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LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON LIBRARY

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JACK ALBRIGHT

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Signed by Jack A. Albright on May 4, 1994.

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ACCESSION NUMBER 02-09

INTERVIEW II

DATE: June 10, 1981
INTERVIEWEE: JACK ALBRIGHT
INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE
PLACE: Cosmos Club, Washington, D.C.

Tape 1 of 1

G: You were going to talk about that trip to the Truman Library.

A: Yes. That was an interesting trip, because we went out the day before to visit and to make arrangements for this. When we arrived at the Library, President Truman was there and [he was] a most gracious host. He came to us and he said, "Well, you know, I always admired Lyndon. He was a great, great man, a great majority leader. And I think he's making a great president. You know, I wouldn't offer this for just anybody, but I would really let him and be glad to have him use my podium." I said, "Mr. President, may I see the podium? He is rather tall and maybe it's too short, maybe we can raise it. We'd take a look at it. We'd like to look at it." So he said, "Fine."

He took us to a back room. Now, he had lead us through the Library; he had already walked us through the various rooms and [was] very proud of the Library. He showed us the various rooms within there, and then finally found a room where this podium was stored. I don't think I'm exaggerating, it could not have been more than four foot, four inches, four foot five. It was extremely short, hit you about your navel. Not something I could have used at all, and about that wide. It might have suited him very well, it might have made him loom large to the crowd in front of it, or behind it to speak. But I didn't think the President would be happy with it at all, and so I said, "Mr.

President, I do appreciate it, but I don't believe that it would just fit the circumstance, I don't think." He said, "Well, couldn't you put it up on some telephone books or something of this nature and sort of raise it where Lyndon could use it? He's taller than I am." I said, "Yes, sir, but we've found that they've gone through trying times on security and they really feel they need the protection now. What we've done, Mr. President, we've placed certain security within that podium, and so we would prefer to use the regular podium, which is wide, which is about his height. So if you don't mind, we'll use that one." "Well, that's fine," he said, "whatever you want to do. But I wanted to make the offer and let you know how I felt about Lyndon. He's a great guy." So we put his podium in and the President spoke from his regular podium, not that of President Truman.

But it's just interesting the attitude, the solicitude he had toward this. But he took all of my other people, the people that came in with me, the public address systems, and he was most solicitous, most anxious to assist, to do anything he can to make sure this was a success. We were, that morning, about, oh, three hours away from presidential arrival, and he was saying, "We've got to have it right, we've got to have it right." We knew that, of course.

G: Did you have an opportunity to see the two men together, to observe their interaction?

A: Oh, yes, many times. Each year I would say, and you'll see it down through the schedule, President Johnson, sort of around the birthday period, he'd visit President Truman. I think probably the last time I recall was in I believe it was 1968, could be 1967, but in that time frame, and he visited him. We went to the house and they stood together on the

porch and took pictures and so on. Afterwards President Truman said, "Well, I'd like to go back to the airport with you," and Bess Truman just said, "No. Harry, it's time for your nap. I'm sorry, you're not going to the airport." He turned to Lyndon and said, "You see, as you get older you have someone boss you around and tell you what to do. You have to look forward to this." That sort of laughed it off and ended the subject, but he did not go.

An interesting story with that though. In an earlier visit to their home, I think it was probably in 1966, we went in. Normally before the President's visit we used to install telephones in the facility, in the location where the President would come, both for Secret Service and for the President. But Mrs. Truman told my advance man, she said, "I'm sorry, we don't have a phone. Don't have a phone in the home." I thought that was rather odd. Nevertheless, she said, "It's true. We don't believe in phones. We don't have a phone in the house, and if we need to use a phone we go down to the phone booth on the corner." I thought that was rather [odd].

But she said, "Now, Lyndon's coming. He's always a great favorite of mine. We'll let you put a telephone on the back porch with a long cord, and if he gets a call he can bring it in the kitchen and talk on it." And that's all we could do. He put a telephone installation on the back porch with a long cord, and he did get a call and took it into the house and talked in there.

Well, at the end of that visit, as they were coming from one of the functions and going back into the house, a lot of the photographers were following and the White House photographer, [Yoichi] Okamoto, was attempting to follow. She stopped him and

said, "Hold it just a minute. I don't allow photographers in my house." He said, "Why?" She said, "Well, I've got furniture that dates from World War I, old furniture. It suits me, it suits Harry. But I don't want anybody taking pictures of it, I don't want anybody making fun of it. We're not going to have it. You, you little old Japanese boy, you get off my porch." She told Okamoto this. Okamoto said, "Look, I'm the White House photographer. I'm working for President Johnson." She said, "I don't care who you work for, you get off my porch. I don't want you on my porch." So he came out in the yard. Bob Taylor and I were standing there during the argument. We were always the kidding kind, and we joked with him a little bit and said, "Oh, you Japanese kid, get away from us. You're terrible." Of course, we had been friends of Okamoto for years. But we said, "You get away from us." He was really burning about this. But she wouldn't allow them in the house. No photographers, and specifically Okamoto, no way. They did take pictures on the porch, and that's all they could do.

G: Was LBJ apprised of this situation later?

A: No, no. No, no. We never told him about that. It really wasn't a thing we would tell him about. It was just laughable to the Secret Service that heard it. Well, the press around it heard it. The press were really told, "You can't come in." They never wrote much about it, because they had great respect for Mrs. Truman and President Truman. Never said much about it.

G: LBJ presented Harry Truman with the number one Medicare card, didn't he?

A: Yes, but I don't remember much about that. I was not privy to that or present at the time he did. I do recall that he did, I read about it. But I don't know much about that.

G: Do you ever recall him talking about President Truman after these visits?

A: Oh, he'd always have some comment about it. He'd inject it in some speeches. One speech, he made it and went on to make a speech somewhere else--I think San Francisco. He made the comment he'd seen him at the Muehlebach Hotel. This was sometime in early 1965. He made the comment, "I've just been with one of the greatest Democratic presidents since Roosevelt died. Old Harry Truman, I visited with him at the Muehlebach. He's one of the greatest, and he's doing great." [He'd] just tell the people, he said, "He's a wonderful guy," that kind of compliment, always that kind. Nothing but compliments about him. I think he had a genuine respect for him. Part of it was palaver and politics, we knew that. But nevertheless, there was a genuine respect for him. He didn't have to make those trips. He gained maybe politically from it, but he didn't have to make them. He could have gotten public respect otherwise.

G: Did he ever get any advice from Truman during these visits?

A: You couldn't tell.

G: Really?

A: We never were privy to any of this where they talked together. You really had doubts, because their talks were never long enough or private enough to feel that he could. And what we saw of President Truman, ex-President Truman, in later years didn't lead us to believe that he would. He really didn't keep up with current events that close, I don't really think so. He might have gotten political advice, I don't know that. But I don't think in world events, no. I don't think so. President Truman was all interested in what he was doing, in terms of the Library, in terms of what he was doing day-to-day. But he

never attempted to talk to me or to my people, and I've spent hours with him over a period of time, in and out of his office there in the Library, there and the other times. He never got onto current events or onto politics. He never branched in that area. Always sticking to current, trivial subjects. So I have my doubts about it, but I never heard anything.

