaiser. It was made available. It really was the best place for the President's stay because it did provide protection and isolation. It wasn't downtown in the middle of a hotel. We helicoptered from there to the CINCPAC headquarters which is the Commander in Chief of the Pacific area.

He had his meetings with President Thieu there, and we went to CINCPAC for a briefing, but I believe if I recall right, he met President Park out there at the Kaiser estate. That is where they met, as a matter of fact.

I always thought it to be an interesting commentary on our foreign affairs--and maybe this is something that people generally knew and know and I didn't know--but you know when leaders of two countries meet, usually at the conclusion of their meeting they have a sort of a joint statement. I always found it interesting that going to both of those meetings the joint statement was in the process of being drafted. In the case of President Thieu, I believe it was by Bill Bundy. Secretary Rusk was with us, but Bill Bundy, the Assistant Secretary of State, was in the process of drafting the statement before we left Washington, while

we were on the airplane, and he had been in communication with his counterpart with President Thieu. And whoever did the President Park statement did the same thing.

F: So they agreed on what they were going to agree on?

T: Right. It was just a methodology with which I wasn't familiar. The representatives of the two leaders had been working prior to the meeting, and thought that these were the points that could be ironed out. I think the two leaders--I was not present at the Park meeting although I was present at part of the conversation through the interpreters with President Thieu, and they did discuss what was in the comminque, the joint statement agreement. But it was fairly well agreed upon through their representatives prior to the meeting. You know, it was almost as if you could run it off in Washington before youwent out there. I found that to be an interesting sidelight of the way foreign affairs are conducted.

F: Did the President meet these people--these opposite numbers--more or less on an equivalent basis, or as a big power versus little power sort of situation?

T: On a very equivalent basis--with obvious respect and affection, really, for them. He and President Park were particularly good friends because the President had been to South Korea a year or two before.

Just as an interesting sidelight, there's a story I heard the President tell a couple of dozen times about when he was going. My numbers may be wrong, but the story still has the same significance. When he went to South Korea to see President Park, he said that when they went in sort of a motorcade, I guess it was, through the streets, there were

just literally thousands upon thousands of people. He said that there were just waves of people everywhere he could see. He couldn't see land; he couldn't see trees; he couldn't see buildings for the people. The land, trees, and buildings were there, but the people were there in such massive numbers. Through the interpreter he asked President Park how many people there were there on the streets. President Park said something like three million--or whatever the population of (Seoul) South Korea is. The President's response was, "Three million!," like that's incredible that there are so many people. President Park took his comment of three million to be a statement of unhappiness with the number. He just completely misinterpreted it. President Park then came back and said, "Mr. President, I'm very sorry that I could not have more people, but this is all the people there are in my country!(capital)" The President always liked to tell that story. Because of that, he had great affection for President Park.

Again this comes back to the gift situation. He took a hand in the gifts. For example, I remember when we went to see President Park, he went to great trouble to take him a saddle. He somehow found out that President Park was interested in a western saddle and liked horses so he went to a great deal of trouble to get a saddle that he had down at the ranch that had been used maybe once, because he found out or the State Department told him that the saddle that had actually been used on the LBJ Ranch was better than sending off in a catalogue and getting one, so to speak. He just delighted in giving those presents to those leaders as he'd be delighted in giving presents to me or my children.

F: If you, in a sense, have made up your agenda in advance and you've

decided on your results in advance, what's the purpose of the trip? What did you feel came out of it?

T: I think it was a matter of just keeping a close relationship to these countries and having the leaders believe that the President was interested in them and interested in their problems--

F: There is more to it than window-dressing?

T: Yes. Were there not more to it than window-dressing, you wouldn't have to have any extended meetings. When you go back to two, three, four, and five meetings, then that indicates to you that they are getting into some things.

With regard to one of those communiques, and I can't remember which--maybe it was the President Thieu communique--I think maybe they met at the Kaiser house and again at the CINCPAC headquarters, there was some little disagreement about that. I think the Thieu representatives had worked out everything but one thing that they couldn't agree on, and the President and President Thieu got involved in it. Then they finally got some factor worked out--I don't even know what it was.

F: Does the President ever express himself on Vice President Ky?

T: I vaguely have a recollection of him saying something, but I don't remember what it was.

F: Let's get to El Salvador.

T: The El Salvador trip was a very interesting trip. That was one, you'll recall, where he went to El Salvador to meet with all of the leaders of the Central American countries. Now that one was designed very clearl and unquestionably to be one of trying to, not necessarily re-establish, but carry on the close relationship between the United States and these

Central American countries.

F: To a certain extent, that had been forecast at Punta del Este which precedes you.

T: Right. We went down there. I don't think there was any preconceived communique or really, from the State Department's standpoint, any joint statement that they wanted to release or problems they were trying to work out. It was just, again, instead of inviting these people to our country, to show them that our President was willing to come to their country--come to them. You know, they put a lot of store in the bigger man coming to them. I think that it was very successful from that standpoint.

And then there was a little wrinkle to it that was thought up by somebody. I don't even know, and that is that at the conclusion of the meeting the President ought to invite each of these leaders of the Central American countries to accompany him in Air Force One and let him take each one of them home in Air Force One. Well, when this was tried on for size through the State Department and with each of these Presidents of the Central American countries, they were genuinely elated as I recall the report back; because it gave each of them great, great stature and prestige in their own country if they accompanied the President of the United States on Air Force One.

