

Oral History Interview #2

With

WILLIAM J. RANDALL

Independence, Missouri

December 8, 1989

by Niel M. Johnson, Harry S. Truman Library

JOHNSON: We'll pick up where we left off last time, let's say, in January 1953, when Truman came back from the White House, and from then until 1959, when you took office replacing George Christopher who died in office.

RANDALL: A very interesting sequence there.

JOHNSON: Did it take a special election to do that?

RANDALL: You know, that's something that makes you so very proud, to be a member of the United States House of Representatives. You asked me if there was a special election. There is no other way you enter into those doors. We've seen the spectacle in this country--I'm making motions like Mr. Truman with both hands parallel, which I try to avoid--we've seen here in

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recent years a President of the United States un-elected as President. We know many times United States Senators are un-elected or appointed. Many, many governors are unappointed. There's only one office in America--oh I suppose there's constables or dog catcher or school board members--but only one major office in America that you never enter those doors unless you are elected by the people. There must be a special election. It isn't the question, "Was there one;" there must be one.

JOHNSON: When was that election?

RANDALL: The election was March 3, 1959.

JOHNSON: So he just had begun to serve his term.

RANDALL: Well, I was going to tell you. I don't know whether this is as important as some other things we were going to try to get to. Mr. Christopher suffered from diabetes, very serious diabetes. First he had a toe removed and then a foot removed and then an ankle removed, and up to his knee. Finally, I guess the dear soul had both of his lower extremities virtually all removed. He was in a wheel chair, being wheeled around. He was in bad, bad, bad condition. He was

sworn in on the third day of January, and passed away on the tenth day of January. Seven days later.

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JOHNSON: But he was reelected with those infirmities.

RANDALL: Yes, he was reelected with all those disabilities. Well, he was wheeled around. There again is another episode which has always saddened me. Without mentioning any names, he had two assistants out here in the area, out in the district. One was a very nice fellow, a long-time personal friend, down in Bates County where he lived. He lived in western Bates County. But the other one was what I have always regarded as sort of an opportunist, a ne'er-do-well, who was his assistant here in this county. He let that dear old soul sit in the hot sun in a car, unattended during the summer months of 1958. The young man who was working for him would leave him for as long as an hour and the poor guy--I'm referring to Mr. Christopher--would come down and say, "Would somebody give me a drink of water?" That said something to me about Mr. Christopher. I would have fired that b-a-s-t-a and so forth on the spot.

JOHNSON: So between 1953 and March of '59 you were serving here as Eastern Judge of the County.

RANDALL: Right.

JOHNSON: Were you down at the depot when Truman came in that day?

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RANDALL: Oh, I was there that night. That was pretty much under the aegis, or I should say under the arrangement, of the then-sitting Robert Price Weatherford, Jr. who was mayor. Incidentally, well, we won't go afield on that, but he was one of those who, shall we say, always paid homage to Mr. Truman, but I always felt that Mr. Truman never returned it. He was there that night anyhow. He was running the show.

JOHNSON: Robert Weatherford, yes. He was a popular Mayor, is that true?

RANDALL: Well, yes. Don't misunderstand me. I'll take a little credit for his even being Mayor. The leadership met the night of Roger T. Sermon's death, about an hour afterward. When I say leadership, I was Eastern Judge, and in those days I had more jobs, I controlled more jobs, than anyone in the city. I had virtually 900 jobs under my control, and anyone close to me only had 40 or 50. Maybe the little city jobs in those days were 100-150. So four of us, or five of us, were called in. There were two City Councilmen, a City Counselor, and John Theiss. The two city councilmen were Rennick Jones and Jim Noel, and there was Alvin Hatten who was county collector, and myself. Maybe Marcus Curtley was there; he was Assistant County Counselor. John Theiss was City Counselor; and then

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myself. Two immediately began making a selection for successor.

I'll have to refresh my memory. There was a special election, but the council had to agree on an interim Mayor pro-tem. This is clear off the subject of Mr. Truman--but that night I was the first one to propose Robert P. Weatherford, Jr. because he was at that time president of the Chamber of Commerce. We had to have someone who would have a totally clean, untarnished image, if you please, and Weatherford fitted that mold. I proposed him. There were three or four other proposals; some members of the council wanted to succeed the Mayor, but my proposal finally prevailed. I was the first one to propose Weatherford. So therefore, that's the answer to Mr. Weatherford.

I will have to suggest that after he was in office there were some shortcomings that later, should I say, surfaced, but I first proposed him. Now that's a little afield; let's go ahead.

JOHNSON: When was your first meeting with the former President after he came back?

RANDALL: There weren't too many meetings. In other words, there was really no occasion or no call for a meeting. I was doing my job; he was here. I don't think I have

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ever taken one of the morning walks with him.

JOHNSON: Did he take an interest in local politics after he came back?

RANDALL: No, not very much. Not very much. Really not. Well, of course, I guess you could say he took more of an interest while he was President, before he retired, than after he retired. After he retired, I can't recall any.

JOHNSON: Did he ever come up to the office there at the Court House to visit?

RANDALL: Oh, very rarely. Very rarely. I can't recall. He would walk through the Court House as a sort of a short cut sometimes from the east door to the west door, and maybe say hello to a few people on the way. But he didn't visit the Court House very much.

JOHNSON: He never talked to you about running for office, running for Congress, anything like that?

RANDALL: Not in one single instance.

JOHNSON: What was it that caused you then to decide to run for that position?

RANDALL: I don't know that there ever was a decision. I have said many times to those who have an ambition to

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be a member of Congress that today you can have that ambition but it's very, very difficult to ever see it realized. We're to a point in this country now where it takes a challenger at least a quarter of a million dollars, and even back in those days it probably would have taken seventy-five to a hundred thousand. A person can have an ambition, but to see it realized; I suppose a person can nurture that ambition all the time, and say, "Oh, my goodness, I just want to hold national office, and that's the one I want to hold." I wasn't running for Congress. I think I told you that before. I wasn't running for Congress. My dear wife, I mentioned earlier; she said, "Bill," bless her heart, she said, "I want you to retire from the County Court. One of these days you're going to be so old they're going to have to lift you on the bench and lift you off." She said, "You can stay there until you die, I know that. I know they'll never defeat you, but," she said, "why don't you just voluntarily retire?" Which I didn't do. I had been elected to a seventh term when Mr. Christopher died.

JOHNSON: Well, now, who was it that influenced you to run for Congress?

RANDALL: Well, that is quite a story, and I don't know that that's as important as some other things we ought to

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get to, but we'll go into that.

At 10 o'clock that night, the phone started ringing at our little home on South Main Street. People were calling from way down in the deep country, friends that I had known over the years, mostly in veterans organizations. I was very active in the VFW, past commander of the local post, a state judge advocate general; I had a lot of friends throughout the area. Those were mostly from veterans organizations. They said, "Bill, get in there right now; don't let anybody get ahead of you." I said, "Well, I have a job." I'll never forget the remark that one of them made; "You just get something going there in the suburban area, we'll take care of the sticks." Well, I didn't ever appreciate anyone referring to the rural area as "sticks," but they said, "We'll take care of the sticks. You get some backing up there."

Well, nothing happened. Friday night passed. Saturday passed. All the names came out in the paper. The Sunday edition of the [Kansas City] Star had all sorts of speculation as to who would succeed: Robert P. Weatherford, Jr.; Stanley Fike, who was administrative assistant to Senator [Stuart] Symington. Oh, my goodness, there was Floyd Snyder, who was state representative; Floyd Gibson who was state senator, just virtually every one, but my name was never

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mentioned.

Monday passed, and nothing in the morning [Kansas City] Times. Monday night I was sitting at the table and my dear wife, bless her heart--I've said so many times, the greatest thing that ever happened to me in my life was to marry her--said to me, "Bill," we were sitting across from each other eating dinner, and my little daughter was sitting there. She said, "Are you alive?" I said, "I

don't know; why do you ask me that?" She said, "I haven't noticed your obituary, but there's not been one word in the paper about you being considered for Mr. Christopher's successor." I said, "Well, I don't know that that's important." She said, "I don't care whether you go to Congress or not, but I just want to see your name in the paper."

Okay. Tuesday morning I got on the telephone. I called Don Jones who was a long-time friend, who I guess you would say was really the political editor of the Star at that time. Little Don T. Jones, he was a little tiny fellow. I said, "Don, I don't care what happens, but as a special consideration to me, please just say that my name has been mentioned, because it has in the rural areas; maybe not here, but in the rural areas, in several instances, it has been mentioned in the different counties." I said, "Maybe the Star hasn't heard of it." He said, "I'll take care

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of that, but I want to tell you something right now. I'm glad you called; there's one call you should make immediately." I said, "What's that?" He said, "Call Ben Norberg's office. Harry Gallagher and Ben Norberg and Hubert Dalton are sitting in that office right at this minute. They're desperately searching for a candidate to offset and beat Bill Sermon's candidate," and they all knew who that would be. I said, "All right, I'll give them a call."

I got Ben Norberg on the phone. "Bill," he said, "thank God you called; are you interested in it?" I said, "Well, not so much interested; I just want my name mentioned in the paper." I said, "I have a job." He said, "No, you don't have a job; you are going to be the next Congressman." I said, "Oh, now that's a big order."

Harry Gallagher was there, and he turned the phone over to Harry who was then the leader of the so-called Shannon faction. Ben, I guess, was the titular leader, but Harry was the active leader. He said, "Bill, you're our man. We're going to start fighting for you." I said, "Well, now, wait just a minute. I didn't jump into this thing." So finally he said he was going to turn the phone over to Hubert Dalton. I said, "Hi Hubert," and he said, "Hello cousin." We're not really related, but he always called me cousin. He

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was president of local 13 of the United Steel Workers, a very powerful political following. He said, "Bill, I've been committed to another man. I'm way out on a limb, but at this very moment I'm starting to crawl back to that tree. I'm going to get off of that limb." Well, I said, "Now wait a minute." So there begun, you might say, the impetus right there in that one telephone call, beginning with my dear wife.