(Interruption)

On this particular trip we were informed of this only the day before the trip actually occurred.

G: This is the trip to Honolulu?

A: The trip to Honolulu, that's right. They chose the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, and we were given [the third floor], and all the guests were cleared off. My memory may be faulty, but I think it was the third floor. We cleared it all out. That was given to the presidential party. Now, the hotel itself is an old hotel, it's probably one of the older ones in Hawaii. It really had not many of the modern conveniences; it didn't have air conditioning, it didn't have modern communications. We had to literally start from scratch and wire the hotel. The main frame for it was on the roof, so we had to wire from the roof of the hotel-hang the wires over the side of the hotel and string them in the windows of the various suites on the third floor and apartments and rooms.

During the night that first night, which was a Friday night of I believe it's the second February, 1961, Jack Valenti was sleeping and we were laying wires across his bed, stringing wires across his bed. He woke up and wondered what in the world is going on, and they explained what it was and he went back to sleep.

But it was an interesting trip in that it showed that you could in fact [handle it].

That was the first--not really an overseas trip, but it was the first trip he'd taken outside of the continental United States with us. It had been so long since we had made an overseas trip that the whole organization was out of practice for it, Secret Service as well as us. So we had to get back in swing.

G: What lessons did you draw from this experience? How did you streamline your operation?

A: The main thing is, we found we had to develop a bit more flexibility, more mobility with our equipment. As he did out there on this, he changed his mind during the trip. He wanted to speak at the East-West Center, and we had nothing at the East-West Center. This was all in a matter of hours we had to arrange things. But we had to learn to get equipment that was flexible to the point--and the East-West Center was at the University of Hawaii. We had to get equipment that would match equipment as we'd find it. Sometimes they develop a low level or low resistance speaker system and you could go in and connect up without any problem. Others it was a high ohmic system and you couldn't do that. You had to have equipment that was especially designed and matched to it. So we had to start carrying both, equipment that would match both systems, and that's what resulted from that trip. We built our travel packages considerably different as a result of that one trip.

The other main thing we learned was that we're almost totally dependent on in any trip the commercial communications systems that exist, whether it be an AT&T or GT&E or an independent, we are totally dependent on them. Because we had to take

over whatever systems exist and they had to do the wiring; you had to depend on that group to do the wiring locally and change all the telephones out, change them back to our switchboard. Now, we did it within the twenty-four hour time frame we had, but it wasn't a simple thing. But without them it would have been impossible. No way. We could not have done it ourselves. As many people as I had, I could not have made the adjustment.

Witness that a year later when I'll talk later about the second trip to Hawaii, when we went out in preparation for the visit out there in 1967 [1968], just before Martin Luther King was killed. We had to abort and go back a week later. Now that's a massive trip we prepared for that time and yet we were better prepared because of this first trip, because we knew what we had to do, what we had the plan for, and what we could do. So it was a good traveling experience. But he really had not traveled anywhere in what we called an overseas environment up to that point, not anywhere. That was the first one.

G: Why do you think he didn't travel more outside the [states]?

A: Oh, I think his politics were mostly domestically oriented. I think that he felt when he took over as president after Kennedy was killed that he had a mission to try to pass the legislation that had been unable to pass, that Kennedy espoused but could not pass. So in the first hundred to hundred and eighty days he had an objective to pressing for that legislation. He had a control, a way with the Congress, that no president before him has ever had.

G: Now at that East-West Trade Center he, as I recall, gave very enthusiastic support to the idea of educational television.

A: That is correct, he did. That is the first time he had ever spoken of that in public, and he spoke of it very strongly and it gave a boost to all of the ETV programs throughout the United States. But that's where it opened, that's where it began.

G: Can you recall the genesis of this? Did he ever discuss this with you?

A: No. No. That was not anything I even knew about, I didn't see it. He didn't prepare for those kinds of speeches when he was going on the road. He'd have some speech writer, Doug Cater or somebody, write him a speech. Then he'd give it--he wouldn't rehearse it. The only speeches I ever got involved in in preparation for was like State of the Union or one where he's going on nationwide TV or where he was going to make a press conference. Sometimes he would rehearse those kinds of things, and I got in on it, but not this kind. He considered those more extemporaneous types of talks. (Interruption)

We were traveling from Stewart Air Force Base in New York over to Ellenville, New York. The motorcade was traveling around through the countryside. A crowd would gather. They'd heard something about it on the radio, and they would gather along the roadside as we traveled through. He'd stop the motorcade and get out and talk to them. Sometimes it would be five, seven, sometimes ten or twelve people. He'd talk to all of them, wherever he could. But as we were traveling and close to Ellenville suddenly the motorcade stopped. And we didn't know why. I didn't know why. I was in about the seventh or eighth car back in the motorcade. When it stopped to a dead standstill I went forward to see what it was, and here's a horse lying in the road. It looked like a fairly scrawny-looking horse, maybe of a trotting horse vintage, that kind, because that's trotting horse country up there. And the farmer is standing there talking to the Secret

Service and the first lead car, which is a police car from the state of New York, and he's irate. He said, "You killed my best racing horse and I want to get paid for it." Well, he wasn't going to move the horse, nor let them move the horse until he got paid for his horse.

So, we'd argued for oh, anywhere from five to seven minutes and suddenly the President gets out. He's about the third or fourth car back. He gets out and comes up and says, "What's the problem?" So they told him. He looked at the horse and he said, "Don't look like much of a horse." The farmer said, "Well, he's a trotting horse and he's a good lineage, and he's won many races up here in trotting. He's a very valuable horse," He said, "Well, what do you want for him?" They'd explained to him, the horse jumped over the fence and got in front of the motorcade and of course got hit by the lead car and got killed. He said, "Well, it ought to be worth a thousand dollars." The President looked, walked around and sort of looked at him. He said, "He don't look like any thousand dollar horse to me." He said, "Well, no, now he doesn't. He's dead. But he was worth that." He said, "What would you take for him?" He said, "Well, I'll take a thousand dollars." The President said, "I'll give you five hundred." He said, "Well, I'll split the difference, how about seven-fifty?" He was a trader, too, you know. The President said, "Okay, seven-fifty." He turned to the Secret Service [man] and said, "Pay him." The Secret Service [man] said, "Pay him? We don't have any money." He said, "Who's got money?" And he said, "Albright. He's the only man who carries money with him." I always carried an impress fund in cash. The President turned around and said, "What's the problem? Pay the man and let's get on! We're going to Ellenville!" So I drug out

seven hundred and fifty dollars, paid the guy and got a receipt for the thing, one dead horse, got in the car and we went out.

We get back to Washington, and I don't know, we went on to these other locations here. I guess it was to Vermont and Lewiston, Maine and New Hampshire and New Brunswick and finally to Campobello Island and back home. So the following week, I guess it was the twenty-first, twenty-third [August 1966], somewhere in there, I submitted my voucher to clear my account. I put on there "One dead horse, seven hundred and fifty dollars." It got to the finance officer and he called me, "You've got to be kidding! You can't put a dead horse on your finance voucher." I said, "Oh, yes I can. That's what happened. You see the receipt for it?" He said, "Yes, but that's not a deductible item." I said, "Oh, my God, I got a novice here."