Air Force One obviously, had become world-wide famous, really because of the assassination. I think that's when people first started hearing about Air Force One. To be able to ride on Air Force One with the President of the United States and return you to your own country accompanied by the President was a matter of great prestige. They all immediately said yes. It was to be worked out, and it was announced that that was what was going to take place.

T7

Shortly after the announcement--problems continued to crop up in Guatemala, and there were many problems of insurrection going on within the country, and attempted overthrows of the government, and a lot of problems of rebels that were out trying to marshal their forces together to overthrow the government. The CIA and the Secret Service, I remember, came in and said to the President that he ought not to go to Guatemala; that they couldn't guarantee his safety, and that that was their responsibility; and that he ought not to go to Guatemala. The President said very simply, "I'm going to Guatemala. I told the President of Guatemala I was going to take him home. I told him that we were going to go to Guatemala--"

F: Is this back in Washington or after he's down in El Salvador?

T: Down in El Salvador. "And we're just going to do it. I can't take these other fellows home and then just--" I remember hearing him say, "And then let him parachute out over his country." They suggest that he not go, and there was a lot of discussion about it, and the President was fairly adamant about it from the outset.

F: He never seriously entertained any idea of cancelling the whole--?

T: Not really, although that was suggested to him by the detective forces.

F: If you can't and Guatemala will feel it's an insult, then don't take anybody.

T: That's right. And I remember we decided that Guatemala, I believe, was the last stop. I'm fairly sure it was. I think originally it may have been going to be the third or fourth stop, and then the Secret Service just changed that around so it would at least be the last stop--at least get everybody gone, so you don't have to worry about them. If you're trying to rush some people back on a plane or something, you don't have

so many people to worry about.

The thing that George Christian and I now--and only now--kid around about about this, and that is that when the President of the United States is around, everybody likes to be around him. And a lot of that is because the photographers are there taking pictures and the newsreel people and the cameramen and the TV people are taking pictures--even among White House staff people, even among the Secret Service, even among the military, if it's a question of standing 'way back over to the side or being in kind of a group around the President maybe when the cameras are going. You can see it in the White House old hands whether they're civilian or military or Secret Service or what. When we went to these other Central American countries, we witnessed that kind of thing the way we always did. We'd land in each one of the countries--.

[redacted] The President had said that he always wanted to get something from every country he had been to since he was Senator, and that the thing that he thought reflected the country more than anything that you could go from one country to another and at least have some continuity and at least show a little something about the culture, was the native art. He always wanted to see about some art. He did this in Australia, by the way, too.

I don't know whether this initiated with the President or with Jim Jones or with whom, but the advance people that went to these countries along with the representatives of the President of the country, arranged for really kind of an art show at each airport. And we'd land at each

airport. We'd get off and there would be a stage. The President would go up and make a speech and introduce each of the Presidents. The local President then would get up in all his glory then, be there and welcome the President of the United States. There'd be bands. I think there were some young kids dancing at one place. It was a really very festive sort of a thing. Then we'd go inside at wherever the airport or the place we landed was, and there'd be sort of an art show, and the President would purchase a painting. I think maybe in two or three of the countries the Presidents of the countries presented the President of the United States with a painting--just gave him one, and then maybe he bought one or two others. He was not asking that they give him a painting. He was willing to purchase the painting from artists who were willing to sell it.

F: Did he himself negotiate?

T: No. The price was never discussed. He would see something, and he'd say he liked it. What happened is that there was a fellow with the State Department who would go in then and purchase it for the President, and then the President later would reimburse him.

F: The President would pay for these personally?

T: Yes. Because he planned to take them with him personally. He still has them. I guess ultimately they'll be in the Library with these tapes. I remember the rest of us purchased some, too. I still have some in my home, as a matter of fact, from that very trip.

But each of the stops was very festive, very enjoyable, delightful, fun things after pretty much of a fun trip to El Salvador. It had been kind of low key. I remember I had eaten each night with the President at the home. He was staying in the Ambassador's home--

F: I've been there. That's nice.

T: It's a very, very nice home. I'm not thinking in order, but an interesting sidelight is that the Ambassador to El Salvador who later was appointed--As a matter of fact, when the President was down there, the President had on his desk back in Washington papers to name the Ambassador to Bolivia.

F: That's Raul Castro.

T: Yes. All I could remember is a South American country. And, by the way, he was thought to be an extremely able Ambassador, and all of our contacts with him were good. The Ambassador, in addition to giving up his home to the President, which he very graciously and generously did and, as you know, it was a very handsome home, had--I think he was referred to as a houseboy--but had a Chinaman there named Wong or Chang or something. He was just super efficient. He couldn't speak anything but Spanish and Chinese, but he was super efficient. He was obviously very intelligent and could anticipate whatever the needs were and really just did a fine job and so impressed the President that I remember he told Ambassador Castro, he said, "You know, before I leave here, I may steal that fellow from you."

And Ambassador Castro laughed and said, "Oh, that's fine, Mr. President, whatever you want." And not just with the deference because he was President, but I think partly because he thought the President was kidding, and I thought the President was kidding, too.

And when we got ready to go, something was said--the President said, "Well, I might just steal that fellow from you."

