Interview Two

Tuesday, January 28, 1992

RITCHIE: When we left off this morning, you were working for Hubert Humphrey, and you were assisting him when he was the Democratic Whip. This was just before you went to the office of the secretary of the Democratic majority. I wonder if you could give me some description of the Senate at that stage. What was the pace of life of a person on the Senate floor? You were taking classes at night, but what would be an average day, when you were working for Humphrey?

VANDER ZEE: Well, you mean as a member of the majority leader's staff after I'd left his personal staff as Senate whip in '61 I went down to the floor.

RITCHIE: Well, tell me about being with him as whip and how it would have changed when you went down on the floor.

VANDER ZEE: Right. I did have some more or less administrative and policy responsibilities with respect to Humphrey's personal politics; the Senate whip operation and in this case, as I told you, agriculture, because it was so important to him in his home state. Down on the floor it became more or less just a housekeeping type of thing. I wasn't with policy. The policy committee, that was Harry [McPherson] and Ken Teasdale and

Charlie Ferris. I was under Baker's direct supervision. He was secretary of the majority at that time. Had been since Lyndon Johnson became majority leader, I think. Johnson became minority leader the first go 'round, as I recall, during Eisenhower's first term.

RITCHIE: During 1953-'54.

VANDER ZEE: Uh, huh. And then when they reassumed the majority, then Baker was elevated to majority secretary. He had quite a record as being an effective guy. He told me, "Your assignment is just to assist me. I'd like for you to stay up on the floor as much as possible, work for the majority leader and the whip, supervise the operation up there," which included the page boys, cloakroom basically. I personally, more or less, had the duty to record the votes. Joe and I usually did it together to double-check one another as the roll call was being taken. And, of course, the roll call clerk also took his. But we reported those to the—I guess it was the policy committee staff that kept the permanent voting records of the Democrats? So that is who we did it for. That was our responsibility to take and record an accurate vote, and the members who had to be absent, or for their own reasons had to ask for pairs. We'd keep records of that, record it all and carry it into, I think it was a Mrs. Moore who kept all those records for the majority. These became permanent records.

You know the old "revise and extend" thing that has been often criticized in both houses of Congress by the media and so forth. But, I didn't have any trouble with it. Because in the Senate I never saw anybody abuse it. I didn't think to the extent of it being called abuse. Many of the members would either make an extemporaneous speech; or even if they had a written speech, after the fact, they'd want to come around and look at their copy, and sometimes revise and extend by putting in new copy. I was always amused at a great gentleman, Senator John Stennis from Mississippi. He always seemed so apologetic. He said, "You know, I really hate to ask you to do this, but you know." [laughs] He was a guy you couldn't say no, too, anyway, even if you wanted to. He was such a gent.

So we took care of those kind of matters. Like I say, it was housekeeping. I guess one of the most important functions was when roll calls were called—in the old days, prior to Senator Mansfield taking over, and it kind of carried over. And the I suppose Senator Mansfield's desire was not to have members told of the leadership position unless it was some matter that was extremely important. I guess it had become routine under Johnson that on *every* vote the leadership position was given to the members when they came to the floor. And, of course, they were expected to vote that way.

Whether Baker was just used to doing it that way or what, we did start out with that. But during my time there that kind of eased up. In fact, I think before I left we were instructed *never*

to give the leadership position on a bill unless a member requested it. Maybe there had been some static from members themselves. Well, it continued—there were certain members that not only insisted on it, they didn't want you to take up the time to explain it. All they asked for was a thumb up or a thumb down or a yea or nay as they walked in. They didn't want to know what the issue was. They had sufficient confidence in the staff that the staff would know how they should vote.

These were admittedly what you might call your "automatics." I mean, they were people who almost always did vote with the majority leader on any given issue. That was it more or less it, housekeeping. We had to see to the physical housekeeping, make sure that everything was in order every day. The [page] boys filled the old snuff boxes, and the old inkwells. We just had to keep everything tidy and neat and, of course, make sure that the boys kept themselves shaped up so they run their errands properly and conduct themselves properly in front of the members.

RITCHIE: You spent most of your time in the cloakroom?

VANDER ZEE: In the cloakroom and at the desk in the corner that is reserved—I think, still is—for the assistant secretary on both sides. There is a seating arrangement on the dais, which I frankly don't remember but during ceremonial functions, which were rare, I think during opening day sessions of new Congress was about the only time where the actual staff members would take their seats

on the dais. And during those days, I was the lowest on the totem pole, but there was a seat up there for the secretary and assistant secretary for the majority along with the ones you find, the parliamentarian and all the other Senate officers. And when business was routine or even non-routine nobody ever occupied the dais except the presiding officer and those that necessarily had to be there. The parliamentarian, and his staff, and the roll-call clerk.

RITCHIE: Did you do much head-counting for the majority leader?

VANDER ZEE: I didn't personally. There was some of that, again, early on; but that also started to decline under Senator Mansfield. It wasn't the big thing it had been, to try to predict the outcome of the vote. That had gotten to be a kind of a game, I think, before under Johnson and Baker to be able to predict their head counts. You know they had this reputation of being very good at it, knowing how everything was going to turn out, knowing what the results were going to be. But that fell into disfavor.

RITCHIE: Did Baker sort of give you his assessment of the senators these are the "automatics," these are the uncertains? I get the sense that he really had a peg on everybody who was there. Did he let you in on his observations with that?

VANDER ZEE: We really didn't have that much time. He was a constant-motion guy. And I could tell he depended on me to cover the floor and free him up to get on down to the office or whatever he was doing. As I say, he spent a lot of time with Senator Kerr. Not always in the office. They weren't out of sight. Sometimes they would just go out and sit in the window seats off the floor. But they conferred a lot.

So I saw my duty just to be there, and make sure there were no problems, and to let him know if there were any problems. And, in turn, as I said, Joe Stewart and Dickie Darling, who ran our telephone cloakroom were very generous with me because they knew I was in law school.

I think Joe might have still been at American [University]. And Senator Bob Byrd was down at American. We were all in law school at the same time.

RITCHIE: Senator Byrd got his degree in '63, and I think that's when Joe did, too.

VANDER ZEE: Yep. Well, I got mine in the spring of '63. Took my bar in the summer, and I got the result about October or November '63. That's why I was ready to go on into private life. Then we had the assassination.

Well, first we had the Baker thing. The Baker thing blew up about October. A month later the president was assassinated. Then we had to follow along both of those. Johnson, of course, was

gone, where he had been around all the time. He liked to spend time on the Hill. As I mentioned, he kept P-38, and, I think, really considered it his base.

After Bobby's trouble started—this was still while Johnson was vice president in that interim before the president was killed. Every day, I know he polled me, and I also know it wasn't the only one he was polling. He'd be polling around the staff guys to find out what the members were saying. Just an interesting aside. Along in that period, Harry McPherson was appointed to some job over in the Defense Department. I forget the title that he had. But upon his departure, Senator Russell, who was chairman of the policy committee, got up on the floor to say nice things about Harry. I think others did, too. But Senator Russell being the boss of policy committee where Harry worked would be the principal one paying tribute to Harry and his work.

In the course of that, Johnson motioned me over—he was in the presiding officer's chair—he motioned, he said, "Now Rein I want you to listen to this. Now here's a boy—Harry McPherson, here—from Tyler, Texas." He said, "I brought him up here. I put him on the policy committee." And he went on and on with the identification he had with Harry, and Harry being his boy. "Now here is Senator Russell down there on the floor saying what a great man he is." [laughs] He said, "On the other hand, when I came here Bobby Baker was working here," and I forget the Senator from South Carolina who brought Bobby up. I'd know it if I heard it. But

RITCHIE: Maybank?

VANDER ZEE: It was [Burnet] Maybank. And he went on about the fact that Bobby was in place. All he did was leave him where he was. And he says, "Then he gets in trouble." He says, "Everybody says he's *my* boy. But they don't say anything about Harry McPherson being my boy." [laughs] Typical Johnson stuff. He was just venting his spleen to one guy that day while the speech was going on. And then later he did the "Bobby who?" bit while he was down at the White House and Baker's apparent troubles seemed to grow more complicated and deepened.

Actually, when it was all over, as I said, it wasn't exactly a tempest in a teapot. But it was a hell of a press party. I don't really to this day, I don't know of anybody, maybe even including those who were involved in the investigation and the ultimate trial, who could tell you exactly what Baker's misdeeds were.

It just seems, if I had to characterize it, I'd say he was doing too damn many things beside his government job. And they exacted a price for that, ultimately. Again, harking back to the so-called good old days, I referred earlier to Hoover, maybe we need more of the atmosphere in which people can function freely and make things happen. We seemed to have so constrained everybody that they can't do a damn thing. Everybody is boxed in. That may be a big part of the overall frustration with government that we see today. I don't know that it is. I can't prove any of this,

but I suspect it. We're witnessing now the Governor [Bill] Clinton affair. And these things just keep people away from government. They not only hurt the government, the image of government, its institutions, its people, with the public but then they keep people who might participate out. They never try, and that's sad.

RITCHIE: You talk about frustration in government. At the time you were there, in the majority secretary's office, there was certain frustration in the Democratic party. They were the majority party in the Senate and House. They had elected a president. The president had ambitious program. But he had a lot of trouble getting anything enacted.

VANDER ZEE: Absolutely. Absolutely. And the atmosphere of frustration was growing more. You could just feel it coming down like a cloud every day that passed up until the very moment of the president's death. It was going to be a bad time. No question about that! And the Democratic party was going to take the rap because, isn't that the last—no, under [Jimmy] Carter we had a government that was not divided. But ever since Carter we've had divided government. I think this is a time when we could use the British system and fix that responsibility, because unfixed it just heightens the public frustration with government's non-performance. It gives both sides the copout that "but for" that bunch of clowns, we could do this and that and the other. I don't know when the American public is going to wise up.