Forgive me for putting it on the tape, but all hell broke loose with Bill Sermon. It came out in the paper. He began to realize that I was going to have some substantial backing. I don't know whether I want to use the word "paying homage," but he was following the wishes, I guess you could say, or following the urges maybe; maybe not that strong, maybe it was reading the mind of Mr. Truman who wanted Randall Jessee.

The word got back to Mr. Truman. He sent messenger after messenger to me, lawyers, associates, [and the advice was] "Bill," in the very dirty words of the street, "get your a-s-s out of that race." My word back to Mr. Sermon was, "How can you get out of something you've never been in?" I said, "I've never announced; I haven't made an announcement yet. I haven't made any indication that I'm even interested in the office. I simply have some friends that want me to

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be interested. So, thank you for your message, but it doesn't apply to me."

The late William Harry Sermon thereafter did everything in the world he could to discredit me, everything in the world he could to be certain that I wouldn't even be considered for the nomination. He had a man by the name of Jimmy, I've forgotten his name, but anyhow, in those days and even now, you have a county chairman of the Democratic Party, and you have a Congressional District Chairman. The Congressional District Chairman was totally controlled by Mr. Sermon. I'm wrestling with that name. It was Jimmy Williams.

He would call sessions of the Congressional Committee for no reason at all. In other words there was only one time you call a Congressional Committee together, and that's when you're going to select the nominee. But he called it in at least two instances. Anyhow, he called the committee together, and drug all the rural people in here to Independence.

It was on a Thursday or a Friday I guess, and at that time they made every effort in the world to get me to attend that meeting and make a commitment whether I was running or not. The meeting was held at the City Hall. I was tempted just to go to the back of the room and kind of see who all was present. In other words, not only was the committee present, but the room was

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packed; the council chamber was packed. Well, even the downstairs of City Hall was full. I just kind of mingled around downstairs. I suddenly realized, "Wait a minute, this thing could be very well engineered to be a trap for me, some kind of a trap."

So, I quietly bowed out and went up the street, north on Main Street, and thereafter was one big search for one William J. Randall, all over. They even had the police looking for me, I guess. Anyhow I thought, "Wait a minute, we're not going to be led into this thing. We're going to continue to keep the status of a non-candidate." I went into a barber shop, of a great friend, Clyde James, whom I had known for years, about half a block away from City Hall north. I went into the barber shop, and said, "Clyde, there's going to be a lot of people looking for me in the next half hour." I said, "I want to wait until this meeting adjourns. I want to be sure this meeting is adjourned without making an appearance." He said, "I'm going to be giving you a shave." He put the barber chair way back, and put a sheet clear up over my head. Three or four times people came in there looking for me, wanting to know, "Is Bill Randall in here?" He said, "My goodness no, and don't bother me; I'm shaving this man."

Well, after about a half hour I slipped out and went down the alley and finally got in my car and went

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home. So, we got by that hurdle. Jimmy Williams initiated that totally at the behest of Bill Sermon. Well, that was unsuccessful for them.

JOHNSON: What were they trying to do?

RANDALL: Trying to pin me down so that they could really start working against me, to say that I was a candidate and work against me.

JOHNSON: At this time they were promoting Randall Jessee?

RANDALL: Well, they were floating two or three alternatives. Randall Jessee was their first choice, because of Mr. Truman.

As I have suggested before, I don't think Mr. Truman ever forgave me for getting the nomination, but I guess he had never forgiven any of the Randalls for being for E.E. Montgomery in 1922. Mr. Truman was somewhat like the Kennedys; he didn't forget, and he always tried to get even, both ways. This time he was very, very adamant about Randall Jessee. Randall apparently had done some favors for him. Randall, may his soul be at peace and rest, and I have nothing but good vibrations toward Randall Jessee. He had a very fine family. I don't think I'm maligning or in any way slandering him or maligning him, but he had a tendency to drink quite a bit. He's been known to appear on his

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TV shows rather inebriated, but he would mumble through and get by. What it was that Mr. Truman saw in him, I guess was some favors that he had done as a TV announcer. That's the only reason. I don't know of any other relationship that ever existed. But it must have been because of some favors. Anyhow, he was determined that Randall Jessee would get the nomination.

JOHNSON: He was involved with promoting the building of the Library here.

RANDALL: Well, involved yes, and no. Well, I guess, sure, he was just like everyone; he wanted to see the Library here built. I think maybe I had a little something to do with it, and I can tell you, I've had an awful lot to do with it since as a member of Congress, in appropriations.

JOHNSON: Yes.

RANDALL: He was mentioned in it; we were all mentioned in it, my goodness.

JOHNSON: Did you take an active role in the building of the Truman Library?

RANDALL: No I didn't. If you'd have to say who took the most active role, again I guess you'd come back to Bob

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Weatherford, Robert Price Weatherford, Jr. I repeat that every time because that's the way he liked for it to be. He was named for General Price, Sterling Price. But Mr. Truman was very, very strong--I should say almost adamant--for Randall Jessee to be the nominee. So, all Mr. Sermon was doing, I guess you'd say, was just being in lock-step with him.

But that is pretty much the background of some of those things. I never did announce. I never did announce.

JOHNSON: But you had to get on the ballot.

RANDALL: Well, I was going to tell you about that, about the machinery, the nuts and bolts.

Now comes the Harrisonville convention. Well, let's back up a little bit. We had some friends working for us; there was no question about that, and they were not doing it necessarily surreptitiously or should I say, covertly. They were doing it carefully, and not making a big show about it.

I just had a thought. I guess if I ever get around to writing down any memoirs of anything, or a little chapter, a little book, one little book would be "How to Run for Office Without Running for Office," because this is a perfect illustration of it.

A man by the name of Jimmy Shaffer, whom I was

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really not indebted to at all, a lawyer, head of the firm of Newbanks, Shaffer and Wilson; he had an entire floor of the First National Bank building, a good firm, and his partner was Keith Wilson, who later became city manager. If you've lived here a few years you've heard of Keith Wilson, a rather articulate fellow, sort of loquacious and everything else, very able man.

Then there was a third man that entered the picture, Roger Slaughter. He was in addition to the others I mentioned: Harry Gallagher and Ben Norberg and Hubert Dalton. All of that group, I won't say silently, but carefully under cover, began to work and work hard, making trips back and forth to the rural areas. Roger Slaughter was a very wealthy man. He represented all of the big grain companies in the area. In fact, I guess he had maybe a seat on the Chicago Board of Trade. He was born and raised here in Independence but he lived in Kansas City. He was a member of Congress for two years, whom Mr. Truman defeated. I guess maybe the motive--I'll never know what his motive was, and this is just speculation--but maybe he wanted to do the thing that Mr. Truman was so good at: on getting even. So, he contributed in those days. I don't

remember what it was, a couple hundred dollar bills or something; I don't know what it was. Maybe I omitted to mention it, but sometime during that

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weekend after Mr. Christopher's demise and the time that I finally made the telephone call on Tuesday morning, he may have called. I believe he did. I said "Rog...

JOHNSON: Roger Slaughter called you?

RANDALL: I said, "I'm not interested in the thing. I would hope that they would mention my name in the paper." He said, "Oh, don't worry about that. We sure would like for you to be a candidate." I said, "Well, don't sweat it."

So he became very active. He had a lot of friends in Lafayette County, and he had some in Bates County. He had some in Johnson County. But these two lawyers, Shaffer and Wilson, fanned out and made trips back and forth, back and forth. I didn't owe them one thing. I don't know what their motive was; I guess their motive was maybe anti-Sermon; I don't think it was anti-Truman, it was probably anti-Sermon. But here was Bill Sermon spearheading the drive, and everybody knew it. There was the late Gilbert Titus who was a policeman who had managed to study at night and became a lawyer, and a pretty good one. I never even gave it any thought until just now, this interview, why Roger Slaughter--I'm beginning to see it now--Mr. Truman was a party to defeating him as a member of Congress.

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JOHNSON: Was that when Enos Axtell received Truman's support?

RANDALL: You're right, you're right on the button. This shows that you can take a lot of courses, sit in a lot of lectures on political science, but you have to pull back the veil a little bit and find out what really makes it work, and this was one of those. It was the past coming into the present.

One time I was privileged to sit in on a Thanksgiving Day [dinner?], with the American Ambassador to Austria. I guess it was one of the greatest two-hours I ever spent in my life. He gave me a history of Europe and brought down to date why Europe is today like it is. Of course, there is the Iron Curtain, but up until that time at least, why Europe was divided, why all the countries felt as they did towards each other. It was because of what went on in the past. I think we're right here on the same thread. Those who were working for me were reacting to what had happened in the past because of Mr. Sermon and Mr. Truman.

JOHNSON: They had some scores to settle?

RANDALL: That's a good way to put it. I had no score to settle. I think everyone has a legitimate desire to hold high office.

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So let's go now to Harrisonville. The meeting was finally held in Harrisonville. I can't give you the date. I get so excited doing this that I forget to give the proper sequence.

This concerns one of the most shameful things that I have ever seen, totally; the action of the participants was shameless. Mr. Christopher's memorial services were at the Baptist Church in Butler, Missouri. He passed away on a Friday, and I'm not sure whether it was Tuesday or Wednesday of the following week [that the services were held]. In any event, it was sort of like my later attendance at the called meeting, which was very extraordinary and very unnecessary--the called meeting of the committee by Mr. Williams in Independence some time later in January. I thought, "Well, I'd just go down and see what was going on."

I didn't go in the church; there was no room in the church. The church was packed with rural people who were genuinely mourners for the man; he was a good man. George Christopher was a good man. That church was on the west side of the street; I shall never forget. Out in that yard of that church, between there and the street, there were probably 100 or 200 people. I was very careful; I stayed out near the street. I just wanted to be there to pay my respects and see what

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was going on. Randall Jessee was going from person to person. Here at a man's funeral--he hadn't even been interred in the earth yet-- he [Jessee] was asking support to be his successor. There was a man by the name "Rube;" I always called him Rube Schappler. I believe he was state representative at that time. There was a third man, Don Doak, I believe; he had not been mentioned very prominently. He was, I guess, administrative assistant to Mr. Christopher. Another person who was always actively pursuing the nomination, when I say actively, I mean openly, was a little gentleman named Robert Crawford, Bob Crawford.

