

Interview with Ralph Yarborough, former US Senator from Texas, Austin, Texas, December 10, 1974, conducted by Jack Bass and Walter de Vries, transcribed by Linda Killen.

Yarborough: -- in some areas of Texas where there wasn't a black person in the county being much stronger than in counties in east Texas where there were quite a number of blacks. So it's very much in local tradition in the counties as well as local traditions in areas. But I presume that it would save time better for you to ask me particular questions you're interested in rather than have a rambling discourse on this.

Jack Bass: What have been the major changes in the last twenty-five years in Texas?

Yarborough: Politically? Politically the big money is stronger now than it was twenty-five years ago. Politically it's harder to beat in Texas because it's witnessed the rise of the PR firms. And PR firms have debased politics. Because there is a certain code among politicians. It's not as high as the code among lawyers or the code among judges. I've been a judge, a practicing lawyer, have a judicial code that's a little bit higher level than the practicing lawyers code. When you get to politics, it's not quite as high as a practicing lawyer's. Good bit lower. But the PR firms have no code of ethics at all. Theirs is sell the product. They'll sell any line. When a candidate says "I'll turn it over to you and let me write the scripts"--and that's what many of these successful PR firms demand--you turn it over to us, you agree that

we'll write the script and you'll follow it and we'll elect you. Well, that's the utter debasement of politics. Another debasement that's taken place in the years I've been active has resulted from the US Supreme Court decision in the Alabama case, Bear Bryant, and the subsequent case, the New York Times case and the other cases, holding that for a public official or candidate to be libelled, you have got to prove malicious intent. The intent . Next they have held that you've got to have a conspiracy. That means you conspire between persons. Even if you could prove one person had a malicious intent it still. . . . So this has reduced politics to the law of jungle insofar as honesty and morality is concerned. Not as far as the old fashion southern duels of shooting each other. But if it wasn't for the constitutional prohibition against dueling barring you from holding office, I think it would have driven some southerners to duels. This is the debasement of politics that's gone on. Twenty-five years. Makes it harder for a person of limited means to run, to be elected in a state-wide race. The moral debasement, I mean, and the growing power of big money. For example, in Texas we have a constitutional provision that prohibits banks branching, branch banking. We've had no branch banking all that time. But a few years ago attorneys devised this holding company method, you know, they have in Carolina or Virginia. You've run into that in one of those states. Some states in the Union have have pure branch banking, like California and Nevada and Arizona. The Bank of America. Some prohibit any. Some have this inbetween thing. More states in this category I think than

any other, where you have bank holding companies. Well, the result of it is in Texas in just less than a decade a few large banks control banks in which are deposited sixty percent of all the money in Texas. So this monolithic control of money gets together to support a candidate has become stronger. The forces of the money power have become stronger in my years of active participation.

Walter de Vries: You don't think it has diminished. It's become stronger.

Yarborough: It's become stronger, unquestionably.

W.D.V.: Where do you see it going in the future?

Yarborough: You see, a bunch of oil companies have moved their national headquarters to Houston. Because Texas is one of the less than ten states that have no corporate income tax for the state. The people pay the taxes. The kind of governors that get elected are those that will promise the people no new taxes. No new taxes. All the big papers take this up. They drum it home to the people. No new taxes. The result is the people are paying more taxes when the state doesn't pay a higher percentage. Schools have improved. The way of living. People's demand for more services. They get more but they're having to pay that tax out of their local incomes. Local property tax. We have a sales tax in Texas. We have city sales taxes authorized over the course of the years. The first sales tax started when Price Daniel was governor. He was elected in '56. Eighteen years ago. The first sales tax. Now city sales taxes. All this hue and cry no new taxes doesn't mean no new taxes. It means new taxes on the people and no new taxes for corporations. They get by with less and less taxes. So with the

debased morality caused by the decision that you can't hope to recover in libel suits. I've held that over papers in the past, actually employed lawyers. No hope for recovery in a libel suit to keep political campaigning honest. The unity of power now. This doesn't always mean money in a campaign, this big power. But I'll tell you how they operate in Houston. The last two weeks of campaigns against me, they practically denuded those big offices and sent all the secretaries and junior executives back out over Texas to the home counties to campaign. I wish you'd of been here two weeks ago and seen what they on Ma Bell. Bell Telephone Company. Those big cases. Have you heard of the San Antonio cases in the time you've been here? Well, they caught some junior people stealing from Ma Bell and they put the heat on the regional manager, the state manager, as being responsible for it. And they drove the top manager for the southwest to the point of suicide and fired the second in command. And he sat down and wrote a whole book, you might say, and left it to his wife. She's given it to the lawyers and printed it in the papers. How Ma Bell collects from all the executives and puts that into campaigns over the state for the legislature, city council and other campaigns. We knew this was going on in my own campaigns for the governorship. And the other side had control of the party machinery, the state government. There's no way to prove it. And had all the money. So you have a monolithic control. The banks get together with the oil companies, insurance. It's all together. And it goes down beyond that, to restaurants. Nearly all of these organizations have trade associations. And it goes beyond the restaurants. For example, in my years in the Senate, I worked to help

with social security and helped with old age pensions and helped get larger allowances. Of course the restaurants profitted by that. The payment got enough to be profitable for them. But they are tied in with the money establishment too. In my own race in 1970 for re-election, they often loaded the old people in buses set to nursing homes and a number of them in the state, took them to polls and told them I was against them. Had them all to vote against me. So this organization, down through the trade associations, is one of the ways they control politics in the state of Texas. We've not had a progressive governor in Texas since Jimmy Allred, in the 1930s. That's basically why I started running for governor. Try to bring Texas into the 20th century on that. The result is, here's Texas, with a state product of over \$45 billion--between \$45 and \$50 billion a year. Exceeded only by the gross state products of the states of California and New York. If you take all the nations of the earth, there are only a few nations on this earth that have a greater annual gross national product than the state of Texas alone. Yet, despite that fact, we have more people in the poverty bracket in Texas than any other state in the union. Despite our 12 million population, California 20 and New York 18 to 19 million. We're thirty-first in the nation in average annual per capita income in the 1970 census. Now we've leveled along at 28, 29, 30 or 31st for a good many years. But the Commerce Department has released figures this spring that Texas is now 34th in the union in average annual per capita income. Despite this great gross state product. That's the result of low wages and poor education. We're 31st in the nation in education.

We've got great universities. We've got great high schools. But that doesn't level out to all the people. That hasn't been true of all the people. The result has been that up until recently less than 50 percent of the students who finish the eighth grade finish the twelfth grade. Comparable states--you look at the ratio of the ethnic background, Mexican-Americans, blacks--Illinois and California are fairly close to Texas. Two big states. In the first six in population for example. In those states over 85 percent of all the children who finish the eighth grade finish the twelfth grade.

