

INTERVIEW I

DATE: December 17, 1968  
INTERVIEWEE: RUFUS W. YOUNGBLOOD  
INTERVIEWER: DAVID G. McCOMB  
PLACE: Mr. Youngblood's office, Washington, D.C.

Tape 1 of 2

M: To identify the tape, this is an interview with Mr. Rufus W. Youngblood, who is the deputy director of the United States Secret Service. The interview is in his office in Washington, D.C. The date is December 17, 1968. The time is 10:45 a.m. My name is David McComb.

First of all, may I ask you something about your background? I'd like to know where you were born and when.

Y: I was born in Macon, Georgia, January 13, 1924.

M: And where did you get your education?

Y: A few years later, we moved to Atlanta and I went to elementary and high school in Atlanta, then interrupted by military service during the war; I later came back after the war and continued my education at Georgia Tech. I graduated from Georgia Tech as a bachelor of industrial engineering in September of 1949.

M: What did you do during World War II?

Y: I was in the Army Air Corps. I started as an enlisted man and was an aviation mechanic, and later became an enlisted  
serving a tour of combat and returning to the States, I became a navigator and was commissioned and then took some further transition training

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in B-29s as an engineer-navigator. The hostilities ceased in Japan, and I did not go back overseas again.

M: And then after the war you went back to school and got your bachelor's degree in industrial engineering. Then what did you do?

Y: I worked for a commercial refrigeration and air conditioning firm in Waycross, Georgia, but later changed jobs and worked for a consulting mechanical engineer in Atlanta until the recession, which occurred around 1951, and did some damage to the building industry. I changed jobs in March of 1951 and came into the Secret Service.

W: Well, that seems to be a rather uncommon switch--from industrial engineering to Secret Service work. What made you decide to go into the Secret Service?

Y: I had always been interested in law enforcement work, and I was interested in counterfeiting and forgery investigations, and many of the applications relative to counterfeiting are somewhat technical and with my background at Georgia Tech, I sought to enter this field and so did.

M: Had you had any experience in that field before this?

Y: No, I had not had any previous experience in law enforcement.

M: So, then you joined the Secret Service. Did you go directly into the Service or did you have a training period with the Service, or how was it set up then?

Y: You actually joined the Secret Service and then you would go to some formal schools within the Service; you also had some on-the-job training.

M: Did you have a period when you wore a uniform--were you in the uniformed service?

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Y: Not within the Secret Service. We do have uniformed branches which are the White House police and the Treasury guard force.

M: In your training you didn't have to go through that?

Y: No.

M: Can you tell me what your first duty was after the training period?

Y: I was a special agent in the Atlanta, Georgia field office, where we had counterfeiting and forgery violations to investigate.

M: How long did you stay there?

Y: Approximately a year and a half. I entered in March of 1951 and I came to Washington on a permanent assignment in August of 1952.

M: And what was your assignment here?

Y: When I first came to Washington, I was assigned to the Washington field office, which was basically the same type of work that I had done in Atlanta except, by virtue of being here in Washington, the Washington field office participates often in presidential or vice presidential protective movements.

M: Did you get into that kind of work, then, when you came--in actual protection on presidential movements, when you came to Washington?

Y: Yes.

M: Did you immediately get into that kind of work?

Y: Yes, but if you're a member of a field office, you don't participate necessarily on a daily basis on protective work. You have the other investigations--

M: Only when he moves then?

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- Y: When he makes public appearances, or when you're needed to complement the White House detail.
- M: Maybe I should ask some general questions at this point about the work of the Secret Service. You're involved in counterfeiting and forgery. Was narcotics still a part of the Secret Service in the 1950s?
- Y: Narcotics is not, and to my knowledge never has been, a part of the Secret Service. Narcotics is, or was at that time, a bureau of the Treasury Department. It was one of the sister agencies of the Secret Service--one of the Treasury law enforcement agencies.
- M: To clear up a public point in definition--when somebody refers to a "T-man," what are they referring to?
- Y: Actually, they're referring to a Treasury agent, and this could be a Customs agent, a Narcotics agent, a Secret Service agent, or an Alcohol and Tobacco Tax agent.
- M: Am I correct that the main duty of the Secret Service is the protection of the president, the presidential family, and the vice president, plus the counterfeiting and forgery? Is that correct?
- Y: That is generally correct. The primary mission of the Secret Service is the protective mission. You mentioned the president and members of his family, and the vice president, and in recent years there have been added protective duties. For instance, during this last year, we protected the major presidential and vice presidential candidates and nominees. We also have the president-elect and the vice president-elect and former presidents and their wives.

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M: At the present time, is counterfeiting and forgery still under the jurisdiction of the Secret Service?

Y: Oh, yes. The Secret Service actually, in addition to protecting these principals that were mentioned, protect the obligations and securities of the Treasury Department, which would include our money, and therefore we get into the counterfeiting statutes; checks, government checks; government bonds of all types; gold and silver violations. In addition to that, we have such things as applicant cases and other special investigations.

M: When you came to Washington, then, you were working in the field office; you were working mainly in the counterfeiting and forgery aspect, except when the President moved--is that right?

Y: That's correct.

M: And how long did you stay on that particular tour of duty?

Y: I was assigned to the Washington field office in August of 1952. In February of 1953, I was assigned to the White House detail, so it was a rather short stay in the field office.

M: Is there any particular reason why you were moved to the White House detail? Is this considered a promotion, for example?

Y: It is not necessarily considered as a promotion, but within our Service and the career progression of any agent, normally if they are suitable, they will do a tour of duty on the White House detail, or some other protective detail.

M: What are the qualifications for a man to be selected to the White House detail?

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Y: Well, first of all, they are selected from the special agent category of the Secret Service, so they have the basic requirements of being a Secret Service agent. In addition to this, the individual must have approximately two or more years in Secret Service; he must be qualified in the use of a weapon in the area of being a sharpshooter or above.

M: Now, does this mean any weapon or a specific kind?

Y: A specific weapon. The handgun. He later gets additional training and qualification in other weapons, but to be placed on the White House detail or a protective division, a person needs to be able to qualify as a sharpshooter or above. He should be able to swim; he should be able to drive; and he should be able to pass a physical aptitude test.

M: A physical aptitude test?

Y: A physical aptitude test.

M: What does that mean? Does that mean reaction time--

Y: Well, yes, that and reflexes coupled along with an annual physical examination. You see, these people are working on and off of moving follow-up cars and things of that nature. So we have designed an aptitude test--physical aptitude and agility.

M: Can you give me an example of the kind of test it would be to test physical agility?

Y: It's not an overly complicated thing, but it's just made up of a group of things like ability to jump so high and do such things that require coordination like hop, skip, and jump; be able to chin yourself so many times; be able to climb a rope. Some of these things that seem very simple, there are some people who can't do them. We're not necessarily

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looking for supermen, but a person must have good all-around aptitude and agility in order to qualify.

M: Is there a running test of any kind? Have to run one hundred yards in so much time?

Y: Yes.

M: What's your time on that?

Y: I don't recall. And I don't recall actually if it's a hundred yards, but we do have a distance and a time element. You have to add all these things together and come up with a reasonable summary score.

