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JOHNSON AND MANSFIELD
Interview #4
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RITCHIE: We talked the last time about your various trips to Vietnam with Mike Mansfield, and about your work on the Foreign Relations Committee, particularly in connection with the aid investigation which Mansfield chaired. I thought we could begin today by talking about your relations with Mansfield in general and the period when you went to work for him.

VALEO: Before we get into that, let me go back to one more item on the Foreign Relations Committee, which I neglected to mention. I'm not really sure whether this subcommittee was set up before or after the disarmament special subcommittee. It must have been before Wiley was chairman of the committee at that point, and the Republicans had control of the Senate—this was Alexander Wiley of Wisconsin. Francis Wilcox was always very deeply interested in the United Nations, it was one of his passions, certainly in that period. He was very protective, almost like a mother hen when it came to the U.N., as far as he could protect it in terms of attitudes in the Senate.

The criticism had just begun to develop of the United Nations, partly growing out of the Korean experience, mostly because the veto power was at that point being used very

extensively by the Soviet Union and our protests were all against this usage. Secretary of State Dean Acheson had developed the concept of moving an issue from the Security Council to the General Assembly as one way of circumventing the veto and countering the criticism of the ineffectiveness of the United Nations. That of course, as you are probably aware, was a basic factor in getting the U.N. involved in Korea. But there were opposition groups beginning to form around the country, and the slogan first appeared: "Get the U.S. out of the U.N. and the U.N. out of the U.S." So, I guess it was Carl's idea, or Francis and Carl together—no I guess Francis was a little worried about the concept, so it must have been Carl's idea originally—that we ought to try to take the committee out into the country, in a sense to get a step ahead of the critics by finding out what the country was really thinking about the U.N.

We set up a special subcommittee on review of the U.N. charter. Charter revision was a substantial issue at that time, the League of Women Voters, I recall, was discussing it, and a number of others, again largely growing out of the veto question. As far as I know, that was the first time the Foreign Relations Committee ever met outside the city of Washington. Under Wiley's chairmanship, we took it to about five or six cities. Our idea was to open up the question to public discussion. Carl always believed in the educational value of the committee. I did not, as

such. I thought its primary function was to legislate, and that any educational function had to be purely incidental to the question of legislation. I thought constitutionally that was the way it ought to work. But we did go out and to a degree it was an educational exercise.

We started in Akron, Ohio and then Greensboro, North Carolina. When we announced that the committee for the first time in its history was going to have hearings outside of Washington, there was a great deal of interest around the country. A number of mayors and alert public relations officers in the cities began to write to the committee and offer us all kinds of facilities if we'd meet in their city. Besides Akron and Greensboro, we met, I believe, in Denver; another was Louisville, Kentucky. We were going to meet in Birmingham, Alabama, but canceled when the Birmingham authorities said they could not desegregate the audience. They would be glad to admit Negroes to the hearing, but it would have to be in a separate section of the auditorium. That's how far back we're going.

The hearings were interesting. We discovered all sorts of public affairs groups around the country, some of them going far back in history. I can think of one, I believe it was the Daughters of Patrick Henry, in Tennessee. They had no objections to the United Nations, they were just against the federal government! Then we began to get some really vicious right-wing

appearances at the committee. The same ones that had engendered this slogan of "Get the U.S. Out of the U.N. and the U.N. Out of the U.S." They would come in a group. They had no sympathy with the committee; it was just they had even less sympathy for the U.N., and they felt it was necessary to make a public statement to that effect. Edward R. Murrow covered one of the sessions outside of Washington and used it on one of his TV programs.

I don't know that we got a great number of ideas on what ought to be done from the U.N., but we did get some new thinking by going outside of Washington. What we did do, I think, was to engender a great deal of thinking about the United Nations in many places where otherwise it would have just been remote at best. I don't know, as a technique, how valuable it was. We did use the same technique on the disarmament subcommittee, bringing in a somewhat different group of participants, mostly academic audiences. In any event it was a pioneering effort and I think it's worth making note of that. The committee eventually reported, made a number of recommendations, some of which—not because of the committee's recommendations necessarily—gradually began to be absorbed into the U.N. system. I think it was a worthwhile experiment, and probably opened the doors for the Vietnamese hearings, which came later in the committee. Now, let's go back—unless you have any questions on that.

RITCHIE: Would you call these educational hearings?

VALEO: In a way. But I always contended that we had to have a legislative purpose, otherwise it wouldn't work. We would not be acting really in my judgment constitutionally. I would say they had an educational offshoot, but that basically our purpose in going, we stressed it—I wrote the opening statements for the chairman and all the senators—and they kept stressing the point that we were meeting for an input into legislation, which might or might not be useful in terms of the United Nations, and that any other purpose was incidental.

By the way, there was one incident in the hearings which illustrated the value of this approach. After we'd been going on for about two or three meetings, an extremist group, this "Get the U.N. Out" business, began to appear at every hearing, no matter what city we were in. I wasn't sure, but I thought I recognized the same faces. They began to make speeches rather than to offer testimony and their followers in the audience would applaud and whistle and what not. At first, we had set the witness chair at a right-angle to the committee, so that the witness could turn to the audience and turn to the committee as he saw fit. Well, we found that these witnesses were essentially addressing their remarks entirely to the audience, and creating something of a stir. They were beginning to get a bit out of order.