W.D.V.: Why hasn't Texas been able to produce a progressive governor when most southern states have at least once or twice in the last twenty-five years?

Yarborough: Money. The big money gets together. And furthermore the political structure of campaigning is against it. Politics permit corruption. For example we have in Texas no party purity law. The Republicans pour over and vote in the Democratic primary. Though they carried the state for president recently a good many times, you'll note in the primary in the last four years you had over two million people voting in the Democratic primary and only a little over 100,000 in the Republican primary, despite contested elections for the governorship and the US Senate in the Republican primary. They give instructions in their party to move over into the Democratic primary. They come in and vote against me. The papers, the big papers, like the Dallas News, urge them to go in. Says go in the Democratic primaries. That's the only one that means anything. You get the vote of your

choice. Then you get two bites out of him in November. We've been unable to get a party purity law passed in Texas despite the fact that the legislature is more than 90 percent Democratic because of the influence of money on that legislature. And that's needed. If we could ever get a party purity law to keep the Republicans out of the Democratic primary. Registered Republicans. As over forty states have such a law. We'd then have a progressive governor in Texas. I doubt that you will get one as long as we keep this present, immoral law. Another factor that's made it more difficult with a person of limited means to win in the state-wide race have been the change in the primary dates. You've seen a pretty good sample here of spring weather. Except in the spring, in addition to fog and rain, you would have tornados. That's a tornado season. It's worst in April and May. Those primaries were moved up from the traditional old primaries from the last Saturday in July and the last Saturday in August, where they had been for generations, to the first Saturday in May and then the run-off is the first Saturday in June. That's tornado season. That's bad weather season, your campaigning season. That's a time when the farmers are still in the fields. Crops aren't laid by. That's a time when schools are being held. I know this from personal experience, running with very little money. I could staff my headquarters, state and regional, with volunteer help in the past in the old July and August primaries. Can no longer do that. Had young housewives say to me "Ralph, we've helped you in the past, but we can't. This is the months when our children are in school. Not all graduating but they're being

promoted. And most of us still make the clothing for our children. We've got to make their clothes. We've got to go to school for the exercise." I've had kids in grammar schools campaign for me as well as high schools. I've had one county where no man would speak for me in McClellan. In one race an eight year old boy spoke at every county rally against the politicians, on my behalf. I had another in west Texas at a time when it was very unusual for women to campaign--over twenty years ago--a young women reared in a little town I was reared in in east Texas. Make every county rally and speak on my behalf. Well, you no longer get that. The old county rallies are gone. The weather is too rough then. So the situation for an independent--that is, not independent of party but independent of the big money--winning has worsened with the moving up of the primaries to the tornado season. The result is that fewer people go to rallies. Very difficult to get people to go out in this kind of weather to rallies. Now. You couldn't get people to go in this kind of rainy weather to rallies in Texas, even in the fall when you don't have the tornadoes. And tornadoes often have alerts: stay off the highways, stay in. Have tornado alerts. And they are very accurate. The modern weather services is very, very good. They'll throw a map on the television saying for a belt the width of sixty miles for a line from Del Rio to it's a tornado alert until twelve o'clock tonight. There may not be any tornadoes. But the likelihood some are going to hit in that belt that time. There will be the clouds and they may not touch down. And tornadoes are bad. Oklahoma's the worst state in the union on number of tornadoes. Texas

is not quite that high, but it's pretty bad in the spring. These factors, the change of dates, the failure to have a party purity law, and the other factors--I won't repeat them--have made it harder to get a progressive government elected. Now there are some factors that have helped. And one big one is the Supreme Court decision on one man one vote. That's resulted in many cases since then that require redistricting counties. For example, we have four legislators from this county. State legislators. Houston a large number. Dallas a large number. In the old days, Dallas, you never had a progressive legislator from Dallas county. Now, with single member districts, the county having to cut up instead of all running at large over the county, you have some very progressive legislators in Dallas. Not many on a percentage basis, but a few. And also some Republicans. You had nothing but reactionaries all running under the Democratic label. And in Harris county a majority of all the legislators are progressives. And from Bear county, San Antonio. One man one vote has opened it up in the state legislature to get more progressives in the legislature than you ever used to get. Both in the house and senate. And also for the Congressional districts. Houston has two very progressive legislators in Bob Eckhart and Barbara Jordon. I consider Bob Eckhart without a peer in the Texas delegation. One of the ablest legislators in all the history of Texas. But that one man one vote doesn't have any effect on a state-wide race. We have other factors that would help the side of progress. . . the outlawing of the poll tax. Texas was one of the last five states in the union to hang on to poll taxes. Finally a circuit court sitting right here in

Austin . . . Judge Homer Thornberry, who grew up here, was deputy district. . . I mean the deputy sheriff in charge of running the sheriff's office while I was district judge here. . . worked his way through law school as chief deputy sheriff. Very unusual. He was the judge who knocked the poll tax out. Even deep old South states like Georgia had abandoned the poll tax long before a federal court held it unconstitutional. And that has broadened the electorate to where many more people vote. But the percentage voting is much less than it was before the electorate was broadened. More people voting, but a much smaller percentage. History of broadening the franchise is that, as political science teaches and it's true factually, when you newly enfranchise a bunch of people they're not going to rush into the polls to exercise that new franchise. You have to lead them by the hand. We put on poll tax drives in Texas and poll tax days. Or voter registration drives, after the poll tax was knocked out. And got voters registered. They're not going to the polls and just registering. Then you've got to work door to door. Many are afraid to go. Elderly people. No educational attainments. May not be low intellectual, but just no opportunities in life. Afraid to go in this booth. They're afraid of the law. They've been trapped before. They don't like to go in there and fiddle around with the law and machines.

W.D.V.: Would a campaign reform law on expenditures and contributions change things? A tight state law.

Yarborough: It would have some effect, but I can't see a tight state law circumventing the corporate control of Texas. They'd have

ways of spending money. Six and a half million was spent against me for the Senate in 1970. But you'll find only a fraction of that reported. I'm satisfied Bentsen, in filing his affidavit, filed what they told him they'd collected. Twelve million people. A candidate can't go out and collect that money by hand. He doesn't see it all. They paid that much in--whatever reported, a million something--but they were too smart. The corporations that control Texas are too smart to go in and hand that money to the candidate. They spend it on their own. They organize all kind of things and don't tell him about it. So that he can make his affidavit honestly and truthfully and not have a contest to throw him out for committing perjury. They don't tell him what they do. They spend this money. You pass that law, it's a state law. They're not afraid of state laws. They put the judges on the courts. They put the legislature in office. They put the governor in office. They're only afraid when the federal law is involved. And you saw in '72 they weren't afraid of federal law. Not very much afraid now. They all pleaded guilty and got slapped on the wrist for those guilty pleas.