I digress for a moment here to say to you I'm glad in a way that you're taking the time to do it because I'm afraid I might just forget some of these things. I do hope that I can read these tapes some time, and to get time to jot some of this stuff down in print, or at least in handwriting.

Robert Crawford was later Secretary of State, I think. He might have held a local office in Vernon County; that would be out of Nevada. Bob Crawford was active, and he was nominated at the convention, at the Congressional Convention. He received a lot of votes.

Another who was there--and this to me was disrespect to the man who was lying in state in the

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church with the memorial service about to be, or being, performed--was Delton Houchens. By the way, Delton Houchens became an active candidate, from over at Clinton, from over in Henry County. Delton Houchens received a lot of votes. He was a sort of backup or a follow-on for Randall Jessee in the event that Randall Jessee faltered.

Houchens later became state chairman of the Democratic State Committee. He was a dear, dear, close friend of Warren Hearnes, whom I loved and still regard as one of the greatest Governors, with the possible exception of Forrest Smith, that this state ever had. Here were those people out there, all of them out in the yard, going around soliciting support while the memorial service was going on. I won't say it made me ill, but I just shook my head. I said, "My God, why can't they wait until the man is buried?" I turned around and came back to Independence.

JOHNSON: Had Christopher been associated with any particular faction?

RANDALL: Well, no. No, he was strictly a rural candidate. Well, wait a minute, let's back up. All of these things I made no preparation at all for coming out here. I'm just like an untutored witness that goes on the stand. I have no preparation.

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In that previous year, think of it now, in 1958 Robert Price Weatherford, Jr. was the candidate of the Eastern Jackson County and came very close to defeating Mr. Christopher in the primary.

JOHNSON: So even with those physical handicaps he was able to run that campaign and beat Weatherford.

RANDALL: Well, he won predominantly in the rural areas, and Weatherford didn't run all that well in the urban areas.

JOHNSON: Well, was there kind of a rural-urban split?

RANDALL: Schism? Yes, I guess so.

JOHNSON: The rural support was crucial to you then, wasn't it?

RANDALL: Not only crucial to me, but it took me years to gain the confidence of the rural people because I was in effect a city slicker. It took me years and years and years to live down the Bill Sermon image. I say, "Now, wait a minute. It's all right if you refer to me as a Sermon man, but let's be doggone sure which Sermon you're talking about; Roger Sermon who built up that town for 27 years, and the man [William Sermon] who tore it down in four." I managed after about four to six years to convince the rural people.

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Another thing I've learned about the rural people; they are slow, slow, slow to become acquainted with, but once you become acquainted and once you gain their confidence, they don't change. There's no fickleness like there is in the suburban or urban areas. They're with you first, last and always. It took me several years to gain that confidence, because it's exactly what you said. Here I'm from a big city; I'm a "big city slicker." They didn't call me that, but worse than all was the idea I was a Bill Sermon man. I said, "Wait a minute. Not only was Bill Sermon

against me, Mr. Truman was against me. How can I be dominated by people like that when they're against me?"

JOHNSON: So after the funeral what happens?

RANDALL: Well, Jimmy Williams called the special meeting of the committee which nobody ever understood why, except to try to count noses or something I guess.

JOHNSON: Of the Congressional District Committee?

RANDALL: The Congressional District Committee. So, I can't give you the exact date, but it was early February 1959. I want to try to pin that date down. Well, it was close to the first day of the month, either the first or second, because I remember well that the Governor called the election. We got a new Governor;

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it was Blair, Jim Blair, and there's a very interesting episode there. Jim Blair was against me too. The Governor was against me. How a man can get the nomination with everybody against him is something very difficult to figure out. The Governor was against me; he was for Bob Crawford.

The Governor called the election for the 3rd day of March. Again, I don't want to assign any ulterior motive because the man's in his grave, but Jimmy Williams held off, held off, held off calling the real committee that makes the nomination. I know it had a February dateline, but I know I said to myself after I received the nomination, "I have exactly one month to campaign in all these counties." So, it was one or two days before the 3rd day of February, because the election had been called for March 3rd. That's a pretty big assignment, to have one month to campaign.

JOHNSON: The Congressional District Committee was going to make the nomination?

RANDALL: They made the nomination.

JOHNSON: Were all the candidates at that meeting?

RANDALL: I don't know, I can't tell you. I wasn't there.

JOHNSON: You weren't there.

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RANDALL: No.

JOHNSON: But you had established these contacts with the...

RANDALL: Well, let's say, they had been established. I hadn't established them necessarily. I made the call at the behest of my dear, sweet, loveable wife. From there on the momentum started.

JOHNSON: And Roger Slaughter was . . .

RANDALL: Well, not necessarily Roger. If I'd have to rank the proponents, it would have to be first Ben Norberg, who was then sitting County Clerk and probably had 35-40 jobs [under his control] I guess. There was Harry Gallagher, who was his first lieutenant. Harry was a factional head at that time. Frank Shannon, the son of the late Joseph B. Shannon, was sort of off on the side-line. Well, he might have been ill; I believe he was ill. He passed away. Harry Gallagher was the titular head, anyhow, of the so-called Regular Democratic Club, which was the Shannon faction. So I guess Gallagher would be number two, and if I had to list the third one, it would be Hubert Dalton who was head of local 13, and in those days Armco probably had 4,000 workers over there.

JOHNSON: And they never consulted Truman, or did they?

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RANDALL: Well, I don't know whether they did or not. I'm not sure. Well, I'm almost certain that none of those was very close to Mr. Truman. Not close at all. Roger Slaughter probably would come next after naming Hubert Dalton. I guess maybe next would be Shaffer and Wilson, and to this day I don't know why Shaffer and Wilson were so gung-ho, if that's a good word to use, so strong, or worked so hard for me.

JOHNSON: Was there still a remnant of the Pendergast faction?

RANDALL: Well, after 1936 or maybe '38, even along about '39, the Pendergast faction, as a faction, began to disintegrate. That was the Goat faction, called the Goats. The Rabbit faction, or the Shannon faction, did not suffer the same taint, or I should say the same tarnish, that the Pendergast faction did because of the fact that Mr. Pendergast went to the penitentiary. Joe Shannon and his group, were in the political profile all along. Even on the vote fraud, the great vote frauds of '38, by association, I guess you could say they were involved, but they weren't painted with any criminal offenses.

JOHNSON: Well, Jim Pendergast was still living, was he not?

RANDALL: A fine man, and a man whom I admired and held in

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highest esteem. He was the nephew, and he did the best he could to pick up the remnants after Tom Pendergast's death.

JOHNSON: Was he supporting Randall Jessee for instance?

RANDALL: I'm not sure whether he took any part in it. I doubt seriously if he did. Here's something that's been omitted; that while the Honorable Mayor Roger T. Sermon was aligned, or I should say, more closely associated, with the Pendergast faction than he was the Rabbit faction--the Shannon faction--he had his own faction. He had his own. He was his own man, and he had, I expect, maybe as many as a couple hundred city jobs, such as policemen, firemen. He had his own group, and had Roger T. Sermon lived, I probably wouldn't even have had to ask for the nomination. He would have put his hand on my shoulder, and he'd say, "Bill, you're our man, let's go."

Well, I think I suggested why Bill Sermon didn't like me so well. It took long after he had passed on, to find out. I don't know if this is the time or place to put this in the record and I won't do it, but he didn't like me.

JOHNSON: Bill Sermon.

RANDALL: Didn't like me. And it was long after he was

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gone, it took me a long time, to find out.

JOHNSON: But he helped you get onto the County Court, did he not?

RANDALL: Yes, and no. The power of incumbency in the County Court is almost invincible--I mean, when you're sitting on 900 jobs. He had a little handful of jobs; he couldn't have stopped me. There's no way he could have defeated me.

I don't have a big ego, I hope not; I'm accused of it sometimes, but I disavow it. I was fortunate enough to lead the ticket every time, meaning that I received a lot more votes than any other Democrat. There were three of us, but I was always fortunate enough to even be ahead of all the other two. There was the present Alvin D. Hatten, bless his heart; he's now 96 years old I believe. I'm going to try to go out and see him tonight. There was Judge Brady, who's now deceased; and myself. I was always fortunate enough to lead the ticket, sometimes as much as 10 or 15 percent over the other Democrats on the ticket. That's known as leading the ticket, meaning that you received a lot of Republican votes, always did.

JOHNSON: And Truman never visited you, while you were on the job so to speak as western judge?

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RANDALL: He might have dropped down to Kansas City on one occasion, I don't know.

JOHNSON: Did he ever ask you to help promote the building of the Library? Did he ever ask you?

RANDALL: No, I don't think he did. I don't think he did.

JOHNSON: Okay, now after you were elected . . .

RANDALL: Well, we never did finish the Harrisonville episode. The Harrisonville deal is the most dramatic thing that ever happened.

JOHNSON: All right.

RANDALL: When I say "dramatic," that's in terms of local antiquarian, political life, if you want to put it that way. It received some national publicity though. They convened in Harrisonville, Missouri, and I'll never know why Jimmy Williams selected Harrisonville.

JOHNSON: Now is this the Congressional District?

RANDALL: Right. This is the one that counts. I want to say it was the first or second day of February. I guess all the other candidates were there; I don't know. I didn't go. I'm still a non-candidate. I had some friends there. I can't give you the count; I don't know if the secretary's even living or not.

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There might be a woman out here at Blue Springs, bless her heart. She was a supporter, Jennie Johnson.

JOHNSON: I know Jennie.

RANDALL: You know Jennie? Great little lady.

JOHNSON: Tiny Johnson's widow.

RANDALL: Tiny Johnson's widow. Tiny had a bunch of horses he rented out there.

JOHNSON: I've interviewed Jennie.