M: How do you test quickness of reflexes?

Y: We don't actually go into things like the time measurement of the reflexes similar to a psychomative test. Our test is not designed for that type of thing. But the responding of the reflexes--it will come out if someone doesn't the ability to hop, skip, and jump, and do things of that nature. As I said, this physical that we take for entrance in the protective division is also coupled with the annual physical exam which is given by either army or navy physicians.

M: To all the Secret Service?

Y: To all the Secret Service special agents.

M: Is there an intelligence test, too, given with this?

Y: Well, as I said, the personnel who are selected for the White House come from the special agent category. In order to become a special agent, they take the Treasury enforcement agent's examination, so that would have already been taken into consideration.

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There are other factors such as appearance, attitude, and things of that nature.

M: Let me clear up this business about the physical qualities. Are you required to keep in good physical condition by the Secret Service? Do you have to have a certain amount of exercise every day, or--

Y: We don't have a required program insofar as what a person will do. We don't have a required athletic program, but a person must be able to pass this aptitude and agility test; and we give this on an annual and a semi-annual basis. If they fail to qualify, then they're given a reasonable period of time to correct the deficiency and if not, they would be transferred somewhere else. It makes no difference to us whether one individual would get his exercise by playing golf and the other one may get his by raking leaves.

M: Just as long as he can pass that test?

Y: That's correct.

M: Does age make any difference in this other than as it might affect the test?

Y: Well, I think you and anyone else would agree with me that the older you get, the--well, this varies so much with individuals, but I don't react as fast now as I did when I was thirty-five. I think we try to look at the individual and when he approaches, well, between the ages of forty-five and fifty, he may be very good in some supervisory position, but one begins to slow down insofar as working on and off the follow-up car.

M: I see. So you would shift them to another branch or area of work?

Y: Yes.



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M: And I suppose that after working, say, in a follow-up car, a man would acquire a certain amount of wisdom in how to do this that would be valuable to the Service in a supervisory capacity?

Y: Absolutely.

M: So you wouldn't just dismiss these people?

Y: Oh, no. No. They're assigned elsewhere.

M: Now, about appearance. What do you look for in appearance in your personnel? Does he have to be a person that can blend in with the crowd, or does he have to be reasonably good-looking, or what do you look for?

Y: Well, some of the aspects of appearance border on the intangible--for instance, who is good-looking and who is not good-looking? What we are looking for are people who present a decent appearance and have no abnormalities which would make them stand out. Actually, we would like for them to just be neat and average in appearance.

M: Now, you mentioned these various qualifications needed: the ability to swim; the ability to use a handgun; physical qualities; appearance. Have there been any changes in these qualifications for White House personnel over the past, say, ten to fifteen years, at least since you've been here?

Y: I would say yes.

M: What are the changes then?

Y: Well, one important change is that now we are putting the people on the White House detail who have been in the Service for two years or more. There were times when we were not in this position, and we were putting some people on it that had been in the Service, say, one year. But since

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we have had an expansion and an increase in manpower, we are now thankfully able to do this. We have a better, more well-rounded agent when he goes on a protective assignment.

M: This, then, is one of the changes since, say, 1964? Is that right?

Y: Well, we have made a great deal of progress in this area since 1964.

M: Maybe I'd better make this a little bit tighter in the construction of the interview and take you up closer to the time of the supposedly great reforms. According to the background you've been giving me, you came to the Washington field office in 1952 and you did some work.

Y: Correct.

M: And then you went to the White House detail in February of 1953. Is that correct?

Y: That's correct.

M: And then what happened to you? How long did you work in that detail?

Y: That was during the Eisenhower Administration, and I remained on the White House detail until the last of 1957. Then I went to the Atlanta field office and stayed for three years during 1958, 1959, and 1960.

M: Any particular reason why you went to the Atlanta field office?

Y: Well, I had been on the White House detail for five years; Georgia is my home; I had expressed a desire to transfer back to Georgia--you must realize that there is an awful lot of traveling on the White House detail and people are away from their families. I wanted to return to my home area and when a vacancy occurred in the Atlanta office, I was able to get this position. So I returned there. And another factor--President Eisenhower, as you recall, was quite often visiting the Augusta and

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Thomasville areas in Georgia, so even after going to Atlanta I did not completely make a separation from protective assignments--I was again assigned to the field office where we did investigations, but we also had frequent visits by the White House and any field office participates in these visits, if they occur within their area.

M: And you stayed in Atlanta until 1960?

Y: Through 1960. At the very end of 1960, I came back to Washington on a temporary assignment and was here during the inauguration of President Kennedy. In March of 1961, I transferred back to Washington, D.C.

M: Did you come back to the White House detail?

Y: I came back to the White House detail but didn't stay on it but just a few weeks, when I was then assigned to the vice presidential detail which at that time was a part of the Washington field office.

M: So then you began your protection of Lyndon Johnson at that point?

Y: Yes.

M: And have been with him ever since, I guess?

Y: Yes, although since 1966, when we had a reorganization and I moved up to headquarters.

M: With this background, let me fire some questions at you. You began daily protection of the president with Eisenhower, is that right? Was Eisenhower a difficult man to protect.

Y: Well, I'm reluctant to make comparisons insofar as the personalities of presidents. I would like to say that all presidents are super-people. They're human beings; they have differences; and when you ask if someone

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is difficult to protect, I might say that security and protection usually has to make adaptations to the individual.

M: Okay. Speaking in general, is it possible to protect a person completely? Not anybody in particular. If you were assigned to give protection to a man, is it possible to give him complete protection, or is he always vulnerable in some aspect to attack?

Y: Protection in that sense is somewhat like life insurance. You can't take out too much life insurance. Protection is not an absolute science. It's an art. Perhaps I shouldn't call it an art, but it's, I guess, an endeavor. I think it would be rather foolish to say that there was such a thing as 100 per cent foolproof protection.

M: Yes, unless you just locked them up some place, I suppose. Even that might not work.

Y: You can then conceive of a James Bond type of situation. I'm somewhat inclined to compare it to the life insurance analogy.

M: Apparently much of your work is preventing a possible incident, rather than doing something about it after the incident has occurred. Is that correct?

Y: That's generally correct.

M: Now, how do you go about preventing incidents with a politician, which is your job, who likes to be seen by people, who thinks it's part of his duty to be seen by people, and likes to shake hands and go to conventions and public places? How far can you protect him in something like that?

Y: This is a type of intangible question, and I might have to give you an

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intangible answer. You do your best. There are some tricks to the trade, for example, where you often watch people's hands.

M: Let's take a specific incident; maybe this will be better. Say that the President, whoever it might be, wants to shake hands with a political group meeting to honor him; say as Lyndon Johnson would greet people in the Texas Society and he would come in, and there's a large group of people, maybe four or five hundred in a relatively small area, auditorium, or reception. Now how do you protect him in a situation like that?

Y: Well, we stay in his immediate vicinity, and we observe closely the people that he is in contact with. And then you assess your audience as to what type of people are there. Are they ticket-holders? Are they general public? Did they have previous knowledge that he was going to attend the function? Quite often, on impromptu actions by the President, the problem is somewhat less than you might envision because no one has planned anything that would endanger his security.