W.D.V.: You think six million was spent against you?

Yarborough: Six and a half I've stated and it's been printed in one political science book in Texas. . They believed that or they would never have put it in that book. Very popular book, because this is the establishment. I've been saying that for quite a while and I was stopped on the streets of Houston a few months ago. A man I'd known in the law school at the University of

Texas. Very much on the other side. Stopped me and said in a hostile voice "Well, I've been hearing what you said about Bentsen spending \$6.5 million against you. I don't know of but \$5 million he spent." And turned on his heels. so like if anybody was picking it up, recording off talking to me, like he was mad about me charging six and a half. But what it meant to me was that it was more than six and a half. He wasn't in the campaign, helping run it. If he only knew of five million, he was in effect telling me that "my industries I represent spent five million."

W.D.V.: But Bentsen reported 1.2, didn't he? How could they spend that much more money without it being accounted for in some way?

Yarborough: Well, I'm sure that he had his 1.2 in the television and radio brackets. Oh, they spent money in all kinds of ways. They had a hoard of agents all over Texas travelling. Hoards of agents. One county I hadn't lost before--Newton county, right over on the Sabine River where the lumber companies were against me on account of the Big Thicket bill. The county officers there had always supported me strongly. They were so stunned that they lost the county that they carried on a very quiet investigation for six weeks. Not a public one, not filing a charge against anybody. They couldn't find out anything. And then wrote me and said "We are convinced that they spent \$35 a vote against you in this county. To carry this county against you." That was over where Time owes Eastex Lumber Company. They're one of the biggest opponents I had. Time, Inc. We're convinced it was \$35 a vote. Now they didn't go pay people \$35 for a vote or \$25 for a vote. They gave heads of families where there were three

or four votes an extra job at some mill. They hired the unemployed to work and then let them know how they felt. They put unlimited ads in the local papers and unlimited spots on the radio that they didn't report to the headquarters of their county organizations. All kinds of ways. One preacher of a small church got paid \$8,000 for one sermon against me the Sunday before the election. I don't know how many other churches that happened in.

W.D.V.: Why did they want to defeat you so badly?

Yarborough: Well, you see what they're doing to Bentsen. They wanted Bentsen in. There are other reasons. Bentsen had more than that. They were dissatisfied because I was voting with the people. If you look at the history, it just wasn't me, it was anybody in that Senate who stands up and fights for the people of the United States. Just like Wayne Morse of Oregon. Albert Gore of Tennessee. Paul Douglas of Illinois. Ernest Greuning of Alaska. Joe Tidings of Maryland. Young, handsome, articulate. Most of us thought he'd either be on the ticket as president or vice president before he passed on. Just the first term. Joe Clark of Pennsylvania. They poured vast monies in to people the big money can't control. You don't find people standing up on the floor of the Senate now making speeches like Wayne Morse and Paul Douglass would make. If you go back and study that. I've got no phobia of that. It wasn't just me. Anybody that stands up and represents the people against the big money. But there's a special reason in this by the military establishment in this. Lockheed got \$3.5 billion on the C5A contract. Are you familiar with that contract? Very important in the politics of America. And this man Fitzgerald

reported. . . what did he report? One billion or two billion dollar overrun? Look in to that. That's important. He reported an overrun. Well, they wanted \$500 million more in 1969. They wanted us to vote them that. We voted in the Senate 45 to 44 not to give it to them until there was an audit. We'd pay them if it was owed, but if it wasn't owed we wouldn't give it. Of course an audit is the last thing they wanted. They hadn't had an audit since World War II. So, Bentsen who ran against me was on the board of directors and a big stockholder in Lockheed. He announced against me. Now they poured money in against about ten Senators that voted that way where they figured there was a chance to beat them. Pour money into states. They defeated three of us. Albert Gore, Joe Tiding and myself. Then, in 1971 when the Congress met they brought the bill up again. Instead of a give away bill of \$500 million, they had a guaranteed loan. Kind of like FHA loan. Lend you two hundred and fifty. And had a long extended debate in the Senate and it passed 49-48. What three votes cost the people. Two weeks later they slipped through a \$472 million grant. They got them a \$250 million loan and a \$472 million grant in lieu of the \$500 million they didn't get in '61. That's what it meant to change two or three Senators. On just one contract. One fat cat contract. A give away. Straight give away. So it paid them money. And about the spring of this year there was an announcement in the press--you'll find this and I recommend you check this gentlemen. You're getting down right now to the meat of the coconut. Why they want people in there who are subservient, won't raise questions about this. That Lockheed was the biggest government contractor. \$1.6 billion in contracts. Three months

later they announced that the Trident submarine contract had been let to Lockheed. Now Lockheed is an aerospace and aircraft manufacturer. But they took this away from the maritime contractors and gave it to Lockheed. \$1.3 billion more. That means a total of \$2.9 billion. That would double any other contractor. Bentsen. . . I didn't know his connection with this until he had a debate with Brock. Did you all hear that debate on television between Brock and Bentsen. Bentsen representing the Republicans. Well, it was Alphone and Gaston. Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee. Neither one would say anything really where the people were being hurt. But Bentsen claimed credit. Says "Well, it illustrates that the Democrats have a better record on thrift. They had a contract for a trident submarine and it would be too extravagant hastily done. And I succeeded in postponing that and we're getting it done in a more rational way. And we've saved money by that three years from that hasty job they were going to do." What they did is switched it from the other contractors. See, this is defensive. He's taking the offense on it. Afraid somebody will say something about it. So at the mini-convention--I've just been there-- I saw something in the Kansas City Star while I was there. He was claiming credit for savings on the trident submarine contract. He put it over in his company.

J.B.: Is he still on the Lockheed board?

Yarborough: Oh no. Ronny Dugger attacked him in the Texas Observer in the middle of my campaign. He said "I resigned the day before I announced." Of course, nobody believes that. It's probably post-dated. I didn't have all those facts and didn't have the money and

hadn't charged it. But he'd resigned. And besides, I doubted the political value of attacking him on that. That puts every member of a board of directors--even the little companies--thinking. . . . I'm a director, you know. I've learned that in campaigning. If you attack a man for being director of a board and some fellow that's director of a little \$10,000 corporation might think "I'm a director," you know, and vote against you. But Ronny Dugger exposed it. He said I resigned and put my stock in trust the day before I announced. May have, may not have. What difference does it make. He could post date it anyway. There was no power in Texas going to look into the date of his deeds, like Congress looked into the date of Nixon's deed. Nixon, in postdating and juggling those deeds, is just doing what the big money officers are doing for a long time in this country.