RANDALL: Jennie was a friend of Norberg and Gallagher. She fought hard for me, and maybe was the secretary. No, I believe it was Bernice Ross over at Holden. I'm not sure. Anyhow they convened at noon, and I don't have any record of how many were there. I remember that people said there were twenty-two ballots cast. I'm not sure about the rules of the Congressional Committee, whether they were followed or not followed. They had a quorum; there's no question about that. Everybody was there virtually. The nominee had to receive a majority of the votes, one more than half of those present, in order to be nominated.

Well, I don't recall the split. I mean I don't know that I ever heard the split; don't know whether it was ever announced. I hope I can find someone that's

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still living. Don Jones was there on the outside; he was not inside of the committee. Harold Vince, who is not totally well today, might know. There's a fellow down here by the name of Steve Schmidt. I'm not sure whether he is living; he has told me a lot about it.

Dear Rudy Roper, who was Mayor of the City of Sugar Creek for 40 long years, was there and he's told me about it. He now is not well. Harold Vince is probably my best bet, but I'd like to know how it was split down.

I guess still the largest number of votes each time was for Randall Jessee. The second big bloc of votes was for Bob Crawford, Robert Crawford, because of the Governor's influence. The fact of the matter is that he was the Governor's nephew. His mother was a Blair, I believe; maybe it was his grandmother who was a Blair. He was, forgive me for saying so, a pompous little fellow. He came up to the meeting in Independence and, oh, he was so confident he was going to get the nomination. I know I walked with him from the Legion building up to the vicinity of the City Hall where the meeting was, and he just reared back, "I've got it. I have it; don't worry about it, it's all over." I said, "Well, Bob, congratulations. I hope after you're in Washington you'll say hello to me, and let me come up and visit you."

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But anyhow, he had the next largest bloc of votes; that is my understanding. Third was Delton Houchens, and there were a few straggling votes each time for Reuben Schappler and Don-- either Deak or Doak. Don Deak or Doak, he had one or two. And that went on and on and on all afternoon, until just before 7 o'clock at night. I obviously wasn't in the meeting and I don't know what happened. It was in a hotel, the dear old Harrisonville Hotel, and I guess it was one spot in the world that should be dear to me. It's gone now; it's a landmark that's been torn down. My dear mother and father went there on their honeymoon, the first night. He owned a brick plant there, and they drove there after they were married in Independence; they spent their first night together there and I tried to do the very same thing after I was married in 1939. We were so poor we had to go to the Ozarks, and I just said, "Well, Honey, we're going right back to that same hotel," which we did. And that's where the convention was held, in the Harrisonville Hotel.

I came out the next morning, a Sunday morning. Some son of a gun followed me all the way down there; all the tires were flat, all four tires were flat on my car. Anyway those were the days. As I've said before, the greatest thing that ever happened to me in my life was to marry that dear woman. I'm digressing, getting

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far afield.

So, the meeting went on, and on, and on, till sometime around 6:30. Because of the fact that it was in the hotel, there was a bar there and drinks were being brought in all the time to the delegates. Now, how many drank and how many didn't drink, I don't know, and much they

drank I didn't know. But I've heard this story so many times, I think there must be some credibility to it. William Harry Sermon became greatly inebriated because, I suppose, he had failed in his quest for Randall Jessee to be nominated. He saw that it was a failure. He saw that he couldn't swing it; and Ben Norberg was putting his votes on Crawford at the time. He didn't put them on me. I was never nominated until the last minute, about 6:30. He was playing all his votes for Crawford and he was a big supporter of the Governor. I think Crawford came pretty close to the total of Randall Jessee a time or two. I'd like to get those totals; I don't know where in the world we could get those totals. But Crawford was gaining on Randall Jessee, and all the while William Harry Sermon was becoming more and more inebriated. (I've heard this so many times I'm almost certain this is true.) Ben never took a drink; Harry Gallagher didn't take a drink. They were both delegates. Hubert Dalton was not a delegate.

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Well, they all came back to Independence that night, and it cost me about \$500 or \$600, which I'll explain later on. Along about 6:30, because it was a few minutes before 7 when I received the word, Ben said, "Now, we're going to be here all night. We've got to have a nominee, and I'm going to propose the name of a man whom I know can be elected. He's had a very distinguished career on the County Court; he will carry the suburban area big, and I think he will be accepted by the rural areas. I'm withdrawing my support for Bob Crawford and I'm going to nominate William J. "Bill" Randall of Independence, Judge of the County Court." "And," he said, "I don't see any reason why this convention can't conclude this right now."

Well, as I recall and it's been quoted so many times, Bill Sermon was at that point so inebriated. And may his soul be at peace, but this has been quoted to me so many times I can almost quote it verbatim: "Go ahead Ben, and take your goddamn Bill Randall. I'll support him." I was nominated unanimously. Everybody in the place voted for me, so I received the nomination.

I know I've told you this before. All the delegates went out the door. The big room was on the north side of the hotel. They all went out to the south, into the lobby saying, "It's Randall." Out

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there stood Randall Jessee, and he said, "Thank God, justice has been done." They had to go up and say, "I'm sorry Randall, it's not Randall Jessee, it's Bill Randall." End of story.

I don't think I've told you that before.

JOHNSON: No, that's quite a story all right.

RANDALL: I'm trying to make a political scientist out of you. Go ahead.

JOHNSON: The scene behind the scenes. Well, getting the Democrat nomination was tantamount to election.

RANDALL: Yes. The Republicans first nominated a man by the name of Bill McKee, a lumberman from down at Lee's Summit, a nice guy. His wife was so ambitious that she bought a big wardrobe, beautiful clothes, [as if] "I'm going to be the wife of a Congressman." My dear wife got hold of that and she put that all over the rural area. She said, "This lady's even buying fine clothes to go up there. Are you all going to like that?" My dear wife took care of that right quick.

I'll never forget this. One time we were down at Lee's Summit, at a meeting and I was on time. It was a meeting at the Optimist Club. And he [McKee] was very, very late. That was his home town, and he should have

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been there. I was there and made a few remarks. The place was packed; you couldn't get another person in the room. He went to a window up on the north; it was kind of down half-underground and he knocked on the window. They raised the window and shoved him through the window. I said, "There you are folks; there's what happens to a man that doesn't care whether he's elected for Congress or not. He'll always be late."

JOHNSON: Well, then the campaign was about a month long, I suppose.

RANDALL: That's right. It was very difficult, very hard; I just shuttled back and forth, because I had to concentrate on the rural counties. I wasn't worried about the suburban vote; I knew good and well I would get that.

JOHNSON: Did you have any contacts, or correspondence, with Harry Truman during that month?

RANDALL: None at all. None at all. He was very unhappy, I suppose; I don't know.

JOHNSON: Then you're elected on March 3 of '59, and you took office at that time?

RANDALL: I went up there immediately, the next day or two, and was sworn in. In fact, my term started the day of

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the election. It was on a Tuesday, and I went that weekend.

JOHNSON: It's apparent that President Truman, former President Truman, did try to influence your policies after you went to Congress.

RANDALL: Well, not immediately. Not immediately.

JOHNSON: Do you recall when the first contact was made between you and Mr. Truman after you were in office as Congressman? Do you know what the issue was?

RANDALL: I suppose it was rather soon. Driving out here, I thought of one I want to mention, if I could think of the little Senator's name, United States Senator from Ohio. A raw, young, green rookie Congressman was faced with one of the roughest votes that anybody had had for years, in late March. I guess the first vote that I had of any consequence was to vote Hawaii into the union, and I just couldn't understand all of the southern opposition. I guess they realized that two more Senators would dilute their prestige and power, but all of the southerners were against it and I of course voted for it. I couldn't understand that opposition. But that was followed late in March or at least in April with a vote on the very, very difficult Landrum-Griffin bill.

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I knew that I had received the vote of labor. In other words, labor had been influential in my nomination. Yet, I also realized the--I won't say anti-labor--but unlabor or no-labor feeling of many of the rural areas. In fact, during all of my years, I constantly faced that problem, of how in the world can you support and return the support that the labor unions have given for your election each year, and still manage to half-way satisfy the rural areas who were, oh, I guess we'd almost have to say were anti-labor. They certainly didn't believe in labor unions. And so that was the most difficult.

So, here I was, faced with a totally no-win vote because labor was so, so, interested in the defeat of Landrum-Griffin.

JOHNSON: Since you mentioned Landrum-Griffin.

RANDALL: [Phil M.] Landrum, a Democrat from Georgia, and [Robert P.] Griffin was a little Republican from Michigan.

JOHNSON: Yes. In the book Congress and the Nation there's an accounting of voting records up to 1965. (Congress and the nation, 1945-1964: A Review of Government and Politics in the Postwar years (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Service, Inc., 1965), 38a-97a.)

RANDALL: I think I can probably give you my entire voting

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record sometime. I have every single vote I cast.

JOHNSON: Okay, this is just on some of the major issues where they did a listing. I notice that on most, almost all key votes in that period, you voted the same as Richard Bolling, including a "no" vote on the Landrum-Griffin amendment. The amendment, which passed, curbed secondary boycotts and picketing; you voted no on that amendment. You voted no on another bill that would have reinforced states rights against Federal courts. You voted yes on the Civil Rights Act of 1960 and on the Foreign Assistance Act of 1962.

RANDALL: If I did, if I voted for Foreign Assistance in 1962, that was probably the only one I ever voted for. I have an unbroken record of opposing foreign aid. I can't believe the vote's accurate in '62; I don't think I ever voted for foreign aid in any year I was there.

JOHNSON: Well, you approved enlarging the House Rules Committee, and additional spending for public works and for construction of facilities at universities and colleges, as well as the Civil Rights Act of 1964. You voted for appropriations for the International Development Association?

RANDALL: Yes, and that was a bad vote as far as I was concerned.

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JOHNSON: And you voted for the Urban Mass Transportation Act in 1964.

RANDALL: Oh, sure, anybody would vote for that.

JOHNSON: And for Federal Court jurisdiction in matters of state legislative reapportionment.

RANDALL: That's all right. Let's go back. Let's go back a little.