I attribute it to the television set, the television era; and the parallel collapse of the old party system where your people came up through the crucible of ward politics. And by the time they bubbled up to the top—let's face it, they were the Harry Trumans, they were tried and tested. If they were foul balls, chances are they would have been eliminated long before they got to that level.

And nowadays with the TV set, they send the foul balls straight into you. They come into the House, the Senate, wherever. I think if we could get back to the old system, it might have been a better one. But, you know, you've got to deal with reality. And the reality is it is a so-called beauty contest.

RITCHIE: You had a lot of very conservative Democratic chairmen during that period, didn't you? A lot of southern Democrats who were chairing the committees.

VANDER ZEE: Gosh, yes. You had Ellender. You had Stennis. You had [James] Eastland. I guess, you had Lister Hill—who wasn't so terribly conservative except on civil rights, he had to be, I guess. Jim Rowe told me one time he thought Lister Hill would have been one of the all-time greats if it hadn't been for that damn civil-rights yoke. Or race yoke—whatever you want to call it.

I would have to look back. My memory doesn't serve. Senator Russell. Warren Magnuson. Well, not highly conservative but

certainly not a wild-eyed liberal. Well, as I said, I'd have to look back.

RITCHIE: But the party was not united.

VANDER ZEE: No, anything but. I wouldn't say that there was open animosity, but there were schisms, sure there were. At this time, I think there was no question but that the southern members who had in the past been unable to go along with the civil rights movement more or less became neutralized. I don't know if President Kennedy's assassination, Johnson's ascendancy, all that thing we discussed earlier, was a big part of it. And they were going to give President Johnson what he wanted. They didn't want to be against him. Those that didn't vote with him, I guess, were just neutralized.

I don't remember actually how those votes were taken. But that was a big shift, and we can see the results that it's wrought all across the South. I don't know if it's completely civil rights. I think that when South came out of the Second World War, there was a lot of new and varied economic activity that also brought about big change down there. I guess from what I read Mississippi has been the most resistant to change. And, of course, in recent times the oil thing has certainly played hell economically with Mississippi, Louisiana. As we know, Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma.

I don't personally recall, was it Senator Fulbright? No, he got beat—I think finally the Israeli thing, there was a lot of eastern money that went out there to help defeat Senator Fulbright because he spoke out on what he thought some of the inequities out there in the Mideast.

Am I right about that?

RITCHIE: I think he certainly feels that way.

VANDER ZEE: So I've got to confess, Don, I'm not the thorough-going student. I guess I was so enmeshed in the events—breaking events, and my studies. And, as I say, being involved not so much in a policy job as a functionaries job, that I maybe didn't absorb all I should have at that time. I'm a fair reader, and I've tried to enlighten myself in subsequent years.

RITCHIE: Did you have a sense that Johnson was doing much lobbying for the Kennedy administration? When he was vice president, did he try to promote Kennedy's programs?

VANDER ZEE: I think he was a definite plus, and a definite help around the Senate in particular, I don't know about the House, perhaps there too, insofar as the Kennedy program went. But, breaking his back? Probably not.

I think he was doing all he thought a vice president could and should do. I don't think he was slacking on the task. But I

believe that when Johnson was no longer the majority leader and was the vice president that he simply could not exercise any leverage on those old members that didn't want to go with him. There was during that period, the thing I referred to, where these members were taking back what they considered to be their rightful territory, and their committees, and their authority with respect to those committees and what they did.

The combination of it just added up to not a very bright outlook for the Kennedy program, such as it was. One thing I remember that did go fairly well on and, I think, was regarded as being the proper thing to do and very beneficial for the country; and that was the investment tax credit. And, I guess, Senator Kerr went along with that. As I recall, there may have been many others; but that was one of the real pluses put in place early on in the Kennedy thing to get things buzzing a little bit. And it worked! It did a lot of good.

RITCHIE: It seems that when Kennedy had Kerr on his side, he got things passed. But when Kerr opposed him on something like Medicaid, there were some very embarrassing defeats.

VANDER ZEE: Precisely. That was that Randolph vote I spoke to earlier that knocked that thing down. I think that was the vote that did it.

To sum up, I don't consider my recollection to be that good about the thing beyond what I've told you. It was a time of flux.

A time of change, readjustment. And it was mainly that shift back to Mansfield's type of operation, and the committee chairmen reasserting their influence and authority over their committees and kind of following their own dictates. All of this added up to a very muddled and unproductive period for Kennedy.

RITCHIE: Did Senator Humphrey ever express his frustration over what was going on?

VANDER ZEE: I don't have any specific recollection that he did. So I'd have to answer that no. Very simply, no, not to my knowledge. He was always a perpetual-motion guy, and he always was totally preoccupied. He was a very compassionate man. He had a sister named Fern who had all kind of problems—it wasn't his only sister—but I have seen him in the heat of something have to go to the phone in the whip's office and talk to Fern on the telephone just to be her brother and reassure her and calm her down. He had a very compassionate side to him.

He tried to do it all. And in many ways, he did do it all. I've often wondered if that frenetic, frantic life he lived in some way shortened his life. His family, I'm sure anybody now would look in retrospect would say they suffered mightily. That Mrs. Humphrey did a heroic job of raising her kids and all, but it's a tough go when the guy is never there. And to me that is the great crime of politics. Somehow a national political life and a family life just don't seem to work. It's a very rare family that can

make it work. I can't off the cuff name any great family successes. I hope that there are some. The people that have risen to the top whether they sought the presidency or not, even if they've risen to the upper levels of the Congress.

RITCHIE: Was there much socializing between senators and the staff at that stage?

VANDER ZEE: Yes. Well, yeah, there was. I would put it this way: there were those people like in any group that are naturally attracted one to the other. There always seemed to be some form of camaraderie in the cloakroom born of just the club-type atmosphere, even if people were diametrically opposed politically. There were some occasional conversations back there that were always interesting. Some would get a little heated but never any really ill will.

I remember for the longest time the United States had this sugar import quota from abroad, and there was some move to eliminate that. And I think we ultimately did go on some sort of world market and eliminate in effect what was a subsidized market in the United States by having this quota system. And Senator Fulbright was one person that was interested in it, because I remember he said back in the cloakroom, "Where there's sugar, there's flies, and that's all those lobbyists that are all up here feeding at the trough on this thing." He thought they could wipe out all that stuff having those guys running around the Hill

pushing for their country quotas. Humphrey on the other hand, I remember he said, "Bill, when is the last time you heard a housewife in the United States raising hell about the price of a pound of sugar?" He said, "We have an assured supply. The whole world tries to sell it to us. Our public gets an unlimited supply at a fair price. Nobody's complaining. Why the hell change something that's working?"

So you'd hear that type of thing, and I'm sure their views were always seriously held by both sides. But I think in that question ultimately the world market forces prevailed, and then I think sugar prices skyrocketed. At least in the short term they did. I really forget all that because I'm not a sugar user.

The thing that I do remember is that staffs were very loyal and very friendly with their principals, their members. I remember making a speech to the people in my office that you always have to keep uppermost in your mind when you work around this institution that there is one name out there on that door, and it isn't yours. Nobody cares about you, and your particular programs. You've got to get with the guy whose name is on the door.

We had, as I recall, excellent camaraderie among the staffs, it went back and forth, bipartisan. A gang that would go over and have a few shooters at the Carroll Arms or wherever. It was all very good. Then I trace back to an incident that occurred—it was after I left the Hill, it was post '64, it might have been my final days, where Senator Tom Dodd from Connecticut and his staff—there was a serious breach of privacy, you might say, between the senator

and I think his AA had a girlfriend on the staff. Senator Dodd apparently disciplined to the point of discharge. I can't remember all the details, and I can't remember the names. But I remember that they seized a lot of the senator's records, and I think Jack Anderson got in the act, as he'd be inclined to do.

To me, I traced what I would call the deterioration of that friendly employer-employee trust and dedication, I trace its beginnings back to that. I don't know if I'm right about that, but in my own experience and recollections, that's when it started to come apart. And I only have the word, since I haven't been around the institution after nearly thirty years, I only have the word of my contemporaries who have remained around, that there's a great deal of acrimony and distrust and that sort of thing in the environment here, which is indeed a sad development it it's true.

So to summarize, Don, I would say they were very good days both from the standpoint of staff and members. After all, let's face it, we were still the big dog on the block. I mean being that close to our worldwide victory in World War II. And everybody thought the sky was the limit. Certainly everybody hit the ground running in the beginning of the Kennedy administration. I trace the decline in nation's and Democratic party's fortunes to the Johnson years, where Johnson had about a year and a half and a second term, to two things. Of course, the Vietnam war had already been cussed and discussed over and over, and obviously that was a part of it. But I think also that President Johnson didn't appreciate—being from Texas perhaps, being somewhat of a fellow

who liked to personalize things—perhaps didn't appreciate the importance of the structure of the Democratic Party. The grassroots. The block. The neighborhood. As I remember lamenting during his time in office, he was doing absolutely nothing to promote it.

I don't know whether he could have sustained that type of operation in view of the onslaught of television, which obviously had an effect. But there was nothing done in that area. And so the Democratic party started to fall apart at the seams. At least the party I knew, and I even see television commentators and these press pundits now sitting around lamenting that we can't go back—that we *should* go back to the smoke-filled room. That it was a better deal! As I said, earlier, when these politicos are brought up through the system, and they have years and years of discipline and training and temper, generally when they get to the top they're ready. And that's what we need.