Castro said, "Well, he doesn't have any family here. How he wound up here I don't know. He doesn't have any family. They're all in Red

China and he would like to get out, and he doesn't have any family. He has said several times he'd like to go to the United States."

So the President said, "Well, I may just steal him from you, then," and laughed about that.

And he sent somebody to this Chinaman and talked to him in Spanish and said, "How would you like to go to the United States and work for the President?"

He just said, "Yes, fine."

The man said, "Well, it may not be at the White House. He may want you to work for him personally at his ranch." Oh, he thought that was fine. I think he truly did not know what a ranch was to begin with. We later found out there are a lot of things we take for granted that he didn't even understand at all. No comprende! And the first thing you know, right with about five or six hours notice right before we were getting ready to leave, the fellow says, fine, he'd like to go; and the President says, "Let's go." So here Wong is on an airplane leaving with us, and he is now down at the LBJ Ranch. He did come back, and the President has just been awfully good to him.

F: That's one way to get your life changed, isn't it?

T: Yes. He got into this country. Somebody was telling me recently he has been able to re-establish some kind of communication with some of his relatives in China.

F: He must have been a little pop-eyed on the trip. It would have been nice if he had been sufficiently articulate to have been able to get his reaction.

T: That's right. Then just before I get back to Guatemala, one of the

interesting things is, when he got back the President said now, "I've got to communicate with this man. Bring him in so I can talk to him and see if he wants to work for me down at the ranch. We've never talked about salary." So he got an interpreter and he talked to him, and there wasn't any problem on salary. I think the fellow would have worked free, but the President worked out what I thought to be, at the time, a very generous salary with him.

I remember in the bedroom one morning when he was talking to him about these. He was talking to him through an interpreter, said, "Now, you tell Wong that something has got to give. All he speaks is Chinese and Spanish, and all I speak is English. Either he's going to have to learn English or I'm going to have to learn Chinese or Spanish, and I'm too old to learn. Now, you tell him he's going to have to learn some English so he can communicate with me." So the interpreter tells him that. And this big smile comes across the face and he says, "Si, si, si!" Shook his head up and down and smiled. The President really got on him time and time again because he wasn't learning his English, which he ultimately learned and is still with him. So that's one of the souvenirs the President brought back from that trip.

F: The President can speak a minimum of Spanish, can't he?

T: Oh, he can, sure. That was just to make effect.

I'll get back to the trip. With regard to Guatemala, when we got ready to go there, we got airborne and the Secret Service says, "All right, here we go. We're going to land, but here's the problem. The airport is down in sort of a valley, and it's encircled by hills. A mountain just encircles the airport."

F: An extinct volcano.

T: That's right. "We've had helicopters down there flying over the area. We are satisfied that there are a lot of these rebels who are out to embarrass and, if possible, probably even assassinate the President of Guatemala, if they can. And they're out in those hills. The President of Guatemala with all of his security force, combined with ours, we do not have enought people to just ferret out all of the people in the mountains and the hills. So we've got that kind of problem." So when we started to land, it was suggested by some of the Secret Service that those that didn't essentially have to get off of the plane stay on the plane and not get off.

Well, I remember Jim Jones and I very quickly decided that that wasn't going to fit our pistol very well. If somebody was out there about to lob in some kind of a bomb or mortar or something, that plane was a whole lot bigger target than somebody out on the runway. If you're going to try to run for cover somewhere you'd at least have a place to go if you're out there. If you sit in that airplane, that wasn't the way to do it. So we decided that it was essential that we get off. It probably was anyway, because we were doing some things for the President.

And the thing that I started to tell you that George Christian and I now kid a little about is that when we got off at that time at that airport, that for the first and only time that we can remember all these people weren't crowding around the President. If he was going to be the target and the President of Guatemala was going to be the target of somebody trying to get at them, these people who heretofore had wanted to be sure they got close enough to have their pictures in the news film or pictures in the still film decided that it wasn't quite that

up going to Chicago on his birthday for a party--kind of a big convention party--for them to pay the tribute to the President they wanted to pay. The people up there that had helped put it together had said that was what they wanted. Vice President Humphrey had indicated that's what he wanted. I thought that was what we would do.

F: There never was any question in your mind that Humphrey was the President's choice?

T: No, I think not. I think he clearly was the President's choice. I can't even think of anybody who was not in the running that the President might have preferred.

In any event, we got down to the ranch, and there are those--as you and I talked about earlier, I guess before we got on tape--there are those who suggested that Lyndon Johnson was pulling the strings and controlling convention. Marvin Watson being out there helped to give rise to that. Marvin, like me, was named as a delegate to the convention because of his friendship for John Connally. Governor Connally called me and said, "I'm going to put you on as a delegate if you want to be a delegate." And I said, "Sure." This was 'way back in May or June; and did the same thing with Marvin.

The President, obviously, was interested. There's not any question about that. In my judgment he was not manipulating or running the convention. People that were friends of his by and large were. It wasn't his enemies that were running it, but he wasn't running it. But he was interested.

F: Was he on the phone much?

T: No. The interesting thing is that he did not want to be subjected to the charge of running the convention, and he avoided talking to people

The people up there at the outset in Chicago--and when I'm talking about the people, I'm again talking about the key people that were his friends. I'm talking about the Connallys and the Watsons and the Jacobsons and the Dick Daleys and Buford Ellington, Governor of Tennessee, and others. They wanted the President to come up. Before the convention, this certainly was true. They wanted the President to come up because they knew that Democrats generally want to pay some kind of tribute to him.