J.B.: How do you arrive at that \$6.5 million figure?

Yarborough: One way, independent businessman in west Texas came to Wichita Falls the last week when I was campaigning. Said he'd been to Houston in a meeting. Bentsen meeting. And he heard what the budget was. It was \$6.5 million. And that he thought it was outrageous. He'd never supported me in other campaigns. That he felt this was buying the government and it was going to undermine the government and came up to announce his support for me. During that week about three or four students from Rice University, who had been working in Bentsen's headquarters, came over and joined our Houston headquarters. And said that they had overheard them talking about the budget of \$6.5 million and they couldn't stomach it any more. And they came and joined our headquarters. These weren't joining because they thought I was winning.

Shucks, a blind man could see he was beating the hell out of me.

Now I had people in my headquarters foolish enough to tell people ten days before that we had it won, when I was begging for help and couldn't get any help around the old campaign managers. It got too hot for them. They kind of drew back. They threatened to take all the practice out of lawyers' offices you know. And got lots of ways. Call notes at banks of people who were supporting me. Threatened to fire people working if they were out supporting me. All kinds of ways. I've had this before in the campaigns for the governorship. So that's where I got the six and a half million is from those sources. That business man and separately, entirely disconnected. . . . one at a financial meeting to raise the money and the other students. . . . You know kids, you put them in headquarters, they're going to spy around in anything they can. Got too obnoxious to them and they quit. So since then one lobbyist has told me "I don't know of but five million they spent against you." I can't afford to tell you what companies he works for. See, I've got friends, lawyers, who were friends of mine before I ran who bemoan the fact that I disgraced the bar by turning into a politician. Of course I feel that I have done the higher service rather than help these corporations bleed the people of Texas. If you go through the establishment law schools. . . . I suppose do too much for the people.

[Interruption.]

I've never had the support of one of the ^{big} dailies in one of the big four cities. They have slandered me and they have also told the people-- which is just as devastating as slander--that I amounted to nothing,

hadn't passed any laws, just an encumbrance on the Senate and the state up there. And that's all the people have heard from the daily press. And very little publicity in the years I was in the Senate. Except if I made a speech that they thought would cost votes they'd print that. When I cast a vote they thought was unpopular, they'd print that. Now in Albert Gore's case, there are eight big newspapers. Two dailies in each of the four biggest cities. There are two in Chattanooga, two in Knoxville, two in Nashville and two in Memphis. One of those papers in each of those four cities supported Albert Gore. He had half of them. And they were telling the people the truth about Albert Gore being really a great Senator. And the people voted him out when they had the truth laid out to them in half the papers. The Nashville Tennessean was the strongest paper for him. They phoned me. They ~~found~~^{found} out about this campaign in Texas. I laid it out for them exactly how they ran it. They pulled the same thing on Gore. And they warned the people in advance it would be done and they still turned Gore out. So, if a pure political scientists saying the people in Texas had no means of finding out about the record the people of Tennessee were told of Gore's fine record, and still voted him out. I have no phobias about having been defeated. I don't go around with hurt feelings or anything like that. My god, Winston Churchill was one of my heroes and always regarded the British as pretty rational in their politics. They turned him out after he'd saved western civilization. I'm old enough to remember all this, you know. Turned him out in July of '45 when he was right there with Stalin in that conference in Berlin and badly

needed because Roosevelt had died and had thrown Truman into the vortex there before he'd had time to get his feet on the ground as president. Then they turned Churchill out and sent Clement Atlee over. Stalin must have thought "My god, these democracies are really [Crazy] ." So, seeing people like that. . . . Sam Houston, one of my heroes, who created the republic of Texas. They threw him out of office as governor, bodily threw him out in Texas because he wouldn't take the oath to the confederacy. And he walked from the capital here to the governor's mansion and they stoned him in the streets of Austin. Because he had been against secession. Texas is one of the few southern states that submitted secession to a vote of the people. This county voted against secession. The state capital county. So, with Houston and Churchill as examples, why should I. . . why should the lesser lights be dismayed when they see the angels treated that way. I've had a pretty practical experience. . . .

J.B.: What's your feeling about Lloyd Bentsen's presidential ambitions and candidacy?

Yarborough: Well Harry Truman, if you get his book Frankly Speaking. . . if you haven't read it just pick it up on the news stand. Where it says Lyndon Johnson just look over there and there's about three quarters of a page of fine print. He's talking to somebody. He says you can buy a convention, but it's not possible yet to buy an election. I think after he died I think Nixon did buy one in '72 by many devious means. It was really buying it with vast money when you had all those slanderous circulars distributed in Florida that the leading Democratic candidates were a bunch of homosexuals. By name.

The utmost slander. Terrible slander in the South and the rural areas there's nothing worse. Then stirring up the dissension and infiltrating. . . telling their people to go into the Democratic primary and vote against certain candidates. Utter dissolution almost of the Democratic party during the time of the convention and after. They spent all kind of money on that. They really bought one. Because the polls of 1970 showed Muskie and a bunch of others would just wipe Nixon up. The polls that were being taken at that time. But you can buy a convention. There isn't any doubt about it. I was at a cocktail party here a few months ago. Businessman, moved out here, retired, wasn't very conversant with what had happened in Texas. Think he was from somewhere up North. Came up to me just bubbling over and said "What do you think about Bentsen's chances for the presidency." Well, of course this drew people around. I wasn't there to start an argument with him about Bentsen. I said "Well, I was in Washington a couple of months ago and one of the Senators told me that Bentsen told him he'd have \$2.5 million ready to buy the convention of '76." To spend. And before, you know. With all the things like you do in Kansas City. He'd have \$2.5 million to spend. One US Senator said Bentsen told him that. I told him that. "Oh," he says, "Senator, that's just the surface money. That's just the surface money. Underneath he's got the real money." I don't know what they'll spend. Two and a half million is pretty good for surface money. He didn't know who he was talking to or he would never have told me that. I think he knew what he was talking about. I think he's a real factor, buying a place on that ticket. Big oil wants him. I know one independent oil man been on the so-called

liberal side before Houston says "Well, he's the best thing that's ever come along for the oil industry." And he's absolutely moved over, after twenty-five years, to support Bentsen because of the benefit he figures he'll be to oil.

W.D.V.: Is the party still divided on two factions, liberal and conservative?

Yarborough: No.

W.D.V.: How would you describe the Democratic party in Texas?