In my opinion, one of our present president's problems is that despite all his years around government, he wasn't ready for the big show. And I think that's going to make itself apparent. I think it already is. When the heat gets on big time—despite the fact that the war went very nicely, the Mideast war—he didn't seem to know where to go or what to do. And that's, of course, something we can't afford. Tonight's [state of the union] speech will be rather interesting. I hope he has more far-reaching proposals than the repeal of luxury tax on yachts, which has been discussed as a great economic revival measure. [laughs]

RITCHIE: The pace of life did seem to be different to some degree at that stage. The fact that the Senate slowed down a bit after Johnson, and Mansfield was trying to regularize things. I get the sense from talking to people that there was certain predictability to things, that you didn't have late-night sessions, and you could get to night class and stuff like that.

VANDER ZEE: Yeah. There wasn't the frantic do-it-yesterday type of approach. I believe it's a historical fact—you probably know off the top of your head—that until World War II, whether it was a law—written or unwritten—that the Congress get out by July 4. And during the emergency condition of the war years, they departed from that. Then it just became a habit. We always said that a lot of the members didn't want to go back home to face the music. They would much rather be here getting lobbied, going to cocktail parties, a more pleasant life than being back home. I think that was in fact part of it because I don't believe anyone would argue realistically that the Congress couldn't do its work in less time than they do if they were in session if they set their minds to it. Others have said that the year-around Congress came about as the result of central air-conditioning.

RITCHIE: Well, one place where people did go to relax which I've heard about from various sources, and you've mentioned once or twice already is the Quorum Club. Can you tell me what the Quorum Club was and how it operated in those days?

VANDER ZEE: Well, I think I recall accurately its beginnings. The building and the little hotel called the Carroll Arms were owned by two brothers who had been left the property, I understand, by their father. I believe their names were Pickford. I don't recall those Pickford boys' first names. perhaps Tom and Bill. But they had a manager named Tom Heslop, and Tom managed the hotel. And Tom was a hail-fellow, well met. He liked to take a little shooter or two with his friends. He knew everybody on the Hill, and he always made sure that if Senator Dennis Chavez or anybody else liked a shooter, that they got it. And consequently, quite a few of those folks were accommodated over there.

They had the downstairs in a semi—it wasn't a full basement—but it was a few steps down. It was the principal lounge. And Mark Russell, who's gone on to greater fame, was the in-house entertainer in those years. So at some point Tom, pretty much on his own with the consent of his owners, decided it'd be nice if everything didn't have to be in the public lounge and that they could open up a suite of rooms, and they could have a private membership. Members could come there and have a drink, have a bite and not be out in the full glare. Not that there was anything to hide but some people would just prefer that.

I was reminded at lunch [laughs] over here by one of the boys that somebody remodeled the Democratic Club over there on the other side of the Hill. Used to be the old Rotunda restaurant. I haven't been there in years to verify this, but he said they decided to cut a big picture window in the side of the building

that had been a solid brick wall. And this window opened on to the bar. [laughs] Said the first night they opened it, the place emptied out. Nobody every came back until they put the wall back. [laughs]

It would appear that there was some of that in the motivation to have the Quorum Club. So people were either solicited to sign up or volunteered to sign up. And I guess Baker was one of those. I was a member over there and went over there many times and always enjoyed it. There was never anything even bordering on anything that I ever observed that was lewd or rude conduct. There was a cocktail waitress or two that waited on tables, just like in any other establishment. Very convenient and nice place to go.

And then when the Baker scandal came about, well, suddenly that became a sinister place, because that's where Baker was—who, in fact was seldom there. I don't think he was there twice. But, suddenly, that was a den of iniquity where all of these evil deals were being made and the legislature was being taken over by all these sinister influences through the Quorum Club.

So the politicos—oh, not the politicos—the outsider lobbyists, for the most part, who provided the economic, financial support for the Club by having joined and paid dues, being the big spenders. Let's face it, a guy on Capitol Hill wasn't going to be a big-spender on his Senate pay, or House pay, wherever he's from. But in any event, they were frightened off. They didn't want to take the heat, so the thing just wouldn't sustain itself. It died a natural death.

By this time, now, I'm off the Hill. There were others involved—some eight, ten fellows—who decided that we had liked that place. And since I was, I remember I was one of two people appointed to a scouting expedition. For awhile we just went up—at that time this fellow Paleologos whose been the manager of 116 for many, many years, had a restaurant on the corner one block down from the church by the parking lot. I don't know the street. It's on the corner of D and whatever. The club members were also customers of his a block up the street. As I recall, full meals weren't served. There were snacks, maybe appetizers at the old Quorum Club. So a lot of times, people would migrate up there to his place. He finally wound up setting aside a room where people could sit around, have drinks, and get them out of the public part of the restaurant.

So out of that, we thought that we had enjoyed what we had there. I was one of two or three scouts that were sent out to try and locate a new site to reinstitute the club. And we finally settled on that corner in Shott's Court, and we thought that perhaps the fact that the Quorum Club had been the name of the Club in the old hotel that that implied too much of a connection with the Hill and enabled the press to do these interpretations of what took place there. So we decided to name the new place after the number on the door. And, initially, the facility was not big enough to accommodate really that many members at one time. So we held down the membership to a small number.

RITCHIE: It was a little alley house.

VANDER ZEE: Yes. It was an inverted L. It was called Shott's Alley and had been an alley. But all of the buildings that surrounded it had been torn down to make a parking lot, and it and one apartment house were the sole surviving buildings on that square block. That's this block. Is the National Organization for Women still on the corner?

RITCHIE: The National Women's Party.

VANDER ZEE: So they were on the block, and of course, they survived, somehow, the takeover by the Senate. But, ultimately, our landlord there who was a fine Irishman and a graduate, I think, of Georgetown. He used to have the Dean of Law School over for lunch whose name was Paul Dean, during that time. It was a grand, old time. He was a good landlord. It was a good facility for its time. But we ultimately had to get bigger quarters. So when the Senate took it over for this building, these new quarters were sought at Third and C here. So the 116 today is the successor and the outgrowth. I saw two or three senators over there for lunch today. It's only operated now for lunch. It's not even open in the evening as we originally were for cocktails and sandwiches and things.

It's a very convenient place—especially to the Senate side, but I see House members there, too—to come and meet. There are a

number of rooms that can be reserved on request with the manager. Where you can take a private group and just have a good, old hoedown. You've been there, so I'm sure you are aware of how pleasant it came be for people.

There's one table that I always sit at as a single guy. It's just called a club table where individuals by themselves just all sit down and have their bull session at noon while they're having lunch. It's been very, very well—it's been a great success, and I think provides a very valuable spot on Capitol Hill. And a lot of the members and staff people alike as well as outsiders utilize it.

RITCHIE: I think Scott Peek said he was the first president of the Quorum Club before the 116 Club.

VANDER ZEE: He probably was. Scotty very well may have been. I know at the 116 there's a plaque with the annual presidents' names on there. I was one year back, I think, during the 70's. And a number of people. We had some repeaters. I think Lee Williams took it more than one year. The board has always tended to be made up of—well, I won't say exclusively—of Capitol Hill types, but maybe fellows that were at one time, even if they're not any longer on Capitol Hill. And I think there was a tendency for awhile not to let in new members. So consequently the membership started aging. And this is not healthy. I was told just today they kind of reversed that policy, and they're letting in newer and

younger members which kind of helps the new-blood thing. You've got to have that all the time.

RITCHIE: Apparently the original Quorum Club got its inspiration from the administrative assistants.

VANDER ZEE: I think exclusively. Who really initiated the idea—I don't know if it was Heslop or people on the Hill. But, in any event, it resulted in Heslop and his principals, the Pickford boy, financing and setting aside—and they did a little interior treatment to brighten up those two or three hotel rooms that they used for the facility. It was just on a little walk-up. From where you walked down into the lounge, you walked up half a flight to get up on the level where that was in the old Carroll Arms.

RITCHIE: It was a place where you could conduct business in a more relaxed sense or just socialize.

VANDER ZEE: Yeah. You know, the tradition in those days—I think it's kind of faded away now—but the old martini lunch was *de rigueur* in those days, and there was no place on the Hill proper where alcohol was served. So this was right across the street, and gave a semblance of privacy so people having a business meeting could have a drink, have a bite. You know, business will be done some way or another, and this was just something that facilitated that.

RITCHIE: Close by.

VANDER ZEE: Yep.

RITCHIE: You mentioned lobbyists as members of the group. Did you have much dealings with lobbyists when you were working in the.majority secretary's office?

VANDER ZEE: Not really, because I wasn't in a position for anybody to lobby. Why, what the hell! Why lobby a kind of a second- or third-rate clerk, shoe clerk, you know, when you can lobby his boss just as well? I can't say that I didn't have a few acquaintances from around the area who occasionally would be company people. I remember a fellow that was a friend of mine, personal friend of mine, he represented Sperry and Hutchison, the green stamp people. His name was Joe Oros. And through Joe I met his principal one time. I think I met him way after I left the Hill.

Of course, as you know, the mainstay of the Sperry and Hutchison Company business was the so-called trading stamps, or green stamps. They'd become a big thing around the country, and someone put in a bill to eliminate trading stamps in the District of Columbia. So, as this is still typical, anytime something like that happened, these people see their national business threatened—especially in the District of Columbia it would be a terrible precedent. It was known widely that Senator Humphrey was a great

supporter of small business and that he himself had been a small-town pharmacist and druggist. And that these trading stamps were a weapon of the huge chains that used these type of devices to drive these small businesses out. So there was great hope that Senator Humphrey would take up the cause of these anti-stamp people and help to carry that bill and in this way eventually erode the business nationally. I talked to him about it at some length, and he had already reached the conclusion that there wasn't a damned thing he, Hubert Humphrey, could do about trading stamps, that they were already here to stay. They had gotten too big, and everybody liked them. Whether they really were free or not was very questionable, but he wasn't going to take a position on it.