M: Lyndon Johnson has a reputation for quick changing of plans. He'll get the idea that he wants to go to the Ranch or he'll get the idea he wants to visit some place and three hours later, he's there. Is this good or bad from your standpoint?

Y: Well, it can be both or either. It can be good in a sense that, as I just remarked, surprise is an element in favor of good security. There are problems--the bad features of it would be simply, perhaps, logistics. I mean being sure that you have automobiles, drivers who know where they're going, and things of that nature. Actually, if you make changes in your plans and if you have your outfit and the supporting elements and the other

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people you work with flexible to this extent, it makes life enjoyable.

But there are times when you "sweat out" the logistics.

M: What about a situation when Lyndon Johnson, apparently in 1964, went up to tourists on the White House lawn and invited them in to tour the South Lawn--now what does this do to the Secret Service?

Y: Well, Mr. Johnson is president, and if he saw fit to do this, it was his house. He was accompanied by agents and if the people who happened to be there and were invited in were for the most part just innocent tourists--they were just delighted. It could create problems if it were repeated often and a pattern came out of it. But on a simply impromptu affair such as this was, it was no serious great problem. I mean, we didn't know who we had in our midst so we therefore observed everyone rather closely. We made absolutely sure that they stayed together in a group and they got back out, et cetera.

M: So in a situation like that, you just did the best you could?

Y: That's right.

M: And the element of surprise was in your advantage?

Y: Right.

M: Well, in a crowd like that, back to an earlier question--what do you look for? You look at people's hands or what?

Y: Well, we could closely observe their hands and any items that they may be carrying. If they carried any type of package or anything that appeared to be suspicious or possibly containing something that it shouldn't, we would check the package. If that was not possible, then we'd more closely observe that person.

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- M: This might be a little delicate. You don't want to embarrass a visitor. But if he's carrying a package, say, wrapped in paper that you don't know exactly what it is, what do you do? Do you try to get him to check that package at the gate or what?
- Y: Well, if we're talking about, for instance, a tourist coming into the White House, they have a parcel check bin where the tourists enter, and if they have anything of that type, they are asked to check it. People usually are generally cooperative; quite often, they're happy to be able to get rid of it for a while.
- M: And if you found somebody in a crowd around the President who did have something suspicious, what would you do?
- Y: Well, we'd try to isolate the person from the President.
- M: And you do this as subtly as possible or what? I mean, do you actually go up to them and you say, "Would you please move back?" or what do you do?
- Y: Well, it will, of course, depend on the circumstance, but you approach a person and you start talking to them. Usually if there's any problem or trouble, then you summon someone else, perhaps another law enforcement officer or another agent. As soon as you determine and evaluate the situation, then you can either take steps to either remove the person or remove the President or if there is no cause for alarm, you thank the person and let them go about their business.
- M: And if you found someone, say, carrying a weapon--knife, gun, what do you do then? Do you again have to assess the situation, or do you try to move them back, or do you actually arrest him, or what?

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Y: Again we isolate them from the President, or the President from them. And then we interview them and depending on the circumstance, the person possibly would be placed under arrest.

M: And then if he did have some desire to harm the President and you do arrest him, then what happens to that case? Is he sent to a federal court, or what?

Y: Well, in general terms, let me point out that we in the Secret Service work for the taxpayers. We are cognizant of their rights as individuals. We all uphold and support the Constitution. If we had a case such as you mention, we have to go through the normal processes. I mean, we have to consult with U.S. attorneys and prepare the case and present it to the court.

M: In this instance then, you would be operating as any other federal law enforcement official?

Y: That's correct. Within the statutes that we are authorized to.

M: Are there any special kinds of cases that you look for in a crowd--any suspicious-type people that you particularly look out for in a crowd if you're just assessing it? With no prior information?

Y: You're inclined to look for the abnormal. For instance, in sunshiny weather, the people who are wearing raincoats, or in hot weather, the people who are wearing heavy coats or jackets. As I said, the people who are perhaps doing different things with their hands than the other people are doing with their hands. Most people in a crowd will perhaps be waving or shouting or cheering, and if you see someone else that has



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his arm outstretched as if he has something in his hand, you would look more closely at this person.

M: What about people who offer food to the President?

Y: Well, are you referring to something in the mail, or in a crowd, or what?

M: Say, he's in a crowd. A person just hands him a box of popcorn.

Y: Well, we would attempt to say, "Thank you very much," and take the package ourselves--or the foodstuff--and we would rather the President not be placed in the position where he had to accept it. This would, of course, differ from people that he knows, and people that we know he knows, et cetera, such as a barbecue at his own ranch and us knowing the people who are invited and things of that nature.

M: Well, at a White House lawn party, for example, I observed people offering him popcorn, just from a regular package that was served there at the White House and he'd reach over and take a few pieces and eat it. Now, this would be a circumstance that you would, I suppose, have to accept. Is that correct?

Y: Well, first of all, we do a lot of background--or we take some background preventive measures as to food that's prepared at the White House, whether it be for an outdoor party or whether it's inside. Yes, there are things that we have to accept.

M: I mean, it is conceivable that even at a party like that, there could be some kind of poison slipped into a seemingly innocent box of popcorn?

Y: Well, it's conceivable.

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M: Is food coming into the White House in packages through the mail or given at the door for the President--does this come in under your jurisdiction, too?

Y: Yes.

M: And what do you do with this food?

Y: Well, most of the food that is sent in as you're talking about in the mail is actually destroyed.

M: This is just too much of a risk, I suppose.

Y: Right.

M: Then the food that comes in, say, is handed--there's a party at the White House and the guests come in and some of the people bring him, say, a bottle of wine, what happens to that?

Y: Can we turn off the tape?

M: Yes.

(Interruption--Here McComb was requested to refrain from asking questions concerning specific security procedures and to adhere to biographical questions. RWY)

M: Well, let me go back to your biography then. You came to work back in Washington for the Kennedy inauguration, and then in 1961 you were assigned to Lyndon Johnson, the vice presidential detail. When you began to work for Lyndon Johnson, was there anything special that you had to do with him? Did he cooperate with you, for example?

Y: Well, let me give you some general discussion relative to this. In March of 1961, our law relative to the Vice President contained the words, "At his request," which meant that at that time in March of 1961, we did not

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protect the Vice President of the United States on a full-time basis. Since the law contained the words "at his request," it was an intermittent type of protection, a type which he could himself set limitations, such as we could accompany him on a public appearance; we would accompany him on a trip out of town, depending on what type of trip it was. And at that time, as I remarked before, the vice presidential detail was a part of the Washington field office. In fact, we only had two people assigned to the vice presidential detail. Now, there were times when I was assigned to the vice presidential detail, but not actually engaged in working with the Vice President, at which time I would do other field office investigations or assignments.

M: There would be a great deal of the time then that the Vice President would move without a Secret Service man.

Y: That's correct.

M: Say, within the Washington area.

Y: And on his purely routine day-to-day activities, we may or may not be involved. Actually, it started out more for trips and then later it became trips and public appearances.

M: Well, now, the Vice President, Lyndon Johnson, made some trips abroad during his years as Vice President--to India, for example. Did you have to go along with that?