JOHNSON: Okay, I guess that sets the stage for this question. I think it is correct that you have described yourself as a conservative Democrat.

RANDALL: That's correct. And let me interject. I guess of all the awards that I've ever received, and I have received a few, [I cherish] the award in two Congresses in a row, four years, of the little bulldog, the "watch dog of the Treasury"--a little bulldog, a little brass bulldog. I've lost one of them, but I still have one of them and I cherish that greatly, because [I foresaw] the mess we're in today, the fiscal morass, the almost drift in the control of our deficit spending, our spending and our unbalanced budget. I think I saw at the time where we were going, what was going to happen to us. One of these days there's going to be some serious, serious consequences.

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JOHNSON: How would you describe Truman, at least while he was President, as a liberal, or as a conservative Democrat?

RANDALL: I don't think there's any question but what he was a liberal.

JOHNSON: But how about on fiscal matters?

RANDALL: There, I think you have to draw the line; I think that's a well-put question. I prided myself as being liberal, humanitarian-wise, that is to say as far as human rights and human welfare are concerned, with the constraints that have to be exercised moneywise. I was a very strong fiscal conservative.

JOHNSON: Did you vote for Johnson's "war on poverty?"

RANDALL: I probably did, with reluctance; not completely, or not totally. On some things we're moving a little too fast here, there's some things we're omitting about the Landrum-Griffin bill that I want to tell you about. You jumped in there with the Bolling comparison, and I don't think I was too closely compared with Dick Bolling. I liked Bolling and Bolling was a friend. I know I respected Dick; I hope he respected me, and I think he did. I know he did in the latter years; he said, "You've grown and you've proved yourself; your stature has increased since you've been here."

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JOHNSON: You describe yourself as a conservative Democrat. Why would you consider Truman to have been a liberal Democrat?

RANDALL: Just his record in the Senate, if you comb it.

JOHNSON: The New Deal?

RANDALL: Yes, if you comb it very carefully. Yes. Yes, I think that speaks for itself.

JOHNSON: You were not necessarily a supporter of the New Deal program?

RANDALL: Well, I wasn't there, of course. There are so many, many, many things that are coming out now about FDR, that you sort of wonder what was really the New Deal. Of course, Mr. Truman had what he called the Fair Deal.

JOHNSON: Yes.

RANDALL: Those are journalist descriptions, that don't necessarily have all--they are not necessarily descriptive of what happened. Yes, I'd have to classify Mr. Truman as a liberal. I don't know what you people out here regard him, but that is just my personal opinion.

JOHNSON: Yet, you were supporting many of these bills.

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RANDALL: Well, now, I'm going to have to check my record on that, but I don't think I ever supported foreign aid at any time, in any instance.

JOHNSON: How about Medicare?

RANDALL: Oh, yes. Yes, there again, we're talking about the human welfare of people. If I'm liberal to that extent, you'll have to tar me that way. Oh, yes, I had one of the greatest honors I

guess a man could have. The bill was signed right over here in the auditorium, right over here in the west part of the building.

JOHNSON: You were there.

RANDALL: I was there and sat right there with him. I shall never forget. I think you'll find some pictures, and I'll be in the background there. But anyhow, I came out on the plane, on Air Force One with Lyndon B. Johnson. We've got so many threads here. We were on the Landrum-Griffin bill, and we're way off track here. Now, let's go back. But let's get this airport bit out of the way.

Here are two Senators, Ed Long and Stuart Symington, who were determined to ride with the President on the way from the airport out to the Library. Bless his soul, I was never nearly as close to LBJ as I was to John F. Kennedy, or even for that

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matter, to Richard Nixon, and certainly Jerry Ford, and a lot of the others. You notice I haven't mentioned Jimmy Carter. Of course, I served under five Presidents. I didn't serve under Jimmy Carter. LBJ said, "No, there's only one person who's going to ride in the back seat with me, and that's the United States Representative of this area, because I know what he has done. I know what he has done to try to promote Medicare. You gentlemen can get in another car if you want to, or you can ride in the front seat or whatever you want to, but Bill Randall is going to ride with me." I rode out with him and rode back with him in the back seat, just the two of us.

JOHNSON: So, you got to converse with him.

RANDALL: A little bit, yes. Oh, there's an episode there that we can't even begin to scratch the surface in this little bit of time. If I can ever get a chance to put some of this down, I want to write a chapter about how the medical fraternity, the doctors, should love me, love me. The only really tough, tough, tough race that I ever had in my life was in 1962, my third run. I had this special election, one in '60 and one in '62. Mr. Truman had a candidate against me in the primary, some fellow; I can't even recall his name. He was out here at Grandview; President Truman's brother

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Vivian Truman trotted him out. I didn't have any trouble in the primary. But the Republicans said, "If we don't beat Randall this time, we'll never beat him." They put their strongest candidate, a little mayor by the name of Fox from out here at Raytown. The doctors contributed thousands and thousands of dollars to him; their group was, called the Committee for the Healing Arts. I pegged them at \$22,000. Even the pharmacists, everybody, tried to beat me because of my stand for Medicare.

Now that the doctors have become rich, rich, rich, rich, as the result of Medicare, I hope some of those that were against me might just say some kind word or, "Well, we're sorry we treated you the way we did, Bill Randall."

JOHNSON: They used the term "socialized medicine" in 1948, you know.

RANDALL: They used everything; they used everything, everything against me. And I didn't win big; I won by the smallest margin I ever had. I think it was 5,000 or 6,000 votes, very tight, out of 100,000 votes. But from then on--I missed this before. Mr. Truman, said, "Well, there's no way we can beat Randall; we may just as well join him." Those were the very words I understand he used. "There's no way we can beat

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Randall; we just as well join him." In fact, I think the Star quoted that.

JOHNSON: Apparently there was a plan to build a new Post Office here in Independence, a government building. What was your role in that?

RANDALL: It was a total role. I did the whole thing from one end to the other, completely.

JOHNSON: Did Truman feel that you were supporting the building of this new Post Office.

RANDALL: I don't know whether he felt that way or not, but I certainly did. It's a matter of record. There's a big episode there that we'll come back to that in just a minute.

Before we leave Landrum-Griffin, let's finish that up. You're going to have to edit this and piece it together, but I don't want to leave Landrum-Griffin.

I was up all night the night of that vote. When I say all night, I was calling people out here in the district, call after call after call. We had in those days a rule allowing any member to demand an engrossed bill, in which any member on the floor of the House could demand a printed version, printed mind you, of all the bills, with all the amendments that had been adopted before the final vote. It was a parliamentary

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move that was very seldom used. This has been a long time; it was 1959, and this is '89, 30 years later. A fellow by the name of [Clare E.] Hoffman, a little Republican from Michigan, demanded an engrossed version.

At that time, at that point, I had supported the Elliott amendment, by Carl Elliott of Alabama, the big labor leader from the South. It was very unusual to have a member of Congress that was active in labor affairs in the South. Carl Elliott was a great big tall guy; I'll never forget him. The Elliott amendment negatives would have knocked out a lot of the worst provisions of the Landrum-Griffin bill, in other words its curbs on secondary boycotts, and, let's see, 14B of that

section. Well, that was state right-to-work laws. In other words, a state could have its own right-to-work laws. Labor is still trying today to knock out 14B. The Elliott amendment knocked out 14B and permitted secondary boycotts. I voted for that. That was defeated by a handful of votes, 225-210 or something like that; 225 was the affirmative vote. We lost.

Hoffman demanded an engrossed version of the bill. That made it go over to the next day. I was up all night long calling, calling my rural people, "What do you think?" Well, of course, their answer was, "Do those labor people in." I talked to the urban people.

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Most of my calls were to friends, and again I've got to say that included some lawyers I was associated with, and some doctors.

I had a lot of friends in the medical fraternity even though some of them had been against me; not all of them. I said, "As you talk to your patients in your office, what is your reading? How strongly do they feel about labor corruption?" Well, the answer came back, "Pretty strong, pretty strong." The answer from the lawyers was, "Yes, it's pretty bad. There's a lot of anti-labor feeling."

All right, I had cast a strong labor vote that night before. I had lost. The next day I voted to send the bill to the Senate. In other words, we can kill it through a parliamentary situation, or we send it to the Senate. I voted to send it to the Senate. So there was a labor vote the night before--and if you want to comb the record, this will be something you will be interested in--and a labor vote the next morning.

That inspired two letters from Jimmy Hoffa bearing the same date line. Somewhere I have in my 173 boxes of papers that finally went to the university, that Dr. Zobrist was kind enough to keep for me for years. I think I've saved those letters; I know I have a lot of them. I know I have a lot of beautiful mementos from

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some of the Presidents--Jerry Ford and Richard Nixon and some of the others. But in any event, I received two letters from Jimmy Hoffa, bearing the same date. One said, "You have now proved yourself to be a scab, nothing but a scab. You do not deserve to serve another day in the Congress," or words to that effect. The first letter written the night before said, "You have proven yourself to be a friend of labor. We'll do all we can to keep you in office," or something like that. Two letters from Jimmy Hoffa bearing the same date. I don't know whether I can resurrect those or not, but those are going to be collector's items.

Where is Jimmy Hoffa now? You know what the big billboards in Detroit used to say. I guess they don't now. "Please call home Jimmy Hoffa."

All right. Now, the Landrum-Griffin bill was so difficult that members actually became ill. They broke out with the hives. They had to take a week or two off. It was a totally no-win

situation, no-win, totally no-win. Yes, I guess you could say I may be accused of straddling the issue, but I came out about as good as could be expected.

JOHNSON: Now, you mentioned foreign aid; being opposed to foreign aid bills.

RANDALL: Do you want to know why?

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JOHNSON: Okay, but first you did approve the Marshall plan, I suppose, didn't you, the Marshall plan program?

RANDALL: That was long before we got there.

JOHNSON: Yes that was earlier, but that's foreign aid in a sense. Why were you opposed to foreign aid when you were in Congress?