So you'd get those kind of contacts. But no big deals. I told you the one earlier about the fellow who had been a subcontractor to Boeing in Montana and wanted to do that some more. But, hell, those kind of decisions don't get made by clerks in the Senate.

RITCHIE: Well, you mentioned that Baker at that stage was getting more and more involved in outside activities and his business arrangements. Was that common, or was he unusual in that?

VANDER ZEE: I really don't know how common. It was not uncommon. My recollection is there were absolutely no rules—written or unwritten—governing that in that period. My reflection would be that he had simply become more high profile and open about

it and it was known. He made no attempt to hide it. He had a partner that had built this motel in Ocean City. Then there was the other thing about the vending machines which, I think, did obviously—maybe Baker wouldn't have been involved in that if he hadn't been in the position he held. But, he could have been. This was something, I think, they put these vending machines as well as in some places in the local area they put them out in a defense contracting plant in California, as I recall.

That was widely interpreted as smacking of a big fix and something improper. I guess as a result of Baker's experience that a lot of that changed. I think now, from what I hear, Senate employees in general, maybe in particular, and government employees in general are literally foreclosed from outside activities. I don't think they're prevented from buying and selling real estate. Maybe they would be speculatively. I don't really know. Or is there some kind of disclosure that has to be filed?

RITCHIE: Oh, yes. It depends on your level on the staff, but their are certain forms you file with the Ethics Committee, this, that, and whatever. There certainly are a lot more rules and regulations than there were before.

VANDER ZEE: Right. Right. And my understanding is that up to that time there was absolutely no guidance on that. So really a person could do what the hell ever he wanted to do, and probably if Baker was guilty of mistakes in judgment there it was that he

didn't make any attempt to conceal it. He was perfectly open about it.

In fact, I was among a couple or three hundred other guests invited to the opening of the motel as was Vice President Johnson and, God, half the Senate. I really don't remember who all was there, but it was a big party. Nobody was complaining then. But, of course, later on it began.

RITCHIE: Did it ever strike you that he was spending more time on his outside activities than on the Senate business?

VANDER ZEE: Yeah. I think that two things happened. I think that Senator Mansfield's style of leadership automatically freed him up. And I was there, he trusted me, and we never had any trouble that I'm aware of, and Joe, too, because he and Joe had known each other much longer than I had known either one of them. I don't think they had been fellow pages, but Joe had come up somewhere after Baker.

What the hell! He kind of got freed up. I think he still had the position as treasurer for the Democratic Senate Campaign Committee, because part of the money problem was with those S & L contributions that came in during that period. So he was out running. He was either in the office doing things, which were Senate-related or otherwise, or he was out traveling, too.

RITCHIE: I wonder why he didn't leave when Johnson left, to just go into business.

VANDER ZEE: I feel sure that in retrospect he would ask that same thing, or tell you that he should have made that judgment about that same time, and become a private citizen rather than continuing to have the accusation, just or unjust, that he was guilty of these conflicts of interest.

But I think that in the final analysis if you are on a government payroll, I think the public consensus has always been that you settle for that. And that's it, you know. You can do limited, private things; but you can't be out doing major undertakings because it just constitutes a time conflict if no other one. That would be my guess on that.

RITCHIE: Baker was still involved with the Democratic Campaign Committee as you mentioned in fund-raising.

VANDER ZEE: I feel that.

RITCHIE: Did you get involved at all in that end of it?

VANDER ZEE: No. I had no role nor was privy to anything or had any function there.

RITCHIE: That was another thing that was much wider. There weren't as many restrictions. There certainly wasn't as much filing necessary.

VANDER ZEE: Right. This was still before the wrapped themselves in the red tape. Yeah, it was pretty much whatever anybody wanted to contribute. They were there to receive the funds. The more the merrier.

RITCHIE: And it left it to the staff, to their discretion as to what was legitimate and what wasn't, and to the members.

VANDER ZEE: Um-hmmm. Well, whoever—I forget who chaired the campaign committee during those times. It might have been George Smathers.

RITCHIE: Smathers was one of the early on—in the '56 or '58 election was the chairman.

VANDER ZEE: Some time, yeah. So, to the best of my knowledge, during the time Baker held that position he was there at the, I suppose, at the convenience of whoever was chairman of that thing.

RITCHIE: What was your impression of Senator Smathers, by the way?

VANDER ZEE: He was a very personable guy. I knew Scotty Peek much better than I knew Smathers, of course. If they had a little social function over at the office, I'd get invited over. I'd go by and say hi and have a drink. I knew a fellow named Bud Lucky pretty well that worked for George Smathers. Bud was one of our campaigners in '60 as was Scotty. Everybody kind of turned to there in the presidential year. They were a good bunch. Everybody enjoyed them. I last visited with Scotty, maybe we were here in Washington, but I've been to his home in Florida. We're not close friends, but I've been to see him in Florida. And I feel if he came to Texas, he'd give me a call.

RITCHIE: Smathers was secretary of the Democratic Conference.

VANDER ZEE: Um-hmmm.

RITCHIE: Kept his hand in the leadership of the party, I guess much more so than any of the other senators.

VANDER ZEE: Um-hmmm.

RITCHIE: Were there other senators that you sort of relied on or looked to more than others at that time?

VANDER ZEE: In what way?

RITCHIE: Well, with the Democratic majority secretary's office, were there senators who aspired to leadership or that you would deal with more frequently than others?

VANDER ZEE: Well, there was that Class of '58? I suppose that when the Democrats picked up quite a significant number of seats that included Muskie, Gale McGee,

RITCHIE: [Eugene] McCarthy

VANDER ZEE: Yeah. And Gaylord Nelson from Wisconsin. Maybe [Quentin] Burdick, although he followed his father. He might have come in a special election. But there was—I think Senator [Robert C.] Byrd was in it. [Daniel] Inouye didn't come in until '61 or

RITCHIE: '62

VANDER ZEE: Maybe it was because of their relative newness, they wanted to consult more and know what's going on and be told. The old timers, Senator Lister Hill used to. Senator Russell never did. Once in awhile he would walk by back in the cloakroom, he'd say, "What's goin' on?"

But the younger members would come around and actively want you to tell them what was taking place. This, that, and the other. I just want to mention one thing about Senator Russell before I forget it. I was just standing back in the cloakroom with him one

day, and he was a smoker. He was back there having a cigarette. We were looking out the doors to the floor.

He said, "You know, I had somebody on my staff look it up the other day, and since I've been here," now this would have been in the early sixties, "since I've been here over five hundred members have come and gone from this body." That's a five hundred per cent turnover. And I think he might have been in his fourth or fifth term then. I think he did a full term after that. Do you remember when he left?

RITCHIE: He came in '33 and died in '71.

VANDER ZEE: Okay. So he lived another ten years after the time I'm talking about, and he died in office, right? So those little reflections are kind of interesting. Put a perspective on things. Because it's absolutely astounding when you look back, these interim appointments. You know, I think it's still true that no self-appointed member has ever survived the next election.

RITCHIE: Governors who have themselves appointed find it's the kiss of death.

VANDER ZEE: Yeah. There was a guy from South Dakota named [Joseph] Bottom that did it during my time. I think Howard Edmondson from Oklahoma. Any number! Nobody has ever survived

that curse. So, we don't see too many self-appointments any more. I doubt that they want to try to buck the curse there.

RITCHIE: Even the senator who was appointed to succeed Richard Russell was defeated in the primary.

VANDER ZEE: Right. And there have been so many of those seat-warmers. There were more of them than we remember because they're here so briefly. You take the guy named Smith who took Kennedy's seat.

RITCHIE: Benjamin Smith.

VANDER ZEE: Ben Smith. Lovely guy. Sweet guy. Some friend of President Kennedy.

RITCHIE: His college roommate.

VANDER ZEE: That they put in for a seat warmer. Problem was he got to liking the place! The guy really took it hard when he left. He shed tears. I remember that. He hated like hell to go. But he was here, what? Barely a year. So you see a lot of that. Those numbers are much greater than we would expect. People that come and go from the Senate as members.

RITCHIE: Were there any senators that gave you any trouble? The independent kind.

VANDER ZEE: Not really. The majority of them were great gentlemen. There was a senator from Ohio named Steve Young that was inclined to be high strung. I always figured maybe he had some kind of—maybe not neuro—but maybe a glandular situation. He one time came into the chamber and something had made him unhappy. I don't even know what it was. I don't know if I knew at the time. But I was, you know, a shoe clerk over there in the corner at the desk and convenient. There was a full chamber that day on some kind of an important vote. And he chose that time to come over and dress me down on behalf of the staff. It was kind of embarrassing because he was being loud and noisy. But he cooled down and went away. I just said, "Yes, sir, senator, we'll try to take care of whatever your problem is, and we'll get at it." You know—the only thing you can do.

Some while later that day, after whatever vote was taken Quentin Burdick and, I think, Gaylord Nelson both walked over and said, "Van"—everybody called me Van. They said, "Van, we're sorry that a member would do that. And we just want to apologize." I thought that was kind of unusual.

But he'd get a little goofy. I knew his AA. A boy named Miller. God, the stories he could tell! [laughs] But he was just one of those characters that come along from time to time.

RITCHIE: He was famous for writing insulting letters to his constituents.