So I called my boss, who was [Lt.] General Alfred Starbird. General Starbird called somebody in Defense, and somebody in Defense called somebody in Treasury, and Treasury filtered down. This poor finance officer somewhere down the line an hour or so later called me and he said, "Come get your money." So I went over there and he wrote it off and signed it. So I still have the voucher somewhere in my records where he said, "One dead horse." He paid for it just to clear the records.

G: He met with Lester Pearson in Canada, I think?

A: In Campobello, that's right he did.

G: Do you remember anything about that?

A: No, other than the fact that they had a meeting and they made no real speeches, they made no communiques from it. But they had this speech up there and they met up in

FDR's old house up in Campobello Island, what they call FDR's hideaway or something--Shangri La I guess is what they called the place up there.

G: Did he ever talk about FDR when he was there?

A: Not a great deal. Oh, he made a few comments about it, "one of the great presidents" and so on. He really was not one to dwell on history that much. In private he never had much to say about it.

(Interruption)

This particular trip was the first place we had done the research work on the nuclear development, and it's the first peaceful development at Pocatello [Idaho]. He dedicated a space science building there and accepted an honorary degree from the University of Denver thereafter, he went on down to Denver to accept it. But the first site--we had been out and prepared a site for them. We anticipated about ten thousand people to come and hear him. So we contracted with a local firm to put in a public address system for him. We had some huge speakers, amplifiers, but he was also contracted to be on nationwide TV, and so we had connected for that. Just as all the preliminaries--the Governor of the state of Idaho and so on all were there to make their preliminary political talks and introduce the various dignitaries. About the time the President got up, the public address system quit. It literally quit, nothing. So my people were scurrying out in front, pulling plugs and shoving this and shoving that, trying to figure what was wrong. The President was up there and looking around at me and looking at Marvin Watson out of the corner of his eye, and Marvin [was] saying, "What's wrong?" And I'd say, "Keep talking, keep talking." Well, I wanted him to keep talking because it was on nationwide

TV. Well, he did keep talking. He kept making snide remarks about it, you know, "the public address system don't work, they wonder what I'm saying out there. But I hope you people out in TV can hear me" and so on. He did talk for four-and-a-half minutes and finally it came back on.

He finished his speech and got back on his helicopter. I got on another helicopter. We flew back over to the air base and flew down to Denver, which wasn't a long flight, he called me in and said, "What happened?" I said, "Mr. President, I really don't know. I'm waiting for a report." I had a fellow on the ground--a Major Taylor, Joe Taylor, and I said, "I'm waiting on him to tell me." Now some of that is in this other thing [Interview I]; you'll see some duplication. But that's where it was. I said, "Well, I don't know, but I'm waiting on a call from Joe Taylor."

Well, I finally subsequently got hold of Joe Taylor, and he told me, said, "Well, we had what is known as a hot short, a hot solder. As it got hot, the solder"--that's S-O-L-D-E-R, see, I've spelled it all wrong in the early interpretation of this thing. But, it came apart. As it got hot it broke loose, and that's an unusual type of a defect in electrical equipment. But it did. The President said, "My God, I'm glad you found it." I made the mistake of saying, "No, we didn't find it." He said, "You mean it could have quit again?" I said, "Yes," and he augered right through the roof. He said, "Oh, my God. Next time I'm up there, when I'm talking, you walk out in front of me and say, 'Hold it, Mr. President, stop talking, just sit down until I get it fixed.'" I said, "Mr. President, I can't do that. My God! You're on nationwide TV." He said, "I don't really care how many people are listening. You're standing there with ten thousand people looking at you and

they're watching your chops moving and somebody is saying, 'What in the hell is he talking about?' Really, that's a critical thing; you don't want to do that. Stop me next time!" But, well, I didn't ever stop him. I never stopped him again.

G: Did it ever happen again?

A: Oh, yes. My God! It happened a number of times. (Laughter) That's just one of many, but it wasn't as obvious to him as that one. I had failures a number of times after that.

G: Let's talk about that next Hawaiian trip, October, 1966.

A: Actually this was just an overnight stop; all he did, he spent the night there. We stopped in Hawaii.

Going back a bit, we had a pre-trip group that made the trip. We left on the first day of October, 1966, and we got back on the sixteenth. We turned around and left with him on the morning of the seventeenth and went back with him again for the same trip. We were dead, dead on our feet.

But at any rate, his trip, we arrived in Hawaii on the seventeenth. He got there and spent the night. Raining like hell, we got off the plane, just pouring rain. I mean just buckets. Every cable was up off the ground and the system was muffled in part at the airport because of the water on the cables. It wasn't a good arrival at all.

But anyway, he went downtown, spent the night. As a matter of fact, he didn't spend the night, he just stopped there and made a speech and went on to Pago Pago.

Now in Pago Pago we stopped again for the ceremonies, and we had ceremonies there while they were refueling the plane. He made a couple of speeches there. The most interesting thing is they had the native dances and the native ceremony. He had to drink

some of this kava kava, and some of this is pretty horrible brew that they come up with out there, highly alcoholic but tastes like a very bad bitter coffee, but it's got some native fruits and stuff in it. He'd make a face and so on. But anyway, he drank that stuff.

Then we went on to Pago Pago--that's American Samoa--and then finally wound [up] in Wellington, New Zealand. Now this was an interesting trip. He spent I believe a full night there. Yes, that's right, one full day. We went up to visit the Maori village up in the hills and then came back and visited and he spoke at the New Zealand congress. He made some trips around town to a couple of historical sites there. A very interesting trip, went on very well. But we had enough notice, we had people in place. It's one of the few times for President Johnson I was able to prepare for him. Most of the time he really sort of gave you one day or two, and then he'd give me hell and smile at me as [if] to [say] "See, I told you you could do it. No problem at all."

G: Then he flew to Australia I guess after that.

A: He flew then, right, to Canberra. Canberra became our center of operations, and from Canberra, we stayed there I guess two days, flew one day over to Sydney, flew back to there. I don't know what came out of it, but one that came, we had a picnic out at the Ambassador's ranch. He had a ranch, out in the country. He put on a very nice feed. I'm embarrassed to say [I can't think of] the Ambassador's name. I can see the guy. A fellow who was from Texas, the Ambassador--

G: Ed Clark, wasn't it?

A: Yes, that's right, Ed Clark. A very nice gentleman, mustache you know, a very congenial fellow. He and his wife received the press out at his ranch. He had a little barbecue, and

he put on sort of entertainment out there. The President stayed out there for several hours, and then he flew back and we all went back to town.

Then the following day we flew up, stopped at Townsville, and then went on up to Darwin, refueled, and then finally on to Manila.

G: Now he had been stationed in Australia during World War II.

A: Yes. I didn't realize how long he had been there, but I guess some of it had been in the Darwin area, Townsville.

G: Did he talk about it?