Even at that time once Lyndon Johnson announced that he was not going to seek nomination, would not accept nomination, and would not be a candidate for re-election, a lot of his opposition just dwindled out. It's sort of like the people who aided Truman that thought he was a grand old man when he got out of office, and the President's popularity was going up, at that time, as it has gone up since. It was thought by the President's friends that even the people who had opposed him politically within the Democratic party wanted to pay tribute to him as being a man who had done a lot for the party; a man who had been the party's leader. They were urging him to come.

Then, of course, once the convention got started, and all that tragic situation that surrounded the convention--without trying to assess whose fault it was and exactly what happened, how it was precipitated. At least it was very obvious--obvious from television without having to get the personal accounts--that there was a lot of unpleasant activity going on and people getting hurt and riots or near-riots taking place in Chicago. And questions became raised by the Secret Service--they always raise the first question about the President's safety--about the President's

safety. Then later, I think everybody ultimately concluded that Lyndon Johnson could go to Chicago and return with safety. You know, it would be a hell of a thing to conclude that there were places in the United States that the President cannot go with safety.

F: Particularly to his own party.

T: That's right. Lyndon Johnson was not prepared to conclude that there was any place in the United States that he had to decline to go out of fear. He never came to that conclusion and wasn't prepared to ever come to that conclusion. But because of the unruliness of the crowd within and without the hall where the convention was being held, and because of all that unhappy, unpleasant activity--even in spite of the fact there were people still urging the President to come--I think he concluded that he ought not to go. I think this was because--

I do think Lyndon Johnson wanted to go to Chicago. I haven't talked to him about it since. I don't know what his recollection of it is. My recollection is that at the time he wanted to go. It was his birthday, and if they wanted to have a party for him, it was his party. It was the party that he had served and that had served him, and this was the last convention that he probably would go to. And I think he wanted to go.

But there were people up there that told him that, in their judgment, if he went to Chicago, it would be the source of some embarrassment to him because a lot of these people without thinking might boo him. His appearance might be the catalyst for some of these anti-war people to have an excuse to riot further and cause further unpleasant demonstrations. I think he concluded that his presence at the convention would not add anything to the convention or the the unity of the party or

to the unity of the country; that on the other hand, his presence at the convention might cause some disruption that would not otherwise occur if he were not there. I think, with a lot of reluctance and with an awful lot of regret, he decided that it was just better for him not to go to the convention. I don't think that he declined to go and decided not to go because he thought that some booing would embarrass him--although there were those in Chicago that didn't want him to go for that very reason. But I think he just decided that no good purpose could be served by his presence, but some bad result might occur from it.

I do think it was a disappointment, because I do think he wanted to to go. He wanted to be there. And the reason I say that is because--I'm not a long-time watcher of the Lyndon Johnson phenomena--but I know that when he gets unhappy he tends to have a shorter temper with people; and I know that he was having shorter temper when he was grappling with the problem and kind of short temper on other matters once he decided that he couldn't and wouldn't go.

F: Did he as far as you know ever make any offer to help Humphrey during the campaign?

T: Yes, I think so.

F: Do you believe the charge that he secretly hoped Nixon would win so that it would give you a chance to assay the Democrats?

T: No, I don't believe that at all, and the reason I don't believe it is because he knew that there were some programs that he had started that had not reached their culmination. He also knew that Humphrey had been a part of those programs, and those programs would be carried through under Humphrey whereas under Nixon they'd probably be scuttled for some new and different programs, or if they were the same programs--. You

know, the name of the political game is a little bit different than anything else. History clearly shows that leaders sometimes scuttle the programs of their predecessor, and then resurrect the same program by a new name so they can get credit for it. I'm not suggesting that Nixon has done that, but that's a potential danger.

F: Or you can finish the program, but drop the enthusiasm out of it until--you're still following the program but--

T: Right. I don't have any doubt in my mind whatsoever but that Humphrey was clearly and unquestionably his only choice for the Presidency. Now he also, though, felt a responsibility. I think there were some Humphrey people who are unhappy with him and thought he could do more than he did, and maybe by hindsight that's right. I don't happen to think so, but maybe it's right. But the President also remembered that in addition to being maybe still the leader of his party--even though Humphrey was the nominee--or maybe a co-leader or whatever name it goes by, that in addition to that, he also was the President of the United States and that it was the judgment of the people that was going to prevail and not the judgment of Lyndon Johnson that was going to prevail as to who his successor would be.

In the area of foreign affairs he was particularly sensitive not to do anything that would cause any advantage or disadvantage from one candidate or another. And also not to do anything which would be construed as political. He was always saying, "Well, we can't do that. I think it's the right thing to do, but we may have to wait a little bit, or resume it because somebody will say it's political and that'll ruin it that'll kill it." He had that kind of a problem. But I think he was

for Humphrey, strongly! Everybody I know that he talked to about the race, when he talked to them in my presence, he told them to get back and get out and help Humphrey.

F: I haven't talked to either of the principals in this, but, as you know, Connally and Ralph Yarborough, at least, had some show of unity during the latter stages of the campaign. Was the President instrumental in this, or was this just the fact that these two old-line Democrats that have come together because it's time to come together?