Y: Oh, yes. Actually since he became Vice President, I have made every foreign trip that he has made.

M: Can you tell me the difficulties that you might have in a trip abroad? Is this unusual in your duties to protect a man?

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Y: Your trips abroad perhaps present one of the greatest challenges to the overall protective picture. You normally send a team of advance special agents who work with people who are communicators, such as your White House Communications Agency, and you go to a foreign land and establish contact with the ambassador and with his staff and you work closely with the Embassy personnel. You then establish contact with the local law enforcement officials and with the help of the intelligence agencies, the local law enforcement people are evaluated, and you attempt to establish rapport and cooperation with these people. One of the biggest difficulties is sometimes the language barrier. We have for that reason many agents who are bilingual and we will take them on this type of trip to act as interpreters, and if we are in a land where we have a language problem and we don't have an agent who has that capability, then the State Department is quite cooperative with us in helping along these lines.

M: Did you travel with Eisenhower when he went abroad?

Y: At the time Mr. Eisenhower started making his foreign trips, the extensive ones where he visited many countries and many cities, I was in the Atlanta field office, but having been on the White House detail, I was called in and I was one of the advance agents who went out on his South America trip. I was in Buenos Aires, and I was there several weeks before he arrived, doing the things that I just described and working with the Embassy people and the local law enforcement people and the other dignitaries of that country.

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Then I later was an advance agent, still while I was in the Atlanta office, on his trip to Korea and other countries, and I happened to have the stop in Manila. Then when the President moves through a stop, some of the advance team join on and continue other parts of the trip.

M: I recall that Eisenhower enjoyed riding through the streets of foreign capitals of places in an open car, waving to the crowd. Did this worry you a great deal?

Y: Well, an open car, whether it's here or abroad, always presents many more problems than a closed car. However, we do a great deal in cooperation with the police, whether it's foreign or domestic. We take a lot of preventive measures like keeping certain elements or groups under surveillance and the route that he rides over is usually covered with local uniformed police and also plainclothes people within the crowd, et cetera.

M: Can you evaluate which kinds of presidential moves are the most worrisome to you? Is it the trips abroad that give you the biggest headache or what?

Y: Well, the trips abroad, I hesitate to use the word headache, but it's applicable. Perhaps the biggest headache is in your logistical arrangements. But depending on the place you're visiting, the trips abroad sometimes do not give you any more of a worry insofar as security than here in your own land.

M: Okay. Let me put it this way then. At what point in a presidential career, in his movements and so forth, what do you worry about the most? What gives you the greatest trouble? Is it when he's actually going some place,

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visiting some place out of Washington, or what is it that worries you the most as a Secret Service man?

Y: Well, I think what you're saying is where do I think the security risk is the highest. Actually, on a repeated pattern--someone will do the same thing at the same time repeatedly. That is perhaps--over a period of time, that will become a high risk element.

Another factor is something that is "on the record" or previously announced for a long period of time. Where a person who we protect perhaps has to stand, or stay, in one spot for a long time. That is, for instance, at a rostrum in a large stadium being overlooked by buildings--previously announced--this is the type of thing.

M: Of course, on the other hand, you have more time to prepare, too.

Y: That's right. This is what I was saying a while ago when you asked about surprise or a change of plans and all that. There's good and bad.

M: I suppose it would be best if you knew where your man was going to be and yet the public didn't know it. Is that right?

Y: Oh, yes. That is the ideal situation, but this is the type of situation that defeats the aim of a politician or a political or a public figure.

M: Is there any time--well, this would be getting into a sensitive area here, I suppose. I was going to ask you, is there any time in your work as a Secret Service man that you can relax when you didn't worry so much?

Y: Well, we have a secret weapon that we've hesitated to mention this morning, or we haven't mentioned. That's prayer! And actually, we don't use the term "worry." A good agent cannot really worry; he can be concerned, but if he worries, he won't be an agent long. Or rather he will not stay on a

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protective assignment too long. So you must be concerned, but you can't worry, you can't take it to bed with you, you can't take it to church with you. But you should always, when you're on duty and even when you're not, you should be planning and thinking--you should always think security.

M: This is part of the attitude of a Secret Service man.

Y: Right. There are people in our service and in other federal enforcement services who make excellent investigators, excellent supervisors, but their attitude would not be conducive to being an agent on a protective assignment.

M: To evaluate the kind of attitude a man should have then is one of concern but not worry. Are there any other attitudes that he should have to be a good agent, say on a protective assignment?

Y: Well, there are many other attitudes that he should have. He has to, first of all, be loyal as an American and loyal as a Secret Service agent; loyal to the people he protects; and he has even another factor that we are not only concerned with protecting someone's physical well-being, we are also concerned with protecting his reputation.

M: This would be to prevent him from getting into what--embarrassing situations?

Y: Well, yes, so he wouldn't be embarrassed and perhaps others wouldn't be embarrassed, the country wouldn't be embarrassed.

M: Can you give me an example of what you're talking about?

Y: Well, we wouldn't want the President surrounded by unsavory characters, if I may use that word.

M: And you would take steps to protect him from this, I suppose?

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Y: Yes, where possible.

M: Now, to move on a bit in time. The event of the Kennedy assassination in Dallas had been well covered as you indicated to me before the interview, and they've been gone over and over again. Do you have anything you want to add to that, or any qualifications you want to add to the previous record of events in Dallas?

Y: No, I think that it has been very well covered in the Warren Commission and other reports. I have nothing additional.

M: Apparently, as a result of that event, the investigation, a number of suggestions came out for reform in the Secret Service. I would like to know what kind of organizational changes occurred after this event and how steps were taken to improve the Service.

Y: Well, I would hate to use the word "reforms." I would rather use the word "improvements," or "more progress," which primarily is wrapped around money and manpower. If you have sufficient funds to run a class A organization, it will be class A. And I think as a result of the tragedy which occurred--that our position--the Secret Service position--has become more appreciated by the taxpayers; and as a result of this, we have had a very substantial increase in the number of persons and a very substantial increase in the equipment.

M: Is the figure about a 50 per cent increase in manpower correct?

Y: It's correct in the sense of agent personnel. It's generally correct concerning agents; we practically doubled our agent force. We did not necessarily double all the other related [personnel]. The Treasury Guard Force didn't have a doubling; the White House police didn't have a doubling.



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M: There were also some structural changes in the organization. Can you tell me about those--within the Treasury Department?

Y: Yes, to a degree. Within the department, a position was created for an assistant to the secretary for enforcement, where the Secret Service answers along with other law enforcement agencies in the Treasury Department--answers to this individual. And then--are you concerned with changes within the Secret Service?

M: Yes.

Y: Naturally, as a result of increase in manpower and increase in improvement in equipment and related items, the structure from a personnel standpoint also had to change. Basically the head of the organization was formerly known as a chief and they raised the status of the organization and the head of the organization became the director. The director had, not at first, but later, had a deputy director, and then under the deputy director, there are four assistant directors. We have two assistant directors in the protective portion of the service. One is the assistant director for protective forces: he has the physical manpower and the organizations which actually protect the different principals. The other assistant director heads the protective intelligence portion. In a sense you have one with the manpower and you have one with the intelligence gathering capability. The two have to work very closely. Then we have two other assistant directors, one being the assistant director of investigations, and the entire field structure answers to this assistant director. Then we have one other assistant director who heads up all the administrative functions, such as personnel, payroll, supply, et cetera.