We wondered how to deal with this and finally hit on a very simple solution. We just turned the witness chair around so that

the witness's back was to the audience and he faced the committee, reasoning that we were there for a legislative purpose. Any value to the audience was strictly incidental. The audience heard the testimony over the loudspeakers while it was being given directly to the committee for legislative purposes. It worked like a charm. Once the hearings ceased to be a kind of public forum and became primarily a legislative matter, the heat died down. The procedure became duller, to be sure, but it was also something much more in keeping with what we needed.

RITCHIE: This raises a question: in looking through back hearings, whenever there was a major issue, from foreign aid to whatever, usually the last day of testimony would be opened up to non-administration people, various citizens groups and others. But it almost invariably seemed to be fringe group representatives.

VALEO: It's a standard procedure in most committees.

RITCHIE: Is there any way of getting more mainstream opinion, or is it basically just going to draw those people who are most disaffected by the system?

VALEO: I guess it's mostly those who are disaffected by it or those who have a very positive interest in the subject. We did try, though, to open up the procedure to the general public. We developed certain rules to make it feasible. We agreed to hear

anyone who wanted to testify. We guaranteed them a minimum of five minutes, so long as time permitted. If there was any fuller statement that they wanted to put in the record, we accepted that. We did take a great deal of testimony, and there was a great deal of input. The League of Women Voters appeared pretty steadily in most places. They were most interested because it was their annual discussion subject, at the time.

It was a fascinating experience. It was the first time that I think the Senate ever tried to go beyond Washington in terms of foreign relations, and we found that there was a great deal of interest in the U.N. in the country, and an interest in world federalism. We tried as far as possible in that first experiment to hold the hearings where a member of the special subcommittee's state was involved. That, of course, stimulated further interest in it, because it was a way of talking directly to your own senator in those locations.

RITCHIE: Well, would you like to switch now to Mansfield?

VALEO: Yes, you'd better give me your question again so I have it clear in my mind.

RITCHIE: Basically, you introduced Mansfield earlier, but I wondered about how your relationship with him evolved in the 1950s up to the point when you decided to go to work for him, when he was whip.

VALEO: Well, trying to pick it up from where we left off, on this theme, we worked on the foreign aid thing together, and we traveled a great deal. He began to travel elsewhere other than Asia and he asked for me from the committee. We went to Latin America to Panama and Peru and Bolivia in 1956. Again, it was in pursuit of the aid program, or the Point Four program. I believe there was a report on the Point Four program in those areas which stressed the importance of staying with the original concept of the Point Four program.

RITCHIE: From all your travels with him, getting to see him in action and presumably talking with him over long stretches, how would you judge his character as an individual?

VALEO: It's an interesting thing, we talked very little on the trips, except on matters of business. On a personal level, there was a minimum of conversation. Oh, occasionally something personal would come up at dinner when he and I were traveling alone. In the case of the Latin American trip, his wife was also along, so that put it in a somewhat different category. But when we were alone, I guess we crossed the ocean two or three times by boat, coming back from these trips to Vietnam. I would be working on a draft of the report and he'd be in the library. He'd spend the whole day in the library on the ship. We'd meet only for meals, for lunch and for dinner, that was all. And we barely exchanged a half a dozen sentences on each occasion. I was quite

young and a little overawed by the position I found myself in. He, at the same time, was the most taciturn man I had ever encountered anywhere. He had a great way of keeping long silences and he was almost without small talk.

It used to cause all kinds of problems in the embassies. We'd be invited to dinner and invariably he would sit next to the ambassador's wife. She, trying to do what she regarded as her duty, would bravely attempt to engage him in conversation. It was virtually impossible to do. He just simply had no small talk. I used to feel sorry for them. I knew exactly what they were going through. Now, that changed as we got to know each other more, but in those early years, I must say it was a very difficult thing to deal with. I could talk to him on any matter of business, he would be glad to listen and it would be a very adequate conversation. But it was almost impossible to chat. Occasionally he *might* mention a personal thing, but it was a very rare occasion.

RITCHIE: You said that he spent a lot of time in the library. Do you have any idea what he was reading in those days?

VALEO: Just about anything. He always read five or six newspapers everyday in the office, at least that many, all the papers from home and about five or six other papers besides, usually the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, and all of the Washington papers, there were three at that time. And he'd read

the New York *Daily News*; I could understand why. This was his way of trying to understand the lower middle-class and poor and the more militant nationalistic elements whose support he felt was very, very critical to win, particularly in terms of foreign relations questions. If you didn't have that you didn't have a majority. So he read that religiously. The New York *Daily News* was always very negative on international participation. I don't think it ever went as far as "Get the U.S. Out of the U.N." and vice versa, but it did come very close. It was an extremely jingoistic newspaper.