RANDALL: Well, that was always an easy decision. You look about the District, and you see rural areas that so desperately need funding, assistance, grants, for sewers and water districts, and multiple, multiple needs for assistance. Yet, we send our money to a foreign country that, according to all the evidence in the world, has misused it. The political leaders and bosses spend it, and absorb it, and it never goes down to the people. Foreign aid has never been a success, anywhere.

JOHNSON: But much of that aid has been justified or argued on the basis of opposing Communist insurrection, hasn't it.

RANDALL: Well, it hasn't worked. The only valid argument that I ever heard, and I brush it aside, because we were still sending the money. Some of the pro-foreign aid people say, "Now, wait a minute, let's send money instead of troops." I say, "Wait a minute, let's don't send

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either one. Let's don't send either one."

JOHNSON: But you did not think of yourself as an isolationist type?

RANDALL: Oh, no, no. We're part of the world. How could I be, as a member of the Armed Services Committee for all those years, and as the chairman of the NATO committee for ten years?

JOHNSON: For defense appropriations, did you always support them?

RANDALL: Always, continuously.

JOHNSON: Did you ever challenge the Pentagon on its spending requests?

RANDALL: No way. No way. Not a time. I guess you could say, if you use the old dividing line between a dove and a hawk, I was a hawk.

JOHNSON: How about the taxes to pay for all that, a balanced budget?

RANDALL: Well, now, wait a minute. We know what happened, one of the reasons we're in such difficulty now is that Lyndon Johnson never proposed a tax increase, or never even put it in his budget. We absorbed any surplus we had, all because of the Vietnam war.

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JOHNSON: You know, President Kennedy apparently did reduce the income tax, maybe it was the corporate tax.

RANDALL: I believe it was the corporate tax, yes.

JOHNSON: Did you vote for that reduction, do you recall?

RANDALL: I very likely did. I have a list of all the key votes that I put in the [Congressional] Record, about my last week in Congress. It's a very interesting resume.

JOHNSON: Did you believe then in the pay-as-you-go?

RANDALL: I not only believed it then, I believed it all the time I was on the County Court. We never raised taxes on the County Court. We reduced taxes several times while I was on the County Court.

JOHNSON: President Truman, during the Korean war, said we should pay-as-we-go, which meant we should increase taxes considerably.

RANDALL: I guess I'd have to agree with that.

JOHNSON: But conservatives in Congress, Republicans and conservative Democrats, reduced his request.

RANDALL: I'd have to depart from that. I'd have to depart on that. That's why, sooner or later, we're going to have a tax increase, well right now. We have to face it.

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JOHNSON: In other words, you would have supported tax increases to balance the budget.

RANDALL: Yes, I would. One of the commentators in the last two or three days described the last three or four wars we've had. I thought it was interesting. He said, "Well I guess you could say we won World War II. Half and half said we tied the Korean war, and we definitely lost the

Vietnam war." Oh, that was so sad. Let's see, we had some of those threads that you left dangling back there.

JOHNSON: Well, on this question of foreign aid.

RANDALL: Foreign aid was a loser so far as I was concerned, in all respects. In other words, we were denying our own people what they needed and passing it to people who did not appreciate it and squandered it.

JOHNSON: Did you correspond, or did Truman correspond with you on foreign aid, or on some of these other issues and try to influence you to support one or the other?

RANDALL: No, I don't think he did. He corresponded with me on local matters.

JOHNSON: Such as Postmasters, and that sort of thing?

RANDALL: That's right, yes.

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JOHNSON: Can you think of any real conflicts with the President on some of those issues?

RANDALL: Now, let's go back to Landrum-Griffin. Yes, when you say he corresponded, I guess you could say I corresponded with him, knowing that he had, in three different instances, tried to keep me from becoming a member of Congress. Once it was for the nomination. In 1960 he ran a young minister, a young preacher out here on Blue Ridge, against me. When I say he did it; all of his people did--his brother and all of the others that were associated with him. I can't think of that fellow's name, the Christian Church out there. He was a Christian Church minister, a small fellow, kind of blond hair. He received a few votes out in that area, but there was no question I had already, I think, regained a little confidence, and quite a little bit of credibility in the rural areas. He didn't get anything in the rural areas.

JOHNSON: Crawford, for instance, didn't run?

RANDALL: No, Crawford never surfaced any more. Let's see, there was something back there. Oh, yes, in 1959, at the time of the Landrum-Griffin bill, as I say, many of the members faced a total no-win situation. Actually, some of them were ill for a week or two. They were just burned out. I mean it was a terrible situation, I

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mean for anyone who had wanted to survive politically. Then, rose the old cliché, or I should say the philosophical bit that Mr. Truman pronounced many times, "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen." Well, he never in memo, phone calls, or anything, never made one overture of any kind to me. Well, I don't know why, except he probably realized I had never

been his candidate, and he at that time had just finished opposing me to the fullest as far as he could.

JOHNSON: And he would have voted your way on that, would he not?

RANDALL: Well, yes, on the Elliott amendment. On the Elliott amendment, but not to send it to the Senate the following day after the Hoffman engrossed bill maneuver. Oh yes, yes. So, anyhow, there was Steve, a little Senator from Ohio, Steve [Stephen M.] Young, a little tiny guy, not very big, a feisty little fellow. He made some kind of a statement in the Washington Post, that was picked up by the [Kansas City] Star, the Associated Press, or something. He said, "Randall has not yet fully understood the meaning, 'If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen,' as his principal constituent, his number-one constituent, Mr. Truman, would have him understand." Well, I said,

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"Now, wait a minute. Mr. Truman never said anything like that to me." So I go over to the Senate side, and I didn't want to get into a big hassle on the floor of the Senate, although a member of the House has a right to go to the floor of the Senate just like we let them come over on our side. So, I asked him to come out in the hall. We had back there what's called the Indiana clock; it's the only state that ever appreciated being taken into the union so much that they gave a gift back to the United States. They passed the hat. It's a great huge clock, as tall as this ceiling. First time I ever met John F. Kennedy was in front of that clock, about that same time; he was Senator at the time. I asked the page to call Mr. Young out. I grabbed that little son of a bitch by the lapels. I said, "Let me tell you something, Senator. If you have anything to say to me, you say it to me. But the next time you make a pronouncement of that kind, you better damn well say something to me first, or you're going to regret it." I shook him a time or two and said, "Now, go back to the Senate floor."

JOHNSON: Well, you did take heat.

RANDALL: I took a hell of a lot of heat, forgive me for saying so, to use the language of Mr. Truman. An enormous amount of heat, and I stood it. But for this

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little pipsqueak to say that Mr. Truman felt that I hadn't yet fully mastered the knack of taking the heat and I should get out of the kitchen; I picked up that little guy and I shook him a couple of times.

JOHNSON: Well, of course, in 1960 there was a bit of a controversy about Truman not going to a Democrat convention and criticizing the Kennedys and so on. Then they had this press conference here in the Library, with Scoop [Henry] Jackson and JFK and [Stuart] Symington.

RANDALL: A great man; I love Scoop Jackson. I'm sure he loved me. I'm sure he respected me; let's put it that way.

JOHNSON: Were you here at that news conference?

RANDALL: No, I wasn't here. Well, I was here when Kennedy came to town. I met him out at Grandview. I met him out at Richards Gebauer Air Force Base, and rode down in a car with him. He always called me "Rawndawl." He never said Randall, he said Congressman "Rawndawl." We all went down to the old auditorium, the Kansas City auditorium, to a meeting that night. There were three members of us there. Dick Bolling was there. I rode in a car with Kennedy. Bill [W.R., Jr.] Hull from across the river, and Dick Bolling, and myself; three

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Congressmen sat up there on the stage with him. He made one devil of a speech that night. The place was packed.

You know, when we talk about the political situation today, it just makes you yearn for some of the things that have gone on in the past that may never be again. With the tube, everything, all access to homes now, you either get in the home thorough the TV or you don't. If you have the money; if you don't have it, you don't win. It's sad, sad, sad.

JOHNSON: Do you remember the first time you came down here? You did come down here to visit Truman in his office here in the Library didn't you?

RANDALL: Pretty much by invitation. I don't know that I came in too many times.

JOHNSON: But you were invited to come down by Truman to visit and talk about some particular issue?

RANDALL: Well, you mentioned a moment ago about the Post Office. It sort of got to me there when you said did I have anything to do with it. I had all to do with it. It would never happen if it hadn't been for me. Now I say that advisedly and deliberately and with consideration of what I said.

In those days the Post Office Department was a

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part of the Government; it's none of this Postal Service junk that we have today. I guess one of the sorriest votes I ever cast was to create that separate postal facility, because the Congress has nothing to say about it anymore. They raise rates on you every few years, and the mail gets worse and worse. Of course, the mail has always got big problems. But at that time we faced the same problem at Sedalia. I had a big fight there, for the new building there. We had one also in Warrensburg, for goodness sake, all around; Nevada, Missouri. I guess in my years in Congress we probably built maybe as much as 50 new facilities, 50 new Post Offices, and I know appointed 65 Postmasters even before the change over to the Nixon administration, whenever that was. All during the Kennedy and Johnson years, I know I appointed 65.

JOHNSON: Did Mr. Truman ask you to come down to talk about the Post Office business?

RANDALL: Before we wrap this up, if we don't ever get another session, I'm going to come to the most disagreeable--I can use that word, the lowest tempo I can put it--the most disagreeable conference I ever had with Mr. Truman in my life, right in his office. That was over a Postmastership.

Let's go back to the Independence Post Office so

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we can clear that up. The Post Office Department was insisting on leasing facilities, on contracting them out; have an individual agree to build a building and they would lease it back. Yes, I did come out to talk to Mr. Truman about that. I don't know why I did, because I knew we were on the same track and totally agreed. He said, "No, my goodness, I'd rather have nothing than have a lease facility."

Well, all right, we're on the same track, we're going to work like the dickens. So, I not only had to get a bill through; it was all a part of urban renewal, where the building is now. My dear wife is gone, bless her soul; one thing she said was, "If there's one thing that has been an injustice done to you, it is that that building was never named for you, the Randall Building." One time it did pass the House, and Bob Young was defeated, and I might some time suggest that it be done, but we had everything to do with it. It was a part of urban renewal.