A: He reminisced about it a little bit, yes, at the picnic. He didn't do much of that other places. But he made a speech at each of these stops where he'd stop, Townsville and Darwin. He [said], Well, I'm coming back for the first time since 1944"-I guess it as when he was there.

G: 1942, yes. 1942 it was I think.

A: Oh, no, it was later than that. 1942, no. We didn't have anybody there in 1942.

G: Well, he was there.

A: 1943 maybe.

G: No, it was 1942. Yes.

A: 1942. Gee, Pearl Harbor was in--

G: December of 1941.

A: 1941. And then he went down there.

G: Well, summer of 1942 was when it was.

A: It could have been, they moved anybody, people down there to Guadalcanal at that time, but I didn't realize we had a lot of people in Australia that early. I thought it was a little later we got people into there. But maybe anyway it was. But he spoke about his trip down in there, his time in there.

G: So you went on to Manila from there?

A: Manila, right. And they had the conference there in Manila. We were there I guess--they show here as two days.

G: This was the conference with the other heads of state.

A: Southeast Asian Conference, that's right. Now he spoke to almost all of them during that time frame. Some of them he was trying to reach some sort of a consensus with them. I don't know whether he did or not. He made a number of talks while he was there.

G: Was he pleased with the way it was going there? Did his mood seem positive?

A: Yes, I think so. I think that he felt that he was being supported in general by that crowd there that he met there, particularly the Thai and the Malaysian group, because he agreed at that point and we then consisted to modify it to continue on. We had already done some preliminary work, but he would not if he hadn't met them there and made some sort of an agreement to continue with them. We went on from there to Thailand and then into Malaysia.

One of the interesting things that came out of this, and I got one of the chewings I had. They had a rice institute down south of Manila and he went down to make a speech at this rice institute. This was arranged by Tyler Abell. Tyler Abell was [assistant] postmaster general at that time, but he was also an advanceman on this particular trip.

We went down there and we made arrangements for this presentation, and Tyler Abell came in at the last minute and started changing things around. But he was just about to screw things up good, when I heard about it and I overruled him and said, "No, we're not going to do it that way." He had taken the President's podium out. The President would get mad. He would come in and if he didn't find the circumstance he liked in a presentation view really, he would get very unhappy. So he told me later, "You're not going to let somebody like Tyler Abell tell you what to do, are you?" I said, "No, I'm not," and he didn't. But we put it back in place. We moved Tyler Abell out and shoved him all up to Korea. He went ahead of us on a jump to the Korean site.

But he made the speech at the rice institute. This was generally where we agreed to provide some assistance to that rice institute to try to proliferate the fast-growing rice that they had come up with, very prolific rice for Southeast Asia, for Malaysia, for Thailand and for Vietnam. They agreed to move some of that out there under the auspices of that rice institute.

G: He did go to Vietnam then, didn't he?

A: He went to Vietnam the following morning. I was rudely awakened at two o'clock. I knew something was wrong. I knew that something was going to happen, because I was told to be at the naval base at Subic Bay at something like five-thirty, six in the morning. Well, I was. I was the only member of my group that could be there. Nobody else from the White House Communications [Agency] was there. We got on a plane, the President's plane, the single 707, the presidential aircraft, and flew to Vietnam.

Then we got there. So he told me, he said, "I'm going to visit the troops in the hospital. When I come back I want to have it set up for a speech." I said, "Well, I'll be able to record it. There's not going to be any podium." He said, "Where is the podium?" I said, "Podium? You wouldn't let me bring anybody. You just said me, and I'm here all alone. I've got microphones prepared for your speech and we'll record you, but you're not going to talk into any podium or anything, presidential podium. There's not going to be any presidential seal. You're just going to get up and talk to the troops, Mr. President." Well, he said okay. He sort of accepted it, but some of the other aides there thought I should have brought the whole--and I said, "Well, that's really wonderful to think. That's a four-hundred-pound podium, and you've got me here alone. So. . . ."

He did talk to the troops. We fixed it up, and we recorded it. It was a very, very hush-hush trip, a lot of security involved in the thing. He really had told [General William] Westmoreland that he was coming, and that's about the only one that knew there that he was coming into there.

G: How did he feel about that trip? Did the experience influence him in one way or another?

A: Well, yes, it did, it sort of touched him. Because on the way back he'd talk to us about it; he talked to me about it and a couple of others, Marvin Watson, Jake Jacobsen, a couple of others were on there. He felt he had really had a meaningful trip to him. He felt he had done something that was important to the troops in Vietnam. He always felt strongly about Vietnam. He felt that it was right, he felt we were doing the right thing. Even though, as he says, his detractors didn't feel that way, he felt that he was.

G: Did he also feel that it was important for him to be there to show a measure of support for the troops?

A: Yes, that's why he went. He would not have gone otherwise. He really felt that it was important. He didn't feel as many people did that he was putting his life in danger; he never felt that way. He never worried about his life really, per se. He never felt there was anybody that was really anxious to kill him.

G: He never had a fear of assassination?

A: Not at that time, he did not. He developed some of it later, but not at that time. And certainly out there he had no fear. These were among his people. These people in Vietnam were his--you ask the British, the Australians, whatever was there for him were all friends of his. They were people that were supporting the same things that he supported, support for the Vietnamese. And certainly the Vietnamese that he dealt with, they were there, they were still in power because U.S. forces were there. And so, no, he had no concern about that kind of visit; he felt good about the visit.

But an interesting thing happened. Interesting thing looking back on it, it wasn't too funny at the time. As we left there he asked me, "Did you get a copy of the tape?" I said, "Yes, we brought one and I have one." He said, "Well, I tell you what, I want to go on nationwide TV when I arrive back in Manila." International TV. And I said, "Mr. President, fine, all right. We can probably arrange this. It probably will be tape recorded, and we'd have to go out to one of the TV studios and record. I can arrange that." He said, "But I want to use the teleprompter." I said, "Now wait a minute, Mr. President. I asked you specifically, you personally, did you want us to bring the

teleprompters before we came and you said, 'No. it's too much weight.' So we didn't bring it. That's some we cut out, six hundred pounds. We just cut down in the weight of the things we were hauling around. And you said, 'All right, don't bring it. It's too much!'" I said, "You don't have them." He said, "Well, don't they have those out here?" I said, "No! They don't have them all over the world! They might have some elementary ones in Japan." He said, "Well, I don't care where you get them. Get me one by tomorrow morning!" I said, "Well, I'll try, but I'm not betting that I'll have it." He said, "Well, I don't tell you all my problems. Just find one."

Well, I called back to my people in Manila from the air after we took off from Cam Ranh Bay and I told them what I wanted. Then I had a very good man in Manila, Jack Rubley, who is now the head of communications for the ICA, Interagency [International] Communications Agency. I said, "Jack, the President wants to make a TV recording and go on worldwide TV. So you're going to have to record it in the morning; when he comes back he wants to record. It's going to be late at night. But he wants to go on the TV." He said, "Well, would he be willing to wait until in the morning? I can get him on nationwide TV easier in the morning. Time-wise it's just not right tonight." "But," I said, "he wants the teleprompter." He said, "You know we don't have a teleprompter out here." I said, "I know that and you know that. But just find one, Jack." "My God," he said, "you give me some of the damnedest jobs." I said, "Don't tell me your problems, Jack. That's what he told me." So, we left it laughing like that.