T: I would say, the President was instrumental in that, indirectly, if not directly. Let me hark back to what I think I may have told you in our initial interview. The relationship between Lyndon Johnson and John Connally is such, and for probably thirty years has been such, that they do a lot of private communication with each other that nobody else is privy to. You never really know when they've talked to each other and when they have, what they've said, because they're both pretty close-mouthed about it. They don't say, "Well, let me tell you what I told John," or, "Let me tell you what I told the President," sort of thing. I've been on both ends, so I've got some idea about that. I know the President told Governor Connally that he desperately hoped that--maybe desperately is not the fair word--ardently hoped that the Governor would help Humphrey and do what he could to help him get elected.

F: Do you think Connally had been secretly helping Nixon?

T: No. I don't think he ever did.

F: That charge has been made.

T: That charge has been made, and I don't think there's any truth to it; particularly the recent charges that you and I have seen.

F: I haven't seen him since then, so I haven't asked him about that.

T: The charge was that he was secretly helping Nixon--particularly with money from oil men--and that he was doing it in return for assurance that he would be Secretary of Defense, or some Cabinet post; and that only in the last three or four days when he saw that Texas was going Democratic and he decided that he didn't want it to go Democratic without him, that he showed up in the Astrodome with the President and Yarborough.

The truth of the matter is he didn't show up at the Astrodome. He joined Yarborough in early October in Fort Worth and Dallas and Waco--more accurately joined Humphrey--he and Yarborough both joined Humphrey in a show of unity. And I know it was a difficult thing for Governor Connally to do. He did dislike, and does dislike, Ralph Yarborough. He has made no bones about it.

F: It's mutual.

T: And I know that that view is reciprocally held by Yarborough. But I think that that demonstrates more than anything that Governor Connally wanted Humphrey to get elected, and was helping Humphrey. If he had been secretly for Nixon. Well, first of all, I don't find John Connally being secretly for anything. He's a man who's willing to get out there if he's for something and get his name attached to it. But if he had been secretly for Nixon, all he had to do was just decline to show up with Yarborough and decline to give this appearance of harmony within the party. That would have been the end of it. I think maybe this state-- If John Connally had wanted it to, I believe he had enough followers to directly or indirectly get this state to go for Nixon. All you've got to do is see the hair-thin margin of the election to conclude that.

F: Was it embarrassing to the President in a sense, or annoying, the fact

communication operator on Air Force One--the only time I every saw him--sitting there with the communication coming in on what in a sense is a teletype-type thing--

F: Coming in in English or coded?

T: I believe it was coming in in English. He pulled the curtain around him where he sits there on the plane, it's sort of like you're in a voting booth type thing, and there's a curtain that goes around. All the time I was there and the literally dozens and dozens of times I was on Air Force One, I never saw him pull that curtain around him--and he did. When we landed, the President had had some conversation on the ground with--.

This is an interesting sidelight by the way. The President with his telephone on there could talk to Washington in the air, but he had the view--and I think the communications people indicated to me time and again that he just was wrong--but he had the view that it was more secretive if he waited until he got on the ground and got hooked into ground communications; that it was more of a confidential thing.

F: If it was from the plane, it just kind of scattered.

T: The President never wanted to talk to anybody in the air. Now, I would talk; I would talk back to my office, or a lot of times to the Attorney General, a lot of things while we were in the air. But the President never would. He'd wait until we'd get down.

When we got on the ground, he talked to Walt, I guess it was. He indicated something about a breakthrough of the Russians where they had kind of agreed to have a meeting with him, probably in Russia. I remember that the President got out of the airplane and went to the car and waited in the car. And he got very, very impatient and very irritated

because he was wanting this message to come through--wanted to read it. This was when the communications fellow had the curtain draped around him. The President kept saying, "Go back in there and tell him to hurry up." Well, there wasn't any way to hurry it. The machines clicks it out at a certain pace. It goes no faster or no slower than that machine goes. All he's doing is--

F: Not even Lyndon Johnson can accelerate it.

T: That's right. All he's doing is just getting it. I remember the President was awfully impatient about it. I remember I got it and took it to him in an envelope. I didn't know what it was. George Christian then told me, he said, "You know, that is a very significant message--a breakthrough diplomatically, and we may be going to Russia," I think was the comment he told me later on.

Then I remember the President commented on it a time or two very privately. I'd hear him talk to Secretary Rusk or Mrs. Johnson in the bedroom. I never mentioned a word of it except I thought that we were going to a meeting in Russia some time in the fall;and that that was what--I never did see this message, he didn't hand it to me or say, "Read it, and tell me what you think of it." But I remember that--I believe we were going to announce one morning, mid-morning or mid-day, that the President was going to Russia; and the night before that announcement was to be made was when the Russians invaded Czechoslovakia. And you know, the ball game was over, so to speak. I was at the White House and working that evening when he assembled all the Security Council and talked about it, but I didn't sit in on it.

F: Were you involved at all in the transition effort?

T: Not as directly as, say, Charlie Murphy was. I was involved in them--

F: From your standpoint, how did it go?

T: I thought very well.

F: Just in your own personal experience.