My relationship with Mansfield began to give me problems at the committee, because he would tie my time up a great deal. He would come to me directly, not going through Francis or Carl, and I was still on a loan arrangement with the committee at that point. He had asked me to go to work with him. The first time must have been shortly after his election, maybe about two years after his election. I remember the incident very well because we were in the Senate dining room having lunch on a Saturday—he was one of the few senators who worked every Saturday. He offered me a job and I told him that I hadn't left the Library and I really didn't want to leave the Library. He said, "But you're over here all the time anyhow." I said, "I know that, but I always expect to go back to the Library at some point." I said, "But I'll give you whatever help I can through the committee."

The thing that helped to fix the occasion in my mind was that there was a correspondent, Jack Bell I believe, of the AP. He came in and sat down and Mansfield told him to have a cup of coffee, he always did that with the press. Jack Bell began to ask him some questions. I don't know how it came up, but his response was, "Well, you know Jack, I don't know that I'm going to run again." This was after he'd been in the Senate about two years. And Jack Bell said, "You want to make a bet!" Mansfield smiled. I learned later that it was almost a standard response from senators in their first term. They weren't at all sure that they wanted to stay in the Senate, but invariably they did. It reminds me of a much more tragic setting some years later when I went up to Wilmington to swear in Joe Biden after he was elected for the first time. He would not come down for the general swearing in of new senators because his children were in the hospital. They had been in a terrible automobile accident, in which his wife had been killed. He made a speech to his supporters in the hospital room where I swore him in, and he said the same thing: he was not at all sure that he would run again for the Senate. He felt so badly about what had happened and he was so worried about his children. Of course, he's been around now for a while, into his third term.

Mansfield asked me again, a year or two later, I guess about 1956, on one of the trips, to go to work for him. I still stalled on it. Then in 1958 we were at the U.N. I was the congressional

advisor to the delegation, and he and Hickenlooper were the U.S. delegates from the Congress in that particular General Assembly session, which was the thirteenth. He always regarded that as a lucky number, maybe that will give you some indication of his nature! But anyhow, we were there. I had been ill with an appendix and I had just gotten married. I wasn't in my best shape. And he was in the middle of an election campaign in Montana while serving up there in New York.

The assignment at the General Assembly was not a particularly taxing one. It was pretty cut and dried. One thing that disturbed me: the permanent U.S. delegation at the U.N. was so frozen into position that they didn't even want to change words even in innocuous statements. The permanent mission just wanted the same thing year in and year out. They just wanted everything left exactly as it was. We tried to modify at least statements that were going to be made either by Hickenlooper or by Mansfield, but they resisted it all the way. Even trying to change the traditional language of the U.N., which had become so stilted, to try to put a little more life into it was impossible; they just resisted it all the way.

Mansfield ran again that year, 1958. In contrast to his first election to the Senate, which was in '52, he won by a landslide, a very large landslide. He came back to New York and he said, "I've just been reelected. I'm going to ask you once again:

Do you want to go to work with me?" He said, "I've got six years. If you stay with me for a couple of years, I'll help you get whatever you want in the government." I said, "Let me think about it." I went back and talked it over with my wife. We decided that the staff structure on the committee was beginning to get a little bit difficult to deal with, in part because Mansfield was using a great deal of my time. This caused some resentment among the other staff people. And he wouldn't accept any change. He was that sort of a person. Having once learned to work with somebody he just hated to make any changes and he didn't like staff people forced on him. I had done some work for Fulbright, very little but an important job in connection with his concepts of foreign aid. And I mentioned the Morse incidents, but those were minor. Most of my time really went heavily into helping Mansfield and mostly on Asia.

So we thought about it and decided that it was time to make a change. He was then only a member of the Senate, he had not yet become whip. I said, "Okay, I'll do it." At that point I had just gone over to the committee, that is, made the formal change from the Library to the committee, and I'd been on the committee staff per se for about eight months when this happened. So I guess it was in January 1959. I had no sooner gone to work for Mansfield when Johnson tapped him for whip, and we moved up into the rooms on the gallery floor over what is now the Democratic

leader's office. We used to hold forth there every Saturday with the press, in particular there were two members, one was Tony Vaccaro, who represented the AP and the other one was Warren Duffy, who was with the UPI (it may have been just the UP at that point). They would always be on hand on Saturday, they'd always come up.

An interesting sidelight—which is one of the reasons why I would want this held in confidence, at least for a while longer. The same year Mansfield was elected whip, [Thomas] Dodd came over from the House and so did Bob Byrd. I never forgot a conversation at a Saturday meeting, when Tony Vaccaro said to him, "Mike, there's some funny people coming over here from the House this year. Do you know it?" He said, "Who do you have in mind?" He said, "Well, that fellow Dodd, he's a kind of strange guy." Actually, Dodd was alcoholic, but Vaccaro didn't say it in so many words, but he said, "You know, he likes to make long speeches. Then you got that other fellow Byrd" he said. "He's a wild one!" Mansfield only smiled. He would never let himself be drawn into a conversation which might be in the least disparaging of his colleagues.