Yarborough: Very difficult to describe. Because it doesn't have the rigid divisions of the past. The big money's gotten smarter than that. They put people of the ethnic minorities in on the important jobs. They give an important job to one black or one chicano--good speaker--he can split that ethnic minority wide open. They're no longer solid . It's a little bit difficult to say. It's not sharply divided as it was before. Gee, it's pretty perplexing to try to describe it now. It's in a state of flux.

W.D.V.: How about the Republican party?

Yarborough: Well, it had chances to be a viable party in Texas. But the Republican party and the people who control the Democratic party are identical in ideology. It's money controls Texas. This is the happy hunting ground. Senator Metcalf has written a book, a study of utility regulation in the United States. And he points out in that that people in Texas are gouged worse by utilities than any other state in the Union. We're the only state in the union that has no utility regulation, state-wide utility regulation body. The phone rates. All the utility rates. Texas is the happy hunting ground of predatory

wealth in the Union, out of the fifty states. And they've gotten smarter. They no longer denounce labor. They used to denounce the Negroes when I was running. They'd denounce the blacks, say I was a Negro lover. They would denounce labor. Now they've put a few on their side. Hired a few of the leading ones. And it makes it more difficult, smarter, more difficult to raise a viable force on the people's side where the people are being robbed by high interest rates. Being robbed, absolutely. American people are being sticked all over this nation and especially in Texas.

[Interruption.]

--a college textbook. So they made so bold as to print a speech of two of mine once. Of course it's one of the main publishers of text books.

is one of the big ones, as you know. Here's where they printed it. They'd never print that if they thought I was telling a falsehood. Those political profs in different universities in Texas, they saw what was going on. They saw this monumental amount of money being spent. They believe that. I can assure you. I know enough of politics. See, I used to be general counsel for the Texas state teachers association for four years. District judge here five years. Assistant attorney general for nearly four years at the state capital trying some of the biggest law suits ever won by the state. So I know enough about politics. They didn't think that was a wild charge. They wouldn't print it. They could see what was being spent. Any fool could see it was millions. I've had millions spent against me time and time after time. Woefully underestimated Bentsen. I thought, well I've learned to beat one or two million in Texas. I can beat a couple of

million. But I didn't realize

--somebody who's chief interest is the school system. Somebody in the city. Somebody in the county, the state, the national level. That was the last spot I had.

[Interruption.]

W.D.V.: What you're saying is that it really has
Is this evident in other forms?

Yarborough: Oh yes. They've dispersed it. Instead of putting out a candidate who would get up and say those Negroes and those radicals, the youth and the women all voting now. . . . It's clever. Gosh, I can feel it. Listen, the control. . . . They've called loans on people for supporting me in campaigns in the past over and over. They used to couldn't phone. They had a lot of influence in the big banks with the country banks as correspondents. Now they own them. Since I wrote that I bought this world almanac at the magazine stand at the airport on the way to Kansas City. 1973. Total debt in this country, two trillion, five hundred and some odd million. Just go look at the debt. Get your financial reports and see what the interest rate was when Nixon went in after six years. My gosh, we're being stripped of something between 50 and 100 billion dollars a year. This is the most monumental redistribution of wealth in the history of America. And it's being distributed upward. I've talked to people in finance who say--I think three percent in conservative--they say they cannot be over three percent of the people who profit by it. I've taken the most conservative figure. Probably one and a half to two. You've got to have at least a quarter of a million dollars to invest to

profit by that over your other expenses. You've got to be making enough money off that increased interest rate for it to more than offset what it's costing you to live, your standard of living. You've got to have a lot of help to do it. For the poor, middle class or upper middle class this is absolute outrage. This is what's happening under this administration. You don't find any Democrats standing up on the floor of the Senate or House and raising hell about this. They'll throw it in. And they're blaming us. The people have to swallow being blamed for how they're being robbed. Say you're burning too much gasoline. You're eating too much. You're buying too much. You've got too much of everything. You've got it too good. And the preachers in the pulpit preach about how they've got it too good. And people begin to blame themselves. You know, kind of an inward morality. While they are being absolutely stripped by gross wealth in this country. Listen, the great wealth is far more powerful politically in Texas. Except for making a few mistakes I would have won more of those races than I did win for the governorship.

That's the reason I got elected to the Senate. They stole the '56 governor's race from me and I went around for the Senate. I had people call me and say "Ralph, we're going to elect you. They stole that last one. They burned ^{ballots} 250 for you in this wastepaper basket out here." One county official told me that with pride and said "If you ever tell this I'll be defeated. I can never be elected again." One place down

, black porter, there's a grocer, little independent grocer and his wife. Went down the day after the election and found ^{ballots} 278 marked

for me thrown in the wastepaper basket for the election that town. This happened all over Texas. And they held finally that I'd lost that governor's race and the primary, the run-off, by 3,000 votes. That was less than a third of a vote per voting precinct in Texas. They'd thrown them away. We know that because that night when there was only about 1,500 between us. . . I was leading 1,500 I believe, it went back and forth. . . they suddenly closed the Texas election bureau. Which is a private organization, kind of like AP, you know. Run out of the Dallas News. Newspapers pay into it to get the election returns faster than the official candidates. They suddenly closed it. Election closed with less than 1,500 votes between us. Never happened before. They'd hold the election over to see how they decided. They closed it until either Monday afternoon or Tuesday afternoon. We phoned up there. They had let Price Daniel, my opponent, have representatives in the Texas Election Bureau where they were counting. We went up and asked. They refused to permit our representatives in there. This is part of the corporate control of the state. They closed down. A bunch of law students at the University of Texas helping me to campaign.

smart enough to figure it out, went out to the airport and watched and told me some 20 to 30 planes took off, little planes took off between midnight and 2 a.m. incoming from the capital carrying satchels. Now, I phoned. I talked personally to the man running the Texas Election Bureau. Mr. Johnson. Asked where they were. The big cities were all in. I was losing the cities. The boss controlled counties along the Rio Grande where the Mexican votes were

then bossized. The boss controlled them. They were in. They were all against me. They were in. There were thirty counties out. And they had phoned the chairmen of those counties and gotten their estimates of how many votes were out. I was carrying most of these. And those I werent the county seats were in, the slow rural votes. The estimates of the county chairmen was estimated to me that there were 30,000 votes out. I knew in my own mind that I had at least 60 percent of those votes. I believed two-thirds of those out. I didn't say in my own mind "I've got it won." I'd been through this before. That was my fourth state-wide race. And sure enough when they finally reported all the votes in only 5,000 more votes were ever reported from those counties. And I lost, they said, by 3,000 votes. That was '56. I think that's one basic reason why I was practically guaranteed the election in '57. So many people in so many counties knew of that steal, they just turned around and voted for me. I was elected. Since then, since their talking. . . . I go to bar conventions. I'm a lawyer. I've had some other say "Ralph, I've heard you say that election was stolen from you in '56. But the one was in '54 also." I had a lawyer call me in '72. I was running to try to go back to the Senate. He said "Don't you ever call me. Don't you write me any letters. This is my last word. I'll be ruined. But Ralph, you've got to do something. These lawyer companies are literally scared to death that you are going to be re-elected. And they're planning to steal this election, buy it, to rob you to keep you from going back. I know this. But don't you ever call me." I'd known him for forty years. I'm 71. He