VANDER ZEE: Yeah. Miller told me about some time some guy came in the office, and the Senator didn't want him there. So he had a couple of guards come take the guy away. And after they were on each side of him, Young runs over and belts him in the back! [laughs]

So those are amusing little asides that happen around a place like this. But, by and large, members were all very, very courteous gentlemen. They had bigger things to do. One of the impressions I had—this is more from my page boys than anyone else—is that the great humanitarian members, the great "would-be" humanitarian members, the great civil righters, the great this rights, and that rights, and the other rights—when it came to the treatment of staff people they were absolutely the worst!

[Jacob] Javits. Maybe [Abraham] Ribicoff. Imperious. Treating the little kids like, you know, publicly upbraiding them and all that sort of nonsense. But never the so-called backward people from the South. They were always very genteel. And very kind to everybody. By and large they are a fine group of men.

I only knew a few of them in the context of their home surroundings, of course, because we dealt with them here. One that I did a little bit was Senator Bob Byrd, because when I was in West Virginia in '60 he came over when I was there for Humphrey. He came over and spent a night or two with me in my hotel room in

the Daniel Boone there in Charleston. Senator Byrd's a great one not to run up hotel bills in his home state. He'd stay with people in their houses. As we know, he was very close to his people. He knows how to get with his troops, and his career reflects it.

I haven't spent any great amount of time in West Virginia in recent years, but I feel sure he'd be a shoo-in as long as he can get up there and saw that fiddle—make the effort.

RITCHIE: I think when he gets less than 80 percent people are surprised.

VANDER ZEE: Yes. See Humphrey had been seat-mate with Matt Neeley, one of his predecessors. I don't know whether it was Randolph or Byrd who succeeded Neeley. It might have been [Chapman] Revercomb. There were a couple of other fellows in there briefly from West Virginia.

But Humphrey had great regard for Neeley. Thought he was a fine man. I felt the kinship with the West Virginia people, because they're my working stiffs that I told you about earlier. They're a lot like our original Texans. They're close to the earth. Tend to be religious. Tend to be hardworking. Tend to be independent. And tend to be poor. And the West Virginia people were damn sure all of those. They have been in my opinion victimized for many, many years by eastern financial interests, particularly in mining, coal mining, gas, railroads, all of those things. It's improved somewhat. But in the 60's, if you went into

southern West Virginia it looked like a moonscape. The gashes in the hills. The ink in the streams. Terrible. I've never seen a piece of land raped like that place. And, of course, the people had been raped at the same time.

So I admired their spirit that they were able to maintain. And West Virginians had more of their native sons killed in World War II than other state in the Union. I always thought that was an interesting statistic. Here are these so-called backward, ignorant, underprivileged, uneducated hillbillies—as if that's why they lost more of their sons in World War II than other, it wasn't that, it was because of their love for their country. And I always thought that they are a lot like the Tennesseans—the Tennesseans, of course, were largely responsible for the establishment of early Texas. They're given credit for being the guys that put the glue in the gang at the Alamo.

I tell my Tennessee friends, if there hadn't been a back door at the Alamo, there wouldn't be a Tennessee today. [laughs] They're similar-type people, and I appreciate those people. And you'll pardon me as a native of New York, Don, for saying this, but I've never been able to identify with the eastern—who was it, was it no less a personage than Nixon's vice president who talked about the effete..?

RITCHIE: Oh, [Spiro] Agnew.

VANDER ZEE: I forget what the phraseology. I think Pat Buchanan put it together for him.

RITCHIE: "Effete snobs."

VANDER ZEE: That plus.

RITCHIE: "Nattering nabobs of negativism."

VANDER ZEE: Yeah. He stitched together some of that deathless prose. I'm one of those guys who definitely feels that the heart and soul of the Democratic Party—and this is where we fail—should be the lunch-bucket guy. Keep him going. Keep him working. Give him his wherewithal. Let him improve his family life. Let him improve his lot in life. Let him get his kids educated. And if we had kept that up, I don't think we would have been the failure that a lot of people brand our party today. But we didn't.

RITCHIE: You brought up Senator Byrd. I remember when I first came to Washington, I was a student and I used to sit in the galleries and watch what was going on. This was in the mid-sixties, I guess, and I used to see Senator Byrd on the floor all the time. This was before he was whip or party leader or anything like that. Were there some senators who spent more time on the floor and in the cloakroom than others?

VANDER ZEE: Um-hmm. You probably picked the classic example. I think that Senator Byrd, he's a guy that came up from Crab Orchard, West Virginia where people that I knew in West Virginia told me he worked in a butcher shop. People that know him, and know him well. People that claimed to have contributed to his first campaign. People out of Beckley—one being the father of Nickie Joe Rahall here in the House.

This is a guy who aspired to bigger and better things. I think at some point in his life he just willed that by sheer determination and principally education he was going to do it. So I think unlike many, he made a special study, and you recall, he literally set a trap for Ted Kennedy when Kennedy thought he had a walk-in, Byrd took it right away. Snatched it right away—the, assistant leadership, and subsequently the top job. So this is the kind of guy, you want to watch him, when you go up against him. You know the easy, easy bad assumption that Kennedy made was this guy from West Virginia is going to be a pushover. No contest. Well, guys like that are always a contest.

So I assume that all that time he was spending was prepping himself to make that effort. While you were watching, he was probably doing that. He hadn't started that when I worked. But, in the House! He was over there when I was over there, or he had just left. He had a reputation, which was for holding prayer meetings in the office. I remember hearing some guys talking about that. Before they started the day, they had to start out with a prayer meeting.

Well, like I say, this is all part of a pattern. I've seen it in my life, you've probably have, too. These fellows have their beliefs; their agenda. They're willing to make almost any sacrifice and abide almost any amount of time. I'm told by my friends of the senator's who are also friends of mine—West Virginians. In fact, one of them was Matt Neeley's AA, guy named Harold Miller here in Washington. I assume Harold's still kicking around here—that Byrd would, after a full day's work, would go in the office and spend half the night phoning and talking to key people in West Virginia. He did that. Maybe he's still doing it! This is certainly not that thing that Senator Fulbright, among others, I think, got accused of. And that was forgetting how they got here, and not keeping the home fires banked, and keeping in constant touch. They got a little too remote, and then the folks back home, when push came to shove. . . Well, I don't think Byrd would be caught in that situation. That's my estimate, and I would assume when you saw him on the floor all the time that was exactly what he was doing. I forget the year that he went to the whip job.

RITCHIE: It wasn't until '71. He was Democratic Conference Secretary in the sixties. But he seemed to like to be down there on the floor. I guess he was collecting IOUs from the senators for favors he could do for them if he was on the floor all the time.

VANDER ZEE: Probably that, and probably watching the parliamentary stuff. I'm sure he mastered that procedural manual a long time ago.

RITCHIE: Were there some senators who just liked to come and sit on the couches in the cloakroom?

VANDER ZEE: Um-hmm. Yeah. You had senators, they were fine senators, but they were on in years. Pat McNamara from Michigan. He more or less just came to the floor and cast his vote and stayed back in the cloakroom most of the time. I don't recall that there was any group or any individuals who devoted themselves to the floor.

We always had a hell of a time getting these junior members. They were always trying to get out of sitting in the chair. So it was more or less being there when you were presenting something, or when there was floor action or votes. That sort of thing.

RITCHIE: The atmosphere of the cloakroom was one that I don't have a great sense of. I've walked through it, but only when the Senate is not in session. I don't have a great sense of what it's like to be in there on a daily basis.

VANDER ZEE: Well, the main activity there is the boys who answer the phones and tell the senators they have their calls. There used to be, I haven't been there in years myself, but there

used to be booths on both sides of one wing where they could take their phone calls and make their phone calls. The boys handled them for them there. There were the custodians, three or four boys who kept the men's room. They'd replenish the cool boxes with the waters from around the country. Some was from Arkansas. Some was from West Virginia. The spring waters. It was just a place where they could go ahead and keep on with their personal activities because they had access to the telephone and still be there and, of course, as I said, sometimes, there were pretty good bull sessions that went on back there.

The day President Kennedy was shot, when it started coming over the teletype, there was a pretty good-sized group repaired back there—just to sit and monitor the news. We didn't have any television sets in there that I can recall. But there may have been. I don't remember that part.

RITCHIE: Were you in the chamber when the news came in?

VANDER ZEE: Yes. I was at the old duty station there at the corner desk. The way I learned of it, each day—I think I may have told you this early on yesterday—but each day we would have one of the boys assigned, it would be his day to pull the ticker tapes. When it got down to the floor, they would tear them off and hang them on the board so the members could always go in there and look at their news tapes. And the little page that was on duty that day came over to my desk in the corner, and said "Mr. Vander Zee,

there's something on the ticker tape about the President being shot."

Teddy Kennedy was in the presiding officer's chair. So I told him to get Senator Kennedy relief. Go request one of the other junior members to relieve him. And I either told him, I think I went over myself and told Senator Mansfield there was something coming on the tape. And he walked out. I walked with him, I recall, because I remember what he said. As usual, he had his pipe. He took his pipe out of his pocket as we walked out. I don't recall he was smoking on the floor, but he'd smoke out in the lobby. And he read it. And the lead was by a guy named Jack Bell who was in our gallery. He was either AP or UPI. I don't know which.

RITCHIE: AP.

VANDER ZEE: So Jack was in a phone booth down there and with the lead in the deal about the shots from the grassy ridge or bridge. It was all very vague and indefinite. But Mansfield said, "I wonder what's wrong with those people down there?" In Dallas. And, of course, he was alluding to the fact that both Adlai Stevenson and Mr. and Mrs. Johnson had been jostled about and spat upon. I think Lady Bird might have gotten hit with signs by unappreciative groups in that area, in just the few preceding months. So his off-the-cuff reaction was that it was a bunch of crazies in Dallas that had done it again.