Well, when he [Johnson] got back it so happened he changed his mind before he got home. He didn't want to make a recording that night. He said, "I tell you what, I'll do

it first thing in the morning. But you have it ready at say nine in the morning." So, okay. That would give us an overnight. But Jack had it ready. We could have gone to a studio and recorded it for TV that night. But we put it off until the following morning, sent him out there and did record it. They had a form of teleprompter, some things that he could look at and the tape could be put on there. We did do that and he recorded it the following morning. Generally it was a short message about his feelings about his trip in to Vietnam and why he went there.

G: Why did he change his mind, do you think, so many times on things like this?

A: You mean on the way home?

G: No, just in general on last minute changes, last minute decisions, changing his mind on whether or not he wants to use this or wants to speak from this podium or that podium, and things like that.

A: I never did figure him out really. I never really understood him that complete. I could have understood more if the circumstances had changed or if there had been an incident or something to upset him or if somebody had called and told him about some press release or something. But I didn't often see those things that caused them. But I concluded in general he got tired. Maybe the circumstance appeared to change for him, and so he'd say, "Well, okay, I'm tired tonight. We're not going to do it tonight. Let's change it and do it in the morning." I have to adjust it maybe to tiredness, maybe to his age, maybe to the fact that the trip itself was bearing on him. I never was critical of him for doing this. I just reacted to, that was all I could do. And there were times [when] I was there, yes. I moaned and groaned about him doing it. But in retrospect, no, I think

that some of that was just a fact of the pressures of the office. (Interruption) Before we left, we were preparing to leave the Philippines and about that night, I guess it was somewhere around two o'clock in the morning, I get a call from Korea. My advance man in Korea tells me, said, "We got a problem up here." "Now," he said, "the problem is, we wanted to use a podium, the President's podium, up here in Korea but we got a fellow by the name of Tyler Abell who sent some advance word up here. Hackler is here, Loyd Hackler"--he was acting as the advance man on that particular trip--"but they say no, we've got to use one that's built in, that's short, that fits the Korean president and matches the decor and all this stuff, and they've gone ahead and had it built." And it's high. Oh, it was a massive speech environment. He was trying to speak to about two million people from a conjunction of a whole series of where roads radiated into a square, I don't know, it was seven, eight, ten roads came to one point in the center of Seoul. A massive and a very impressive sight. But we'd built this thing up off the ground, some seventy-five or a hundred feet, and looking down these roads you could see this thing from all directions. So they were going to make sort of a dais, a real impressive affair. And they didn't think this President's podium would fit in that environment or would show.

I said, "Look"--this is my man, it's Jim Adams, and I said, "Jim, look, please. The President told me again tonight, he said he wants to speak at that podium up there. So don't argue with him and we're not going to take any argument. Tell them to put that podium up." So he said, "All right. I'll tell them."

Well, another hour later I'm now asleep. I'm in the hotel in Manila asleep. I get a telephone call and he said, "Sorry. They say nope, they won't do it. They're not going to

do it." And I said, "Who do they want to call them?" He said, "Well, they want Marvin Watson to call them if there's a change. I said, "Marvin ain't going to like it, I'm going to wake him up." So I called him and woke him up. "Yes, Colonel, what's the problem?" I said, "Loyd won't change it. Loyd Hackler says we're going to use that built-in podium, he will not use a presidential podium." "Didn't you tell him what we told you?" I said, "Yes." "And he still insists?" I said, "That's right. He wants to talk to you." "He'll be sorry he did. Would you get him on the phone and then give me the call?" I said, "Yes."

I said, "Okay, Jim, get him on the phone and then give it to me, and I've got Brother Watson standing by. He's mad. He's waked him up, and he's not happy. So Loyd may get a few words. But if you want to put a bug in his ear, you can save him a lot of grief. Marvin is going to just chew his ass out, and he just says it's going to change, it's going to be the presidential podium. Now, if he wants to hear it from you, fine. If he wants to hear it from Marvin, fine." So a few minutes back, he said, "No, he's got to hear it." So I said, "Okay. Is, he on?" "Yes. I said, "Just a minute." I told the operator to give Marvin the call. Marvin came on and I said, "I want a conference, listen." Marvin said, "Loyd"--he could be very quiet sometimes, but very subtle, but very understanding. "Loyd, what did Colonel Albright's advance man tell you?" Loyd said, "Well, I'm doing what Tyler Abell told me. He told me he wanted this built-up podium up here and all this. It's what he said. He said, 'Don't deviate.'" And he [Marvin] said, "And since that time they've told you that the President has told me and I've told Colonel Albright, I want that podium up there. Did you understand that?" He said, "Yes, Marvin. They've told me that." He said, "Then, goddamn it, listen to them! Listen to them! Take that son-of-

a-bitch out!"--and Marvin didn't normally curse, Marvin is a very religious man. He said, "Just take that son-of-a-bitch out and put the President's podium in the middle of it. You clear?" "Yes, Marvin. Thank you." Wham! Marvin didn't lose his temper very often, but he did that night, and when we were out in Korea that's what it was.

G: Tell me about the crowd in Korea.

A: Oh, my God, a tremendous crowd. I don't have any way to judge it. We saw really only the piece of it as we drove in from the airport. There must have been a million lining the street. They turned out every school in Seoul. They trucked them in from all over the countryside. Every little kid from that high up to as high as I could reach--really a tremendous crowd. Most of it school kids and people from out of their houses. They were all out to greet, you know, flowers and everything. A real tremendous greeting. You have to read it as planned, you can't read it as spontaneous. But they were there. But when you got this speech environment as far as you could see, I've never seen that many people in my life and I've seen speech environments with a half million, three-quarter million. I have to guess well over a million or more in the streets, as far as you could see up seven ways and at every road, solid. And they had speakers built over those roads where they could all hear. But they were there, a tremendous crowd. I've never seen such a crowd in my life, before or since. Never.

G: I gather Johnson was very impressed with the size of the crowd.

A: He was. He made the comment, said, "That's the biggest crowd I've ever seen. I've seen a lot of Mexicans in my time, but never ever seen this." No, he was real pleased with it.

We went on then to Thailand. The President took a day, or a night I guess, he went out in the Padioc [?], which is a resort area down on the Gulf of Siam, and stayed overnight and we went on into Bangkok. He came into Bangkok for the formal meetings with the government of Thailand the following day. They did the usual things. They visited the universities there, Chulalongkorn [University]. They put the wreaths at the tombs of the heroes. They appeared in the parades downtown. All the usual things there, nothing that I recall other than that, nothing significant as a statement came out. Now you recall the Thais of course were with us in Vietnam; they were fighting with us, had two divisions over there and were fighting with us. But they were supporting us all the way. So he knew nothing but support in that country, too.