We did a lot of speeches. He kept me working mostly on foreign policy questions, even though we moved into the whip's office. The whip in that period really had a very limited amount to do. The leadership wasn't highly structured as it is now. The

whip had no function except to substitute for the leader when he wasn't around, and Johnson used to go away periodically because he had had a heart attack and was under instructions to get out of town a lot. So he'd leave the Senate with Mansfield, and Mansfield would carry the burden for long hours and run them into the evening very often, which was in accord with Johnson's wishes. I had very little to do with the floor. That was still Bobby Baker's realm. I was still feeling my way in the Senate structure, because up until this point my interest had only been in foreign relations. I had no real interest in the inner workings of the Senate as such. So I spent most of my time trying to hammer out speeches, developing new positions, many on Europe in this period, as well as on the Far East.

Mansfield had a good working relationship with Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. Dulles liked Mansfield even though he was a constant critic of Eisenhower policies, but he did not do it on a personal level. He always deferred in the end to the power of the president and his secretary of state. Dulles appreciated that kind of approach, which was somewhat in contrast with what he had to confront in Fulbright, who liked the adversarial role with him. So Dulles constantly turned, I think, to Mansfield on the Democratic side of the Senate in that period.

RITCHIE: Do you have any idea why Johnson chose Mansfield for whip?

VALEO: It's a hard question to answer. I didn't know Johnson at that point, hardly at all. I'd seen him and watched him in action. I think there were a number of reasons. First of all, I think he wanted to have a line out to the Democratic liberals in the Senate, men like Paul Douglas and Hubert Humphrey, Morse, Gore, and others. He couldn't pick a Southerner for balance. Even though he claimed he was a Westerner, it didn't really register. It was always greeted with a smile when he claimed he was a westerner. He was regarded as a southerner, by the liberals in any event. So he felt he had to have a liberal whip if they were going to keep the party unified. And I think he found Mike Mansfield the most compatible of any of the liberals in the Senate, largely because Mansfield never gave him any trouble. He just did what Johnson asked, upheld him whenever he could, and spoke only on foreign policy, which was of no great interest to Johnson at that point. He hadn't yet learned that if you want to run for the presidency you should know something about it. He was mostly interested in budgetary questions, and he was in a constant struggle over who was causing the budget to be unbalanced—shades of today—he or Eisenhower. There was a lot of give and take between them. And then Johnson used to work very closely with Speaker Sam Rayburn over on the House side. They sort of figured out their strategy together. It was mostly involved with domestic issues, tax questions and things of that sort. Natural resources were important, particularly oil.

I think he found that Mansfield really was totally noncompetitive. He never saw him as a rival. I don't think he ever felt comfortable with Mansfield—it's very hard to feel comfortable with Mansfield, very few members of the Senate ever did, even after held been leader for ten years. He had enormous reserve, which I think is part of his basic personality. It goes well in certain places; the Japanese have an appreciation for a sort of removed person who doesn't talk too much except when it's necessary to talk. That's the way he was. His interests were, as I say, in Montana affairs, which he really watched very, very closely, and in foreign policy. And the number of people interested in foreign policy in that period, in a deep sense, was rather limited in the Senate as well as in the country. I think that probably explains why Johnson chose him.

There was another factor too: the southerners liked Mansfield. I'm talking about the old patriarchs, people like Walter George and Dick Russell—who wasn't so old at that point, but he knew he couldn't do the job of whip even if he wanted to, and he didn't want it. He knew no southerner could do it, he was astute enough to know that. It had to be somebody from the Northeast, or it had to be someone from the Northwest or the West. Mansfield was respected among the members from those areas. However, the show was still run pretty much by Johnson. Mansfield

made very little in the way of an original contribution to the leadership. It was not his style. He deferred to Johnson on just about everything.

RITCHIE: I've heard it said that Mansfield was whip in name but Bobby Baker was really whip in deed.

VALEO: Well, Bobby Baker had great influence. I don't think he was whip, but it depends on how you define whip. If you mean in the House sense of whip, where your purpose is to try to get votes lined up, yes. But that was never the whip function in the Senate. I don't think it is even today. Bobby Baker did the vote catching, and he went out with his butterfly net to catch whatever he could. But Mansfield would never do that. It would not be his nature. As whip I don't think he ever asked anybody for a vote. But his very presence in the leadership, and his support of Johnson on a lot of difficult questions, tended to modify the hostility which was gathering very strongly against Johnson in liberal circles in the Senate at that time. Mansfield was sort of a cap on that. He held it somewhat in check.

RITCHIE: Did Mansfield have any difficulties dealing with Bobby Baker because of his role in that?

VALEO: Oh, no. You didn't see much of Bobby Baker. He spent most of his time either with [Robert] Kerr or with Johnson. You rarely saw him on the floor except when there was a vote. He

had a private project going on down at the—I think the whole Baker story I'd better deal with as a separate set, because it was part of a transition in the pattern of leadership in the Senate when Baker finally came to his—desserts, I guess that is the best word.

RITCHIE: After you started working with Mansfield, did you have any more dealings with Johnson?