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M: Was there, as a result of these changes, greater effort made to cooperate with other federal law enforcement agencies, such as the FBI?

Y: Well, actually I wouldn't say there was greater effort, because I don't think that we had ever been derelict in this effort. But I will say that more attention was directed toward this aim, and, in fact, we formalized in some instances what had previously been informal. For instance, we have entered into formal agreements with the State Department, the FBI, Department of Defense, et cetera. We now have a liaison division which is part of our protective intelligence that I spoke of. This liaison division has agents who are assigned to make daily contact with certain other agencies, and these other agencies in turn have liaison people who make daily contact with us. So that there's a somewhat formalized flow of information back and forth between the various federal agencies.

M: Would this cooperation also extend to local police agencies?

Y: Oh, by all means, yes. However, your local police agencies--your liaison with them so to speak--is your field office in that area. For instance, in Atlanta, the Atlanta field office with the Atlanta Police Department or with the Georgia State Patrol.

M: And you personally moved up in the organizational structure as I recall. Is that right?

Y: Yes, that's correct.

M: Mr. Rowley moved from chief to director?

Y: That's right.

M: And you moved about the same time, did you not?

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Y: Well, yes, I did, but at the time the reorganization came about and it really began to come about the last part of 1965, like November, actually some of the promotions weren't formalized until like early 1966. At the time this occurred, I was then the special agent in charge of the White House detail. And incidentally, we have since renamed the White House detail. It is now the presidential protection division, but it's the same thing actually. At the time of the reorganization, I was special agent in charge of the White House detail, and then I became the assistant director of protective forces. I had under my jurisdiction the White House detail, the vice presidential detail, and then later we had former presidents' details, the White House Police, et cetera.

M: When was it in time that you were promoted? Can you tell me?

Y: Yes, actually I left the White House detail and became assistant director in November of 1965, but I didn't get the paycheck increase until February of 1966. Then in December of 1967, we formed the deputy director's position and I became the deputy director at that time.

M: In your improvement of organization, did you also use more computers?

Y: Yes. This was mainly an outgrowth of the Warren Commission. We did not have computers prior to the 1963 occurrence. As a result of the Warren Commission and other committees, we now have a computerized protective intelligence section, but it's somewhat like "you can't win a war without an infantry," and you can't get that information into the computer unless you have agents who ring doorbells. They also say that the output of the computer is only as good as its input.

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M: Has the computer been helpful to you?

Y: It has been quite helpful, because it has enabled us to handle a larger volume and to do it more rapidly. I mean, it's a great rapid retrieval item; it's a great catalogue; and it saves many man-hours of work.

M: Do you expect extended use of computers in the future?

Y: Absolutely. I mean, we have found other applications of the computers that we installed initially for the protective mission. We have found many methods and ways of using them, like in personnel, or in investigations.

M: This is a good time to break. You have an appointment, so let me cut the tape recorder off.

(Interruption)

Well, we're back for the second session. It's now 3:15 in the afternoon, same day, a continuing interview with Mr. Rufus Youngblood.

You had something you wanted to add to an earlier question.

Y: Yes, this morning when we were discussing protection relative to the Vice President in the period around 1961 at which time it was not a full-time occupation of the Secret Service; it was limited only to special, or the words "at his request" for the Vice President. In 1962 following the Cuban situation, this statute was amended and the words "at his request" were removed from the statute. It therefore then became a continuous obligation at which time the detail of men working with the Vice President was substantially increased to carry three shifts day-in and day-out. I thought perhaps this should be on the record to make what we said accurate or complete.

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M: The reason for that being the difficulties in Cuba?

Y: I think not that alone, but the Cuban situation at that time reflected the somewhat changing mood of, let's say, world conditions.

M: Now, before we left off, we were talking about changes of the Secret Service organization after the Kennedy assassination, of how the organization had grown, expanded in personnel, began to use computers to a greater extent. The question now is, has this substantially improved the Secret Service, do you think?

Y: I would say that it has improved the Secret Service as a functioning organization. For instance, having more manpower, having better equipment, such a thing in the way of equipment as armored cars, for instance.

M: You did not have these before?

Y: We did not have armored cars at the time of the tragedy. We now have several armored cars and even the parade-type vehicle which allows the public to view the principal and at the same time increases his protection and security.

M: You're talking about the presidential limousine?

Y: Yes.

M: Being more heavily armored, more powerful, that sort of thing?

Y: Particularly armored.

M: Has your file of suspect people been substantially improved since then?

Y: Yes.

M: This is part of the computer mechanism, is it not?

Y: Part of the computer arrangements plus the liaison arrangement with other

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federal agencies whereby we have many more types of individuals in groups cataloged than we did before.

M: Just a general question. Does the Secret Service use undercover men?

Y: Yes. In fact, I think all law enforcement agencies of any size use men in an undercover capacity from time to time. We perhaps use them more in the investigative fields than we do in the protective fields, but we're not limited to that.

M: And this would extend also to the counterfeiting, forgery--

Y: Oh, yes, counterfeiting and forgery investigations.

M: Well, with all of this reorganization and improvement, how else can the Service be improved? What else needs to be done?

Y: Well, the main thing is that we need to stay abreast, because technology changes, conditions change, and a piece of equipment which may be up to date today may become obsolete tomorrow. And we need to keep our equipment up to date. We also need to keep our personnel up to date, and we attempt to have some continuous training, and not just train an individual when he first comes in and that's it. We try to have retraining and reorientation and things of that nature.

M: What do you do about equipment? Innovations in weaponry and protection?

Y: We have in this protective intelligence area which I spoke to you about--one division of that is a technical security division; within the technical security division, we have a development and planning branch. They are charged with the mission of staying up to date, associating with other law enforcement agencies, other federal agencies, Department of Defense, commercial firms, reviewing catalogs and things of that nature to make sure

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that we do stay up to date in our equipment. And although this little group is more or less charged with that mission, all the other people in the Service that work on protective missions and go from place to place are also more or less unofficially charged with the mission of trying to stay up to date and if they see something better or something they think would benefit us, we'd like to look into it.

M: Does this group design equipment for your particular use?

Y: Not so much are they a design group. They're not exactly a research or design outfit. They evaluate and they would, for instance, condense and make a report for the other assistant directors or division chiefs to review.

M: Well, other than this maintaining of your skills and improvements of skills and getting better equipment, does the Secret Service need any improvements beyond that?

Y: Well, I'd have to say yes. I think we strive for perfection. That's a goal. To be realistic, I don't think anyone can ever reach it. I don't think any person; I don't think any organization; but at least if that's the goal and we strive for it, then we can continue to progress. And in the last few years, I think we've made remarkable progress, but there's much more to be done.

M: Do you still need more personnel?

Y: Well, I feel that we do, because our people are very dedicated, and they are working a great deal of overtime, and I would think that with things as they are today, that, yes, we do need more personnel. We don't want

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to be unreasonable about it and try to build an empire or anything of that nature.