We left the following day and flew to Kuala Lumpur. And Kuala Lumpur gave him quite an impressive greeting and lined the streets. Now it's about nine or ten miles from the airport into the city, it's quite a ways. And the roads were lined all the way.

G: That's in Malaysia, is that right?

A: Malaysia. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, is the capital. And quite a crowd. Oh, it's a country of-I don't know, I don't remember the population, but it's on the order of twelve, fourteen million. The capital city itself is roughly a half, three-quarter million. But the crowd was out, it was there. Well done. Stayed one day and then we went on to Korea from there, with two days in Korea. Met at the airport, usual festivities at the airport, made this tremendous motorcade in, the speech before that huge crowd, appeared before the governing body of Korea, visited a few more historical sites. Visited the troops. We had quite a number of troops in Korea. He visited some of the divisions over there.

And then finally we came home to Alaska, stopping in Alaska for a visit. We were going to go downtown and spend the night. They first said we were going to stay overnight and changed it and didn't. But we came downtown for a rally; they had a bonfire and we drove down through a motorcade and got into the town.

An interesting one came from that, as we returned. We got on the plane in Alaska to leave. I was on the number-two plane then, he was obviously on the presidential [plane]. He called over and said, "We're going to go into not Andrews but Dulles." Now our original plan was to go back into Andrews, no crowd, quietly slip in. But after this trip he wanted a successful arrival and he wanted nationwide TV and a speech. Now, he had planned neither of those. So he said to me, "Fix it up at Dulles." So I called back to Washington from the air and they said, "Man, it's a bad night here. It is pouring rain. The winds are thirty-five, forty miles an hour. I don't know how you're ever going to do it." I said, "Well, okay. Move your material out to Dulles and go ahead. Maybe the weather will clear. We are now six hours away from there so maybe it will clear." Well, three hours out I called back and they said, "Well, it's still windy. It's still gusty." I said, "Well, the President said put it up outside. He wants to do it outside." Now some of that is in that other [interview], you've heard it. But that same story is there. So I don't need to repeat this story.

G: That's the content of it?

A: That's the story, right. That's the context of this. The President said, "I want to do it outside." Then when the wind was so bad, the Secret Service said, "No, you can't do it out here. You can't put that thing up." I went to the President and to Watson and Watson

said, "You're not going to let the Secret Service tell you what to do." and I said, "When it's safety, yes, I am." So they finally accepted some modification of the plan, and he said, "Put it inside," so we did. Then it cleared up, and he said, "Put it outside." I put it outside and as he got off the plane the top turned loose and it rained all over him and everybody. We really had a mess. I just grinned at him and I said, "You wanted it outside, we got it outside."

G: When he was traveling overseas, particularly in an area like Vietnam, was there a division of security between Secret Service and military? Where did one's responsibility end and the other begin I wonder?

A: The Secret Service was always in charge of the security of the President. What they did is they assigned certain functions and certain tasks to the military and they carried them out. There was complete cooperation, but there was never a question of who was in charge. Secret Service always laid out the plans and the others said, "Now, we can do this, we can do this, we'd like to do this, we're prepared to do this and this and this," and the Secret Service is saying, "Nope. You will do this, you will do this, you will do this." Always in charge. Never was a question of that. Even the FBI, where they cooperated, there was never a question. The Secret Service were always in charge.

(Interruption)

G: --start with that. The Punta del Este [conference].

A: In April of 1967 there was a plan to hold a conference of the American chiefs of state in Punta del Este, Uruguay. Now, this was interesting in that if you had made an effort to pick a place that was one of the more difficult places to hold a conference, land to pick a

time of year when it would be most difficult to accommodate seven hundred, eight hundred people., you couldn't have picked one. This one is a resort area. It's one of the leading resort areas in all of the east coast of South America for that time of year. This is a sunbathers' paradise. This is the summertime down there. These people are there by the thousands, the bathers, the families, they rent places year after year after year, every beach, every condominium, every house, every motel, every hotel, all taken up., And somebody picked that time of year at that location to have it.

The second is, there are no telephones in the area, there are no communication to the United States from that area. And they picked that as an area. You could have picked any other major city and we might have done better. But they picked the world's worst, and that's why. But they didn't look at that. They never think of that. They think of a place that--it makes a fine-sounding name undoubtedly. It might have a nice historic value in future years, nobody has had a conference there in a hundred years. They pick out these strange things. I don't know why they do or what prompted that place. I never figured it yet, but I know they did. And from the time we first knew about it, we had our problems. Interesting story with that, I think I've told it on the other tape, about the trip with Bill Moyers when he and I went down there. Isn't that on the tape?

G: I'm not sure.

A: Well, interesting story then. In February, 1967 Bill Moyers and I were given a task to go to Uruguay incognito, unannounced, and we were to fly in not the same identifiable positions we held--he was press secretary and I was chief of White House Communications [Agency]. We flew Varig Airlines through Rio [de Janeiro] to Buenos

Aires. When we were in Rio we did not go into the airport, could not. We stayed in the airport [airplane], and walked around the plane, walked around the outside, we didn't go inside at all. Someone came up to Bill Moyers and tried to talk to him and he kept saying [he] didn't speak English, didn't speak Spanish, and so they left him alone. They finally came to me and said, "Isn't that Bill Moyers?" and I say, "No, no, no, you're mistaken. That's my secretary. He's a male secretary, travels with me all the time." That's what we agreed would be the cover story. So they dropped it and left him alone and nobody did. And so we went that way.

We arrived in Buenos Aires and the Embassy personnel met us, the Deputy Chief of Mission. En route from the airport into town, the driver and I were in the front, Bill Moyers and the Deputy Chief of Mission were in the back seat and Bill was sitting behind me. We pulled up behind a car that was ahead of us at the cross walk, but the car behind us didn't stop, and hit us. I mean, full tilt. Bang! Bill's briefcase came forward, caught me in the back of the head, threw me into the dashboard under the seat, threw Bill off the seat. I mean he hit hard, it wasn't any light one. Well, here we are three cars in a row--and we hit the car ahead of us now, mind you. Now we've got a three-car accident. Well, Bill said, "We got to get out of here. We can't be identified in the accident." So we bailed out--they did. The two of them, the DCM and Bill bailed out of there, ran off and left us, took taxis and went off to town. Well, here now I'm injured. I've got a cut on the knee, a cut underneath the knee, from there, I've got a knot on the back of my head. I'm not hurt anywhere, I'm not in any danger, but I'm limping all over the place, you know, and I'm trying to answer questions. Of course the driver speaks not enough English to

even talk about, and I speak not enough Spanish to even talk about, and I'm trying to convince these guys that I'm headed for the American Embassy, it's an American Embassy car, so they'd release us. Now the car is capable of running, there's not a problem of that, it's the question we're tied between two cars and they won't let us go. The police are there on the scene.

Well, [to make] a long story short, about thirty, forty minutes later we did get free, we went to the Embassy, and of course Bill was there and the DCM was there in the Embassy. They brought in a woman doctor and she examined my leg and wrapped it up, bandaged it up, put it in a knee stocking from here to here, bandaged my head and gave me some aspirin and this kind of stuff. Well, I couldn't go home because Bill and I had to go on to Uruguay.

