

April 17, 1962

**TELEPHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN SECRETARY FREEMAN
AND THE VICE PRESIDENT APRIL 17, 1962**

Freeman: Hello Lyndon. I tried to get you yesterday but did not reach you.

Johnson: I did not know until this minute that you had tried to get me. I was down at Camp David, but you could have called me down there. I want to congratulate you on that report you made on Grades 12 through 18. That is one of the best pieces of work I have seen. It is excellent.

Freeman: I am glad to hear it. We have been working on it, but haven't been making too much progress as yet. Lyndon, I need some advice. You have been following, I am sure, the efforts of the Attorney General of Texas to get elected Governor. I don't know what is behind all of it, but he is giving some of our boys some trouble. Apparently he is trying to get it where he can proceed under the Anti-Trust statute and in an open court. What he is doing is subpoena people and then examine them in the open court procedure. This has been done in connection with the Billy Sol Estes case and there have been some allegations in connection with the Estes case on the part of some of our Department of Agriculture employees. One such allegation is that he bought Red Jacobs some clothes. You know Red resigned and I think he is going to be down there Friday to face this guy. The second allegation was against a fellow named Bill Morris, who they said accepted a \$20 hat from Estes. He refused to come by and discuss it with us so we fired him. In the case of Jim Ralph, there really has been no allegation of wrongdoing, but the implication is there just the same. Wilson told him to come down and appear and he plans to go Friday, but frankly he is scared stiff. This was a difficult problem of cotton allotment. It involved land acquisition in which ownership had to be proved and involving eminent domain. There have been a lot of schemes from time to time and Estes was one of those. Frankly, Jim Ralph is afraid to go down there, but he feels he should go. The only thing he did was get a money order from Estes for \$100.00 to buy a ticket to the dinner, which he did and then sent the ticket to Estes after it had been purchased.

Freeman: Lyndon, are you alone?

Johnson: Yes.

Freeman: I need a little advice. What kind of fellow is Wilson? I don't want them to go down there fully unprepared and I thought maybe you could give me some advice as to what should be done.

Johnson: I have just come out of a meeting at the White House. I am not a lawyer. I would gather that Wilson has the authority to hold these courts of inquiry and I gather he is going to do it from now until May 5 in the hope that he can reflect any way he can on Washington although he was the Manager for the Kennedy Johnson ticket from Los Angeles through the November election. Connally went back to Fort Worth. Ralph Yarborough did some campaigning, Don Yarborough did some, but this guy was the real manager. He was head of the whole thing. He ran for the Senate and a lot of people thought he would do pretty good and he had a miserable following. As a consequence, he was very bitter. He calls everybody Washington stooges.

Freeman: If our folks had anything to fear, it would be different, but I am afraid he is going to be unfair. Is he an able guy or just what are we up against?

Johnson: Yes, he is able. He is the Present Attorney General of Texas, former District Attorney. I would not say he is in the league with our Cabinet people, but he is an experienced lawyer and an experienced prosecutor. He writes very attractively. He is not a good speaker. He is not a good television personality. He has unlimited resources and unlimited staff. If I were you I would try to get the Department investigating and also a Committee. Anderson, the Republican, this afternoon gave out a statement and said that Estes just walked into his office and said he was a great friend of Senator Yarborough and that he had had dinner at my home. I checked it. The only time I ever recall having seen Estes was at that January dinner with Senator Yarborough and others and they were at the tables and I invited everyone at those tables out to my home. He did come, along with about two hundred others. But I don't know anything about the man's business transactions although I gather he is very heavily involved. He has been in the liberal

Democratic group. He is supposed to have been a loyal Democrat. I think he is very friendly with the Kennedy-Johnson program and was probably more friendly with the Speaker and Senator Yarborough.

Freeman: I think these boys should have a good lawyer in Dallas and one that could advise them. Do you know a good lawyer in Dallas that might be able to help them?

Johnson: I think Wilson will try to make a big issue of it. He is running about 4th in the Governor's race. The last polls showed that Daniel dropped from 33% to 30%, Connally had 27%, Yarborough 14% and Wilson 11%. The election is May 5. I don't know- maybe your Solicitor could counsel these boys on what their rights are.

Freeman: What lawyer in Dallas would you suggest?

Johnson: The best advice I can give you is Bob Clark, the Justice's brother. Or you might get Ramsey Clark to give you some advice. I would suggest you call him at home and ask him what he thinks they ought to do. You know Ramsey, don't you? Call Ramsey and say you understand Wilson is going to hold a court of inquiry and who would be a good lawyer who would understand this court of inquiry.

Freeman: That is good advice and we will proceed accordingly. Thank you very much for your help.

Johnson: Call me at any time. I want you to know I appreciate very much what you and that sweet Wife of yours are doing for this Administration.

Freeman: Thank you very much. I appreciate that.