T: I thought it went very well. I was kind of surprised. First of all, President Johnson admonished each of us individually and collectively, to leave nothing undone in being helpful to the Nixon people. He said, "you just do what you would want somebody to do for you if you were coming in." And I must say I remembered when I was coming in with John Connally in January of '63, and I had some feeling for how difficult it is with some folks who don't know what was going on.

I remember that I thought at the time that the counterpart to at least some of what I was doing would be John Erlichman. That was the indication I had as a matter of fact. I was impressed not only by Erlichman but by really everybody else that I met. Erlichman and Haldeman and--. I can't remember now who all the others were, but those two stick in my mind, and the others are characteristic. That while I thought each of them to be very, very efficient and very knowledgeable about what was going on, I also found them to be pretty cold fishes. We tried to be nice to them. We had sort of a joint cocktail party, I remember at one time, down in the White House Mess where we kind of mixed and mingled and we all had a little drink. It was late in the afternoon. They were even very cold then--very formal, and very businesslike.

I never could decide whether it was because they thought that we were a bunch of buffoons who didn't know what we were doing and they were

going to come in and correct all the ills of the country, or whether it was maybe some deep-seated lack of trust or confidence in us, or what it was. But I remember very clearly in my mind what I thought to be a very formalistic, cold attitude from them. An example of it: I had a conversation with John Erlichman one time, and I said, "John, I understand very well that each Administration will conduct some of its activities in its own way and differently. One of the things that I have been responsible for is the handling and the conduit for appointments to the federal judiciary. I have had Warren Christopher, the Deputy Attorney General, put together a memorandum spelling out in detail how they handle these nominations from their standpoint, and I can put together a memorandum saying how we handle the nominations. Now I'm not suggesting to you that you want to handle it the same way at all, but at least this will give you an idea of how we did it. If you think there are any defects to it, you'll know what they are, and you can change it. I'll be glad to do that if you'd like that, you think it would be helpful."

I remember he very coolly said to me, "Yes, that'll be all right, if that's what you want to do," and didn't really seem to want it at all. It was all I could do--it was only because of my very recent admonishment from the President to be nice that I didn't say anything more.

But I just said, "Now, I don't have this yet, and I'll have to put it together. If you're just going to discard it and don't have any use for it, I don't particularly want to go to the trouble of putting it together. I don't need it for my files."

And he said, "Yes, why don't you put it together!" Which, with

some reluctance after that kind of reception, I did. He had gone back to New York where they were staying, and I sent it to him--sent mine and Warren Chirstopher's memorandum to him, saying again, "Here are the memoranda as to how we handle it. If you have any questions or there's anything further that I can get for you, I'll be happy to do it: I never even got a response to the letter.

So I remember the transition. I think it went very smoothly, as a matter of fact. I think things went very well.

F: There was no diminution of pace in those closing days?

T: No. It was a difference--

F: You didn't phase out. You just went up and quit?

T: That's right. There was a difference. I think that, because of what I was telling you about in the Wirtz episode of the President saying, "We're not going to start anything new that can be held off," we weren't in the initiation stages of anything. But we were in the culmination stages of an awful lot of things. But the pace didn't slacken at all. I didn't see any slackening of pace until high noon January 20.

F: Were you involved in that last-minute Udall episode?

T: Yes and no. DeVier Pierson probably could give you the full reading on that. I was there.

F: Udall has given it to me.

T: I was there, and I remember the President looked upon the renaming of the memoral stadium--D.C. Stadium in Washington--as the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium by Udall as being intentionally trying to take a poke at him by Udall, because although unquestionably Udall had the authority to do that, that is not the type of thing that a Cabinet Officer would have done without at least telling the President.

INTERVIEWEE: LARRY TEMPLE (TAPE # 8)

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

August 13, 1970, Austin, Texas

T: What I was saying is that this renaming of the stadium after a very well-known and controversial political figure like that, is not the type of thing that a Cabinet Officer ordinarily would do without advising the President about it ahead of time--not clearing it with him, but advising him of it. The President didn't learn about it until after it was announced, and a fait accompli. That just, I think, was done by Udall with full knowledge of what he was doing. He knew that this was the type of thing he probably should advise the President of, but he intentionally didn't.

I was there on--I just remember it was a Saturday when all of the big flap between the President and Udall transpired. It seemed to me like it was a--

F: You had the other problem, of course, that Udall set aside this great gob of land and the President wouldn't go with it, and Udall had to back down.

T: Right. I was there when the flap came up over that. I remember that he was scheduled to see Udall and DeVier on that Saturday to talk about that. It seems to me like the appointment was two or three in the afternoon. Jim Jones was out of town for some reason. He had [recently] been married and I've forgotten where he was, but he was gone. I had handled the appointments desk all day. I remember the President saw DeVier earlier

in the day, and, by hindsight, I know that he went over this matter with him.

Then DeVier got Udall over there and was talking to him and called and said, "Secretary Udall is in my office. See if the President would like to see us." I went in and told the President. The President was very irritated and said, "Now, I told DeVier that I wanted him to work out with Udall. I don't want to talk to him while they're seeing if they can work it out. If I'd wanted to do that, I'd have gotten him over here and I'd have worked it out with him. You tell him to finish working it out, and when he gets it worked out, come back to me. I don't want to talke to them while they're working it out." He said it in a little bit stronger tone than that, as I have a very vivid recollection. I told DeVier Pierson that, and DeVier and Udall spent the rest of the afternoon--it was a Saturday and Sunday. As a matter of fact, I'm inclined to think this might have been the Saturday and Sunday before the 20th--the following week--.