So then they arranged for the military attache to fly us to Uruguay, mind you. Now he's got an old antiquated DC-3, so Bill and I clandestinely go out to the airport and crawl on this DC-3 and grab our baggage and haul it on there and then they'd drag us--we fly across to Uruguay and again the same old story. Everywhere we go we're sneaking around behind the bars to talk to people. So we talked to people in Uruguay about the conditions there. We go out to Punta del Este and look at it, we talk about the various things. I tried to find out about communications without tipping anybody off of what's coming off, that the President in fact is coming down. Now, people inside the Embassy knew it, there's not any doubt about that. We had to tell somebody. You couldn't do that. But the people in the government itself of Uruguay and of Argentina never were told.

We didn't tell them. Until later they announced this meeting. We didn't tell another body. But we arranged for all that in advance.

Then we went back and told him, yes, there was sufficient--yes, the Embassy said yes, we can take over a floor of the hotel. Yes, they can throw people out of the hotel. But they never visualized the response they would have to that. They thought we might have as many as a hundred, hundred and fifty. We had about seven hundred people wanting to go to that damn thing, and they had a real problem later. The Embassy had the problem, with about four hundred press, about a hundred and fifty of support, and then of course the political groups in the White House, et cetera. About seven hundred and fifty total. It was a real madhouse. I felt sorry for them.

Anyway, we went in there. The conference was held. The conference was reasonably successful. We had high frequency. We brought the USS Wright I guess down, the aircraft carrier, which was a communications ship. It stood off shore. We gave communications back through it back to Washington. And at three o'clock the morning of the last day they were scheduled to leave about eight in the morning, had a blackout, all communications failed. Everything. All north-south communications on HF ended. Now, why did it save my ass? There is a cable that runs down the east coast of South America and it was installed--I don't recall the year, but many, many years ago, a real low-speed, single channel cable. Now why you'd spend that much money for one cable, I don't know. But it did. It was a teletype cable installed for the news services. Western Union International controlled it. It was forty-five baud circuit, which is--oh, forty-five baud is around fifty-five, fifty-seven words a minute. But it did pass traffic,

and that one was the only thing that operated, we could pass traffic. If we had had to have a message--we didn't have to--but if we had had to have a message passed either way for emergency purposes, that's all we had. We had no voice, no other messages, no high frequency between that part of South America and North America for that period of time, between four and six a.m.

Well, I caught hell from the President. I mean, he asked me, "What would you have done if I had wanted to make a call?" I said, "You wouldn't have made a call. You'd just have had to give me all the hell you want. There isn't anything you could do." He said, "Well, why didn't you arrange something better than that?" I said, "What could I"--we didn't have any satellites up then you see at that point that we could use. "What could I have done that's better, Mr. President? We couldn't do anything with that. We were dependent on high frequency." Now today you've got an easy thing; there's no problem today.

G: Just use satellites.

A: Use a satellite. And when they travel they do carry satellite terminals. But I tell you, that was a risky business.

G: You would have thought the National Security Council or some group within the White House would have said you can't have the conference here because we don't have [communication facilities].

A: They would like to have. But they assured him, "Well, we've got six HF circuits with the Wright and four of them commercially from Montevideo, and three of them from Buenos Aires. We've got connections microwaved to Buenos Aires." We showed commercially

we could have all these interconnections; it all looked good on paper. But when that blackout spot came, when the sun spot hit, it took it, it took it all. And it happens once every eleven to fourteen years. There's an eleven-year sun spot cycle, and you're not certain whether it's going to be that eleven-year or the thirteen, fourteen, fifteen-year. But it could be an eleven-year cycle, and it happens.

G: Did you have a chance to observe LBJ's interaction with the Latin American heads of state, people like Eduardo Frei?

A: No, very limited really. No, I didn't. All it is, I heard him talk about it later.

G: What did he say about it?

A: He was never really comfortable with those people. He feels more comfortable with a European than he did with the Latins.

G: Really?

A: Yes, he did.

G: Well now, this is odd, since he came from Texas.

A: It doesn't matter. You never heard his comments he used to make about the Mexicans. He used to think, "Goddamned Mexicans." He used to speak fairly lowly of them I'd say. He watched the others with suspicions. He didn't trust people such as the Frenchman and so on. He'd have suspicions about them, he'd laugh about them sometimes. But in general, he trusted the British probably more than anybody. He was more comfortable with the British. I think it's an understanding a language maybe that made the difference. Where he had to depend on a translator, he never felt comfortable at it. I think that's the main reason.

G: Did he understand much Spanish himself, do you think?

A: No. Just enough to talk to the Mexicans on his ranch, "vaminos" and this kind of [thing] is about the extent of it. He couldn't get much beyond that. He used to talk to them now and then. "Como esta?" and "Bien, no mas" and that's where it ended sort of. I used to laugh at his Spanish. I'd hear him riding around in his car and saying, "Buenos dias, Juan." I said, "You speak the language?" He said, "That was it." Not really. He claimed he did earlier years, but he said, "As you get older, you forget." Which is probably right.
(Interruption)

G: Let's start here. Okay.

A: Glassboro, New Jersey is a very small town, I might say a real rural, a real country town. I'm sure the people of Glassboro probably wouldn't appreciate that description, but that's the way I'd describe it. A town of at the most four thousand people. But it has a consolidated school and during the daytime the town is larger because of the number of students, coming into town. But they chose this particular town because it had a historic house in there that they wanted to use for this purpose. Hollybush was the name of the place. So we got about three days notice on this.

The other major problem was that it is not on a major route of communications, and yet they wanted to make this a major television-radio nationwide appearance. So the telephone companies had to break their back, they had to literally build facilities from the Philadelphia area over there to that area, all overnight. It cost them hundreds of thousands of dollars to provide television coverage in that area, live television coverage.

They had no capability to originate television there. None. So it was interesting in that regard in that it took tremendous amounts of efforts on many people's parts.

Now, nobody could stay there to speak of. There wasn't a motel in town. There wasn't a hotel, motel, no nothing. The nearest was about, oh, twenty-five, thirty miles away, or Atlantic City, which was about forty-five to sixty, I don't remember the exact distance, but about that. Or the other way, you could come to Penn-Jersey about the same distance. But it was just an interesting trip. Yet they met for some three to four hours, maximum, had lunch together and talked. But it was interesting in that we got a chance to bring then the Premier of Russia, Kosygin, to talk to us. I think that's probably the first time we met him except under the auspices of something like either at the United Nation environment or in a Washington environment. We hadn't met him in the other environments. Now, during the war they had of course, but I mean since that time.

G: Did he have his own communications requirements?

A: They don't worry about it. When they're in this country they really don't have--see, their chain of command is not quite the same. In our country a president is always a president, no matter where he is or what he's doing. He cannot abrogate it. The exception to it is recent legislation where when he is incapacitated that the vice president assumes the responsibilities of the president until he becomes capable of carrying out the duties again. That's an exception to it. But it's a rarity in which you'll ever see that occur. I don't know whether you'll ever see it. But in the case of the Soviet Union they've got a hierarchy that would occur even if something happened to him. It wouldn't matter. They've got a set

S.O.P. or standard of procedure that occurs, and so I don't think they need that kind of a rigid communication system.