VALEO: Still very limited. Extremely limited. I didn't really get to know Johnson until he became vice president. Johnson was running for the presidency at that point, clearly. We're talking now about '58, '59, in that period. But there were about fourteen other members of the Senate also running for the presidency. I remember a conversation with Hubert Humphrey when we were out on the disarmament subcommittee hearings. We were in Minneapolis where he had a lot of labor support, and he had been meeting with labor leaders incidental to our trip to Minneapolis for the disarmament subcommittee hearings. I had dinner with him one night during that trip. It was just on the verge of the Democratic Convention, it was approaching rapidly. I remember we got talking about his prospects for the vice presidency. I told him I didn't think he had a chance for it. But he really thought he did that year. I expressed the view that he ought to wait awhile and concentrate a little bit more on building up his reputation in the Senate. But he was running. Had he not done

that, I don't know what might have happened. He might very well have wound up as majority leader instead of Mansfield, but it was, again, part of Hubert's character to either be too far out ahead or too far back. His timing was always off. That was the year Stevenson and Kefauver ran, I believe.

RITCHIE: '56.

VALEO: Right.

RITCHIE: Well, when you got into the whip's office, even though you really weren't on the floor, how did the Senate begin to appear to you? Now you were seeing it from beyond just one committee but looking at the whole institution.

VALEO: And it was a great body, I must say. It had some of the most unique individuals that I've ever known in a group. It was a great concentration. One of the questions which always confounded me was how from a given state you might get two totally contrasting personalities. At first I tried to think of senators as being reflective of the area of the country from which they came, in a kind of representative sense. But that is not a fully satisfactory explanation of the people who in that period were elected to the Senate, because you would have, in some instances, a very real liberal in terms of that period in contrast with a stark conservative from the same location. I could never quite develop a theory to explain why that would happen.

But what you did have was the fact that they were very unique individuals, and yet, compared with the Senate today, they were able to work together as parties much, much better. Certainly this is true of the Democrats, who seem to me to have less and less sense of party as time goes on. I think it's true also of the Republicans to a great extent. But the Democrats in that period did work and did think of themselves primarily as Democrats. They didn't run from the fact that they were identified as Democrats, which seems to me to be the pattern of current election campaigns. You don't play your party identification. I think this is one of the by-products of television, and the use of television as the principal politicking instrument in the country. In that period, first of all you didn't have to be good looking, you didn't have to have a photogenic face. You never got photographed that much, and it seemed that what you had in your head was a lot more important than how you looked on the television screen.

They had stark identities in terms of issues, very often. Douglas of Illinois was always out there campaigning against bigness. I mean, you could always count on him for that, and he would get extremely passionate on the subject. Humphrey was there for civil rights. And you'd get an Eastland who was just as much opposed to civil rights. You could identify people: Russell was always on the military end of things. Well, it was that kind of Senate, with very clearly marked, definable personalities. The

debate was very edifying. Much of it was spontaneous on given issues. There were not so many set speeches. There was a great deal of humor in the Senate. There was a show in the Senate, as well as a legislating body. But it was a genuine show, it was not a cheap imitation of Hollywood. It was basically a legislative show. It was quite fascinating, actually.

RITCHIE: In the election of 1958, the Democrats swept the Senate races and took over the Senate in great numbers. For the ten years before that, the parties had been almost even in the Senate.

VALEO: That's right.

RITCHIE: But suddenly you had this huge body of freshmen Democrats coming in.

VALEO: I'm trying to remember what it was. I guess it was the disillusionment with Eisenhower at this point.

RITCHIE: Yes, and there was a recession.

VALEO: And a recession was involved. It was interesting, just prior to that, an important footnote in the history of the Senate: the Republicans had control of the Senate in '53, and I think they held it in '54 barely.

RITCHIE: I think the Democrats took over barely then, by one or two votes.

VALEO: In '52 the Republicans had only a one-vote margin, and something happened, I think there was a vacancy somewhere, so for a period of time Bill Knowland of California had no majority but he was the majority leader. There was a discussion in Democratic circles at the time whether or not to let them continue in control of the Senate. They decided not to disrupt it since the elections were coming soon. So Knowland used to speak of himself as a majority leader without a majority, and Johnson used to speak of himself as a minority leader with a majority! I guess Nixon was in the vice president's chair and that made it possible to do that.

RITCHIE: He broke the tie at one point.

VALEO: Right.

RITCHIE: But for years the Senate had been very close, two or three vote margins between the parties, and now all of a sudden there was a twenty vote margin. And you had a brand new set of young, ambitious Democrats. What kind of problems did this pose for the leadership?

VALEO: Well, again I was still not deeply involved in floor matters, but I used to hear that it drove Johnson crazy. He

used to say that it was a lot easier to work with a one-vote majority than it is with twenty. There is a certain truth in that: if you're holding a very small majority—I think that this is true of [Robert] Dole, for example now, he's in not exactly the same boat, but it's much easier to hold your troops in line when you're very close to the line than it is when you have a big majority. It's the natural tendency for fractures to occur in any political group. You don't have room for the refinements of divisions when you're only close to a majority, but when you have plenty of margin, you can say, "Oh, what's the difference if I don't go with them?" And you tend to go in other directions. Then, again, you can't divorce this problem from the fact that there are so many people in the Senate running for the presidency, or at least the vice presidency.