M: Now, have there been any significant changes in the counterfeiting and forgery part of your work?

Y: Well, yes. Counterfeiting, by virtue of changes in technology and equipment that's on the market today, requires us to stay abreast of all this.

M: Are counterfeiters "better than ever?"

Y: That's somewhat a measure of quality. I wouldn't say that they are better, but the equipment that they have today is better. However, I think years ago when most of the counterfeiters came up with the photo-engraved plates as compared to some of the lithographic plates that they have today, I think that the quality was better, but in those days there wasn't as much money in circulation and people looked a little closer at their money than they do nowadays. Counterfeiting nowadays is a faster art than it used to be. Where it used to take many hours of painstaking and laborious work to produce usable plates, it can now be done in a matter of minutes.

M: Have your skills at detection of counterfeiting kept pace with the equipment used by the counterfeiters?

Y: I think they have. Actually, the very basic investigating methods relative to counterfeiting have not had a substantial change, but the network of communication, for instance, has improved. Nowadays, everybody's moving in fast automobiles and jet airplanes and so we have to be able to communicate



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fast and to disseminate the information, not only to our own people, but the bankers and merchants and groups of that nature.

M: Do you cooperate with the other law enforcement agencies, such as the FBI on this sort of thing?

Y: Oh, yes. In a thing like counterfeiting, though, it's perhaps more so down to the local levels. By that, I mean the municipal levels, the city and state police, et cetera.

M: Now, to say a few things about President Johnson and your work with him. When Vice President Johnson first was subjected to Secret Service protection, was there anything that he said about this at the time, or what did you say to him when this was first placed upon him?

Y: Actually, I met President Johnson at the time he was Vice President in Dakar in Africa. I had come to the Washington field office, I think in March of 1961, and very shortly thereafter, the Vice President was planning a trip to Senegal. He was the President's representative for the Independence celebration. I was sent out as the advance agent to make the advance arrangements for the trip. Stu [Stuart] Knight, who was at the time my superior and also on the detail with me, accompanied the Vice President when the Vice President flew from Washington to Senegal. The first time I actually met the man, although I had seen the Vice President at the time he was a senator during the Eisenhower Administration and I knew of him but I didn't know him and he didn't know me--the first time I actually met him--Stu Knight introduced me to him in a car. I was in the back seat of a car with the Vice President in Dakar.

M: Did he say anything to you at the time?

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Y: Yes, as a matter of fact, now I recall, and it's somewhat humorous to look back on, but he displayed his personality at this very time. After meeting me and saying "How do you do" and so forth, Stu Knight made the remark that--"Mr. Youngblood came down here as my advance agent, and he has been here for a few days making arrangements." And Mr. Johnson said, "How did you come?" And I said, "By airplane." And he said, "How much did your ticket cost?" And quite frankly, I didn't know. And I was embarrassed. So I right away started making an explanation that, "Well, sir, we're issued a G.T.R., and there was more than myself," and so forth. And he said, "Well, you'd better always find out how much your ticket costs and know how much of the taxpayers' money you're spending." Or the "government's money," or something to that effect.

From then on, I was aware that this man would ask questions that perhaps other people I had worked around would not ask.

As to the protection of the trip, though, he seemed to be very pleased with the work that we had done and the cooperation we received from the Embassy. He made these remarks at the end of the trip as we were coming back--that we had done a fine job.

M: To clear up my ignorance, what is a G.T.R.?

Y: Oh, I'm sorry, that's a Government Transportation Request, and it's something like a check. Instead of us carrying credit cards or things of that nature, we use these Government Transportation Requests. They're tax exempt. You issue them to a common carrier and they bill the Treasury Department.

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- M: Well, then, by the time you had connection with him, Lyndon Johnson had some experience with Secret Service protection. When he became president, I suppose this was increased. Did he give any instructions to the Secret Service or to you about this?
- Y: He has always taken an interest, almost a personal interest in addition to an official interest, with the manner in which we the Secret Service conduct our business around him. He doesn't confine this to Secret Service. President Johnson is the type of man who delves into all elements of business in running the White House or the nation.
- M: He has shown interest in your cooperation, then, outside of his own--might be personal interest in his own protection, he's interested in the organization of the Secret Service and how efficiently it's run and that sort of thing?
- Y: Absolutely.
- M: From a managerial point of view?
- Y: From a managerial point of view and like a concern for not only himself. Actually I don't think he's concerned so much with himself as a man, but himself as President of the United States. He is also concerned with others like the Vice President and like President Eisenhower, President Truman and so forth.
- M: That brings up a side issue. Apparently you should be interested in the protection of the President as President, not as a personality. Is that true?
- Y: Correct.
- M: You have loyalty to the office?

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Y: That's correct.

M: Is that the way it's supposed to be?

Y: That's the way it is, but that does not necessarily mean that you're limited at that point. Your primary loyalty is toward the office, not the individual, but it makes your job easier and much nicer if you, at the same time, can like or carry the loyalty to the individual.

M: How do you keep from invading the privacy of the individual you're protecting? How do you keep from being obnoxious?

Y: Well, this in some cases is difficult, because if you wanted to go to the drug store, or if you wanted to be alone, there are times when anyone else's presence would be undesirable to you. However, in the case of protecting a public figure, even though there are times when we are officially invading his privacy, there are times by our very presence we guarantee that he has some privacy. For instance, if he is going into a room and he wishes to talk with some individual and we know who the individual is and we don't consider the individual a security risk. If, for instance, I stood at the door and prevented others from going in the room, whereas if I wasn't there, he probably couldn't say two or three sentences without being interrupted. Now, what you really try to do to keep from being overly obtrusive, you have to do your best to stay out of pictures that are posed with a group of individuals; you need to be close by but not in the picture. There are many times in moving around from Point A to Point B you just simply cannot be out of the picture and still be doing your job. But if he wishes to pose with, say, an old gentleman or a young child or something, you try to stand over to one side, but close by, and quite often stand with

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the photographers. They're about as close as anyone else. You try not to be overbearing and you try not to interrupt him when he's talking and things of this nature. You try to use a lot of common sense.

M: But I suppose even then presidents and other people you're protecting continually get upset with your presence. Do they get irritated once in a while?

Y: Well, I don't think they get irritated too often, because the experienced agent doesn't try to breathe down their neck as long as--his job is to keep them in a secure environment and if they are safe or in what we think is a secure environment, then we can move off as long as we can observe any changes in this environment. If he's at the Ranch and he wishes to talk with Secretary Fowler or someone, we try to walk far enough away so not to hear the conversation. And, as I say, at the same time we often prevent other people from intruding on his privacy.

M: Is it important in your work to keep your own identity somewhat anonymous?

Y: To a degree. I mean, you can't have complete anonymity. But you don't try to take the play away from the principal actor. You try to remain in the background as much as you can but still be close enough to do your job.

M: You don't want to become a publicly known figure either, though, do you?

Y: That's correct. You don't have these aspirations. You don't want to become a public figure. For instance, in our Service, if I were to return to a field office, I would not be good in counterfeiting investigations or forgery investigations if they were investigations that required discretion because my picture and personage has been plastered over too many

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newspapers and so forth. This is undesirable. It's a thing that happened, but it's not desirable from a standpoint of an investigator or police officer to ever become too well known, particularly if they're at the working level.