F: It was. It was that last weekend, the very tag end.

T: Before the following Monday noon.

F: Monday noon was when it was all over.

T: That's when it was then. I never did get into the details of the controversy, and that really was a Lyndon Johnson-Stu Udall-DeVier Pierson activity.

F: What was your last morning at the White House like--on that Monday morning? It all ended on January 20, Monday, at noon.

T: Very hectic. The President had invited me and my family to ride back to Texas on Air Force One with him. We had made arrangements for a

young man who was coming down in this direction to drive our car so we didn't have the problem of the car. My wife--as she said she has done ever since we've been married--moved us. When we've moved, she says I'm never around, and that certainly was true then. This very weekend we're talking about the movers came out and packed us up and moved everything out of our house and headed toward Texas with it. We had turned the keys over to a real estate agent who was selling it for us. My wife's brother and his family lived in Annapolis, still do, where he teaches in the Naval Academy; so my wife and children went over there and stayed with them and I stayed in a hotel in Washington.

Before I get to the last day, let me tell you about the last night which you probably have heard from others. Lyndon Johnson and Mrs. Johnson I believe did the nicest thing for their staff--staffs, both of them, the President's staff and Mrs. Johnson's staff--that could possibly have been done. I would think that the last night that they were going to spend in the White House would be of such significance to them that they might want to have the Cabinet in--key leaders of Congress, or just have their family if they wanted to go in another direction. But what they decided to do was have a relatively small, very, very nice buffet-cocktail party for the staff in the White House in the Mansion on the second floor.

F: Just staff and mates?

T: And mates--and spouses. It was as nice and as fun--under fairly sad circumstances in a way--as anything that transpired during the time I was up there. The President was not diminished one bit by the fact that it was his last night. I think he's the greatest story teller

I ever heard, bar none, and he was in good form that night. It was kind of like a yo-yo, kind of back and forth. He was in great form, and then he'd be quiet awhile- and he'd look very sad and very unhappy; and then he'd get back into it with his loud, booming voice, telling some story with all the motions that he puts into a story.

F: He wasn't attempting though to induce any kind of real sentimentality?

T: Not at all.

F: And make the tears flow.

T: Not at all. There was some dancing. They had a little orchestra up there, and there was some dancing. I think maybe a little Marine, four or five-piece orchestra. I remember the only sad thing was they struck up "Hello Dolly," and everybody on the staff sang the "Hello Lyndon" song that brought lots of tears to lots of eyes, not the least of whom was the President.

He made a little speech for the end of it that was a sort of thank-you speech, but much more eloquent than just saying thank you. I don't even remember the words of it. I remember it was very moving at the time. It was just a lovely, lovely evening. I remember so well how thoughtful a gesture I thought it was at the time, and my thoughts about it haven't changed any since then. But that was the last night.

The last day, I believe that--first of all, from my standpoint, I spent the night in a hotel with my wife. My children were over in Annapolis. She got up early the next morning to go get them in a car that I think we rented or borrowed or something.

F: You hadn't lost your White House car, had you?

T: No, but I didn't use the White House car to transport my wife around, although some did. I had a little reticence about that. But she left,

and I got to the White House, and it was a busy, busy morning. First of all--

F: Did it start out as routine? I mean, did you go to the bedroom or--?

T: First of all, I didn't go to the bedroom. I was tying up some loose ends on something. Since then, Harry Middleton, who is helping the President write his book, called me not long ago, and he said: "I see by the diary here that the President called you at nine-fifty, and--it seems to me like he left the White House at eleven, and he called me like ten-twenty--and he said, I'm writing this. What was he calling you about?"

And I said, "The truth of the matter is I don't remember. All I remember, it was some little project that he chastised me because we hadn't tied up the ends on, and I told him I was finishing it up that day. He was chastising me pretty severely about waiting until the last minute." It seems to me like it was something we started Saturday, so it wasn't waiting too much to the last minute about finishing it up. But I remember it was a very, very hectic pace, because there were some things that had to be done that he wanted done. It was a matter of just finishing them up.

Then, of course, he left at, it seems to me like, maybe ten-thirty or eleven, to go to the swearing-in ceremony. I didn't go to that. And I think as your records reflect, he went from there to Clark Clifford's house for a little farewell luncheon.

F: Now all your files had preceded you. They had gone so you were just working with what was on top of your desk, in effect.

T: Yes. My secretaries were still there. Both of them were there, and we

were finishing up. I think there may have been still some papers that they were going to take when I left.

F: Had your successors begun to move in yet?

T: No, but they were going to move in that afternoon.

F: It wasn't going to be long.