And, of course, it was, I guess an hour. Two hours? Anyway, whatever the time factor was before it was known that he was dead. There were tears shed there that day in the cloakroom by members—staff alike. Because that's very jarring—even if you weren't close to the man. To have *known* him, and to know as the president of the country you could be shot dead in a motorcade in Dallas. I don't think I had, even as a young man, had a full appreciation of the impact of that—especially on older men, more aware of their mortality, more aware of, perhaps, the political shock and consequences, like that. I forget, was it our fourth assassination of a president? You had Lincoln, McKinley, Garfield?

RITCHIE: Yes.

VANDER ZEE: Then Kennedy. Well, not in that order. It was, of course, a great tragedy well recognized whether you were a Kennedy fan or not. I don't know. Again, my personal belief is you have to go through all of these procedures the Secret Service goes through to protect the president. But if a determined assassin wants to kill a president, I don't think there was a way ever devised to keep him from it. We just have to hope that not too many are motivated that way.

But crazies are crazies—whatever makes them, wherever they come from. That's who you've got to stop. Irrational people. I don't think that any of our presidents have ever been assassinated

by somebody who would be considered rational in the ordinary sense of the word.

This movie that's out [JFK] now if nothing else, it will sharpen the consciousness of the public, I think. Show them once again that it can happen. As I see it, that's the value. I'm sure it doesn't hurt the Secret Service's assignment a bit or their appropriation [laughs] to have that going on. It's sad in a way.

My understanding is that less than one hundred years ago, Don, that American citizens could come to Washington, walk into the White House, and talk to their president without an appointment! Less than a hundred years ago! It's an amazing thing to realize that in this period of time has developed this remoteness that the president has from the people. And I can't help but think that a lot of that—George Reedy wrote the book. I think he called it the *Imperial Presidency*?

RITCHIE: The Reedy book was the *Twilight of the Presidency*. Arthur Schlesinger wrote the book the *Imperial Presidency* .

VANDER ZEE: Okay. And I read Reedy's. I didn't read Schlesinger's, but wasn't their theme more or less this removal of the president from the people some way, this isolation, which permits them—staff people—to manipulate, ill serve, misinform—whatever you want to call it? These things happen in that kind of an environment where maybe it couldn't otherwise where a man is truly not in touch with common folk.

RITCHIE: Did you notice a change in atmosphere in the Senate after Johnson became president? After the assassination? Was the assassination a real shock? Did it get things moving again?

VANDER ZEE: There was so damn much that was going on there. I don't have too much personal recollection. Let's face it—Johnson was back in the White House the next day, was he not? And then there was the funeral in which again the Capitol was the site of it.

All I remember was everybody kind of wanting to get in the boat then and get on with it. All of this was a great help to Johnson.

RITCHIE: Did you stay through the passage of the civil rights bill in '64? June of '64?

VANDER ZEE: No. No, I departed, at the end of February I had some medical leave and I had to get a light surgery. I think I went and got that and was out of here before the end of March, that's my recollection. So I wasn't around when it actually got passed. But it was apparent even before—I guess, January-February period—that there was going to be a lot more activity—and in all likelihood, productive activity because if it couldn't be done then with that set-up, it wasn't going to be done. And everybody was frustrated to hell with the way it had been up to then in the Kennedy Administration.

I think the common expression was: Kennedy couldn't buy a bill out of Congress.

RITCHIE: How about the White House liaison people?. Did you deal with them very much?

VANDER ZEE: Well, when Larry [O'Brien] had it. Early on. Some in connection with substantive stuff on the floor, but not a hell of a lot. One of the principal things we had that Humphrey and I met with Larry about was we had reason to believe that Larry and Ken O'Donnell were blocking, simply because of personal dislike coming out of the West Virginia campaign, that they were blocking a nomination. I don't think it was a nomination; it was a Schedule C of one of the people who'd been Humphrey loyalist. We talked to Larry, and Humphrey—much to my surprise—kind of gave him an old Dutch uncle talk, and "Larry, you know, you've got to realize if you want to get things done up here we would like for you to do some things for us." Most unlike Humphrey.

And Larry got it done. And the guy got his appointment. I think it was an appointment down at Commerce, and everything worked out all right. But that's about it. I remember during my year with Humphrey there we had nice visits from Dean Rusk, usually in the evening after work. Folks would come by to chat, to talk business. I wasn't always in the room. Sometimes Humphrey would invite me. Sometimes I'd whip up a drink. We had a little fridge up there in one of those deals Joe Duke put in [laughs] so we could offer a

little hospitality. I remember good chat. Joe Clark from Pennsylvania. Any number of folks, you knew would come by and spend a little time in the evening. Have a snort, talk things over. Sometimes administration officials. Sometimes Senate members.

RITCHIE: But the Kennedy problem wasn't a problem of liaison, was it?

VANDER ZEE: Well, I don't think so. As I recall, Larry was well liked. He was the only one that I can remember as having carried that freight. During my time there may have been others, I just don't remember that.

RITCHIE: Mike Manatos also.

VANDER ZEE: Oh Mike was down there. He was working for Larry, wasn't he?

RITCHIE: He spent lot of time in the Senate.

VANDER ZEE: Uh-huh. I knew Mike quite well. He was a grand guy. Yes, he was around saying hi. See your recollection, Don, because of your position—I trust—is quite, a lot more acute than mine. But Mike was well liked. He'd worked for [Joseph] O'Mahoney up here, I believe, and knew the area. And I suppose Mike had been

a Kennedy ally out in Wyoming. That's the reason he was in that job.

But, basically, I would characterize it as a time of cooperation and everybody going in the same direction, or trying to! And I think, as I said, it was the last time it was that way. In the Democratic Party. The conflict and the unsettled nature of things began in that Vietnam period, and it's never been the same.

RITCHIE: What was it that made you decide to leave in '64?

VANDER ZEE: Well, as I said, I had been pursuing that law degree, and it was always my intention, my plan, the aim was to be able to liberate myself from employers and pursue my own goals and objectives. And I did that for twenty-eight years, up to now. The Texas scene has been extremely difficult from an economic standpoint in the last few years. We started having our major problems in '84. We didn't quite know what was happening to us when the oil price collapse came. But in '85 came the collapse in real estate values which followed immediately behind it. Next was the banks and S&Ls. Then it's been one form or another since then of the economic grinder. We're going into our eighth year of depression down there.

So it was strictly that. And I went downtown originally—I mentioned earlier the congressman from Missouri named Charlie Brown. Charlie Brown had lost his reelection bid to a Republican MD from the Springfield area, for the simple reason that what

should have been his own campaign time, he had spent for Stuart Symington. So he lost his seat in either 1960. In any event, we were friends. We kept in touch, and so when I discussed with him that I was going to be leaving the Hill, he told me he would like very for me to join him. He was not an attorney, but he said "I have a great deal of business that I'm turning away. and you could handle that if you want to come into the office with me." I wound up doing that. Charlie made me a guarantee to start with him and an incentive program. We got started that way. Then, after a few years, he decided to leave the Washington area; and I went ahead. I officed with both him and another former House member named Slick Rutherford from Texas who, I think, also lost his seat in 1960.

And with Harold Miller, the gentleman I mentioned to you who'd been Matthew Neeley's AA. We all had our little client list, and we just went about carrying our bucket around town like many of the guys make their living here.

RITCHIE: You did some lobbying here on the Hill?

VANDER ZEE: I did. I also did agency work. Hill work, to some extent. I guess I found my most important and interesting and slightly remunerative effort was in behalf of a national chain of agricultural cooperatives in Spain that wanted to take advantage of some of our PL 480 credit transactions. So at that time I was able to put together the biggest Title IV, which is a private sale for credit, but for cash money—a corn deal into Spain. We put in

about three-quarters of a million tons worth around $40 or $50 million guaranteed by the Spanish government. The contract never did go through to full fruition because Spaniards don't know how to handle success. When success is looming on the horizon, they start scrapping among themselves. I think this is typical of some national groups and certainly is of them. And Mr. Franco was still the boss at that time and got tired of the whole damned thing and just canceled the deal. Paid the US government off, and that was that. But I think they drew down some $l0 or $l5 million before that happened.

RITCHIE: What was it like to come back to Capitol Hill as a lobbyist having worked here as a staff person?

VANDER ZEE: I never liked the feeling. I never enjoyed it. I always felt like I was a hat-in-the-hand guy trying to take advantage of personal friendships. Not that my clients' business wasn't meritorious—I always tried to have meritorious things to present.

RITCHIE: Did you have certain senators that you would see more regularly than others, or did it just depend on what the issue was?

VANDER ZEE: Yeah, it would depend more on who you were representing and where the work had to be done. As I recall, I

wound up having as much work on the House side as I did over here. Perhaps you were trying to get a little old piece of language in a bill for people you were working for—something they needed or wanted in a piece of legislation. More than not, I would have to characterize my retainers simply as access. I mean, I was retained because people perceived that I had access, and I recall being retained a time or two by interests who I don't recall ever asked me to do a damned thing, specifically. They simply wanted to have me around, I suppose, in case they thought they needed intercession with a particular member. Somebody, you know, the most obvious being Humphrey because he'd been my most prominent and immediate principal up here.

I'm trying to think back, I remember one time being retained by a firm that had a plant—a big installation—out here in suburban Virginia called Melpar. They were a defense contractor. And I never did lobby anybody in the Defense Department. That's one of the company's I'm speaking of. They used to have a membership in a private club in Pennsylvania called the Rolling Rock Club. I think it was something that the Mellons had started over there years back. Pretty exclusive thing, I'm led to understand.

I'd been over there a time or two, and then on one occasion they asked me if I would invite Vice President Humphrey. You know, to do a little trout fishing or play a little golf. In the winter time they had shooting, they had pheasants. And it was indeed a lovely place.