says "I'm telling you the truth. You've got to do something to stop it. They're going to steal it from you. Steal it again." I couldn't do anything to stop it. Had no money. In debt now from this campaign. Because I was in, entrenched then. It's a lot more when you've got some assistants to help you. When you've got no money, running on credit and voluntary help. They're holding the state. Friendly. They're being patted on the back by the big boys. After all, they own banks in little rural counties where they had correspondent banks. Lot of difference in owning a bank and being a mere correspondent. The power of big money, the control, is greater in Texas today than it has been in the past.

W.D.V.: Is it bigger than any other state? How about the South?

Yarborough: I couldn't tell you. I don't know enough about the other states. You'd have to have an intimate knowledge. I've learned this in all of my life. It takes many years of work to know the extent. I have no way of knowing that. I'd have to study for years, comparing. The only way to know that is find out from other people what the exact situation is in those states and compare.

[End of side of tape.]

--well, there might be yes. But it's too early. The present governor has just been re-elected for four years. That's too iffy and too far off. Things change too fast.

W.D.V.: How do you assess the governor?

Yarborough: About like the people of Texas do generally. I have no special phobia about the governor or against him. I was in other

races. I didn't participate in races for or against him. And I'd rather than you get that appraisal from other people who are closer to the situation, either opposing or for him. I didn't take any viable part in that. Had races of my own.

J.B.: There's one theory that some of the people on the horizon in state-wide office, such as the lieutenant governor, the attorney general, have wealth of their own which would enable them to be independent progressives if elected.

Yarborough: That's true. I think the attorney general said his net worth was something like \$3 million. A politician like that is not going to overestimate his worth, for tax purposes and political purposes and all. So you can take that as a modest estimate I feel. The lieutenant governor, I don't know how much he is worth. But certainly he will inherit a vast fortune. The Houston Chronicle. The land commissioner is another very bright young man. I think he stated his net worth was something over \$200,000. And probably will inherit a good bit more. His parents are still living. Another figure on the horizon who is going to figure in that--people may not have told you--is Bob Bullock, state controller. He has no money, but he is more progressive than either of those other three. He's not a handsome man, but he's a mean, tough fighter on the stump and campaign. Not afraid to call a spade a spade. Strike a lick where it needs to be struck. You've got four prospects there. And Price Daniel, Jr. Price, Jr. is the speaker of the house. Got a whole bunch of young men there. Four out of that five would have enough financial means that they at least could buy

groceries while they were running. They could maintain their own households. They could do that and not be worried about meeting a minimal payroll in a state-wide office. But none of those except John Hill would have enough money to combat this. . . . Of course, I don't know. That is so much money, having a million dollars of your net worth is so much money in comparison to being in debt from other campaigns, it's hard to evaluate. Certainly a man worth \$3 million could mount a good campaign. They may have limitation laws on how much he can spend. So far none of those apply in the state. Campaign contributions unlimited. I've been told, back in the governor's race, about some people spending as much as \$250,000 apiece for. . . . Shivers, against me in '54. The most bitter race I've ever had, on the surface. I think the Bentsen was the most bitter undercover but a lot of that I'm just still learning. I learn something every month. Four years later, I've just learned in the last two months about agents they had going in to all the west Texas counties where there are ranchers and telling them I fought the ranchers and had been against them. I didn't learn that until the last two months. I ended up with so few votes out there that people wouldn't tell me about it. They covered this state with hired agents like the locust of Egypt or modern locust swarms that covered across from Arabia across the Red Sea and devastate the crops of Ethiopia.

W.D.V.: Anything you'd do over?

Yarborough: You mean if I knew what I know now run again the same races? Yes, I'd run them again knowing this and knowing how come and with no money and in debt. I'd do it because of what I've done for

the people. The Dallas News admitted when I was through that I'd passed more legislation than any other Senator in the history of Texas. I fought the Cold War G.I. Bill for eight long bitter years against three presidents. Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson. All opposing it, fighting it. And finally passed it. Three million veterans have already been to school under it. They were robbing the very people. . . sending them over to their death or diseases in Vietnam. . . robbing them of the chance. . . . I was chairman of a subcommittee and held hearings on it. I called the assistant secretary of defense and said "Why on earth would you draft these men, send them over there for all of these things, and then not let them go to school when they come back?" "Senator, if they pass your bill they wouldn't re-enlist." They've been tough on veterans always. I passed that bill. I fought it finally and passed it. We had one national park in Texas when I went in the Senate. I put two others through, over very bitter opposition. Padre Island National Seashore and Guadalupe Mountains. And my prize, the Big Thicket, I got through the Senate but couldn't get through the House. That's north of Beaumont in southeast Texas. The ecological gem of Texas. The place where eight different eco systems merge. The evolution of plant and insect life and scientists absolutely wild. Well, that's where Time was putting in all that money. They've got their paper plantations. Eighteen million acres of timber lands in Texas. Now most of that's pine. Not lumber for houses but pulp pine. Time, Inc. owns over nine and a half percent of the total commercial timber acreage of Texas, mainly pulp pine. Some of those counties

over ninety percent of all the land in them are in timber. Just the county seats. So they own and control them. That's the eastern 31 counties of the state. And they fought that. Well, it's finally passed. I'm not egotistical but I do believe that since I've been out making constant speeches and attacking those in for not passing it, they have passed it for a reduced acreage and changed the name to a biological reserve. Something they'd never created before. And I'm very suspicious of it but it's better than nothing. A lot of people stirred up now intend to keep on trying to save the Big Thicket, the most fragile of all these national parks.

people have been in Texas 125 years. I've seen the people of Texas looted and stripped by this vast wealth so that I resent it. I voted against it. Not in situation type because after all, I grew up in that economy as a part of it. I, of course. . . university education. . . wanted to see something done. But the people of Texas. See a more just system and a better educational system. I remember when the schools were only three months a year in Texas. I taught in schools three years where six months was your maximum school. We've been behind in education all that time and we still haven't caught up. I served on the education subcommittee of the Senate for thirteen years and on the health education subcommittee thirteen years. And on the veterans subcommittee thirteen years. I pushed bills for veterans hospitalization. I put a veterans hospital in San Antonio. I was the author or co-author of every major educational bill to pass in that period. The first one was 1958--the National Defense Education Act.