M: Now, is there a danger in your work that the person you're protecting, such as President Johnson, may misuse you, have your men working as a servant more or less, carrying packages, and things like that that might interfere with your work?

Y: That's somewhat difficult to answer when you use an illustration like carrying packages and things like that. I mean, there are often times when maybe he will be presented with some small gift at a function and it's probably good security to take the package actually and carry it to another point and then give it to someone else or something like that. I don't think that the presidents or the people we protect have any intention of over-using us in the area of servants. Well, I don't even know whether I should use the word "servant." I mean, I don't think they have an intention of doing this, but quite often just by virtue of the many things that they have to do they'll say, do thus and so. Well, you can stay on the job and sometimes pass this to someone else. I don't mean pass the buck. I mean if he says, "Get Jack Valenti for me," I wouldn't necessarily run away and get Jack. I might tell someone standing nearby, "The President would like to speak to Jack Valenti. Would you get him?" or something like that.

M: Well, there has been no occasion then under Lyndon Johnson where such a demand would interfere with your duty and protection--is that correct?

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Y: Well, there again, that's somewhat difficult to answer. But you as an agent don't solicit any of this type of thing, and there are usually other people who can do these things. I don't know whether I've completely answered this or not, but--

M: Let me rephrase the question. Does President Johnson generally respect your task in the protecting of him and see to it that he would not interfere with this by asking you to do extraneous duties?

Y: Generally yes.

M: Do the women that you have to protect or the children you have to protect give you any particular problems?

Y: Well, if we didn't have problems, we wouldn't have a job. In that sense, they are a welcomed problem. Now, we have to approach their protection somewhat differently than protecting the principal, the man; we have to remold our security around their habits and lifetime and so forth.

M: Do you use women Secret Service agents?

Y: Unfortunately, we do not have women Secret Service agents. This will probably be a thing of the future. I would say that when we go into a large city, there are many places like New York, Chicago, Atlanta, that all large police agencies have a women's bureau, and we quite often coordinate and cooperate with them and use them on some of these public functions.

M: What happens then if you have, say, you're protecting a female child, or a female and she has to go to the restroom? How do you extend protection?

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M: Okay, the tape's back on again. I just had asked you about what do you do

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with a female that you're protecting and you have to use the bathroom facilities.

Y: Well, if it's a movement which was previously planned that we had done an advance on, we would have, let's say, a secure environment bathroom. However, there is an occasion whereby it's an impromptu type of movement, and the female member may have to depart momentarily from her protectors who remain at the door. That's about all I can say on that. But of course these ladies that we protect are usually--they go to the best places and so the problem is at least lessened if not completely eliminated.

M: And I suppose there are usually females in their company anyway who would go with them?

Y: Yes. Right. Quite often.

M: Which would lessen the security risk. You've mentioned that there are no women working for the Secret Service, at least in a protective branch of it.

Y: I might correct you there. There are no women in the special agent category. We have many females in clerical and other specialized areas like personnel, computers, et cetera.

M: Do they work, incidentally, in the counterfeiting part?

Y: Not as investigators. In all of our field offices, we have clerical personnel, and from time to time, they have performed some task even in the investigative areas, although they are not active investigators. For instance, I have had the clerks in the Atlanta office search a female prisoner.

M: What about integration of the Secret Service? Do you have Negroes?



Y: Absolutely.

M: According to the information I've read about this, this came under Kennedy. Is that correct?

Y: I think we had our first colored agent--I believe was hired during the Eisenhower Administration, but it had nothing to do actually with an administration policy. Actually we just were able to get a real good recruit who was a desirable applicant. The first one that I recall we hired was Charlie Gittens, who came on board in North Carolina. He later had an assignment in New York. He spoke Spanish, he was a school teacher, he worked in the area where there were a great many Puerto Ricans. Since that time, we have continued to add to the force many colored agents.

M: Do you make any special effort to recruit them?

Y: Yes, we have done that and, in fact, we sent several of our agents out to talk or interview prospective applicants, to various colored colleges throughout the United States.

M: How about other minority groups--Chinese, Indians--?

Y: Well, actually, we're open to anyone who fulfills the qualifications. We are fortunate in having some Chinese agents; the special agent in charge of our technical security division, Al Wong, is Chinese, and he originally came to us in New York City, had been in that office for a long period before coming here and working at the White House. We're always happy to get, and I think I mentioned earlier this problem we have on our foreign trips with language, so we're always happy to get Mexicans, Italians, anyone who speaks another language, or even if they can't speak fluently enough for interpreters, if they can speak or have a knowledge of,

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then when we go into these various countries, we attempt to use these people.

M: Do you, incidentally, have responsibility to protect foreign VIPs, such as prime ministers and such that come to visit?

Y: Not exactly. Our protection of the foreign dignitaries would be only when they're in the presence of our principals--our president or vice president. There is in the State Department a security division and these people are charged with this mission that you speak of in protecting the foreign dignitaries. Incidentally, we get along extremely well with the State Department security personnel.

M: Now, to take up some specific events. In 1964, President Johnson at the Democratic Convention, descended to the floor of the convention and began shaking hands with delegates. Was this any particular problem to you?

Y: Not any particular problem other than a lot of pushing and shoving. This becomes a little clumsy in crowds where there's not room enough for the principal to walk or us to walk--everybody is trying to occupy the same bit of ground at the same time. Actually we had the entire convention hall secure as we could have it. Actually you could not vouch for every individual in the hall, but we had people posted, not only our own people, but local law enforcement and other participating agencies, throughout the hall. Other than the pushing and shoving part of it, it was no great problem.

M: Is that a danger? Apparently the President, or whoever it may be, attracts crowds to the point that it might cause injury to him or to somebody in

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the crowd. Now, is this an ever-present problem when the President gets in a situation like that?

Y: Yes, I think it is and more often than not, it's a problem to the other people more so than it is to the principal. Particularly a big, husky man like President Johnson, we can clear the way for him, but we try to also watch out, believe it or not, for small children and things like that.

M: And, of course, if his wife is with him or his daughters and their children, this is also a problem, I suppose--crowds?

Y: Yes.

M: Also in that same year 1964 after the death of President Kennedy and with the succession of Lyndon B. Johnson to the presidency, the Speaker of the House McCormack became the next in line for the presidency. Apparently, Secret Service protection was extended to him and he did not particularly welcome this. Is that true?

Y: That's true, generally. I'd like to elaborate a bit. The Speaker did not have any hard feelings or anything of any ill intention toward the Secret Service. The Speaker just preferred to continue living his life as he had before. He requested that the Service remove the protection from him and allow him to continue as he had in the past. But we were, according to law, available to perform this task, and we, of course, made an effort to do it; an effort to be accepted by the Speaker. But he declined.

M: There are several public accounts, at least that appear in the books written about the President, of his driving down on his ranch and losing

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the Secret Service car behind him on the highway, somewhat to the embarrassment of the Secret Service. Do you have any comment about that?