RITCHIE: Well, in 1960, Johnson was elected vice president and the majority leadership became vacant. Did Mansfield really want to become majority leader? He seems like such an unlikely person in a lot of ways to want a leadership role in a body like the Senate.

VALEO: It's very, very difficult to discuss Mansfield's motives. Even I, who probably knew him as well as anybody around the Senate by the time he left—as a matter of fact, he said that at one time, that I knew him probably as well as anybody ever will know him, except maybe his wife. It's very hard to explain his

motives. I think Mansfield was very heavily influenced by China where he had served as a young Marine in the twenties. You can either see him as a master Machiavellian or as a very honest, simple man who just didn't really want anything that came his way. But a great deal came his way.

I guess the Senate is about the only place left in the world where he who would be first is last. That is still very much a factor in the whole character of the Senate. It's a body of very jealous men of each other—and women, I wouldn't except them. Margaret Chase Smith was no different from the rest. They have been through an extraordinarily fine sieving in the political process, and having reached that point which wouldn't be reached without a certain degree of paranoia to begin with, senators are constantly protecting their flanks from challenges, real or imagined. Having reached that point, they're very anxious, if not to go the one step further to the presidency, at least to hold their full rights at the Senate level. In this respect Mansfield was no different than the rest. There are some who think he's an aberration, that he was not in the normal Senate pattern, and I think there's truth in that. But in arriving at the Senate in the first place, he had to be very much like the rest. I think he grew beyond that point in the office. This is an important characteristic.

Once the extreme need for alertness in terms of protecting flanks was past, once he won the election in 1952, in the face of the Eisenhower landslide, he had some room for maneuver. They really pilloried him on the China issue in the 1952 election, he was attacked by all of these McCarthy supporters and still managed to come through, by a very close margin in that first election. Once he'd gotten through that, the only question that I ever found Mansfield really afraid of was the China Question. He went to great extremes to protect that flank of his political personality. So he had to have some—let's call it Machiavellianism—just to survive. But once he was past that point of extreme danger, then I think the other elements in his character became a much more powerful factor in his subsequent behavior. We're talking now of a western politician moving from the level of just western politics up to national statesmanship. He would be the last one to accept that definition of himself as a statesman. But once having met the worst requirements of political necessity, then I think he moved into a new realm. I think you can apply this to the leadership question.

He certainly did not expect to become whip in 1959. He talked with me about that at the time it happened. He said, "Johnson wants me to be whip." He said, "I don't know why he suddenly fixed on me. I told him I thought there were a lot of other people. I'd only been around for a couple of years and I

didn't think he ought to do that, but he's very insistent." He ascribed Johnson's offer to Walter George. He was on the Foreign Relations Committee already and George was chairman or ranking on the committee at that point. He said, "I think Walter George must have suggested that I be the whip." He took it reluctantly. But he took everything he got reluctantly; I think that's an important point to remember.

When it came to the subsequent question of the majority leadership in 1960, my own guess is that Johnson wanted [George] Smathers for the job. Smathers was a kind of Johnson protégé to begin with. Kennedy would have found that extremely difficult, even though the Hill stories had it that Smathers was supposedly one of his close friends, and they went out chasing women together. I don't know how true those stories are, but even so, Kennedy, being the kind of person he was, would not have wanted Smathers in that job. It would have been a disaster for Smathers, who would have been very much amenable to Johnson's guidance from the vice presidential chair. We came back to practical politics. Maybe Johnson recognized that there was really no alternative to Mansfield, and he probably thought that he could still run the Senate from the vice president's chair. So Mansfield would have been Johnson's ostensible candidate, even though Johnson may have wanted someone else in that chair. That would be the way I would size it up. That may also have been true of a lot of people

around Kennedy. I think they would have preferred what they could have defined more accurately as a liberal than a Mansfield. Mansfield was regarded by many of the Kennedy people as an out-and-out conservative! Whether Mansfield himself wanted it, if I were forced to vote on the issue I'd say, yes, he probably wanted it, but he wouldn't have raised a finger to get it.

RITCHIE: So he didn't campaign at all?

VALEO: Oh, not at all. Nothing. Quite the contrary, he would say, "Well, look around, you've got a lot of other people, there's Hubert" and so forth. That would have been his reaction. The last thing he would have done would have been to campaign for it.

RITCHIE: To some degree, his greatest strength was that he wasn't Lyndon Johnson. He was just the opposite, and the Senate apparently—or at least the Democrats—were pretty tired of Lyndon Johnson.