The president of the Encyclopedia Britannica told me that was the first big breakthrough on federal education. We got that with the help of the Russians when they put up Sputnik I in October of 1957. You were old enough to be around then. Americans got very much frightened. Were the Russians getting ahead of us in education? We had that national education act up there and wise old Lister Hill of Alabama, chairman of the full committee, said "Boys, I've been around here a long time. You can't pass anything in this Congress if you call it education. But if you call it national defense you can pass anything. Just put national defense education." We put it on there and passed the bill. It had seven different things. It had student loans. Millions of students have been able to stay in school under it. I taught school in rural schools three years. I taught briefly in the University of Texas law school. I'd been general counsel at one time for the Texas state teachers association for four years, wanting to do something about education. I knew a little about this. So we had provisions for outright grants. And it was changed into loans. It lost by only two or three votes on the floor of the Senate, turning that into loans rather than outright grants. But at that time the G.I. bill of World War II had expired and the Korean G.I. bill was about played out. There was no way for the student to get money to go to school with federal funds. At that time there were two and three million students in college in America. And a few of us got together--four or five--who found out by speaking were strong for education and decided that we would push enough bills. . . . We would make it our aim to

double the number of college students in America in ten years. In eleven years we had eight million in college, vis-a-vis two and three quarter million. We had five different programs. Helped raise that to eight million. Of those five the first was the national defense education act. That was loans to students from lower income families. And you see at that time Lyndon Johnson introduced a bill to have guaranteed loans, like FHA. The banks had the money. The banks came to me. "We'll lend that money. You don't need this federal grant." Shucks, I didn't say anything to them. I thought "Oh you, I know what you'll do." But we passed that. Guaranteed income for middle income families. You had to have above a certain level to get that. The others were going to get it easier. We passed the Cold War G.I. bill for veterans. We passed the opportunity grants, outright grants for students from poor families. Very poor families. We passed the medical education act for bigger grants, for medical schools because of laboratories. The work-study program. You could go to college half time and work half time and earn enough under guaranteed federal levels in that half time to go to school the other time. So we had five programs. We doubled the number of students in college. That's one main reasons I was [accused of] give aways. All Tarborough stuff is give away, give away, give away. I was the co-author of all those bills for the National Institutes of Health, the regional medical centers over the country. For heart disease, cancer and stroke. For the regional mental health centers. We planned one for every 50,000 people. Had to drop it to one for every 100,000. What's the name of that medal

1471124-1 85-1-15
1304370

in Chicago? They only issue one a year. And I was awarded the first one that had been awarded in three years. One for mental health. Financing those centers. Kennedy was strong for the bill. We passed it and he signed it in October of '63. He'd been working for it. I worked for it. I've passed legislation. I'm a trial lawyer and know how. You never heard of me as being a great orator in the Senate. The great orators get up and skim the other Senators. I never made a derogatory remark about any Senator in the Senate, saint or skunk while I was there. Any . I passed bills. I was there to get bills passed. You could make the galleries laugh like Dirksen, but when you've stung a fellow he doesn't vote with your bills later. I never made a derogatory statement. A lot of scathing remarks made of me and the galleries would laugh. I didn't answer them in a personal context, but I answered on the issues. And passed those bills. Mainly in committee. I'll tell you one interesting incident. I'd been trying to pass that Padre Island National Seashore. They had only one. Cape Hatteras. Roosevelt endorsed some fifteen, sixteen, eighteen.. And in all his time the only one that had ever been passed had been Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. I was pushing Padre Island down on the coast. My legislative assistant came in and said "Senator. . . ." This was October of '62. Kennedy sent Lyndon Johnson to South Vietnam and to Pakistan and Israel. You all remember when he invited that camel driver over here and the camel driver came? My legislative assistant, lawyer, came in. Young lawyer said "Senator, you've been talking about that Padre Island bill. You want it down there for some

reason." He didn't care. Says "If you want it, this is your only chance. Lyndon's gone." See, Johnson undercover was blocking it. He says "Johnson's gone. And you're going to have to get it." And you know yourself the value of a Senate office, the value of the staff. They work and say this Senator is against it and this Senator is for it. These are doubtful. You've got to go see them. Over on the House side, this committeeman's for it, this against it. The staff would give me briefings. These are doubtful, go see them. Cancel those speaking engagements. So I cancelled speaking engagements. I worked like a dog day and night. I passed that bill through both houses. And when Johnson got back I had that bill passed and on Kennedy's desk. So there's a saying around our office now "It's a poor camel driver who brings back luck to nobody." You remember that. When they'd ask him a question. . . had interpreters along. . . he'd quote from the Koran. It sounded like the sage of ages. The people alone that understood Urdu--I believe that's one of the languages he spoke, one of the big languages of India and Pakistan. I'm pretty sure that was Urdu from my experience in Pakistan--they said that if you could have heard this camel driver's answers. They had a fellow who was a Pakistanian, naturalized, married an American woman, State Department translator. Said they were the scream of screams what he'd say in answer to these questions.

[Interruption.]

--off the record.

to say that with all the suffering I've caused my family and all. Anonymous phone calls to your wife. You

know, threatening to kill you.

all the suffering it causes them. You've kind of in the shape that McDuff was in in MacBeth when your family suffers. What are you going to do? I remember that being posed to us by a high school teacher. If it's your family or your country what are you going to do? As tough to answer now as it was in that high school class.

W.D.V.: What is your assessment of Lyndon Johnson?