Y: Yes, and the first comment I have is that some of these things that are printed in black and white are not always true. Quite often exaggerated. I have seen this myself--I mean, read articles in the paper when I was there. I remember on one occasion we had two cars following the President and one car dropped back and more or less held the press back, and they weren't aware of the other car that was up there with him. When you read the story, it gave you the complete wrong impression.

M: As if he had outrun his protection?

Y: That's right. Now, there are times that the man is alone. For instance, in his own living quarters at the White House. There are times on his ranch when he is driving his own vehicle. In a sense, he's alone or with the company of his choosing, and we are in nearby vehicles. Again I go back to this secure environment. If we can maintain a secure environment and observe him or his whereabouts, we don't necessarily have to see him. At the White House, for instance, if he is in his living quarters, we don't have to see him; but we can reasonably assure that he is safe.

M: Would you prefer, say, when he is at his ranch, to do the driving yourself of his vehicle?

Y: Not necessarily. He had been living there for many years before he became the president; he knows the roads as well as I do or better. If he was leaving the Ranch and going into a city like Austin or something like that, we'd prefer that we do the driving. But within the confines of his ranch

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and even some other neighboring places around, it doesn't present a great problem.

M: For the record, then, since the books have criticized his fast driving to the point of losing the Secret Service, let me ask you, has this been a problem to you at his ranch?

Y: I think it has been more of a problem to people writing about it than it actually has. Again, I say we have to take steps to adapt to the situation. For instance, if a person is moving from Point A to Point B, sometime we can have someone ahead of him rather than behind and things of this nature.

M: Then there's another famous incident when paint was thrown on his car during one of his tours abroad. Can you tell me about that?

Y: Yes, that occurred in Australia in Melbourne. We were enroute to an official function and--

M: This was in 1966, wasn't it?

Y: It was in Melbourne, Australia, in October of 1966. The picture you are looking at is right after the incident occurred. That was the armored vehicle that he was riding in. Of course, no paint got on him or the First Lady or any of the occupants of the car as far as that goes.

M: They were in an enclosed vehicle?

Y: Yes, we had a little difficulty in wiping it off enough for the driver to see.

M: Were you there at this event?

Y: Yes.

M: Did you get paint on your clothes?

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Y: Yes.

M: Oh, yes, on your head, too. [For the benefit of the tape, I might say that this is a color photograph of the incident in which Mr. Youngblood is shown at one side with red paint splattered on his face and his suit. The presidential party is inside the vehicle and is completely enclosed with white paint splattered on the windshield.]

Y: I beg your pardon. That's green.

M: Oh, was it green paint? Excuse me. [It's a light green paint.] Well, what was your reaction when this happened?

Y: Well, I might say I was mildly annoyed. Actually, it happened very quickly and it was over with in just a matter of seconds. Our reaction was to evacuate because we didn't know what else might occur, if anything, and we wanted to immediately get him out of the area.

M: Let me ask this. You were obviously close to the automobile when this happened. Were you on foot?

Y: I believe at the time I was on foot. However, this car has places for the agent to stand on the rear. Intermittently, I would be on the stand and then down on the street. For usually, when the crowd is of this nature and this many people gathered along a route, we walk the car if he's going slow enough to wave at the bystanders. All these other gentlemen you see with paint on them around here are Secret Service agents who are working the car.

M: As I recall, there was an immediate apology forthcoming from the Australian government. Is that correct?

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Y: Yes, I believe that's correct. The matter really shouldn't be one that would reflect on the Australians as a group. They were extremely nice people and we had a very enjoyable trip. This was just an incident caused by an individual, and I think he later regretted it.

M: Was there any trouble getting the car cleaned up, or to your clothes?

Y: Well, yes, the clothes were junked. I lost a suit, shirt, even underwear, shoes, et cetera. But clothing is easily replaced, and we were lucky that no one was damaged by eye injury or anything like that. The car--we had to repaint certain areas of it--and it was quite a job in cleaning windshields, et cetera.

M: Well, in that incident, obviously your security of the President was effective.

Y: Effective mainly by the use of an armored vehicle, or the use of a closed vehicle.

M: Now, are there any other incidents up to this point in time, 1966, or up until 1968 that should be mentioned? I'm getting ready to ask you about the White House, the lawn incident where he praised the Secret Service. Before I do that, I'd like to know if there are any incidents up to this time that should be mentioned on this tape.

Y: There are any number of incidents, but I think I might take an example like this: I recall on a New England trip during the 1964 campaign one of the cars in the motorcade caught on fire--an engine fire. At first, you just have to make a rapid assessment and the best thing to do is get out of there--evacuate, remove the principal from the cause of the concern, which we did. We hastily evacuated. Actually, it was nothing but a simple

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fire in a vehicle, but we didn't know as security agents but what someone had planted a fire device or bomb or something like that in the car.

M: This was not the presidential vehicle?

Y: No, it was the staff car which was a vehicle one car behind our follow-up car; but it was close enough to be a part of our integral motorcade, so we evacuated.

M: Incidentally there's an event in regard to the Secret Service in which the child of an agent was dragged to death by a horse down at the Ranch.

Y: Correct.

M: And the President went to the funeral of that child. Is that correct?

Y: That's correct.

M: Did the President make any comment about that to you or to the staff?

Y: Oh, yes. I don't specifically recall what comment he made, but I think he made several comments. The agent who was the father of this child was our agent, Clarence Knetsch, who was in charge of the security detail that we had at the LBJ Ranch. The President was quite fond of Clarence; Clarence had been working with us back in the days when the President was vice president, since about 1961. Clarence spoke fluent German, and we had a visit of [Konrad] Adenauer down there in 1961. So over a period of time the President grew quite fond of Clarence. And again, I can't remember his exact remarks--the President extended to Clarence and to Mrs. Knetsch his sympathy, his condolences, and offered to do anything he could to help them in their period of bereavement.

M: Well, this would indicate that President Johnson, although he may be somewhat rough on his Secret Service agents sometimes, really appreciated their



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work; and this came out over national television recently in which he gathered Secret Service people--personnel--on the lawn of the White House and made a public statement to them about their work and how much he appreciated it, even though he had "abused," in his own words, the agents at times. Did you happen to witness this event?

Y: Oh, yes.

M: Did you have any feelings about the President's words?

Y: Well, certainly! I was pleased and proud that he did this because it was very valuable to the Secret Service. I had heard the President make complimentary remarks about the Secret Service from time to time, and we had received letters from him and things of that nature. But this was a time when all the world could hear it, and this was a time that our youngest agents, who are perhaps many miles away and are not exposed to protective elements at this time, they heard it. And naturally, it was like a morale booster--like a shot in the arm! I think we were just grateful.

M: This exhausts the questions that I have. Do you have any comment or any statement that you wish to make about the work of the Secret Service or relationship to the President or anything else you wish to say?

Y: The job of protecting the President is a challenge, and I think those of us who are in the Service accept it as such and we enjoy our work. That's really about all I could say.

M: I wish to thank you for the interview and your comments on the Secret Service. It has been a rather informative interview, and you're kind to take the time to give it.

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Y: You're quite welcome, and it's all for the sake of history, I think.

[End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview I]

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By Rufus W. Youngblood

to the

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