So he was to come over. But after I got over there, I learned for the first time that no blacks were permitted at the Rolling Rock Club. I conveyed that to the V.P. I had to do that because he had a Secret Service agent on his staff who was a black man. May have been others, but I knew there was one. And, as a consequence, he didn't come over. He didn't want to have that kind of a matter come up, obviously. What the hell, with his background and record. So we had to cancel out that little social engagement. [laughs]

I worked with George Bushman who had been an AA to Homer Capehart from Indiana. George, after he left the Hill, was working downtown. And somehow he got involved in Senator Dirksen's one-man, one-vote effort. And I remember working some on that with George. I don't remember the full nature of that legislation. I guess some people would say it was designed to deprive certain people.

RITCHIE: He wanted to overturn the Supreme Court ruling at that time, basically so that rural districts wouldn't lose so much representation.

VANDER ZEE: Um-hmm. But I remember working in favor of that. I don't remember why, unless George asked me. I don't remember being paid by anybody to do it. And, as I say, I got off into this kind of a specialty area of these public law 480 deals. And after I made at that time the biggest ever made into Spain, I got

several—none of them materialized—but I had a lot of work to do there and try to make other ones happen, too. Aristotle Onassis sent me to Greece to look into the possibility of doing one over there, which didn't work. There were others. Other countries. I represented people in Central America. In fact, one was a displaced Cuban. He'd been run out of Cuba at the time of the Castro takeover, and he'd gone to Guatemala and had a cattle processing operation down there and was exporting what they called boxed red lean meat to the United States. They'd bone it out, ship it frozen in forty-pound boxes, I recall.

The Central Americans all had a quota, and their desire was to cooperate one with the other and get their quota upped. So I took on that effort for awhile. There were constant things like that which paid the rent. I wound up traveling half the year, meeting with these clients or pursuing their objectives overseas. Very enjoyable at that time in my life. I wound up wearying of the travel and ultimately decided in 1970, after seven years of private practice here, to go back to Texas.

RITCHIE: Before you went back, did you get involved in the '64 campaign; or the '68 campaign?

VANDER ZEE: Now in '64 we had the convention in Atlantic City. I was at that convention. I believe my involvement that year, it wasn't going to be a contest—or we didn't think. Well, certainly not for the nomination! So the convention was just a

formality. And as I recall, Joe Duke put me to work just on helping him on convention security.

Oh, I remember now. He asked me to man the platform, and he said "The problem with the Secret Service is they don't know who the hell the pols are around the country." And he said, "You do, so I want you on that platform and you decide who makes the trip down to the podium." And I did that little chore. There again, another housekeeping chore.

In '68 I was in Chicago. I was active. What are we talking about now? Was that the Chicago convention?

RITCHIE: Yeah.

VANDER ZEE: Where Humphrey was nominated?

RITCHIE: Right.

VANDER ZEE: Well, I was still here in town, so I was active in that. I was back out in the states where I had worked before. West Virginia. Probably in the West. I guess I was back to Montana. I don't off hand recall, there may have been others.

I remember spending most of my time at the convention in Chicago with the Montana folks because we had them in pretty good shape. The job was just to make sure it stayed in good shape. You know, that's typical of a convention deal when you have an

assignment. So I tried to have little receptions, keep them entertained.

You know, it's kind of like a flock of quail. You just make sure they keep going in the right direction and nobody wanders off the range. So I did that. In the actual campaign and election process, I'm sure I was out there as an advance guy. But I don't recall. Yeah, I had to be, because we got the call again. Oh, no. We'd had the call before. Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Yeah. Okay. We were back out there as advance guys, but I didn't attend the '72 convention or any convention thereafter. '68 was my last one.

RITCHIE: In '68 you said that before Johnson withdrew from the race, you got a call to give him some assistance. What was the story about that?

VANDER ZEE: Well, Democratic Headquarters, as you know, was in the Watergate building. This fellow who was from Oklahoma, he'd been—why can't I remember his name? My secretary in my private law office had been Howard Edmondson's secretary. She'd been with him as governor and senator; and when he was defeated, I don't know how but I wound up hiring her. Little girl from Weatherford, Oklahoma named Edna Shiff. And Edna turned out to be a wonderful secretary. She just could take care of everything—especially when I had to be out of the country. She could keep the clients happy. Took care of all the mail. You know, a girl who hadn't had her

background wouldn't be able to do that. But she did it beautifully.

RITCHIE: You had gotten a call to come help out while Johnson was still in the race?

VANDER ZEE: Okay. Okay. The fellow that called me was the guy running the national committee for Johnson. God, I ought to remember his name because he had been Howard Edmondson's AA. I just got it: John Criswell.

He said, "Rein, I got a few names here of guys we'd like to go to work." Now, see, I'm in private practice downtown on DeSales Street, as I recall. And he said, "Would you come down here and visit?" So I did, I had a brief meeting with John. He said, "A fellow has come up from Texas to coordinate this effort," a lawyer from Corpus Christi, and an old Johnson friend. I hadn't seen him in the '60 election. Cecil Burney. He said, "I'd like you to go meet Cecil and visit with him." So out of those two conversations came the request to get my rear out to Wisconsin which was coming up after New Hampshire.

I asked for a few days reprieve so I could get my personal affairs where I could take off. During that time the New Hampshire returns came in, and it was all over. I always refer to it as a campaign that never was, because subsequent to that Johnson's public announcement that was he and Lady Bird and decided roughly a year earlier that he wouldn't run again.

I don't know who all was involved. There were probably at least ten, fifteen, maybe twenty guys at that point. Just guys they could count on for that sort of thing. I'm sure my name was put there by Jim Rowe. Jim was always buzzing around there. Getting things organized. He told me when he put me into that job in the '60 campaign, he said, "I did this for Adlai Stevenson" in '52 or '56, whichever one. And he said, "Vander Zee, you're young, you've got the energy. There's only one thing I'll guarantee you. You'll never do it again." [laughs]

And he was basically right. That led up to that story I told you about Johnson pulling out on the Hawaii trip which threw my whole role into limbo anyway other than as an advance man.

RITCHIE: But in '68 you think Johnson pulled out because he didn't want to lose?

VANDER ZEE: That would still be my assessment after these years. He just *hated* the prospect of having a loser. To the point, I think, that rather than go into the prospect of a loser, he didn't even want a close one. He'd had that, on that Texas election with Stevenson—Coke Stevenson. And I think that he just couldn't stomach that possibility. And he thought well, with the war thing, if it's that bad, if Gene McCarthy can get that damn many votes, I better get out. And be recorded, historically, as a guy that just left the office voluntarily.

RITCHIE: Living in Washington and following politics, what was your assessment of Johnson as president. Were you pleased with what he was doing or surprised?

VANDER ZEE: I've got to be honest with you, Don. I didn't have that much contact with the Johnson White House. I was invited down there a time or two. I remember going down there I guess it was the Christmas right after Kennedy was killed. Now, as a Texan I had been known to Johnson as a Texan, though I never worked directly for him. He always invited me to functions out at his house when he was a V.P. I say always—certainly to Texas club events. And one I remember—I guess it had to be '61 or '62—I remember the two honorees that evening were Henry Gonzales and a fellow named Graham Purcell from Wichita Falls who came into the House. There was a reception in that house Johnson had bought from the little steel lady . . .

RITCHIE: Perle Mesta.

VANDER ZEE: Yeah. Mrs. Mesta. So he was always very cordial and kind to me. I saw him on a plane, I went with him—at my request—again, this had to be 1961, when I had been working Humphrey's personal politics. And I asked Walter [Jenkins]—I knew that Johnson was going out as the vice president to address the governors' conference in Honolulu. And I had been in the Navy out there, and I had attended prior governors' conferences at the

Glacier National Park, at places, and knew a good bit of those people and their staffs. This seemed to be a proper function for me in my capacity of looking out for Humphrey's national interest.

So I asked if I could hook a ride out there to that one. Walter didn't get back. Walter always had the yellow pad and always took shorthand. I didn't hear anything. And I was home at my apartment—this is a typical Johnson story I'm going to tell you now. I lived in a little 2x4 apartment out there off Shirley Highway called Fairlington. Anyway, one of those big apartment projects. And my phone rings, and it's the vice president.

He said, "Rein, I understand you'd like to go out to Hawaii with us." I said, "Well, yes sir. You know, I'm working up there for Humphrey. One of my jobs is kind of working with him on his national things since he was a candidate. And, if you have room, I'd sure like to go along."

He said, "Okay, you come out to Andrews such-and-such a time, and you go with us." *That day!* That afternoon. In those days I was always packed. You have to be! And did. It was an enjoyable trip. George Reedy and I sat together. There was a military attache-type who was along, too, that I roomed with. A guy named Bud Vandervort. He used to be liaison here, I think.

When we were on the way out, we were just sitting there, George and I, just shooting the bull, and Johnson comes forward. He was back in the back. We were in Air Force something or other. I guess Two. George had given me the draft of the speech to read that Johnson was going to make. I was on the window-side. George

was on the aisle. Johnson sat on the arm of the chair across, and he said, "George, you got that speech I can look at?" So George just reached over and handed it to him. He said, "George, don't take things out of people's hand like that!" I thought, Jeez.

They didn't talk about it much, but if you were on his payroll, I understand, you really had to take a lot of crap. But he was never that way with me, because I didn't work for them. And he wasn't that way with me in any of that stuff I told you about at the national committee. We just got shunted aside. Both one of his longest time friends, Jim Rowe, and myself, just a little functionary working under Rowe's direction.

On that trip—God, it was kind of interesting. We were going to stop in Los Angeles to dedicate the new airport on the way out to Hawaii. Now, he said, "Rein, when we get out there, I've got this podium that goes up and down." And he said, "We have these people on these programs, and a lot of them are short. If you don't mind, how about being responsible for making that podium go up and down so it will always be right for the speaker." He said, "I think you know them all."