T: I remember--

F: Is there a general kind of a clean-sweep down, fore-and-aft thing, at that time to get the thing--

T: Pretty much. You know, you clear out all the papers--all the books out of the shelves, all the papers, everything! I remember my good friend Joe Califano--. As you know, there's a Presidential phone system that everybody among at least the seven or eight key staff people--I guess there weren't more than about seven or eight that had on their telephone a little red line that had "POTUS" on it. POTUS--President of the United States is what the POTUS stood for. The President had a button on his telephone with my name on it. If he pressed that button and picked up his receiver, it rang in my office--and it didn't just ring, it didn't just buzz, but as I'm sure you know from being there, it sounded like a fire alarm going on. There was never any question when the President was calling you. Nobody had else had that, and it clearly was the President. He had those buttons in his office--all the phones in his office--in his bedroom, and in the second floor sitting room. So he called all the time, and everybody, when that phone rang, whatever they were doing--if they were talking to somebody they either cut them off or put them on hold, not because you felt an urgency to cut off a second or two in getting over there, but you really wanted to cut off that

loud ding of the ring. And everybody always answered it, "Yes, sir," or, "Yes, sir, Mr. President." Occasionally it wouldn't be the President. For example, I'd be in his office and he'd say, "Call George and ask him something," and I might ring George and talk to him.

F: You noticed the difference in tone when it was you and George answered--when he heard it was you?

T: He'd say, "yes, sir," and then I'd say, "George, this is Larry. The President wants to know so-and-so." There is a big difference, yes.

But I remember that I thought that the last gesture that I ought to do was--Joe Califano was down in his office and just as soon as the President left and went on and got in the car--we were watching it on television, we didn't have to be over in the front of the Mansion, we were watching it on television. I went to the President's office and punched Joe Califano's button; and picked it up, and it rang in his office while he was trying to pack and everything. I remember he grabbed the phone and said, "Yes, sir, Mr. President." All he had to do was to have watched television to know it couldn't be the President because the President had just gotten in the car with Nixon--

F: He had been suckered.

T: Anyway, he said, "Yes, sir, Mr. President," and I just said, "Go to hell, Joe Califano," and hung up. The girls in his office tell me that there was just this kind of look of shock or surprise on his face, and it took him a few minutes to comprehend exactly what was happening. That was my last use of that phone system.

We did pack up then, and I met the President at the airport. And that was another--

F: You were on your own from the time you left--from the time, in effect, he left and the time you left the White House until you showed up at Andrews?

T: At Andrews, right. And it wasn't very long to be on my own. I just went on out there and met my wife and children who were there.

F: On a cold, raw day.

T: On a very cold, raw day. But it was a very moving ceremony at the airport, with an awful lot of people out there--a tremendous number of people, and a great outpouring of all of his friends, his Cabinet, key Congressional leaders--the whole thing.

Just as an interesting sidelight, here a Republican President had just been sworn in. The Republican Administration had begun. The parade was still going on, as a matter of fact. And one of the people at the airport was George Bush! I saw him and told him then and told him later, I said, "George, I don't know what you're out here for, but I want you to know among the people that are appreciative of it is me. I think it's a very kind gesture."

And he said, "Well, he's my President, and he is leaving town; and I didn't want him to leave this town without my being out here and paying my respects to him. I have great respect for his successor, but his successor is going to be here. And I'm going to have the opportunity for a long time to come to see him. But he was, up until an hour ago, my President and he's leaving this town. The very least I can do is to be here and pay my respects."

F: I saw him, I said the same thing to him, and got almost the same reply with the only variation at all was that he said, "He has been my

President, and he's also my leader from my home state, and I didn't think I belonged anywhere else." And I thought it was quite a gesture.

T: Oh, I did, too. Of course, that was kind of a sad time at the airport. There were a lot of tears on a lot of people's faces out there on that occasion. You were on the plane back, weren't you, Joe?

F: Yes. I was going to ask you though, to get it on tape, what was the mood like on the plane coming back?

T: More routine than sad or relieved or anything. It was very quiet. I remember, because my family was there I didn't go into the President's compartment as much as I--I usually was in the President's compartment when I was on the plane with him, but I wasn't there as much. I remember the President was in his bedroom resting most of the time. I remember he came out into the other compartment, and I remember that he was sitting up in his--He usually ate on the airplane, but he obviously had just gotten through eating over at Clark Clifford's house. I wouldn't really characterize it as happy or unhappy or relieved. It was just kind of quiet. There was a little activity going on.

F: Did he ever comment to you on the reception he got at Bergstrom?

T: Yes. I think he was surprised. I don't think he ever anticipated that reception.

F: I got the feeling--in fact, pretty straight, that he discouraged any attempt to get a crowd out down here.

T: He did.

F: But other people worked behind the scenes.

T: As a matter of fact, I was one of the people that helped because--I wasn't trying to generate a crowd, but I was helping to tell the people

about what time we'd be there . They said--these are local people that want to be there--if he's coming back to our state, we want to greet him. When is it going to be?" And I didn't say, "Oh, now, the President doesn't want you to have this." As a matter of fact, I did say, "The President has indicated he doesn't want this, but I think it's a good idea." Then I helped them with the timing on it, and it was a genuine thing here. Nobody had drummed it up.

F: One of the worst traffic jams in history. I don't know whether you stuck around for it or not.

T: I stuck around a whole lot longer than I wanted to because we got out there and couldn't get away from Bergstrom. I remember one street got closed up because of a wreck or something. But the President had generated crowds--. Let me tell you that everybody that knows a political operative knows that sometimes there are crowds that are generated--that's the reason you send out advance men sometimes--but this was just a--

F: That's the reason you have helicopters in a Senatorial campaign.

T: That's right. But this one was a very genuine crowd that came out all of their own volition. And I guess that's about the end of what I know.

F: That's good. And I thank you, Larry.

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By Larry Temple

to the

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