VALEO: Well, they had that first Senate Democratic Conference in the new Kennedy administration. It was clear Johnson really was stunned by the fact that Kennedy not only had gotten the nomination instead of him, but also that he had won the election. I think in both instances he was overwhelmed. Whatever else he was, Johnson was a good Democrat, but he was such an egotist that he must have pondered along these lines: how did

this ever happen? The wrong person is in the White House, obviously; since I'm here as vice president, I have to make the most of my talents. I'm going to preside over the Senate and I think I'll run it pretty much the way I ran it before. Well, of course he found out very quickly that he could not, that the vice president is neither in nor of the Senate, and was again shocked. The truth is Johnson didn't really know the institution of the Senate that well. He knew his own cronies and he knew how to manipulate some of the more exasperating liberals (and he exasperated the liberals in turn), but he didn't really know some of these underlying feelings that had gathered against him. I don't think he ever recognized the depth of the hostility until it hit him in the first Democratic Caucus, which elected Mansfield.

Mansfield, playing it again like he always did on every issue, went in there not even expecting to be named. Kennedy had actually spoken with him on the phone, and said, "What's this? I hear you don't want the job. I want you for the job." And Johnson reinforced the president. Reluctantly, I guess, Mansfield agreed. So he knew he was going to get it, but he went in as though it could be anybody. Johnson presided over that caucus. Of course, Bobby Baker was there. Baker was still the secretary for the majority. I went into the caucus, I was invited in by Mansfield. Mansfield's first act after his election by acclamation was to nominate the vice president, Johnson, as the permanent chairman of

the caucus. Well, it was as though he had brought down the east front or the west front. I don't remember who was on his feet first, whether it was Gore or Clark of Pennsylvania, but they were up there in an absolute fury, and then it all began to come out, all the hostility to Johnson.

Johnson just sat there, absolutely flabbergasted at the kind of hostility that was shown to his face. In the chair, he didn't make any comment. When the liberals finished pouring out their wrath and anger, either Holland of Florida, or Russell, or both perhaps got the floor. It was Mansfield's motion that had brought forth the outpouring. He'd just been named by acclamation as majority leader, and then he made the motion to put Johnson permanently in the chair of the conference, which at that point was essentially an honorary job, but the members just didn't want any part of Johnson. He had had it. Then Holland and Russell, either one or both, got up to chastise Mansfield for being too modest, pointing out that after all, he was the leader and this was his place and he should take it. And again, reluctantly, he accepted that. Once he had been made leader, Bobby Baker tendered his resignation. Mansfield refused to accept it and said, no, he wouldn't even think of running the Senate without Bobby Baker's help and assistance. He went on to say that Baker was the finest majority secretary the Senate ever had. Baker, who was anxious at that time to get into the hotel business and other enterprises and

who was also, I think, overwhelmed by the offer wasn't so reluctant, he agreed to stay on. And that's the way it was set up.

Then Mansfield assured Johnson that he was going to consult with him on every question that came up. But the first question that I recall came up was the appointment of Democrats to various Senate delegations. Technically, these are appointments of the chair. The appointment is officially made by either the president pro tem or the vice president, when he is there as the president of the Senate. So Johnson got this list from the parliamentarian that we needed six people or so for some meetings somewhere, and he asked me to convey to Mansfield that he had some ideas on who he wanted to appoint. And Mansfield said, "No dice. You just put these names down there and tell him to appoint them." Johnson didn't try to fight it once it was put to him.

RITCHIE: Do you know if Johnson asked Mansfield to make that motion, that he be permanent chair of the conference?

VALEO: I do not know that. My guess is he did not. My guess is that it was Mansfield's way of easing Johnson out gradually. First of all, I don't think he'd want to hurt Johnson. I don't think he had any malice towards Johnson, but he also knew that there were some things he'd have to do if he were going to be leader, and one way of softening the blow—Johnson had already

suffered from the fact that he wasn't going to be president—was to give him something to do that would be a little more meaningful than sitting in the vice president's chair.

RITCHIE: The irony was that the conference really didn't meet all that much. When Johnson was majority leader it only met once a session.

VALEO: It only held occasional meetings. That was one of the evolutions in the system during the Mansfield tenure.

RITCHIE: So Mansfield himself was caught off guard by the hostility that followed that motion?

VALEO: Whether he was or whether he wasn't is a question I have never answered to my own satisfaction. He must have anticipated that the proposal would not go without a great deal of opposition. Again, it comes back to the question whether you think he's naive or whether you think he's a Machiavellian. And I don't think that you can survive for fourteen years as majority leader of the Senate if you are naive. I mean, I just don't think it's a possibility, so therefore I have to conclude that he must have expected some adverse reaction, that it would not just go through perfunctorily. Whether he expected the vehemence of it or not, I don't know. I certainly didn't. I didn't realize how deep seated was the hostility to Johnson at that point.

Let me give you two reasons why I think that the caucus reacted that way. First of all there were a lot of Democratic senators who smarted under Johnson's manipulation and his buttonholing, and his use of petty prerogatives and things of that sort, to either reward or punish. I think there was a lot of anger at that. The other thing was that there were a lot of other disappointed presidential candidates in the Senate at the time and they vented their wrath on Johnson. I think both things were involved.

RITCHIE: Once Mansfield became majority leader, how did your role change?