Yarborough: A very smart, cunning politician. He built a vast fortune of about \$20 million. Lyndon didn't grow up in that big house out there. He was the son of the poor cousin out there. Had a rich uncle. I think he grew up, you know, resenting that and he was after money. You've seen Gone With the Wind haven't you? You remember Scarlett O'Hara got that turnip . Lyndon Johnson has held that turnip in his hand. And he was never going to go hungry again. I came from an easier culture, east Texas. The old farm. My experience is that fellows came from that hard, scrabble country in the west where draught. . . . they'd starve. Back where I grew up in east Texas folks were Forty inches of rains fall a year. Nobody went hungry. Sweet potatoes or corn or potatoes or peas in the ground. A living for a lazy man. They knew what it was to go hungry in that country. Most of the politicians in Texas come from out there. The main chance. That's where Bentsen had their ranches. Of course Bentsen. . . that's a different kind of horse. That's a Minnesota family came down here. Created vast wealth for themselves out of swindling other midwesterners luring them down. You know that story. You know how he got that wealth? Bentsens

came down here as father and uncle and got some citrus lands on the Rio Grande. You know there's limited water there. And you don't have citrus lands unless you've got water. They brought train loads of people. Furnished trainloads and bought an old abandoned country club and put them up and take them around in buses so they couldn't talk to other people and sold vast quantities of land across the road for \$300, \$400, \$500 from very beautiful citrus orchards. Wasn't worth

because there were no water rights. Water rights were all adjudicated and used up. No water. Those people sued them. There were at least seventy fraud suits filed against Bentsen's father and uncle in the valley from their fellow midwesterners. They came down from Minnesota and South Dakota and settled. Many were broke and couldn't file those fraud suits. And they got wealthy out of that. And when Bentsen left the House, and the hospitality of Sam Rayburn--because of his anti-Semitic statements for one thing and another, he endorsed Eisenhower in '52 and Sam Rayburn jumped on him that the hostility of Rayburn

And then these notes, you know, that they got for selling that land down there, fraudulently. Bentsen's father and uncle declared them worthless. I don't believe in tainted blood going from the father to the son, but they declared the notes worthless. Now if they were worth face value, \$5.5 million all the cash they'd collected off these midwesterners, farmers that they swindled. If they collected that cash, have to pay income taxes, you know, on fifty percent of it under the capital gains law. They could hold it for six months

and then they could sell them and pay a tax on half of what they made out of it. But they declared them worthless. That's no income tax. But the gimmick in the income tax law to protect the other tax payers is that if you declare a note like that worthless and then collect them later you've got to pay your taxes on 100 percent of them, not on 50 percent. You don't get your fifty percent capital gains. So they formed that Lincoln Insurance Company down there in Houston, transferred something like \$5.5 million of that notes to Lloyd Jrs' company. The size of your policies you write depends on how much money you've got. Your capitalization. Most companies start smaller than that. He could write enormously big policies with a \$5.5 million capitalization on those notes declared as fraud. And you talk about the oil depletion allowance. That's no tax gimmick at all compared to what insurance companies get by with. If you are familiar with the tax laws. Have you studied those? The depletion allowance. . . there are only about eight or ten states. . . they give it hell all the time because of all the cover ups. There are all kind of tax gimmicks for big wealth. And it's scattered over all the states. But oil being in a few, it catches the brunt of that. But I'll tell you, anybody that knows that tax law will tell you that oil doesn't have anything on that depletion allowance. Their biggest tax gimmick is not their depletion allowance. Their biggest tax gimmick comes with the drilling operations. Far bigger loop holes than the depletion allowance. If they can keep all those others, they'll let the depletion allowance go without too much screaming.

J.B.: We've got to run, have another appointment, but I really did want to ask you your assessment of Lyndon Johnson.

Yarborough: Very, very clever, shrewd man. After power and after money. He got them, got them both. Very clever and very shrewd. Once he got in the presidency he tried to outdo Roosevelt and Kennedy on things for the people. You never saw him doing any of that in the Senate. He never did that until after he got in the presidency. He had a bill up there when he first went to the Senate. . . he filibustered against an anti-lynching bill. On my education bill. He wasn't for those bills. He introduced one when we had the national defense education act of '58 to have a guaranteed loan, let the banks lend the money, keep the federal government out. Once he got in there, though, he saw Roosevelt. Roosevelt his idol. Andrew Jackson. They got famous by fighting wars. And Roosevelt by helping the people. He was going to do both. One historian in Washington told me also that he was the first president in history to make money out of the office on the side. I don't want you to print this. I don't know anything about his private wealth. I wasn't close to Lyndon and you'll have to talk to the historians on that. They're writing books on it now. Will you please not print that remark.

J.B.: T. Harry Williams, of the Huey Long biography, gave a speech at the Southern Historical Association in the last couple of years. . . speech entitled "Huey, Lyndon and American Radicalism" in which he presented a thesis that Lyndon Johnson was considerably influenced by Huey Long.

Yarborough: Well, Johnson was no radical. Did he count Johnson a southern radical? Why he's crazy as hell. Johnson was a He was put in there by big money. He was put in office by big money. Oh, once he got to be president he was going to outdo Roosevelt and Kennedy.

J.B.: Well was that the real Johnson or was there a real Johnson?

Yarborough: Johnson was a complex man. He wasn't any simple little rancher out there. His education was [never] grounded in the great university. He didn't have a deep education. But he was clever and cunning as a fox. A cross between a fox and a coyote, assuming that cross combined the cunning of both the fox and the coyote. He was cunning as hell. Listen, this bugging, this taping of speeches. That started with Nixon. That's for the lamebrain people. Hell, Johnson was taping what people were saying to him when he was majority leader, before he ever went on to those other offices. He didn't invent taping. They were threatening people on income taxes when Roosevelt was president. I'm a staunch loyal Democrat. But this thing has been going on a long time. Now all the great spying on the American people. . . I think it began in the 'thirties with an inordinate fear of communism. Once you set up secret agents. . . . Of course the CIA isn't supposed to be doing any spying on Americans. That's the FBI's job. But hell, they got in. The Army spies. The defense department has them. Countryman has an article in the Texas. . . he made a speech here. Brent Countryman, a great law prof at Harvard. The best estimates he can get after studying this for months in Wash-

ington are that there are three billion five hundred million dossiers on Americans. Most in the federal government. The CIA. Anybody prominent. You all know this. They've got a big dossier on you. Everything you've done in life. [Anyone who is a] college teacher, especially in the fields of government or political science, what your political beliefs are and so forth. My god, writing this book. I'm sure they have got a big one on you. They've gone back and asked everything you have ever done. Your childhood. Where your parents came from. What their philosophy was. They have all those dossiers. And all this spying began, it seems, in the 'thirties. That's when they passed that law, you know, emergency law giving Roosevelt power to set up these concentration camps. So afraid of an armed revolution. I'm old enough to remember this because at that time, before Roosevelt went in, middle aged, middle class Americans were walking the streets of this country talking revolution. It wasn't young college radicals. People were starving to death. And so they put in WPA and all these other things, social security. There was no social security, no old age pension, no guaranteed bank loans, no unemployment insurance. Nothing. People starved unless they had kin folks to take care of them. They stood in lines in cities in the depression and waited four hours for one bowl of soup. So they passed all those repressive laws then. They weren't implemented in so far as setting up the concentration camp. I was pretty sure they were for spying on people. Shucks, under Nixon it got to the apex, where they really spread it out. Bold, just going to . I think spying and destruction of per-

sonal liberties in this country yet.

[End of interview.]