Well, in those days the Urban Renewal Committee, the local commission, had to agree that they would sell it to somebody else. I've forgotten the exact details, even who was on the commission, but they refused to sell it. They said, "No, no, we've got other plans." I said, "All right."

So then I started to get a bill through the

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Congress, an authorization bill for that site; they were going to condemn it. Well, when we got that bill started they pulled off, so then we had to get a bill for authorization of that site at the corner of Osage and Lexington Streets. Then that was just the start. After we got it authorized, oh, he [Truman] was happy, very happy.

Next was the appropriation. We took two or three bites at it, because things were tight. Finally, we got the appropriation, and finally got it built. He sat in the front row, out there on the docks, and I introduced him. We were friends. See, we were working together, and that was a great afternoon. I was happy to be with him. I've always respected Mr. Truman. I haven't agreed with him; we've had some very serious disagreements, but if there's any ill feeling, it was a one-way street. It was himself toward me, because I think my record shows that I've done everything in

the world that I could do, except doing some things that I couldn't do, and I'll get to that in a minute.

Well, now we're through with the building. The building was dedicated; the General Services Administrator came out. A beautiful afternoon; everybody was happy. You look at the cornerstone there, and that took a lot of doing. When you say did I have anything to do with it, I had everything to do

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with it, totally! The Senators had nothing to do with it. I mean it passed the Senate. It was a beautiful afternoon and everybody was happy. Mrs. Truman and all of us were there; I think Margaret was even there. I know my lady was there and it was just a great afternoon.

Here, we ought to do this. The Postmastership at Independence was open. There were a lot of candidates for it. I never raised a voice. Edgar Hinde, for some reason or other, had retired. Anyhow, and I know you don't know about this, he was a member of what's called the Harpie Club. Did you ever hear of the Harpie Club? It was an harmonica club, and Edgar Hinde, who was the Postmaster, was a member of that. He played cards with Mr. Truman down back of Herb McClure's place, down there on the railroad tracks, and he retired. He was interested in perpetuating the family dynasty, and he wanted his son Edgar Hinde, Jr. to be Postmaster.

Well, I had other people that wanted it; three or four others had wanted it. But I said, "My goodness, this is Mr. Truman's home town." I just told my people to forget about it. I was for Edgar Hinde, Jr., and he was appointed. I appointed him; that's all there was to it. So I think that ought to address a little bit the problem of whether there was any ill feeling toward Mr. Truman. I suspect that my appointment would have

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been honored, regardless of what happened. I know it would have been, because that was strict protocol. A member of Congress names the Postmaster, but I said, "My goodness, Mr. Truman wants him. Edgar Hinde was his brother in the harmonica club; you're in, that's it."

But now, from there on I couldn't let him name every other Postmaster, and I didn't.

JOHNSON: Was there one or two in particular that were very divisive?

RANDALL: Well, yes, even before that he had some preferences at Warrensburg, Missouri, that I didn't honor. You said was there any correspondence, and yes, he would write me letters. I don't know where they are; maybe they're in the files someplace. I didn't maybe regard them as Presidential communications, like from Mr. Nixon or Mr. Johnson or Mr. Kennedy because he wasn't President. He was a former President. But anyhow, I know they're around someplace. I guess they are.

JOHNSON: Well, we have a small file of letters. (Papers of Harry S. Truman: Post- Presidential Files- Secretary's Office File – Randall, William J. (Folder)

RANDALL: Anyhow, he just wrote a few congratulatory letters

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and things like that. Put it on the record. I'm the most uninhibited person you've ever seen, and I always have been. I always believe that if you tell something that's the truth, that truth is defense to any litigation you're going to have or anything else. Don't worry about it, just be totally outspoken.

Now, Warrensburg--I've forgot who he was for there, but it was very tight, very tight. There were two or three. There was a car dealer, but there was a [American] Legion man there who finally got the appointment. Gosh, I've forgot his name. I was a Legion man. It was a pretty good sized job. Warrensburg is a pretty good sized city. It has the college there, a lot of businesses; it's always sort of like Columbia--the population goes up and down. In those days they only had four or five thousand, but when I retired from office, Central Missouri State had 10 or 11,000 students. So it was a good job, a good Post Office. Anyhow, we didn't have a total disagreement; I just didn't follow his suggestion.

Maybe the same thing happened at Sedalia. Sedalia is a large city. I don't think there was any contest at Marshall. Marshall, again, is a good-sized county seat. Nevada, in Vernon County--my recollection is that we may have been in agreement there. At least he didn't take sides. Bill O'Connell was finally named.

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My goodness I haven't thought of that name in many years. That was Crawford's home town. He was my opponent in the primary, but Crawford and myself got along famously after it was over, until this day. I know I respect him, and I feel certain he respects me. We had no problem. That was another good, big-size appointment.

Harrisonville, I don't think we had any problems there. The one I'm coming to is Henry County, Clinton, Missouri. I was thinking about it coming out here, and the man's name finally came to me. The man who was finally appointed was a man by the name of Talley; he was my appointment.

Mr. Truman passed the word to me; he called the office or something and said, "Before you make that appointment I must talk to you." I said, "All right." Henry County is notorious, or famous, or I should say well-known, as being a purely political county. They have in the past actually murdered people on election day there. Well, once during my term of office I think they shot the sheriff and may have killed another man. There were very bitter factions down there. So, here we're talking about the home of Delton Houchens, who was later [Democratic] State Chairman. He lived in Clinton, Missouri. It was the home of Bill Casen, who later ran for Governor, William J. Casen; and the home

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of the late Judge Floyd Sperry, who was the judge of the Kansas City Court of Appeals, and his son Floyd Sperry, Jr. There were three factions, bitter toward each other. Later, there was a merger of the Houchens and the Casen factions, so really you've got two antagonists here, strong antagonists, who were never able to agree on anything. Yet they had a meeting in the law office of William J. Casen; I believe it was a Saturday afternoon, anyhow it was on a Saturday. They asked me to come down. I came home. I said, "Gentlemen, have you checked your guns before you come in here? I want to be sure that there's no shooting in here. Let's lay them down. Let's guarantee that nobody's going to get shot." They said, "We've agreed on a Postmaster." I said, "How's that?" They said, "We're in agreement." I said, "Do you mean that these two factions have agreed on one man?" They said, "Yes. And we hope you will appoint him." Well, I said to myself, right then, "There is no reason but what I will appoint him. There is no way but what he will be appointed, because when you have two bitter factions aligned against each other that agrees, had I appointed anyone else, I'd just run an X through that county, not only in the primary but the general election.

All right, Mr. Truman enters the picture. He called a couple of times for me to come out. Congress

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was in session, and I said, "Well, I'll be out." He said, I want you to be sure to come before we make the appointment." I learned that he was actively promoting the candidacy of the son of a man who had curried horses for him in the horse artillery. He was an artilleryman, back in the days when the field pieces were drawn by horses. Maybe it was the National Guard, I don't know. I've even forgotten the fellow's name. It was an odd name.

JOHNSON: An Irish name?

RANDALL: I've totally forgotten the name. Well, I just forgot. I would like to know. If I ever get a chance to write this chapter, I would like to know that name. I'll have to ask some of the people in Henry County. Here we've had a total agreement, complete agreement, of two warring factions. Mr. Truman asked me to come out. I finally come out to talk to him. Well, I think maybe twice. The first time I told him what I was going to do, and he said, "Well, you think that over. I know that you want to have the advice of a former President of the United States and a man whom has always supported you." And I thought, "Now wait a minute, Mr. President. I'm not sure about that latter." Anyhow, I'm not sure he used that word, but it was someone who's always been for you. Well, I

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don't think I made any comment on that one. But anyhow, the last time, he said, "I want to talk to you one more time."

So I came out, in the morning. It might have been a weekend; I don't know when I came home. So we talked for a little while and he said, "I know you haven't always followed my advice on a lot of the appointments," but he said, "this is one that just must be this way. It just has to be." He said, "This man is a lifelong friend of mine, and here his son wants to be appointed. Surely you want to grant me that favor." I said, "Well, Mr. President;" and I always did respect him. I respect him to this day, and I hope his being, his soul, looks down from heaven and sees that I'm making a faithful account of this. He said, "I know the problem you face, but it means a lot to me. This fellow was in the war with me, and now his son wants the job." So now I proceeded to explain to him. I said, "Mr. Truman, you've been on the political scene, and held office nearly all of your adult life, except for the time in the military." I said, "What would you think if I told you that there are two bitterly warring factions that have finally agreed on another man?" He didn't say very much for a little while. I said, "They met together in a room, and they've agreed." I said,

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"Do you expect me to just forget about that county from now on?" Well, I'm not sure what his reaction to that was. I think he said, "Well, we'll make it up somewhere; we'll help you some other way." I finally told him, "No, my mind is made up." I said, "I'm sorry."

I've thought about it so many times, and I know I'm right about this. He put his hands up as he did so many times, about a foot apart from each other, with palms facing them, and up and down in a sort of a choppy movement, he said, "Bill, that's the way it's going to be. You're going to appoint that man." Without raising my voice--I tried to be as courteous as I could, and I might have put this in the black book, but I know it's someplace that I've quoted this--I said, "Mr. President, with all respect that I can muster, all the respect that I can exhibit towards you, I have to reply to you that that is the way that it is not going to be." He jumped up out of his chair, and he walked out to the window, and he put his arms behind him like this. I'll never forget; he put his hands behind him like this, and looked out to where he is buried today, and he wheeled around. I want to be sure that I can quote as nearly as I can. If he didn't use exactly these words, he said, "I didn't think you'd have the guts to do it." I don't know whether he used

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the word "guts," but it was, "I didn't think you'd stand fast and do it," or something like that. End of chapter. "I didn't think you'd stand fast and do it."

JOHNSON: You ended up on a reasonably good note then?

RANDALL: Well, yes, he didn't kick me out of the office.

JOHNSON: You've stated that there's a difference here between a conservative Democrat and a liberal Democrat, but are we seeing differences that involved mainly personality, rather than policies? Would you describe your differences as more of personalities than of policies?