So, sure enough, I had a list of who was going to be on the program. Well, they left off the name of the guy who was going to introduce Johnson. And he was a fellow named Anderson. He was lieutenant governor of California. Pat Brown, I think, was governor. The reason Pat Brown wasn't there was that Pat Brown had already gone to the governors' conference.

They'd left Anderson's name off the damned list! So the next name on the list is Johnson. So I ran the podium all the way up to its full height for Johnson to use. This little guy [laughs] Anderson, I swear to God, the guy wasn't five feet tall. And he had to stand over on the side. It was too late, then to lower it back down, the way things were going.

You become aware of the sensitivity of these things when you're a damned advance man. That's your job, to make sure everything works like clock work. And I took great pride in usually being able to do that. My two embarrassments were that Amarillo thing with the airplanes—my only known embarrassments—were that where I was involved and this thing in California.

But, anyway, the airport was dedicated, and we went on to Hawaii. A fine time was had by all. And the governors' conference was very enjoyable. I remember one of Pat Brown's old guys being on board with us. I understand he lobbies for the Saudis now downtown. Freddy—-can't recall his name. But, anyway, at least he rode back from Hawaii with us. I don't recall if he rode out, but he'd been a big *Kennedy* man during the campaign. So Johnson was very kind about that type of thing. Other times, if I wanted to go to Texas; or I was in Texas and wanted to come back, I had the phone numbers over there. And this was after I was off the Hill. I'd call [Bill] Moyers or whoever was handling things and ask to hook a ride, and they'd give me one. I'd meet them over in Austin and catch a ride. And that happened a few times.

While I had a cordial relationship, I told you about the time I went down to the White House for a Christmas reception. That had to be right after Kennedy was killed. I think it was part of inviting the Senate down there. And I remember Johnson passing me to Lady Bird and saying, "Bird, you probably remember Rein. He's Jim Rowe's friend." [laughs] Which was his association over that thing. But, he was always nice to me, and I kind of admit, I liked the guy. He used to, before he went down to the White House, those stories you hear about what might be called his less than—what would you call them? country-boy traits—less than refined gentleman.

I remember being in P-38 with him. He would be talking about something. He'd go over and take a leak in a lavatory he had over there in the corner of the room. He'd just be talking, taking a big old leak, talking to you at the same time! He was a busy guy, you know. [laughs]

But I liked him! I didn't have any beef about him. I was always fascinated, though, by Morrow's feelings as a result of that '52 thing. And I never could discern what the bitterness was about there. But the way I figure it is Morrow, and George Brown, and Jessie Jones did put up the green and then they felt this guy owed more loyalty than perhaps he displayed or that he betrayed them. Or whatever. You know, you really don't know about those things, and I was too young and green to figure that stuff out then.

RITCHIE: How did Johnson treat Humphrey?

VANDER ZEE: Well. I always thought well. I called Humphrey, we talked on the phone within a matter of minutes after the president was shot. He wasn't in the whip office. I was in the whip office. So he may have been out of town or over here in the other office. But, I remember saying, "Senator, if you want to go ahead and pursue this national office thing," I said, "Johnson's going to be the president. He's going to have to have a vice president. And that can be you." And, of course, in the final analysis, despite the games that Johnson played, it couldn't be anybody else. He needed to consolidate the whole damn thing. I don't know how much of a role Jim Rowe played there. Well, Jim acted as liaison in the 60's. He was Kennedy to Johnson liaison, number one, beginning immediately after the nominations.

I think he had a similar role in the Johnson-Humphrey time. I just don't remember. But I remember telling Humphrey that. Of course, he knew it, too, that he would pretty well have to be the choice. And he was. He didn't do much overtly. It just kind of had to come him, as I recall.

Johnson talked about everybody else. In the time, I forget, what was that about, nearly a year. Well, no it was only about seven months—from the time of the assassination until the convention. My estimate would be he came to have a greater respect and admiration and friendship for Humphrey than he started with. Because, you know how Humphrey hit the Senate. And Johnson was minority leader, I suppose, at that time. I forget the timing

there. No, Humphrey got in '48. And Johnson didn't get minority leader position until '52. Right?

RITCHIE: Right.

VANDER ZEE: So, I remember him saying things like, "My, God, if I could just harness that guy's energy." I think he always had great respect—or maybe even envy—of Humphrey's stumpability and a kind of a supercharged nature. I mean, you remember, hell, he didn't walk. He bounced! He'd walk into a damn room arms akimbo [stands up and demonstrates] just going at them. Johnson felt, I think, that there was a great political talent there that was largely being dissipated on irrelevancies in the early part. And I think later on he came to see otherwise.

I wasn't around and privy to much, because I was down making a living, in the '68 thing to know, where there has been a lot of speculation about the degree of Johnson support. Whether or not he could have done more or whether or not he could have done more the last few days of the campaign, and whether or not he was tacitly really hoping that Nixon would be the guy because he'd be more apt to carry out Johnson's war policy. You've heard that speculation.

So, I don't know. I do know that after Baker went to Johnson's ranch and came back to my house, he had told Johnson that he was staying over at my place. And Johnson said, "Well, tell old Rein to come see me," you know, like he'd be expected to do. I

never did go see him. I didn't have that much—I wasn't that close to the man.

RITCHIE: I wondered if when Humphrey became vice president, Johnson didn't look on him as sort of an extended member of his staff rather than as a colleague.

VANDER ZEE: Well, see, I was gone then from the staff, and I don't really know. I used to drop over to the old State Building there where Humphrey's offices were and just see the gang. Maybe talk to a few of them about something, pushing my deals. But, I really wasn't politicking much in those days, and I don't know. I don't know. And Baker never—to my knowledge—his talks with Johnson on that last visit didn't extend to anything like that.

I feel that Humphrey had a healthy respect and liking for Johnson. And I think maybe, in the final analysis, Johnson would have felt they made a good team, that they covered the gamut of the party's interest. I think he would have termed Humphrey a loyalist, and I think Humphrey was a loyalist. And I think Humphrey had compromised a lot of his old positions which cost him support on the left wing of the Democratic party. I don't know if it was enough to cost him that election, but some people might argue that.

I remember talking to Humphrey again on the phone after the election and just saying that I was sorry that he didn't make it. But how many men ever had the chance, ever got the opportunity to

make the run? I think that's the way he felt about it. He didn't seem down. We had, to the extent you can have a friendship with a guy that really doesn't even know his family, we had a real good friendship for a few years there. But you know, at that stage in his political life, everybody is busy as hell! If there was only some way when that is going on that you could stop and savor the moment. But you never can. It's always too fleeting. Things are happening too fast. Nobody slows down. You're at the height of your physical energy and usually your intellectual energy during those years. It's just a damn blur.

That's why something like this, this exercise right here today, can evoke memories that, hell, you'd have to sit around for days to think up on your own. But by doing this, you prompt these things to come back.

RITCHIE: Well, you were here during very dramatic times, and you certainly knew some very dramatic people in that period.

VANDER ZEE: I have nothing but good memories about it. They say that finally all you take to your grave are your memories. You certainly don't take your physical possessions. But, hopefully, memories of your family and loved ones go with you. So that's all you've got. And that period of my life was very personally enriching because I was just a little old kid from Texas that never would have presumed to even have these acquaintances or associations.

If I learned anything from it, it was that no matter the station in life that people arrive at, people are all still pretty much the same. And I would have also to say that the people who were more identified as statesman—what's the definition? A politician is somebody who worries about the next election; and a statesman is a person who worries about the next generation. The statesmen—the Rayburns. The Trumans. I also had the privilege to meet President Truman. I was an invitee to his last birthday party held here in Washington at the Mayflower. About thirty or forty of us were down there that night, and I was introduced to him as a new kid working for Democrats. That man had a great gift. He'd make you feel like he'd known you your whole damned life in a brief meeting like that.

But all I would say is that the great ones are really the kind of humble types that are very easy to approach when you know them. And the stuffed shirts, the real stuffed shirts, they don't make it. They don't make it. I think Johnson in his heart of hearts was a man of the people. Of course, he was very conscious of self, and he wanted a place in the history books, and all of that. But I think ultimately he was motivated by what he thought was in the true best interest of the people at large, and maybe the more modest among our people.

Certainly Humphrey was. I can only say that I am glad I had the experience. There were bad moments along with the good, but on balance, they were all favorable experiences in my lifetime. I've had the opportunity to spend a lot of hours with people who knew

these men, especially Johnson, much better than I. And I think in the final analysis, that he deserved to be president. And he gave it his best shot. And that's where the historians will have to decide what kind of job was truly done.

Who could predict the direction that world events take? Certainly, there is no such person. So *everything* men do ultimately gets interpreted in light of what happens afterward. I'm sure there are already people who say that all this stuff that was attempted in the Great Society—or much of it—was a failure. Some might say that the whole civil rights thing has set the stage for a huge social problem that has to be dealt with some day. The blacks don't seem to be delivered up from poverty. Some people would say things are worse rather than better. All I can say is these men were attempting to do the very best they knew how at the time, and they couldn't do more than that.

RITCHIE: Well, I want to thank you for sharing your perceptions and stories and personal experiences. They're a very valuable addition to our collection.

VANDER ZEE: Um-hmm. My pleasure, Don. I only regret that I wasn't more deeply involved and could give insights that could be original or more substantive than those I've given.

RITCHIE: I think it's going to be a very solid contribution to the collection. I appreciate it.

VANDER ZEE: Okay. Thank you, sir.

RITCHIE: Thank you.

End of Interview #2