G: Well, was President Johnson disappointed with the lack of substantive accomplishments there at Glassboro?

A: If he was, he didn't show it at all. He was grateful for the work he got and the chance to meet and he expressed it that day. But later he expressed it to us as grateful for the support he got in this quick reaction, which is what he called it. This was really done on a spur of the moment, only about three days notice.

G: Anything on his interaction with Kosygin?

A: No, we wouldn't have heard that at all. It would only have been a political advisor that would have gotten any feel for that kind of thing.

(Interruption)

Normally in our work at the White House the President--and by precedent it had been habit not to wear uniforms for the military personnel, just to keep a low profile, partially because the White House never desired to appear there were large numbers of military people in support of them. So I never wore a uniform. The President called me on that particular day, the tenth day of November. I had gotten off a plane at Dulles Airport, a Braniff Airline plane, somewhere around noon and I was en route from the airport home when I got a call from Watson, who asked where I was. I informed him I was en route home. He said the President wanted to talk to me. So I stopped, called on the phone and talked to the President. And the President said, "Where are you?" and I told him. He said, "Let's go visit the troops." I said, "Which troops?" He said, "The US

troops, army, navy and air force. You got your uniform on?" I said, "Mr. President, I haven't worn a uniform but a couple of times since I've been in the job with you. Yes, I've got one. Do you want me to wear it?" He said, "Go home and get it on and meet me at Andrews in two hours."

Well, this is now twelve, wants to meet at two. I said, "Where are we going?" He said, "First of all, we're going to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, we're going to El Toro, California. We're going to Camp Pendleton, California. We're going to the USS Enterprise. On the way back, we're going to stop at McConnell Air Force Base in Wichita. Then we're coming back to Langley Air Force Base and spend the weekend in Williamsburg." So I said, "Well, that sounds like an ambitious trip. Can I send some people out to start?" He said, "Nope. They're all going with me." I said, "Oh, my God! Can I make some calls?" He said, "Yes, go ahead and call them." So I started telephoning. I called my man in the White House, my operations man, and I said, "Here's where we're going to go. Start your calling, get your people alerted. Tell them to start preparing some actions on it. We're going to spend the night on the USS Enterprise."

Well, that's a real disaster. I don't know whether anybody's ever told you, but the navy has beautiful communications on board to talk to itself, but doesn't have anything to talk to shore. They don't believe in talking to shore. They just don't do it. They can communicate from one ship to another, but they do not make a plan to talk from ship to shore; there's no system whatsoever, except in port. And this was to be at sea. Well, we knew we had our hands full immediately.

So I went home. Needless to say, my uniform was not in the best of condition because I hadn't worn it in two years. But I did get into it. I had gained some weight, too, so I did get into it. I joined them at Andrews. We flew to Fort Bragg, and they had been alerted for two hours and they knew it and they were ready. They had a public address system and he talked to the troops. He welcomed a bunch of people that were leaving there to go to Vietnam. He gave some military decorations to people that were brought in from Vietnam. He talked to some new trainees down there. Then we got on an airplane, then flew all the way across. I guess the next stop was--I guess we flew south first, Fort Benning [Georgia], stopped at Fort Benning. Then we flew across to El Toro. Now it's almost night. Then we flew down to Pendleton and then from Pendleton took helicopters and flew out to the Enterprise and spent the night on the Enterprise. Now that was the most difficult part of the whole job because the minute he got on board he wanted to talk to the world and this was where I had my problems. Because as I say, they're not organized to talk to the world.

G: By this you mean talk to the television audience or call people on the telephone?

A: No, no, he wanted to pick up the phone in his quarters and talk to whoever he pleases.

And that's not possible on a navy ship. The navy captain himself can't do that. He can't pick it up and talk to anybody except on that ship. It's well organized internally; he can reach anybody on that ship he wants to. But he cannot reach anybody on shore. The only way he can get a call through to shore is go up to the bridge. From the bridge or from his control room, he could get a call from there ship-to-shore and talk to people. Not telephone, but just to the naval station that terminates that telephone call. [There are] no

provisions for patching it anywhere else. Well, I had to make arrangements in a hurry for them to be able to patch it through and get us anywhere we wanted to go in this world from that point. This took a lot of doing, and it was clumsy, a very clumsy system. Nevertheless, we survived the night for that.

Next morning we got up and flew back to El Toro in helicopters. Now this is the whole crowd, carried all by helicopters and brought off by helicopters. And that's a lot of press. I don't remember how many they were, but there must have been two press loads, oh, probably forty press, and then staff and everything. I don't know, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five helicopters, hauled them all out there, in batches, hauled them in, unload, carry it back. The big Marine Corps forty-passenger helicopters.

Then we went to McConnell, spoke to the troops up there. He presented some medals to the air force personnel there. Then we flew to Langley. Now it's nighttime. We've got to have lights up. He went on nationwide TV there. He spoke to that crowd. And he went to Williamsburg, spent the night there in Williamsburg. He was going to play golf the next morning. I guess he did get up and play golf, but he made the mistake of going to church. You remember the story. He sat in the front row of the church and this preacher--they had approved his script the day before, and he threw it away as he walked into the pulpit and just blasted the President about Vietnam. The President sat there and gritted his teeth and took it. Well, they could have choked that preacher. But nevertheless, he wasn't there after that day, he was not a preacher there. They removed him. But it was really unfair to catch a man that way and be that unkind in his comments about Vietnam. But I guess he had it on his chest and he got them off.

G: Do you recall the President's reaction to that?

A: At the moment he just sort of gritted his teeth. His reaction in private was a little different.

G: What did he say?

A: He was just saying, "well, I think it was a little unfair" is mostly what he said. He said some other words to other people. I didn't hear them personally. Jim Jones is the one who told me later what he said. But in general he thought it was unfair to catch him in that circumstance. Generally just hoping for a reaction from the President is what it looked like, hoping that the President would get up and walk out. And the press were sitting in the back hoping this same thing. Well, he didn't. He sat through it, he gritted his teeth, listened to the whole thing, this diatribe, which is what it was, about a twenty-minute diatribe about the people who had sent the boys to die in Vietnam. Then he got up and left.

Well, he stayed on until that night. I guess he played golf in the afternoon instead of that morning. Then he went back to the White House.

Next morning I met him in the hallway and he said to me, "You know it's your fault, that thing yesterday." I said, "Why?" He said, "Well, first of all, if you hadn't a been so blessed efficient we would have never made that schedule, we would have been stymied somewhere along the line, and I never would have made it to church yesterday morning. So it's your fault." I said, "Well, that's kind of specious thinking, Mr. President. I do appreciate your confidence, but I don't think I caused that." He laughed and said, "No. He was pretty mean, wasn't he?" I said, "He picked on you." He said,

"Well, I guess he feels better about it." Then the day's paper said, well, of course, he was no longer there.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview II]