RANDALL: Well, I'd say that's a good appraisal. I think generally I had a voting record that he probably approved of.

JOHNSON: He never wrote and criticized a vote on an issue?

RANDALL: Not a one. Not a one.

Oh yes, one thing I've left out. I guess the top of the whole thing was the Clinton Postmastership, but several other times he asked me to do some things that I couldn't do. One other time I came out here, and we didn't have a lot of visits, but one other time I said, "Well, Mr. President, if you want to be a member of Congress, you're actually being a member

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of Congress when you are telling me how I should vote on appointments. If you want to be a member of Congress, why don't you run for Congress?" Oh, he said, "Bill, I couldn't make it. I couldn't be elected."

JOHNSON: Do you remember what particular issues that you might have been discussing at that time?

RANDALL: No, I'm not sure. We never discussed issues except perhaps the labor issue, the Landrum-Griffin thing, and I don't know that we discussed that.

JOHNSON: Mostly these appointments?

RANDALL: The appointments, yes, that's correct.

Now, wait a minute. I think that I honored some of his suggestions on the Academy appointments. I feel sure I honored some of those. At least as for as I am concerned, I wasn't mad at anybody. I just had to do what I had to do as a member of Congress.

JOHNSON: Now, on each of his birthdays, May 8th . . .

RANDALL: Oh, I was down in the well continuously, eulogizing him.

JOHNSON: You made a practice apparently of putting into the Congressional Record, greetings on his birthday.

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RANDALL: Every time. Every time.

JOHNSON: I notice that Congressmen Carl Albert, John McCormack, and Ken Hechler often rose to second your remarks on these birthdays. And I notice that you often sent him tear sheets from the Congressional Record that pertained to him.

RANDALL: Oh, I always did that. Well, let's look at it this way. Regardless of what disagreement may have happened over some appointments, or what failure to totally agree--well, I guess the only disagreements would be over appointments--never at any time that I can recall was he pushing me, or urging me, to do this or that on a vote.

JOHNSON: How about foreign aid?

RANDALL: No, no. Never a word. Not a word. He never faulted me over any vote on policy or issues, not a one that I can remember. I'm trying to pick up my train of thought, back there a moment ago. It was not simply protocol; it was protocol but it was not that alone. As far as I was concerned, it was a privilege and a pleasure to eulogize a man on his birthday. Think what would have happened if I hadn't taken the lead; they would have said, "What a minute, here's a man who represents a man in his home city. What's going on

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here?" There wasn't anything going on. I was there every time.

JOHNSON: But you did feel that you were supporting legislation that Truman himself would have supported?

RANDALL: Not necessarily, not necessarily; that wasn't in my mind.

JOHNSON: A lot of this was kind of a continuation of Fair Deal type programs, under Johnson and Kennedy.

RANDALL: Well, yes. Let's put it this way. I, forever, adhered to the proposition and the belief that a representative means exactly what it says, "represent the people."

The late Clarence Cannon was, in my judgment, a great man--he was Chairman of the Appropriations Committee and held office for about 40 years in northeast Missouri. He always regarded me as his lawyer, and he called me on legal questions late at night sometimes. Clarence once said to me, "Bill, this business of being a Member of the Congress, a Representative, there's nothing to it. All you've got to do is find out which way the parade is going, and get out there and get in front of that parade; that's all you've got to do. In other words, it means find out what your people want and try to do what they want.

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That's all it takes to be a good Representative." That's what I did. I tried to find principles my people were interested in, and voice those principles on the floor of the House.

JOHNSON: You felt you had to be a conservative Democrat in order to do that?

RANDALL: Yes, I think so. Our rural areas were adamantly conservative. I mean not adamantly--that's too strong a word--they were strongly conservative.

JOHNSON: Okay, so in differentiating yourself from liberal Democrats . . .

RANDALL: I thought I did as well as I could a little while ago; I'm for humanitarian rights and for the downtrodden as far as help to the poverty program and things like that, yes. But also there's the fact that it has to have restraints; there has to be a brake put on how much you can spend, what you can do.

JOHNSON: Would you tend more to support, let's say, rural and agricultural type programs, rather than some of the urban poverty programs and such projects?

RANDALL: Well, there is a lot of poverty in the rural areas. I was the first chairman of the House Committee on the Aging. You hear a lot about Claude Pepper, and

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may his soul be at peace, but I was the chairman, and he was my ranking member at the very formation of the committee. I said many times; I said, "The saddest, the most pitiful thing in the world is to live in a rural area and to be old, to be poor and to be sick." The worst spectacle in the world is those four: to be isolated in other words, and be old, be poor and be sick.

JOHNSON: Did you support the legislation to end the seniority system on committees?

RANDALL: I don't think I did.

JOHNSON: In other words, did you part with Bolling on this? Bolling sponsored it.

RANDALL: I parted with Bolling on that.

JOHNSON: You did part with Bolling on the seniority issue.

RANDALL: I strongly believe in the seniority system. I think it's the only orderly way you can run the Congress. I strongly believe in the seniority system.

JOHNSON: But didn't that mean a lot of southern Democrats, conservative Democrats, were dominating committees?

RANDALL: I think that's probably true, but they were sent there by the people. They were sent there by their

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people. They had the same privilege, the right of the floor of the House that all the rest of the other people had. No, we differed on that.

You're talking about this fellow from California, what was his name? He's deceased and his brother is deceased he was a great big fellow, from the middle part of the state. He was the one that pushed those so-called reforms on the seniority system.

JOHNSON: But Bolling was . . .

RANDALL: Bolling, I think, was with him. He later opposed Dick to be Speaker of the House. So, I'm not sure how close they were.

JOHNSON: Well, merit and seniority don't always coincide though, isn't that true?

RANDALL: Not always, on a theoretical basis. You're dealing in theory there, yes. In theory that may be, but not always practically. No, I think it is a fact there has to be a lot of merit, or those people would not have been elected again and again and again.

JOHNSON: But it would be a conservative position to be for seniority.

RANDALL: Yes, that's a conservative position.

JOHNSON: One last question. The July 4th ceremonies here

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at the Library--when did you start taking part in those and what was your role?

RANDALL: Never missed a one, I don't think.

JOHNSON: You were always here for the 4th of July?

RANDALL: Always here. That ought to say something about my feelings toward Mr. Truman.

JOHNSON: You gave some speeches?

RANDALL: Yes, I gave two; I think two over the years. If you get a program you'll find out. Once, I'm sure two.

JOHNSON: That was an opportunity for you to visit with Truman too, wasn't it?

RANDALL: Oh, well. Let's see if we can't get this as straight as we can. I have never known, and I don't know to this minute why Mr. Truman never either felt close to me or regarded me as one of his own. Maybe it goes back to 1922; I'll never know. Maybe it's my fault. Maybe I didn't patronize him.

JOHNSON: You mentioned the Roger Slaughter thing, too.

RANDALL: Oh yes, but it goes back before, before I went to Congress, long before--to those years in which I was on the County Court, and before when he was in the Senate. I suppose you could say that maybe it's my fault, maybe

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I didn't patronize him; maybe I didn't go up and counsel with him and talk to him directly. I probably went to Washington several times while he was in the Senate.

JOHNSON: When he was President?

RANDALL: Before he was President. I know I went once or twice. I just didn't regard it as any alienation, or being away from him. I just was never close to him, never.

JOHNSON: Were you associated more with the Rabbit than the Goat faction?

RANDALL: No, no, no, no. No, I was a Pendergast man.

JOHNSON: The Shannon people . . .

RANDALL: Shannon supported me, yes sir. I speculate that in the final showdown it was the Shannon faction that nominated me at Harrisonville, but I was regarded as a Goat.

JOHNSON: Which included Roger Slaughter. Was he considered a Rabbit?

RANDALL: Oh, yes, oh sure. He was a Shannon man. I never solicited Roger Slaughter to help me, not a bit. He did it. If you suggest a motive, maybe he thought Mr.

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Truman was for me and that was the reason that he was . . .

JOHNSON: Didn't Mr. Truman think of Roger Slaughter as more of a Republican, too conservative, and more of a Republican?

RANDALL: He might have; he might have, I don't know. I don't know his feelings but I know Enos Axtel defeated him in the primary, and Enos was a nice fellow.

JOHNSON: Did you know him very well?

RANDALL: I knew him very well. He was defeated in the election. When Roger lost the primary, he helped defeat Axtel in the election.

JOHNSON: Yes, the Republican won.

RANDALL: Albert Reeves, Jr. That was the '46 election. Bolling was elected in '48.

JOHNSON: Okay. If you think of anything to add to these remarks, you will have the chance to do that when you receive the draft.

RANDALL: Well, I'd like to edit a little too.

JOHNSON: Edit and correct, if necessary.

RANDALL: I can't recall anything I've said I would want to

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take back. I don't believe in that. I am not trying to walk a tight rope or anything about it. I've been very straight forward. At this moment, I can't assign any reason that Mr. Truman would not only had some modicum of respect for me, but maybe even some minimum affection of some kind. As far as my part is concerned, I suppose you could say a person doesn't necessarily appreciate the man being against him three times when he runs for office. Then after the person prevails [in an election], he seeks not only to be an advisor but to sort of say, "Here, you're going to have to make these appointments."

JOHNSON: But then you say that he said finally, "Since you can't beat him, join him."

RANDALL: Oh, no question about it. No question about it. I'm sure that there's a quote some place. I don't know whether it was Mike Westwood who walked with him every time, from the Independence Police; it could have been Dexter Perry, who was a member of the Harpie Club. It could have been maybe even Edgar Hinde, Sr., when I finally said, "Well, wait a minute, Edgar Hinde, Jr. is going to be the Postmaster at Independence, no question about it." I said, "Mr. Truman that's fine, that's good enough for me." Mr. Truman was quoted as saying, "Well, we've tried to defeat him, and I don't think

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there's any way we're going to beat him, so we may just as well join Randall. There's no way we're going to defeat him, so we may just as well join him."

JOHNSON: Well, thank you.

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