VALEO: Once he became majority leader we moved into what is now called the Kennedy Room, a name given to it by Mansfield. Interestingly enough, shortly after he became majority leader, Bobby Baker came in and asked him if he could change his office. The majority secretary's office was then down on the terrace level of the Capitol. He wanted to move right up next to Mansfield, into the Brumidi room that Johnson had occupied when he was majority leader. Mansfield said no. He turned that one down very quickly. He knew what he was doing in a way with Baker. He was afraid of Baker, and he was afraid of Baker's influence with some very powerful southern Democrats, or at least western—I don't know what you'd call Oklahoma-border state Democrats like Kerr, particularly Kerr, I think. So he handled Baker with kid gloves.

But there were points at which he had to draw the line or look entirely foolish, and this was one of them. He just turned it down flatly.

RITCHIE: Symbolically it would have looked wrong.

VALEO: Said he'd like to do it, but that Johnson's quarters had to be a ceremonial room. It would have been symbolically a very, very bad thing. There's an amusing sidelight on this room business. Jackie Kennedy was redoing the White House and Johnson came in one day with a letter that he'd received from Jackie, a "Lyndon Dear" letter. It had to do with a chandelier in the hall of the Senate, one of those massive crystal chandeliers, there are about a half a dozen, in the Senate. She wanted it for the White House, and she had been trying to get it from the then architect of the Capitol, George Stewart. George Stewart was dragging his feet. He knew the chandelier had come out of the White House originally. It was put in the White House during the Grant administration and came out in a subsequent administration. But Stewart didn't want to let the chandelier go so Jackie wrote this letter that Johnson gave to me to look into.

At this point I was beginning to know him better and have some dealings with him. He gave me the letter and it was the most stinging letter I had ever seen. Somewhere that ought to be in the record. Maybe it's up in the Kennedy Library—or in the

Johnson Library more likely—but she said, as I recall that "George Stewart can either be the hero or the villain in this piece, but one way or another I'm going to get that chandelier." So he said, "Here, take this. Do something with this. You know, I'm not the majority leader." So I talked with Mansfield about the letter and he said, "I don't know, talk to Stewart and see what you can do." So I talked not with George Stewart, it was impossible to talk with George Stewart, he was so set in his ways—I'll tell you some funny stories about him at some point if you want them—but I talked with Phil Roof, who was his administrative assistant, a rational human, soft-spoken but astute. So I said, "What are we going to do about this letter?" And Phil said, "Oh, let her have the goddamn thing." So I brought it up with Mansfield. "The advice of Phil Roof is to let her have it." He said, "Well, okay, but let's do it on a loan basis." I guess it's been recouped by the Senate since then.

George Stewart at that time—if I can digress for a minute—there are two amusing incidents. I was just getting to know him. He was obsessed with the idea of the west front. He really wanted that extension. He didn't want to restore it; he wanted the extension, and he wanted to bring the tourist buses right into the Capitol. Left to his own devices he would have set up the Capitol basically as a tourist haven, that is the Capitol Building itself, and move the Congress' real business elsewhere. That was a

concept I certainly was not sympathetic with, nor was Mansfield. But I did think there was some use in the idea of having more space in the Capitol for senators, and we began to figure out ways in which it might possibly be done. Anyhow, I remember going to my office on a Monday morning, and Stewart was standing in the hall. His office was near mine, this was after I'd become secretary of the majority. He said, "Frank, I want to show you something." So he reached into his pocket and pulled out a chunk of stone. I said, "What's that, George?" He said, "It's a piece of the West Front. I was walking out there last night and it chipped off and almost hit me on the head! We have to do something about it before it falls down." I said, "George, what were you doing there on Sunday night?" or something to that effect. He said, "Well, I always walk around the Capitol to see what's going on."

Another time he came to me, this was when I was secretary of the Senate. One of the perquisites of the secretary of the Senate is a supply of calendars every year with a picture of the Capitol for distribution. One day he came in to see me and said, "Frank, could you let me have about a hundred of your calendars?" I said, "Sure, George, we never give them all out. We get a large quota. If you want them, you can have them, George. But don't you get your own from the House side? Why don't you ask the House Administration Committee." "Well," he said, "they aren't the same

calendars. Over there they're still printing the calendars with the old east front picture, because they didn't like the idea of changing it in the first place, but the Senate has the new front on it." So he said, "If you don't mind, I'd like some of yours." That was another one of his pet projects in which he was successful—extending the east front.

The Senate at that period had a lot of that sort of very close, intimate kind of exchange; you really knew everybody you were dealing with. There were very few staff people, for example, that I didn't know at least enough to recognize them by name.

RITCHIE: You said before that you got to know Johnson better when he was vice president.

VALEO: Yes. Well, of course the main source of my direct contact was when I traveled with him to Vietnam.

RITCHIE: Did you go in '61?

VALEO: Yes. I was on the '61 trip. The way that came about—we're sort of at a stopping point. Do you want to go on with this?

RITCHIE: Would you like to start the next time with that?

VALEO: Maybe we could get into that the next time.

RITCHIE: Oh, yes, because I'm really interested in that '61 trip.

VALEO: That was a very fascinating trip. It was very important in fixing Johnson's ideas about Vietnam. It was an extraordinary experience.

End of Interview #4